

**The Labour Market, Gender and Rapid Social Change in Chile:  
Working Women's Experiences**  
Isabel Vogel

Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Social and Environmental Sciences, University of  
Liverpool, for the degree of Ph.D.

September 1997

*Well, I know that sometimes the man doesn't want his wife to work, and in the end, it's because she earns more than him. But sometimes, he has to recognise that the money is useful to him and put up with it, he just has to put up with it!*

*Raquel (trabajadora de casa particular)*

*I feel that us women, we can no longer keep on complaining, we have to make changes. And those changes start here, from the home. Because there's no point in shouting in the streets, "We want women's liberation ...!" if you don't demand that your rights be respected in your own home.*

*Ester (confeccionista)*

## **ABSTRACT**

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This study explores the effects of women's permanent incorporation into the labour market on gender relations within the household, the workplace and wider society. The implementation of neo-liberal policies in Chile in the 1980s resulted in far-reaching economic and social transformations, with complex and contradictory outcomes for women. Women have been rapidly and permanently incorporated into the labour market as a result of expanding job opportunities, and dual-earner households have become increasingly common. Despite this, traditional gender relations persist, and domestic responsibilities remain women's responsibilities. The data were drawn from in-depth interviews with working women in both urban and rural contexts, exploring how their everyday management of the demands of their paid work and family roles presents possibilities to transform gender relations within the household. At the same time, new work and wage-earning experiences increase self-confidence and independence and may also help create bases for organisation in the workplace. Although this potential empowerment may be constrained by poor employment conditions, instability, low wages and poverty, the case studies show women who are nevertheless challenging accepted male-dominated gender relations within their workplaces and their families and households. More importantly, they perceive themselves to be active and independent agents, engaged in subtle but important processes of re-working gender relations in a context of wider social change.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Dr. David E. Hojman for supervising this work, and for his invaluable help and encouragement. I would also like to thank the Economic and Social Research Council for financial support through Research Studentship no. R00429234323, without which this study could not have been completed.

The help received from individuals, organisations and institutions in Chile, particularly CEDAL, CONTEXTIL, *El Directorio Femenino* - CUT, *La Casa del Temporero* in Graneros, the *I. Municipalidad de La Florida*, the *I. Municipalidad de Graneros* and SERNAM is gratefully acknowledged.

Many thanks to all those colleagues and friends, too numerous to mention, who have provided assistance and advice throughout. Special thanks go to Dr. A. E. Bee for ever-constant support and encouragement. Thanks are also due to Dr. P. Healey for help on countless occasions.

I would like to thank M. G. Sime, T. Vogel, C. Vogel, F. Bodger, N. Schmidt and P. Leach for their unflagging faith, love and friendship in times of darkest despair. I am especially grateful to Dr. A. Vogel, for heroic assistance above and beyond the call of duty.

Last, but not at all least, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to those women who gave up their precious time to sit and talk with me. Their generosity, warmth and vitality are at the heart of this study.



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## PREFACE

This study is set in the context of the far-reaching economic transformations that have occurred in Chile over the last twenty years. The implementation of neo-liberal policies in Chile has led to the structural transformation of the economy, which has been highly successful through the 1980s and 1990s. Economic indicators point to a growth rate of around 5.8 per cent in the early 1990s, with accompanying increases in employment and wages. Much of the growth of the economy is based on the expansion of international trade, as there has been successful diversification into non-traditional exports. Fast GDP growth rates have resulted in increases in employment. Unemployment rates have remained low, at around 5 per cent, while the scarcity of skilled labour has prompted substantial increases in real wages (Business Monitor International, *Chile Anual*, 1997).

These economic transformations have had complex and contradictory effects on women. General growth rates have led to an expansion in the demand for female labour in those occupations which concentrate female employment. At the same time, those sectors which have undergone rapid expansion incorporate new employment opportunities for women. These new female occupations fall into the export-oriented sectors, most notably agribusiness and the financial services sector. This has led to the permanent incorporation of women into the labour market, an incorporation which continues to increase.

These projections raise important questions regarding the impact of women's permanent incorporation into the labour force on gender relations within the household, the workplace and society. There is a potential for a real change in perceptions of gender roles, as traditional gender role expectations are modified to accommodate women moving out of the home into paid employment. The tensions and contradictions which are emerging as gender relations undergo change can be felt in the media, in the political arena, in the workplace and within the household.

In the light of these economic and social changes, the principal aim of this study was to gain a qualitative understanding of the experience of paid work in the lives of working women in

Chile. In the context of these economic changes, employment outside the home is becoming an increasingly important dimension of women's lives. However, as Chile's remains an inherently *machista* culture, with clearly defined gender roles for men and women, the extension of women's roles into the paid work arena gives rise to conflicting and contradictory situations vis-à-vis gender role expectations as, in addition to their increasing presence in the labour market, women also retain the primary responsibility for maintaining the domestic sphere. Thus, this work aimed to gain an insight into how women interweave their work and family responsibilities, as well as the meaning and value they give to these aspects of their lives. The nature of these interpretations is dynamic and constantly changing, revolving around the intersection of gender, work and family, reflected in re-negotiations of gender relations. As such, these re-negotiations have important implications for long-term changes in gender relations.

The qualitative insight gained permits the exploration of the question regarding the possibilities for empowerment that incorporation into the labour market offers women. The extent of women's empowerment through paid work is likely to be limited by conditions of low-pay, unstable and poor quality employment, given that many of the 'female' occupations which have emerged as a result of new economic conditions are seasonal and temporary, with working conditions which may be less than satisfactory. Nevertheless, in a context of permanent and increasing female labour force participation, paid employment may offer a set of challenges and experiences which enable women to take the first steps towards re-working gender relations within their own households and workplaces. Traditional gender role expectations are frustrated as women move out of the home into paid employment, while men become obliged to take on some of the responsibility for childcare and domestic chores. At the same time, women's increasing economic power also poses a threat to the status of the husband as the breadwinner of the household and family, further challenging traditional gender relations. These tensions must be mediated and negotiated by working women.

The study is based on fifty-six in-depth interviews with working women, carried out during 1993-94. The interviewees were drawn from a wide range of household situations, and were employed in a variety of occupations, in order to have maximum heterogeneity. Information



was sought by means of a semi-structured questionnaire on the quality of the interviewees' occupations in terms of wage levels, working conditions, work histories, as well as their attitudes towards their paid work. The women's interpretation of the effect of their employment and income on the dynamics of household and family relations was also an integral dimension of the study. Finally, opinions and attitudes on gender relations within the marriage, the family, the workplace and society as a whole were sought in order to stimulate a discussion of the issues and contradictions which arise from women's participation in the labour market.<sup>1</sup> Despite the limitations this specificity imposes in terms of drawing generalised conclusions, parallels can nevertheless be drawn between the life and work experiences of these Chilean women and those of women in other cultures and countries.

In order to contextualise the analysis of Chilean women's labour force participation, chapter one examines the literature relating to the general aspects of women's labour force participation in developing countries. This discussion focuses on the perspective of gender and gender relations as the most useful in analysing women's paid work. The ways in which gender relations divide the labour market will also be discussed. Then will follow a critical examination of the research and scholarship that has been carried out across the range of women's paid employment in the Third World, particularly in contexts of rapid economic and social change. This will illuminate some of the current debates in the issue of women's labour force participation which are relevant to this study, in particular the central debate of whether women can become empowered through labour force participation.

Chapter two will examine the nature of women's incorporation into the labour market in Chile specifically, first briefly outlining the way in which traditional gender role ideology is expressed in Chile, based on gender relations which incorporate the masculine ideology of *machismo* and its feminine counterpart *marianismo*. These traditional gender attitudes have historically shaped women's roles within economic, political and social changes, while, at the same time, these changes have altered the nature of the gender relations themselves in highly significant ways.

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<sup>1</sup> For a more detailed methodology, please see Appendix A: Methodology.

Then follows a review of the economic and political changes that have taken place since the 1960s through to the 1990s, together with the contradictory impacts on women and gender relations. The failure of the modernising governments of the 1960s to bring about lasting changes in gender relations through their reform programmes will be discussed. Against this will be set the paradoxical situation that arose as a result of the implementation of the free market model by the military regime in the late 1970s, with women entering the labour market, in the first place, in order to compensate for falling household income, while, in the second place, remaining there as female employment opportunities improved.

These effects will be discussed, together with the evolution of the female labour force in relation to demographic characteristics, educational levels and the rates of female participation in different sectors of the economy. The qualitative aspects of this participation will be drawn out, in terms of the types of employment opportunities available to women, working conditions and wages, as well as the stability of employment. Then, the activities that concentrate female employment will be examined in more detail. The employment opportunities for women in these sectors illustrate the ways in which perceptions of gender result in occupational segmentation: export agriculture represents an example of new activities which have been 'feminised'. The rates of female participation in these sectors will be examined, together with the quality of the occupations. The final section of chapter two will draw together the social and cultural implications of women's labour force participation in Chile. The impact of women's increased paid employment on gender relations and wider changes in attitudes will be discussed.

The three chapters which follow, chapters three, four and five, deal with the different aspects of women's paid employment which emerge from the data. These aspects are separated into three main areas of analysis: paid employment, household relations, and gender ideology and attitudes towards gender relations. Twenty-three case studies have been selected for detailed analysis, accompanied by quantitative data from the whole sample to provide a context, followed by a discussion of the issues raised at the end of each chapter. The themes which emerge will be discussed through the use of extracts from the interviews. These quotes represent a complete response or set of responses to the same area of enquiry in each



interview. This was deemed the best way to present the data, as it permits issues to be approached in the interviewees' own words, but incorporating different points of view. The aim is to allow the interviewees' own interpretations and viewpoints to stand alone, as well as determining the direction of the analysis. To this end, the extracts are the author's translation of verbatim quotes, although in some cases, considerations of space have necessitated the removal of repeated phrases. This has been indicated by the symbol '(...)' in the quoted text. The ordering of the themes mirror the ordering of the interview, in an attempt to maintain the flow and reflexive development that occurred during the process of each interview. The extracts are presented in the same order in each section, in order to allow the reader some continuity throughout the following chapters.

Some explanation of the terminology which has been used in this analysis is necessary here. The terms 'interviewee' and 'participant' have been used interchangeably to refer to the women who participated in the study, in order to avoid tedious repetition. The terms 'paid work', 'employment' and 'work' have also been used interchangeably to refer to remunerated work outside the home. The set of tasks and responsibilities relating to the domestic routine of the home has been referred to variously as 'domestic chores', 'domestic responsibilities' and 'domestic work'. These refer to the all of the tasks, including childcare, except where individual tasks have been specified. None of these terms refers to women's income-generating activities carried out within the home, which have been discussed separately where the topic has arisen.

Chapter three focuses on the general aspects of working conditions in each sector, in order to compare wage levels, physical conditions, the length of working days and employment relations. This will provide an insight into the similarities that exist between 'women's jobs', as well as some of the important differences in terms of the quality of the employment. Four work histories will be presented in order to illustrate the different influences which shape women's movement through the labour market. Economic necessity, life cycle and the position within the family are all influential factors in prompting women's entry into the labour market, whilst other factors influence women's movement between jobs. The work

histories show how the historical emergence of specific female employment opportunities have influenced women's employment decisions.

The interviewees' attitudes towards paid work, their motives for working, as well as the advantages and disadvantages they perceive will be explored in the following section. This draws out some of the conflicts between work and family roles that women experience when they take on paid work. However, this analysis also draws out the positive benefits that the women perceive in working, the value they place on their work in terms of personal and economic independence. The final discussion will focus on the common themes that emerge from the analysis, evaluating the potential for empowerment which is offered to the women through their paid work, as well as the implications for gender relations within the workplace and the household.

Following the pattern of chapter three, chapter four will continue this discussion through a focus on the household and the effects of the interviewees' paid employment on the dynamics of household relations. As a traditional gender division of labour persists within the home, women, in their roles as wives and mothers, remain responsible for the bulk of the domestic chores. Men perform relatively few of the domestic tasks within the home, while those that do are consistently perceived as 'helping out' their female partner, rather than taking on a real share of the domestic responsibilities. This results in women carrying out a 'double shift' of work when they are engaged in paid work.

In order to begin an exploration of the ways in which the women who participated in the study mediate the tensions between paid work and domestic obligations, the first section in this chapter will deal with the composition of the family and household group, as well as identifying those members of the family group who are engaged in paid work, and the extent of women's contribution to the household budget. Then follows an analysis of the decision-making process within the household, the way in which purchasing decisions are reached, for example, particularly the contrast between food and consumer durables. An analysis of the way in which decisions are reached will allow an insight into how gender and power relations are expressed in this context, as well as into the dynamics of household relations.



Next, the distribution of the household chores will be examined, indicating specifically how the gender division of labour operates within different households, including responsibilities for domestic chores and childcare. The participants' descriptions of their typical day illustrate clearly the links between paid work and domestic work for women, as well as the extent of the double workload faced by the majority of the participants. At the same time, the description of a typical day shows how there is no distinct division between the two roles: boundaries become blurred as women constantly move between their paid and domestic work roles throughout the day, highlighting the organisational and management skills which women must employ in order to combine both paid work and domestic work.

Chapter five aims to explore further the opinions and attitudes of the participants towards gender roles, together with their perceptions of the gender relations at play in the family, the labour market and wider society. Gender ideologies can be influenced by life and work experiences, resulting in attitude changes which reflect this, while shifts in ideological perceptions provide an insight into the nature and direction of attitude changes at a wider level. Thus, in chapter five, the interviewees' perceptions of gender relations are presented, as the women make observations and generalise from their own experiences.

The exploration of the participants' gender role attitudes and ideology will draw together the themes that have arisen and been analysed in the different contexts of paid work and the household. The chapter will begin with an analysis of the conflicts and ideological expectations regarding paid work and family roles for both women and men. In addition, the interviewees' attitudes towards the gender division of labour within the household will be explored, with particular reference to domestic chores. This section will also examine the attitudes towards education and training for women, drawing out the importance this has for many of the interviewees. The following section will explore the participants' perceptions of gender relations within the family and the marriage, as well as their opinions on gender relations in wider society. This section highlights the ways in which differences between ideology and real behaviour, represented by aspirations, can help to indicate the direction of cultural changes.

In relation to this, the following section will take up the issue of discrimination against women in different social arenas. The participants' interpretations of discrimination point to an awareness of the nature of the gender ideology which establishes relations of inequality between women and men in social arenas. Moreover, as the women may often have direct experience of discrimination in the workplace, this may stimulate debate, and perhaps collective action, in order to bring about a change in gender relations at least within the workplace.

Having explored many of the conflicts and tensions which arise for working women, the final section aims to establish what the interviewees perceive as the barriers which prevent women from participating in all the social arenas on equal terms to men. These perceptions draw together many of the issues which have arisen during the course of the analysis, and point to an awareness of the limitations imposed on women by the prevailing gender ideology. The interviewees are all engaged, in one way or another, in posing a direct challenge to these gender relations.

Finally, chapter six will draw together the insights which have arisen through the analysis of the data, in particular addressing the central question of whether paid employment has proved to be an empowering experience for these women or not, linking up to the theories and debates raised in chapters one and two.



## CHAPTER ONE: Introduction

In general terms, women's labour force participation in the Third World has been increasing steadily over the last few decades. This is associated with increasing urbanisation and economic development, particularly in Latin America where women represent around a third of the workforce (Bradshaw, 1995; Brydon and Chant, 1989; Safa, 1992). This reflects, to some extent, the processes of economic and social change that have taken place in these countries. The incorporation of women into the labour force is often viewed as a significant step forward in terms of an improvement in the status of women. Through the taking on of an economic role outside the family and household, women earning their own wage gain economic independence and possibly improve their material conditions. By making a contribution to the household income, women can improve their negotiating position within household decision-making processes as well as taking on a socially-valued, 'productive' role. All of the above can be regarded as progress in the direction of equality in the status of women and men (Blau and Ferber, 1992: 29).

However, feminist scholarship has shown that this is a simplistic perception of women's labour force participation in developing countries and its potential effects. Increased participation in paid work and the receipt of a money wage does not automatically mean equality for women, as is demonstrated by the general trend for women's employment to be concentrated in low-paid, low-status jobs with limited career possibilities (Kahne and Giele, 1992; Chant, 1991; Elson, 1991; Wilson, 1985; Arizpe and Aranda, 1981; Elson and Pearson, 1981). Feminist scholarship has added complexity to more simplistic views, highlighting that positive or negative outcomes of paid employment for women depend to a large extent on the economic, social, cultural and gender relations under which their incorporation into the labour market takes place.

The aim of this chapter is to examine the literature relating first to the theoretical aspects of women's labour force participation in developing countries, focusing on the perspective of gender and gender relations as the most useful in analysing women's paid work. This takes as its starting point the concept of the gender division of labour, how this is expressed in

terms of gender relations in different cultures and countries, how gender segregation in the labour market is defined by these relationships, as well as how the gender division of labour shifts in the context of social and economic change. It will then go on to examine the research and scholarship that has been carried out across the range of women's productive activities in the Third World, including paid employment, in order to illuminate the current debates in the issue of women's labour force participation.

### **1.1 Gender relations and development**

The incorporation of women into the labour market in ever-increasing numbers is the result of changes in social and economic conditions. For many developing countries, this social change has come about as a result of the expansion of capitalist development, technological advances in production, as well as through a variety of development policies and programmes that have been implemented by states in the last decades. The role of women in this process of economic development, which was previously assumed to be the same as that of men, has become the focus of many studies. As investigators and scholars became aware of the inequalities in gender relations that condition women's experience of these changes, studies became centred on the question of how the changes brought about by 'development' have made themselves felt in the lives of women.

Boserup's seminal work, *Women's Role in Economic Development* (1970), represented a major innovation in the study of women and development. It made a ground-breaking attempt to provide a comparative overview of women's role in development in Africa, Asia and Latin America, inspiring much subsequent theoretical and empirical work. Boserup's work was significant in that it approached rural development from an examination of women's specific roles in changing rural society (Benería and Sen, 1981). This represented a break with previous ideas that economic and social development would have the same outcomes for women as for men in terms of improving their standard of living (Giele, 1992: 5). Boserup's work highlighted the importance of women's distinct productive roles in rural society and the ways these exist within social relations in determining whether capitalistic development would be beneficial for women.

Boserup identified gender as a basic element in the division of labour across a variety of countries and cultures, exploring how colonialism and the expansion of capitalism transformed the roles and status of men and women in Africa, Asia and Latin America (Benería and Sen, 1981: 280). She identified Latin America as having a 'male' farming system, determined by population densities and cultivation patterns which distinguished it from farming systems in Africa and Asia. Boserup argued that the process of mechanisation of the agricultural sector in Latin America was driving women out of waged employment and into the subsistence sector, although this view was subsequently questioned by further research. Boserup's approach was pioneering in that it identified the importance of pre-existing social and productive relations (gender relations among them) in conditioning the outcomes of capitalistic development for women. However, this analysis was criticised for focusing on the more technically determined production relations, depending too heavily on formal statistical evidence, and passing over the importance of the relationship between production and reproduction (Deere and León, 1987; Benería and Sen, 1981).

Nevertheless, Boserup's work inspired a new field of research within development, known as Women in Development (WID) which sought to redress the inequalities between women and men. These inequalities were addressed in terms of increasing women's opportunities for economic development through educational and training programmes as a means of giving women formal equality with men and improving their status in society. As feminist critiques began to emerge within development thought during the 1970s, the WID approach was criticised for fostering negative stereotypical perceptions of Third World women as poor, backward, passive victims in need of education and modernisation, as well as for failing to address the fundamental nature of gender relations and gender ideology as systemic determinants of relations of gender inequality (Parpart and Marchand, 1995; Kabear, 1994).

This feminist scholarship began to focus on analysing gender as social construct rather than addressing women as a separate category to men. The series of international conferences which took place in the mid-1980s to mark the UN Decade for Women took up this focus as a means of understanding and addressing the problems facing women in the Third World,



incorporating scholarship from feminists from both the North and the South. The ensuing dialogue sought to move away from focusing on women as a separate category to men within the process of development towards the need to understand how gender relations are embedded into local social, political, economic and cultural relations of power (Parpart and Marchand, 1995; Nelson and Wright, 1995; Kabeer, 1994; Grant, 1993; Mohanty et al 1991; Brydon and Chant, 1989; Deere and León, 1987; Benería and Sen, 1981). In day to day experience, all activities which individuals undertake are carried out within a variety of heterogeneous relationships, through which power is simultaneously reproduced, negotiated and challenged in any given interaction or context. These power relations, whether they be relations of culture, class or ethnicity are often unequal and are expressed in terms of social norms, institutional processes and even personalised interactions. Gender relations cross-cut these, creating and reproducing differences in the position of women and men within these relations, 'interwoven into the broader set of social relations structuring the division of resources and responsibilities, claims and obligations between different social groups of women and men within any given society.' (Kabeer, 1994: 280). Within development thought, approaches which took account of gender and social relations became known as Gender and Development (GAD). The emphasis here was on seeking to find ways of transforming socially constructed gender ideology in order to increase women's power within these relations, rather than merely attempting to increase their opportunities without questioning the social context of development (Parpart and Marchand, 1995).

As an analytical perspective, the GAD approach is informed by feminist analyses of the system of male-dominated power relationships which seem to recur across cultures, often referred to as 'patriarchy' in the literature (Grant, 1993; Phillips, 1990; Daune-Richard, 1988; Mies, 1986; Sokoloff, 1980). Mies points out that 'patriarchy' literally means 'the rule of fathers', while the male-dominated gender ideologies of many different cultures often means, in fact, 'the rule of husbands, of male bosses, of ruling men in most societal institutions, in politics and economics...' (Mies, 1986: 37). Thus, patriarchy has come to be used to denote a system or structure of power in which power differentials between women and men are embedded and perpetuated.



The structure of patriarchal gender relations creates a gendered division of labour within the household from which appropriate gender roles are constructed. This division of labour is based on socially constructed stereotypes of 'feminine' and 'masculine', which create the cultural categories of 'women' and 'men'. The importance of women's biological role in reproduction forms the basis of their social identification with the caring and nurturing functions associated with this role. By further association, women are assigned to the 'private' sphere of the home and family as their appropriate arena of action, extending 'reproduction' to include the day to day maintenance of the family and the domestic environment. Social constructions of masculinity lead to the association of men with the world outside the home, as providers of food and shelter to ensure the survival of the family, with the 'public' sphere as their appropriate arena of action. Thus, gender ideology assigns different roles to men and women, with associated activities and tasks appropriate to the carrying out of each gender role (Grant, 1993; Phillips, 1990; Daune-Richard, 1988; Mies, 1986; Sokoloff, 1980).

While this gendered division of labour is often ideologically presented as equal, it does not result in a distribution of tasks between equals. Activities carried out in the 'public' sphere is often remunerated, perceived as productive, and as such socially valued, while unpaid work carried out in the 'private' sphere is viewed as unproductive and as such remains socially undervalued (Elson and Pearson, 1981). As domestic work is not remunerated, women's contribution in this arena is rendered invisible, a phenomenon which is reflected in the widespread under-representation of domestic work in national statistics (Benería, 1992). Patriarchal gender ideologies thus place a higher value on the 'productive' work that is perceived as 'men's', with a corresponding de-valuation of the 'reproductive' work perceived as 'women's' (Brydon and Chant, 1989; Benería and Sen, 1981: 293).

That these gender relations are socially constructed rather than 'natural' fact has been made clear by explorations of how gender relations have formed and re-formed during specific historic processes of state formation. Himmelweit (1995) argues that in the leading industrial economies, the latter half of the nineteenth century saw ideological and class struggles over the appropriate roles for men and women. Mies (1986) argues further that the state and the

bourgeoisie directly fostered the ideological notion of the nuclear family and the 'family wage' to allow men to earn enough so that wives could stay at home and take care of the children and the household. This was enforced through social legislation restricting the use of women's and children's labour in the factories (Mies, 1986). The notion of the 'family wage' encapsulated the ideological aspiration that 'earning money was men's work, while women had their own domestic duties' (Himmelweit, 1995: 7). These domestic duties were presented as 'natural', arising from women's innate desire to care for their families, thus ideologically justifying women's unpaid labour in the material reproduction of the male workforce which was vital to industrial expansion.

These patriarchal relations became enshrined in social and legal codes which perpetuated the subordinate position of women, often denying them effective control or ownership of land and property (Wilson, 1985). These measures reinforced the notion of the inferiority of women at an ideological and practical level, maintaining their position as unpaid domestic and reproductive labour within the household, whilst rendering their economic contribution invisible. Within agriculture, where women's household activities often provide goods and food for family consumption, the lack of recognition of women's role is reflected in the well-documented statistical underestimation of female labour in agriculture, both in paid and unpaid work, within traditional and modern sectors (Deere and León, 1987; Nash and Safa, 1986).

In practical terms, the division between productive and reproductive work is not as clear cut as is presented in traditional gender ideology. Feminist analysis has drawn attention to the need to examine the relation between women's 'productive' and 'reproductive' roles, bringing together both paid employment and household relations within their social and historical context in any analysis of the subordination of women (Daune-Richards, 1988; Sokoloff, 1980). It is the interaction of these social relations which shape gender relations within any given context.

In rural areas in many different countries, women have historically worked as unpaid family labour on their husband's farms, or else worked under their husband's contracts for a



landowner, providing essential extra labour at seasonal peaks (Wilson, 1985). In Latin American rural society in the last century, women also formed part of the poorest group of landless wage labourers outside the family farms and *haciendas*, forced to migrate to find remunerated work from season to season (Valdés, Rebolledo and Willson, 1995). The blurring of the boundaries between productive and reproductive work persists in more 'traditional' agricultural systems today. Where subsistence and commercial production originates from family farms or peasant holdings, women produce many of the goods consumed within the household and farm through activities considered to be part of their domestic work. Thus, women knit, sew and mend clothes, care for small livestock and cultivate the family plot, for the consumption of the family, as well as contributing to production for exchange through any surplus.

Many case studies have explored the effects of the development of capitalism in the agricultural sector and its complex impact on gender relations. Mechanisation, modernisation and the development of markets within agricultural production transform pre-existing social and productive relations, re-shaping the nature and workings of gender relations (Humphrey, 1987; Grant, 1993). This is reflected in case studies of historical and cultural change in the Third World, particularly affecting rural women (MacEwan-Scott, 1986: 23).

Young's (1978) study of the changes that took place in Oaxaca, Mexico explores some of these aspects. Young analyses the effects of far-reaching economic transformations in the region on social and productive relationships in two pre-capitalist communities. An examination of the economic changes and their effects on social and productive relations illuminates the changes in the gender division of labour and women's productive and reproductive work, their access to economic roles and the ways in which this has affected their status in the communities (Young, 1978: 132). Historically, the two communities had existed under pre-capitalist social relationships, with communal ownership of land and a kinship-based system of labour exchange. Women enjoyed a fairly high status, with important ritual roles in the community as healers and midwives, as well as a degree of autonomy as skilled weavers.



These community and productive relationships began to change in the first half of this century when the traditional cotton cloth weaving was substituted for coffee cultivation for the international market. This led to differentiation among the families within the community, with some gaining control of extensive landholdings, while coffee production became widespread among smaller farmers. After coffee prices declined in the mid-1950s, production moved towards commodity production for the domestic market, and the area became incorporated into the national economy. Young emphasises the class differences in the region which are important for the analysis of the changes in the gender division of labour in the region and the changes in 'women's work' (Young, 1978: 144).

Young describes an explicit gender division of labour as perceived by the members of the community under study:

Women do not work in the fields except at harvest or occasionally when their menfolk require a helping hand; they do not collect water and wood, carry out all household maintenance tasks, care for children and the old, tend the family livestock and prepare food for eating. Men, on the other hand, do work in the fields but do not collect water or wood unless their womenfolk cannot for some reason, do not maintain the household on a day-to-day basis, nor do they cook or wash clothes. (Young, 1978: 144).

This basic division of labour is conditioned by the different economic opportunities available to women as a result of economic changes. Young indicates that it is the women from the poorer group in the community who have succeeded in gaining some independence from their husbands. Access to employment opportunities, such as performing domestic tasks for the richer families or working as agricultural wage labourers with their husbands, enabled them to earn an important money wage. However, as many of these activities were considered 'women's work', they gain no social prestige or recognition from performing the low-paid, unskilled jobs available to them. This is in spite of the fact that their income is often essential to the survival of the family. Furthermore, their domestic and family responsibilities remain unchanged, so this slight independence is won at the cost of taking on a 'double day' (Young, 1978: 145-146).

Deere and León's (1981) comparative study of the gender division of labour in the Andes reinforces some of Young's conclusions. Three regions of the Andes with different levels of capitalist development were compared: García Rovira in Colombia as a region of 'non-capitalist relations', Cajamarca in Peru as a region of predominantly 'capitalist relations' and El Espinal in Colombia as a region of 'advanced capitalist relations of production' (Deere and León, 1981: 340). Their analysis aims to show how the gender division of labour in production and waged employment not only follows the pattern of women's subordinated position in agrarian society but reinforces it.

In the study regions that underwent rapid capitalist development, there was a decline in agriculture as a source of subsistence, accompanied by an expansion of a local wage labour market. This means that, as agriculture becomes less important for the male head of household, who may be involved in other wage-earning activities, the participation of women in agricultural field work has increased. Women work on the family farm as unpaid family labour as part of their domestic tasks, and some may work as wage labourers at certain times of the year. Agricultural fieldwork was formerly considered inappropriate for women, so this represents a change in the gender division of labour. This change, it is suggested, is an important effect of capitalist development (Deere and León, 1981: 354). However, both women and men tend to view the tasks carried out by women to be of less importance than those performed by men: women merely 'help out' in the field. So although the gender division of labour appears to have changed, it remains a division where women's work is undervalued.

Nevertheless, although women's access to economic, 'productive' roles appears to have increased, the opportunities for employment available to women, and the corresponding wages for these, reflect the subordinated position of women relative to men. The majority of women are employed in non-agricultural activities, particularly in occupations such as domestic service, cooks and laundry workers. In García Rovira, there was also temporary employment for women in the tobacco selection and packing plant. These types of jobs reflect the prevailing gender ideology: domestic service represents an extension of the domestic work women carry out at home, and the few jobs in the rural industries are the

tedious, repetitive, manual, 'inferior' tasks to which women are perceived to be suited. Furthermore, in all three regions, women's wages were significantly lower than men's.

Thus, both the above studies indicate that the gender division of labour and the gender hierarchy that it imposes have not disappeared as a consequence of the economic development of the region. Rather, gender relations have been re-created under the new system of capitalistic relations: although women are participating in the labour force, this participation is shaped by the pre-existing gender relations and the gender division of labour. Women's labour is less valued than that of men because of the primacy of their domestic role, and this in turn restricts the kind of work they can undertake, as well as the wages they can expect to be paid (Ruiz and Tiano, 1987: 7). Deere and León conclude that 'the subordinated position of women in production is not just derived from the characteristics of their employment; the development of capitalism takes advantage of and reproduces the continuing subordination of women' (Deere and León, 1981: 360).

These case studies illuminate how gender relations are socially-constructed expressions of power and as such, embedded within other social and economic relations. This focus, drawing upon the concepts proposed by the GAD movement, allows a deeper exploration of the complex effects of women's labour force participation on gender relations within the household. As the gender division of labour is presented here as an ideological division rather than unchanging biological fact, the possibility of transforming or at least re-working gender relations is opened up, addressing the potential for paid employment to increase women's power and control within these relations of power. However, while the GAD paradigm proposes at least a basis for transforming gender relations, it too has been criticised. Critiques have highlighted that GAD perpetuates many of the stereotypes associated with the WID perspective, as well as Northern assumptions about 'Third World' women's lived realities. It is also said to unquestioningly retain the notion that modernisation is equivalent to development, and fails to take into account the significance of women's differences and multiple identities (Parpart and Marchand, 1995).



Many of these critiques have come from Southern feminists concerned with the need to recognise the differences which exist between women from different cultures, countries and social contexts. This call to emphasise specificities rather than stereotypes has coincided with currents of postmodernist thought, sparking a complex debate within feminism. The main outlines of the feminism/postmodernism debate shall be briefly summarised in the next section, although a full discussion of postmodernism and the debate surrounding its value for feminist research is beyond the scope of this chapter. However, as some of the issues which emerge have informed the premises of this study, some of the main currents will be outlined.

## 1.2 Feminism/Postmodernism <sup>2</sup>

Some of the meeting points between feminism and postmodernism arise from postmodernist critiques rejecting universal and simplified explanations of social phenomena, which, it is argued, obscure the complexities of life, and the interactions of human relations, as lived experiences. This has certain implications for feminist research, given that constructions of 'woman' in European and North American feminist theory have not always avoided generalisations in the past (Grant, 1993; Mohanty et al, 1991). The conception of a 'universal' female experience, which formed one of the central planks of feminist thought for so long, was based on the experiences of white, middle-class Northern scholars, failing to take into account the ethnic, class, cultural and power differences which exist among women themselves, both within and across national boundaries (Grant, 1993; Mohanty et al, 1991). Increasingly open dialogue amongst feminists from South and North has brought new approaches to understanding the complexities of women's lived realities in different contexts (Parpart and Marchand, 1995 (a)).

This new scholarship has coincided with the postmodernist call for local, specific and historically informed studies, that incorporate the ways in which identities are constructed in specific contexts. Many authors argue that this approach is particularly relevant for research about 'Third World' women, which must take into account relations of ethnicity, class and

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<sup>2</sup> For a discussion of feminism/postmodernism, see Marchand and Parpart (1995), Grant (1993), Wolf (1992), Hartsock (1990) and Hekman (1990).

gender as they have been constructed in the particular historical and cultural context of a given country or region. As both feminist and postmodernist approaches recognise the limits of 'objective' knowledge claims, both create a space for voices which challenge the dominant discourse. In terms of feminist and gender research, this approach can offer an insight into the ways in which different women negotiate and re-work the gender, class and cultural relations which mediate their life experiences.

The postmodernist approach has limitations for feminist research and theory, as has been debated at length elsewhere (see Parpart and Marchand, 1995 and previous footnote). Not least among these are its failure to recognise the importance of the construction of systemic power relationships, such as patriarchy and capitalism, which also mediate individuals' lived realities. Moreover, extreme emphasis on difference can undermine any unifying relations between women from different groups, sweeping away possibilities for collective action.

Regardless of whether feminist scholars fully adopt the feminism/postmodernism position or not, the movement has nevertheless contributed to a more nuanced approach to feminist research, allowing the careful questioning of many of the assumptions about power relationships, as well as those which formed the basis of feminist thought. Thus, together with the notion of a 'universal woman's experience', the basic concept of patriarchy has also come under question.

Pollert (1996) highlights some of the ways in which unquestioning assumptions have been made around the concept of 'patriarchy'. She argues that it is often used simultaneously as both a description and an analysis of an ideological structure which perpetuates itself, and its relations of gender inequality, independently of other social and historical processes. This unquestioning usage, Pollert argues, not only fails to provide an analysis as such, but also obscures the agency of the actors involved in these processes. Women's active negotiations of patriarchal relations are rendered invisible, or else women themselves become constructed as passive 'victims' of oppressive patriarchal structures. Moreover, the use of 'patriarchy' to denote an unchanging, self-perpetuating structure removes all possibility for change, making

any political action redundant. As such, 'patriarchy' as and of itself becomes severely limited as an analytical tool (Pollert, 1996)

Both Pollert and Mies point out that patriarchal ideologies emerged in specific historical and geographical locations, and as such, 'patriarchy' does not exist as one, overarching, timeless system. Nevertheless, these ideologies still find expression within numerous cultural and social contexts (Mies, 1986). In view of this, it is more useful to refer to patriarchal relations in their specific local expression, for example as *machismo* in Latin America. This more localised approach returns one to the view that these cultural expressions of male-dominance are based on social constructions of gender, rather than unchanging biological differences between women and men. This view allows an analysis of the dynamic interplay of gender relations within social and historical processes and not independently of them. Pollert argues that this is a more useful conceptualisation, as women can become active participants in negotiating gender relations in each situational context, allowing for the possibility of changing or re-working them, rather than remaining the passive victims of an unchangeable structure of male-domination (Pollert, 1996).

This section has discussed some of the debates and concepts which have emerged within recent feminist scholarship. The discussion has centred on the ways in which gender relations interplay within social and economic power relationships to shape constructions of gender and gender roles in different contexts. Bearing these concepts in mind, the next section will discuss how gender relations and social and productive relations at the household level shape women's participation in paid employment, as well as how these relations are mediated when women become integrated into the wage labour force.

### **1.3 Gender relations and the household**

The household not only represents a unit of economic activity, but also a set of socially constructed relationships. These relationships help shape the freedom that individuals have in managing their own actions, 'enabling, constraining and differentiating its members' participation in the economy and society at large' (Kabeer, 1994: 283). This holds true



across geographical and cultural boundaries, although the actual form and degree of household and family influence varies. The dynamics of the relations between individuals within the household are mediated by social constructions of gender roles, a gender division of labour and generational hierarchies, and how these are interpreted by individuals. These relations are significant in shaping the extent of the control and allocation of household resources, as well as employment patterns of households. In turn these are shaped by the ideologies and cultural expectations of the local community, the occupational community and also the direct social relationships within which the household is located (Young, 1992). Women's participation in waged employment therefore, is conditioned at various levels by economic and political factors, influences operating the ideological level, such as patriarchal principles which order both household and employment relations (Daune-Richards, 1988; Sokoloff, 1980).

While avoiding the presentation of 'Third World' women as a homogenous and uniformly oppressed group, certain patterns of subordination can be identified and the household is frequently presented as the primary site where this subordination occurs (Bruce and Dwyer, 1988; Benería and Sen, 1981; Young, Wolkowitz and McCullagh, 1981; Sokoloff, 1980). Moreover, the literature indicates that a closer examination of the household shows that they are not monolithic units, with a single coping strategy based on virtues of generosity, pooling and sharing, but are rather cross-cut by generational, family and gender hierarchies (Young, 1992; Bruce and Dwyer, 1988; Benería and Roldán, 1987). These relations must also be negotiated by the individual members of the household, and the social construction of households therefore needs to be considered when examining the effects of female employment.

Women's incorporation into waged employment means that traditional, patriarchal gender relations within the household can often come into conflict with new realities. In Latin America, traditional patriarchal norms allocate the central control to the male head of household through the breadwinner role. When women take on paid employment, they become independent wage earners, often making a vital contribution to household income. This is likely to alter the dynamics of gender and power relations as women gain direct

control over their wage, potentially improving their bargaining position within the household, and also challenging the authority of the male head of the household. In addition, women retain the principal responsibility for carrying out the domestic chores within the household which represents a primary set of demands on their labour time (Kabeer, 1994). Their participation in waged work is likely to be conditioned by their ability to re-organise domestic responsibilities, actions which also confront traditional gender role expectations within the household.

It has been argued that a more egalitarian domestic division of labour can be brought about if women increase their control over the material resources of the household. However, studies have indicated that this argument is somewhat simplistic. It seems that a 'traditional' division of labour tends to persist within the home, relatively unaffected by wives' contributions to household income, forcing women to take on a 'double day' of paid work and domestic responsibilities (Wharton, 1994; Sánchez, 1993; Hochschild, 1989; Benería and Roldán, 1987; Sokoloff, 1980)

A comparative study of husbands' contributions to housework compared data from four South East and East Asia countries with data from a country in an advanced stage of industrial development, in this case, the United States (Sánchez, 1993). The results indicate that, across all the national contexts, there is no obvious relationship between women's material conditions or their participation in wage labour and husbands' regular participation in housework. However, the data from the farming sector showed that husbands from these couples were more likely to participate regularly in household chores. This suggests that, for rural households, housework may be a more direct part of the family economy, with the links between domestic work and economic survival more apparent to husbands (Sánchez, 1993: 445). The latter observation reinforces the conclusion that husbands' domestic labour was more likely to be affected by household composition and necessity than by women's material resources, which were not found to have an effect on equality in the gender division of labour.



Sánchez's study shows that not only does men's involvement in housework remain relatively unaffected by women's paid work commitments, but it also suggests that cultural perceptions of gender roles may be more important in determining the division of labour within households than economic conditions, particularly as the US was far from being the country with the highest proportion of men participating in domestic tasks. The results of this study underline that the determinants of the domestic division of labour are the cultural and ideological roots of gender relations. The importance of couples' gender ideologies and expectations regarding domestic work has been confirmed by other studies in the US (see Spade, 1994; Wharton, 1994.; Hochschild, 1989). Sánchez points out that this study did not measure the actual control women have over the households' material resources and the extent of their power over the decision-making process (Sánchez, 1993: 455). Thus, it remains to be seen whether women can gain some control and power through their contribution to the household income, and with it the possibility to renegotiate the gender relations within the family.

Benería and Roldán's (1987) study of women outworkers in Mexico indicate further that there is no automatic link between women's earning of an independent income and any renegotiation of gender relations within the household. Their study highlights how the extent of wives' control of their own income, and any corresponding increase in their power, is shaped by the budgeting and allocational process within households, and mediated further by the dynamics of individual couples' marriage relationships (Benería and Roldán, 1987). This highlights again the influence of ideologies and expectations of gender roles in conditioning any possible renegotiations of the gender division of labour within the household.

Given the predominance of patriarchal gender ideology in Latin America, it seems inevitable that women will take on a double day as they add new waged work responsibilities to their existing domestic ones. The tensions which working women must mediate are exacerbated by the *machista* ideology that legitimates husbands' significant control over their wives' activities. In some cases, a husband can prevent his wife from going out to work at all, which seems to impose an apparently inflexible division of labour in terms of domestic work, where the male breadwinner is exempted from domestic chores. In addition to the double day, the



problem of finding adequate childcare becomes an important consideration if there are young children. In this area, the ability to call on relatives for help, particularly with childcare, can be an advantage in alleviating the burden of the double day. Together with the composition of the household and life-cycle factors, these traditional gender relations shape women's participation in waged employment.

Chant's (1991) study on Mexican households provides insights into the gender role expectations which shape women's paid employment. Participation in the labour market appears to be greater among women from extended households than from nuclear households. This may be due to the presence of other female family members who can take on part of the burden of household chores and childcare responsibilities. In addition, if wives can show husbands that the housework will continue to be done and that the children will not suffer any neglect, then there are substantial grounds for obtaining their permission to take a job outside the home, and their negotiating position is strengthened (Chant, 1991: 152).

Moreover, Chant's study highlighted concerns beyond the practicalities of managing housework and childcare if women take on paid employment. Many men had anxieties that their wives might earn more than them and 'get ahead', while certain kinds of work that brought men and women together were perceived as threatening to wives' fidelity (Chant, 1991). These anxieties arise from the nature of gender relations in a *machista* culture, where men's power and authority derive from their control over women and their role as 'breadwinner'. If women gain economic independence, they have the potential to challenge the cultural power which their husbands hold over them, and perhaps increase control of their own lives.

The strains of carrying out a double day can be made worse by the anxieties women feel regarding their reduced capacity to care for children. In her study on the impact of structural adjustment policies on low-income women in a community in Guayaquil, Moser (1992) highlights the material effects of mothers being forced to take on waged employment. Younger children receive less attention than before, as, in the absence of adequate childcare, mothers may be forced to leave their children locked in the house, or in the care of elder

siblings. In addition, nutritional problems arise from the unfair division or poor preparation of food in the mother's absence, while truancy has increased in the community. Elder daughters forced to take on the responsibility for domestic chores and childcare at an early age suffer from less parental care and guidance. Moreover, they have less time for schoolwork, leading to their future disadvantage. Another concern for working mothers was their reduced ability to control teenage sons, for whom the temptations were strong to drop out of school, become involved in street-gangs (Moser, 1992: 111). As women tend to carry the burden of these multiple roles alone, anxiety over children can significantly affect stress levels and performance while at work, as once again the boundaries between productive and reproductive work become blurred.

It is apparent that ideological perceptions of gender roles, as well as how these are interpreted by both partners, constrain the extent of any changes in the household division of labour. In Latin America, *machista* gender ideologies mean that a wife must convince her husband that taking on paid employment will not disrupt the fulfilment of the household routine. The presence of, or the ability to call on help from, other female relatives may strengthen her negotiating position. In this situation, when it is down to women to reorganise their time and effort in order to win 'permission' from their husbands to work, it is hardly surprising that the male role within the family remains seemingly unchanged by wives' labour force participation. However, when women take on waged employment, there must necessarily be some alteration in the dynamics of gender relations within the household, not least through her increased economic power. It is the ways in which these tensions and contradictions are mediated by working women which may allow them some space for an active renegotiation of power relations. Moreover, moving out of their isolated role within the household into wider social relations may create new experiences which will also make themselves felt within individual negotiations in the household. The next section will explore how traditional gender relations come into conflict with new forms of social relations in the labour market, shaping the direction of women's experience of waged employment and the outcomes this may have for women themselves.



#### 1.4 Gender relations within the labour market

The discussion above has outlined the ways in which patriarchal gender relations interact with wider social relations at the household level to condition individuals' participation in the economy and society. Many analyses of female employment indicate that social constructions of gender shape women's participation in waged employment, through the ordering of labour markets into perceived 'male' and 'female' jobs and tasks (MacEwan Scott, 1994; Chant, 1991; Brydon and Chant, 1989; Humphrey, 1987). Within paid employment in different contexts, new and old forms of gender relations may co-exist, with often paradoxical and contradictory outcomes.

Feminist analyses of women and paid work have highlighted how prevailing gender relations work to gender-type occupations and tasks. Men and women make up two distinct workforces, with particular skills and characteristics associated with the gender stereotypes of male and female. As employers are likely to seek workers who will require minimum training, assumptions are often made between the qualities required for a particular job and the female or male skills perceived as 'innate' (Chant, 1991; Humphrey, 1987).

In terms of formal sector occupations, this can be seen in the concentration of women into particular types of activities, most notably those which fall into the service sector, such as commerce, restaurants and hotels and administration. In manufacturing and industry, women are concentrated in specific branches which are again associated with women's domestic role, for example, textile and garment manufacture and food processing (Chant, 1991; Humphrey, 1987).

The perceptions of different 'feminine' and 'masculine' skills are linked to the prevailing gender ideology. These are regarded as 'innate', making men and women suitable for different tasks. Typically, some of women's 'positive' characteristics in terms of employment include manual dexterity, patience, productivity and docility. Women also tend to accept lower wages, be flexible and co-operative in terms of changing work schedules, as





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relations are altered, often simultaneously transformed and reinforced. Thus, while traditional gender relations may, on one hand, be reinforced to maintain a supply of flexible, low-cost female labour, on the other, they must also be first modified in order to free women from their domestic role. This creates contradictions which need to be negotiated, whether it be within the household or the workplace. Although these negotiations may take place on an everyday basis, within households and families, this does not lessen their importance. As women negotiate with their husbands and re-organise their domestic schedules in order to go out to work, they are actively engaged in processes of change, opening spaces to re-work gender relations.

As paid employment means the direct receipt of a money income, this offers women the possibility of gaining at least a degree of financial independence from fathers and husbands. This in turn may enable women to gain a little more control over their own lives through this economic control. Some examples of this can be observed in case studies, for example, the importance of the daughter's wage to the family income has resulted in factory work becoming a way of escaping early arranged marriage in some Asian countries (Elson and Pearson, 1981). In addition, this financial autonomy has allowed daughters greater freedom to break with traditional norms and find a partner of their own choice. In Mexico, some of the young women working in the strawberry packing plants and the *maquiladoras* also appeared to have gained more say in the decision over whom they marry (Young, 1987; Arizpe and Aranda, 1981).

Studies which focus on these more complex nuances move away from perceiving women as 'victims' of patriarchal and capitalist structures and allow us to see the ways in which women actively negotiate the contradictory opportunities that emerge in processes of economic and social transformation. Thus, women's perceptions of themselves as workers, together with the paid work they do have a central place in this scholarship. For example, in Aranda and Arizpe's study (1981), most of the women preferred working in the packing plants rather than in domestic service, the only alternative employment. This was because they could continue to live in their own houses in the village and not be subject to the whims of their employer. Furthermore, for many of these women, their wages had increased on moving to the packing

plant and many stated that they could earn more working at speed in the plant than they could working in a shop or an office. Although the bad working conditions in the plants persist and many women consider the work to be tiring and exploitative, they prefer it to being shut up in their houses doing domestic chores. At the very least, work in the packing plants provides a widening of horizons, company and an income. Work in the plants also has an effect on the young women's aspirations, as some of them have become eager to study and improve their prospects.

This highlights the possibilities of expanding women's perceptions of their gender role beyond the immediate home and family. From their own experiences of family and social life, women form an awareness of the gender relations governing men and women and the inequalities that arise from this. In the workplace, men and women are brought together and incorporated into yet another set of unequal power and gender relations, that of female workers and male bosses. This allows for the potential collectivisation of individual women's experiences, leading in turn to an awareness of the wider patriarchal relations which are behind many women's 'personal' and 'individual' difficulties.

Moreover, as the women in Arizpe and Aranda's study mentioned, incorporation into the labour force obliges them to leave the sphere of the home, moving them away from the 'isolated and atomised' housewife role mentioned by Mies (1986). The harsh, demanding production disciplines, low wages and unacceptable working conditions which they all experience collectively as workers can form a concrete base for organisation within the workplace (Elson and Pearson, 1981; Young, 1987; Vogel, 1995).

It is also important for researchers to avoid imposing pre-conceptions of power and empowerment. Lawson (1995) presents a more positive view of the impact of restructuring on women outworkers than other scholars by focusing on women's own perceptions. Her study explores the ways in which economic re-structuring in Ecuador has affected gender divisions of household labour. The central focus is on the ways in which women negotiate the competing pressures to increase their income-generating activities in the face of declining



household incomes, while taking on a greater burden of welfare responsibilities from which the state has withdrawn (Lawson, 1995: 11).

Economic restructuring in Ecuador during the 1980s led many industries, particularly the garment manufacturing industry, to reorganise production and incorporate outworking. Women have resolved some of the economic tensions by taking on unregulated employment as outworkers, enabling them to earn an income within the home while carrying out domestic responsibilities. As has been argued elsewhere, industrial restructuring has taken advantage of existing 'social relations of family and gender division of domestic work [which] define women's access for wage-earning work and so present industry with a domestic workforce.' (Lawson, 1995: 24).

Through an exploration of in-depth interviews with women outworkers, the study exposes some of the contradictory implications of these women's wage-earning work. The interviews show that increasing their paid work activities does not necessarily have a subordinating or oppressive effect on the women. Lawson argues that women's increased access to incomes can have an impact on the gender division of labour within households, as women seek to combine paid work activities with their household responsibilities. Through this, they increase their access to economic resources and control over the household budget, without compromising their domestic responsibilities too far. The importance of the income generated by the women's home-working means that, at times when the pressure of work is great, husbands may take on part of the household chores (Lawson 1995: 27). Their success in combining their roles as income-earners and wives and mothers leads to a re-shaping of these women's gender identities at a household level, while household divisions of labour become subtly altered (Lawson 1995). While Lawson notes that this is not a radical restructuring of gender roles, these women are nevertheless 'engaged in taking power, identifying their autonomy and even re-defining *machismo*' (Lawson 1995: 27).

The literature discussed in this chapter has drawn attention to the contradictory effects of women's participation in the labour market. The case studies show that despite the constraints imposed on the women workers by the conditions of their incorporation, there

exists the potential for women's empowerment, or at least for the enlargement of the traditional female gender role. However, the question of how to measure empowerment remains. GAD scholarship has identified empowerment as taking place through changing gender relations within household divisions of labour, within resource control and allocation and gender relations within the workplace. These might be viewed as 'outward' representations of empowerment, while other authors argue for more nuanced approaches which allow day-to-day negotiations of power relationships to illuminate the processes through which women exercise and take power. In order to examine the extent to which this potential is realised, it is necessary to move beyond representations of women as universally subordinated, focusing on women's own perceptions and interpretations of these everyday processes. The case studies discussed in this chapter show that changes do take place and while these may not be dramatic or radical, they nevertheless indicate re-workings of gender relations and identities. Both GAD and feminist/postmodernist scholarship has informed the approach taken in this thesis, which focuses on working women's own perceptions and interpretations in order to illuminate how the incorporation of women into labour force in Chile has had subtle, yet at times dramatic, effects in terms of gender relations, and women's empowerment. The next chapter traces specifically the processes which have led to the incorporation of women into the Chilean labour market, reviewing the contradictory impacts of the economic restructuring of the last three decades on gender relations.

## **CHAPTER TWO: Women in Chile**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This study of women's labour force participation in Chile is set in the context of the far-reaching economic transformations that have occurred over the last two decades. These economic changes are the result of the free-market, open economy policies which were first implemented under the military regime in the 1970s and 1980s. The free-market model has been extremely successful in Chile through the 1990s. Economic growth indicators point to an increase in GDP of 33.5 per cent in real terms between 1991 and 1995. Much of this growth is based on the expansion of international trade, through diversification into non-traditional exports. Between 1990 and 1995, total exports expanded by 91 per cent with products ranging from foods, drinks, textiles and garments, to machinery and electronic equipment. Imports also increased during this period, by 109 per cent. Imports of consumer goods in particular increased by 258 per cent to reach about 17 per cent of total imports by 1995. Thus, by 1995, external trade amounted to 47 per cent of GDP.

In terms of employment, fast GDP growth rates had the effect of increasing employment by 232,000 in 1993, with an unemployment rate of 5 per cent, which, in terms of the characteristics of the Chilean labour force, amounted to 'full employment' in this year (Hojman, 1995; EIU, 1993). This has been accompanied by substantial increases in real wages as skilled labour became scarcer. The value of real wages rose by 9.9 per cent between 1987 and 1990, accelerating between 1990 and 1993, to reach a real growth rate of 13.5 per cent.

Macro-economic forecasters expect these trends to continue and expand. GDP is forecast to grow at a rate of 5.8 per cent in 1997, reaching 8.0 per cent in 1999 (Business Monitor International, *Chile Annual*, 1997). Exports are expected to increase during this same period by 28 per cent to reach a value of US\$ 20.4 bn in 1999. Similarly, the value of imports is forecast to increase 34 per cent, reaching a total value of US\$ 22.1 bn by 1999. Employment is also expected to continue growing by 125, 000 in 1997, dropping slightly to 87, 000 in



1997, with increases in the real hourly wage. Unemployment rates of 5.4 per cent are expected for 1997.

These indicators show that the Chilean economy has been highly successful through the late 1980s and will continue to be so through the 1990s. This success is based on dramatic structural changes which have come about through the implementation of neo-liberal policies. However, these economic transformations have had complex and contradictory effects on women. As we have seen in the previous chapter, women's labour force participation is conditioned and shaped by gender relations and cultural perceptions of gender roles. The influence of these factors serve to gender-type occupations, which determine the nature of the employment opportunities which have become available to women through the structural transformations of the Chilean economy.

There has been an expansion in the demand for female labour in those specific sectors of the economy which concentrate occupations gender-typed as 'female'. At the same time, new employment opportunities for women have emerged, particularly in those sectors which underwent rapid expansion, namely agriculture and the financial services sector. However, many of these 'female' occupations, particularly in commerce and export agriculture, are seasonal and temporary, which has important implications for the quality of women's employment.

The projections for future trends outlined above raise important questions in terms of the impact of women's paid work on gender relations within the household, the workplace and society. There is a potential for a real change in perceptions of gender roles, as traditional gender role expectations are modified to accommodate women moving out of the home into paid employment. In order to examine the nature of Chilean women's incorporation into the labour market, the first section of this chapter will briefly outline the way in which traditional gender role ideology in Chile is expressed, based on patriarchal relations which incorporate the masculine ideology of *machismo* and its feminine counterpart *marianismo*. These traditional gender attitudes have historically shaped women's roles within economic, political

and social changes, while, at the same time, these changes have altered the nature of the gender relations themselves in highly significant ways.

The following section is a review of the economic and political changes that have taken place since the 1960s through to the 1990s, together with the contradictory impacts on women and gender relations. The modernising governments of the 1960s failed to bring about lasting changes in gender relations through their reform programmes, while, paradoxically, the periods of crisis that resulted from the military coup in 1973, and the subsequent implementation of the free market model, had the effect of pushing women into the labour market to compensate for falling incomes.

These effects will be traced in the third section, together with the evolution of the female labour force in relation to demographic characteristics, educational levels and the rates of female participation in different sectors of the economy. The qualitative aspects of this participation will be drawn out, in terms of the types of employment opportunities available to women, working conditions and wages, stability of employment, as well as the labour legislation protecting women workers.

The next section will focus in more detail on the activities that concentrate female employment. Export agriculture represents an example of new activities which have been 'feminised', resulting in the expansion of demand for specifically female labour. The employment opportunities for women in these sectors illustrate the ways in which perceptions of gender result in occupational differences, as was discussed in a wider context in the preceding chapter. The rates of female participation in these sectors will be examined, together with the quality of the occupations available to women.

The final section will draw together the social and cultural implications of women's labour force participation in Chile. The question of whether increased paid employment results in empowerment for women, the impact on gender relations within the household and wider changes in attitudes will also be discussed.



## 2.2 Cultural perceptions of women

The incorporation of women into paid employment in Chile cannot be discussed without taking into account the cultural context that influences gender relations. In Chile, gender ideology is characterised by traditional norms which are based on patriarchal relations. These norms are often termed *machismo* in Latin American countries. *Machismo* refers to the ideology of men's dominance over women, expressed both within the family and wider social relations (Gissi, 1976). *Machismo* forms the basis for an idealised masculine identity which incorporates stereotypical notions of physical strength, aggression and the sexual domination of women. Inherent in this ideology is the notion that masculine traits are superior to feminine ones.

The roots of this ideology remain obscure, although Gissi points to the ancient Roman patriarchal law of *patria potestad*, which gave the father authority and rights over the members of his family and slaves (Gissi, 1976: 34). Furthermore, Gissi highlights the influence of the Church in transmitting patriarchal ideology, ranging from biblical sources which make explicit references to women's inferiority to men, to papal encyclicals in this century which continue to reinforce patriarchal ideologies (Gissi, 1976: 38). Moreover, husbands' control over their wives and their assets remained enshrined in Chilean civil codes until 1989 (Valenzuela, 1991).

In his study, Gissi examines the persistence of *machista* attitudes amongst both men and women in Chile, across class and educational levels. Although attitudes towards gender have changed somewhat since the 1970s, Gissi found respondents referring openly to the inferiority of women, as being physically and psychologically incapable of performing many of the functions that men do (Gissi, 1976: 36). This coincides with the results of a study on attitudes carried out by Mattelart and Mattelart (1970; 1968). The authors found that even amongst university students, *machismo* was the dominant gender ideology amongst men and women of all classes as recently as the 1970s, leading many respondents to reject the notion of equality between the sexes (Mattelart and Mattelart, 1970).



Other authors identify a feminine counterpart to *machismo*, which forms the basis for an idealised feminine identity. This is known as *marianismo*, based around the cult of the Virgin Mary as a representation of feminine qualities. Montecino (1990) traces the development of *marianismo*, from its origins in the time of the conquest to contemporary feminine identities. Montecino argues that the Chilean culture, similar to that of the rest of Latin America, has its roots in the meshing of the conquering Spanish culture and indigenous cultures. A significant point of connection between the two cultures is the notion of 'mother earth', representing the indigenous feminine deities, and the symbol of the Christian Virgin Mary. The two cultural notions become expressed in a single symbol, which occupies an important place in the *mestizo* culture. This is evidenced across the continent by the veneration of the Virgin of Guadeloupe in Mexico, the Copacabana virgin in Peru and Bolivia and the Carmen and Tirana virgins in Chile, all of which correspond to indigenous female deities (Montecino, 1990: 285; Montecino et al, 1988).

This powerful symbol is further strengthened by a maternal dimension that arises from social and historical relations. Montecino argues that as numerous indigenous mothers were forced to single-handedly raise their illegitimate children fathered by Spanish men, the lone mother became an important cultural icon. In cultural terms, this unites the symbol of 'mother earth' with the real mother as a figure who creates, shelters, heals, loves and nurtures all her children in the absence of a father (Montecino, 1990: 288).

In her study of thirty life-histories of middle class Chilean women, Montecino highlights the presence of many of these cultural traits within the women's self-identity. Professional women interpret their responsibilities in the workplace in terms of the responsibilities of motherhood, for example, being 'the mother of so many children' (Montecino, 1990: 289). The symbol of motherhood also incorporates a striving for an ideal of perfection, linked as it is to the perfect Virgin-Mother figure, resulting in a pressure for these women to successfully assume multiple roles within the workplace, the family, and the marriage relationship. However, assuming all the responsibilities leaves no space for the husband and father in the family and domestic sphere, perpetuating the male figure's absence from family responsibilities.

Montecino concludes that living up to this role of super-mother is an essential part of the Chilean feminine identity. However, this cultural symbol has very real, physical effects on women, as they live under constant pressure to meet the demands of paid work roles, as well as these important maternal roles. The Mattelarts, in their 1968 study, identify this tension as 'traditional-modern', a tension which other authors argue persists into the 1990s (Guzmán, 1992; Mattelart, 1986). Chilean women, like women in many other cultures, live out these tensions in attempting to be 'super-women', juggling 'modern' employment with 'traditional' wife and mother, conflicting roles which are reinforced through the media (Guzmán, 1992; Mattelart, 1986). The strain of living out this tension between modern and traditional is a recurring theme in the views of the women expressed in chapter five of this thesis.

These two traditional cultural models of feminine and masculine identities shape gender ideology, influence gender relations at all levels through the periods of economic transformation under discussion. While extensive modernisation began to take place in the 1960s, *machismo* remained a strong ideology, influencing the attitudes of the successive governments and state policy to the 'women question'. The position of the male head of household remained enshrined in legal codes and state institutions, while perceptions of women remained firmly rooted in the terms of women's traditional roles as mothers and housewives.

### **2.2.1 Women and the State 1964-1973**

Traditional, *machista* gender relations shaped Chilean rural society prior to the agrarian reform of the 1960s. In terms of the productive roles held by women in the countryside, feminist scholarship has established that women made an important contribution to peasant agricultural production, held productive posts within the *hacienda*, as well as working as seasonal wage labourers (Valdés, Rebolledo and Willson, 1995; Valdés, 1992; Valdés, 1988). However, a woman's role as a permanent resident worker was dependent on her husband's position as the head of the household. In this way, women's contribution to the labour of the estate was rendered all but invisible, while the prevailing gender ideology made



it legally impossible for them to own land in their own right. This discrimination persisted into the agrarian reform period, when land was allocated only to heads of households and permanent workers, who were, in the majority, men (Venegas, 1995; Hojman, 1993; Bradshaw, 1990; Valdés, 1988).

Nevertheless, the Christian Democrats did have specific policies aimed at mobilising women, as well as those sectors of the population which had been excluded from the political process. Within this programme of popular participation, women were incorporated through the creation of neighbourhood associations and the *Centros de Madres* (CEMAs) (Lechner and Levy, 1984). The aims of these policies are summed up in the government's slogan '*A cada mujer chilena una máquina de coser*' ('A sewing machine for every Chilean woman'; Bradshaw, 1990). The slogan illustrates the government's perceptions of women in their traditional roles as housewives and mothers. To reinforce this ideology, the activities of the CEMAs revolved around training in handicrafts and other skills which were oriented towards the care of the family and the maintenance of the home. This perception of women was based on the stereotype of the urban housewife, as opposed to the reality of the peasant women, who were engaged in productive activities on the family plot or even working as seasonal wage labour, as well as carrying out their domestic roles (Valdés, 1992; Campaña, 1985; Campaña and Lago, 1982; Lago and Olavarria, 1981).

As women were excluded from participating in the *asentamientos* (agrarian reform communities), they remained largely marginalised from the direct benefits of agrarian reform. The Allende government made some attempt to rectify this situation, realising the importance of gaining women's electoral support and incorporating them into the 'peaceful road to socialism' (Boyle, 1991). Participation in the *Centros de Reforma Agraria* (CERAs), which were created under the Popular Unity government, was thrown open to all single labourers, both men and women, and to temporary and day workers, on equal terms as heads of households. However, in practise, traditional stereotypes regarding women's roles persisted and women's participation was encouraged only through 'female' activities, principally the Welfare Committees (Hojman, 1993; Bradshaw, 1991; Garret, 1982). Nevertheless, women



did have the right to a voice in the general assembly, although even this limited participation was widely criticised (Garret, 1982).

While the Popular Unity identified women as supporters of the class struggle, there was no attempt to address their specific needs as a social group. Feminism was viewed as a *petit bourgeois* ideology, and gender subordination was perceived as a dimension of class oppression under capitalism (Garret, 1982). In this view, gender subordination would disappear once the socialist society had been realised. However, despite a discourse of equality, the rhetoric exhorted women to help the men of the revolution in their traditional supportive roles as wives, mothers, lovers and companions (Boyle, 1991).

Female voting patterns in Chile had indicated that women tended towards conservative political attitudes. Allende had attempted to mobilise women in support of the Popular Unity coalition, and while this may have been successful amongst women of the working class, there was a marked backlash on the part of the women from upper and middle class sectors. These women became organised in a right-wing movement across party-lines known as *Poder Femenino*. The first successful protest was the 'March of the Empty Pots', ostensibly to protest the food shortages in 1971. In reality, this protest represented a much deeper mobilisation of the opposition groups and parties, in defence of the status quo of a social order that the Popular Unity government threatened to overturn. This mobilisation of women, around a discourse of the defence of morality and the family, played a crucial role in the downfall of the government (Boyle, 1991; Mattelart, 1976).

With the advent of the military government, the mobilisation of women around their traditional roles became central to the new conservative social doctrine. However, as will become clear in the next section, there was a fundamental contradiction between this doctrine and the impact of the military's economic policy on women.

### **2.2.2 Economic transformation from 1973 and the changing roles of women**

The Allende government was brought to a violent end by the military intervention of 11 September 1973. Although the military had previously intervened in the political process, this intervention represented a dramatic break with Chilean political tradition. The new regime embarked on extensive repression and a plan of total restructuring of the Chilean state and society (Remmer, 1989). The military regime closed down the avenues of legitimate political participation with the closure of Congress, while the military junta assumed the administrative and legislative functions of the state. In search of a coherent economic programme which would deliver the political aims of demobilising the working class sectors, as well as ensuring the legitimacy and permanence of the military regime, the military government embraced the neo-liberal policies offered by the right-wing technocrats, the so-called 'Chicago Boys' (Pollack, 1995; Waylen, 1992; Chuchkryk, 1989). This resulted in the implementation of free-market, open economy policies. The functions of the state were cut back, there was a drastic reduction in public expenditure, and privatisation became the tool for establishing market forces as the central allocating mechanism. A counter-reform in the countryside returned much of the expropriated land to its former owners, while other land was sold to private owners. Subsidies and price controls were removed, while state enterprises were privatised (Vogel, 1995; Waylen, 1992; Chuchkryk, 1989). As a result, unemployment rose and wage levels fell, leading to widespread poverty amongst low income sectors. The reduction of welfare services exacerbated the effects of the 'shock' on households and individuals.

After a short boom in the late 1970s, the economy underwent a period of financial crisis in the early 1980s, due to both international and domestic factors, and entered into deep recession. The currency was overvalued, resulting in an increase of imported consumer goods, which had devastating effects on domestic manufacturing, while reducing the volume of manufactured exports. This was coupled with the collapse of the new banks and financial enterprises, which had arisen through the privatisation process, as a result of lax regulation of the financial sector. This prompted government intervention and the take-over of many economic assets.



Unemployment reached a high of 31.4 per cent in 1983, affecting principally men from the industrial manufacturing sector (Waylen, 1992). This deepened the poverty of the low income sectors, particularly as the welfare system had been largely dismantled. As a consequence, significant numbers of women were prompted to enter the labour market as a strategy to compensate for falling household incomes, many of them looking for work for the first time (Vogel, 1995; Waylen, 1992; Valenzuela, 1991; Chuchryk, 1989).

In political terms, Pinochet's military government actively sought to both maintain and control the mobilised groups of middle and upper class women, employing a discourse which was traditional in the extreme. There was constant reference to the role that women had played in the downfall of Allende, elevating women's role to the level of saviours of the nation. In his speeches, Pinochet evoked the 'innate' feminine senses of morality, of spirituality, of dedication and selflessness, expressed in terms of motherhood and the image of the loyal wife. In this sense, he sought to link mothers with soldiers, as defenders and transmitters of higher values, morally above the dirty-dealing that was politics (Waylen, 1992; Boyle, 1991; Valenzuela, 1991).

In keeping with the ostensibly apolitical project of the regime, there were unsuccessful attempts to demobilise women. Instead, the state sought to control the organised women through re-structuring the CEMAs, which became known as CEMA-Chile, and organising volunteer groups of middle and upper-class women. These organisations were hierarchically controlled, with Pinochet's wife, Lucia Hiriart, as the head of the National Secretariat of Women. CEMA-Chile provided the means through which to transmit the military's doctrine to women, while providing its members and their families from poorer sectors, with the health care, education, training and welfare provision which the state no longer provided. In many cases, these benefits were enough to prompt women to join whether they agreed with the regime or not. Even at the end of the dictatorship in 1989, CEMA-Chile could boast 200,000 members in 9,814 centres nation-wide (Waylen, 1992; Boyle, 1991; Valenzuela, 1991; Valdés and Weinstein, 1989).



This discourse was at odds with the reality of the economic crisis. During the early 1980s, male unemployment had become a long-term situation, with men's paid employment declining by 10.9 per cent over the 1980-82 period (Waylen, 1992: 161). Although the rhetoric of the military regime encouraged women's traditional roles within the home and family, women began to seek paid work in an attempt to compensate for falling family incomes. The female workforce grew by 4.5 per cent between 1970 and 1985, with a high increase in the numbers of women seeking work for the first time (Waylen, 1992: 161; Valenzuela, 1991: 168). The depth of the crisis meant that women were willing to take any paid employment that was available, notably domestic service. Approximately 25 per cent of the women in paid work at this time were in domestic service (Chuchkryk, 1989: 153).

Another factor behind this rapid incorporation of women into the labour market was the implementation of a new labour code in 1979. The *Plan Laboral* aimed to deregulate the labour market, in line with the neo-liberal model, increasing 'flexible' employment. Under the code, the power of trades unions and the right to collective negotiation were severely curtailed. This was largely to the benefit of employers and entrepreneurs, who faced reduced labour costs as a result. The situation of workers deteriorated as other labour guarantees were cut back under the code, such as those covering hours of work, job security and the minimum wage. The creation of these highly flexible labour relations contributed to increased levels of informalisation in the labour market, facilitating the incorporation of women into unregulated employment in domestic service for example, as can be seen from the figures above. At the same time, the new conditions prompted the employment of women into those sectors of the economy which were beginning to benefit from free market policies, such as export agriculture and the services sector. Within these sectors, there emerged an increasing demand for labour which was flexible and cheap, with an increasing shift towards seasonal and temporary work, marked features of 'flexible' employment (Barrientos, 1996). This process parallels those witnessed in other developing countries undergoing economic restructuring, examined in the preceding chapter. Under these conditions, women meet the demands for flexible and low-cost labour, becoming in this way the preferred workforce.

With increasing numbers of women becoming wage-earners, this reversal of gender roles had considerable effects on households. The proportion of female heads of households within the workforce increased by 4 per cent between 1970 and 1972 (Valenzuela, 1991). This increase points to various factors such as the migration of male partners seeking work further afield, but more importantly, to the conflicts created within relationships as women became the principal breadwinners, and male partners failed to adjust (Valenzuela, 1991; Chuchkryk, 1989; Boyle, 1987). Thus, the discourse of the military, centred as it was on traditional gender roles and the defence of the family, was in direct opposition to the reality forced on women, men and households by the very policies which the government had implemented.

Another important development during this period was the emergence of popular organisations initiated by women from low-income sectors. These were a collective response to the crisis, aimed at meeting some of the basic needs of the family. They became known as *Organizaciones Económicas Populares* (OEPs), an umbrella term which covered a whole range of groups and activities. These activities included all-women knitting and embroidery groups aimed at income-generation, neighbourhood soup kitchens, collective shopping and primary health care groups. As well as fulfilling economic needs, these all-female OEPs provided women with a whole new experience of communal organisation and activity which led to the emergence of a gender and political consciousness. This grass-roots mobilisation broke with the pattern of the state-propelled attempts to organise women around their traditional female role. This was reflected in the emergence of discussion groups around a whole range of gender issues, resulting in the questioning of the dominant gender ideology (Vogel, 1995; Waylen, 1995; Waylen, 1992; Valenzuela, 1991; Chuchkryk, 1989; Molina, 1989; Valdés and Weinstein, 1989; Serrano, 1987).

These diverse collectives formed the basis for an autonomous women's movement which later incorporated middle-class feminists. Towards the end of the 1980s, the various organisations became grouped under the *Concertación Nacional de Mujeres por la Democracia*, a highly important part of the opposition movement. The *Concertación* brought gender-based issues and demands into the movement for democracy, as a grass-roots and autonomous social movement of women, incorporating women into the political process in a



way which had not been witnessed before in Chilean society. The aims of the *Concertación de Mujeres* were two-fold and succinctly expressed in the slogan: '*Democracia en el país y en la casa*' ('Democracy in the country and in the home') (Matear, 1995; Boyle, 1991; Valenzuela, 1991; Molina, 1989; Kirkwood, 1986; Mesa, 1986; Molina, 1986).

Dishearteningly, much of the momentum of this social movement of women became lost with the re-establishment of the formal avenues of political participation after the transition to civilian government. However, this movement was vital in provoking public debate and the questioning of accepted gender norms. As this debate goes hand in hand with the increasing incorporation of women into the labour market and all other areas of public life, the social bases for questioning accepted gender ideology, and bringing about lasting change in attitudes regarding women's roles, had been established.

### **2.3 Participation of women in the labour market**

It was after the period of crisis in 1982-83 that the Chilean economy began to reap the successes of the free market model. Following reasonably high growth rates for several years, GDP grew by 7 per cent in 1988 (EIU, 1993), and growth rates have remained consistently high through the 1990s. External debt service ratio fell to below 30 per cent, aided by debt-for-equity swap schemes. The external debt reduction was made possible by the huge expansion in the volume of exports, which increased by 32 per cent in this same year. Adherence to the principles of comparative advantage have led to a dramatic increase in the volume of non-traditional exports, reducing the dependence on exports of copper (Waylen, 1992).

Agriculture accounted for much of this expansion, with fruit providing the basis for export-led growth. Between 1982 and 1994, fruit exports expanded by 258 per cent, as a result of investment in infrastructure and technology, as well as the more favourable exchange rate policy after 1982 (Barrientos, 1997). The vital importance of women's labour for the success of the agro-export sector will be discussed in detail in later sections, while the following



section will examine the rates of female participation in the labour force under these changing economic conditions.

### **2.3.1 Evolution of the female labour force in Chile**

The increasing participation of women in the Chilean labour force over the last three decades has been well-documented (Waylen, 1992; Valenzuela, 1991; Bradshaw, 1990; Chuchkryk, 1989; Muñoz, 1988; Valdés, 1988; Lago, 1987). The factors which affect the evolution of employment and unemployment are the rate of growth in the economically active population (EAP), the rate of participation in the labour force, and the demand for labour by firms.

Chilean official statistics define the EAP as the total population over the age of fifteen, so changes in the EAP depend solely on demographic factors. The participation rate is defined as the outcome of dividing the number of all those in the labour force, either employed or unemployed, by the EAP. Therefore, the participation rate is affected by economic variables, such as increases in the demand for labour, household decisions and wage levels. Through the early 1990s, the participation rate has fluctuated between 54 per cent and 56 per cent (Business Monitor International, *Chile Anual 1997*).

In terms of female participation rates, these tend to be under-registered due to the numbers of women involved in informal activities, in both urban and rural areas (Valdés and Hola, 1988). Moreover, in rural areas, the temporary and seasonal nature of many women's occupations means that this type of employment is also under-represented, particularly in census data. Nevertheless, regular employment surveys indicate that there have been significant increases in the figures of women participating in the labour market. Between 1976 and 1990, the EAP has increased from 3, 170, 500 to 4, 728, 400. The female population of working age rose proportionally faster than the male, in this period to make up 31.0 per cent of the EAP.

The growth in the participation rates of women in the labour market are not only attributable to population increases. In terms of participation rates, women represented 25.2 per cent of the labour force in 1976, increasing to 31.8 per cent by 1990 (Valdés et al, 1992: 39-40).

There has been a substantial increase in the demand for specifically female labour, with 259,

420 new female jobs created between 1989 and 1993, representing an increase of 19.2 per cent, in contrast to a 9.8 per cent increase in male occupations (Henríquez and Reca, 1994: 145). The continuing demand for flexible female labour within the economy is reflected in the growth of the female participation rate, which reached 34.9 per cent in 1993 (Henríquez and Reca, 1994: 145).

In terms of unemployment, the female labour force shows proportionally higher rates than the male over time. Table 2.1 shows the relative rates of male and female unemployment between 1987 and 1992.

**Table 2.1 Male and female unemployment rates 1987-1992, Oct - Dec, percentages**

Year	Female	Male
1987	9.3	7.3
1988	7.8	5.6
1989	6.1	5.0
1990	5.7	5.7
1991	5.8	5.1
1992	5.6	4.1

Source: Gálvez et al, 1994, from INE, Encuesta Nacional de Empleo, 1987-1992

Both rates of unemployment are decreasing, due to the expansion of the economy in the period under discussion. Authors attribute the persistence of a higher rate of unemployment amongst women to the fact that more women are entering the labour market seeking work for the first time, and thus are more likely to declare themselves unemployed rather than inactive (Valdés et al, 1992). It seems that the growth of the economy has provided more attractive employment opportunities for women, while rising wages are likely to make paid work an option for those women who have, up to now, remained in the home (Henríquez and Reca, 1994). Moreover, studies point to a degree of underemployment amongst women, reflected in a desire to work more hours (Gálvez et al, 1994; Valdés et al, 1992). In keeping with this, a study of the female labour supply in Santiago (Muchnik et al, 1991) estimates that for a



given wage increase, 27 per cent of the expected increase in female labour supply would come from an increase in the hours worked by women already present in the labour force, while the remaining 73 per cent would be accounted for by the entry of currently non-working women into the labour market.

Thus, it seems that the successful implementation of neo-liberal policies has resulted in a continuous incorporation of women into the labour market as the economy grows. However, it is important to examine in greater detail the ways in which women are incorporated in terms of age and educational levels, as well as the types of activities they are undertaking, wage levels and conditions. The next section will examine the qualitative changes that have taken place in women's labour force participation in Chile.

### **2.3.2 Age, education and rates of female participation**

Prior to 1970, labour force participation rates were highest amongst single women aged 25 or less. This situation has undergone considerable change, with participation amongst the age group 14 - 19 falling from around 20 - 30 per cent to 12 per cent. This has been accompanied by an increase in participation amongst women aged 25 - 44, from 14 per cent in 1957 to 54 per cent in 1987 (Hojman, 1993: 93). This age group now concentrates the highest rates of female participation, with an average rate of participation of 44.5 per cent (Gálvez et al, 1994: 45). This means that increasing numbers of married women of child-bearing age are participating in the labour market (Szasz, 1995).

There has also been an improvement in the educational level of the female labour force. Women's access to education in Chile has been relatively good since the 1960s. In higher education, for example, women formed 45 per cent of the student body at the Universidad de Chile by 1962. They were represented across all the degree courses, although in varying concentrations (Mattelart, 1968). Although women had lower rates of schooling relative to men in 1957, with the average schooling for women at 5.6 years, compared to 6.7 for men, these differences have reduced substantially. By 1987, average rates of schooling had



improved for both sexes, with the male average at 10.1 and the female average at 10.0 (Hojman, 1993: 93).

In terms of female labour force participation and rates of schooling, in Santiago in 1950, a large proportion of the economically active women had less than seven years of schooling. By 1970, this proportion had fallen to less than 35 per cent of the female labour force (Szasz, 1995: 183). Figures for the whole country for 1989 indicate that 34 per cent of women in the labour force had 11-12 years of schooling, while in 1993, the majority of women in the labour market (57.3 per cent) had 13 or more years of education (Gálvez et al, 1994: 45; Valdés et al, 1992: 52). This increase is a reflection of changes in female participation rates, as well as the overall improvement in female educational levels. The participation of women from the top income quintiles increased to over 43 per cent by the late 1980s, while participation amongst women from the lowest income quintile remained around 25 per cent. This is reflected in a corresponding increase in the educational levels of women in the labour force. Between 1957 and 1987, the labour market participation of women with no education at all fell from 38 to 16 per cent, while the participation of women with secondary education increased from 30 to 35 per cent and for those with university education, from 51 to 60 per cent, for the same period (Szasz, 1995; Hojman, 1993: 93)

These increased levels of education are reflected in the unemployed population. Only 19 per cent of unemployed women have less than eight years of schooling, compared to 37 per cent of men. New entrants to the labour market also have high educational levels: in 1993, 37.6 per cent of women in this group had 11 - 12 years of schooling, while a further 28.1 per cent had 17 or more years. This compares to figures for men in this group, of 29.7 per cent and 2.6 per cent respectively (Gálvez et al, 1994: 49).

However, despite women's high levels of education, they do not participate in the labour market on equal terms to men. There is marked division of the labour market along gender lines, with women's employment concentrated in those activities which are stereotyped as 'female' (Szasz, 1995; Gill, 1992; Muñoz, 1988). Many of these have lower wage levels compared to 'men's' jobs, and women tend to be incorporated into the lower levels of the

professional hierarchy. This leads to differences in the wage levels of women and men, as well as differences in the quality of the posts held, tenure and job security.

### 2.3.3 Gender-typing of occupations, wages and women's employment

An examination of the distribution of the male and female labour force between three broad branches of economic activity, agriculture, industry and services, indicates the characteristics of these occupational differences, as well as highlighting those specific areas of economic activity which account for the increases in female rates of participation. Table 2.2 shows the increase in women's participation in specific branches of activity, between 1976 and 1989.

**Table 2.2 Employed population by sex and branch of economic activity, percentages**

	1976			1989		
	Men	Women	Both	Men	Women	Both
Agriculture	23.4	3.0	18.0	25.3	5.9	19.4
Industry	27.0	16.6	24.2	31.2	15.7	26.5
Services	49.6	80.4	57.7	43.5	78.4	54.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Valdés et al, 1992, from INE, Encuesta Nacional de Empleo 1976-1989

As can be seen from Table 2.2, women's employment is concentrated in the service sector, with 80.4 per cent of the female workforce employed here in 1976, and 78.4 per cent in 1989. This compares to a more even distribution of the male labour force across the three sectors, although the service sector also accounts for the highest proportion of male employment. Women's participation in industrial activities has declined over the period 1976 to 1989, while agriculture, although registering the lowest numbers of women employed, shows an increase in the participation of women. However, as has been noted, women's employment in agricultural activities tends to be under-registered due to the temporary and seasonal nature of activities in this sector.

**Table 2.3 Female participation rate, within branches of activity, percentages**

	1976	1989
Agriculture	4.4	9.3
Industry	18.2	18.1
Services	36.9	44.2
% Total EAP	26.5	30.5

Source: Valdés et al, 1992, from INE, Encuesta Nacional de Empleo 1976-1989

Table 2.3 indicates those specific areas where female participation has increased. This participation has increased substantially in the service sector and agriculture, which have seen a rise of 4.9 per cent and 7.3 per cent respectively between 1976 and 1989. These sectors correspond to those activities which saw rapid expansion with the implementation of free market policies (Muñoz, 1988), and which benefited from the flexible labour market conditions brought about by the *Plan Laboral*. The level of female participation in industry has remained the same, at around 18 per cent.

Within these branches of economic activity, women and men hold different types of posts. Official statistics use a hierarchy of occupational groups, which are categorised as follows: professionals and technicians, managers and administrators, office-workers and white-collar employees, salespeople, farmers and agricultural workers, non-agricultural manual workers, and personal services, which includes domestic service.

In terms of the distribution of these occupational groups within the different branches of activity, figures from employment surveys for 1989 indicate that only in the service sector are women represented at all levels of the occupational hierarchy. The majority of female professionals are employed here, making up 17.6 per cent of the women in services, while only 2.6 per cent of the women in industry are employed at this level. Male professionals are employed more evenly, making up 9.6 per cent of the male labour force in services employed at this level, and 4.4 per cent of those in industry.



At the professional level, women are employed in middle and low-wage activities, such as nurses and teachers, to a lesser degree as pharmacists, dentists and scientists, while their participation in the higher-wage professions, such as lawyers, engineers and architects, is low, with women representing less than 30 per cent of these professions. Amongst managers and administrators, women are concentrated as directors within public administration, again a lower-wage activity, while their participation is low amongst managers and directors of private sector firms (Valdés et al, 1992: 46-47).

Women and men are represented more equally at the white-collar employee level, accounting for 18.1 per cent of the women in both industry and services, and 9.5 per cent and 14.1 per cent of men in industry and services respectively. However, again there is a marked gender-typing of occupations, with women accounting for over 50 per cent of secretaries, telephonists and typists, with lower representation as accountants, inspectors, and qualified office personnel (Valdés et al, 1992: 46-47). A high percentage of both women and men are employed as manual workers in industry, 74.1 and 79.3 per cent respectively, with women concentrated in activities such as dressmaking and textile manufacturers, while men are employed as shoe-makers, electricians, carpenters and mechanics (Valdés et al, 1992: 46-47). Within the category of personal services, women are employed principally as domestic servants, cooks and laundry-workers, representing over 50 per cent of the total employed in these activities. In this category, men tend to be employed as waiters, building maintenance staff, and guards. The importance of domestic service as an activity for women is demonstrated by the fact that this category represented 39.6 of the women employed in the services sector in 1989 (Valdés et al, 1992: 46-47).

This occupational gender-typing leads to wage differentials between women and men, which persist despite the similarities in male and female educational levels which have been observed. In 1960, women earned an average of 46 per cent of the equivalent male salary, and while this situation has improved, women still only earn 70.8 per cent of the average male salary (Valdés et al, 1992: 53). Men earn more than their female counterparts in every sector apart from construction, and the difference is greatest in the sector of personal services (Gill, 1992). In this activity, which concentrates the greatest numbers of female workers,

women earn only 60.7 per cent of the male equivalent salary. Moreover, figures for 1992 indicate that the gap between male and female salaries increases at the higher levels of the occupational hierarchy. At the professional level, women earned only 45 per cent of the male salary, while female administrators and managers earned a slightly higher proportion at 55.2 per cent (Gálvez, 1994: 53). This is in keeping with the observations from other studies (Szasz, 1995; Gill, 1992). Compounding these inequalities is the concentration of women in low-wage employment, such as domestic service. Figures for 1990 indicate that 51.3 per cent of the female EAP of Santiago fell into the lowest monthly earnings group, compared to 14.3 per cent of the male EAP (Szasz, 1995: 186).

Some analysts do not regard these figures as evidence of discrimination in the labour market, indicating that male and female wage differentials reflect the lower productivity of women due to less work experience and training, as well as discontinuities in their employment histories caused by life-cycle patterns (Gill, 1992; Hojman, 1991). However, other studies indicate the existence of widespread discrimination against women in cultural terms which are reflected in inequalities between women and men in the labour market. These studies highlight employers' discrimination against women employees in relation to maternity and on the basis of women's family responsibilities (Henríquez and Reca, 1994; SERNAM, 1994 (b); Hola and Todaro, 1992; Montero, 1992; Hola and Todaro, 1991; Délano, 1989; Gálvez, 1988; Gálvez and Todaro, 1988; Muñoz, 1988). The issue of discrimination will be taken up in greater detail in chapter five (see 5.4.1).

The existence of this inequality in the labour market, whether it be due to direct discrimination or not, has been recognised by the state. The *Servicio Nacional de la Mujer* (SERNAM) has formulated specific policy objectives to improve the quality of employment for women and to establish criteria for the implementation of the ILO treaty on equal pay for equal work as part of a national equal opportunity plan. In addition, SERNAM is campaigning for the enforcement of legislation to provide childcare facilities at the workplace, as well as new legislation which would allow paternity leave for fathers, enabling either parent to combine work with family responsibilities (SERNAM, 1994a).



This section has examined the evolution of the female labour force in Chile in the context of long-term structural change, examining both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of women's incorporation into the labour market. The next section will look at specific sectors where women's employment is concentrated, as well as where the demand for specifically female labour has arisen as a result of free market policies. The importance of gender in determining which occupations are 'female' and which are 'male' is further emphasised when examining the specific activities of women in these sectors.

## **2.4 The quality of 'female' occupations within the economy**

### **2.4.1 Garment manufacturing**

Within the industrial sector, women are concentrated in the activities of *Textiles, garments and leather goods* and *Food preparation, beverages and tobacco*. Figures for 1984 indicate that these activities account for 89 per cent of the women in industry (Gálvez and Todaro, 1988: 296). The sub-groups of textile and garment manufacture account for the majority of female employment. Although these activities were hard-hit during the periods of crisis and adjustment in the early 1980s, since 1984, production has recovered. Production is geared mainly towards the domestic market, with the export of some textiles. Despite the recovery, the sector is unlikely to attain the economic importance of previous decades. Thus, although the manufacturing sector as a whole is experiencing growth, textiles and garments are likely to stagnate. The value-added contributed by this sector to total industrial production declined between 1979 and 1988 from 8.2 per cent to 5.9 per cent, with a corresponding drop in employment from 17.9 per cent to 14.7 per cent (SERNAM, 1994c: 103).

The demand for labour is different in the two activities. Garment manufacture is a labour-intensive activity, and consequently employment has expanded as the sub-sector has grown. The number of larger firms (50 employees and over) has increased, with employment levels reaching 65.2 per cent of the employment in the textile industry. In firms with more than 10 employees, women formed 46.7 per cent of the workforce in 1988, a greater proportion of female participation than in the industrial sector as a whole, which is only 21 per cent.



In terms of female employment, garment manufacture is more significant than textiles. Here, 67 per cent of the workforce made up of women. This proportion is even greater in the category of manual workers, where female participation is around 74 per cent (SERNAM, 1994c: 103). Women are employed in very specific activities which take advantage of the skills learned in the home, namely sewing and the knitting of textiles. These activities are mechanised and divided into an industrial process, and consequently do require skilled knowledge of the operation of the machines. However, as they remain a gender-typed activity performed exclusively by women, these skills tend to be obscured. Studies on the gender-segregation of industrial production confirm this, highlighting that, although the operation of machinery is usually associated exclusively with male workers, the industrial sewing-machine is the sole exception (SERNAM, 1994c; Gálvez and Todaro, 1988). In the garment manufacturing sector, the hierarchy of posts within firms is significantly marked by gender. Very few supervisory and management posts are occupied by women, who remain restricted to the category of manual or administrative workers. This means that there are few opportunities for advancement and promotion of women within this sector (Gálvez and Todaro, 1988).

The perception of this activity as a 'female' one is in keeping with the characteristics that are culturally attributed to women, as discussed in chapter one. Thus, the tasks performed by women in garment manufacture are those which require manual dexterity, attention to detail, concentration and high levels of productivity. Productivity is encouraged through piece-work systems of pay, facilitated by the division of the process into individual tasks (Díaz and Schlaen, 1992). This often means that wage-levels are low, and depend on the individual woman's capacity, making this a physically demanding activity for the worker. Moreover, these tasks are also repetitive and sedentary, characteristics which will be observed in the other sectors where women form the 'ideal' workforce. These factors increase the risk of occupational illnesses such as skeleto-muscular problems caused by repetitive movements, as well as psychological ailments which result from the stress of working at an accelerated pace in a 'chain' of production (SERNAM, 1994 (d); Díaz and Schlaen, 1992; Echeverría et al, 1991; Larraín, 1991). Nevertheless, garment manufacture provides an employment

opportunity for women within urban-based manufacturing industry. The gender-typing of this activity means that there will continue to be a demand for skilled, female garment workers, providing an important employment opportunity for women within industry.

#### **2.4.2 Agribusiness and Fishing Industry**

These sectors are examined together, because they are classified together in official statistics, while offering many parallels as regards female employment. Both agribusiness and commercial fishing geared towards export production incorporate examples of new activities which have been 'feminised', resulting in the expansion of demand for specifically female labour. This has been one of the most dynamic sectors of the economy in recent years, with fruit providing the basis for a successful agro-export sector, together with processed fish products.

The boom in fruit exports began after 1982, with rapid expansion resulting in an increase in exports of fruit from 340 thousand tons in 1982 to over 1.2 million tons in 1994 (Barrientos, 1997). The highest rates of growth occurred in the late 1980s, slowing after 1991. The most important exports are table grapes, accounting for approximately 38 per cent of exports in 1994-95, with apples and pears making up 29 per cent and 13 per cent respectively. Most of the total fruit production is destined for export, with over 50 per cent of the country's total production of grapes and pears exported in 1993-95, and over 40 per cent of total apple production.

Although production mainly takes place between Region III to the north and Region VII to the south, fruit cultivation is highly specialised by region. Due to climatic factors, production starts each year in the semi-arid north, where the use of advanced computerised drip irrigation systems enables the early harvest and export of table grapes. Production then moves south as the season progresses, with the export of apples, kiwis and pears in the central regions and Region VII. The majority of export production is concentrated in the central regions, which account for three-quarters of total exports. The peak season here is



between January and April (Barrientos, 1997 and 1996; Bee and Vogel, 1997; Venegas, 1992; Valdés, 1988).

The expansion of fruit exports have generated new types of employment for both women and men. Increased specialisation and the division of the production process into separate tasks to maximise productivity have resulted in the 'industrialisation' of agro-export production. Within this, gender-typed tasks have emerged, creating new 'female' jobs in the labour-intensive sections of the chain of production, particularly in fieldwork and packing. Women are employed again by virtue of the perceived range of 'feminine' characteristics observed in garment manufacturing and other industries (see chapter one). Moreover, the association between women and food production and preparation in the home, make this activity another extension of the female gender role. Women also make the ideal labour force because they represent a flexible workforce, hired for a short period of time, subsequently returning to their primary domestic duties when the season is over (Barrientos, 1997; Bee and Vogel, 1997; Venegas, 1995; Valdés, 1992 (a); Venegas, 1992; Díaz, 1991; Bradshaw, 1990; Medel and Riquelme, 1989; Valdés, 1988; Campaña, 1985).

The seasonal nature of agro-export production generates a huge demand for labour at peak times. National statistics tend to underestimate the numbers of women employed in this activity, as much of it is seasonal and temporary. Figures from the employment census of January-March 1992 estimated the size of the male agricultural labour force to be 807, 450, while the female labour force was estimated to be 88, 860 for this period. However, a supplementary employment survey in 1993 found that a further 186, 190 women had worked in agriculture in the previous year (Barrientos, 1996). There are a number of unofficial estimates of the size of the temporary labour force which place it between a quarter and half a million workers (Venegas, 1993). Further estimates based on Venegas's surveys (1992, 1993) place the proportion of female workers at 52 per cent of the workforce, making approximately 150, 000 women temporary workers who are mobilised at the height of the season.



Women from all kinds of backgrounds become *temporeras* in the season. They are of a wide age-range, from 15 to over 35, according to some studies (Venegas, 1992; Díaz, 1991). Many of the women are married with families, while extensive migration from urban centres mean that it is impossible to classify them according to place of residence. Students, in particular, travel to work in the season during the summer vacation. This contrasts with export production in other countries, where the workforce tends to be young, single women.

Women are employed in the tasks which require delicacy to minimise damage to the fruit. These include the selection, cleaning and packing of the fruit at the height of the harvest, which require patience and attention to detail, while the urgency of moving the perishable fruit into the international market demands the ability to maintain productivity while performing repetitive tasks (Bee and Vogel, 1997; Venegas, 1995). Women are also employed in certain field-tasks earlier in the season, such as pruning and thinning, as well as the application of pesticides (Díaz, 1991).

The tasks that women perform require a degree of skill and knowledge, creating a situation where female workers return to the same jobs season after season. This has a complex effect on wage-levels in this sector. Labour costs can be kept low as the workforce is made up of 'housewives', who can be mobilised at peak times and then return to the home when the demand for labour has diminished at the end of the season. However, the accelerated expansion of agricultural export production in the early 1990s meant that firms faced a severe shortage of labour skilled in these tasks. Firms were forced to bus in workers from other regions in order to meet the demand (Venegas, 1992). Thus, experienced selectors, cleaners and packers are valued for their speed and skill, and as these tasks are paid by the piece to encourage productivity, these women have the potential to earn the highest wages amongst temporary workers. Estimates indicate that skilled packers can earn between £5.36 and £8.07 per shift, higher than the wages earned by men in the male-dominated activities (Bee and Vogel, 1997: 87). Thus, working in agribusiness is a relatively lucrative employment option for women, attracting large numbers of workers. The existence of this occupation has had an effect on the market for other types of female employment, most notably domestic service, which has become a far less popular employment option than in the past (Hojman, 1989).

Again, there are considerations of occupational health risks to workers, particularly as the temporary nature of these activities hampers the regulation of working conditions. There are physical risks associated with performing repetitive movements, standing long hours in cold conditions and working at the pace dictated by the mechanised production process, while maintaining production quotas in order to maximise wages. These risks are added to by the unregulated use of pesticides, often mixed and applied by women workers, which have devastating effects on women's reproductive health (Medel and Riquelme, 1994; SERNAM, 1994d; Valdés, 1992c; Echeverría et al, 1991; Larraín, 1991).

For women, finding employment in the countryside has traditionally been restricted, and the new demand for female labour in export agriculture offers the opportunity to earn a relatively high income in a few months. In spite of the difficult working conditions and the temporary and unstable nature of the work, agribusiness provides an employment opportunity for women in the countryside whose importance cannot be ignored.

The fishing industry is another sector which has expanded in recent years. In particular, commercial fishing and the related processing of fish products for export are areas which have seen considerable growth since the 1980s. Between 1980 and 1989, fisheries exports grew at a rate of 10.3 per cent, becoming the third most important export activity, accounting for 11.3 per cent of the total value of exports (Sherman, 1994: 101). Industrial fishing is the dominant sector, accounting for 92 per cent of the catch landed in 1990. Only 8 per cent is caught using artisanal methods.

Commercial fishing products consist of various processed products, with fish meal the most important item, accounting for 76.8 per cent of production. Fish oil is the second most important product, 14.5 per cent of production, while conserves of fish and seafood and frozen fish account for 4.6 per cent and 3.2 per cent respectively. Exports of smoked, salted and dried fish and seafood, particularly salmon, are also growing rapidly. In 1990, 95 per cent of the total catch was destined for processing, while only 5 per cent was destined for consumption as fresh fish (SERNAM, 1994c; Sherman, 1994: 101).



It is the processing of fish products that is significant in terms of women's employment. Employment in the fishing industry grew by 175 per cent between 1980 and 1989. Figures for 1989 indicate that there were 7 137 women employed in firms of 50 or more employees. In terms of production workers, female participation was 46.3 per cent (SERNAM, 1994c).

In this sector too, there is a marked gender-typing of tasks along similar lines to those observed in agribusiness and garment manufacturing. The workers in the fish meal factories are almost exclusively men, while the major part of the female workforce is employed in the production lines of the freezing and canning plants. Women are employed for a range of specific tasks which include the cleaning, selecting, filleting of fish and shellfish, as well as packing and labelling. Again, these tasks represent the labour-intensive parts of the process (SERNAM, 1994c; Sherman, 1994: 104). 'Women's jobs' within the processing plants are those which require manual dexterity, speed and productivity, again characteristics which are deemed to be innate qualities in women. Productivity is maintained through the paying of piece-rates, drawing further parallels between women's manual occupations in the sectors under discussion.

Conditions in these activities give rise to occupational health risks. Women work within an environment which is maintained at low temperatures, utilising knives and other hand-tools. Free-flowing water is used for the cleaning and filleting of the fish, making falls and resulting injuries the most-commonly reported accidents, together with lacerations from tools, as well as a range of ailments arising from the cold, damp working conditions (SERNAM, 1994 (d); Echeverría et al, 1991; Larrain, 1991).

Again, this type of employment represents contradictory outcomes for women. On one hand, it provides the means to earn an income, but in unskilled, undervalued manual jobs. Moreover, there is a marked instability of employment and low wages, uncomfortable and, at times, dangerous working conditions. However, in some regions, there is very little alternative employment and women are obliged to take on paid employment under these conditions.



### 2.4.3 Domestic Service

Domestic service has traditionally formed the employment of easiest access for women. It is an occupation for which women are 'qualified' by virtue of the socialisation and training received as part of the female domestic role. A domestic servant is defined as 'a person who is dedicated continuously, full-time or part-time, in the service of one or more people or a family, in occupations of cleaning and assistance, proper, or inherent, to the home' (Todaro and Gálvez, 1987: 49). As this activity represents a remunerated parallel to the activities 'proper to the home' carried out by housewives, domestic service is an activity undertaken predominantly by women.

In official statistics, the number of people employed in domestic service appear under the occupational category of *Workers in personal services*. Although this category includes other activities which are carried out by both men and women, such as building caretakers and waiters, the numbers of women employed in this activity in January-March 1992 were 408,640, in other words, 28 per cent of the employed female labour force (INE, 1992). Domestic servants also appear under the branch of activity of *Municipal, Personal and Social Services*, which includes a wide range of other activities, such as teachers, public servants, and as such, is the largest employment category. Disaggregated figures available for 1980 put the minimum number of women employed as domestic servants within private homes at 231,607 (Todaro and Gálvez, 1987: 53). However, official statistics are likely to underestimate the numbers of women involved, partly due to the lack of clarity in defining the specific occupation and partly due to the informal nature of much of this activity.

This activity has undergone considerable change in the intervening period. In the 1950s, domestic service accounted for around a third of the female labour force, falling to a quarter in the 1990s (Szasz, 1995: 183). There was a marked increase in the supply of labour for this activity in Santiago in the periods of crisis 1981-82, and a corresponding drop in wages, as high male unemployment rates prompted the entry of women from low-income sectors into the labour market (Szasz, 1995; Hojman, 1989a; Todaro and Gálvez, 1987). This

emphasises the accessibility of domestic service as an employment option for unskilled women.

Since the expansion of the economy since the mid-1980s, there have been changes in this sector. In 1957, 88.9 per cent of women in domestic service were resident at their places of work. By 1990, this proportion has fallen to 46.5 per cent, with an increase in the educational levels of women in this activity (Szasz, 1995: 184). This is related to the increase in married women with families seeking work in this sector, a tendency which was particularly marked during the periods of crisis. This meant that a greater number of households were able to hire domestic servants on a daily or part-time basis, as the cost is lower than hiring a resident maid (Todaro and Gálvez, 1987).

However, the expansion of the economy has resulted in a decrease in the supply of labour for domestic service, reflected in increasing wage levels. Evidence supports the view that the supply for domestic service is countercyclical, falling with economic expansion (Hojman, 1989a; Todaro and Gálvez, 1987). It is possible that women previously employed in domestic service have taken advantage of better job opportunities in commerce, manufacturing or other service activities, reducing supply. At the same time, housewives from middle- and higher-income sectors may have been also prompted to enter the labour market, increasing the demand for paid domestic service. The emergence of extensive female employment opportunities in the agro-export sector has also been highlighted as a factor in the contraction of the labour supply, by reducing the degree of migration to Santiago, which provided many of the capital's live-in servants (Hojman, 1989a).

Consequently, there have been substantial increases in the wages offered for domestic service, particularly for live-in maids. The largest real wage increases during the recovery period of 1983-86 were in the domestic service sector, which experienced an increase of 23 per cent compared to 4 per cent and 2 per cent increases of white and blue collar salaries. This trend has continued through the 1990s, with salaries being offered for live-in maids of between US\$ 285.71 to US\$ 404.76 (*El Mercurio*, Situations Vacant, 27.10.96). The wages



offered for non-resident domestic servants are lower, but also compare favourably with other occupations.

However, domestic service remains the least desirable employment option for women. Apart from the absence of defined hours of work and specific tasks, entering domestic service carries social and personal consequences, particularly when the person is resident with her employers' family. There is an ambiguous relationship between the employer and the employee, which can create uncomfortable situations for the worker living in the heart of a family which is not her own, whilst restricting her personal freedom. Moreover, this relationship is mediated by one of class, resulting in a subservient relation between the domestic servant and the employers' family (Gálvez and Todaro, 1985). These factors may perhaps explain the shift from live-in domestic service to working on a daily and part-time basis, enabling unskilled married women to take on employment in this sector without sacrificing their personal freedom or their family responsibilities. Working on a day-to-day basis improves the conditions of work in this sector, as will be discussed in chapter three. Nevertheless, domestic service remains an occupation that is not valued in social terms, is viewed as unskilled, in spite of the higher educational levels amongst women in domestic service. However, some studies indicate that the real wage in this sector is likely to continue to improve, which may alter the perceptions of this type of work (Hojman, 1989a).

#### **2.4.4 Public administration and financial services**

Although these sectors are very different in character and are separated in official classifications, they represent an important area in terms of white collar female employment. Both activities employ high numbers of women in similar types of occupations viewed as 'female'. Among these are office personnel, such as secretaries, typists, and telephonists, activities in which over 50 per cent of the workforce is female (Díaz et al, 1993). Figures for 1992 indicate that the number of women employed in the financial services sector was 75,810, that is 5.4 per cent of the employed female labour force.



Public sector employment appears in the same classification as domestic service, that is *Municipal, Personal and Social Services*. This is the largest employment category, accounting for 46.4 per cent of the employed female labour force (INE, 1992). Thus, both these areas of the service sector account for a significantly high proportion of female employment.

The financial services sector has expanded rapidly as the economy has grown. This sector incorporates firms which administrate pension funds (AFPs), insurance and loan companies, as well as banks and their subsidiaries. In addition, real estate firms and consultancies are also included in this sector in official classifications. In 1995, the financial sector represented 12.6 per cent of GDP, while the average annual rate of expansion between 1991 and 1995 was 8.1 per cent. Women's share of employment in this activity has increased to 32.8 per cent in 1990 (Hola and Todaro, 1992: 44). Female employees are concentrated in the category of *office personnel*, in occupations such as secretaries, typists and telephonists. This category accounted for 70.9 per cent of the female workforce employed in this sector (Hola and Todaro, 1992: 46). Women are also employed in direct sales of insurance and pension plans.

In the category of *office personnel*, a new occupation has emerged in this sector which, although carried out in an environment which is highly technological, takes advantage of a similar range of so-called 'feminine' characteristics as female occupations in other sectors. This is the activity of data-entry which is an important aspect of the data-processing activity within both the financial services and public administration sectors. The majority of the workforce employed in this activity is female (Díaz et al, 1993).

In keeping with the female manual occupations observed in other sectors, this activity does not require specialised education or training, nor previous experience, as on-the-job training is given. Women are the preferred workforce because this activity requires manual dexterity, the ability to maintain high levels of productivity and concentration while performing a repetitive and monotonous task. Productivity is measured by the number of key-strokes per minute or hour, analogous to the piece-work of other female manual activities. There are few

opportunities for promotion or training within this activity, which is actually declining due to improvements in data-processing systems (Díaz et al, 1993: 22). Moreover, this type of work is carried out increasingly by contractors, for whom women represent a flexible workforce. Thus, in spite of the activity being carried out in a technologically advanced work environment, data-entry is regarded as a semi-skilled, manual activity, carried out by a cheap, flexible workforce (Díaz et al, 1993: 24).

In spite of the financial services sector being possibly the most modern and technologically advanced in the economy, the occupational differences along lines of gender observed in other sectors persists here (Díaz et al, 1993; Hola and Todaro, 1992). There are few women employed as professionals or directors, confirmed by Hola and Todaro's study. Amongst the insurance firms studied, no women held the post of president of any of the firms, while only seven out of 251 director-generals were female. Out of a total of 339 posts of director or manager, only eight were women (Hola and Todaro, 1992: 47). Moreover, the salary differentials between women and men are in keeping with those observed in other activities.

Public administration represents a slightly different case, as this is a sector with high levels of female professional employment. However, the public sector is marked by low salary levels compared to equivalent posts in the private sector, while the occupational hierarchy that exists in the financial services sector persists here, with few women employed at the level of directors and managers (SERNAM, 1994d). Nevertheless, employment in the public sector represents perhaps the best quality of female employment in terms of stability of employment and the extensive benefits accorded to working mothers, although this is can also give rise to discrimination against women employees with families (Campusano and Lagarrigue, 1992).

The preceding sections have examined the details of women's participation in the labour market. In general terms, there has been an widespread increase in women's participation in the last twenty years, as a result of several factors. Demographic factors have increased the female EAP, while participation rates were significantly affected in the late 1970s and early 1980s by the periods of economic crisis arising from the implementation of free-market policies and the restructuring of the economy. Despite these periods of crisis, the sustained



macro-economic success of the neo-liberal model has led to the emergence of a demand for female labour in the dynamic sectors of the economy and a permanent incorporation of women into the labour market.

However, as we have seen, this incorporation is not automatically beneficial to women. There are a number of factors which shape these differences in male and female employment. Traditional gender relations in Chile assign to women the primary responsibility for the household and children. Paid employment is therefore often perceived as a 'secondary' activity for women, regardless of the reality of the situation of individual households. Women return to their primary domestic duties within the household when the demand for their labour declines, a cultural perception which makes female labour flexible and cheap, the so-called 'comparative advantage of women's disadvantage' (Leiva, 1993; Elson and Pearson, 1981). This appears to explain why women are incorporated in a range of activities in agriculture, industry, commerce and the service sector which show a high degree of seasonality and instability. Moreover, as women are perceived to be secondary wage earners, female occupations tend to have lower wage rates relative to men's. However, this may also be a reflection of the fact that women's work histories can be interrupted by life-cycle changes, reducing the continuity of employment experience, which would result in lower wage levels.

Gender relations also play a significant role in determining the nature and quality of the employment opportunities offered to women. There is a marked degree of gender-typing of occupations, as well as a gender hierarchy in terms of the category of post. 'Female' occupations are determined, in one way or another, by their association with stereotypical perceptions of 'feminine' characteristics. As these notions have been widely accepted by employers and workers alike, the question of whether women possess these qualities by nature or nurture has been rendered academic (Muñoz, 1988). Women are employed in manual activities in the labour-intensive parts of the production process, which require similar skills of manual dexterity, delicacy, the ability to maintain concentration and productivity while performing the repetitive movements required by the process. White collar 'female' occupations also require some of these skills, while more broadly representing



the service and supportive aspects of the female domestic role. As many of these skills which women bring to a job are adapted from those learned within the home, outside the workplace, they require little formal workplace training. This can often lead to a 'de-skilling' in the classification of female occupations, which also affects wage rates. The tendency for women's jobs to have a lower remuneration than male occupations reflects the maximum flexibility of the conditions under which women are often employed, leading piece-rates to dominate over fixed salaries in many predominantly female activities.

## **2.5 The impact of increased female employment on gender relations**

The increasing participation of women in the labour-market must be examined in the context of the socio-economic and cultural changes that have taken place since 1973. The macro-economic success of the free-market model in Chile has resulted in a widespread consumerist orientation among upper-, middle- and, to a lesser degree, lower-income sectors (Silva, 1995). This appears to have smothered political and social opposition to the free market model, despite its clear shortfalls in terms of social justice, for example, the poor quality of employment, the lack of protection and union representation for workers, and the persistence of poverty, among many other issues.

Macro-economic indicators confirm the increasing levels of affluence amongst the population. Real hourly wages rose by 15.9 per cent between 1993 and 1996, without negatively affecting employment, while the availability of cheap commercial consumer goods has increased. This is reflected in changing consumption patterns, as can be seen in the increasing sales of domestic supermarket chains, while the number of credit cards issued by retailers doubled between 1993 and 1996. According to Silva (1995), consumption has become the means to gauge the development of the nation, and while the economy continues to allow consumption to expand, there will be political and popular support for this path to 'modernisation'.

This economic and cultural shift towards a consumption-oriented, individualistic society has had a further impact on women. Households have become more dependent on purchasing

goods on the market to meet their needs, and female labour has become a potential source of income to acquire these goods. Furthermore, the elimination of the state's role in providing important services, such as health, social security and pensions, has passed the burden onto individuals and households, while the flexibilisation of the labour market has eroded any notion of a 'family wage'. Levels of poverty have therefore increased significantly, and poor households have become dependent on both men and women finding paid employment to ensure their survival. Wives and mothers who previously were likely to remain at home may be obliged to enter the labour market to meet primary needs, particularly health care, and not merely to provide 'extras'. In this context, women from poor households seeking employment have little choice but to take on the low-quality, unstable occupations on offer. For these households, the income from women's paid employment has become important in alleviating poverty and providing a means to gain access to goods and services.

The reality of life for many households is in direct contradiction to the cultural perceptions of 'family values' and traditional gender roles which continue to prevail. Despite the increased importance of paid work for women, they remain the primary carers for children, as well as taking on the bulk of the domestic responsibilities within the home. This means that working wives and mothers face a 'double burden' of work, as male partners' participation in domestic chores remains low. Moreover, both women's and men's perceptions of women's paid work remain contradictory, as a public opinion survey carried out by the 'Centro de Estudios Públicos' indicates (*El Mercurio Internacional*, August, 1995).

The results of this survey show a general support of women's paid work outside the home, with 78 per cent of women and 89 per cent of men agreeing that, in general, it is good for a married woman to have paid employment. When asked to name the two most important motives for women working, the principal reason was 'to increase the family income', with 81 per cent of responses. The second most important reason was 'for personal development', 40 per cent, while the third reason was 'so as not to have to ask the husband for money', 26 per cent. These results indicate positive attitudes towards women's decisions to take on paid work, as well as a general aspiration towards employment amongst women. When asked to name the two most important reasons why women do not work, the most important was 'their



husband doesn't like it', with 52 per cent, closely followed in importance by 'they prefer the domestic life and being with the children', 51 per cent. These responses indicate the persistence of *machista* attitudes amongst husbands, while, at the same time, emphasising the decision to stay at home with the children as a positive choice for women.

Contradictions arise in relation to the impact of women's paid work on family life, with 42 per cent of men and 48 per cent of women considering that it has a positive effect. Only 24 and 20 per cent of men and women respectively consider that it has a negative effect, with 33 and 29 per cent considering that it had no effect at all on family life. This latter response indicates that there may be an ambivalence towards paid work on the part of both husband and wives, as, rather than have no effect at all on family life, paid employment is likely to bring about many changes, in terms of gender role expectations, the decision-making process, as well as the organisation of the domestic routine. The sense of contradiction is reinforced by other perceptions, as 60 per cent of men and 48 per cent of women felt that the woman who stays at home was the better mother. At the same time, 60 per cent of men and 61 per cent of women felt that the woman who works is more interesting as a person. Moreover, when asked to rank the factors which would facilitate women's employment, the most important was the greater availability of child-care, 61 per cent, while the second most important was increasing the participation of men in the domestic chores, 45 per cent.

These contradictory responses indicate that societal attitudes towards gender roles and women's employment are in a state of transition and change, as traditional expectations of gender roles clash with the reality of the free market economy. The 'traditional-modern' tension which Chilean authors have identified (see section 2.2) emerges again in the results of this survey. Despite the new economic reality, women still have to negotiate the demands of their responsibilities of motherhood and the often conflicting demands of paid work. Moreover, changes in power relations within the household are likely to be generated by women's new wage-earning role. The possible conflicts between partners arising from these changed power relations must also be negotiated. However, as was argued in chapter one, it is often these daily negotiations that provide women with an opportunity to subtly alter traditional gender relations at a household level. Moreover, in a context of relatively rapid



and extensive economic restructuring, societal attitudes also become subtly altered to accommodate new realities, as reflected in the survey above. Perceptions may be modified as female gender identities become extended to include the role of 'provider', while male gender identities may come to incorporate responsibility for childcare and domestic chores.

In terms of the question of whether women are empowered through their paid work, it is clear that incorporation into the labour market under conditions of low-pay, in unstable, poor-quality employment will limit the potential for empowerment. However, in a context of permanent and increasing female labour force participation, paid employment could offer a vital first step for women to begin to rework gender relations within both the household and the workplace. Through focusing on a group of working women's own perceptions, the next chapters will trace the complex and contradictory effects of women's paid employment on gender relations within the workplace and the household, as well as women's own perceptions of their paid work.

## **CHAPTER THREE: Paid Employment**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter will examine the interviewees' experiences of labour force participation in activities which are found within four sectors which concentrate female employment in Chile: the garment manufacturing sector, export agriculture, domestic service and public administration. The first section focuses on the general aspects of working conditions in each sector. Each activity has specific differences in the production process involved, resulting in a particular set of physical working conditions, as well as different employment relations and wage levels. In order to gain an insight into the quality of working conditions, the interviewees' own descriptions will form the basis of this section.

Despite the wide differences which exist between these activities, ideological perceptions of gender play a significant role in characterising specific jobs as 'feminine', leading to a concentration of female employment in these activities. This means that there are similarities in employment relations and wages which will be drawn out during the course of the analysis, together with the cultural factors which lead to these jobs being characterised as 'women's work'. As the majority of the women interviewed combine paid work with family responsibilities, certain aspects of working conditions, such as flexibility of hours, are important in allowing women to take on paid work in the first place. The advantages and disadvantages of these conditions to women workers will be examined.

The following section will deal with employment relations. These are an important dimension of conditions in the workplace. The environment that is created in the workplace has an important place in some of these women's employment decisions. In most of the workplaces, there are hierarchies which give rise to a situation of male supervisors and directors placed in charge of numbers of female workers. The nature of gender relations in Chile means that these hierarchical relationships often give rise to sexual harassment. This is an important issue which will be examined in this section. In addition, the informality of employment relations compounds the problem of sexual harassment. Thus, the important

influence of worker organisation and union-formation within the workplace will also be examined here.

In order to illustrate the variety of women's employment experience, four work histories are presented. The work histories illustrate four career paths within the sectors concentrating women's employment in Chile. The career trajectories clearly show the influence of economic necessity within the family as the prompt to entry into the labour market. This also highlights the importance of life cycle and the position within the family as influential factors in women's labour force participation. The dynamics of the employment decisions women are making, as well as the influence of both monetary and non-monetary factors on these decisions are drawn out in this section.

The next section analyses the interviewees' attitudes towards paid work, their motives for working, as well as the advantages and disadvantages to themselves. This draws out some of the conflicts between work and family roles that women experience when they take on paid work. However, these attitudes also highlight the potential for empowerment that paid work offers the interviewees, both in terms of financial autonomy and personal development.

The final section draws together the heterogeneities of the participants' paid work experience. The discussion will focus on the common themes that emerge from the analysis, evaluating the potential for empowerment which is offered to the women through their paid work, as well as the implications of this for modifying gender relations within the workplace, as well as the household. These themes will be taken up again in subsequent chapters.

### **3.2 Working conditions**

In order to discuss women's experiences of participation in the labour force, it is important to examine some of the working conditions which shape this experience. Working conditions vary widely according to the demands of the different jobs women are undertaking in the four sectors, as well as between individual firms and factories. This section will describe some of the general conditions under which the women in the study were carrying out their work: the



organisation of the tasks, the physical conditions of the workplace and the conditions of employment, including wage levels, stability of employment and labour relations.

### 3.2.1 Garment Production

As discussed in chapter two, this sub-sector of textile production has a predominantly female workforce, up to 67 per cent. While the garment manufacturing factories employ both women and men, the tendency is for female employees to outnumber the male, with women carrying out specific tasks related to the production of the individual garments within the process of garment manufacture. In general, women work as *singeristas* and *overlistas* (machinists), operating the industrial sewing machines, while other women's jobs include cutting out the pieces of the garments as well as the cleaning of the threads and lint from the finished garment at the end of the process. Men are employed in heavier tasks, such as moving the bales of cloth, pressing the finished garments and the maintenance of the machines.

This division of labour along gender lines in the workplace arises from the stereotypes associated with women's 'traditional' gender role within the household. As has been discussed in previous sections, the process of socialisation that establishes gender differences serves to assign certain skills and characteristics to each gender which then become integral to the idealised stereotypes of 'masculine' and 'feminine' (Elson and Pearson, 1981; Gálvez and Todaro, 1988; Guzmán, 1991; Grant 1993). As the production and maintenance of the family members' garments is an important aspect of the 'feminine' role within the household in Chile, sewing is a skill that women acquire as part of the socialisation process. In garment manufacture, the household activity of sewing has been transformed into an industrial process. It nevertheless remains firmly rooted in this stereotype of a 'feminine' activity. This means that women enter the garment factory with basic sewing skills already in place, as well as a perceived 'natural' aptitude for this activity. This 'skill' is combined with the other characteristics perceived as 'female', such as manual dexterity and the ability to maintain high levels of productivity and quality in an industrial context (Elson and Pearson, 1981).

The organisation of the work is divided up into the individual stages of the garment manufacturing process. Tasks are organised on a piecework basis. The tasks are carried out within one large workshop, where women sit at rows of machines performing these various tasks. This type of production process is known as *trabajo a la rueda* (work on the wheel) in Chile. Generally, the work begins at the front of the workshop, at the cutting stage, then the pieces are passed back to the next row of women who perform the next stage of the process; for example, one row joins sleeves so that the next row of women can sew them together. In this way, the pieces of the garment progress back through the workshop row by row, until the bale of finished garments is pressed at the back of the workshop. The task of the final pressing is usually performed by men.

Seven case studies were selected for detailed analysis, with the interviewees having worked in garment manufacturing from two to ten years. Table 3.1 presents the demographic characteristics of the participants whose occupations were in the garment manufacturing sector. Four of the women interviewed worked in small or medium sized factories, owned by established firms, with all of them estimating that over 60 per cent of the workforce in their factory was female. The other interviewees worked in a small informal workshop, based in the home of one of the participants.

**Table 3.1**

**Demographic characteristics of interviewees working in garment manufacture**

<b>Confeccionistas</b>					
<b>Name</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Education (years of schooling)</b>	<b>Marital status</b>	<b>No. of children</b>	<b>Number of residents in household</b>
Ana	29	12	Separated	2	3
Ema	33	Over 12	Separated	2	2
Soledad	34	Over 12	Single	0	1
Ester	34	10	Separated	1	3
Gloria	36	12	Single	0	5
Gladys	40	10	Married	3	6
Carmen	45	10	Married	0	2

Source: Survey carried out in Chile by author, 1993-1994.

**3.2.1.1 Ester and Gladys**

Ester (34) is a female head of household and has been working for eight years in a factory which manufactures jeans. She took on paid employment when she separated from her husband, and had previously dedicated herself to her home and her family. Ester's job is to make the front pockets in each pair of jeans. Here she describes how *trabajo a la rueda* operates in her workshop:

All the process is 'on the wheel', for example, there are colleagues who make the pleats in the trousers - say the back pleats, - there is another who makes the back pockets, another person makes the front pockets, but only the inside lining, you sew the pieces of the lining and then there is another who makes the outside part of the pocket, another who puts the zip in, another who puts the front and back together. (...) None of us are going to do a complete job, everyone does just a part of the trouser. (..) You do all one packet and you put in all the zips in that packet and then it goes back and back. (Ester)



Gladys' (40) is married with three children, and she has been working for two years. Before taking on employment, she had been exclusively a wife and mother. Gladys' job is less specific than Ester's: she helps to move the work through the stages. Her firm manufactures suits, which involves quite a number of stages in the production process:

It starts at the cutting, and then it goes in different ways; (...) when it gets to my hands, I put the sleeves together for the lady who sews sleeves, I put the linings together for the lady who sews linings, for the lady who puts the sides together like in a skirt, and I help to move the work: I deliver it, I take it away, and if there are any repairs, all that type of thing. (Gladys)

The descriptions above convey in detail the organisation of the workshop and the types of tasks that the women workers are carrying out. Each worker has the responsibility of ensuring that her task is carried out quickly and passed on to the next person in the chain. In order to maintain the rhythm of production, firms impose minimum levels of production for each worker, as well as implementing systems of payment by the piece or production incentives. This means that workers become highly skilled in their specific task, in order to maximise the level of their salary as well as moving the production process rapidly along.

Table 3.1 gives an overview of the average earnings of the interviewees working in this activity.<sup>3</sup> In order to provide a context for the value of these wages, it is important to compare them against the poverty line for this period. According to the definition used in the CASEN survey (a national household survey carried out every five years), the poverty line is measured by the minimum income needed to purchase a *Canasta Básica de Alimentos* (a basic food basket). The poverty line for 1994 was \$15,710 pesos per person, per month. This is approximately US\$ 37.40, using the average exchange rate for 1994 of US \$1 = 420 Chilean pesos that has been used elsewhere in this study.

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<sup>3</sup> For comparison, see chapter four and appendix C for the wage levels and income contributions of male partners and other household members.

**Table 3.2 Average monthly earnings of *confeccionistas*  
in US \$<sup>4</sup>**

<b>Interviewee</b>	<b>Average earnings in US \$ per month</b>
Ester	273.81
Ana	238.11
Gladys	171.43
Gloria	321.43
Carmen	190.48

Source: Survey carried out in Chile by author, 1993-1994

There are two basic systems of payment in the garment manufacturing sector. Piecework (*trabajo a trato*) is the predominant wage system. This has been implemented as a means to stimulate production and enable the firm to meet its production schedule, as each worker will strive to maximise their salary. Each task in the process has a tariff which will make up the bulk of the worker's wage. For example, Ester, who makes pockets, is paid about US\$ 0.03 per pocket. She can make a maximum of 580 pockets in a working day of ten hours, which brings her daily rate up to US\$ 17.95. However, this is a maximum, usually she would earn slightly less, although the working week can be up to fifty hours long. Most firms in this sector pay their workers the equivalent of an additional day if they have worked the whole week, without any hours off. This is known as the *semana corrida*. Ester calculates that she takes home between US\$ 261.90 and US\$ 285.71 in a normal month. In most factories, workers are usually paid a basic wage which conforms to the legal national minimum. They also receive overtime, especially at peak production when they have to work over the weekend. This is paid at fifty per cent over the normal tariff per piece, although this usually has to be negotiated by individual unions within firms, as legally pieceworkers are not entitled to overtime. Wages are paid weekly.

<sup>4</sup> The exchange rate used is of US\$ 1.00 = Chilean \$ 420 pesos (1994 average exchange rates).

The second form of remuneration is payment by the day (*trabajo al día*), where workers are paid a basic daily rate, together with bonuses and incentives to boost production. In Gladys' and Ana's firm, workers are paid per day of work. For Gladys, this means a basic wage of approximately US\$ 37.36. Then the *semana corrida* pays her US\$ 7.47 a week, while a bonus of US\$ 9.52 brings her wage up to US\$ 59.04 a week gross. After the deductions for pension and social security contributions have been made, she takes home US\$ 44.58 a week. This makes her monthly income approximately US\$ 171.43.

### 3.2.1.2 Ana and Gloria

Ana (29) has been working for three years since her separation from her husband. In order to support her two children, she earns a basic wage of US\$ 54.76, which together with the *semana corrida* becomes approximately US\$ 71.43. After the deductions, she takes home US\$ 59.52, bringing her monthly salary up to US\$ 238.10. Ana mentions that if a worker misses a few hours from a day, she or he will lose both that day and the extra *semana corrida*. This is problematic for any women workers who are likely to miss time if their children become ill. Although Ana's and Gladys' firm pays a daily wage, it is implementing a system of financial incentives and re-organising the work in order to transfer to a piecework system in the near future.

Gloria (36) works in the design and patterning department of a lingerie firm. She is single with no children, and has been working in garment manufacture since she left school. Gloria's salary is made up by combining a basic salary with production bonuses for each garment she cuts. The base salary is US\$ 285.71 a month, with bonuses which bring it up to US\$ 321.43.

As the production process in garment manufacture involves extensive use of machinery, the physical work environment can be uncomfortable and at times hazardous for the workers. Although the physical work conditions vary from firm to firm, factors such as extreme noise levels, high concentrations of dust suspended in the air, extremes of heat and cold, together with poor ventilation and illumination are all characteristic of the conditions in this sector.



Moreover, most garment manufacturing workshops, even within established firms, are little more than large sheds, with minimal adaptations for accommodating large numbers of workers and machines.

All these conditions pose a risk to the health of the workers as legal requirements are rarely observed. The high levels of noise produced by the machinery are often exacerbated by music from radios played loudly and the scrape of metal chairs on concrete floors. This can result in loss of hearing and tinnitus in workers as well as provoking anxiety and tension. These are among the most commonly reported occupational ailments (Díaz and Schlaen, 1992: 22). There appears to be little awareness on the part of either workers or the firm of the need to utilise protective gear in order to protect the hearing of garment workers.

One of the most hazardous conditions within the garment and textile industry is the high concentration of lint and dust particles in the air. The lint is produced with the cutting and piercing of the fabrics. The particles are so fine that they are inhaled, ingested and absorbed by the skin, causing respiratory problems, allergies and irritations of the skin and respiratory tract. This condition is exacerbated by the absence of proper systems of air extraction and ventilation which create adverse environmental conditions. Poor ventilation also affects the temperature levels within the workplace. The heat generated by the machines causes temperatures to reach extremes of 40 °C in the summer, while in the winter, the extra heat serves to mitigate the effects of low temperatures in the absence of a central heating system. The effects of these extremes of temperature are worsened by the conditions of overcrowding which often exist in garment manufacturing workshops:

[The ventilation] is bad, bad. As I told you, when we were only a few people, it was enough that we had these fans in the roof which let air in and take away all the bad. (...) And then they put in these windows that they open in the summer and fresh air comes in and other windows... but you know these were implemented for just a few people. Now there are more of us, the air is suffocating in the summer. I'm telling you, the temperature, if it's 35° outside, we reach 40°. And, in the winter, it's not cold because the furnaces are on and the steam press is on and it's temperate indoors; it's nice. But in the summer, then we suffer. (Ana)

There is that problem [of the cold], but it has to be central heating. You can't have a heater because there are bales that can be knocked over and things. Ventilator fans don't work either because the fluff flies around; then we would have more lint than ever. So, as putting in the central heating system is expensive, they're not going to do it. (...) But they are going to make some changes, they are conscious of that. (...) Extractors, that's it, they are going to put in extractors and the same extractors can put out heat. (Ester)

As the problems caused by the extremes of temperature are viewed as seasonal, many firms are reluctant to invest in expensive heating and ventilation systems. Some of the problems that are produced by extreme heat in the summer include fatigue, fainting, dizziness and an increased risk of accidents. In the winter, the cold affects the extremities, causing pain and discomfort for many of the workers. These effects are further complicated by the lack of rest breaks in the demanding working day.

Many firms seek to maintain the rhythm of production through a strict control of their workers, with few official breaks except a lunch break of an average of forty-five minutes. In some workshops even the time allowed for visits to the bathroom is controlled. This exacerbates the effects of the adverse occupational conditions discussed above.:

Around ten in the morning, you get up and we run off to the canteen to have a cup of tea; most people do that. (...) It's supposed to be behind the boss' back, but he knows we do it. (..) It's not an official break, but unofficially we do it. Even he sometimes has a cup of coffee. But there are other firms where they don't and they start at eight o'clock and they don't get up until one o'clock to have lunch, and that's half an hour they have for a break, and sometimes they even control the time they have to go to the toilet. We have two plants, where I work, we make trousers, and the other one, where they make shirts, it's like that. (..) We do this at this time of year, or if not, in the summer, the thing we do is drink coffee with Coca-Cola, which people who work in garment production do a lot, they drink a lot of coffee with Coca-Cola to keep themselves awake, to take the sleepiness away. (Ester)

In one of the firms where the women interviewed worked, the union had succeeded in gaining an official break of ten minutes in the morning, in order to combat some of the effects of working in the cold of the winter:



I start working at about eight-thirty, at ten we get up to have a cup of tea, at ten in the morning. It's a break because those ten minutes they give us in the morning, we work extra in the afternoon, we pay for it. We asked for it in the wintertime, because it's freezing, it's cold; sometimes you don't have time to have breakfast and at ten you have a chance to have it. (Ana)

The system of piecework has adverse effects on the occupational health of the workers in the garment industry. Most workers perform one specific task which entails one movement which is repeated many times throughout the day. There are minimal safeguards against permanent injury, such as adequate seating or the correct positioning of the machines. These kinds of strains can lead to permanent problems with tendons, ligaments and the spinal column, which not only affect the health of the worker, but also diminish her earning power substantially. Ester suffers from tendonitis in her shoulders, which she is attempting to have recognised as an occupational injury in order to become eligible for a pension to compensate the shortfall in her income:

My normal salary, not taking into account that I'm ill, was [US\$ 285.71]. But now, as I'm ill, it's not. I mean, as it's piecework, it's whatever I can produce. (...) Now, I'm taking home just half of it. (..) I have to wait for the resolution of the *Superintendencia* so that they recognise it as an occupational injury (..) and I can claim a pension for incapacity of 35% or 30%. And that's like another addition they give you for the salary you're losing. Then, my situation will be more normal. (Ester)

Ester is fortunate in that she works in an established firm, with a contract which entitles her to claim compensation for her injury. All four women have a contract for an indefinite period of time, which specifies their job, their wage and the form of remuneration. However, this does not in itself guarantee their job, as the firm is legally entitled to trim its workforce according to the production schedule, with a month's notice or a month's salary in lieu. This is often the reason used in order to sack troublesome workers, such as those who become involved in union activities (various interviews).

There are many more garment workers in informal situations or outworking from home who have no legal protection of their employment. This is a widespread situation in the textile



and garment sector. Many large, 'formal' firms in Chile contract work out to informal workers in their homes, which often leads to whole families sewing garments in order to meet the demands of the firm and struggling to make their salary. There also exists a sector of informal 'sweatshops' which employ large numbers of women under appalling conditions and for low pay. These situations are not covered by the present study; however, three women who worked together in a small informal workshop were interviewed.

### **3.2.1.3 Soledad, Carmen and Ema**

Soledad (34), Carmen (45) and Ema (33) work in Soledad's front room, where they have a cutting area, two industrial sewing machines and a steam press. The workshop has been established for about four years and they have an informal arrangement with a boutique which provides the majority of their orders. The boutique places an order and provides the fabric, while Soledad creates the designs and the patterns. Then the garments are manufactured between the three of them.

Soledad, Carmen and Ema operate the workshop as a collective and this means that they are considerably more comfortable regarding conditions and rhythm of work. However, their income fluctuates substantially according to their orders. In a good month, they may earn between US\$ 952.38 and US\$ 1190.48, from which the costs of rent, energy and materials are deducted and the profits divided between them. However, in a lean month, they may earn as little as US\$ 285.71 from the boutique orders. At these times, the three of them turn to other activities, mainly manufacturing garments from left-over fabrics which they market themselves.

Soledad has worked in larger workshops before and it was the experience of working under the pressure of the production line, coupled with the bad treatment of workers in general which prompted her to become self-employed:

But it's still enjoyable work, in spite of the uncertainty. I prefer to work like this than with a boss. In the workshops, they exploit you terribly, and the environment is terrible (..) and they pay you really badly, they never value your

work. I worked in the summer in a big garment factory doing patterning and I'm telling you, they owed me money in the end. And if things go badly for them, they just shut the door in your face, and you don't have the possibility that we do to find another way [to make money]. For example, I give salsa classes to foreigners in the summer, because I take students from a language school, or a cookery course .. I mean I have to do what I can.

But it's not a job where you can have total security; it's really relative, but at the end of the day, it's better than being shut up in an office, with the way they treat you. (...). So I prefer to work like this and know that if I starve to death, it's down to me, and if not, if I succeed, then it's because of the effort that we've made, and it's not as if all the money is going to go to someone else. (Soledad)

This negative view of work in larger workshops seems to be borne out by Ester's description of working under pressure *a trato* in her factory. Her description conveys vividly the demands imposed on the workers by the production schedule:

Because it's piecework, then the more you work, the more you earn. So you're always thinking of what you're going to earn and not of chatting. But at lunch, then we do talk in the canteen; we have half an hour, we swallow and we talk, (..) even for eating we're *a trato*, we're really fast! Sometimes we chat at work, but when they catch you, they tell you off. (...) Each firm has internal rules. And the only thing it says on the rule list is "don't do this, don't do that, no, no, no. Just produce, produce, produce." I'm serious, "don't run, don't shout, don't cry.. don't have a nervous breakdown!" They don't have that last one but they will! (Ester)

Although Ester gives a light-hearted view of the anxiety experienced by many workers carrying out their tasks under pressure, the problems caused by stress are serious. They are compounded by the threat of dismissal if production quotas are not met. Thus workers carry out their tasks under conditions of extreme anxiety and it is apparently common to see women break down into tears at their machines. These feelings of anxiety are often reinforced by the supervisors who enforce the rule list and urge workers to maintain production. It is this type of pressured hierarchical relationship that Soledad rejects, preferring to work under more humane conditions, albeit at the price of income stability.

### 3.2.2 Agribusiness



### 3.2.2.1 Agribusiness in Regions VI and VII

Both the VIth and the VIIth Regions have a long established history of agricultural production, with advantageous soil and climatic conditions in the valleys which have favoured the cultivation of a wide range of fruit species (Murray, 1996). Nationally, the VIth Region has the greatest concentration of land dedicated to fruit production, amounting to 51 160 has. in the 1987/88 season. This accounted for 33.7 per cent of Chile's total fruit production in 1988/89 (Díaz, 1991: 72). The VIIth Region has less land dedicated to fruit production, although this amounted to 23 310 has. in the 1987/89 season (Díaz, 1991: 83).

A wide range of fruit species are cultivated in the VI Region, including table grapes, apples, oranges, pears, kiwis, cherries and plums. However, it is apples and table grapes which account for the highest tonnage produced in the region, with 11 170 has. and 8 700 has. of land dedicated to their cultivation in 1989 (Díaz, 1991: 74).

In the VIIth Region, a similar range of fruits are cultivated, with the exception of oranges. Again, red and green apples are the most significant, with red apples accounting for 7 901 has. in 1990 (Murray, 1996: 254). Other significant fruit export species in the region include kiwis, 4 863 has., pears, 4 728 has., table grapes, 1 789 has., and cherries, accounting for 1 432 has. (Murray, 1996: 253). The production of kiwis for export increased dramatically during the 1980s, with the VIIth Region becoming the principal producer of this fruit.

The case studies are drawn from in-depth interviews with women from very different communities within these two regions. The first location lies in the VIth Region, is the small settlement of Las Mercedes in the *comuna* of Graneros. The municipal town of Graneros is situated in the province of Cachapoal, VIth Region. The regional capital, Rancagua, lies approximately 50 km to the south. Graneros is an area with a well-established agribusiness sector, with table grapes, apples, pears and peaches as the principal species cultivated. However, a more recent development is the cultivation of onions and garlic for the international market.



Las Mercedes is situated about seven kilometres to the west of the urban centre of Graneros. This represents a community of approximately twenty households which depend on wage labour in agribusiness, despite its proximity to an urban centre. There are no public transport links from Las Mercedes to Graneros and only an unpaved road links the settlement to the paved highway. The isolation of the settlement means that it retains a relatively traditional rural way of life. However, the extent of agribusiness in the area means that few households own land beyond a family-sized plot, making them dependent on wage labour in agriculture in order to survive. Thus, while agriculture may offer a few permanent employment opportunities to men, the women of the settlement rely on seasonal employment in agribusiness to provide a wage income which is vital for ensuring the survival of the household through the winter months. There are relatively few packing plants in the immediate area, and the women seem reluctant to venture further afield to find this type of work. However, the extent of export agriculture is such in this sector that there is a range of work available in the fields and orchards within walking distance for the women of Las Mercedes.

In contrast, the second location is the city of Curicó, the capital of the province of the same name in the VIIth Region. This represents a large urban centre, which nevertheless, is also largely dependent on agribusiness to provide employment. Many of the service industries in the city are based upon agriculture, providing employment for a substantial proportion of the regional workforce (Murray, 1996: 246). This means that although alternative employment opportunities may exist, seasonal employment in agribusiness provides the central wage-earning activity for many households, particularly those from low-income neighbourhoods on the outskirts of the city.

Table 3.3 presents the demographic characteristics of the participants who were involved in seasonal work in agribusiness within the two regions. Six interviews were selected for detailed analysis, five from Las Mercedes and two from Curicó. All the women have worked during the season for a number of years, in a variety of activities which represent the range of employment opportunities available to women in this sector. Women are employed in specific tasks in almost all the stages of production: in the pruning and selection of the

young fruit on the tree, the application of pesticides during the growing season and the harvest, all of which take place in the field. In the packing plant, women are employed in the cleaning, weighing and packing of the fruit to be exported. In addition, in certain regions, such as Region VI, there are jobs for women in the fruit processing and freezing plants which continue into the winter.

**Table 3.3**  
**Demographic characteristics of interviewees working in agribusiness**

Name	Age	Education (years of schooling)	Marital status	No. of children	Number of residents in household
<b>Las Mercedes</b>					
Luisa	23	7	Married	2	5
Berta	25	7	Married	1	11
Sara	34	7	Consensual union	3	11
Ruth	38	4	Married	2	5
<b>Curicó</b>					
Anita	29	8	Married	2	5
Clara	42	9	Married	2	4

Source: Survey carried out in Chile by author, 1993-1994.

The fact that women are viewed as the ideal labour force for these tasks is again due in part to the perceived (and often imaginary) range of 'feminine skills' they possess. These include greater manual dexterity and gentleness which minimises damage to the fruit, as well as the maintenance of high levels of productivity and quality on the packing line. These ideas have been widely accepted and articulated by employers in export fruit production (Lago and Olavarría, 1981; Campaña, 1985; Lago, 1987; Valdés, 1988; Bradshaw, 1990; Venegas, 1992).

The highest demand for female labour is during the harvesting and the packing season, when the firms are under the greatest pressure to move the fruit into the international marketplace. However, women are also employed for specific tasks in the orchards and vineyards in the spring, such as applying pesticides and fertilisers, and pruning. The season begins as early as August in some regions, with the pruning and other tasks in the field, and continues through to late April, depending on the type of fruit and the region.

The use of piecework pay systems to maximise worker productivity can also be seen in the agribusiness sector. In the fruit packing plants, the work is organised in lines, with a mechanised conveyor belt, so the rhythm of the work is dictated by the machine. The piecework system has also been adapted to the work in fields where workers can be paid by tree, plant or row. While this can result in a heavy workload, it does enable workers to earn a relatively high income during the season. Table 3.4 shows the average earnings of the *temporeras* in this period.

**Table 3.4 Average monthly earnings of *temporeras* in US \$**

Interviewee	Average earnings in US \$ per month	Total earnings for season
Ruth	106.67 (Nov -Jan)	784.78 (4 months)
	285.72 (Jan -Feb)	
Luisa	202.38 (Dec- Jan)	690.48 (3 months)
	285.72 (Jan - Feb)	
Sara	181.43 (Feb-March)	362.86 (2 months)
Berta	181.43 (Feb-March)	362.86 (2 months)
Clara	114.29 (Nov- May)	914.29 (8 months)
Anita	176.20 (Jan- April)	752.38 (4 months)

Source: Survey carried out in Chile by author, 1993-1994



### 3.2.2.2 Ruth and Luisa

In Las Mercedes, work becomes available in early November with the pruning of the peach and apple trees. Women are employed to do the task of removing the smaller fruit buds in order to allow the strongest one to mature. This is known as *raleo*, and the delicacy of the task means that women's smaller hands and lightness of touch are among the perceived characteristics which suit them to this job (Díaz, 1991; Venegas, 1992).

However, it is regarded as relatively 'heavy' work by the *temporeras*, as wooden benches and ladders are used to reach the fruit on the higher branches of the trees. This bench is carried from tree to tree down the line, involving a high degree of physical exertion. The pruning of apple trees is relatively easier and it is possible to maintain a fast rhythm of work; making this a task which is often paid by the piece. The peach trees are more complicated as the fruit is more vulnerable to damage, so the rhythm is slower. This means that work in the peach orchard tends to be paid by the day. In this sector, the *temporera* has a choice between a heavier workload in the apple trees, with the potential to earn a higher wage, or a lighter workload and a lower daily wage.

Ruth (38) has worked in an orchard near her home for the same boss for a number of years before and after her marriage. Her husband is an agricultural worker with stable, albeit low-paid work all year round. She prefers to work in the peach trees:

In the apple trees, it is easier, you can go faster, but it doesn't appeal to me as you have get right up high, and your arms and neck start to hurt. (Ruth)

Ruth is skilled in the delicate task of pruning the peach trees and this has helped ensure her job year after year. This provides work for between two and three months, November to January. During this period, Ruth earned US\$ 4.29 for a day of approximately eight hours. Ruth's *patrón* had her sign 'everything'. However, she was not sure whether this meant she had a contract. Her wages were paid to her without any deductions for her social security contributions. Ruth worked six days a week for a monthly wage of US\$ 106.67. This was a relatively low wage, in her opinion, but one which had the advantage of being guaranteed for

the whole two month period. Ruth went on to work in the onion harvest, a new employment opportunity in the area, which paid higher wages.

Luisa (23) had never worked before this season as she had been taking care of her alcoholic father before her marriage and subsequently her two children. She has always wanted to work, but her husband had not allowed her to do so on the grounds that the children would suffer neglect. However, once the youngest child began walking, Luisa was able to convince her husband that the children were old enough to be left with their maternal grandmother.

Luisa began to work at the end of November, pruning vines in the field. This work involves a variety of tasks, such as removing long shoots from the vine, and removing the smaller fruit buds. The first task was paid by the day and Luisa received US\$ 2.86 for a nine hour day. The second was paid by the piece and Luisa was able to earn between US\$ 4.76 and US\$ 7.14 a day in this task. She worked about two months in the vineyard. Piecework was paid daily while the other tasks were paid every fifteen days. Luisa calculates that she took home about US\$ 202.38 a month while she was working in the vineyard:

I had never earned so much before, the only trouble was it didn't look as much because we were paid every week. (Luisa)

After working in the vineyard for November and December, Luisa went on to work in the onion harvest with Ruth.

The first job in the onion harvest involved following the lines of harvested onions and cutting off the root and the stem, *desmochadura*. This was by far the best job in that season as it was paid by the piece, with the highest wage levels reaching as much as US\$ 23.81 in a day. Both Luisa and Ruth received average earnings of about US\$ 71.43 pesos a week in the *desmochadura*. However, this lucrative work only lasted from January to February, as so many workers arrived from the immediate surrounding area to take advantage of the high wages. In the *desmochadura*, women and men worked together, and of approximately eighty people working in the field, the majority were men.

There was more work available in the onion fields through March clearing up the leavings from the harvest. In this job, there was segregation of tasks, with the women picking up the leavings and the men filling the bins at the end of the lines. As Ruth explains:

That is a heavy job, and so it belongs to the men. (Ruth)

This was paid at a daily rate of US\$ 5.95. In both the *desmochadura* and the clearing, work began at 8.00 am, with the arrival of the workers checked by list. The pace of work was steady during the *desmochadura*, although the temperatures were high during the period and there was little shade in the open field. Lunch was at 12.00 am, when workers would find a shady spot to eat food brought from home. The absence of facilities was one of the disadvantages of working in the field mentioned by Ruth and Luisa: there was nowhere to wash the mud from their hands before eating lunch and going to the bathroom was problematic as they were working together with men:

There was a cornfield and we all had to go together and guard one another.  
(Ruth)

However, the *desmochadura* was so well-paid that it was possible to earn the day's wage by three o'clock in the afternoon, and many of the women would ask permission to leave early and return to the more comfortable facilities of their homes.

Neither Ruth or Luisa received a contract for the work in the onions, although it seems there was an attempt to draw up contracts:

One day there were some people, they came to sign contracts with us; I, at least, didn't get it back, another lady did, but they hadn't signed it with the patrón, they were badly done, they had the names all wrong, so they were no good! The only thing was that he paid the end-of-contract settlement. (Ruth)

This lack of clear contractual relations is a common feature of work in the fields.

*Temporeras* are often asked to sign blank contracts, as well as blank end-of-contract forms.



This clearly jeopardises the workers, particularly in terms of their wage levels, which can be altered several times during the course of one job

The jobs that Ruth and Luisa took during the season are a good illustration of the type of work available to women in agribusiness in the fields. As export agriculture is well established in this region, there were ample opportunities and both the women were able to find work within half an hour's walk of their homes. This seemed to compensate for the inconveniences of the conditions and both expected to work in similar activities in the following season. There is also work available in the few nearby packing plants, but Ruth was unwilling to explore this possibility, even though she is aware that it is possible to earn higher wages in the packing plant.

### **3.2.2.3 Sara and Berta**

Sara (34) and Berta (25) are also from Las Mercedes. They both worked in the export grape for three months during the season. The first job was in the vineyard where they were arranging the bunches of grapes prior to the packing process. This was paid by the piece and lasted only a few days. Sara and Berta earned an average of US\$ 5.48 in a day of eight and a half hours. They worked six days a week and took home US\$ 32.86. The pace of work was normal, although each worker carried a bench along the lines of vines which made the work heavier. There were official breaks during the day, but they depended on the whim of the boss:

Depended on how the boss was, sometimes he was in a good mood and he'd give us a break. (Sara)

Similarly to the onion field, there were few facilities and workers ate lunch brought from home in the vineyard. There were no contracts given for this work.

From this job, Sara and Berta passed into the packing plant proper. Here they were employed as *limpiadoras*, one of the early stages in the packing process, cleaning bunches of grapes. Any leaves and damaged fruit must be removed from the bunch, and it must be clipped into

shape before being packed. The work in a packing plant is hard. The *temporeras* work standing for long hours, with the pace of work imposed by the production line:

Standing, sometimes we would sit down for a little while but you always got told off. (Berta)

Sara and Berta work in the first stage of the packing process in the plant. From the cleaning, some of the next stages include weighing and calibration before the fruit moves along the conveyor to be packed. The plant was a medium-sized one, employing two hundred people in total. The majority of them were women: there were three lines of women, with one hundred and thirty in total. The day began at 9.00 am and finished any time between 7.00 and 8.30 p.m., until all the grapes that had been cut that day had been cleaned. However, as well as an hour for lunch, there was an official break at 6.00 in the evening, when the firm provided the workers with a snack and a drink. This work was also paid by the piece at a rate of US\$ 0.14 per box, which enabled Sara and Berta to earn an average of US\$ 6.19 a day. Sara and Berta worked in the packing plant for a month through March and, although they worked only two months, their total earnings for the season came to approximately US\$ 181.43.

#### **3.2.2.4 Clara and Anita**

Clara (42) lives in a neighbourhood on the outskirts of Curicó in the VIIth Region. Her husband works as a mechanic and she herself has worked as a *temporera* for fifteen years as well as other jobs. Last season, Clara worked on the calibrator, a machine which ensures the correct weight of the final box. This task is the next stage following the selection of the fruit in the packing process. Her task is to ensure that the fruit passes individually through the calibrators, so that the packers receive the correct weight of fruit to pack into the boxes. Here she describes some of the problems associated with working to the rhythm imposed by the machine:

So, on the other side of the calibrator, the fruit, when too much comes down, it starts to spill over the side and the person who is on that side has to work hard

to make sure that it goes through one at a time in each calibrator. And so with so much movement like that, your kidneys end up really painful. (..) Because sometimes when the thing fills up, and there's a computer up above which is monitoring everything, so if two fruits go through the same calibrator, it comes out wrong at the other end, because the person who is packing doesn't get the same weight. So sometimes even the bosses have to go above the calibrator to help you out. (Clara)

The range of export fruit species cultivated in Curicó offers almost continuous work through the season. Clara worked for a packing firm that also incorporated a refrigeration plant and this enabled her to work for eight months in the same firm, from November to May. Work began with the selection of cherries, passing on to the freezing of strawberries, followed by plums, peaches and concluding with apples, the final fruit of the season:

They didn't let people go because, as the strawberry finished and the plum started, then they began to send people to the packing plant, the same people from the refrigeration they sent them to the packing to start on the other fruit. That's why you were able to work eight months continuously. (Clara)

Clara worked in tasks which were paid by the day and she received US\$ 3.81 a day plus lunch and transport. This was stipulated in the contract that all the workers in her firm received. However, although this is an improvement over the contractual conditions experienced by the women in Graneros, the contract itself does not guarantee security of employment as the firm retains the right to let workers go without notice should the schedule require it.

The shift begins at 7.00 am and ended at 4.00 p.m., with half an hour for lunch. At the start of the season, there is a high volume of fruit to be packed and the shift can be extended from twelve up to eighteen hours until all the order has been packed. Furthermore, at the start of the season, *temporeras* work seven days a week, which only reduces to six towards the end of the season. Workers are paid overtime, at a rate of US\$ 0.67 per hour. However, as Clara points out, this is a low rate for overtime, considering that a shift can extend into the night, with no breaks for the workers:



Sometimes, when there is a shipment or an order and it has to be got out, they get it out, I mean, they don't worry too much about the people. Because with just one meal, people can't be there that many hours. Afterwards they give you a cup of tea, that's all, and nothing more until the next day, when you have another tea in the morning. And you have to spend the whole night with nothing, and in that cold, imagine! (Clara)

Clara would take home approximately US\$ 114.29 a month, including overtime, which brought her earnings for the season to approximately US\$ 914.29, which at times was considerably more than her husband's earnings. However, for Clara, the conditions in the packing are too hard, particularly the cold, so she is looking for work in the fields and orchards for the next season.

Anita (29) lives in another neighbourhood on the outskirts of Curicó and both she and her husband work as a *temporeros*. Anita works in the packing plants where it is possible to extend the period of work, while her husband works in the fields. She has worked as a packer for seven years in plants in the surrounding area, and Anita has worked in strawberries, apples, kiwis and grapes. Packers are paid by the piece and while making a good wage depends on the skill and speed of the individual, again workers are forced to follow the accelerated pace of the machine.

Anita worked from January to April packing kiwis. Here she describes the frustrations of working at the final stages of the production process:

The kiwi has many flaws, oh, the perfect kiwi is hard to find. So that's the job of the one who's up above, the ones who are selecting and when something bad comes down next to you who's packing, and you're faced with this kiwi, well then you get angry. You get angry because the machine runs and runs and the kiwis are counted out exactly for the tray. In the moment that you have too many or there are three short, or three bad ones, you get really angry. (...) And then the machine stops, when the mouth fills up, the machine breaks down. Fixing that breakdown can take half an hour or more, imagine what the owners feel like! And when there's a quota to be met.(..) And if we have to stay five hours extra because the machine has been down five hours, you only get paid for four extra hours. You are made responsible for the breakdown. (Anita)

Anita prefers to work the night shift as the conditions of work are a little easier. Only the line supervisors are present and there is more tolerance when workers become too tired to work at the pace of the machine:

Because when a person gets too sleepy, they move you, they put you in a part where it's slower, a machine which is slower. But you still move all night long, but it is a bit slower. (Anita)

The night shift begins at 9.00 p.m. and ends at 8.30 the following morning. There was only one break during the shift, of fifteen minutes. The rate was approximately US\$ 6.67 per shift, and Anita took home between US\$ 164.29 and US\$ 188.10 a month, for seven shifts a week. She had to miss a few days as her mother was very ill at this time, and other workers were able to earn as much as US\$ 230.95 a month. Anita's total earnings for the season were US\$ 752.38, which was a higher amount than her husband. Anita is the main breadwinner in her family due to the extensive availability of employment for women in agribusiness.

The case studies discussed here illustrate the extent to which female labour is an essential component of export agriculture in Chile. Women are incorporated throughout the process to carry out a wide range of tasks, providing rural women with employment opportunities that previously did not exist. This is particularly the case in isolated rural areas such as Las Mercedes, where there are no alternative employment opportunities for women. The importance of this sector for women's employment is illustrated by the case studies from an urban area such as Curicó, where, although there are alternative employment opportunities, working in agribusiness forms the principal option for large numbers of women.

### **3.2.3 Domestic Service**

In chapter two, some of the market conditions for domestic service were examined, highlighting its countercyclical nature and some of the contradictions which arise from this. Moreover, the conditions of work in paid domestic service are very different from those in the previous sectors. In the first instance, domestic chores are culturally assigned to be part

of women's gender role, and as such, the majority of women in Chile carry out domestic chores in their homes. This means that paid domestic service can be viewed as the wife or mother delegating part of the responsibilities of her role to another woman, who is 'naturally' able to perform them as they also form part of her role within her own family. This gives rise to a set of conditions and relations which are peculiar to paid work in domestic service, and in sharp contrast to work under an industrial process.

The variety in the situations of the interviewees working in domestic service reflects some of the changes that have taken place in this market over the last few years. Working as a live-in maid imposes working conditions which infringe on other aspects of the individual's life. As job opportunities for women have improved, there has been a movement away from the live-in maid and its servile conditions which many women are unwilling to accept. Working on a daily basis brings domestic service closer in character to that of other occupations, lessening the social stigma attached to being a live-in servant. However, as women become less willing to live-in, wage levels have risen considerably, making this an advantageous occupation for some women.

The nature of domestic service means that the work place is the home of another family, and that the work process is usually carried out by a sole individual. This means that there is an absence of a set organisation or rhythm of work, as there is little need to co-ordinate tasks and sequences between a number of workers. At times, this can mean greater freedom for a worker to organise her tasks and time around the routines of the family (Todaro and Gálvez, 1987: 14 - 15). However, although a worker may have her own routine in order to complete her allotted tasks, this is subject to interruptions and re-organisations according to the daily needs of the employer and the family. This means that a worker is subject to the close direction and control of her *patrona* (boss), making non-monetary conditions, such as the quality of personal relationships and mutual obligations, an important aspect of this occupation.



Table 3.5 presents the demographic characteristics of five interviewees working in domestic service. There exist two forms of domestic service in Chile: one is on a live-in basis, while the other is on a daily or hourly basis. Only one interviewee lives with her employers, as her home is a city about 300 kilometres south of Santiago. Four of the women were working during the day for the same family, while two worked in four or five different houses over the week. This is in keeping with the tendencies of the market for domestic service observed in chapter two.

**Table 3.5**  
**Demographic characteristics of interviewees working in domestic service**

<i>Trabajadoras de casa particular</i>					
Name	Age	Education (years of schooling)	Marital status	No. of children	No. of residents in household
Marilyn	32	10	Consensual union	2	4
Clementina	36	12	Single	1	4
Eugenia	40	4	Separated	4	5
Juanita	42	9	Married	4	8
Raquel	49	8	Married	2	4

Source: Survey carried out in Chile by author, 1993-1994

The average earnings of the interviewees are shown in Table 3.6. It can be seen that Clementina, as a live-in maid, earns a higher average than the other women.

**Table 3.6 Average monthly earnings of *trabajadoras de casa particular* in US \$**

Interviewee	Average earnings in US \$ per month
Clementina	250.00
Eugenia	180.95
Marilyn	114.24
Raquel	219.05
Juanita	238.10

Source: Survey carried out in Chile by author, 1993-1994

### 3.2.3.1 Clementina

Clementina (36) has worked in domestic service all of her life. She is unmarried but has a son who lives with her parents in a provincial city. Clementina's present job is only her second post, and having had considerable stability and satisfaction in her employment history, she now works as a live-in maid for a large family. Her job consists of cleaning, food preparation, child-care and all the other domestic tasks that are part of the wife and mother's role in a household. Here she describes how her working day is organised to facilitate the routines of the family:

And I start: the bottle for the baby, bottle for Margarita. I pull back the covers on Margarita's bed and Pepe's and Juan's. (...) Then when I've done the bedrooms, I follow with the bathrooms, and I turn on the floor polisher last so as not to wake up the whole house. Then I go onto the lunch, I always start to make lunch at 9.00, 9.30 and then I go on to see to the ones who still have to get up, señora M.'s room, then I lay the table, they [the children] come home, they have lunch. Then I wash up the dishes and I have a rest. After I've finished all the kitchen, I have a rest. (Clementina)

Clementina has established a routine for herself which meets the needs dictated by the family routine and at the same time allows her to take some time for a much needed rest after lunch. However, even during this rest time, Clementina will usually take the ironing with her to her room; thus her break becomes an opportunity to perform a less strenuous task, but one which is nevertheless part of her job.

This is characteristic of domestic service on a live-in basis, or *puertas adentro*, as it is known in Chile. As her workplace and restplace are within the same space, any 'extra' time gained by completing her tasks more quickly is not considered her own, and her employer may ask her to complete further tasks. Working *puertas adentro* means that the distinction between work and free time becomes blurred, effectively preventing the person from having a private life. A live-in maid's only true free time is on her day off, when typically she will be away for the whole day.

Clementina's average working day as a live-in maid is approximately ten hours long. She works seven days a week, preferring to save up her free Sundays until the end of the month, when she travels to the city where her son lives with his grandparents. In common with the majority of domestic workers, Clementina does not have a full contract with her employers, although her employer pays her social security, pension and health contributions according to the law. After these deductions, Clementina receives US\$ 250 a month. Although Clementina may work up to a seventy hour week, this is still a high salary relative to many other occupations, particularly as food, rent and bills are included as a non-monetary wage while she lives with her employers.

Clementina's is a salary which is only slightly higher than the average that was being offered for a live-in maid in Santiago at the time of the study. There has been an increase in the demand for live-in staff, with a corresponding decrease in supply as women prefer to work *puertas afuera*, or take on other employment altogether (Hojman, 1989a)). In addition, a good live-in maid has now become highly sought after as *patronas* seek to find and retain a reliable person's services for their family over a period of many years. Thus, salaries for *puertas adentro* have risen to these high levels as a reflection of this increased demand. This trend has continued: in 1996, the salaries being offered were between US\$ 285.71 to US\$ 404.76 for a *puertas adentro* maid (see chapter two).

The high wages offered together with the non-monetary advantages of living in the employers' house can transform the occupation of live-in maid from the least desirable option



to one offering a good opportunity to earn and save a considerable amount of money. For Juanita (42), whose case study will be presented below, this is now a good option to maximise her earnings in the last years of her working life:

I have been offered a job *puertas adentro*, (..) which I could now do as my children have all grown up, and from that I could save some money and when I can't work any longer, I can open a small shop in my house. That's what I want to do. (Juanita)

However, for many women in domestic service, living-in still retains many of the original disadvantages discussed above and *puertas afuera* remains a more dignified employment option, as well as a financially rewarding one.

### 3.2.3.2 Eugenia

Eugenia (40) had worked in a variety of activities, including garment manufacture and seasonal work in agribusiness, before her present post working *puertas afuera* for a family. Eugenia is a female head of household with four children to support. In her present job, Eugenia works from 8.30 am to 2.00 p.m. Monday to Saturday, while on Thursdays she stays until 6.15 p.m.. Eugenia does not have a formal contract; however, her employer pays her social security, pension and health contributions in the same way that Clementina's employer does. Although her hours of work are clearly defined, in contrast to Clementina's, while Eugenia is at work, her time is at the disposal of her employer. Eugenia has a set routine, but this again is subject to change depending on the family's activities that day. Eugenia is not disturbed by this however, as she enjoys a very friendly relationship with her *patrona*, who is the 'housewife', so if there is any extra work to be done, they do it together:

Everything turns out right for me, I have enough time for everything, for extra ironing, for gossiping with *señora M.*! (Eugenia)

Eugenia works approximately twenty-two hours a week for *señora M.* for which she earns US\$ 40.48. In addition, her boss pays Eugenia's electricity bill of around US\$ 19.05 a month, bringing her monthly salary to the equivalent of US\$ 180.95. This type of

arrangement is quite common, as well as the payment of part of the wage in kind. This may be a carry-over from the original live-in wage which includes keep and bills as a large non-monetary proportion of the total salary. Furthermore, it appears to be an unspoken understanding that the employer provides the meals for the domestic worker, even if she is only there for part of the day. This is in contrast to most other occupations where lunch is at the worker's own expense.

As Eugenia's normal hours of work are clearly defined, her employers regard any extra hours she does as overtime. Eugenia is paid between US\$ 3.57 and US\$ 4.76 for any additional hours of baby-sitting she may do.

### 3.2.3.3 Marilyn

Marilyn (32) has two children and works two to three days a week *puertas afuera*. She has worked in a variety of occupations and working part-time as a maid enables her to combine work with taking care of the children. Marilyn earns US\$ 9.52 per day, which she is paid daily in cash. Marilyn does not have a contract and asks her employer not to pay any of her contributions as she prefers not to 'lose' any of her money. This is a point of view widely held among women working in domestic service and temporeras alike, according to employers. Contributions, particularly pensions, are viewed as a deduction which lowers the wages a person receives today rather than a saving for the future. For employers, paying the contributions is a legal obligation, and while Marilyn's *patrona* may save herself the paperwork and pay her total wages directly, Clementina's and Eugenia's prefer to abide by the law. This may also be a reflection of a changing attitude towards domestic staff as employees with the same status as those in any other occupation, making a break with the traditional servant-mistress relationship.

Marilyn works on a more informal basis, she has an agreed daily schedule, but is also available to baby-sit during unsociable hours if her *patrones* need to go out or away for the night. If she stays the night, Marilyn is paid half the daily rate and is given the evening meal.

However, if Marilyn is not quick, she will find herself caught up in the following day's routine, as she points out:

As soon as they get home, I leave, at 7.00 or 8.00 am. I always try to leave,.. before they all get up so that I don't find myself obliged to make beds or any of that! Because your conscience says, "well, I'll help a little bit". So I try to leave before they get up. (Marilyn)

#### **3.2.3.4 Raquel and Juanita**

Raquel (49) and Juanita (42) are both married with grown-up families. Both women have worked in domestic service for a number of years, and now work for hourly rates *puertas afuera* in different houses. This is the form of domestic service which is closest in character to other jobs in the service sector, where the individual offers their labour and time to carry out a clearly defined set of tasks in return for a monetary wage. The non-monetary aspects of work in domestic service as well as the sense of personal obligation mentioned by Marilyn above are minimised. By working in different houses, a person can set their own fee on the basis of the weekly tasks to be done and the financial rewards can be high.

Raquel worked for the same family for a year in 1989. She would work six days a week, from 9.00 to 2.00, doing a variety of tasks, including cooking, childcare and cleaning. For this she earned US\$ 95.24 a month. In 1990, Raquel left this job and began to work on different days in different houses. This change was motivated by the higher income she could earn:

And then I started working like I do now, once a week in different houses, because you earn more, yes. It pays more, but we do work hard too; you work hard but it works out better. (Raquel)

Now she works four days a week in five different houses and earns US\$ 54.76 for an approximately thirty hour week. The tasks she carries out are cleaning with some laundry; she has no childcare or cooking responsibilities. Raquel does not have a contract with any of



her employers, nor does she have any deductions made from her wages. This means that her total monthly income is US\$ 219.05:

And to think that I earn that in four days; I, for one, am happy with that!  
(Raquel)

Juanita works in three different houses for four days a week. From a forty hour week, she takes home around US\$ 238.10 a month. In one house, she has only cleaning tasks to carry out, while in another, she takes care of the children. Juanita is happy with this variety and, as all her employers work during the day, she is free to set her own pace of work:

[I work] All day, but I work with people who all work, so I can work in peace.  
(Juanita)

Once the set of allotted tasks has been completed, the worker's time becomes her own, the same as any other worker, as Raquel illustrates:

I don't take breaks, I prefer to finish earlier and rest in my own home. (Raquel)

The domestic service sector is excluded from much of the labour legislation which defines workers' and employers' rights and obligations in other sectors. The working day is longer for domestic servants than for other workers, with a maximum of twelve hours if the person is *puertas afuera* and no established maximum if the person works *puertas adentro*. The only legal guarantee established is that there must be a rest period of twelve hours in the day, with an uninterrupted period of rest of nine hours between one working day and the next. Domestic workers do not enjoy the right to maternity leave and can therefore be dismissed from their post if they become pregnant (CATEMU, 1993; Gálvez and Todaro, 1984).

However, even these minimal safeguards can only be enforced if there is a contract between the worker and the *patrona*. For the majority of domestic workers, it is a matter of luck in finding a sympathetic employer, although there does appear to be an increased awareness of their rights as workers (various interviews, Santiago). As the employer also has a need to find a reliable and trustworthy person to work in their home, these personal relationships of

mutual dependency serve to guarantee a certain stability of employment for domestic workers in the absence of formal contractual relations.

In terms of working conditions, all of the women interviewed were content with the conditions in their places of work. While some women mentioned the skin irritations caused at times from the extensive use of cleaning products and detergents, this was viewed as a normal condition of housework. The lack of dissatisfaction with working conditions stems from the fact that paid domestic work is a commercialisation of a woman's role within her own home and family. As the work is carried out within a house, under similar conditions to those in her own home, it seems that it is not perceived as a 'workplace' in the same way that a factory or an office would be. It seems that as long as the employer supplies the minimum facilities, such as a washing machine, to help carry out their tasks, domestic workers were satisfied with their physical conditions of work (various interviews).

However, as in the aspect of labour relations discussed above, the nature of the personal relationship between the worker and her *patrona* is again influential in determining the quality of working conditions for a domestic worker. A demanding and unsympathetic boss can create a heavier workload as well as adding levels of stress and anxiety to the working day. Raquel describes the effects of working under these conditions:

The place where I worked for a year and eight months the lady was a very nervous person with problems in her marriage; (..) she was very bad-tempered with everyone, and as a result of how she was, of her character, I started to get ill from my nerves. (..) And her children, she treated them really badly..... So I stayed a long time, longer than I would have liked, I did it for the children. Until I couldn't stand it any more, because I was going around bursting into tears, I mean it was that bad for me working there. (Raquel)

This illustrates the dimension of personal obligation which characterises work as a domestic servant. Raquel felt a responsibility to protect the children of her employer at the cost of her own welfare. This is an extension of the responsibilities she feels towards her own children. It is as if by taking on part of her employer's domestic responsibilities on a waged basis, a domestic worker also takes on other aspects of that employer's family role. Raquel brought

to her job the ideals of self-sacrifice and duty which form part of the female role within the household. This is echoed in Marilyn's feeling of duty to help out with chores when she is not officially working as well as in Clementina's use of her rest time to get ahead on the ironing and to take care of her employers' baby. Thus, the proximity of paid domestic work to the traditional female role imposes a set of labour relations on the worker and her employer which are characterised by personal relationships of mutual dependency and obligation which are not expressed as explicitly in other sectors of women's employment. This aspect is reinforced by the importance of non-monetary rewards in the *puertas adentro* form of domestic service. While working *puertas afuera* appears to reduce these ties of obligation and impose more conventional work relations, domestic service remains the occupation most closely associated with 'women's work'.

### **3.2.4 Public Administration**

The administration sector is one which incorporates large numbers of women. Women are employed in service activities which are regarded as skilled in certain measure, such as secretaries, receptionists and telephone operators. These occupations in administration incorporate relations of service and support within the hierarchy of the firm and the office. These jobs are widely stereotyped as 'women's jobs', which may stem from the ideal of service as a further aspect of the 'feminine' role. In addition, these jobs often involve contact with the general public and clients, and, as such, represent the 'public face' of a firm. In Chile, cultural perceptions combine with *machista* relations to make the preferred 'public face' a feminine one. As the primary function of the municipality is to provide services and support to the local community, this becomes an important relation which underlies women's employment in the municipality. Service and support are again aspects of the cultural ideal of the 'feminine' role. This leads to the stereotyping of these activities as 'women's work.'

The sector of public administration incorporates much of the state infrastructure and the services it provides. In order to gain an insight into this sector, interviews were carried out with women working in the municipality of a growing and increasingly affluent suburban borough of Santiago. The municipality is a large one, employing approximately 400 people.



All the women interviewed estimated the proportion of women to be between 60 per cent and 70 per cent of the total number of employees. This proportion is in keeping with the other offices in the public sector in Chile (Campusano and Lagarrigue, 1992). Wages are low within the municipality in comparison to the private sector, which may deter men from taking on as many jobs as women in this sector. However, the municipality provides certain non-monetary benefits for women which enable them to combine work and home roles more easily than in the private sector, as will be discussed in depth below. This means that employment in the municipality is an attractive option for women, providing a local arena where women may be employed in skilled and professional capacities, whilst maintaining their 'traditional' gender role within the family.

In the municipality, working conditions are relatively homogeneous across the range of departments. The day begins at eight thirty in the morning and enquiries from members of the public are dealt with in the mornings until two o'clock. This establishes the organisation of the workload for the afternoon, which begins at three o'clock. The day ends at five thirty, although in the majority of departments, workers will continue to do overtime. This is the timetable for the municipality, although some departments may be busier than others.

There are three different relations under which functionaries are employed: as plant staff (*de planta*), as contract staff (*a contratada*) and as independent or free-lance workers (*honorarios*). Only the first group have full employment rights, as well as guaranteed security of tenure. This is a legal right known as *inamovilidad de cargo*, which means that a municipal functionary cannot be dismissed unless in extreme circumstances. While this stability was mentioned by the women interviewed as a great advantage of employment in the public sector, it was also identified as the root cause of inefficiency within the municipality, obstructing the possibilities for promotion or advancement. Contract staff are excluded from this security of tenure and can be dismissed without notice if their services are no longer required. Although it is mainly professional people who are hired on a freelance basis, other personnel within the hierarchy are also hired under these conditions. They must invoice the municipality in order to receive their salary, they must pay their contributions independently and have no security of tenure. This is a particularly insecure position for semi-skilled

workers, as will be illustrated by the case of the interviewee working in the municipal archives.

Table 3.7 gives an overview of the demographic characteristics of the seven interviewees which were selected. Two of these women are working as secretaries in different departments, one is in charge of the telephone switchboard, another is responsible for the municipal archive. A further two women are computer technicians and systems analysts. These occupations represent the administrative and technical support services within the municipal hierarchy. One interviewee is an architect

**Table 3.7**

**Demographic characteristics of interviewees working in public administration**

<i>Funcionarias municipales</i>					
Name	Age	Education (years of schooling)	Marital status	No. of children	No. of residents in household
Claudia	26	Over 12	Married	1	3
Rosa	33	12	Married	1	3
Mónica	34	12	Married	3	5
Adriana	41	Over 12	Married	2	3
Inés	30	12	Married	2	4
Verónica	28	Over 12	Married	1	5
Alicia	47	12	Separated	1	3

Source: Survey carried out in Chile by author, 1993-1994

Table 3.8 shows the average salaries of the *funcionarias*. These earnings levels are comparable to those of the interviewees working in other sectors, although as these are white-collar occupations, the salaries tend to be higher overall.

**Table 3.8 Average monthly earnings of *funcionarias* in US \$**

Interviewee	Average earnings in US \$ per month
Rosa	357.14
Inés	285.71
Alicia	178.57
Mónica	261.90
Claudia	200.00
Verónica	357.14
Adriana	833.33

Source: Survey carried out in Chile by author, 1993-1994

### 3.2.4.1 Rosa and Inés

Rosa (33) and Inés (30) work as secretaries in different departments. Both women are married and have recently returned to work after maternity leave. Both have secretarial qualifications and have worked for at least ten years in the municipality. Inés works for the welfare department which deals principally with internal matters relating to personnel. There are three people employed in this department, all of them women, including the director. Inés' work is shared with another secretary, which is sufficient to deal with the relatively light workload, which nevertheless varies. Inés works from eight-thirty to five-thirty, and she also has an extra hour for lunch as part of her post-natal leave. This is the *fuero maternal* which gives a recent mother an extra free hour, officially for the purpose of breastfeeding the baby. This right can be claimed for up to two years after the birth. She has a permanent contract as she is part of the plant staff. Inés earns US\$ 285.71 monthly gross for a thirty-five hour week, with no overtime. A secretary in a private firm can earn at least twice as much as Inés' present salary, but the securities and rights enjoyed by workers in the public sector are mentioned recurrently in the interviews as non-monetary benefits which a higher salary would not compensate:

I have tried [to find work somewhere else]. The thing is, two things: I live about five or six blocks from here, then I got married and then the children, so



I'm near home, so that keeps you,... The ease of the hours, it's so short, at five-thirty we leave.... So all of that, in the end you just stay and stay, and it's the security more than anything. (Inés)

Rosa works in the planning department which deals with planning matters relating to the infrastructure and urbanisation of the borough. This is a large department within the municipality, employing eight people. Six of these are women, including three secretaries. The director is also a woman.

Rosa's job is more like that of a personal assistant as she attends to the public, deals with telephone queries, composes and types documents, as well as maintaining the diaries for the professionals in the planning department. The department attends to the public throughout the day, which makes the workload heavier.

Rosa arrives at the office at nine-thirty because, as she has just given birth to her first baby, the *fuero maternal* entitles her to an hour. Rosa uses the hour to take her baby to the childcare centre. The public begins to arrive from eight-thirty onwards and the workload is heavy as this is one of the busiest departments in the municipality. There is no official break during the morning, although Rosa and her colleagues try to have a coffee in the morning, albeit against the wishes of their boss. Rosa continues working until six-thirty or seven in the evening in order to earn overtime and because her workload demands it. In addition, Rosa is sent to other departments to help out with typing or data entry, for which she is not paid any extra. During particularly busy times, such as election time, she also works Saturdays and Sundays, although she refuses to do so now that her son has been born. Rosa earns an average salary of US\$ 357.14 gross for a 40 hour week, including overtime which is paid at US\$ 1.37 per hour. Rosa always works overtime to earn a little more.

Rosa regards her workload in the planning office as a heavy one, because of having such a wide variety of tasks to carry out:

Exactly, it's exactly because of that, having to do a little of everything. And people come all day long. Also, they give me a lot of work to do that isn't mine,... it doesn't correspond to me. (..) I mean, apart from doing my own

work, they move me to another office to put me in charge of a computer for data entry. So it's heavy, it's heavy. (...) And look, (...) my colleague, and the other one, neither of them compose documents. They give me the documents to prepare, for me to type and then get them signed by the boss and then send them off. I have to see what's most urgent. (Rosa)

Although Rosa organises her own work, the routine is subject to disruptions according to the demands of her boss or the public. This is characteristic of work in the service sector, as was observed in the description of domestic service above. This contrasts with the industrial and manufacturing process, where the routine of the job is fixed. Jobs which provide a service require the ability to perform a number of tasks simultaneously, a skill which the housewife and mother learns as part of her gender role socialisation.

However, in spite of the heaviness of the workload, Rosa feels satisfied by the working conditions in the municipality and plans to remain there. Although Rosa's job is more pressurised and demanding than Ines's, it is again the non-monetary benefits of the public sector which allow her to successfully combine her paid work with her new role as mother.

#### **3.2.4.2 Alicia**

Alicia (47) is a female-head of household, supporting her daughter and grandson. She works in the municipal archive, where she is in charge of retrieving material as it is required by the departments and the public. Alicia has been working there for four years and has no formal qualifications in this area of work, although she has undertaken training courses in computing and the management of archives during her time at the municipality. Nevertheless, her job is regarded as unskilled.

Alicia begins to work at eight-thirty, with the public arriving at eight forty-five. Most of her work is carried out alone, so Alicia organises her own workload in order to give the best service to the public:

Because this is the motor, the motor of the department, if it's not tidy, you can't do any work. (...) We copy plans, everything that is necessary for dealing with the public; we try to deal with people as quickly as possible. So the work here is constant, it's not often that you can say, "I'll leave it for a bit", because you are constantly moving. (Alicia)

The archive closes to the public at one forty-five and the pace of work is more relaxed in the afternoon after Alicia has returned from lunch. Then she completes the jobs that have been left over from the morning as well as retrieving material for specific queries from other departments. Alicia views the organisation of her work as similar in character to that of housework:

Well, as you can see, it's the same as a housewife who starts over here, then begins over there, and also I like to have things tidy and clean because it's nice to get here in the morning and find it at least tidy. You feel that you can give yourself the luxury of saying, "well, I'm going to sit down and drink my tea in peace because I worked a little in advance." It's the same as being at home and saying " I'm going to take advantage now and do the washing tonight so that I can get up a little bit later tomorrow morning." (Alicia)

Nevertheless, work in the archives involves a certain amount of heavy lifting, as the large boxes of files must be moved when retrieving material. As Alicia works alone, the bulk of this lifting falls to her and she has suffered from pains in both arms as a result.

Alicia earns US\$ 178.57 a month for a forty hour week. She works as an *honorario*, providing the service and invoicing the municipality every month in order to receive her salary. Under this condition of employment, Alicia is not entitled to any notice or pay if her services are no longer required. She has no right to any overtime and is excluded from sickness pay and leave. Her income is low, reflecting the semi-skilled nature of her employment and Alicia has to supplement her income by giving flamenco dance lessons at weekends. Nevertheless, her job at the municipality is her main source of income and the insecurity of the position is a source of anxiety:

It's just like that, there is no agreement with us, it's just that it [the contract] can be revoked at any moment. The truth is that we offer our services here that's all. (...) It's a stipulated thing, it's finished and goodbye. But fortunately there



has been more work and we have stayed on. (...) The truth is that we have no guarantee, if we get ill, if you've got independent insurance, well, but we don't have any benefits. (Alicia)

### 3.2.4.3 Mónica

Mónica (34) is married with three children. She gained a technical qualification in industrial electronics after completing her secondary education, and has been working at the municipality for five years. After working as a secretary, Mónica moved into the Administration department and after some departmental re-organisation, she now works managing the central switchboard and communications plant at the municipality.

The workload in the central switchboard includes attending to calls, as well as carrying out administrative tasks such as costing calls and purchasing new lines. There are two women employed in the communications plant. They organise their workload on a day to day basis: one attends to the switchboard in the morning when the volume of calls is greatest, while the other takes charge of all the administrative duties, with a change over for the afternoon shift. The workload is heavy, and both women work through their lunch hour every day in order to complete their tasks:

Because it's not only being at the operator post, and we take turns doing that, or if we have something to do, something urgent, we take turns doing that too, we agree. (...) It's usually the same. There is a routine in that sense, let's say that every month we have to see all the calls of all the telephones in the municipality, that's the routine of the plant itself, but they ask us to do a lot of additional things. That's what breaks the routine. Every day there's an additional order, whether it's buying a line, doing a research task,... we always have a lot of additional jobs. (Mónica)

Mónica is employed *a contratada* and her basic salary is US\$ 261.90 net, rising to an average of US\$ 357.14 net with her overtime hours. Both Mónica and her colleague work extra hours every day, as well as two or three Saturdays a month, due to the volume of work. In addition, there is a high degree of stress involved in the operator's post, which creates difficulties in completing tasks within the normal work hours:

No, I would say that it is heavy work in the switchboard. When you're in the operator post, it's tense and it has nothing relaxed about it. Especially when one person has to take on both tasks and has to do them alone, and one of us is away, whether it's because of holidays or illness, then it's worse. Trying to coordinate the two things, and we have to work with more time, I mean we have to work extra hours. (...) Because we finish operating the switchboard, and then we have to carry on working until past five-thirty, overtime. Or at the weekend, one day of the weekend, Saturday usually. (Mónica)

As the telephone plant is situated in a small room, Mónica and her colleague have to work in adverse conditions. The large, old-fashioned switchboard emits heat, noise and soot, and both women have experienced health problems as a direct result.

Mónica's job is not related to the field of industrial electronics in which she gained her technical qualifications. The job in the municipality arose through personal contacts and was originally a short-term employment option. However, Mónica maintains that it was difficult for her to find work in the field of electronics because of prejudices against women in what is considered a masculine occupation:

And why didn't I carry on in my field? Because it's difficult. For example, I applied for a job in INDISA and (..) they didn't give me priority because I was a woman. Because of the degree that I studied, there aren't that many women who study electronics. So, well, after that I carried on sending out my CV, but then this [job] came through, and then I had my little baby, and then I had another and really, it's much easier to combine being a mother, housewife and worker here. Really there isn't the pressure that you get in a private firm; it's different, I mean you work differently. (Mónica)

Thus, in spite of having had ambitions to work in the field of electronics, and facing low wages and uncomfortable working conditions, Mónica has remained at the municipality. She highlights the opportunity that the municipality offers to women to combine their work and family roles with relative ease. Women are able to take on the professional work roles which in the private sector may be closed to them, either directly through discrimination as in Mónica's case or indirectly through forcing them to make difficult choices between work and family. Thus, although the private sector offers higher salary levels, increased promotional

prospects and professional recognition, the women interviewed perceive the cost of moving to the private sector, in terms of their family role, as being too high. The non-monetary benefits offered by the employment relations in the municipality reduce these costs for the majority of the women interviewed, enabling them to combine work and family roles to a high degree of satisfaction.

#### **3.2.4.4 Claudia**

This is certainly true for Claudia (26), a computer technician working in the planning department. Claudia is married with a young baby, and she has been working at the municipality since before the birth of her son. Claudia is in charge of providing technical support for the planning department, as well as maintaining the information systems for the whole borough. There are approximately fourteen staff employed in this department, and nine of them are women. This is one of only two departments which has a female director. For this skilled job, Claudia earns only US\$ 200.00 a month, while her husband, who is employed in a similar occupation in the private sector, earns US\$ 952.38. However, Claudia has a permanent contract as plant staff, which is one reason for her lower salary. By contrast, Claudia's colleague, Verónica (28), earns US\$ 357.14, as she is contract staff. The higher salaries for contracted staff are a reflection of the municipality's attempt to encourage staff to move from permanent posts to contract posts.

Claudia has a heavy workload as she is presently doing the job of three people, however she refuses to do overtime and works strictly within the established hours. In addition, she habitually leaves early for lunch and at the end of the day, resulting in a working day of seven hours. In Claudia's opinion, she is entitled to a shorter day due to her lower salary and high productivity; these are 'benefits' which could not be taken in the private sector:

I think it's a benefit that I have earned because I earn so little. Because I know I earn little, and so do all the others, so nobody says to me 'why are you leaving early' or anything like that, and as long as I complete my work, there's no problem. (...) It's not like in a private firm, that's the good thing about the public sector, nobody's there looking at what you're doing. (..) There's no pressure, I don't think there's any pressure at all. (...) I work, what is



productive I mean, from nine o'clock to one-thirty, and from three-thirty to five-fifteen. How much is that? Seven hours, so I'm wasting one! (Claudia)

Claudia continues to work at the municipality because of these benefits and because she enjoys the relaxed work atmosphere. She had her child very soon after completing her studies, and was reluctant to remain at home after studying for three years. The municipality offered the opportunity to take on a professional post in close proximity to her home whilst guaranteeing the maternity rights which enabled her to take care of her new baby. However, Claudia is not in favour of the security of tenure for the plant staff, although this is the mechanism allowing her to take flexible working hours:

I do not agree with that because you get another thing at the level of the whole municipality, which lends itself to 'well, why should I bother if they're not going to sack me' so it gives you too much leeway, and then all the staff become like that. .... Because they can't sack you. (Claudia)

#### 3.2.4.5 Verónica

Verónica (28) is married with a young baby. She has been working at the municipality for three years, and has the same qualifications as Claudia. She works in the computing department. There are four people employed in the computer department, three of whom are women, with each person in charge of specific systems. Verónica is under contract to the municipality which, as mentioned above, means that she has a higher grade and salary than the plant personnel doing equivalent jobs. Verónica is paid a salary of US\$ 357.14, which is significantly higher than that paid to Claudia. She works from nine o'clock to six-thirty; however, she has a two-hour lunch from two o'clock to four, as she is claiming her *fuero maternal* entitlement to an extra hour for the feeding of her baby. This fits in with the rhythm of work in the computer department as the majority of the technical problems in the departments are dealt with after office hours.

Verónica considers the workload to be fairly light at the municipality. This, together with the relative laxity in working hours in the public sector, has enabled her to take on another job installing a system for a private marketing firm. Verónica goes to her other job after finishing

at the municipality at six o'clock, where she stays until around nine o'clock, as well as on Saturdays. From this, she earns US\$ 428.57, bringing her total monthly salary to US\$ 785.71. The second job is likely to last at least a year.

Verónica does not wish to leave the job in the municipality because of its proximity to her home and the relaxed atmosphere. In fact, it is this which enables her to take on a second job with minimal problems, as she can easily get permission to leave the municipality early if she is needed at her second job:

I think it is one of the reasons why I haven't changed jobs. It's very close to my home and I don't have to go into the centre of town. (..) Sometimes, I have to ask permission here so that I can escape to the other job! (Verónica)

For Verónica, working in the municipality has enabled her to take on a professional post while exploring her employment options in the private sector. So far, the convenient schedule has allowed her both to take care of her son as well as take on a second job.

#### **3.2.4.6 Adriana**

Adriana (41) is married with two children. She has been working for a year at the municipality after working in the private sector. She is a qualified architect and is employed in the public works department, which employs five architects, all of whom are women. Her job involves overseeing and approving all the urban planning applications in the borough, and she spends two days a week on-site. The rest of the time is spent in the office, dealing with enquiries from the public in the mornings. Adriana earns US\$ 833.33 a month, which is a lower salary than she could make working in the private sector.

However, Adriana had previously worked for a private construction firm and she chose to find work in the municipality precisely because of the advantages the public sector offers in terms of regular hours and a lighter workload. This was particularly attractive to Adriana after trying to combine her paid work with being a mother in the private sector:

It's just that I wanted something more relaxed shall we say, in the construction companies, they take up too much of your time, or there's some emergency on and you have to go in Saturday and Sundays, or you have to stay until late. So I was away from my home too much, I preferred something quieter. (Adriana)

Adriana has been working for a year in the municipality under contract, which is renewed periodically. As contracted staff, she has no right to overtime and so works until five-thirty. Adriana considers the workload to be light, as everything is planned and organised in advance. This fixed schedule enables her to teach in a university one evening a week, and to take on private freelance work on Saturdays. From this extra work, Adriana earns about US\$ 476.19, bringing her total monthly income to approximately US\$ 1 190.48.

For Adriana, as well as the majority of the other women interviewed, the municipality provides an environment where they can develop a professional work role whilst enjoying a range of benefits which guarantee their family roles as mothers and housewives. These include maternity and sick leave rights which are enforced in full. In the private sector, the extensive legislation protecting female workers often leads to discrimination against women and claiming these rights can jeopardise a woman's employment (Todaro and Gálvez, 1990). Furthermore, as mothers, women remain responsible for meeting children from school or day-care centres, as well as seeing to children's medical and dental appointments, for example. The fixed hours worked in the municipality, together with the relative freedom workers have to run errands during working hours, enables working mothers to fulfil these obligations. This is further aided by the fact that the majority of women live in close proximity to the municipality, reducing travelling time which facilitates the fulfilment of their domestic obligations. Furthermore, the municipality offers security of tenure and stability of employment relative to work in the private sector, an important consideration for the women interviewed.



### 3.3 Labour relations in the working environment

In the section above, working conditions have been described and the importance of some of the non-monetary conditions highlighted. This section will discuss the relationships which form in the workplace between co-workers as well as between workers and bosses. The nature of these relations are significant in creating a working environment which can either enhance or detract from a worker's performance. Hierarchical relations within the workplace are significant in terms of the control of workers, as well as the extent to which there is space for the negotiation of better conditions. This has an influence on the levels of job satisfaction and general welfare of women workers (Faulkner and Lawson, 1991).

In all the working environments discussed above, female workers are supervised and directed by males in positions of authority. This situation of men in dominant power relations over women raises the important issue of sexual harassment in the workplace. This is a particularly important issue in Chile, where patriarchal culture pre-defines the dominance of men over women in social relations; thus the issue of sexual harassment has only recently begun to be recognised and discussed (Délano and Todaro, 1992).

Sexual harassment has been interpreted by feminist theory as an expression of power, the power that patriarchy gives men to control women (Brant and Too, 1994; Délano and Todaro, 1992). However, it is important to take into account the cultural context and locality where the sexual harassment takes place. The context relevant to this study is the workplace, where sexual harassment has been defined as taking place when one or more of the following conditions are present: when submission to the harassing behaviour becomes an explicit or implicit condition of access to employment; when the submission, or the rejection, of such conduct by an individual becomes the basis for decisions which will affect that individual's employment; when the harassing conduct interferes with the performance of the worker, creating a hostile or intimidating work environment (Délano and Todaro, 1992: 24).

The above definition incorporates the element of consent and the dimension of a potential *quid pro quo* exchange which are present when sexual harassment takes place. It highlights the key

idea that sexual harassment is a power issue rather than a sexual one: consent cannot be given on an equal basis as one individual is in a position of power over the other one. Furthermore, the power to refuse an approach of this nature is conditioned by the awareness of the reward offered in a *quid pro quo* situation (Brand and Too, 1994: 17). This is the type of sexual harassment most commonly experienced by working women in Chile, where entry to a job or wage levels may be determined by an individual's acceptance of the boss' sexual invitations.

In the present study, the women who mentioned sexual harassment as a problem in their workplace were in the groups of garment workers and *temporeras*. Neither the women working in the municipality or the women in domestic service, both of which correspond to the sector of personal and community services, mentioned sexual harassment as a problem. In the case of the women in domestic service, it is probable that as only one of them was working *puertas adentro*, the most likely circumstances for harassment to take place did not arise. In the case of the women in the municipality, it seems that the delicacy of the issue of sexual harassment meant that it was not even mentioned as a problem.

The informality of the employment relations in export agriculture means that there is ample opportunity for bosses to take advantage of women seeking work. It is usual for bosses to ask younger women for 'dates' in return for guaranteeing their employment, although one interviewee mentioned that this type of attention was indiscriminate: married women with children also suffered this type of harassment. However, it appeared that the women who consented to the bosses' approaches were often the most vulnerable, single mothers in need of employment, or else the women with less working experience.

This would be consistent with the definition of sexual harassment discussed above, where the most vulnerable women are in a subordinate position of power vis-à-vis the boss, and where their refusal to consent would cost them a valuable employment opportunity. It is these most vulnerable women who often become partners or co-habitees of a boss for the duration of the season.

These situations are often viewed with tolerance and considered part of working life by both women and men in the countryside. Anita (*temporera*) points out:

The bosses bother you more than they check the fruit! And when there are pretty women, well then they work things out another way; bosses who fall in love are everywhere, in every job. (Anita)

In Anita's opinion, attention from bosses is a nuisance but not more threatening than that. This is due in part to the cultural context of patriarchal gender relations which, to a degree, permit men to focus attention on women in public, an attention which is often interpreted as a 'compliment' by women. This interpretation confuses the boundaries of acceptable behaviour of men towards women, disguising the extent of sexual harassment taking place.

However, the awareness and recognition of this problem by women is widening. Clara (*temporera*) not only recognises certain behaviour as being sexual harassment, but highlights the practical problems which result from the harassment of women workers by male supervisors in the packing plant:

I think they should give women more opportunities because, in the first place, the men take more advantage of the *temporeras* when they are bosses, because they say to the girls, to the young ones, they start to say, "you'll have a job for longer if you come out dancing with me tonight", or something like that.. that's sexual harassment. (...) When I was working in the Co-operative, they had more posts for [female] supervisors, they generally put various [female] supervisors so that the work would always be in order because with just [male] bosses, things didn't work. (Clara)

Nevertheless, there are still very few complaints or charges made by *temporeras*. Many women refuse to submit to the demands of the boss and certainly lose their jobs, while those women who do press charges to the police find that the process of law is slow. There was a case mentioned of a local boss with four charges of sexual harassment pending in one season, who nevertheless never faced those charges. In addition, the women who do make accusations against their bosses will often be branded a troublemaker who will face problems in obtaining another job in the area.



The seasonal nature of the work in agribusiness excludes *temporerolas* from union organisation under the 1979 *Plan Laboral* (González and Norero, 1993). Thus, the absence of unions or organisations to represent workers' interests in the agro-export sector further complicate this problem, perpetuating the informal nature of labour relations. This in turn leaves *temporeras* vulnerable to the threat of sexual harassment, influencing their access to employment in this sector.

In the garment manufacturing sector, there were also incidences of sexual harassment mentioned. However, in the two factories where the women interviewed were working, the formation of a union had considerably lessened the incidences of sexual harassment:

Look, you know we had problems at the beginning, when there was no union. And then, if you made friends with the boss, they could give you a better-paid job. There were problems with sexual harassment and all those things, and some of the workers would flirt with them to get a better job.(...) There were girls who left and others who were sacked because they didn't accept to go out with the chap. But now he watches his behaviour (..), they take care of themselves because of the image of the union. (Ester)

The formation of a union has improved conditions by formalising relations between workers and bosses within the workplace. In addition, this formalisation of labour relations has meant that official wage levels have been established within the firm, removing the bargaining tool which bosses had used in the past to gain favours from their women workers.

Another effect of forming the union in Ester's factory is that relations between co-workers have improved, lessening the individualistic attitudes created by the piecework pay system. There is more communication and solidarity between co-workers, not least due to the gatherings and meetings organised by the union:

Now because there is a union, there is more communication,.. but before when we first arrived, you could be dying next to someone and she wouldn't take any notice because she had to work to make money. (...) But now there is more communication. They are more like colleagues now, there is more solidarity.

At least they ask you, (...) if they see you crying, "What's the matter? Are you ill?"(...) There is a nice atmosphere. (Ester)

In Ana's factory, the formation of a union has also improved relations between both co-workers and workers and bosses:

I mean, there's always differences, but I tell you, you don't see scenes of fighting, nobody threatens you for anything. If there are differences we talk things over. (...) since we formed the union, before, they [the bosses] wanted things to be really rigid, they wanted to impose conditions on us, and we rebelled. So now, things are fine. (Ana)

By creating an atmosphere of communication within the workplace, as well as formalising industrial relations within the hierarchy of the firm, the formation of unions in these two firms has reduced the problem of sexual harassment. The improved communication between workers has helped alleviate some of the problems caused by the stress experienced by garment workers as part of their workload and created a more pleasant working environment. This in turn improves the performance of the workers.

For the *temporeras* from Graneros, few problems arose between co-workers as the majority of the people were relatives and friends from the settlement. This is due to the widespread availability of seasonal work in the locality. However, there are still workers present who have migrated from other areas; it is these individuals who are often blamed if conflicts arise between workers. At times, the workers are segregated in order to avoid these conflicts arising, although problems did arise in the plant where Sara and Berta were working:

The ones from outside get a bit heavy when they put them as supervisors and they don't know you, they pick on you for just one grape, for an insignificance they tell you off. (Sara)

In addition, the 'outsiders' were problematic in impeding attempts to strike within the packing plant. In the absence of any collective negotiating powers, it is quite common for *temporeras* to attempt to influence the level of the tariffs paid per box through 'wildcat' strikes. Traditionally, the lines of workers will cross their arms and allow the fruit to

continue rolling along the line. This is generally successful, depending on the urgency of the shipment and the rates being paid in other plants. In Sara and Berta's plant, they had three successful strikes during the season, in spite of the lack of solidarity from the workers from outside the area:

Sometimes when we want to strike so that they pay more per box, they [the outsiders] don't want to stop, they don't want to support. (Berta)

They drag their feet, it's that some of them are supervisors, or else they have work all year with the patrón, they don't want to stop and they keep on lying. (...) This year, we stopped three times and he would put it up straight away because he knew that he was paying too little. (Sara)

For Sara and Berta, the community and friendship networks between the workers were strong enough to overcome opposition from workers outside these networks and enabled them to gain higher wages.

In the case of the women working in domestic service, all of them stated that there were no problems between themselves and their employers. As discussed previously, the employment relations in domestic service are characterised by their individualistic nature, involving an important relationship of dependency between the employer and employee. As all the women interviewed had been working with the same employers for a period of time, the relations between them were good. Raquel and Juanita worked while their employers were at work, involving little or no contact apart from perhaps written instructions:

They treat me well, and yes, I feel good. (...) I work with people who all work so I can work in peace; it's fine, it's good. (Juanita)

However, the personal nature of this relationship means that the domestic worker often relies on her employer's sense of obligation and responsibility rather than any active negotiation in order to gain improvements in pay or working conditions. This reflects the informal and 'private' nature of labour relations in this sector. Clementina needs her employer to draw up a contract so that she can renew her health insurance; however, at the time of the interview, she was still waiting:



[The patrona] she must have forgotten. It's just that I have to remind her all the time, so I feel uncomfortable having to say things like that, I like to say it once and if she doesn't do it then it doesn't matter. (Clementina)

There is no union which could negotiate on Clementina's behalf, although there are two professional organisations with limited powers which could offer her advice. Clementina has little option but to rely on her employer or risk upsetting the balance of their relationship.

Juanita at times works extra hours for her employers in the evenings, also relying on their sense of obligation with regard to payment for unsociable hours. In Chile, there is some awareness of issues of overtime or extra payment for late hours; however, the domestic service sector remains on the margins of any awareness regarding this aspect of working conditions:

Yes, there are people who of their own accord pay me more. For example, the Chileans almost never take into account overtime or anything like that. But, for example, people I have known, people from abroad, they always pay the difference in hours, or if one stays the night, they pay me for staying (...) I have never asked, I always leave it to the goodwill of the person, that's all. (Juanita)

This sums up the general attitude among the women working in domestic service, and while some of them had had problems with *patronas* in the past, they preferred to leave and find another employer rather than confront them over pay and conditions.

In the case of the municipality, the main problem mentioned was the lack of communication between directors and the staff. In addition, while all the women interviewed reported amicable relationships with their nearest co-workers, there seemed to be little interaction between staff from other departments in the municipality. Interpersonal relationships are characterised by their superficial nature, with little solidarity or common identification between all the women working at the municipality:

Look, in general relations are not very good. What happens is that there is a lot of rivalry here, a lot of envy. (Verónica)

Colleagues don't make constructive criticism but more destructive. (...) Nobody has much trust in the other person, it's more about "what can that person do to me", so there's no trust. (Claudia)

This atmosphere of mistrust is deepened by the lack of communication between directors and their staff across all the departments in the municipality. All the women interviewed mentioned that the directors separated themselves from the rest of the staff and were high-handed in their treatment of the personnel. This created resentment and communication problems. One of the reasons suggested for this distance was a problem of class difference between directors and the rest of the staff:

They are a bit *clasista*. They don't share with the rest of us, they're very short, I don't know, it must be because they earn so much! (Verónica)  
They think they are on another level, whether it be social, cultural or educational, I don't know. (Mónica)

The perceived superior attitude of the management towards the rest of the staff contributes to a lack of solidarity and support between co-workers at the municipality (Gálvez and Todaro, 1990). This contrasts with the quality of the interpersonal relationships observed among the garment workers and the *temporeras*, where although conditions are harsher, there is a sense of identification between co-workers. Thus, although the relaxed working atmosphere was previously mentioned as one of the main advantages of working in the municipality, it seems that this is not necessarily due to the quality of the interpersonal relationships.

The preceding sections have explored the varying nature and quality of the working conditions and wages in those sectors which concentrate female employment in Chile, and the ways in which these may influence employment decisions. The next section will examine how gender relations and life-cycle factors further shape women's employment decisions.

### **3.4 Work Histories**

In this section, four work histories will be presented in order to gain an insight into the factors influencing women's employment decisions. In some cases, there has been a

movement from one type of employment to another, reflecting the types of work most available to women when necessity prompts an entry into the labour market. Through an examination of work histories, it is possible to observe the trade-offs that women need to make between family and work roles, their reasons for entering the labour market, as well as the problem of maintaining the level of remuneration and establishing continuity in a career path.

### 3.4.1 Gloria

Gloria (36) completed her secondary school education and studied for a further year at a commercial institute in order to gain a qualification in Sales and Publicity. She comes from a family of seven brothers and sisters and so her schooling was achieved only with tremendous sacrifice on the part of her parents.

Gloria's first job was at the age of nineteen, after she had completed her studies, when she began to work as a sales assistant in a shop. This job only lasted a few months and, as the wage was very low, Gloria took a job in a small workshop making garments. Although her qualification was in sales, Gloria had very concrete reasons for changing occupation:

Well at the beginning I started looking for work in that because, I don't know, it was easier, in that time there was a lot of unemployment and in order to opt for another type of work, like sales assistant or work in an office, you had to have a good presence in the first place, and I had no possibility of having good clothes or a good presence. So you went into a workshop, a factory, where they didn't demand that of you. (Gloria)

Gloria's decision to change employment was based on her perception of the labour market and the requirements demanded by employers. At the time, Gloria needed to find work urgently in order to help out at home as her father was also unemployed and she calculated that there would be more opportunities for her in the garment manufacturing sector. However, Gloria had only the sewing skills she had learned at home and had never operated an industrial sewing machine. Thus, she took a job which paid very low wages but which allowed her to learn these skills and would better her chances of employment in the future :



I just talked my way into it [the job], (..) I didn't know how to operate an industrial machine, which was kind of important. But there, by force, I learned how to use a machine. I didn't care whether they were going to pay me or not. The only thing I cared about was to learn how to sew. (Gloria)

From this job, Gloria would find workshops which were paying progressively higher wages and would move accordingly. This covered a period of approximately eight years, during which she worked in a large firm for three years. During the crisis of 1982-83, Gloria was made redundant and was unemployed for a year. She was re-hired by the firm in 1984, when, although it was *trabajo a trato*, she earned higher wages than before.

After two years, Gloria decided to take a course in dress design which lasted a year. This decision was motivated by a combined wish to further better her employment opportunities and wage level, as well as increasing her own job satisfaction:

I realised that I wasn't going to get anywhere always working just sewing, it was boring and it paid me little, and I also wanted to do something different, become more professional. (Gloria)

Gloria continued to work while she was studying and she also became involved in union activities. This led to her being dismissed at the end of the year due to her involvement in a collective negotiation, leaving her unemployed once again. This was followed by a two-year period of movement from job to job, until Gloria found employment in the pattern design department of a factory. This job paid only a low salary (\$36,000 pesos in 1990) but Gloria again used the opportunity to perfect her skills:

Well, that year I put up with it, because it meant having more experience in that field and that meant capitalising for the future. (Gloria)

Gloria found satisfactory employment in 1991, and now works in the patterning and cutting department of a lingerie firm. Her salary is approximately US \$321.43 a month. At present, she is the head of the cutting and patterning department, although in a year's time, she plans to look for a job with a higher salary within the same field.

The above case study illustrates a planned career path, with decisions influenced by a combined knowledge of the labour market and the skills of the individual. Gloria became aware that she was unlikely to earn good wages in commerce, given the labour market conditions of the time and her perception of her own limitations in meeting these conditions. She perceived that she had an aptitude for sewing and aimed to apply her home-sewing skills to work in the garment manufacture sector. It is significant that in spite of having no experience with industrial sewing machines, she was able to gain employment on the basis of the skills she had acquired in the home. Gloria took advantage of the employment opportunities presented to her, successfully gaining the skills which improved her position in the labour market.

However, it appears that Gloria's ability to make her choices regarding employment and education depended to a great extent on her situation. She is unmarried, with no children and living with her parents. Although Gloria's financial contribution to the household income was important, her family was not relying on her income in order to survive. This enabled her to take on lower-paying jobs in order to acquire the skills and education for better-paying jobs in the future. Furthermore, as she lives in the large urban centre of Santiago, there were many possibilities for employment in garment manufacture. It is only now that Gloria feels she has reached a secure point in terms of her career, and she is planning to get married and set up her own household.

The above work history represents a planned work trajectory, where both the wage levels and the quality of the job improve with each move. This is in contrast to the work histories of other women, who have had to enter the labour market through necessity and take on whatever employment is offered. Married women with children are unlikely to be in a situation where they can plan a career path, particularly as the obligations of their gender role within the family may have priority over paid work.

### 3.4.2 Clara

Clara (42) completed her primary education up to the age of fourteen when she had to leave school and begin to work. Clara came from a family of eight siblings, with her father the only breadwinner, so economic circumstances prevented her from continuing her studies. Nevertheless, she was able to complete the first year of her secondary education at night school in Curicó. Clara is married with two children. Her husband works as a mechanic in his own workshop and his income varies. This means that Clara has always worked in different activities in order to maintain the family income. Although Clara's is a dual-earner household, within Curicó, she has faced restricted work opportunities in the local labour market which is dominated by agribusiness.

Clara began to work at the age of twelve. She worked in an ice-cream factory, where she worked wrapping and packing ices for one season in the summer. From this job, she went on to work in a garment workshop, manufacturing football socks on machine. Clara began this work at the age of fourteen and she remained there for seven years until her marriage. This job opportunity arose through her teacher at school:

At that time I was studying, and our teacher had a workshop and he took about three or four of us to work there, to get used to it, and there we stayed. But I stayed there a long time, until I got married. (Clara)

After her marriage at the age of twenty, Clara began to work seasonally in the export agriculture, which provides the main employment opportunity for women in the region. Clara worked for the same fruit company for many seasons, which incorporated a processing and refrigeration plant together with the packing plant. This provided continuous work for almost eight months a year. The fruit species included cherry, raspberry, plum, peaches, pears and apples as they came into season, together with artichokes and asparagus for export. The work lasts almost through the winter as many firms store the hard fruits harvested in March in controlled conditions in order to bring it onto the market out of season. This provides work for many women through the winter.



Clara continued to work after her marriage and while she had her children in order to supplement her husband's income:

Yes, because his salary was never enough. (Clara)

Clara worked for the same company season after season for almost ten years, because she enjoyed the working environment. However, the boss died suddenly and Clara no longer wished to work under the changed conditions, so she left:

I didn't want to go back there because we were like the boss' family those of us in that job, so after that, it was all different and I didn't go back. (Clara)

After this, Clara left agribusiness and found work in a childcare centre, where she worked for one year. From this job, Clara went on to work in the local polyclinic as an assistant. This only lasted a year, and Clara returned to the fruit in 1989, to work with a different fruit exporter. Although Clara had attempted to find year-round employment, the dominance of agribusiness meant that her best employment options lay in seasonal work in fruit. As a skilled calibrator, Clara was able to work five continuous seasons with the same exporter.

However, Clara is not happy working in the cold conditions of the packing and refrigeration plant. For next season, she aims to find work in the fields and orchards, although she is aware that the period of work is less and the tasks, such as pruning apple trees and picking cherries, are likely to be heavier. Also, wage levels are likely to be lower; nevertheless, Clara judges that the cold has had detrimental effects on her health, making work in the orchards a better option. The dominance of export agriculture in Region VII means that Clara faces limited employment opportunities outside this sector, as year-round employment proved difficult to sustain. Despite these restrictions, Clara has succeeded in working continuously throughout her life and is still able to exert some choice in finding a job with more satisfactory working conditions.

### 3.4.3 Raquel

Raquel (49) completed her primary education up to the age of fourteen. Subsequently, she completed a hairdressing course and three months of a course in child-minding. Her first job was in a nursery, where she worked for six months prior to her marriage. Raquel stopped working on her marriage and dedicated herself to raising her children.

Raquel did not work again until 1989, twenty years later, when her youngest son was twelve. Raquel's motives for seeking paid work were to cover the costs of the elder son's university education. She began to work for two hours a day in a nearby private house, cleaning and cooking. This job lasted six months and Raquel received approximately US \$33.75<sup>5</sup> per month.

Raquel felt that work in domestic service was the easiest option given her long absence from the labour market. There was no necessity to learn new skills, while there was abundant work available within the city. In addition, domestic service enabled her to set her own schedule, making it easier to combine this with her own domestic responsibilities:

I could have, for example, tried, or maybe not because of my age, to work in the nurseries, but it's a longer working day. (..) So it was too long, and I needed to get things done in less time, in order to dedicate myself to my house as well. So it was easier. (Raquel)

In order to find her first job, Raquel merely asked a neighbour if they knew of a prospective employer. Through this network, Raquel was able to find employment almost immediately.

As her first employer's requirements changed, Raquel moved to a different job with a young family. Here she worked from Monday to Saturday, for a salary of US \$95.00 a month. The tasks included cleaning, cooking and childcare for the family. She remained here for a year and a half. Raquel eventually left this post as her employer's attitude became problematic.

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<sup>5</sup> Interviewee is recollecting wages based on 1994 equivalents, so amounts are calculated using 1994 exchange rate, US \$1= 420 Chilean pesos.

From 1990, after this job ended, Raquel decided to change her mode of work and began to work once a week in different houses. She now works four days a week in five different houses. This arrangement is more convenient, as Raquel works to a set of clearly delineated tasks which she completes at her own pace, without the presence of the employer. In addition, the rate of pay is higher, as Raquel points out:

It pays more, but we work too; you work more but it works out more (...) And to think that I earn [US\$ 219 per month] in just four days; I at least am satisfied! (Raquel)

Raquel is satisfied with her present working arrangements and plans to continue working although her income is no longer essential to her family. Moreover, as her domestic responsibilities at home have decreased, Raquel feels she has more time to dedicate to her paid work activity.

As this work history demonstrates, domestic service remains an occupation which is easily accessible to women, particularly within a large urban centre, as other authors have commented (MacEwan Scott, 1994). Raquel was able to find employment with ease, as well as move from one employment to the next with no periods of unemployment. Furthermore, as her knowledge of the different kinds of work available within domestic service increased, so has Raquel's confidence, and she has been able to create the working conditions which maximise her level of income, as well as her level of satisfaction.

#### **3.4.4 Alicia**

Alicia (47) completed her secondary education in a commercial institute, gaining a qualification in accountancy. She had no difficulties in completing her studies; however, she did not begin to work until she separated from her husband at the age of thirty-three (1980). Then, faced with the necessity of supporting herself and her daughter, she experienced some difficulty as she had never worked before. However, Alicia had taught flamenco dance as a hobby, and she succeeded in finding a private school where she was able to teach:



The first thing I did when I separated was start to work. (...) I am the daughter of Spaniards (...) so, as I was in a bad position and I couldn't find work, I exploited what I knew. (...) So I would organise myself like this: in the morning when my daughter went to school, (..) I did the household chores and in the afternoon I would go and give classes at the (..) school. A schedule in which I abandoned neither my house nor my daughter. (Alicia)

Alicia continued to teach dance for seven years, although the number of classes diminished year by year. By 1987, Alicia was unable to maintain herself and her daughter and enrolled on the *Programa Ocupacional para Jefes de Hogar*, one of the programmes of minimum employment implemented by the military government during the 1980s.<sup>6</sup> Through this programme, Alicia entered the municipality as a data clerk in order to computerise the municipal archives. Nevertheless, the extremely low income provided by the POJH was not enough to support Alice's family and she continued to give dance classes after work.

The POJH paid a fixed subsidy of \$5 000 pesos a month, which was calculated according to the official poverty line. The dance classes paid her \$7 000. From this income, Alicia educated her daughter and paid the dividends on her house:

In the POJH I earned a salary to starve on! (..) I lived on \$12 000 pesos (..). The truth is that I don't know how I have lived but I have lived. I used to do the dance classes as a hobby (..) afterwards I had to take it a bit more seriously. (Alicia)

This continued for a year until 1988, when Alicia was obliged to leave the municipality as the POJH ended. For a year after that, she had severe financial difficulties as even the dance classes in the school finished and she was forced to turn a variety of other activities, including taking in washing to make ends meet.

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<sup>6</sup> The *Programa Ocupacional para Jefes de Hogar* (POJH) was a development of the *Programa de Empleo Minimo* (PEM) implemented during the crisis period of 1982-83 as 'workfare' schemes to alleviate the widespread poverty caused by high unemployment during this period. The POJH provided a minimum wage for heads of households through many types of employment; in many cases providing cheap skilled labour to the public sector. In this way, many women who were female heads of households gained entry to the municipal sector through the POJH and were contracted on a permanent basis after the termination of the programmes in 1988.

However, in 1990, she was hired by the municipality again to work in the archives, where she has remained for four years. This post has enabled Alicia to undertake training courses in computing and commercial writing to further improve her skills. Now, although her situation as an *honorario* means that her situation is unstable, Alicia has acquired skills and labour market experience which would enable her to find good quality employment should she become unemployed.

### 3.4.5 Some observations

In all of the work histories presented above, the occupations which represented the easiest access to the women were those characterised as 'women's jobs'. These occupations all involve an adaptation of the skills acquired through the process of gender role socialisation, for example, sewing, childcare and housework. As such, there are certain skills in place which have been acquired outside the labour market, enabling the above women to begin work immediately, requiring little training within the actual workplace (MacEwan-Scott, 1994).

The work histories fit the pattern of female labour force participation observed in other studies (MacEwan Scott and Burchell, 1994). Entry into the labour market tends to be prompted by the economic necessity of the family group, while the types of occupations taken on represent those which are exclusively 'female'. Moreover, the career paths followed have remained within those sectors which are gender-typed as 'female'. A confinement to a 'female' career tends to be associated with stagnation and demotions in terms of wages and conditions (MacEwan Scott and Burchell, 1994). Nevertheless, in all the cases studies presented here, there was an improvement in wages and conditions with movements between occupations.

Life cycle is an important influence on the career path of women. Gloria, as a single woman still living with her parents, has been able to make steady improvements in her wages and conditions with each move between occupations. The older women have experienced more restricted career options. This may be due to the difficulties associated with women's re-

entry into the labour market after a long break for full-time child-rearing and other domestic work. Despite these constraints, all four women have achieved their individual goals of satisfactory wage levels and conditions, improving and consolidating their position in the labour market through their career trajectory.

### **3.5 Attitudes to paid work, advantages and disadvantages**

In the above sections, the conditions of work and pay have been discussed in detail. It is important to combine this analysis with the attitudes the women have towards their paid work. What are their motives for working, what are the advantage and disadvantages they perceive in doing so? This section will explore the women's perceptions of the importance of their contribution to the family income as well as the potential for empowerment this might bring. An examination of these attitudes will begin to draw out the issues of the potential for the empowerment of women through their paid work, the influence of paid work experience and financial autonomy on gender relations within the household, as well as some of the conflicts between work and family roles. These issues will be taken up and examined further in following chapters.

In the present study there is a marked heterogeneity between the case studies. The variety of occupations create differences in the experience of work, as do the variations between permanent and temporary jobs, under more formal or more informal conditions. There are also differences in the levels of income and occupations of male partners as well as the presence of other family members contributing to household income. These heterogeneities are reflected in the variety of interpretations of paid work presented, providing an opportunity to gain a wider understanding of the meaning of paid work for women.



### 3.5.1 '*Confeccionistas*' in Garment Manufacture

It appears that, for the majority of the women interviewed, economic necessity is the prompt for their entry into the labour market. The other aspects of taking on paid work, such as financial independence and personal development, follow on from this starting point.

#### 3.5.1.1 Ester

Ester (34) began to work when she separated from her husband eight years previously and her experience combines the aspects of economic necessity and personal development:

Look. it's one thing that I like to work, but it is also an economic necessity. That's why I started to work, through economic necessity; but I also like having financial independence, because financial independence gives you the other kind of independence. But, I like it, in any case (...), the two things go hand in hand: the need to maintain my household and all of that. (Ester)

In Ester's opinion, one of the advantages of working is the potential for personal growth, particularly for women, offering possibilities beyond the restricted environment of home and family:

It helps you, especially in the case of women, it helps you to leave the house, to see another world, not just the routine of the thing with the house, all of that. So it opens the world to you and stops you from becoming shut into the problems of the home. (Ester)

Nevertheless, it is the same domestic world which creates the disadvantages to working. Ester perceives these particularly in relation to her role of mother. As the head of her household, Ester has been obliged to work to maintain herself and her son. Her mother took on the responsibility of caring for her son while she worked. Working has prevented her from having time with her son, leading her to perceive that she has missed out on his childhood. For Ester, this as the greatest disadvantage to taking on paid work outside the home:

The disadvantages of working are many. First, not having been with my son; to have enjoyed him when he was little because now he's big, he doesn't want anything to do with me. (...) that's the biggest disadvantage, I think. Of not being at home to look after him, the homework and all that stuff; I get home late in the evening. (Ester)

This conflict between paid work and family and domestic responsibilities permeates the perceptions of paid work. In Ester's case, her income is essential for her family's survival, so there is no question of her giving up work to be with her son. In addition, Ester values her efforts to provide for herself and her son through her remunerated work, as well as the independence this gives her in personal terms:

I have to recognise that in my house, it's not a big house or anything like that, but I have all the comforts, (...) Things that I didn't have years ago, but that have come about through effort, nothing was given to me. So, I don't want to have lots of things, (...) but have a good quality of life. (Ester)

Thus, Ester takes pride in succeeding as head of the household. She has provided a satisfactory standard of living for herself and her son. While emphasising this positive result, Ester perceives a degree of failure to fulfil her role as a mother and this is the greatest disadvantage to her undertaking paid work. Nevertheless, it is clear that Ester regards her paid work to be of significant importance: the income it provides is essential to maintain her family as well as providing her with a real and valuable personal independence:

Yes, I am more independent. (...) Because I'm no longer with my husband (...), because I work, also. I go out more. I don't have to look at his face and ask for money. (Ester)

### **3.5.1.2 Ana**

Ana (29) is also a female head of household. She separated from her husband three years previously and the resulting economic necessity prompted her to seek paid work in garment manufacturing. As Ester does, Ana feels that her paid work experience has provided her not only with economic independence but has enabled her to gain on a personal level. This is the greatest advantage of working for her:

The independence, the independence, and the fact of knowing that you are capable of maintaining your family, that you are capable of doing things for yourself and that you are not dependent, ... to develop as a person. You are not dependent on anyone. (Ana)

The extent to which Ana values this personal independence is brought home forcefully when she attempts to evaluate her situation with her estranged husband. They are on amicable terms and he makes a significant voluntary contribution to the income of the family, yet Ana does not wish to live with him again:

So it's a situation which I still can't understand, it's been three years since we separated, and that has left me frustrated and I have never been able to go back with him, and I think I never will because I've known independence. The independence and freedom to do things which perhaps I would never have done. So I think that's the great reason why we will never be reconciled. (Ana)

Ana pays her sister to look after her two young children during the whole day, enabling Ana to work until late in the evening. Thus, for Ana, the disadvantages of working are linked to her position as a woman separated from her husband:

The disadvantages are, that a lot of people see that you are alone and they categorise you badly. (...) And when they see you alone and they know that you are separated, the man always looks for a way to get close to you but not with a good intention. (Ana)

This illustrates the persistence of patriarchal gender relations in the Chilean cultural context. However, Ana interprets this attention as an attempt to force her into a cultural gender stereotype which simply does not exist:

Because here in Chile, it's a myth that all separated women, we are, as if we have a big sign saying that we are the women who steal husbands, that we are the women who lend ourselves for all manner of things, (...) And it's not like that, it really isn't like that. (Ana)

Ana perceives that gender relations where the man exerts control over the woman while she is dependent on him forms an integral part of the marriage relationship. By resisting her



husband's attempts to return home and seeking to maintain her family through her own efforts, Ana is rejecting this traditional, patriarchal gender relation and establishing her independence.

Ana's sense of independence carries through to her aspirations for the future. She already has a small business with a partner selling shoes and clothes amongst her friends and colleagues. Ana calculated that she and her friend have stock worth approximately US \$2 380. She aims to expand this business and set up a small retail outlet in the near future.

Ana's attitudes stem from her life experience, while her experience of paid work has been significant in giving her the independence she values so highly. This experience has led her to remain a female head of household, in spite of the hardships and disadvantages she will have to face.

### **3.5.1.3 Gladys**

Undertaking paid work can have a significant effect in terms of a change in attitudes as well as increasing self-confidence. The ability to manage one's own money conveys a degree of financial independence which can lead to real personal freedom, as can be seen in Ana's case. In addition, success in the arena of remunerated work can be significant in increasing self-esteem and confidence. For a woman who has lived her life within the traditional female gender roles of wife and mother, entering the labour market and taking on paid work can have a significant effect on her expectations. This is the case of Gladys (40), who has only recently started to work:

I was a housewife until two years ago, I had never worked before. (...) I was offered the opportunity, I liked it, and I've got used to working, to manage my own money, to do what I want with my money and I like it. (..) I, at least, who has been bringing up children since I was very young, for me it was something new, something that I never, never imagined. (Gladys)

For Gladys, undertaking paid work has provided her with a personal success in a whole new area. This success, having learned how to do her job and to do it well, is a source of personal pride for Gladys:

So, apart from having learned how to do it, it's something which I had never done before, so that is a satisfaction for me, an achievement for me. (Gladys)

Gladys' experience of paid work has led her to question the division of the gender roles upon which her married life has been based. As a housewife, she has lived financially dependent on her husband, while carrying out her responsibilities as a wife and mother. Now she is working, however, Gladys has become aware of the vulnerability of this position and her economic independence has become one of the main advantages of working:

Being able to look after myself, which is important for me. Because when one is a housewife, who is dependent solely on her husband, if something happens to your husband, what do you do? I feel capable, even with this misery I earn, but I feel capable of maintaining my house. Of course with the help of my daughter, but I feel capable. (..) Because you see, if two years ago, I had been in the circumstance of losing what I have, the world would have come down around me because, what do I do? who will help me? where will I get money from? So for me it's important. (Gladys)

Furthermore, Gladys' income, despite being small, has made a difference to the standard of living of the family. Their economic situation has improved, particularly as Gladys is now able to provide medical insurance for her children. Linked to this is the fact that Gladys has always been in charge of paying the bills and managing the household income, thus she now perceives herself to be the *de facto* head of the household. The experience of working has been such a positive one for Gladys that she is determined to continue working in spite of the disadvantages she perceives.

The discovery of her economic and personal independence has thrown up a new set of problems for Gladys. She has welcomed the expansion of her expectations beyond the domestic role she carried out for many years, while her husband's expectations have not adapted. At first, he encouraged her to find paid work, however, now he is vehemently

opposed to Gladys continuing to work. This is causing increasing conflict between Gladys and her husband, particularly as she feels that her husband's attitudes and behaviour are becoming unreasonable. For Gladys, this has become the main disadvantage of working:

Because in my case, that I had never worked, one sees new things. Suddenly you want to go for a walk, to go window-shopping, sometimes you want to go and share a [soft] drink, in a healthy way of course, to do so many things. And the fact that you're married means that you can't do it, and there you get some of the problems that I have been having. He doesn't understand that I am a person, a human being with the same rights as him. (Gladys)

As Gladys had previously lived her life fairly traditionally as a married woman, she has not had cause to question or experience the social restrictions which accompany this role in Chilean society. Her new aspirations are simple and yet they already conflict with her perceptions of the activities suitable for a married woman. Moreover, as Gladys' husband appears to have very traditional expectations, he has responded to these changes by attempting to control Gladys' activities outside the home on every occasion. Gladys' resentment of her husband's attitude is evident and, as she perceives herself to be in a position to survive economically without a husband, the strain may prove too much for her marriage.

### **3.5.2 *Temporeras* in Agribusiness**

The opportunity to work as a *temporera* is perceived as a valuable one for women to contribute to the welfare of the family. The principal motive given for undertaking paid work was to buy articles for the house and improve the standard of living of the family. The seasonality of the work reinforces the perception that the women are working to buy 'extras', while the husband's income maintains the family throughout the year. The salary earned during the season is often used to buy clothes and school articles for the children, household goods, as well as food staples for the winter. In this sense, the importance of the woman's



income is recognised, providing her with a legitimate motive to undertake paid work in spite of the many disadvantages.

### 3.5.2.1 Ruth

Ruth's family own their house and her husband has a stable income all year round. Ruth expresses how their incomes are put towards distinct uses as she gives her reasons for working:

To help in the house, to buy things for the children, and to keep things for the winter; because with what my husband earns it's only [US \$ 119] a month and you have to buy them [the children] extra things, that's why I work. (...) Because sometimes you guarantee things with what he earns, you make sure of the food, all those things. But if it's about a pair of trousers, a pair of shoes, that's when I put in more. (Ruth)

Although Ruth indicates that her husband is the main breadwinner, she recognises that her contribution is important and the economic situation of the family has been improved through her paid work:

I bought clothes for the children, and sometimes extra things so that we can eat better in the time when one is working. (...) I bought some cement to fix up the outside [of the house] and we bought sugar to keep for the winter, flour, things like that. (Ruth)

Nevertheless, Ruth's perception is that she is only a contributor to the family income, a helper, despite the fact that she earns more than her husband during the season. For Ruth, the main motivation to take on paid work lies in being able to improve the situation of her children and her home. She enjoys working, as it enables her to leave the house; however, this involves a significant disadvantage in terms of her domestic obligations:

When I've worked, I've felt good, I've got out of the house more, but...of course, then you get home and you have to do more things. The work in the season is double for me, because you have to do all things in the house and work outside. (...) Not like the man, who works out there and then comes home

and everything is ready. (..) It's not as difficult as what one has to do, one has to one thing and then another. (Ruth)

Ruth's home and family are the most important, and she will only work if it does not disrupt her domestic routine unduly:

I have never worked further away, I don't like going out very much. Also, I like to come home at 12.00 noon.. I always try to leave as much done as possible when I work. The house is always the most important I think. (Ruth)

In Ruth's case, the traditional gender division of labour within the family remains basically unaltered: she has succeeded in extend her role a little to include working outside the home but as she is doing so to provide her children with some extras, she remains within the boundaries of her role as mother. This explains the lack of opposition from her husband:

At first he didn't like it, but now he knows that I work for the little ones.  
(Ruth)

Given the increased availability of work this season, Ruth was able to make a substantial contribution to the family welfare. Ruth's income is clearly important in ensuring that the secondary needs of the family are met. The extra income she can earn prompts Ruth to desire to work all year round, in spite of the disadvantages she perceives in terms of her family role. This would alleviate the poverty of the winter months when there is little work available in the countryside. However, as the only available work lies in agribusiness, the future is uncertain. Ruth fears that next year, she will have to search further afield for work, as the local fruit appears to have been damaged by a fly infestation, compromising her domestic responsibilities further. If she is unable to find work nearby, the economic security that was gained through her efforts this year will be lost.

### 3.5.2.2 Berta

Berta (25) has worked every season in order to improve the situation of the family, in a similar way to Ruth. Her husband's income is sufficient to cover the daily needs of the family, while Berta's income is divided between food, dry goods for the winter and articles for her child and the house:

Something for the food and something to buy. This year I bought a bed, and things for my son. (Berta)

Berta herself does not view her income as essential to the family's welfare; they could survive on her husband's income alone. This causes problems as her husband is opposed to Berta's working; however, she continues to work in spite of this:

My husband tells me not to work but I work anyway, the money is always useful. My husband is a little jealous! (...) I like working, I'm used to it. (Berta)

Berta's husband's opposition is not enough to keep her from working as she does not have the same disadvantages that Ruth has in terms of her domestic role. Her son is looked after by her mother and the domestic responsibilities within the household are carried out by her sister-in-law, Sara. In addition, the wide availability of work in the sector means that Berta has become accustomed to earning her own money during the season, enabling her to provide herself and her family with 'extras' which improve their standard of living. Next year, she intends to work again and increase her earnings.

### 3.5.2.3 Sara

Sara (34) is in charge of running the household of eleven people where she lives with Berta. She considers herself to be first and foremost the 'housewife' and does not intend to work again in the future. However, this season, she had a specific motive for working. Sara is expecting her third child and she worked in order to have enough money to finance the hospital costs, the sterilisation operation and to pay for her family to visit her in hospital. At



the birth of her last child, there was not enough money for visits, so she has provided it through her own efforts. Again, it is the relative ease of obtaining work in the neighbourhood which enables Sara to earn this extra income. The main disadvantage she faced was making alternative domestic arrangements, as she is in charge of running an extended household:

It's that you get home tired from your job and you have to do the things in the house just the same. (Sara)

In the end, Sara had to keep her eldest daughter home from school to take care of the children. However, after this had been overcome, she was able to find work with ease, together with the other women from the settlement. Sara was satisfied in that she was able to meet her financial goal and have some money left over to buy clothes for the children and herself.

#### **3.5.2.4 Luisa**

Luisa's (23) main reason for wanting to work was the low income earned by her husband, who is also a temporary worker:

There were so many things we needed in the house, things for the house and for the children and what he earns just isn't enough. (Luisa)

She also felt she was wasting her time being at home when there was ample work available:

It's just that being here, doing the things that need to be done, you don't get anywhere, but working you can get money to buy the things that are necessary. (Luisa)

Luisa also enjoyed working much more than being at home:

I like it because you do just one thing, while in the house you have to do so many things! (Luisa)

There were specific items she wanted to purchase and she did not want to wait for her husband to have enough to give her. In an environment where lots of her neighbours were working, she felt there was no reason preventing her from doing the same. However, she did underestimate the strains of the double day and the problems of childcare, which was the condition imposed by her husband:

Sometimes I didn't have anyone to look after the children ... sometimes my mother works in the summer, and when she works, she spoils it for me because then I have no-one to see to him.. I used to take him with me, but the problem was the heat: he would sometimes get a fever. (Luisa)

Luisa used her income to provide her children with clothes and school articles, like the other women. She also bought household goods and glazing for her house. In this way, she was able to make a substantial improvement in the standard of living for her family, particularly as their economic situation deteriorated in the winter when neither her nor husband had any employment.

Luisa's perception is that the role of mother and housewife is perfectly compatible with that of *temporera*. The main problem she faced was opposition from her husband, but that was overcome through her organisational capabilities. She feels there is enough time to do both; look after her family as well as work during the season.

### 3.5.2.5 Clara

Clara (42) has worked as a *temporera* in Curicó for over ten years. Her family own their house, together with a small workshop next to it. She has returned to work season after season, as her husband's income from his metal workshop has never been sufficient to support the family. Her motives for working are expressed in terms of improving the quality of life for her family, enabling them to live beyond the mere satisfying of basic needs:

In order to get ahead a little, because when one works, then you can renew the mattresses, the sheets, everything, what else can you do? At least I bought the television, I've bought some things in order to fix the house: we bought sheets of zinc, we had to buy fifty sheets of zinc ourselves, and in that way they're things so that we can try to live a little better. (Clara)

Clara does not consider herself to be earning money for 'extras'. Her income is essential if the family is to have a home and a minimum standard of living:

It's very important. Because with just .... with what the husband earns, it's well, it's practically nothing you can do for the house. So, when one works (...) at least you can eat a little better, and at the same time, buy something else. (Clara)

The higher demand for female labour in the season means that Clara's daughter also works a *temporera*. As Clara's husband's workshop is next to the house, he helps out with the household chores when Clara is working, together with Clara's youngest daughter. This situation contrasts with the husbands in Las Mercedes who suffer their wives to work so long as there is minimal disruption of the domestic regime. As Clara's husband's income is sporadic, it is necessary for him to take on domestic responsibilities in order to allow her to take advantage of the greater opportunities for female employment. Economic necessity has meant that there is an important re-working of the gender division of labour in Clara's household.

When Clara is working, she is able to earn a higher income than her husband. The instability of her husband's income means that at times, Clara is the main breadwinner. In spite of



living in an urban centre, there seem to be few employment opportunities outside export agriculture for either men or women. The extent of this dependence on seasonal work is highlighted by the fact that her husband has had no work due to the neighbours' lack of resources. This situation has been exacerbated as there appears to be less demand for labour this season and there have been difficulties in finding work:

At the moment, we are bad, economically we are in a bad way because my husband's work has been bad. (...) There has been no work for us in the season (..) and for him, well, they say that everyone is like this, with no money, that's why he doesn't get any work either, not even some soldering. So we have had days when we haven't had enough even to buy bread ...today we are bad. Waiting to see if something turns up and nothing does. (Clara)

### 3.5.2.6 Anita

Anita (29) is also a *temporera* in Curicó. Her husband is also a temporary wage worker and they have had joint responsibility for maintaining the family since the start of their marriage seven years ago. In this case, Anita perceives herself to be a joint-breadwinner together with her husband: both their salaries are essential to the survival of the family as neither of the two will have work during the winter:

It's always to get ahead with one more little thing. But we always do it in the good time. For example, if we want to buy something, we can do it between December and January, because in February and March it's just for the kids and school, and to save money for the electricity and the water; then we start to just save money. (Anita)

Nevertheless, as both partners are dependent on temporary work in agribusiness, their living is precarious and the winter months are often difficult. At times, Anita can find work in the refrigeration plants in the winter, or else she is able to take in laundry or work as a maid. These represent some of the alternative job opportunities that arise as a consequence of living in an urban centre; the women of Las Mercedes have none of these alternatives due to the isolation of their settlement. Anita's neighbours often help out with food or small loans, as Anita returns the favours when she is in a better financial position. This helps to alleviate some of the hardship experienced during the 'blue months' when there is no work. However,

at this time, it is her husband who has succeeded in finding work for three weeks, enabling him to borrow money until Anita can find work again.

For Anita, one of the most important aspects of taking on paid work is the change it provides from the traditional female role:

I liked having more friends, it's another type, another environment when one works, and I like the work I do, being *embaladora* [a packer]. (...) That's why it's lovely to work, it's important for the woman to work, because she leaves the routine of the home, everyday, the food, the housework, ... I get bored, you miss your friends, you shouldn't shut yourself up. (Anita)

Anita is of the opinion that all women ought to work, one salary is not enough to maintain a family nowadays.

Although this type of work has enabled the *temporeras* to make substantial contributions to household income and make personal gains in terms of increased financial control over household resources, the vulnerability of their position is clear. In both the regions studied, there appears to be little alternative employment available for women outside export agriculture and the *temporeras*' dependence on this employment is highlighted in their expressed anxieties for the future if the demand for female labour in this sector declines.

### **3.5.3 *Trabajadoras de casa particular***

For the women in domestic service, the motives for working do not differ from those of the other women. Economic necessity as well as the improvement of the standard of living of their families are the most mentioned. However, as in the other case studies, these are the motives which prompt entry into the labour market; the motives for continuing to work provide an important insight into the dynamics of paid work experience for women.

### 3.5.3.1 Clementina

As a single parent, Clementina's (36) motives for working are based on the need to provide for her son. Although Clementina's parents would be happy to maintain both her and her son, Clementina prefers to work and maintain her independence:

Because I have to support my son and, apart from supporting him, I have to give him education. In order to survive. I mean, I know that my parents can give me the money, at the moment they can give me, but I like to be independent, I like to be the one in charge. I mean, to earn my money myself, decide myself what I spend and what I don't spend, and not that they control me. (...) For me it's good, because I feel free. (Clementina)

For Clementina this is the most important advantage of working, it gives her a sense of freedom and is a source of personal fulfilment. The only disadvantage is not being able to be with her son, whom she sees only once a month:

Not being able to spend more time with my son would be the only thing. Because I would love to be with him all the time and I can't, I have to work, because otherwise, how would I support him? (Clementina)

Clementina perceives that her income is essential for herself and her son. Although her parents could support her at present, her plans for the future can only be realised through her continuing to work. As Clementina works *puertas adentro*, this enables her to save a significant amount of her salary:

I want to have a workshop, a garment workshop, but to run it not to sew myself. (...) I have always liked it, especially children's clothes, I love children's clothes. (...) So I am saving in that sense, I have a savings account, and I have one for my son too. (...) I do think of the future, further on, when I'm a little older, to establish a workshop. (Clementina)

It emerges that paid work forms a central part of Clementina's life. It enables her to achieve economic security for herself and her son, gives her the personal freedom to run her life independently, as well as providing the means to achieve her goals for the future and educate her son.



### 3.5.3.2 Raquel

The question of the children's education is often another motive for women to enter the labour market or return to work. In households where the male income has been sufficient to maintain the family, the extra income from the wife's paid work can provide higher education for the children.

This was the case for Raquel (49), who decided to return to work after being a wife and mother for twenty years. Her two sons were about to start higher education and one income was not sufficient to pay for both sons. Raquel has continued to work although the immediate necessity has passed as she perceives that her income represents an important contribution:

Well, to live better, I mean, at first it was so that my sons could have an education, and now it's because, well, the truth is that one salary, my husband's salary is not enough for anyone! (Raquel)

Raquel has continued to work in spite of considerable opposition from both her husband and her sons. Her family is embarrassed by the fact that Raquel works in domestic service and they do not tell neighbours or friends that their mother works. However, this does not prevent Raquel from enjoying her work and its advantages:

The fact that I earn money is an advantage already! Also, I like what I do, in spite of, for example, it's looked down on here. I don't care if my neighbours know that I work like this, but my family does. Yes, my children don't tell anyone that I work: I mean, it's always that I've gone out - to other people - to a friend's house: they're embarrassed. (Raquel)

Raquel's family consider that they no longer need the extra income as the eldest son now has a part-time job. There is concern that working has detrimental effects on her health, although the reverse is true, in Raquel's opinion:

So now, we've saved money, I mean, we're better. I mean that I could stop working. But you know, I escape from headaches at home, I used to feel terrible. Because my husband would give me the money, but he wouldn't

worry about anything, (...) I mean he would give me the money, leave himself his own, and I would have to distribute it. (...) So then you realise before you've done the sums that the money isn't enough! (..) So I think that all that nervous tension caused my headaches, made me feel really bad. And now I feel (..) better. So I think I won't be leaving my work that easily, even though I don't need to do it! (Raquel)

Raquel perceives few disadvantages to working. In previous years, she would experience considerable worry over leaving her youngest son; however, as he is older, this worry no longer plays a part. Thus, the disadvantages she does perceive are related to her working conditions rather than a conflict with her domestic role:

The disadvantages are the same as everyone, having to get up early, go out, things like that. And the other thing is that sometimes, but only sometimes, I get bored; the fact that I have to do the same things in my house, so I don't have a change like other people do, (..) I have to do exactly the same thing. And I have had problems with the detergents, (...) So I use detergents a lot of times, I clean a lot of baths, .. So being all day with my hands in the water, something like that. These are disadvantages. (Raquel)

As Raquel indicates, she remains solely responsible for the domestic tasks within her house and family. This stems from her family's continuing opposition to her working, in spite of the material improvements her income evidently provides. Having her own financial resources has enabled Raquel to cover unforeseen emergencies such as medical care, as well as providing small holidays and treats for her husband and sons. Raquel considers that the household could survive without her income, yet she is determined to continue to work and maintain her working role.

### **3.5.3.3 Eugenia**

Eugenia (40) is less happy than Raquel to be working. However, as a female head of household, she is obliged to work to maintain her family. At present, they are in a better economic position than ever before, while Eugenia recognises that she is very satisfied in her occupation.

Nevertheless, she now has a stable partner who contributes financially and is offering to take on the responsibility of maintaining her and her children. This has prompted an evaluation of her position as a dependent of his, as well as her attitudes towards her paid work:

Look, now that I have this person, now that he helps me, I shouldn't need to work, but it's just that how can I leave as a burden to someone children who are not even his? So I work to help, because sometimes he gives me what is necessary, but then he says not to work any more, but I can't stop working because I'm not secure with him either. (..) I mean if I didn't work, I would have to be always asking him to give me [money], but if I work and I have my money, (...) that's why I carry on with my work because any time we might have a fight and I don't have to go and say to him, "you have to help me because I don't have anything." If I'm working, I have what's mine. (Eugenia)

This is a telling evaluation of Eugenia's resistance to the position of women within the traditional marriage relation. An important aspect of this relation is the economic obligation of the man towards his partner and family. In return for economic security, the woman fulfils domestic obligations within the home (Sokoloff, 1980). This is essentially an unequal relation, with the woman dependent on her male partner, while his economic supremacy enables him to exert control over the woman.

Eugenia has made a direct connection between having financial independence and having the power to decide freely in her personal life. Her independent position is likely to enable her to demand a better quality relationship with her partner, one which goes beyond mere economic security. Moreover, it is evident that this represents a change in Eugenia's expectations and attitudes, a change which has arisen as a result of her participation in the labour market. Eugenia's evaluation of her position has led her to resist her partner's requests to live together, although they spend a lot of time together as a family and she helps out in his repair workshop in her spare time.

Eugenia feels confident of improving her family's economic position in the future. She feels secure in her present employment, while she makes extra money sewing and making stuffed toys. Eugenia's aspirations for the future include obtaining the two machines necessary in



order to dedicate herself to making garments at home. The marketing of these would provide her with sufficient income to enable her to work at home and take care of her children:

[I]t would be nice to stay at home all day with my children, (..) my dream would be, what I would buy would be an industrial machine and an *Overlock*, because then I wouldn't have to go out to work. (...) I would make track suits, shorts, all of that, then I would just work at home. (Eugenia)

### **3.5.4 *Funcionarias* in the municipality**

There is a qualitative difference in the attitudes expressed by the women working in the municipality to those of the other women. It seems that these women perceive a greater conflict between work and family roles, and seem to have a stronger expression of the cultural ideal of motherhood, as women's exclusive or main role. These differences may stem from the higher incomes of male partners, as in cases where the male partners income is sufficient to support the family, there seems to be considerable opposition to wives working. Also, as economic necessity appears to justify wives working, it may be that the higher education or vocational training that some of these women have undertaken leads to contradictory outcomes. While they may expect to take on a paid employment for which they have studied, the personal development this implies (rather than economic necessity) may make it more difficult to justify the 'abandoning' of their family role. Perhaps the slightly greater freedom to choose whether to work or not enhances the element of role conflict for these particular women. This conflict emerges when the women talk about their motives for working and the advantages and disadvantages they perceive, as well as in their attitudes towards gender roles in general, which will be explored in chapter five.

#### **3.5.4.1 Verónica**

Verónica (28) has worked since her time as a student and the advantages of working for her are similar to those expressed by other groups:

One of the advantages is that, I don't know, you manage your own time, you can treat yourself, you can be in an environment, you can share with other

people, you're not shut up in the house, and that you have your own money, you manage your own money, that is an advantage. (Verónica)

Verónica studied a professional qualification in computing, nevertheless she seems to derive little satisfaction from her paid work. Her satisfaction seems to stem more from the income she can earn and the purchasing power this gives her, rather than any personal gains she may derive from her paid work:

Life is very expensive, and you go, "oh, how pretty that is, and that and the other!", but for that I have to work because if I don't work, I can't acquire, I have to have money. (Verónica)

Verónica's salary goes towards her own expenses and she thus is unclear regarding the importance of her contribution to the household income. Moreover, Verónica is beginning to feel the pressure of being a working mother with a young child, so her and her husband's future plans include Verónica giving up work and staying at home with the child:

The disadvantage is that, now that I am a mum, I'm realising that the baby is left alone. And so, you really miss him. And also the baby misses you, because now that he is a bit bigger, he sees you come home and you can tell he's happy, and then you don't want to leave him. I would like to stop working and be with him more. (...) So, my husband says if I have that possibility [to become self-employed] you don't work any longer because we won't need you to work. That would be great! So I hope to be able to do that in a few years. (Verónica)

#### **3.5.4.2 Inés**

Inés' (30) income only provides enough for her to cover her own expenses and make a small contribution to the upkeep of her family. However, her motives for working emphasise the need to have an activity beyond her domestic role:

Only the necessity to go out of the house. That's all, no economic [motives]. (...) I get too bored at home. (...) And I shout less at the kids when I go out to work rather than being at home with them all day. (...) So it's a personal necessity more than anything. (Inés)

This personal satisfaction which Inés gains from her paid work is the principal advantage. It enables her mix with other people, keep up to date with events, as well as maintaining a pride in her personal appearance. These are the advantages which would be lost if she stayed at home. However, as Inés is working for her own personal satisfaction rather than economic necessity, she experiences guilt at abandoning her domestic role:

Leaving the children, leaving the house a little, so that my husband complains all day that I've done nothing, that's it. (...) Sometimes [I feel] guilty because it's not from necessity that I go out to work, so I leave it all from my own needs, a little bit selfish in that sense. (Inés)

This perception is reinforced by her husband's opposition to her paid work. His attitude is the traditional one that the woman should be in the home, while Inés maintains her position that a woman can combine paid work with her domestic responsibilities:

He doesn't do it heavy-handedly, he tells me, but he always says "I'd like it if you stayed with the children, if you stayed at home, because the woman is for the home", he says to me, "not to be working" (...) he sees it that way, that it's a different home with the woman in the house. (..) I say to him that it can be done both ways too, I mean that one can be in both places at the same time. There's no reason to be neglecting your family just because you're working. (Inés)

Nevertheless, it seems that this perception that she is being selfish in following her desire to expand her activities beyond the domestic role is a strong one. In the next year, she aims to give up her post in the municipality and establish a small artisan workshop in her home. This would enable her to combine her responsibilities in the family with a commercial activity which offers her personal satisfaction. Inés already has a sewing and a knitting machine and the income from selling the sweaters she makes can exceed her salary from the municipality:

So that's the future, dedicate myself to my children and have a small workshop in the house and make things. (..) And I have a clientele, the whole municipality! (Inés)



### 3.5.4.3 Alicia

Alicia (47) is a head of household, supporting her daughter and grandchild. Her motives for working reflect this need to ensure the survival of the household:

Well, like all people, I work for our survival, I work in order to survive. I am not ambitious, I like to have some comforts but I have never been ambitious. I like to have the necessary comforts but I don't have ambitions beyond that.  
(Alicia)

For Alicia, the advantages of working lie in the area of personal satisfaction, of fulfilling a useful and productive role:

Feeling useful, it's nice to work, to be able to serve other people, to demonstrate that one has skills and capacities too. (Alicia)

As her daughter is grown up, Alicia does not have the same problems with childcare that the other women have. However, she did experience these problems in the past and she recognises this is a disadvantage of working:

The disadvantages, when there are children, you have to abandon them when they are very small, even when there is a nursery, or a maid, all those things. It's a bit disadvantageous in that sense. (Alicia)

### 3.5.4.4 Mónica

Mónica (34) has stronger convictions regarding the importance of her paid work. She has a clear perception of her motives for working, which combine both financial and personal necessity:

Necessity. The first reason is necessity. To help .. one salary isn't enough. And the other is something more personal. I'm not against the people, the women who stay at home, but I think that one gets stupid in the home, you lose touch with society (...), your knowledge becomes restricted, you don't grow.  
(Mónica)

Mónica also values the independence that managing her own money gives her, while making an essential contribution to the household income. Nevertheless, in common with the other women, the greatest disadvantage is the inability to care for her children as she would like:

You leave the children to one side, in effect. You take away from them, you give them the minimum of time, because you can't make it up to them at the weekend. (Mónica)

However, the satisfaction Mónica gains from her paid work and the income it provides for her household outweigh this disadvantage. Moreover, by choosing to remain at the municipality in spite of the lower salary, Mónica feels she has made the best combination of work and family responsibilities while her children are young. Her husband supports her in her decision to work and this is reflected in her attitude towards her paid work.

It is clear that Mónica places a high value on her remunerated work. She is satisfied with the job she has, although not with the level of remuneration she receives at the municipality. Her aspiration for the near future is to obtain employment in the private sector, where she feels the value of her work will be reflected in a higher remuneration:

I like my job, I like being a telephone operator. But I would like it to be in another environment, (...) not municipal, where we aren't badly paid, because our work is hard and requires more effort, so I would like it to be better remunerated. (Mónica)

### **3.6 Discussion**

There are many insights to be gained from the presentation of women's paid labour experiences discussed in this chapter. Primarily, the different dimensions of labour force participation have been presented through the perceptions and interpretations of the women themselves, enabling their own emphasis regarding their experience of remunerated work. This is important if the dynamics of women's labour force participation are to be captured.

The descriptions of the working conditions in the four sectors under discussion convey both positive and negative aspects. In the sectors of garment manufacturing and agribusiness, the production line and the mechanisation of the process impose an intense rhythm of work. This leads to workers carrying out their tasks under pressure, which can have detrimental effects on workers' health. This pressure to produce is reinforced by piecework pay systems, thus workers aim to maximise productivity in order to maximise their earnings.

Conditions in the agribusiness sector seem to be the least favourable to the workers. The physical conditions are harsh, involving extremely long shifts, with few breaks and minimal facilities. There is no protection for workers, who as temporary labour are excluded from much of the existing labour legislation. Temporary workers have no legal right to formal negotiation over conditions and wage levels; this means that there is no guarantee of employment, there is little observation of the maximum lengths of the working day, nor do workers have any right to overtime payment. The only avenue of control over wage and conditions open to workers is the 'wildcat strike', a semi-spontaneous refusal to work (Valdés, 1988). This is often successful in the packing plants at the height of seasonal demand for the fruit, but success depends on factors such as the urgency of the shipment, and community and friendship networks. Despite the fact that the *temporeras* interviewed expressed some dissatisfaction with the working conditions, particularly the length of the shifts, the lack of rest breaks during the working day and wage levels, workers are powerless to effect changes in unsatisfactory working conditions. Wildcat stoppages can effect pay, but beyond that, workers must find employment in another firm which may offer improved conditions.

In the orchards and fields, labour relations are informal and workers rarely receive a contract. A job is guaranteed by verbal agreement which leaves the worker with no recourse if the agreement is not honoured. Within the packing plants, there are more formal labour relations and the majority of *temporeras* receive a contract stipulating the wage level as well as the specific task for which they have been hired. The temporary nature of the work means that there is no stability of employment during the year, causing a cycle of poverty in those areas where agribusiness represents the principal employment option. Nevertheless, the tendency



is for the *temporeras* to return to the same employment season after season, creating a situation of 'permanent' seasonal workers.

In the sector of garment manufacturing, within the medium-sized established firms, conditions are better. Although the rhythm of work is again intense and piecework pay systems dominate, workers are protected, in theory at least by the legal labour rights covering this sector. There are established norms for the length of the working day and labour relations can be formalised. Workers have the right to union organisation within the firm in order to negotiate breaks in the working day, minimum wage levels, as well as the physical conditions of the workplace. There are legal recourses over issues of health and safety, although the enforcement of any legislation can be a time-consuming and laborious process. In addition, there is still a tendency for firms to dismiss workers who press for the enforcement of the legislation. Nevertheless, the unions within the two garment manufacturing firms had made gains in improving specific aspects of working conditions and mitigating the situation of their workers.

The conditions in domestic service are the most unregulated due to the artisanal and informal nature of the work. This sector is excluded from the bulk of the labour legislation and while there are requirements for contracts to be drawn up and contributions paid on behalf of the worker, these are not often enforced. There is no collective negotiation within this sector, thus workers have little possibility to change working conditions and wage levels, unless they negotiate directly with their employer. As employment relations within domestic service are closely bound up with the personal relationship between employer and employee, attempts at negotiation are likely to result in confrontations. Thus individuals often prefer to leave an unsatisfactory employment and seek another with better wages and conditions.

The two modalities of employment in domestic service, *puertas afuera* and *puertas adentro*, present different advantages to the worker. Working *puertas adentro*, living in with the employer's family, presents the most inconvenient working conditions. There is little distinction between work and rest hours, with the individual's working routine subject to changes and disruptions of the demands of the family members. This leads to long working

hours. In addition, workers sacrifice their own home life as they spend the greater part of the time living in the employer's home, with little free time to call their own. However, the present situation of the market for *puertas adentro* staff in Santiago means that very high wages are being offered for live-in staff. As expenses such as food, lodging and utilities are covered by the employer, the monetary wage represents a significant earning and thus living-in has become a relatively lucrative option. Nevertheless, the continuing tendency is for hiring domestic staff on an hourly or daily basis, *puertas afuera*. This modality brings the nature of domestic service closer to that of other occupations, leaving the individual free to return to her own home and family at the end of the working day. This in turn lessens the stigma of the occupation, although does not eradicate it, as was observed in Raquel's case study.

Working conditions within the municipality were the most convenient, enabling women to combine work and family responsibilities with relative ease. Workers are guaranteed their full labour rights, particularly the full range of maternity rights available to women. Wage levels are not high compared to the private sector, however, for women, this is compensated by the relaxed routine of work.

The quality of the working conditions in all four sectors reinforce the statistical evidence that women are concentrated in gender-typed occupations, carrying out tasks which are extensions of the female gender role. These occupations are characterised by bad working conditions, low rates of pay and piecework systems, as well as being perceived as low status (Gill, 1992; Vales et al, 1992; Leiva, 1993; INE, 1994). This would seem to point to a declining quality of occupations available to women within those sectors perceived as 'feminine'. The perceptions of paid work discussed in this chapter highlight the heterogeneity of working conditions within these 'feminine' sectors, as well as the contradictory nature of women's insertion into these occupations. In contrast to this negative view of female employment, employment in the municipality offers good working conditions for women, enabling them to comfortably combine work and family responsibilities. There are prospects for professional-level employment, although the low salary levels remain low relative to the private sector.



However, moving into the private sector would mean the sacrifice of many of the guarantees which make this a desirable employment option for women with families.

The occupations in both the sectors of agribusiness and garment manufacture do fit the view of 'female' employment. Women are employed on the basis of their perceived gender characteristics of manual dexterity and productivity in performing monotonous, repetitive tasks. Both sectors represent activities which are an extension of women's gender role within the household, namely, sewing and food preparation. There is little protection for workers and the sectors are dominated by piecework pay systems rather than stable salaried posts. Furthermore, the occupations for women in these sectors are generally semi-skilled, offering little prospect for advancement, as higher status supervisory posts are held by men.

Nevertheless, the women employed in these sectors contradict some of these perceptions. They emphasise and take pride in the skills they bring to these jobs. There is a marked awareness of the disadvantageous working conditions and low salaries, nevertheless, both the *temporeras* and the garment workers express a sense of the value of the work they carry out. In addition, the most negative aspect of work in agribusiness, the seasonality, is perceived by the *temporeras* as almost an advantage in that it enables them to earn a much-needed income with only a temporary disruption of their domestic responsibilities.

Domestic service can be viewed as the archetypal 'female' employment. It is the occupation of easiest access for women, requiring no skills beyond those already acquired in the home as part of the gender role socialisation. There are few legal guarantees for domestic service workers and the sector is marked by an absence of formal contractual relations. It is commonly regarded as a low-status occupation, due to the nature of the work, yet the participants of the study highlighted the advantages of this type of work, given the present market conditions. By working *puertas afuera*, individuals can set their own schedules and earn relatively high wages by being paid by the hour. This form of domestic service also minimises the servile relations that arise when living in the employer's house and the occupation becomes similar in character to other occupations within the service sector.



Moreover, the wages being offered at present for live-in maids present an opportunity to earn a substantial income given that living expenses are covered by the employer.

The analysis of the perceptions of labour relations highlight the significance of gender relations in the workplace. It is evident that there has been an increasing recognition of sexual harassment and the implications for gender relations within the workplace. In all of the sectors there is a work environment where men are in a position of authority over women, thus the cultural dominance of the traditional patriarchal gender relations enables men to take advantage of this position of power. However, it appears that there has been a questioning of the acceptance of these patriarchal relations, at least within the workplace, and concrete steps have been taken to tackle the issue.

The bargaining power of male bosses stems from the informality of labour relations. The women in the garment manufacturing sector have tackled the problem through the formation of unions, which have established formal channels of communication between workers and bosses, as well as established official tariffs and wage-levels for each occupation. Moreover, the formal and legal status of the union has led the management to guard itself against the consequences of any accusations of sexual harassment. This represents an important re-working of gender relations in the workplace, one which empowers women workers to defend themselves against unwanted attentions from male bosses.

The women in the agribusiness sector remain vulnerable to sexual exploitation by their male supervisors. The lack of worker organisation mean that the above measures cannot be taken, yet it is significant that Clara highlights the practical problems associated with this type of behaviour. In one packing plant where she worked, it was noticed that the productivity of the women workers was affected by the attentions of male supervisors. This led the firm to appoint women to supervisory posts, with a corresponding rise in productivity.

Nevertheless, in spite of the common problems facing women with families who undertake paid work, it seems that solidarity between co-workers is not an automatic process. The systems of piecework dominant in both garment manufacture and agribusiness promote

competition and an individualistic attitude between workers. Again, the formation of a union appears to have overcome this aspect and created a friendlier working environment.

In the packing plants, unity between the workers appears to depend on community networks outside the workplace. This has been observed elsewhere amongst women working in export processing, most notably in Mexico (Peña, 1987). In the cases presented above, the *temporeras* who came from the same communities were able to stage strikes and gain improvements in wage levels. However, there was antagonism towards women workers from outside the locality that may have impeded any further attempts at organisation within the packing plant.

Within the municipality, the friendly work environment was mentioned as an advantage. However, this was not borne out on closer examination as the lack of communication and solidarity between co-workers was highlighted by the women participating in the study. They also mentioned the distance between management and workers as a problem. This may be due to the stagnation of promotional prospects within the hierarchy, coupled with the fact that directors and managers tend to be appointed from outside the municipal structure.

The work histories illustrate four career paths within the sectors concentrating women's employment in Chile. The career trajectories clearly show the influence of economic necessity within the family as the prompt to entry into the labour market. This highlights the importance of life-cycle and the position within the family as influential factors in women's labour force participation. A single woman living at her parents' house, Gloria was able to plan her work trajectory and change occupations which, at times, involved a demotion in terms of wages in order to move towards a promotional goal. In contrast, the three other women were obliged to take on paid employment through economic necessity, and thus were more restricted in their choice of occupation. As has been previously noted, none of the sectors that concentrate female employment offer many possibilities for promotion or advancement and the occupations within them can be perceived as being of low status with limited 'career' possibilities. This is in keeping with phenomena observed in other studies. Occupations characterised as 'female', due to the high concentrations of women employed,



tend to be perceived as low status, poorly-paid, with few possibilities for advancement, relative to similar 'male' occupations (MacEwan Scott and Burchell, 1994; MacEwan Scott, 1994; Faulkner and Lawson, 1991). Notwithstanding, all four of the work histories show a broadly promotional trajectory within the limitations of each sector, while the participants expressed a degree of satisfaction with the wage levels and working conditions they had achieved.

The occupation of *temporera* shows the most precarious position within the labour market due to the seasonal nature of work and its inherent occupational instability. However, at the present point in her work history, Clara is making a transition between occupations, a factor which has contributed to the household's present economic problems. Previously, Clara had succeeded in achieving employment stability for ten years within the seasonal labour market of agribusiness, although it is unclear whether the present conditions will allow her to find this stability again. Within domestic service, Raquel has achieved a position that represents a highly satisfactory combination of income level and working conditions. Working by the hour, Raquel works to her own schedule, which allows her time to fulfil her domestic obligations, whilst her earnings have reached a maximum level. At the municipality, Alicia has also succeeded in obtaining an occupation which represents a high degree of job satisfaction, while recognising that her income, although low, is sufficient for her needs.

The analysis of the attitudes towards paid work are significant in illustrating the value that all the women in the group place on their work. There are marked similarities in the positive aspects of paid work that are emphasised. It appears that regardless of the prestige of the occupation, paid work is an important source of personal satisfaction. The women mention advantages such as the widening of social horizons beyond the home, interaction with other people, as well as a feeling of confidence and self-sufficiency.

These positive aspects are closely bound up with the income earned through paid work, as well as the possibility of making an important contribution to the household income. In the majority of cases, the women considered that their income was essential to meet the family's needs. In the case of the female heads of households, the ability to support their families



through their own efforts was emphasised as a significant personal reward derived from their paid work.

The importance of the financial autonomy that can be gained through employment appears to be the most significant advantage for the women who participated in the study. There is a direct link made in the interviews between this financial autonomy and personal independence. This is reflected in the recurring statements regarding the importance of independence from the male partner within the marriage relationship. Moreover, in Gladys' case, this new-found independence had resulted in the creation of serious conflicts in her marriage. For the female heads of households, this financial autonomy, together with the experience of supporting a family single-handedly, was valuable enough to question the necessity of entering into a traditional partnership with a man.

The most significant disadvantage in taking on paid work which emerges from the case studies is the problem of fulfilling mothering responsibilities. The women mentioned missing out on their children's babyhood, as well as the more practical concerns of arranging satisfactory childcare in order to allow them to work. In spite of this strongly-felt regret at not having enough time to spend with the children, there was little suggestion that a woman could not combine paid work with her family responsibilities. Amongst the municipal functionaries, the level of education meant that there was widespread expectation that women would take on paid work after their studies. However, there is some contradiction in this group as there seemed to be greater opposition from husbands in this sector and a greater adherence to traditional gender role attitudes. Some of the women did express a degree of guilt at taking on paid work and neglecting their domestic responsibilities when there was no immediate economic necessity.

The examination of these attitudes point to a degree of empowerment that women have gained through their paid work and the receipt of an income. The direct financial control of this income is related to an important degree of personal autonomy. This in turn has an effect on gender relations within the household. Within the range of family and household situations presented here, there is an opposition from the male partner when the woman takes

on paid work outside the home. However, this opposition seems to arise in the cases where the woman is returning to work after a long period of full-time domestic work or is seeking to enter the labour market for the first time. This opposition tends to dissipate when the material benefits of the second income make themselves felt. In those households where the woman has always worked, there is less opposition and a recognition of the importance of her contribution to the household income and the standard of living of the family. Nevertheless, all the case studies highlight the different conflicts that arise in the gender division of labour within the household when the wife or mother takes on remunerated work outside the home.

It seems that the earning of an income through paid employment has been a key factor in enabling the participants to gain an important personal autonomy, as well as the possibility of re-working gender relations both within the workplace and in the household. It is true that the occupations in the sectors which are gender-typed as 'women's jobs' are severely limited in scope for promotion and access to occupations with a greater degree of control and autonomy. Employment in 'female' occupations reinforces traditional gender relations, as it is precisely due to their perceived gender characteristics that women are hired for these jobs (Elson and Pearson, 1981). This may limit the degree of empowerment which can be gained through incorporation into the wage labour market (Faulkner and Lawson, 1991; MacEwan Scott and Burchell, 1994). Nevertheless, if we agree with the premise that women are active agents rather than passive victims, as established in chapter one, then the interviewees' work decisions indicate that a degree of empowerment is taking place. The interviewees appear to have gained control over their working lives as their experience increases, making employment decisions based on their knowledge of labour market conditions. Although many of the skills the women bring to their jobs are adapted from those acquired within the home, the fact that the women are seeking to perfect and 'professionalise' these skills also point to self-confidence and personal empowerment. Despite the constraints of the types of flexible, low-wage, unstable employment that the interviewees have access to, they are nevertheless increasing their access to better working conditions, or wages, depending on each individual's priority. While this is occurring on an individual level, it does nevertheless move beyond the first level of financial autonomy to a broader empowerment represented by

knowledge, skills and experience which the interviewees are exercising to improve their own and their households situations.

Therefore, the case studies presented here do point to a link between remunerated work and empowerment. All the women expressed similar advantages and disadvantages of paid work, regardless of the nature or prestige of their employment, and the financial autonomy was emphasised as the most important advantage. The following chapter will focus on the household, the composition of the family group within the household and the ways in which women organise their domestic responsibilities in order to take on remunerated work. This will lead to an examination of the extent to which the personal independence gained through paid work leads to increased control within the household and the potential re-working of gender relations within the home.



## CHAPTER FOUR: Household relations

### **4.1 Introduction**

In the previous chapter, the analysis focused on the different dimensions of women's paid work. As the majority of women also hold the primary responsibility for domestic tasks, such as childcare and housework, this chapter will make a closer examination of this arena. The gender division of labour designates the home and its associated tasks as the responsibility of women in their roles as wives and mothers. As has been previously discussed, this gender division of labour persists in spite of the increasing presence of women engaged in paid work throughout the world (Chant and Brydon, 1989; Blau and Ferber, 1992; Bradley and Kohr, 1993). Men perform relatively few of the domestic tasks within the home, while those that do are consistently perceived as 'helping out' their female partner, rather than taking on a real share of the domestic responsibilities. This results in women carrying out a 'double day' of work when they are engaged in paid work, retaining all of the managerial domestic obligations even when they receive help from other family members (Bradley and Kohr, 1993; Sánchez, 1993; Wharton, 1994).

Given this, an examination of women's labour force participation must also take into account gender relations within the household. Moreover, while 'household' and 'family' may be terms used interchangeably, they do not refer to the same concepts. 'Household' refers to the basic unit of co-residence, while 'family' refers to a set of normative relationships based around kinship. In situations where the basis of the household is the family, members are likely to be influenced by a shared understanding of family principles and priorities. These family principles are in turn cross-cut by social constructions of gender roles and a resulting division of labour, where the men undertake the role of breadwinner, while the women's primary responsibility is for the domestic environment.

In the Chilean context, the dominance of patriarchal gender relations means that this division of labour operates within the household. Thus, socially and culturally, Chilean women are expected, and expect, to ensure the smooth-running of the family and household routine.

This includes managing the budget, providing meals at the right times, ensuring the family members have clean clothes, as well as caring for younger children. Other female members of the family group, such as daughters, sisters and grandmothers are often enlisted to take on part of these tasks. The fairly rigid gender division of labour means that any participation of male partners in domestic chores is viewed as an unexpected extra help.

In situations where a woman has a paid occupation outside the home, she must still fulfil these obligations as the primary requirements of her gender role within the family. Thus, as we have seen in the previous chapter, life cycle stage is an important determinant of women's labour force participation. Her participation depends, to a marked degree, on her ability to re-organise domestic obligations so that the fulfilment of these is not disrupted by her paid work activity. More often than not, this involves getting up early in order to carry out part of the tasks before going to work, making arrangements for the care of children, and continuing to work on domestic chores after the day of paid work has been completed. Thus, the possibility of calling on other female family members for help, particularly to provide childcare, whether they live in the same household group or not, is often vital in allowing the woman to go out to work.

In order to begin an examination of the domestic obligations faced by the women who participated in the study, the first section in this chapter will deal with the composition of the family and household group. This section will deal with the size of the family, as well as those members of the family group who are engaged in paid work. Then an analysis of the decision-making process within the household will be made, indicating the way in which purchasing decisions are reached. This is in order to evaluate how gender and power relations are expressed in this context, gaining an insight into the dynamics of household relations. The following section will examine in more detail the domestic chores and who is responsible for carrying them out. This will highlight the extent of the participation of male and female family members in particular household chores, as well as the extent of the 'double day' being carried out by the women. As finding adequate childcare is the most important concern for working women, the different arrangements that are made will also be examined.



The sixth section will deal with the participants' descriptions of their typical day. This illustrates clearly the links between paid work and domestic work for women, as well as the extent of the double workload faced by the majority of the participants. This also highlights the organisational and management skills which women must employ in order to combine both paid work and domestic work. Moreover, the description of a typical day shows how there is no distinct division between the two roles: boundaries become blurred as women constantly move between their paid and domestic work roles throughout the day. The final part of the chapter draws together the aspects above, highlighting the social and cultural importance for women to fulfil both their domestic as well as their paid work roles, even when it means a double day of work.

#### **4.2 Composition of the family group and household**

As has been mentioned, an examination of the household is a vital consideration in the analysis of women's participation in the labour market. Thus, the household as an analytical concept represents the intersection of social, economic, cultural and gender relations, and, as such, the definition of the household unit is crucial. A wide range of theoretical definitions of the household have arisen within social science scholarship. It has been established that, in empirical terms, the household is composed by a group of individuals of different ages and sexes. Leading on from this, a common definition is that these individuals live under one roof, share the same cooking pot and pool their resources for the welfare of the group (Young, 1992; Benería and Roldán, 1987). However, it is evident that this standard definition is insufficient to explain the wide range of households which exist across different cultures and societies.

The definition becomes further confused when the concepts of the household and the family are merged. These refer to distinct phenomena, where the household refers to a unit of co-residence, while the family is a social unit formed around marriage, parenthood and kinship relationships. The two concepts can intersect as in the situation of family-based households, although this is only one type of household. Moreover, the concept of family in this sense is



based on the model of the nuclear family, with a married couple and children. This again is only one type of family, an exclusive focus on this can restrict the scope of any analysis.

In these definitions, the household unit is presented as a corporate entity, with a cohesive structure wherein all the individual, related, members strive towards an agreed goal, generally assumed to be the maximisation of the welfare of the group as a whole. This definition involves many assumptions and leaves a number of questions to be asked, such as how these 'corporate' decisions are reached, as well as the ways in which internal conflicts are resolved. Extensive research across the range of the social science disciplines has challenged many of these assumptions. As a starting point, the idea of the 'pooling' and sharing of resources is presented as a 'virtue', assuming the existence of equal relations between the individuals making up the household ensuring the equal distribution of the resources. This obscures the internal power relations which are likely to exist between the individuals of the household, reflecting the different ages, genders, family and generational status of the members (Young, 1992; Benería and Roldán, 1987).

In view of this, much recent social science literature has come to emphasise that, as well as representing a unit of economic activity, the household is also a set of socially constructed relations. In addition, it is the site where individuals live out their 'private', emotional lives within family groups. Thus, while members of a family-based household may share common family priorities and principles, these relations are in turn are cross-cut by social constructions of gender roles, a gender division of labour and generational hierarchies (Bee and Vogel, 1996; Young, 1992; Benería and Roldán, 1987). Moreover, the household is not a static, unchanging, ahistorical unit. There is a great variety of households in terms of structure and composition, while both economic as well as life-cycle changes mean that an individual may belong to different households throughout the course of a lifetime (Young, 1992).

Therefore, a 'decomposition' of the household is necessary in order to gain an insight into the dynamics of the relations between individuals, and their power over the resources of the household. The composition of the household and the level of household income are

important factors in determining women's labour force participation. However, it is evident that these factors are closely intertwined with cultural perceptions of gender roles and how these are interpreted by individuals. These gender relations are also significant in conditioning the extent of the control and allocation of household resources. For the aims of this research, the analysis of the household will focus on the interplay of power relations between the individuals within the household and the ways in which these are negotiated in order for women to enter paid work, as well as how these relations may be altered by an earning wife's contribution to household income.

In Chile, the kinship-based household has remained for its members the basic resource for coping with the social and economic environment, whether rural or urban. The households from the sample of women who participated in the study were kinship-based, and represented combinations of the nuclear family, the extension of the nuclear family through the marriage of children, as well as the arrival of one or both parents to their children's households. In addition, there were female-headed households which had arisen through separation or desertion. These too were extended through the arrival of one or both parents, as well as other relatives. Table 4.1 gives a summary of the distribution of the different types of households within the sample of women who participated.

**Table 4.1 Type of households in sample**

Type of household	Number	Percentage
Nuclear	20	35.7
Extended	18	32.1
Female-headed	4	7.1
Female-headed, extended	10	17.9
Single-person	4	7.1
Total	56	100.0

Source: Survey carried out by the author, Chile 1993-94.

While the majority of the participants came from nuclear households, there was a range of different types of families and household situations. Of the women who participated, the majority of participants were living either in nuclear households, 35.7 per cent, or in extended households with relatives, 32.1 per cent. Female-headed households represented 7.1 per cent of the sample, with 17.9 per cent were in female-headed, extended households. The remaining 7.1 per cent came from single-person households.

It can be seen from the above data that the participants' paid work activity is carried out in a wide range of household contexts. In most of the household situations described above, the interviewees share the responsibility for maintaining the household with at least one other household member. This becomes significant when analysing the dynamics of the systems of control over the household income and its allocation. However, it is necessary to ascertain both the levels and the directions of household expenditure.

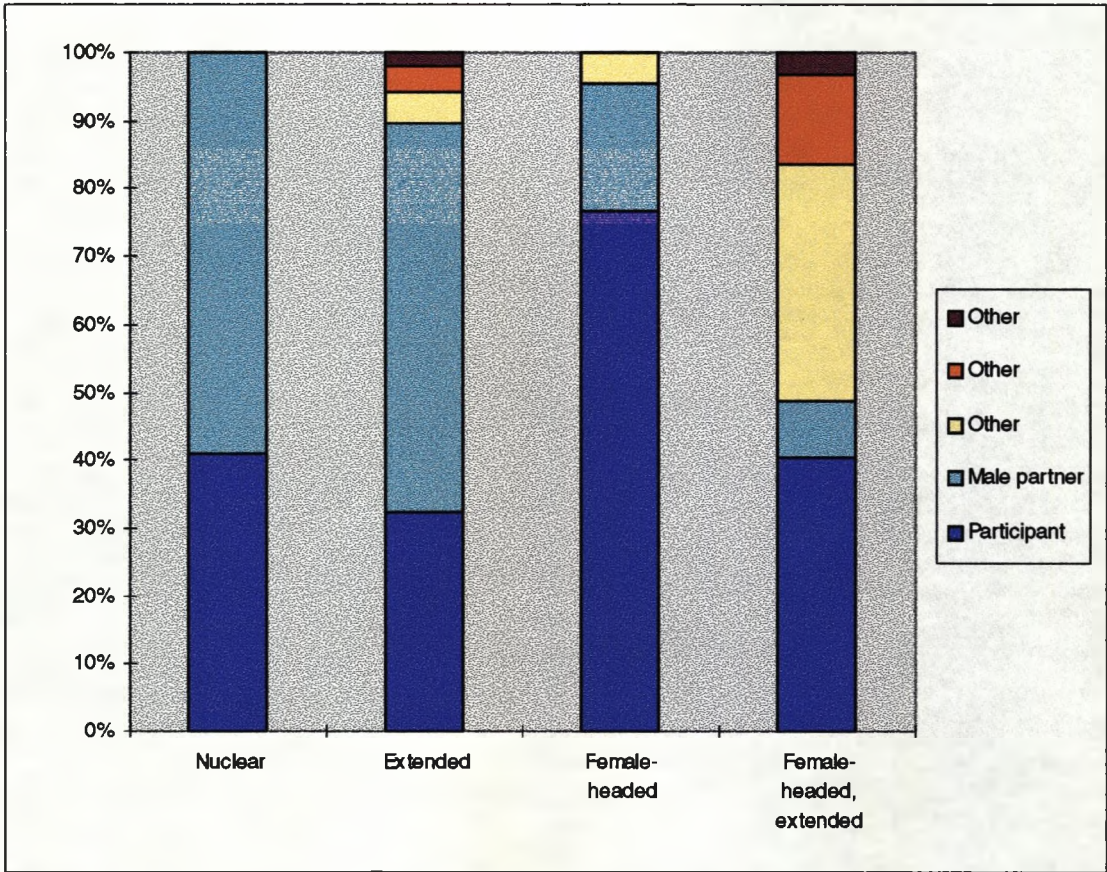
### **4.3 Household Income and Expenditure**

The data gathered on levels of household expenditure was related to the main costs which had to be met on a monthly basis. Specifically, these were: food, utilities (water, gas and electricity), rental or other payments made on the dwelling, telephone bills and transport costs for the household. These must all be met from the household income contributed by



those individuals who are working. As the majority of the participants identified economic need as the main motivation for their paid work (see section 5.5), it is necessary to make a closer examination of the importance of the participants' wage incomes relative to that of the other household members. It can be seen from the graph (Fig. 4.1) that women contribute a significant proportion of the household income across all the household types. Amongst nuclear households, women contribute approximately 40 per cent of the total income, with the male partner remaining responsible for the larger proportion.

**Figure 4.1** Proportion of household income contributed by household members by type of household



Source: Survey carried out by the author, Chile 1993-94.



In extended households, women account for just over 30 per cent of household income. This is due to the increased presence of extended households in the rural sector of the sample, where the women's wage during the period of seasonal work can be significantly higher than men's (see section 5.2).

The presence of a male partner contributing to household income is significant. Even amongst the female-headed households, a male partner is the second-most important contributor. This is accounted for by the presence of ex-partners who continue to make a financial contribution towards the maintenance of the household, particularly towards the children's expenses. Also, new partners, who may not be resident, may nevertheless contribute to the household income as part of their new obligations.

From the graph, then, it seems that the proportion of income contributed by women is, on average, greater than half of the male partner's income. This supports the view that both the male and female partner's incomes are vital to the maintenance of the household. Under a traditional gender division of labour, the male spouse is the 'breadwinner', maintaining the household, while the female spouse works for 'extras'. However, the definition of these 'extras' is significant, as this term can refer to expenditures which alleviate secondary poverty, provide a standard of living beyond basic needs or provide a degree of future economic security. To this end, there are variations in the way in which the two incomes are distributed according to expenditures. In order to gain an insight into the dynamics of this distribution, the perceptions of the participants of the importance of their wage, as well as the uses to which it is put will be examined.

### **4.3.1 'Confeccionistas' in Garment Manufacture**

#### **4.3.1.1 Ester**

Ester is head of her household, so her income is essential for her family's survival. She supports herself, her son and her mother, on her salary of US \$143.00. Her partner does not



live with them but he contributes towards the household expenditure. His contributions equal an average of US \$83.00 per month, approximately half his salary.

All of Ester's income is pooled with this contribution to cover the household expenditures. There is little left over at the end of the month, particularly as Ester and her partner are saving together to buy a house. However, Ester points out that she has succeeded in providing a degree of material comfort for herself and her family, although they still feel the lack of a higher level of income:

No, I want to earn more. (...) I mean, I have a gas heater and a paraffin heater, but sometimes I don't have any gas or paraffin. (..) I have to recognise that in my house, it's not a big house or anything like that, but I have all the comforts: I have an Ascot to have hot water, I have a telephone, I have a colour television. Things that I didn't have years ago, but that have come about through effort, nothing was given to me. (Ester)

Ester's ex-husband also makes a contribution towards her son's expenses. This is kept separate from the rest of the income and is used exclusively to buy clothes and school supplies for Ester's son. However, this is an important extra, as it allows the family to put some money towards a few modest luxuries.

A little [money left over], but sometimes I feel like going out to the Chinese restaurant, those are my luxuries, good food. And sometimes we have enough to go out of town for the weekend. (Ester)

Thus, as a female head of household, Ester holds the main 'breadwinner' role and she has succeeded in providing an adequate standard of living for herself and her family. However, as Ester's wage income alone is barely sufficient to meet basic household expenditure, it is evident that the contributions from both her ex-husband and her present partner enable all the members of the household to have a more comfortable quality of life.

#### 4.3.1.2 Ana

Ana is also a female head of household, with two young daughters to support. Her salary of approximately US \$262.00 is put towards the general household expenditure, although she receives a substantial contribution from her ex-husband. Ana calculates that he contributes approximately US \$ 238.00 in various small sums throughout the month. For example, he pays half of the rent, as well as buying the paraffin and the gas for the week. In addition, Ana's husband covers the cost of the school bus for his children, as well as any extra expenditures that might arise.

Ana recognises that her ex-husband's contribution is substantial. Nevertheless, she feels that her salary is vital if she is to give her children a decent standard of living and a good education:

Because, although my husband helps me, there are things that he is not going to cover the cost 100% for you. Apart from the fact that (...) you have children, you want to give them a good education and if you're going to educate them, it's going to take money. (...) Me, I've got my daughters in a good school and I try to give them the best, the best standard of living that I can given my situation. (Ana)

Ana considers herself to be in a good economic situation. This is due to the relatively high salary she earns, together with her ex-husband's financial contributions. This enables her to save regularly, about US \$ 10.00 a month. Moreover, Ana is about to receive her house through the subsidy, and this will represent a further improvement in her circumstances.

In a similar way to Ester, Ana would probably be able to maintain her family on her salary alone. However, it is the financial help she receives from her ex-husband that enables her to provide her daughters with an education and a standard of living according to her aspirations.

#### 4.3.1.3 Gladys

Gladys is a working wife and mother in an extended household with six members. There are four adults contributing to the household expenditure, namely, Gladys' husband, her daughter who has recently entered paid work, together with Gladys' mother. As they make up a large household, the household income has to be managed carefully. Although Gladys' income is small, approximately US \$171.43, it forms an important contribution to the household budget. Now that she is working, Gladys has been able to obtain health insurance for her three children, which represents an advance in financial security. In addition to this, Gladys puts her income towards those food items which need to be bought daily, such as bread and meat. Every day, Gladys leaves out US \$4.70 to cover these needs, as well as any unforeseen expenditures. Gladys keeps to this amount strictly, although it can fall short.

Gladys is responsible for administering the whole of the household budget. The other members of the family make their contributions directly to her and she distributes it according to the different household expenditures:

Everyone [gives me something]. My mother gives me a certain amount [US\$ 23.81 per month]. That money is supposed to be for me, I distribute it and I spend it, generally, on the water and the gas. The money he gives me (..) I leave for the food. My daughter, who is beginning to make a contribution, also contributes with one payment at least, the telephone (...). And she also pays for her transport and clothes. (Gladys)

Gladys holds the administrative responsibilities which traditionally accompany the role of the housewife. As she has only recently started paid employment, Gladys sees that her income has made a material difference to the economic position of her family:

Because, I see it like this, my salary isn't much but if I distribute it well, you get more. Apart from that, I have my guarantees, I have [health] insurance for my children - which I didn't have before - and that is important, the fact that you have a credit card, you know you have to pay it at the end of the month but you've got it when before you didn't. (Gladys)



It appears that Gladys' wage income, albeit small, makes a noticeable difference to household income. It is used to satisfy immediate needs such as daily food expenses, as well as enabling Gladys to provide health insurance for her children. In addition, she was able to purchase a video for the family and cover the cost of installing the telephone, both of which represent an advance in the general standard of living for Gladys.

This follows a pattern of the distribution of household income which has been observed elsewhere (Benería and Roldán, 1987). The male breadwinner's income is used to cover basic household expenditure, with the second earner's income, usually the wife, covering extra expenditures in order to reach a higher standard of living.

#### **4.3.1.4 Gloria**

This is similar to the case in Gloria's household. She lives in her parents' house, together with her two sisters. Both she and one sister work and contribute to the household income. Generally, Gloria's father provides the principal income to cover the bulk of the household expenditures, while the two daughters are responsible for paying the water and the electricity bills respectively. Thus, from her salary of US \$ 309.54, Gloria makes a fixed contribution of US \$11.90 every month to cover the water bill. Gloria's sister makes an additional contribution towards food costs.

However, Gloria's household has the extra expenditure of her mother's medical treatments, which represent a high cost of approximately US \$48.00 a month. The two extra incomes provided by the daughters are very important in meeting these costs.

Gloria does not have a clear idea of the amounts spent on food and other items as the household income is administered by her mother and father jointly. However, she is happy to contribute extra amounts when the necessity arises:

I think my mother administers more, or my father? They decide how they're going to cover the costs, then they only say to us, "now it's your turn to pay

this bill, the other”, like that. Or “this month” -my father, it’s rare that he says this- “I don’t have enough to pay this bill, you have to take it on.” (Gloria)

As basic household expenditures are met in this way, Gloria can make a substantial contribution when the family decide to buy an expensive electrical appliance. This was the case when she and her father decided to purchase a washing machine to help her mother. They share a monthly payment of US \$54.76, an extra expenditure that would have been difficult to meet without Gloria’s help. In addition to these contributions, Gloria is saving to get married. Gloria and her fiancé have purchased several items in order to set up their own home once they get married. Thus, while Gloria covers her own personal expenditure of clothes and transport, the bulk of her salary goes towards these items.

Gloria is the third earner in her family, and her contribution to household income is small relative to that of the other two earners. Nevertheless, it enables the household to cover different kinds of extra expenditure, particularly the necessary medical bills which would otherwise represent a crippling expenditure.

#### **4.3.1.5 Carmen**

Carmen’s household represents another illustration of this delineation between the first and second earners’ incomes. Carmen and her husband have no children, and live alone, so their household has fewer expenses to cover than some of the other participants in the sample. Nevertheless, the household income is distributed along similar lines.

Carmen’s husband gives her an allowance of approximately US \$238.00 for food and other necessities. This provides for the basic household expenditure, while the bulk of Carmen’s monthly income of approximately US \$190.48 is being saved towards the cost of a house. Both partners have separate savings accounts, which gives Carmen control of her income. However, this second income has also helped purchase some consumer goods which represent improvements in Carmen’s standard of living and economic situation:

Now I see that we're really well. For example, we have bought various things that we wouldn't have been able to buy before. And we've been saving, and with that money we bought the [Ascot] for the winter. And we've done various things in that way. So I'm well, I consider myself to be doing well. (Carmen)

Again, it is the second earner's income which enables the purchase of extra goods, which, while not great luxuries, represent an improvement in the standard of living of the household beyond the meeting of the basic necessities.

#### **4.3.1.6 Some observations**

In the case studies presented above, all the households have at least two contributors to household income. In the case of the female-headed households, the main earners are the women. However, this single income is only sufficient to cover basic household expenditures and both the women rely on contributions from non-resident ex-partners to provide for the 'extras'. Children's school expenses may be covered out of these contributions, enabling the main earner to provide for material improvements in the standard of living of the household, as well as small 'luxuries'.

In the other cases, there is a more traditional delineation between the incomes, where the male partner represents the main earner. Basic household expenditures are met from this income, while the second, and even third, earners provide for unforeseen costs, as well as the relatively expensive purchases of electrical appliances. The provision of these 'extras' represent the traditional motive for a wife to become a second earner. Nevertheless, they are significant in making small material improvements in the standard of living of the family, and in some case in alleviating secondary poverty. Examples of the latter case will be examined in the following section.



### 4.3.2 *Temporeras* in Agribusiness

The opportunity to work as a *temporera* is perceived as a valuable one for women to contribute to the welfare of the family. The principal motive given for undertaking paid work was to buy articles for the house and improve the standard of living of the family. The seasonality of the work reinforces the perception that the women are working to buy "extras", while the husband's income maintains the family throughout the year. The salary earned during the season is often used to buy clothes and school articles for the children, household goods, as well as food staples for the winter. In this sense, the importance of the woman's income is recognised, providing her with a legitimate motive to undertake paid work in spite of the many disadvantages.

#### 4.3.2.1 Ruth

Ruth's husband has a stable income all year round of US \$119.00 a month. During the season, Ruth earned a monthly average of US \$160.38. In a household of five, Ruth describes how their incomes are put towards distinct uses:

To help in the house, to buy things for the children, and to keep things for the winter; because with what my husband earns it's only [US \$ 119] a month and you have to buy them [the children] extra things, that's why I work. (...) Because sometimes you guarantee things with what he earns, you make sure of the food, all those things. But if it's about a pair of trousers, a pair of shoes, that's when I put in more. (Ruth)

Through Ruth's contributions to the household income, essential structural repairs were made to their dwelling. Nevertheless, Ruth's perception is that she is only a contributor to the family income, a helper. However, this season, the increased availability of work meant that she was able to make a substantial contribution to the household welfare. Moreover, there is usually some money left over for savings and for personal spending:

Yes there is enough. At least this year I didn't save any money, I just bought things. Other years when I didn't have the little ones, I would save, but not now! Yes, it's enough to give yourself some small luxuries! (Ruth)

Ruth's income is clearly important in ensuring that the secondary needs of the family are met. However, as the only available work is seasonal and temporary, the economic security of Ruth's household is precarious. Ruth may consider that she was working to buy 'extras'; however, it is evident that her income is vital to prevent the household from living in poverty.

#### **4.3.2.2 Berta**

Berta's income is also used in order to improve the situation of the family. Her husband's average income of US \$142.85 is sufficient to cover the daily needs of the family, while Berta's income is divided between food, dry goods for the winter and articles for her child and the house. This season she earned an average of US \$138.10 which was put to specific uses.

However, as Berta lives in a large household (eleven residents) with her husband's extended family, the costs of food appear to be met by the incomes of the men in the family, while her contribution does provide 'extras' rather than forming an essential contribution to family welfare. Berta retains a larger proportion of her income for her own expenditure than Ruth does, only contributing to food costs if necessary. Berta herself does not view her income as essential to the family's welfare; they could survive on her husband's income alone.

#### **4.3.2.3 Luisa**

Luisa's main reason for wanting to work was the low income earned by her husband, who is also a temporary worker. His average earnings are US \$142.86, although this is earned only during the months of the season. In her extended household of five people, Luisa wanted to make a contribution to the household income. There were specific items she wanted to purchase and she did not want to wait for her husband to have enough to give her. In an environment where lots of her neighbours were working, she felt there was no reason preventing her from doing the same.

Luisa used her income to provide her children with clothes and school articles, like the other women. She also bought household goods and made improvements to their house. The latter item represents a necessity rather than an 'extra': as in Ruth's case, this is an important structural improvement to the dwelling.

As she herself decided on the expenditure of her money, Luisa was able to buy some items for herself:

Yes, at the end, I bought myself some underwear, some cosmetics, I had my hair cut, I bought shoes and clothes. (Luisa)

This was evidently an important measure of her own independence for Luisa, particularly as she was able to fulfil the goals she had set herself regarding household expenditure, as well as setting aside a proportion of her wage income for personal expenses. Thus, through her wage income, Luisa was able to make a substantial improvement in the standard of living for her family, especially as their economic situation deteriorated in the winter when neither she or her husband had any employment.

#### **4.3.2.4 Clara**

Clara's household has been a dual-earner one since her marriage. Her husband's income from his metal workshop has never been sufficient to support the family of four. Both partners earned an average of US \$95.24 a month, although Clara was only earning during the season. For Clara, her income is essential for improving the quality of life for her family, enabling them to live beyond the mere satisfying of basic needs.

Although the delineation between the uses of the two incomes are similar to that of the women in Las Mercedes, Clara does not consider herself to be earning money for 'extras'. Her income is essential if the family is to have a home and a minimum standard of living:

It's very important. Because (..) that money we use to buy something that will be of more benefit, at least it's there as a memory: I bought that with my money. (Clara)



Although working as a *temporera* provides Clara with an opportunity to earn a relatively high income in a few months of the year, the seasonality of the work creates many difficulties. In Curicó, this type of work represents the livelihood for many households, rather than an opportunity for the wife to work for 'extras'. This is reflected in the critical financial situation which is experienced during the winter months when there is no work available. In spite of having made material advances during the season of work and having the minimal security of owning their house, the real poverty of the winter creates a cycle where economic security is rarely gained. It is for this reason that Clara would gladly take a lower-paying job that lasted all year round:

I would like to have been a good hairdresser, but as I can't do a course or something, as I would like. .. I would like any job, but one which is stable, a job that you have all year, even though it might pay less, but that you have it all year. Because it's very sad, sometimes, in the winter, to not even have heating, to be warm, nothing. If one could have a job all year round, then you'd live that much better. (Clara)

#### 4.3.2.5 Anita

As a *temporera*, Anita earns an average wage income of US \$176.20 a month, while her husband earns an average of US \$102.86. However, this is only for a few months of the year. In this case, Anita perceives herself to be a joint-breadwinner together with her husband: both their salaries are essential to maintain their household of five as neither of the two will have work during the winter.

Anita's income is not dedicated to a particular set of uses in the same way that the women from Las Mercedes dispose of their money. Anita and her husband organise the household budget on a joint basis:

We leave one salary for the house and for paying the debts, and the other we use to buy things, to start improving our standard of living. (Anita)

Nevertheless, as both partners are dependent on temporary work in agribusiness, their living is precarious and the winter months are often difficult, as was discussed in Chapter Five. Anita is in a better position to find income-generating activities to help alleviate some of the hardship experienced during the 'blue months' when there is no work.

#### 4.3.2.6 Some observations

In Las Mercedes, the growth in export agriculture and the corresponding demand for female labour has provided the only employment opportunity for the women who would not otherwise have worked. The relative ease of obtaining work in the locality has meant that women from households with a stable income from a husband or male partner, take advantage of the opportunity to earn 'extra' money during the season. The motives for working expressed by these *temporeras* is principally to buy articles for the house and 'get ahead' in material terms. Their incomes are directed towards buying clothes for their children, food commodities for the winter and perhaps consumer goods which represent an improvement in their standard of living. This reinforces the perception that they are working for 'extras', rather than making a joint contribution to household income together with their husbands.

In households where both partners work in agribusiness, the wife's income is essential to the family's survival. In these cases, in both Las Mercedes and Curicó, the wage income gained by the *temporeras* is vital in order to alleviate some of the effects of the poverty experienced in the winter months when there is no work: over the summer, money can be saved, food can be bought to store over the winter and material improvements made to homes. However, the seasonal cycle of work then unemployment means that these gains are made only in the short-term. The income from temporary work is never sufficient to gain financial security or build towards a future, with households often reaching the end of the winter in the same position they were in the year before.

Although this type of work has enabled the *temporeras* to make substantial contributions to household income and make personal gains in terms of increased financial control over

household resources, the vulnerability of their position is clear. In both the regions studied, there appears to be little alternative employment available for women outside export agriculture and the *temporeras*' dependence on this employment is highlighted in their expressed anxieties for the future if the demand for female labour in this sector declines.

#### 4.3.3 *Trabajadoras de casa particular* in Domestic Service

##### 4.3.3.1 Clementina

Clementina is a female head of household supporting herself and her son on her salary of US \$250.00. As we have seen previously, Clementina works *puertas adentro*, while her son lives with her parents in another city. Although Clementina's parents would be happy to maintain both her and her son, Clementina prefers to work and maintain her small family herself:

Because I have to support my son and, apart from supporting him, I have to give him education. In order to survive. I mean, I know that my parents can give me the money, at the moment they can give me, but I like to be independent, I like to be the one in charge. I mean, to earn my money myself, decide myself what I spend and what I don't spend, and not that they control me. (Clementina)

Clementina perceives that her income is essential for herself and her son. As Clementina has few expenses related to work, all of her salary is directed towards maintaining her son. Clementina gives her mother a fixed amount monthly to cover his food and clothes expenses. She pays his school fees directly, as well as all the bills relating to the house she shares with her sister in another city. In this way, she retains control over her income and its expenditure, despite the fact that she only visits her son only once a month.

Clementina feels that her present economic situation is a good one. Working *puertas adentro* means that she earns a high salary, with many of her own living expenses included. This enables her to save a significant proportion every month. She is saving towards her son's education, and planning to establish a small garment workshop in the future.



#### 4.3.3.2 Eugenia

Eugenia is also a female head of household, and the main breadwinner in her family. At present, they are in a better economic position than ever before, while Eugenia recognises that she is very satisfied in her occupation. She earns approximately US \$180.96, which is directed to maintaining her household of five children.

Nevertheless, she now has a stable partner who contributes financially. Although his contributions are sporadic, they allow Eugenia to save money to cover unforeseen expenses. As her partner does not reside in Eugenia's household, he covers his own expenses first, and then together they decide where he can contribute a little extra:

For example, he comes and he sees what needs to be paid, so then he helps me. Then we save between us. (..) Or sometimes his work is not doing well and he says "I don't have anything to give you now", so as he's given me money before and I've been saving it, then I have enough to pay what I have to pay. (Eugenia)

At other times, Eugenia will use her partner's contributions to purchase the weekly food for the household. In this way, Eugenia's partner's contributions are saved or used to cover extraordinary expenditures, while she remains the breadwinner. In her position as head of household, Eugenia feels confident of improving her family's economic situation in the future. She feels secure in her present employment, while she makes extra money sewing and making stuffed toys. Eugenia's aspirations for the future include obtaining the two machines necessary in order to dedicate herself to making garments at home. To this end, Eugenia saves as often as she can, although in the last year, she has been using these savings to purchase a number of consumer durables to improve the standard of living for the household.

#### 4.3.3.3 Raquel

Raquel's household is a nuclear one, and her husband has a stable wage income of approximately US \$385.71 per month. This has been sufficient to maintain their household of four. Raquel considers that her contribution to the household income is not essential and therefore there is no pressing economic need for her to work. Notwithstanding, it is her wage income which has enabled both her sons to complete their higher education.

Raquel has continued to work although the immediate necessity has passed. Raquel earns approximately US \$219.00 per month and she perceives that this represents an important contribution in terms of the standard of living of the household:

Well, to live better, I mean, at first it was so that my sons could have an education, and now it's because, well, the truth is that one salary, my husband's salary is not enough for anyone! (Raquel)

Raquel is in charge of administering the household budget, thus her husband hands her a fixed amount from his wages to cover the monthly household expenditure. In Raquel's view this allowance has rarely been enough to meet the costs of maintaining the household.

Raquel uses her income to supplement this allowance and make small improvements in their standard of living. In addition, this 'extra' income has alleviated the problems of stress and anxiety that Raquel would regularly experience when trying to make ends meet. Raquel has been attempting to save part of her wage income, although unforeseen emergencies have prevented her from doing so:

So now, I should have [money] to spare, but I have had these problems of medical expenses, the washing machine broke, \$20,000 pesos [US\$ 47.0] to fix it, so I haven't been able to save. (..) But I haven't had problems with these emergencies, that's why I know I'm better [economically] because the household budget wasn't affected, otherwise I would have had problems. (Raquel)

In this way, Raquel's income does form an important contribution to household income. Her husband's contribution is used to cover the basic monthly household expenditure, while Raquel's income appears to supplement this when there are extraordinary expenses to be met. However, this obscures the real importance of Raquel's contribution. Raquel's husband only gives her a proportion of his income and is not involved in the distribution of the household income, while Raquel contributes all of her wage income. This doubles the wage income Raquel has available to meet household expenditure. Despite this, as Raquel's husband is unhappy about his wife working, Raquel must constantly reassure her husband that he is the main breadwinner. Raquel devalues her contribution to the household income in order to reaffirm this, telling her husband that her money is only enough to buy the weekly vegetables.

In Raquel's household, it appears on the surface that her husband's contribution provides the main income to cover household expenditure, while Raquel's contribution is used for 'extras'. On closer examination, it is revealed that both incomes are vital for the maintenance of the family and household. This is the apparent situation in Raquel's household, where her husband is the main earner, while her income covers any extra expenditure. An analysis of the distribution of household income illustrates the extent to which the wife's contribution is obscured. In Raquel's case, her wage income is equal to the 'housekeeping allowance' she is given by her husband and is thus forms a full half of the pool of household income. However, as her husband is reluctant to cede his role as 'breadwinner', Raquel is obliged to devalue the importance of her contribution to household income.



#### **4.3.4 *Funcionarias* in the municipality**

##### **4.3.4.1 Inés**

Inés' situation contrasts with those discussed above. Her husband earns US \$714.29 per month, which is sufficient to maintain the household of two adults and two children. Inés' salary is approximately US \$273.80, of which only a small amount is contributed towards the upkeep of her family:

My salary means so little because the only things I manage to buy are disposable nappies, it's the only thing I spend on, some small personal debts and pay [the school] for my sister, and then my salary has gone. So I don't contribute much to the family at all. (Inés)

Inés' salary does enable her to cover her own personal expenses as well as to save a fixed amount of approximately US \$24.00 every month. However, neither Inés nor her husband appear to recognise that she makes any contribution to the household budget. As financial necessity so often forms the justification for a wife and mother to leave the traditional domestic role behind and take on paid employment, this may explain why Inés' husband pressures her to give up work and stay at home with the children.

##### **4.3.4.2 Mónica**

In contrast, Mónica has a clear perception of the importance of her contribution to the household income. In her dual-earner household, her husband earns US \$476.19, while Mónica earns US \$357.14 per month. Mónica considers that her wage income is essential for the maintenance of the household of five, that her husband's salary alone would not be sufficient to cover household expenditure.

Mónica and her husband administer their wage incomes separately rather than contributing to a pool. Mónica has a specific set of household expenditures that she is responsible for

meeting, while her husband has another set. Once these expenditures have been met, they each contribute to make up any shortfalls:

I have only some responsibilities. I am responsible for paying everything to do with the utilities as well as the school fees for one son; that's my responsibility. And then if I see that he [husband] really doesn't have any money for the weekend, (..) I contribute immediately (...); or if we have to go to the supermarket and he really doesn't have any, then I take on that expenditure. We share the responsibility in that sense, but the greater responsibility of administering the money is his.(Mónica)

Mónica does earn enough to save a fixed amount every month, as well as for her personal expenses. If the children need clothes, it is Mónica who uses credit in order to make these purchases.

It seems that Mónica and her husband are effectively joint-breadwinners as they each make an equal contribution to household income, and have divided the responsibility of meeting household expenditure equally. Nevertheless, Mónica emphasises that her husband is the one who makes the final decisions, highlighting that the ideology of the male head of household continues to persist even when, in strictly economic terms, the male partner is no longer the 'breadwinner'.

#### **4.3.4.3 Adriana**

This is the case in Adriana's household. Both she and her husband are earning. As Adriana has two jobs, she earns more than her husband, bringing home US \$1 190.48 per month. Her husband earns US \$714.29. Adriana considers that her income is essential to the maintenance of the household, while they could survive without her husband's contribution:

I think [my salary] is everything! Without my salary ... Without my husband's salary, yes. It's that he's always buying this, or doing that, (...) so I don't count on his money, so without mine, we couldn't survive. His doesn't really matter. (Adriana)

Adriana directs all of her salary towards meeting household expenditure. There is enough left to cover personal expenses, but she does not save. However, although it appears that Adriana has complete control over the household income, she also emphasises that her husband is the head of the household:

Although I decide many things, he's still the head of the household. Because, (..) what happens is that as it's the children, maybe he doesn't get involved, with clothes for the daughter, that type of thing, so that is much closer to me. Perhaps he has distanced himself from that. (Adriana)

Adriana is the *de facto* breadwinner in her household; nevertheless, the traditional gender roles persist, with her husband retaining the patriarchal role of head of household.

#### 4.3.4.4 Alicia

Alicia is a female head of household. She has lived alone until recently, and her income of approximately US \$166.66 has been sufficient to support herself. However, Alicia's daughter and her young son have come to live with her and she is now experiencing difficulties in supporting them all on one salary. She receives no other contributions to cover the household expenditure and has had to increase her money income through extra work at the weekend:

It's essential, essential. I even do extra work at home, I work Saturdays and Sundays in other jobs. (Alicia)

Alicia perceives her financial situation to be precarious in spite of her job at the municipality. Although she has completed the payments on her house, the additional responsibility of providing for her daughter and grandson has highlighted the instability of her position:

I'm a little better because I've finished paying the house and all that, but I would like to have more income because I sacrifice myself too much working. I mean, to have some kind of stability, because if this month, they can say to me that there is no more work, then we go backwards again. I don't have great pretensions to earn more but stability would interest me because I'm not as young as I was. (Alicia)



Alicia's situation, at the age of 47, is that of an older female head of household. She has been the breadwinner for many years, but still finds herself at the mercy of an unstable occupation.

#### **4.3.4.5 Some observations**

From the above case studies, it can be seen that the distinction between the male's 'breadwinner' income and the female's 'extra' income is an ideological rather than a concrete one. There are cases where women's contribution to household income is essential as household expenditure cannot be met from one income alone, and they are therefore equal providers. However, the persistence of a traditional gender ideology leads to a contradictory perception of wives' and husbands' economic roles within the household. On one hand, women recognise that their wage income forms an essential contribution if the household is to have an acceptable standard of living, while on the other hand, they devalue the extent of their contribution in relation to that of their male partner. Moreover, there is a devaluation of the important managerial role held by wives, with a subsequent identification of the male as the head of the household. Thus, it appears that traditional gender relations persist in spite of changes in women's and men's relative economic power within the household.

In order to gain an insight into how gender and power relations are expressed in the context of the distribution of the household income, the next section will analyse further the dynamics of the household decision-making process.

#### **4.4 Decision-making process in the household**

An important dimension of women's empowerment through their paid work is the extent to which they exercise decision-making control within the household. Within the traditional gender division of labour within the home, the female domestic role includes the management and administration of the household budget in order to ensure that household needs are met. However, this managerial role covers a range of consumption decisions, some of which may involve other members of the

household, which are therefore conditioned by ideologies governing gender roles. The traditional dynamics of decision-making may be altered by women's direct control of their earnings.

Table 4.2 indicates the distribution of the responsibility for the routine administration of the household budget across households.

**Table 4.2**

**Person who administrates the household budget, percentages of households in sample**

<b>Participant alone</b>	<b>Participant and husband</b>	<b>All the family</b>	<b>Mother/Father</b>	<b>Son</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Number</b>
59%	21.9%	4.8%	12.1%	2.4%	100%	55

Source: Survey carried out by the author, Chile 1993-94.

In keeping with the traditional gender division of labour within the household, in 59 per cent of the households, the interviewee, as the wife, was solely responsible for administrating the household budget. However, in 21.95 per cent of the households the responsibility was shared between themselves and their partners, while in 12.11 per cent of households, a proportion of those extended households with a resident grandparent, the mother or father of one of the partners is the person responsible for administrating the household budget.

When the process of income allocation is broken down into separate purchasing decisions, it can be seen that there is a differentiation along gender lines. Table 4.3 shows which individuals within the household participate in different types of household decisions. The data in this table excludes those households without a resident male partner.

**Table 4.3**

**Expenditure decisions, participating household member/s, by percentage of households in sample**

<b>Decision-type</b>	<b>Interviewee alone</b>	<b>Husband alone</b>	<b>Both partners</b>	<b>Each earner</b>	<b>All the family</b>	<b>Mother</b>	<b>Father</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>No. of h/holds</b>
<b>Food</b>	76.3%	0	5.3%	0	2.6%	13.2%	0	2.6%	100	41
<b>Consumer durables</b>	34.0%	11.0%	25.7%	0	20.0%	2.9%	2.9%	2.9%	100	41
<b>Clothes husband/children</b>	43.0%	14.3%	23.0%	11.0%	6.0%	0	0	2.9%	100	41
<b>Education for children</b>	55.9%	6.0%	26.0%	3.0%	6.0%	0	0	2.9%	100	41
<b>Education for adults</b>	41.0%		23.5%	32.4%	0	0	0	2.9%	100	41

Source: Survey carried out by the author, Chile 1993-94.



In purchasing and consumption decisions relating to food items, in 76.3 per cent of households, the interviewees were making these decisions alone. This proportion reflects the cultural perception that the routine preparation of food is an exclusively 'feminine' responsibility. This is further reinforced when it is observed that in 13.1 per cent of the cases, the mother (of either the participant or her partner) was responsible for deciding on food purchasing. In only in 5.3 per cent of the households were food purchasing decisions shared between both partners, while no household at all had a male partner solely responsible for this set of decisions.

#### **4.4.1 Consumer durables**

In the case of decisions relating to the purchase of consumer durables, the participation of husbands, and other members of the household would be expected to increase.

Accordingly, in 25.7 per cent of the households, the decision to purchase a relatively expensive electrical appliance is made by both partners, while 20.0 per cent of the participants stated that this was a decision involving all the family. In 14.3 per cent of households, the male partner decided on these purchases alone. The highest proportion of the participants, 34.0 per cent, stated that they decided alone on the purchase of an electrical domestic appliance. Common appliances purchased are television sets and video recorders, which are for the direct benefit of all the members of the household, and represent an expenditure that is an 'extra' or a luxury. However, the women were also purchasing labour-saving devices such as washing machines, floor waxers and microwaves. These items are likely to benefit the participant in alleviating the burden of their domestic responsibilities.

It is worth reflecting on the fact that 34 per cent of the interviewees considered themselves to be making these purchases alone. In a *machista* culture, it would be expected that husbands and male partners would have a greater say in those purchasing decisions that represent an extraordinary and relatively high expenditure for the household. In addition, electrical appliances, even domestic ones such as washing machines, embody ideas of machinery and specialist technical knowledge which are often culturally associated with masculinity. As such, it might be reasonable to assume that, for women, purchasing such goods for the first time might be an intimidating

process. Therefore, for 34 per cent of the participants to perceive that they were making these decisions alone points to an exercise of power on their part. The purchase of labour-saving devices enables women to free themselves from some of the time constraints imposed by domestic responsibilities, and combine their dual roles more successfully. Furthermore, while these figures support the view that women's waged work provides a source of income for households to obtain cheap consumer goods from the market, it seems that women are retaining control over their incomes and making their own consumption decisions.

#### **4.4.2 Decisions on clothing and education**

Referring back to Table 4.3, in the area of decisions relating to the purchase of clothing items for both children and husbands, there is again an emphasis on the wife's role. Around 43 per cent made these decisions alone.

In relation to decisions affecting training and education for adults, there is a more even distribution of the participation of household members. In 23.5 per cent of cases, these decisions are made jointly by the partners, while in 32.4 per cent of the cases, each individual earner decides whether to undertake education. However, the situation is different in the case of the range of decisions over education for the children. Here, 55.9 per cent of the participants stated that they decided alone on their children's education, while only 26.0 per cent decided jointly with their partners.

This may reflect the fact that, as was observed in section 4.3, there was a tendency for women's wage income to be directed towards paying school or university fees for their children. The high proportion of participants making this decision alone implies that women are exerting their influence through their wage incomes in this most important family decision.

#### **4.4.3 Ownership of goods**

Another indicator of women's autonomy within the household, albeit on a limited scale, is the ownership of goods which could be sold in case of a financial emergency. In the sample, 63.41 per cent stated that they had goods in their own name which they could sell to raise cash. From this proportion, 23 per cent owned a house or dwelling, which represents an important degree of independence. Another 23 per cent owned relatively new consumer durables, while 12 per cent had cars which they could sell. Large items of furniture were also considered to be potential sources of income in a financial emergency by 12 per cent of the sample. Only 8 per cent had savings, while 4 per cent owned items of jewellery. Few of these items, except for houses, tend to retain a high value on resale. Nevertheless, these items represent a consolidation of the higher standards of living which households may attain through having a second-earner, as well as providing a degree of security for the women who have purchased them, in case of future emergencies.

However, in spite of this, the interviewees perceive that the degree of power they have within the household is limited. Over 85 per cent felt that there had been no change in the household decision-making process. This may be due to the fact that women hold the main responsibility for administering the household budget anyway, and perhaps any increases in their contribution to household income have merely enabled them to exert this decision-making power with more material effect. This indicates that an increase in women's contribution to the household budget will not necessarily be followed by an increase in her power within the household.

#### **4.4.4 Household headship**

In keeping with this, 32.5 per cent of the interviewees stated that their husband or male partner is the head of the household. This seems to have its roots in the prevailing gender ideology, in which the male partner, as the breadwinner, represents the final authority within the household. This basic aspect of patriarchal gender relations persists, even in household situations where the couple are equal providers.



In section 4.3, Raquel stated that she holds the sole responsibility for administrating the household budget, as well as contributing almost half of the pool of income together with her husband. Nevertheless, she identifies him as the head of household, if only by virtue of his gender. Raquel goes to some lengths to ensure that his authority is conserved:

Because he's the man, I suppose, I don't know. I, at least, always try to make him feel the head of the household, at least in front of the children (...). I mean I never give them permission to do something without their father intervening. (Raquel, *trabajadora de casa particular*)

There were contradictory statements made on the reasons behind the identification of the male partner as the head of the household. Their statements reveal that this is a normative expectation, rather than one based on the practical realities within the household:

It's my husband. Because it's as if the man believes himself to be the head of the household. (...) Although, we talk about things and if we all agree, then we go ahead. (Verónica, *funcionaria*)

He is the head of the household because he is the one who gives the final "yes, no!". He is the patriarch. (Rosa, *funcionaria*)

Why, let's see why? Although I decide a lot of things, it doesn't matter, he is still the head. (Adriana, *funcionaria*)

Because he is the one who's in charge; we're both in charge but he's in charge more than me! (Luisa, *temporera*)

Well, [my father] is the one who maintains the household economically, and the other thing is that he takes the majority of the decisions, he takes all the household decisions. (Gloria, *confeccionista*)

My husband, because he has always made sure he had work, even if it was only a little, he has always worked to maintain us, especially in the time when you don't work. That's why I think he should be the head of the household. (Ruth, *temporera*)

These statements highlight the gender ideology behind the cultural perception of the man as the head of the household. However, there is also a degree of questioning of the assumption of the face value of male authority. There is some reference made to the notion of the male's headship deriving from his status as the main provider, and as such,

holding the final decision-making power; in other statements there is a search for a reason. It seems that in a dual-earner household, rather than material considerations, it is the persistence of traditional gender ideology, as well as the normative expectations of the participants, that gives the male partner the status of head of the household.

Notwithstanding, a very high proportion of the interviewees, 40 per cent, identified themselves as the head of household. This is a higher proportion than can be accounted for by the presence of female-headed households in the sample, which was 21.9 per cent. It seems that this surprisingly prevalent perception among those women who live in households with a resident male partner stems from the reality of their managerial role within the household and family:

I think that I am, more [head of the household] because I am the one who spends the most time with the children at home. (Marilyn, *trabajadora de casa particular* )

Looking at it coldly, I am [the head of household]. I am, because he gives me the money for the food, then it's me who sees to everything: the electricity has to be paid, and the water. He is not even aware of these things. (Gladys, *confeccionista* )

As 40 per cent of the interviewees identified themselves as head of the household, some reflection on this occurrence is necessary here. Given that this study is an exploratory one, the sample is not representative and this figure is not conclusive. Moreover, the interview process itself is likely to have influenced the participants' responses. As the question regarding household headship is located within the context of the decision-making process, the interviewees are most likely to be considering their responses in conjunction with their own managerial role within the household. Despite this bias, the figure of 40 per cent remains significant in that it indicates that a number of those interviewees with male partners are reflecting on the reality of their household situations, and the implications of this for the role of head of the household. These perceptions seem to be based on a different interpretation of gender relations within the household and family, one which emphasises the more practical and material aspects of household relations rather than the ideological ones. Traditional gender relations may not quite sit with these realities, and consequently, the women who responded that they are head of the household are re-evaluating gender identities within their individual households. It

seems that a similar process is taking place among those women who responded that they and their partners are joint heads of households, which was 12.5 per cent:

Both of us, I mean I don't see my family with a head, that doesn't exist for me. (Claudia, *funcionaria*)

I think there are two heads of household, definitely there are two. (..) But I don't feel there have ever been important decisions taken that have been imposed. (Catalina, *funcionaria*)

Both of us, because we always discuss things and then we see what's the best thing to do. (Carmen, *confeccionista*)

An exploration of the interpretations of the role of the head of the household reveal a complex set of dynamics. Some of the interviewees interpret this role as belonging to the male partner for reasons which indicate the persistence of a patriarchal gender ideology. In this interpretation, the male partner retains the final authority within the household based on his gender and its dominant status within the hierarchy of traditional gender relations, obscuring the financial and managerial contributions made by wives. In the contrasting interpretations of this role made by the other interviewees, the material and practical realities of having two, or more, providers are emphasised. This identifies the realities of the decision-making process within the household, as well as recognising the importance of wives' roles as managers and co-providers. Nevertheless, women are still additionally responsible for the carrying out of domestic chores within the home. The dynamics of this aspect of household relations will be examined in the next section.

#### **4.5 Domestic tasks**

This area represents the most primary aspect of women's role as wives and mothers within the household. In spite of any changes in gender relations within the household that have been observed in the previous sections, women remain almost exclusively responsible for the carrying out of the domestic routine. This encompasses a set of tasks which need to be done daily or weekly, which include the purchase of food and meal preparation, cleaning, dishwashing, laundry and ironing. In addition, women are the primary carers for children, which, in addition to general care, entails the supervision of children's homework and the responsibility for taking children for their medical



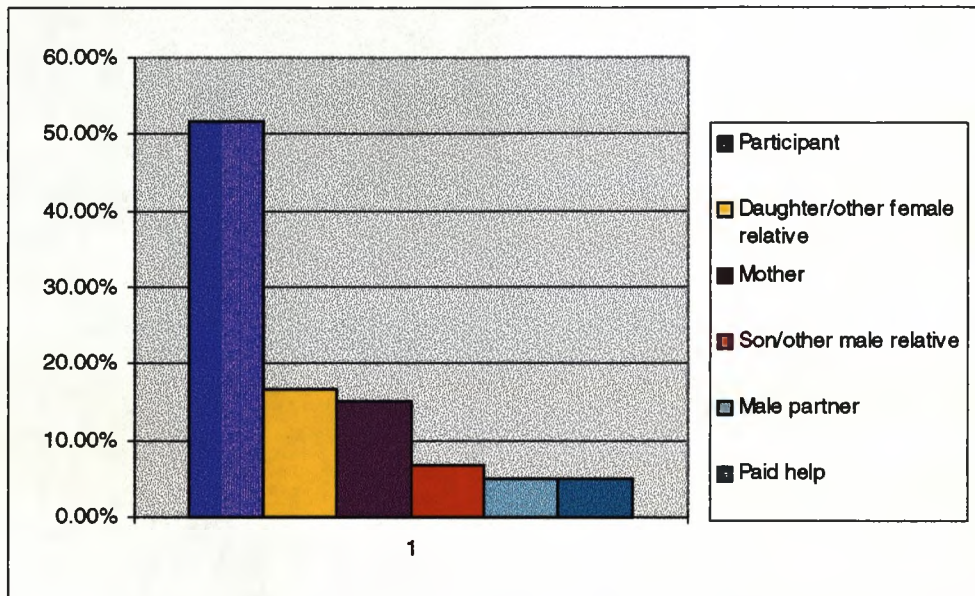
appointments (Wharton, 1994; Benería and Roldán, 1982). For working women, this represents an additional burden of work to be carried out around the demands of their paid work day. This section will examine the ways in which women organise these tasks in order to fulfil the obligations of both their domestic role and employment roles.

As Figure 4.2 indicates, over 50 per cent of the sample responded that they were solely responsible for the domestic chores in the home. Other female relatives, daughters and mothers, also took a large share of the main responsibility for carrying out domestic tasks, while about 5 per cent of male partners take on the responsibility for the domestic chores. In this response, participants identified the individual who is primarily responsible for the domestic tasks, while also including those members of the household who habitually help.

In Figure 4.3, the distribution of individual chores amongst members of the family is shown. This highlights the workload faced by the majority of the interviewees, as the participation of other members of the household is limited. The strength of the cultural perception of housework as 'women's' work is borne out by the fact that other female residents are the most likely to help in the domestic chores. The interviewees' mothers and daughters take on the second-largest share of the domestic chores and provide essential help to alleviate the burden of domestic work. Male partners and sons do participate to a limited degree in general housework, such as cleaning and washing up crockery. However, it is evident that the male members of the household 'help out', rather than take on any significant share of the domestic chores.

The chores that male partners participate most in are household repairs, shopping and child-care. The predominance of male partners and sons in the area of household repairs is explained by the gender division of labour. These are tasks that are traditionally defined as 'male' work, and as such, it is more likely to fall to the male members of the household

**Figure 4.2 Individuals in charge of domestic duties.**



Source: Survey carried out by the author, Chile 1993-94.

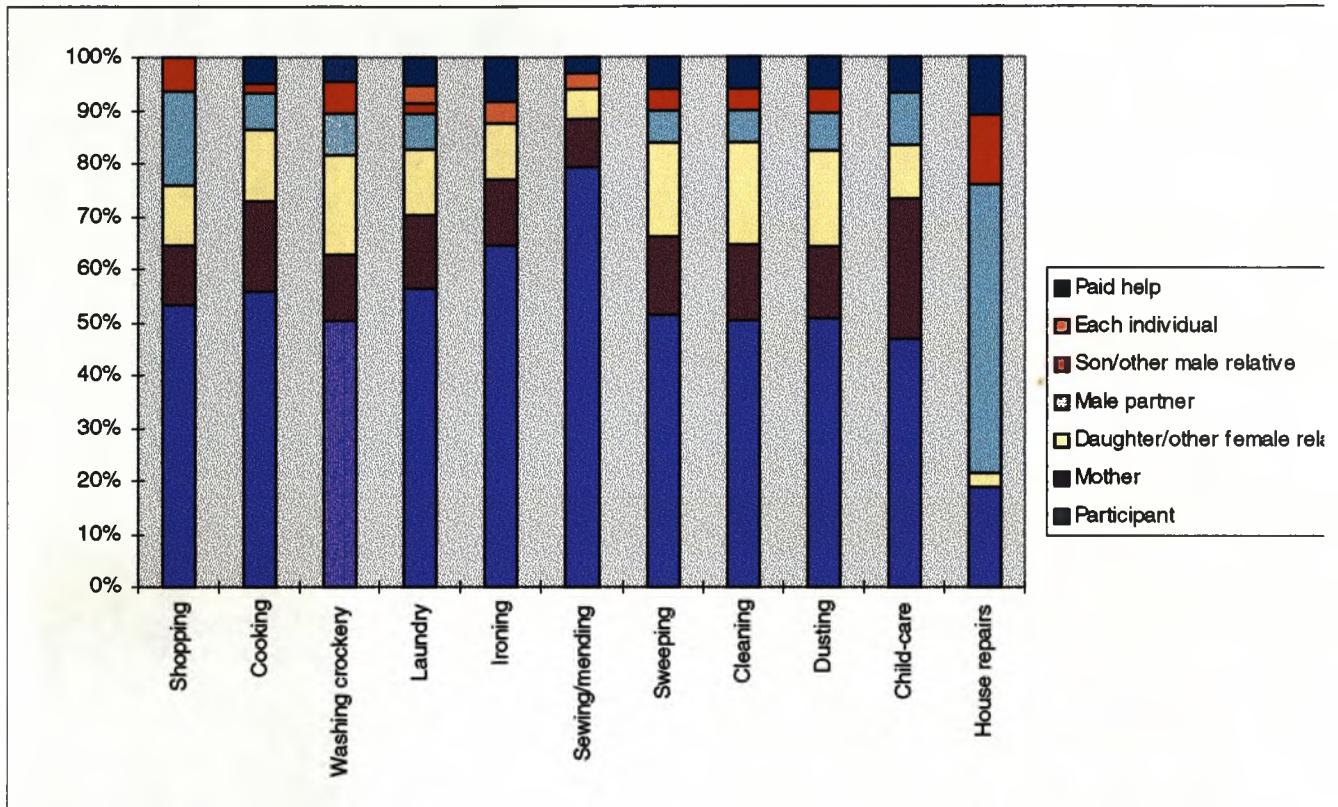
to carry them out. Nevertheless, as these tasks may often require a greater degree of skill, this is the area where paid outside help is more likely to be called in.

The relatively high level of participation of male partners in shopping activities may reflect lifestyle changes which mean that more grocery shopping is carried out in supermarkets rather than the local fresh produce market or the corner shop. In a dual-earner household, there may be a greater degree of affluence, as well as time restrictions which mean that the bulk of the grocery shopping is carried out on a weekly or monthly basis rather than daily. In this case, shopping trips are likely to involve the whole family, as is reflected in the data.

Nevertheless, the majority of the participants are primarily responsible for carrying out almost all the domestic chores, despite any help they may receive from other household members. The list of domestic tasks which need to be done on a daily basis, such as meal preparation, washing up and childcare, is extensive and represents several hours of work which need to be fitted in around the working day. Some of the ways in which paid work and domestic work is organised will be examined further in this section. Nevertheless, over 48 per cent of the sample felt that they had the same amount of domestic work to do in periods when they were working as when they were not. However, the help that was received from the other members of the household did alleviate the burden to some degree, as 34.2 per cent felt that they had less housework to do when they were working. A further 17.1 per cent of the sample stated that they had more to do when they were working, underlining the burden of the 'double day'.



**Figure 4.3 Distribution of domestic tasks among household members**



Source: Survey carried out by the author, Chile 1993-94.

However, it is important to bear in mind that standards of housekeeping vary according to the individual woman's perceptions. While some women may do less at home if they have to work, or limit the heavier chores to the weekend, others may feel the necessity to maintain high standards of housekeeping. The cleanliness and tidiness of the house is an important source of pride and status for many women, as it is an integral aspect of the female gender role within the household. To this may be added pressure from other members of the household, particularly male partners, who will expect the same standards even when the wife is engaged in paid employment.

The problem of finding adequate childcare was the most important disadvantage of working for the participants (see section 3.4). The labour legislation governing female employees stipulates that it is the responsibility of the employer to provide a free childcare centre if the firm employs twenty or more women, either installed at the place of work or as a contract service from an existing nursery (Muñoz et al, 1993). However, in reality, this regulation is poorly enforced as firms may employ nineteen women workers in order to avoid the cost of providing childcare. In addition, the firm can be defined as separate sections, for example, administration and workshop, which are considered as separate entities for the purposes of labour legislation. In this case, firms can employ nineteen women in one section and nineteen in another and thus avoid the legislation. Moreover, the code does not stipulate the location of the childcare centre, which may be close to the place of work or independent, allowing employers to contract the services of a nursery which may be distant from the place of work. This represents a serious disadvantage for women in terms of travel time at the beginning and end of each working day, as well as posing health risks to the child. In addition, the quality of the childcare is not regulated and therefore many women prefer to make their own arrangements (various interviews, Santiago). Thus, finding suitable childcare poses a persistent problem for those mothers seeking to take on paid employment.

The data on household tasks (figure 4.3) indicates that the mothers of the interviewees took on the largest share of the child-care responsibilities. This remains the case when women are working, as 48.2 per cent of the interviewees with young children indicated that their mother took care of the children while they were at work. A further 17 per cent, relied on help from elder daughters (6.8 per cent), sisters (6.8 per cent) or other female



relatives (3.4 per cent). A further 27.6 per cent had paid help, either domestic servants at home or a nursery, to take care of the children. A small proportion, who had no access to childcare at all, took their children to work with them (3.4 per cent) or else left them alone at home (3.4 per cent). These figures highlight the importance of being able to call on female family members to provide child-care, particularly as the cost of hiring a person to mind the children is only accessible to few women. It appears that child-care remains a predominantly 'female' task, as no male relatives were mentioned as playing a role in childcare while the interviewee was at work.

The case studies which follow illustrate in detail some of the ways in which childcare and domestic responsibilities are organised between the wife and other female members of the household.

#### **4.5.1 *Confeccionistas* in garment manufacture**

For female heads of household who are obliged to take on paid work to maintain their families, the problem of childcare is a recurrent one. None of the women from this sector utilised the free childcare provided by the employer, preferring to turn to female relatives in order to overcome this problem. Relatives will also often take on some of the domestic tasks which need to be done daily. However, anxiety related to the safety of their children adds an extra burden to the workload of working mothers, even if they have provided the best possible childcare in their absence.

##### **4.5.1.1 Ester**

In Ester's case, her mother, who came to live with them after Ester separated from her husband, has taken on the main part of the responsibility for the domestic tasks. This means that Ester is free to work, while her mother takes care of her son after he gets home from school:

My mother [is in charge of the domestic chores]. I help her but not much. (..) Before, I was the housewife and I did all the tasks. Since I've been working, I don't do them and (..) the washing machine makes it more comfortable. (Ester)



However, although her mother takes on the main burden of the domestic tasks and childcare, Ester is not entirely satisfied. She still has worries regarding her son, particularly as she feels she has lost authority over him:

He is with my mother, yes, but sometimes he doesn't take any notice of his grandmother. (...) So I can't control him any longer, so now I don't know who is with, who he goes out with, what he does. (..) So that worries me. (Ester)

This represents a significant tension for working mothers. As Ester works long hours, she must entrust not only the care of her son to her mother, but also his upbringing to a certain degree. This can be felt as a failing on the part of the mother, even if she is obliged to work as is Ester's situation. This was a disadvantage to taking on paid employment that was expressed by many of the interviewees (see section 3.4).

#### **4.5.1.2 Ana**

Ana is a female-head of household living alone with her two young daughters. When she and her husband separated, Ana had to pay for a nursery, which took up almost all of her salary. Now, however, as her sister is at home looking after her own children, Ana's daughters are taken care of there:

My sister, because she has a good marriage, (..) and her husband can afford to have her stay at home taking care of her children, and she offered. Because I used to take them to a private school and everything I earned, went to pay for that school. (..) So she [Ana's sister] offered that I pay her half of what I was spending at the school and she would look after them and send them to school for me. And that's what I did, only I also give her some extra money weekly and she gives them their food too. (Ana)

Anna's case illustrates how childcare can pose a serious financial difficulty for working mothers. However, she has succeeded in finding the best possible solution to her problem with family help.

### 4.5.1.3 Gladys

For Gladys, the presence of her mother and two daughters within the household has been vital in allowing her to take on paid employment. Gladys' mother has the main responsibility for the household tasks, while other women in the family take on a share of the chores when they return from work and school. Gladys' husband does not participate at all in the household chores:

My mother is the one who has become the housewife; she is in charge of the house, the kitchen. The other daughter helps, naturally, and the other one who is studying helps when she gets home. Really we all share the work. Because at the weekend we share the chores: one washes, the other irons, the other one waxes the floor. We never let one of us take the whole burden. (..) 'I have less to do, less. Thank God, I have less to do because I have my mother's and my daughter's help. I still have worries (...) but the burden is a little easier for me. (Gladys)

The ability to call on her mother to take care of her youngest son is vital if Gladys is to continue to work. Her salary is low and she would not be able to meet the cost of hiring domestic help to take care of her son:

It would be a big problem. Because if I were to continue working, I would have to find a person to see to him [her son]. It would be a big problem for me. (Gladys)

### 4.5.2 *Temporeras* in Agribusiness

For the *temporeras*, the problem of childcare is a significant one. As temporary workers, they are not entitled to childcare provided by the employers, although some programmes organised by SERNAM have provided childcare centres during the season (Matear, 1995). However, for the women in Las Mercedes, the SERNAM centre was in the town, and it was more convenient to leave their children with female relatives or neighbours.

#### 4.5.2.1 Ruth

Ruth left her children with her mother, who lives in the house next door, during the period when she was working. Her mother also took on some of the meal preparation, although Ruth felt that she had the same amount of domestic work to do:

At least I didn't have to cook, because my mother would cook. But I left the things washed up for her, I swept the yard for her and I did my room. So all she had to do was make lunch, and sometimes, do her own room.  
(Ruth)

Sometimes the older children would help her when they were not at school, however, Ruth still felt that she did not receive any extra help from the other members of the family.

#### 4.5.2.2 Luisa

For Luisa, making alternative domestic arrangements for her first season as a *temporera* proved problematic. Her mother was able to take care of the children some of the time, however, when she also worked, Luisa faced problems with her youngest child:

I didn't have anyone to look after the children at times, there is a need for someone to look after the children here in the summer. (..) Sometimes my mother works in the summer, so when she works, it's a problem because I didn't have anyone to look after him (..) I would take him with me, but the heat, sometimes it gave him a fever. (Luisa)

The lack of available childcare obliged Luisa to expose her child to certain risks by taking him to her work in the fields. However, there was no alternative if she was to continue working.

Moreover, Luisa did not have any female relatives to help her with the domestic responsibilities at home, and her husband did not help her out. This proved to be a source of stress:

I, when I got home in the evening, would be doing everything, so I was bad-tempered; I had to do the cleaning, prepare the meals, and sometimes I



would come home to make bread and I baked at 12 o'clock at night and I went to bed late, so I was angry and I didn't want to talk. (Luisa)

Luisa's case illustrates the extent to which the combination of domestic responsibilities and paid work can present a significant burden of work, particularly if no help is received from other members of the household. This indicates the persistence of the traditional gender division of labour, where Luisa, as the only female member of the household, is solely responsible for the domestic tasks. Traditional attitudes to men's and women's work tend to be more rigid in rural areas, indicating that the gender ideology of the spouse's is important in determining the extent of male partner's participation in household tasks.

#### **4.5.2.3 Sara**

There is a similar situation in Sara's household, where she has the role of 'housewife' in a household of eleven members. During the period that she was working, there was no reduction in the amount of domestic work she had to do:

It's just that you get home from work tired and you still have to do the things in the house, because it was only the men who stayed at home. (Sara)

There were several male members of the household who were not working and remained at home, however the perception that domestic tasks are 'women's work' prevented them from taking on any part of the domestic work burden. This remains the responsibility of the women.

#### **4.5.2.4 Anita**

In contrast to the above situations, in Curicó, Anita and her husband have developed a very egalitarian distribution of domestic responsibilities. As Anita's family rely on temporary waged work for their livelihood, it is crucial that either of the partners be free to work as soon as it becomes available.:

When he's working and I'm not, I don't let him do anything. But when we're both working then we fit together well, because we always look for different shifts. For example, he is bad at staying up late, [so] I go to work

at night and he works by day, so the night-time things he does. (...) He washes at night, and leaves the ingredients prepared for the meal, when I come home in the morning, I just have to finish it that's all. When only one is working, either one [does the chores]. He's like a woman for doing the household chores. (Anita)

This division of the domestic tasks means that Anita has less to do at home when she is working, in contrast to all the other women who face a 'double day' during the season. Anita's situation is that of a true joint breadwinner: both her and her husband have adapted their household roles in order to take advantage of the temporary labour market conditions. In this way, they ensure that they are maximising their earning potential in order to maintain their family and to gain some improvements in their standard of living.

Anita has a clear view of the ideal working of gender roles: she is firm in her rejection of the traditional division of labour in the household:

It was on that condition that I started work ... that both of us would have to do the chores, both of us would help. Just because I'm a woman it doesn't mean that I'm going to do all the chores in the house, no. The husband has to be a good partner, both of you are human beings, he has to help. (Anita)

It may be that Anita and her husband have transformed the division of labour in their household because their economic survival depends on this flexibility. However, it is evident that both partners share a similar progressive gender ideology, which is likely to have been key to the development of their equitable domestic and work roles.

#### **4.5.3 *Trabajadoras de casa particular* in Domestic Service**

For the women employed in domestic service, combining work and domestic roles entails repeating many of the same tasks. Thus, help from the other members of the household alleviates this burden to some degree.

#### 4.5.3.1 Raquel

In Raquel's household, there are no other female relatives. However, she states that both her husband and their two sons help her with the domestic chores:

Yes, they help me. I mean, I do the bathroom because it seems that no-one else can do it! They always help me, and my husband in some things. For example, he sometimes cleans the windows, he waxes the floor. (Raquel)

Raquel explains how this is a relatively new development which has arisen since she started to work again. She feels she has less to do, especially as she gets more help now than before. Raquel explains how things have changed in her household:

They help me more now, because before they used to do nothing, nothing. But it was difficult for them to start helping me. Because before, I (..) used to get back home at six, six-thirty, and they would be waiting for me to have tea, they hadn't even gone to buy the bread! Because, according to them they were waiting for me. So one day I got angry and I told them not to wait for me any longer! Because I came home really tired (..) and then I had to start checking whether they'd put the kettle on, if I was lucky! But sometimes not even that, so I said "I prefer to have tea on my own", and then they began to realise and started helping me. (Raquel)

Raquel probably still does the bulk of the domestic work on her own, but at least her family recognise the extent of her domestic work burden and help out when she is working.

#### 4.5.3.2 Eugenia

As Eugenia is a female head of household, she is obliged to work to maintain her family. The responsibility for the domestic work has been taken on by her eldest daughter, who cooks, cleans and takes care of the younger children. Eugenia helps her daughter in the evenings, and is well aware of the extent to which she relies on her daughter's help. They recently purchased a washing machine to alleviate some of the burden:

My daughter is older now and she helps me. (...) Yes, V. cannot work because she sees to the children for me; if she works, I can't work. (..) I



bought the washing machine the other day, I could see it was too much for V., it was too much for her when she had to do the sheets. So we decided to get her a washing machine. (Eugenia)

However, although her daughter prefers to do the domestic work alone, Eugenia tries to encourage the other children to participate in the chores, even if only at the weekend:

The little ones, no she doesn't let them help. But for example, I'm at home at the weekend, and the eldest, (..) he waxes the floor for me, everything. The other little one I send him to clean and so on. (..) But I like it that they help because then they can learn. I make them help me at the weekend. (Eugenia)

In this way, Eugenia is attempting to teach her male children different attitudes regarding domestic work, presenting them with a slightly different gender ideology. However, it is still down to her eldest daughter to assume the role of 'housewife' while Eugenia has to work outside the home.

#### **4.5.4 *Funcionarias* in the Municipality**

The *funcionarias* in the municipality have certain advantages in terms of working conditions which make the combination of work and family roles a little easier than for the other women (see section 5.2.4). In addition, the higher salaries of male partners in this group of women mean that many of them are likely to have paid help with the domestic tasks around the home. Nevertheless, similar problems of childcare and the 'double day' exist here.

##### **4.5.4.1 Rosa**

Rosa has a young baby, less than a year old, and she keeps him in a nursery while she is working. The nursery is paid for by the municipality, according to the law, and the child is looked after for the whole day. This would represent a considerable expense for Rosa. However, Rosa feels that she is risking her child's health:

But, in what sense are you putting your child at risk? He can get bronchitis from having to go out early in the morning and late in the evening, and the fact that he is in contact with people who may be ill, and he catches it. So

what you don't pay in nursery fees, you pay in medicines and doctors, that's my case. (Rosa)

Rosa's husband would like her to stay at home to take care of the child, although, as Rosa is the higher earner of the two, she will continue to work. Her husband does help out with the domestic chores, although, having a set of domestic tasks to do at the end of the working day is a change for Rosa:

So when I got married it was an abrupt change because you have to be in your house, looking after a child, a husband, putting up with your husband's habits. Of course it was a big change. Already, I come home running to prepare food and before, (...) if I wanted to, I ate and if I didn't want to, I didn't eat, and if I wanted to get up, I got up and if I didn't, then no. So it was a big change. (Rosa)

Although Rosa's young family has only been established for a short while, her husband and her have adopted a relatively traditional gender division of labour. As the mother, Rosa is responsible for taking care of the baby, including taking him to and from the nursery before her work day, as well as the preparation of the meals and the main bulk of the housework. The fact that she is also the main breadwinner does not seem to have had an effect on the division of labour within her household. This indicates that both the spouses have a traditional gender ideology and corresponding expectations regarding the distribution of domestic tasks.

#### **4.5.4.2 Claudia**

This is also the situation in Claudia's household. Her daughter spends the day at a nursery school and Claudia is responsible for collecting her after work. In addition, she is solely responsible for the domestic tasks at home, as her husband does not help at all:

The bad luck is that he always comes home after I do! (...) And I got him into that habit, it's a bad habit on my part. Because at the beginning, he would say to me, "right, I'll make the beds", and he never would, and I would see the beds, and in the end I would make them. It's better if I make them. (Claudia)

Claudia feels that she is partly responsible for her husband's lack of co-operation in domestic tasks. Her own standards of housekeeping, which she is likely to have acquired

in her mother's household, mean that it is difficult to delegate domestic tasks to her husband, who is less likely to share the same standards or the socialised habits of housework. For many women, it is simply quicker and easier to carry out the chores themselves, rather than wait for their spouses to do them.

#### **4.5.4.3 Mónica**

In Mónica's household, domestic tasks are shared by all the members of the family. Her parents take care of the children at their house during the week, relieving Mónica of the responsibility of collecting them from school. At the weekend, the household tasks are shared between herself, her husband and the children:

We share them out at the weekend. In the week, I do the basics and at the weekend, it's shared by everyone, children, my husband and myself. Everyone has tasks they have to do at the weekend. (Mónica)

Help from the other members of her family evidently alleviates some of the burden of the 'double day' for Mónica. The ability to call on her parents to take care of the children during the working day is a great help, particularly as they can take on the responsibilities of taking the children for medical and dental appointments. However, Mónica may have overestimated the extent to which the other members of the family participate in domestic tasks, as her description of a typical Monday morning indicates that she has the main responsibility for the bulk of the domestic tasks at the weekend, as well as the preparation of clothes and breakfast for all the family in the morning:

Monday is fatal for me because Saturday and Sunday I work hard at home, so I do everything that doesn't get done in the week. So I end up dead on Sunday (..). So I start the day ironing. The first thing I do is to get up and start ironing. (Mónica)

Nevertheless, her perception that domestic work is shared, that her husband takes on his share, indicates that both the spouses have a less traditional gender ideology and both aspire to modify the gender division of labour within their household.



## 4.6 A Typical Day

The descriptions of a 'typical day' show how women are organised their domestic work in order to meet the demands of the household routine. The domestic work is carried out in the mornings and evenings around the day of paid work, and requires organisational and planning skills which are seldom given recognition. The domestic routines run like clockwork, as women successfully juggle several roles simultaneously. The burden of work which women have to perform as part of their domestic role is vividly conveyed, highlighting the absence of rest periods, even at the end of a working day. Moreover, even if male partners and other members of the family do participate in the domestic routine, the persistence of a traditional gender division of labour is evident. Only one woman has established an egalitarian division of labour within her household, where all the domestic tasks are shared equally with her husband.

These descriptions highlight the complex dynamics behind women's combination of paid and domestic work roles. There is no distinct delineation between the two, as the women constantly shift from one role to the other, accommodating the demands of their families with those of a paid work schedule. As many of the domestic activities also represent an expression of care and affection towards spouses and children, the 'double day' of paid work and domestic chores is not necessarily resented, but accepted as part of what makes up 'women's work'.

### 4.6.1 Carmen (*confeccionista*)

Carmen works in a small garment workshop, while her husband is a construction worker. They have no children, but there is nevertheless a domestic routine to be adhered to. His working day begins early, dictating the routine that Carmen must follow:

Well, every day I get up at five fifteen in the morning, because that's the time I get up to put the kettle on, to prepare breakfast for my husband, so that he can stay in bed a little longer. While I'm doing that, I have a shower, and I prepare his bag, the food and all of that. And from there, I keep on doing things. My normal hour when I come to work is at a quarter to seven, when I leave my house, and I get there at eight-thirty.

Then, I work all day, we talk, we eat, (..) the routine of every day! And in the evening, around six o'clock, I leave and I get home to do the housework, to tidy up what's left and to cook. It's usually twelve or one o'clock before I go to bed, and the next day at five o'clock again. Sometimes, I don't want to get up, but I have to. (..) he goes at six. (..) I cook at night so that he can take lunch with him the next day. I prepare the tea, coffee, sandwiches, whatever. I have to prepare it for him. And sometimes I forget to give him cutlery, but then he tells me off! (...) If he comes home first, then he does everything, for washing, ironing, cleaning he's the best there is, he's better than a woman for those things. (Carmen)

Thus, Carmen's 'typical day' of work is over eighteen hours long, including around five and a half hours of domestic work and nine and a half hours of paid work. The time it takes her to travel to and from work represents a further three and a half hours. Yet, Carmen is humorous when describing this long day, and will continue to get up early in order to attend to her husband and allow him a few extra moments of rest. In return, her husband takes on a share of the domestic tasks when his work allows.

#### 4.6.2 Anita (*temporera*)

Anita is a *temporera*, as is her husband. Her description of a 'typical day' shows the way in which she and her husband organise the domestic workload equally when they both have to work during the season. They have two children.

My husband works during the day and I work at night. My husband would usually get home at around seven or six-thirty, and I had to wait for the bus at eight o'clock, so what would I have to do? I would do the laundry during the day and leave the preparations for dinner a little advanced, and the tea ready. I get back at nine o'clock in the morning. (..) And then I wouldn't sleep, because it was time to make lunch, clean and do you know how much I slept? It was two hours. Because then I would get up and do something else. If I had to wash, I would just wash and my husband would finish rinsing and would hang the clothes out at night. Between us, we're like that, when we both have to work, we arrange things well between us.

And when I'm working during the day and he's during the day too, the children always stay with someone. And he's always home before me, because the packing plant finishes later than in the field. (...) He prepares everything himself, he waits for me to come home and I arrive and everything is ready, ready to sit down. So then we plan: what shall we do? shall we leave the dinner ready straight away? And it's ready and we leave it. And we do everything like that. (Anita)

Even with her husband taking on an equal share of the domestic work, Anita's day represents an exhausting burden of work. However, from this description, we can see that neither Anita nor her husband have a gender ideology that dictates whether one or other of the spouses should be responsible for domestic work according to a gender-based division. They organise the domestic routine according to practical considerations where both spouses' paid work schedules are paramount, resulting in an egalitarian distribution of household tasks and childcare.

#### 4.6.3 Raquel (*trabajadora en casa particular*)

Raquel works in domestic service *puertas afuera*, while her husband does shift work as a manager in a supermarket. The variation in her husband's paid work schedule means that Raquel alters her domestic routine to fit in with his working hours:

I get up at six twenty, because I have to wake up my son at six thirty to go to school. Okay, so I get up, (...) I wake him up, I give him breakfast, I have breakfast myself, and I leave some things done in my house. My husband, this week, for example, he leaves early, at seven o'clock, so I leave the bed made; I have enough time to leave things done. Next week, he starts in the afternoon, so I don't make my bed, but I leave my youngest son's bed made, because he gets dressed and he leaves, so I can leave that bed made. I have to heat up the food for my other son, to put it in the thermos, he takes food.

For example, if I'm going to make spaghetti with a sauce, I leave the sauce prepared the night before, and the spaghetti I cook in the morning.(...) I mean, usually I leave things like half done, or sometimes all prepared, but generally: if it's soup, I pre-cook the meat. But between the night and the morning. At night we don't have dinner, because we have tea late. (...) It's never the same as what we ate the night before, when I cook in the evening, it's something simpler, easier. My husband, the weeks when he works in the afternoon, has lunch at home, so he eats the same as my son, and my other son comes home at three in the afternoon and he also eats what is left over from that meal. And I'm also carrying around that same meal, that I cook in the morning!

I leave at a quarter to eight in the morning, and I finish at about three in the afternoon. (..) I don't have breaks because I prefer to finish early and rest at home! I also get tired if I sit down and I don't have a rhythm, I get tired, so I even eat standing up. (Raquel)



As all the male members of Raquel's family are working, her domestic routine involves a substantial amount of time spent on meal preparation. Even though Raquel prepares the family meal the evening before, she still has to prepare food and complete the associated domestic chores before she leaves for work. This is a similar routine to Carmen's, as in most Chilean households, where the midday meal is the main, cooked meal. Earlier (section 4.5.3), we saw how Raquel had to insist before her husband and sons would take the responsibility of preparing their own tea in the evening. It appears that this is the only area where she has succeeded in getting her husband and sons to take on some of her share of the domestic routine, as she remains principally responsible for several hours of domestic work.

#### 4.6.4 Claudia (*funcionaria*)

Claudia works in the municipality, while her husband works in a computer firm. As Claudia's workplace is near home, she returns at lunch time which enables her to fit in the routine of domestic tasks around her paid work day:

I get up at a quarter to seven, and what do I do? (..) I arrange my clothes, then my husband gets out of the bathroom and I go in. (...) Everyone gets their own breakfast, luckily. I put my toast on and while that's doing, I fix my daughter's meal, because she goes to nursery. (...) I have my breakfast, (..) I finish putting my makeup on and I begin to get my daughter's clothes that she's going to wear that day. I get her up, I bath her, do her hair etc. and then I arrange her school bag (..). Then (..) I put on my jacket and we leave. My husband leaves at seven-thirty and I leave at ten past eight.

I leave, I drop my daughter off at the nursery and I come to the Municipality, arriving at twenty-five to nine, late of course! (..) Then I see what has to be done and I start to work. (...) I leave at a quarter to two, I get home. Look I get in, I go straight to the kitchen, I put the pan on the stove. (..) I eat, wash up the plates and the breakfast plates. Also in the morning, I make both the beds before I leave. (...)

Then I work again. Until eighteen minutes past five, because I leave on the dot, (..) and at five-thirty I'm at the nursery door, waiting for my daughter. I get home to do the cleaning. First I buy the bread, do the cleaning, after the cleaning, the meal. My husband gets home around eight, we have tea. I see my soap opera, which is sacred because then I sit down! I do the things, I serve the tea, prepare the meal. (..) I bath my daughter, watch a bit more television and then I go to bed. (Claudia)

With a young child, Claudia's domestic routine involves a lot of child care and meal preparation. Her exhausting description of her 'typical day' conveys the skill with which

she juggles her paid work and domestic responsibilities in order to successfully fulfil both roles. Claudia's husband returns from work to find his evening meal served, while her daughter's needs are seen to exclusively by her mother. It seems that both partners share the same gender ideology, where the woman's role within the household remains unchanged, regardless of her additional paid work role.

These descriptions of the daily schedule of paid and domestic work illustrate how women's paid work experience is shaped by the considerations of their domestic role. The types of employment that can be taken on, as well as the amount of working hours, are likely to be limited by individual women's organisational and physical capacities to take on the 'double day'. In addition, gender ideologies and expectations governing male and female roles within the household are likely to play a considerable role in determining the extent of the 'double day' for working women.

#### **4.7 Discussion**

This chapter has focused on the domestic sphere and the dynamics of household relations. In a household context where both spouses are in paid employment, the dynamics of the gender relations within the household have formed the basis of the analysis. As traditional patriarchal gender relations tend to characterise family roles in Chile, some of the contradictory effects of the wife's wage income on household and gender relations have been explored.

The data presented highlighted the extent of women's contribution to household income. In the majority of cases, the income provided by the husband or partner was only enough to cover the minimum of household expenditure. It was the income provided by the women's paid work which enabled the household to reach a relatively comfortable standard of living. To an extent, this fits in with the ideological perception that the male spouse is the 'breadwinner' who maintains the household, while the female spouse provides 'extras' through her paid work as a supplement to the 'main' income.

However, women's wage incomes provided the means to buy shoes and clothes for the children, carry out structural repairs to the dwelling and provide food staples for the

winter, as in the case studies of the *temporeras*. Other women were able to provide health insurance for their children and improve the general standard of living of their families. These are not 'extras' in the sense that they are luxuries: in the case of the *temporeras*, the women's wage income provides essential food items and prevents the household from living in conditions of poverty during the winter of unemployment. In urban households, wives' contributions help to consolidate the economic situation of their families through the purchase of a house and consumer goods.

The interviewees perceived that they made an important contribution to household income, while emphasising that one salary was simply not enough to maintain the household. As the administrators of the bulk of the household budget, they were in a position to assess the difference that their wage income made to the standard of living of the household. Moreover, as husbands and partners tend to hand over a proportion of their money income rather than the total amount, women were putting the greater part of their income into the pool. This meant that they were often doubling the amount of money destined to cover the household expenditure, effectively becoming equal providers. It appears that, for the participants, the cultural view of the 'male breadwinner' as the sole maintenance of the household has been modified to incorporate the realities of a dual-earner household.

However, the ideological obligation of the male partner to provide for the household persists. This is especially evident amongst the female-headed households, where male partners, whether ex-partners or new ones, were making a contribution towards the upkeep of the family. In these households, the reverse of the traditional occurred: the female head of the household provided the 'breadwinner' income to cover household expenditure, while the partner's contributions were used to cover 'extras'.

Thus, there appears to have been a modification of the traditional gender relations within the household as women's financial contributions gain more significance. However, the analysis of the household decision-making process reveals a contradictory set of dynamics. There is a differentiation of sets of decisions along the lines of the traditional division of labour, with women solely responsible for the majority of decisions regarding food. However, a significant proportion were also solely responsible for decisions



involving a relatively high extra expenditure and a change in the household consumption patterns, such as the purchase of electrical appliances and the education for their children. On one hand, this may be a positive effect of women exerting greater power in the household decision-making process through their money income. On the other hand, it may be that these kinds of decisions have been incorporated into the managerial role that women already hold within the household, adding extra burdens of responsibility, rather than conferring greater power.

In keeping with this, over 85 per cent of the interviewees felt that there had been no change in the household decision-making process. However, the perceptions regarding household headship offered significant insights into changing gender relations within the household. Traditional gender ideology is significant in this area, as indicated by the 32.5 per cent that identified their husband as the head of household. However, there were contrasting interpretations of this role, with 40 per cent of the participants identifying themselves as the head. A further 12.5 per cent who regarded the headship as jointly held by both spouses within their household.

These varying interpretations of the role of the head of the household indicate that although a traditional gender ideology persists for some women, for others this ideology is changing to reflect the material and economic realities of a dual-earner household. Under patriarchal gender relations, the managerial role held by wives and mothers, as well as their financial contributions to the household income are not recognised. The traditional division of labour only recognises the husband and father as the breadwinner and the head of the household. In contrast, other interpretations of this role emphasise the material and practical realities of having both spouses as providers. This interpretation incorporates the material realities of economic relations within the household, where the individuals who both provide and distribute the household income are regarded as heads of households.

Nevertheless, the gender ideologies and cultural norms which shape couples' expectations regarding gender roles within the household persist. Women are still primarily responsible for domestic chores, regardless of the realities of their paid employment. This results in a 'double day' of combining paid work with domestic work for many women.

Within the sample, the majority of the interviewees resolved to some extent the problem of childcare using family help from female relatives. Other members of the family, including husbands and partners, did participate in certain tasks, but to a limited degree.

Meeting their domestic obligations is important for many of the interviewees. The descriptions of the typical daily schedules illustrate that while combining paid work and domestic work can result in a heavy workload, the interviewees perceive that it is possible to juggle both roles successfully. Women employ highly efficient organisational strategies to meet the demands of both family and work, and there is a constant shifting between the two roles. However, it is evident that women's paid work experience is shaped by the needs of the family rather than vice versa, particularly as many domestic tasks involve caring for children and husbands.

Thus, although we have seen some changes in the interviewees' perceptions and interpretations of gender relations within a dual-earner household, it appears that the gender division of labour is not necessarily similarly altered. The pattern of the gender division of labour within the household is set by the gender ideologies and expectations of both spouses, rather than the practical realities of having both partners in paid employment. The following chapter will explore further the participants' gender attitudes and ideology, and their perceptions of gender relations in wider society.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: Gender ideology and attitudes towards gender relations**

### **5.1 Introduction**

The previous chapters have explored the twin arenas of paid work and domestic work, the relationship between these, as well as the ways in which gender relations are expressed in these contexts. The importance of the participants' own gender role ideology in influencing gender relations in both these arenas was highlighted. Accordingly, this chapter aims to explore further the opinions and attitudes of the participants towards gender roles, together with their perceptions of the gender relations at play in the family, the labour market and wider society.

As has emerged in the previous chapter, life and work experiences inform and shape individuals' gender ideology, resulting in attitude changes which reflect this experience. Moreover, shifts in ideological perceptions provide an insight into the nature of potential cultural changes. Although there may be a gap between an individual's ideology and their behaviour, this gap can highlight the aspirations and expectations individuals have, influencing perhaps the nature of the socialisation and education their children will receive, with potentially lasting changes in the nature of gender relations. The exploration of the participants' gender role attitudes and ideology will draw together the themes that have arisen and been analysed in the different contexts of paid work and the household. This will highlight the issues of the potential empowerment that paid work may offer women, as well as how this works through to influence gender relations within the household.

An important dimension of empowerment is the realisation that power relations are socially constructed, not 'natural', and that, as such, it may be possible to alter them somehow. In terms of gender relations, the emergence of a consciousness of gender as a cultural and ideological construct is likely to be an important first step in this process of empowerment for women. Tolleson Rinehart (1992) develops a concept of 'gender consciousness'. She defines 'gender consciousness' as a political consciousness, stemming from an individual's recognition that their social roles, status, relationships and attitudes are all shaped by being female or male, as well as by the way that their culture



regards gender. This implies a degree of identification with the other individuals in the 'group' of the same sex, as well as an identification of that group's specific point of view. The development of gender consciousness may be stimulated by life, social or work experiences which make the individual aware of the differences in power relations between men and women. In this sense, 'gender consciousness is potentially empowering, imbuing the gender conscious woman with a sense of the validity of her world view.' (Tolleson Rinehart, 1992: 14). This consciousness can form the basis for a range of political attitudes towards gender roles, encompassing both progressive, feminist interpretations of gender relations and conservative, traditional interpretations of gender roles. Tolleson Rinehart argues that as political attitudes, both these extremes imply an awareness of how gender relations are socially constructed, and this gender consciousness can be invoked both for and against traditional gender roles. As an analytical concept, gender consciousness can be useful in an exploration of gender ideologies which may be nuanced and contradictory, particularly in a cultural context where 'traditional' gender relations are being reworked under changing economic conditions. Using this approach, the interviewees' interpretations of their attitudes and perceptions can be analysed on their own terms, avoiding simplistic categorisations. Many of the women interviewed express egalitarian gender role ideologies which, nonetheless, are not easily classifiable as 'feminist' and may sit comfortably with 'traditional' gender role expectations. Exploring these contradictions and nuances offers a glimpse into the ways in which gender identities and gender relations are being re-worked.

The chapter will begin with an analysis of attitudes towards gender roles for women and men within the household, including the question of paid employment for women, together with the interviewees' expectations regarding the maintenance of the household. In addition, the interviewees' attitudes towards the gender division of labour within the household will be analysed, in particular the responsibility for the domestic chores. In addition, the conflicts and ideological expectations regarding paid work and family roles for both women and men will be analysed. This section will also examine the attitudes towards education and training for women, drawing out the importance this has for many of the interviewees. The following section will explore the participants' perceptions of gender relations within the family and the marriage, as well as their opinions on gender relations in wider society. This analysis highlights the difference between ideology and

practice, both on an individual level and in society as a whole. The opinions and attitudes of the interviewees indicate the extent of possible cultural changes, as well as the way in which this change is shaped and contained by the prevailing gender ideology. In relation to this, the following section will take up the issue of discrimination against women in different social arenas. The participants' interpretations of discrimination point to an awareness of the nature of the gender ideology which establishes relations of inequality between women and men in social arenas. Moreover, it is often a direct experience of discrimination which engenders a degree of gender consciousness, which may have important implications for cultural and political change. Finally, what do the interviewees perceive to be the barriers which prevent women from participating in all the social arenas on equal terms to men? The perceptions of four interviewees, drawn from each of the occupations, will be presented in order to allow this question to be answered in their own words.

## **5.2 Attitudes towards gender roles**

The responses to the statements given in Figures 5.1 - 5.5 serve as a starting point for uncovering some of the dynamics of the participants' attitudes towards working women and the family. The responses have been given for each type of occupation in order to reflect the differences in attitudes between the groups. The statements tend to reflect very traditional views regarding gender roles. In this sense, it was expected that the tendency would be for the interviewees to disagree with the statements. The *temporeras* tended to express the most traditional views, consistent with patriarchal gender role ideology, reflecting the more traditional cultural context of the Chilean countryside. The *confeccionistas* showed the least traditional views, disagreeing with all of the statements.

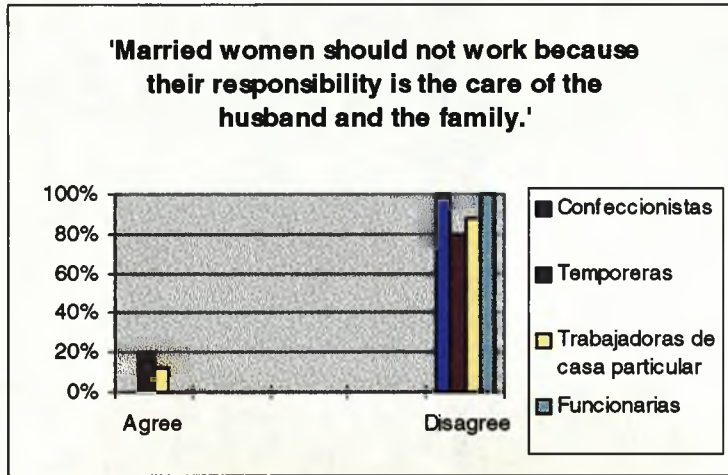
Agreement or disagreement with the statements served as a point of departure for the participants to offer deeper explanations of the reasons behind their opinion. This prompted the interviewees to reflect on and analyse their reasons, perhaps in ways that were new to them. Also, as these ideological questions formed part of the later stages of the interview, the responses draw together many of the themes which arose in the context of the interview. In this way, the responses reveal a dynamic combination of ideological and practical considerations, taking up and reworking themes that are familiar from the

previous chapters. In order to explore more fully the participants' interpretations of these themes, these will be presented in detail.



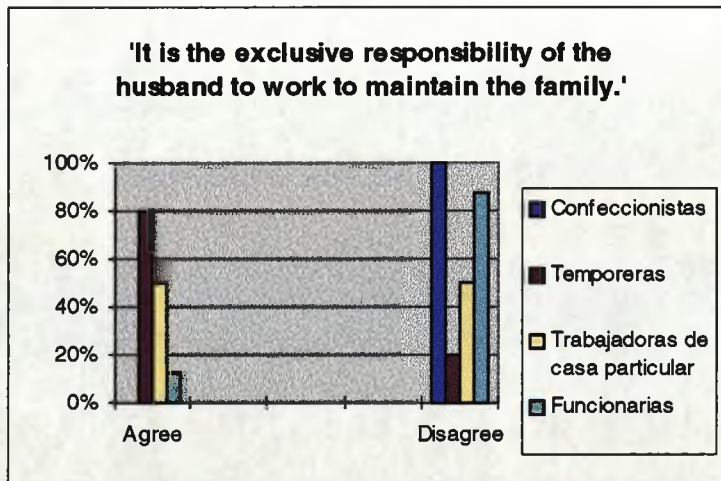
**Figure 5.1 - 5.5 Interviewees' responses to opinions on work and family roles for men and women, percentages by sector**

**Figure 5.1**



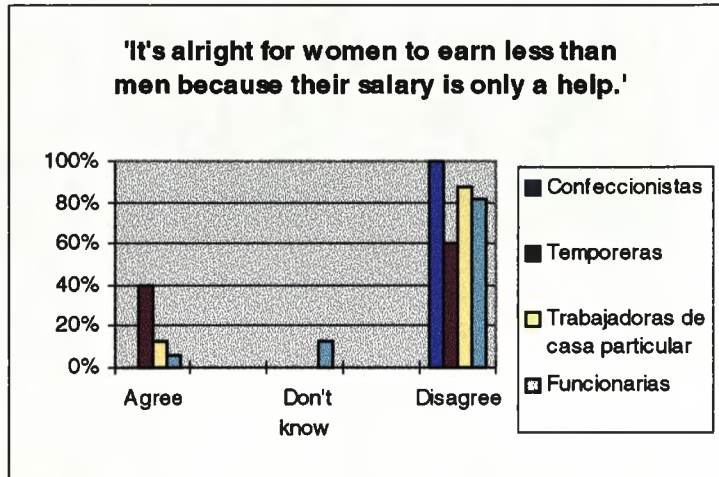
Source: Survey by the author, Chile 1993-1994

**Figure 5.2**



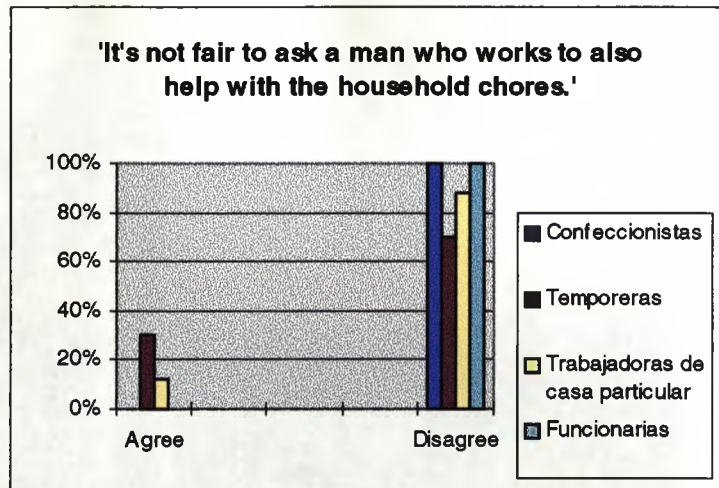
Source: Survey by the author, Chile 1993-1994

**Figure 5.3**



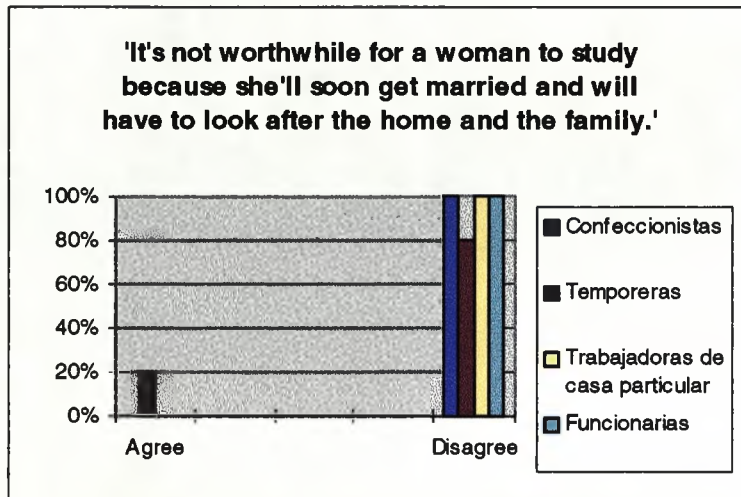
Source: Survey by the author, Chile 1993-1994

**Figure 5.4**



Source: Survey by the author, Chile 1993-1994

Figure 5.5



Source: Survey by the author, Chile 1993-1994



## 5.2.1 *Confecionistas* in Garment Manufacture

### 5.2.1.1 Ester

Ester (34) has an egalitarian gender role ideology which informs her attitudes regarding women' paid work. Ester does not hold views which fit with the traditional gender division of labour within the household; for her, there should be no division of tasks between the spouses, all the responsibilities should be shared equally. For the same reasons, she does not agree that the male spouse should be solely responsible for the maintenance of the household:

I do not agree with that [married women should not work]; it's a shared responsibility. Because the children do not just belong to the woman only. Both of you are parents and both of you are responsible for the house and the children, so it's logical that women should work. (Ester)

In this perception, men and women are joint breadwinners, sharing equal responsibility for providing for the household. In the same way, Ester rejects the traditional gender division of labour in the household. She disagrees that it is unfair to ask a man who works to help with the housework:

It's totally fair. Why should the woman have to work and then come home to do the chores while the men don't? (Ester)

This attitude represents an expression of principle rather than a reflection of reality, particularly as husbands and male partners took on only a small share of the domestic tasks. Nevertheless, it is consistent with Ester's egalitarian gender role ideology.

Ester rejects the notion that women are merely supplementary earners and that this may be used as a justification for paying women lower wages than men. Instead, Ester aspires towards equality in the gender relations between men and women in the labour market:

They [men and women] are the same, because they can both do the same things, produce the same and they have the same capacities. In addition, women can do more delicate jobs which men can't do. So they should earn the same salaries, be equal. You can't have this inequality. (Ester)

Ester rejects the traditional notion that a woman should be dependent on her male spouse. Thus, she disagrees strongly with the third statement that it is not worthwhile to educate women:

And what if her husband dumps her? what is she to do? She should study and have a profession that she can exercise and maintain the household.  
(Ester)

Ester's attitudes are informed by an egalitarian gender consciousness, perhaps even a feminist one, which leads her to reject the inequalities of patriarchal gender relations and aspire towards establishing an equality of status between men and women.

#### **5.2.1.2 Ana**

Ana (29) is also a female head of household. She too has an egalitarian gender role ideology and thus she does not concur with the view that married women should not work outside the home. Ana emphasises the independence that women can gain through their paid employment, and their autonomy within the many roles that women fulfil:

Because the woman, as well as being mother, wife, lover, also has to have her independence. Her independence, and to build her world separately. All of us have a personal life, apart from the life in the couple and the life in the family group, we have a part which is private, ours, where nobody can come in. (Ana)

Ana also disagrees that the male partner should be solely responsible for maintaining the household, women should also contribute:

No it's not totally the man's responsibility, least of all in these times we're living in. I think the woman should contribute, with whatever it is, to the household budget. (Ana)

Ana rejects the traditional division of labour within the household. She emphasises the heaviness of the domestic workload for women, as well as the lack of recognition this work receives:

Of course it's fair, because the woman if she is at home, works all day. She doesn't have a rest, she doesn't have a schedule, nothing. And the man will have a moment, even if it's for his lunch, he will be able to be quiet and will be able to dedicate himself to his lunch, while the women in the house is not like that: what with the children and this and that, and she will never sit down to have lunch as you are supposed to. So he must help too. (Ana)

This opinion shows Ana's egalitarian gender consciousness, perhaps reinforced by her personal experience. She defines the housework done by women as work on a par with the remunerated work done by men, following concepts laid down by feminism.

Ana's own situation as a head of household with the sole responsibility for maintaining her family leads her to disagree with the ideological characterisation of women as supplementary earners:

Because, it's a fact, it's been proven that there are many women like me, many women who don't earn the same [as men], they are not contributing, they are supporting their families with what they earn, and nothing more. (Ana)

Ana has an awareness of the inequalities of status which persist between women and men. She believes that education for women is desirable as a means of gaining independence, while mentioning that traditional, patriarchal attitudes still govern girls' and boys' access to education in Chile:

It's worthwhile her being educated, hopefully to a professional level. But there is still preference, especially in the countryside, "no, because he is the man and he will have to maintain the family, be head of the household, and not you because we're going to marry you with that man, the richest one..." (Ana)

Ana believes in the importance of women having independence and a personal life outside the traditional gender role. For Ana, paid work and education are the means to achieve this independence.



### 5.2.1.3 Gladys

As we saw in section 5.5, Gladys (40) has recently started to work after being a housewife and mother for all of her married life. These changes in her life have modified her gender role attitudes and caused her to question some of the more traditional aspects of gender relations. Her new-found freedom and financial independence have caused conflict between herself and her husband, and this tension is expressed in her attitudes. As Gladys has been financially dependent on her husband throughout her married life, her opinions on whether married women should work reflect her concerns over the uneven power relations between men and women:

No, why [shouldn't women work]? They [men] are not gods, if they have the right to do certain things, why shouldn't I? One wasn't born tied to a man and therefore one has to know how to defend oneself and decide for oneself, not let other people decide for you. I don't think that's fair. (Gladys)

Again, independence for women is the dominant theme in Gladys' attitudes. Her gender role ideology has been modified to reflect the empowerment she has found through taking on paid employment, becoming financially independent and exerting her decision-making power. This leads her to the opinion that men and women should share the responsibility for the maintenance of the household.

In terms of housework, Gladys concurs with the principle that men should help. However, she does not reject the gender division of labour outright, emphasising instead that it would be beneficial for men to see the other side of the coin:

Yes, it's good that they do it sometimes. So that they can see; if the woman works, why can't they help? It doesn't take anything away from them, they don't stop being men because of it. (Gladys)

Moreover, she disagrees strongly with the ideological notion that women are supplementary earners, indicating that salary levels should be determined by practical and economic considerations:

Because if the woman has a worth and does a job that also has a worth, and is well-paid, why settle for less when you can earn more? (Gladys)

Gladys' ideals and aspirations for her children are clearly expressed in relation to the issue of education for women. In Gladys' opinion, this is the surest route for women to attain independence and manage their lives for themselves. Again, this reflects the changes in her own circumstances which have led her to question traditional gender role ideology, where women are dependent on their male spouses for everything:

No, a woman has to study more than ever because she is a woman. Because there are women who get married so they can leave home, and they accept everything because they don't know how to defend themselves. So the ideal, for me, is that the woman knows how to get along on her own. At least that's what I think and that's what I tell my daughters, that they have to study (..) so that if they have bad luck tomorrow, they can still succeed on their own. Why, just because you're not a man, why should you live eternally tied to one? (Gladys)

Gladys expresses a gender role ideology that has moved quite a distance beyond the traditional ideology which, presumably, previously governed her married life with her husband. It is her experience of paid employment and the widening of her horizons beyond the confines of the home which have modified and changed her gender role ideology. Gladys aspires to the empowerment of women relative to men, enabling them to be self-sufficient, at least in economic terms. This indicates an egalitarian gender consciousness, wherein conventional gender role ideology and gender relations are rejected. These ideological changes in attitude have fed through to her personal relationship with her husband, whose traditional gender ideology is making it difficult for him to accept the changes in Gladys' attitudes.

#### **5.2.1.4 Carmen**

However, 'traditional' gender ideology is not necessarily incompatible with attitudes that seem contradictory. Carmen's (45) attitudes towards married women working represents a modified interpretation of the traditional obligations of the wife towards her husband. Through paid work, a wife can help her husband, easing his burden as breadwinner. Moreover, a wife who has a job is less likely to 'let herself go' and therefore will help sustain her husband's interest in the marriage:

I think women should work to help their husbands, and I find that the woman who stays at home sort of gets ruined, I've seen so many people get ill, they don't wear make-up, their husband comes home and they don't care, and they smell of frying all day long. It's important to work, and even if you only contribute a little, it helps the household and serves to help the husband, and the husband feels happier. (Carmen)

Carmen tends towards a more traditional gender role ideology, as she does not question the nature of gender relations in the same way as Ester, Ana and Gladys. However, her interpretation of traditional gender ideology is complex. Carmen views the male partner as the breadwinner, and part of the obligations of the wife are to help and assist her husband, in keeping with the gender division of labour. At the same time, Carmen does not wholly concur with the 'traditional' gender division of labour:

I think that while the woman can help, she should. Because look, (..) I think that the woman who stays at home and has a lot of children, I think that in a way that she's being lazy, that she's doing it so as not to help her husband. So she stays at home, while her husband kills himself trying to support 4 or 5 children, plus the two of them; it's too much responsibility for the man. I don't think there's one salary that would be enough for that. (Carmen)

This attitude is influenced by the fact that Carmen herself does not have children, and perhaps this accounts for her re-interpretation of the duties of a wife. However, Carmen also disagrees in principle with the traditional gender division of labour as regards housework, but she qualifies her opinion to reflect her own situation, as well as the traditional gender role ideology which underpins it:

It's not unfair [for a man to help with housework], but I don't like him to do it. If it occurs to him, yes, but not me telling him "listen, you help me", then no. Apart from the fact that my husband is ill, so, for me that's no go. In spite of that, he always helps me without me having to ask me anyway. (Carmen)

The fact that Carmen has traditional attitudes towards gender roles is confirmed by her opinion that women should not earn more than men:

No, I think in that sense, they shouldn't be equal, perhaps a bit more than what I earn. Because one can't really work at the same pace as a man, so I



can't aspire to earn more than him. It would be too much effort and to have too high an aspiration. (Carmen)

Nevertheless, Carmen does not exclude women from participating in other social arenas. The question of education for women is not a crucial one, as it is for the other interviewees, but just another activity that women can add to their many roles:

A woman, if she wants to study, she can perfectly well fulfil both things: attending to the house and studying, working, or whatever she wants to do. (Carmen)

Carmen's attitudes and opinions represent a variation of traditional gender role ideology. She does not believe that women should stay at home and not work, but that wives should work in order to help out the spouse and breadwinner. By the same token, it is not unfair to ask a husband to help with the housework, but Carmen does not ask her husband to do so. These attitudes show a degree of gender consciousness, but it is directed towards the defence of women's traditional gender role in the household.

### **5.2.2 *Temporeras* in Agribusiness**

The attitudes of the *temporeras* show a more traditional orientation. Although, as we have seen previously, they are accustomed to working and contributing to the household income, their expectations and gender role ideology reflects the patriarchal nature of gender relations in the Chilean countryside.

#### **5.2.2.1 Ruth**

Ruth's (38) motives for taking on seasonal employment were centred around providing for her children (see section 3.5). In this way, Ruth's activities outside the home do not conflict with her traditional gender role ideology. As she is working to provide her children with some extras rather than for any personal reasons, Ruth remains within the boundaries of her role as mother. Although she disagrees with the statement that married women should not work, her adherence to traditional gender roles for women is confirmed when she emphasises the importance of her children over any employment considerations:

Well, I had a time when I wasn't working and I dedicated myself to them [the children], but now they're older, if I can, I will work. But no, they are always before work and everything. (Ruth)

This ideology informs her expectations regarding the male role of breadwinner. Ruth agrees that it is the exclusive responsibility of the man to provide for the household, although she qualifies this opinion in the light of her own experience:

Yes, I think so; well, here, my husband works although it's not much what he earns, and we have so many things to buy still, so I think that I can help with that. (Ruth)

Although Ruth has a traditional gender role orientation, she does not agree that it is unfair to ask her husband for help with the housework. It may be that having to combine paid work and housework single-handedly during the season has led her to question the division of labour, while her own observation has shown that other couples do share the housework:

My husband has never helped me! I think that it would be fair, because I have brothers-in-law who help their wives and I think it's nice when the husband helps her, isn't it? (Ruth)

Ruth's work experience influences her attitudes toward men and women's earnings. In a context where *temporeras* earn relatively high salaries, Ruth does not agree with the idea that women should earn less than men. Her perception is not based on ideological considerations, but on experience which has shown that she can earn more than her husband during the season:

Well, in our case, all the times that I have worked, I have always earned more than him! (Ruth)

Ruth's attitudes are based on a traditional interpretation of gender relations. She also has a more individualistic viewpoint, speaking from her own experience rather than generalising for women as a group and expressing a gender consciousness. In her experience, education has been wasted on women who subsequently got married, but she nevertheless hopes that her daughter's experience will be different. Ruth draws an unfavourable comparison between life in the countryside and life in the town; it seems that women raised in the town have more advantages :

Here, at least, it's always been like that, I don't know if it's because they study or if the people who live in the town have more luck, but here in the countryside, all the girls who have studied ended up married and their studies didn't serve them at all. I always say to my daughter that I don't want her to be like the other girls who have got married here, or who have had bad luck and not been able to continue with their studies. (Ruth)

Again, education is perceived to be the way through which women can improve their position and gain control over their lives.

Although Ruth contributes a significant proportion of the household income, she interprets her paid work as part of the fulfilment of her role as mother, and therefore does not challenge the nature of gender relations within her household. Even though Ruth is seemingly transgressing the traditional female role by working outside the home, by interpreting her paid work as being for the children, she avoids any conflict with her husband's gender role expectations:

At first he didn't like it, but now he knows that I work for the little ones.  
(Ruth)

#### **5.2.2.2 Luisa**

Luisa's (23) attitudes are also coloured by traditional gender ideology. Her motives for working are similar to Ruth's: to provide extras for the children. Thus, although she believes that married women can work outside the home, this is not viewed as something which may challenge the nature of the gender roles within her household:

Because one has enough time to see to them [children and husband] as well as working. (Luisa)

Luisa concurs that the husband should be the breadwinner, although this is a responsibility that could be shared. Moreover, she agrees that housework could also be shared, although we have seen in previous sections that Luisa's husband was not inclined to do so.



However, she does aspire to more egalitarian gender relations in relation to male and female wage levels:

No, I mean it's according to the job. If a man is doing the same job as me, I want to be paid the same. (Luisa)

Nevertheless, in contrast with the attitudes we have seen so far, Luisa was one of the few women who agreed that education for women was not worthwhile, even for her own daughter:

She gets married and what good will it do her? But maybe if she [her daughter] has a good head, she might be able to study a profession later on. (Luisa)

### 5.2.2.3 Anita

Anita (29) shares the responsibility for maintaining the household with her husband (see Chapter 6). This leads her to have egalitarian attitudes towards gender roles. This is a reflection of the practical realities of her household, where both partners are breadwinners. However, Anita has a more traditional, underlying interpretation of gender roles, indicating that the egalitarian division of labour is a product of the household's economic situation rather than of an egalitarian gender ideology:

[Women] should work, the situation is that women have to work, for economic reasons. Because in these times, as we are now, one salary is not enough, when there are more than two children one salary is not enough. (Anita)

However, Anita does not share the view that women should necessarily be jointly responsible for maintaining the household. In her opinion, taking on paid work within certain limits is good, but women ought not to work if there is no necessity:

If a woman wants to she can work, even if she doesn't need to, but she shouldn't work all the time, perhaps two months a year to get her out of the routine of the house, nothing more. Because working is an exercise for a woman, , so I think it's good. (Anita)

Anita agrees with the view that the male partner should be the main breadwinner in the family. However, with regard to the distribution of household chores, Anita and her husband have a very egalitarian arrangement (see chapter four). Reflecting this, Anita feels that a husband should take on a fair share of the housework:

No, it's not unfair [to ask the man to help], he has to be a partner to the woman, both of them are human beings, he has to help; there the man would be being too machista. (Anita)

Nevertheless, she is very specific in explaining her reasons why the husband should earn more than his wife, while, at the same time, emphasising that this difference should not exist within the workplace. Anita has an egalitarian gender consciousness when she mentions that women are often discriminated against, while showing an adherence to more traditional gender relations in the private sphere of the marriage:

Yes, it is right [that she should earn less]. But not in work, although the woman is always more abused. Because it's true that we women are less assertive. Because the man sees that something isn't right and they say, "no, I should be earning this salary", while one, because you have a necessity, you stay. But it should not be like that. But in a couple, it's better that the man earns more, because then he starts to feel bad, as if he were less capable. (Anita)

This same tension between egalitarian and traditional attitudes is shown when Anita explains her attitude towards women's education. She agrees that it is not worthwhile for a woman to study, although a little study can be beneficial:

A woman should study up to a certain point that's all. Because I am of the opinion that what good does it do a woman to study, get a degree, if she gets a husband who says "you will not work" and that's it? Or in the end she gets to have a job, and in a few months, she has to take maternity leave. (...) No, no, only up to a certain point that's all, for what comes afterwards, to teach the children. The man yes, for a man it's indispensable, because he will have to work all his life. (Anita)

Evidently, Anita's attitudes lean towards a traditional gender division of labour within the household, despite the reality of her situation, where she is a joint breadwinner. Moreover, the egalitarian division of the responsibility of the domestic tasks between her and her husband does not seemingly sit with a traditional gender role ideology.

Nevertheless, there has been a reworking of gender relations within Anita's household in order to incorporate the economic reality of both partners working, while maintaining this change within the limits of this traditional gender role ideology. According to these limits, if women must work, then they should have equal rights with men in the workplace; however, a wife should not earn more than her husband, as this would challenge his authority. A woman should have some education, but only to enable her to fulfil her role as mother more successfully, not as a means to empower herself or gain independence.

#### **5.2.2.4 Clara**

Clara (42), by contrast, has a definite egalitarian gender consciousness and ideology. She is aware of the interplay of gender relations which influence the social activities of men and women. For Clara, paid work is not only an economic activity, but one which is necessary for the personal development of the individual. Thus, she disagrees with the statement that married women should not work, indicating that this is a right for both men and women:

Men and women have the same rights. Of course, as a mother, you always have double the work, but you always try and succeed. So, one sacrifices oneself more, but you do what you want to do, which is more important, because if you don't develop yourself as a person, I think there's no point in living, (...) Work, because when you're just at home, you don't know anything about the world, you don't anything about anything. And you live depending on your husband, not even old-fashioned people do that any more, staying at home. (Clara)

Clara is aware of the tensions and difficulties that working mothers have to face, through her own experience. However, she still believes that women ought to work when they can, for personal reasons, not just because they are 'helping out'. Clara also believes that times have changed, that women no longer stay at home to be supported by their husbands. Clara's gender role ideology tends towards the egalitarian, leading her to disagree with the view that the man should have the exclusive responsibility of maintaining the household. She rejects the stereotypes of masculinity and femininity associated with traditional gender ideology. Instead, she emphasises again her view that women should work rather than stay at home:



He should be! [the breadwinner]. But I think not just because he is a man. They say that women are the weaker sex, and I think not because there are women who are much stronger than men. So I think, when a woman has the opportunity to work, she should, because being at home, you don't gain anything. (Clara)

In keeping with this egalitarian view of male and female gender roles, Clara believes that husbands should help with the housework. Her own husband helped out with childcare when Clara had to work:

No, every man should help, I think. (..) My husband helped, [with the daughters], he would do their hair, he dressed them for school, and he took them, on the bike, he took them. And many times he would cook the lunch. So I, at least, can't complain. (Clara)

As Clara has worked for most of her life to maintain the household, she does not believe that her wages are only a help. Therefore, she aspires to equality in men's and women's working conditions, at least in term of wage levels. Clara's experience is based on agribusiness, where wage differentials between women and men do exist. This is unjust in her opinion:

No, that's where they're wrong, (...) it should be everywhere the same, the same salary, because as I was saying before, there are jobs in which women sacrifice themselves much more than men, much more. And women have jobs which carry a lot of responsibility, and they really do them well. In the fruit itself, they put prices on (..) I said "no, if they are men they should all earn the same wage, if we are in the packing, we should all earn the wage, men and women should have one wage, the same for everybody". It's a difference that should not exist. (Clara)

It is the occupational segmentation between 'male' and 'female' tasks which gives rise to this difference in wage levels and piece rates. Clara implies that the importance of the jobs women do is not recognised or rewarded through the payment of wages which are equal to those of men's jobs. In this, she shows an awareness of the inequalities in gender relations which work against women in the public sphere. For this reason, she believes that education is essential if women are to succeed:

I think that women should always study, otherwise how is she going to get ahead? if she doesn't have an education or anything? It's necessary, I think that study is fundamental, because without studies you can't do anything.  
(Clara)

Clara's attitudes confirm that she has an egalitarian gender role ideology. She has a belief in the equality of status between men and women both at home and in the workplace. Her own experiences of combining paid work with family responsibilities have made Clara aware of the inequalities that arise from traditional gender relations which have influenced her perceptions.

### **5.2.3 *Trabajadoras de casa particular* in Domestic Service**

The women working in domestic service show more traditional gender role orientations. We have seen how domestic service is closely linked to the private, domestic role of women in patriarchal gender ideology (see chapter three). The fact that *trabajadoras en casa particular* tend to work alone in private houses means that there is less opportunity to collectivise their paid work experience. This may lead to a more traditional gender role orientation.

#### **5.2.3.1 Clementina**

As a female head of household, Clementina's (36) motives for working centred around providing for her son. In keeping with this, she disagrees with the statement that married women should not work. For Clementina, wives are often obliged to work in order to help the husband and provide for the children, and so they should not be perceived as being selfish :

No, because if the wife is working, it's because she needs to, not because she wants to work just, because. It's to help her husband if, it may be, that they are badly off economically or he only earns a little; to help get the kids ahead too. I agree that women should work even if they are married.  
(Clementina)

Clementina disagrees with the statement that men should have exclusive responsibility for maintaining the household. This is a responsibility which should be shared between the spouses:

Not just the man because if it's shared it's better still, because if they aspire to better life, then both of them need to work in order to achieve that better life. (Clementina)

However, Clementina is adamant in her adherence to traditional gender roles within the home, particularly regarding housework:

Ah, no, no, no, not that. The man is for his work and the woman is for hers, her work in the house. The household chores should always belong to the woman; they should be shared as well. But I stick with the fact that the woman should be doing the housework. (Clementina)

Notwithstanding, Clementina has experience of the extent of the domestic chores that women have to do at the end of their working day, and thus they should be compensated for this by higher wages. Her experience of domestic work influences her attitude towards wage levels for men and women:

I feel that we should earn the same because sometimes the woman works more than the man, because she has more work to do in the house, as well as where she works, so that means that a woman should earn more than a man. (Clementina)

Again the theme of independence for women through education is raised. Clementina does not agree that it is not worthwhile to educate women, on the contrary, a woman should have a profession that will make her independent from her husband:

Yes, it's worthwhile. Because when the moment comes when the marriage is not going well, she can develop herself and work in any place, whereas if she doesn't study, she will have to just go into domestic service in a private house. (..) Whereas, if she is an educated person with a profession and everything, she can work anywhere and support herself without having to depend on the husband. (Clementina)

Clementina's perceptions of gender roles are shaped by an traditional gender ideology, with well-defined roles for men and women within the household division of labour. However, her own desire for independence at times tempers this ideology, leading her towards more egalitarian attitudes. The domestic work that women have to perform as part of their role within the family is often rendered 'invisible' because it is carried out in



the home and accepted as part of the female role. However, as this work represents Clementina's remunerated activity, she has a clear idea of the economic worth of domestic labour.

### 5.2.3.2 Eugenia

Eugenia (40) is also a female head of household, working in domestic service to maintain her household. However, she is less satisfied with the role of breadwinner she has had to take on to maintain her family (see section 3.5). She disagrees with the statement that they should not work, but is careful to qualify her reasons along the lines of a traditional gender role orientation:

No, because if her husband agrees that she should work, she can, and if she has someone to look after the children, she can also. But if she is going to leave the children just to work, then no. (...) She would have to discuss it with him [her husband], make him see that she's going to help him, that in this time there is not as much machismo because women are more free, at least as long as she has someone to look after the children. (Eugenia)

This perception is coloured by traditional expectations regarding women's role in the family, as well as reflecting patriarchal relations. A wife should only work with the permission of her husband, she should only work if she can help out financially and only if she can find adequate childcare, thus interpreting a wife's paid work activity as an extension of her traditional gender role. However, Eugenia is also expressing a reality that faces almost all of the women interviewed.

Despite her personal experience of being the provider for her family, Eugenia concurs with the traditional view that men have the exclusive responsibility to maintain the household:

It's exclusively his to maintain his family, but if his wife wants to work and help him, exclusively his yes. If he got married, he knew what he was getting into, that he would have to work always. (Eugenia)

However, perhaps, for Eugenia, it is the marriage contract which imposes this responsibility on the man, as Eugenia continues to resist her present partner's attempts to take over the responsibility for maintaining her and her family (see section 3.5).

With regards to domestic work, Eugenia agrees that men should take some part. However, she qualifies this, considering that men's participation should be limited to parenting and childcare functions. Any further help should be left to the good will of the individual partner:

Even if he works, he should help, not so much in making beds and that, but help with the children, take them out for walks, things like that. (...) Well, if he wants to [wash dishes], he can do that too. If they are both in agreement. Everything goes on the agreement they may have within the marriage. (Eugenia)

Thus, it is not a question of the ideological principle, rather it is a matter for the individual couple to decide.

Nevertheless, Eugenia does have an egalitarian consciousness on the matter of men's and women's wage levels. She rejects the notion that women should earn less because they are just supplementing the husband's income:

If she works in something that she ought to be well-paid in, they have to pay her well. (Eugenia)

This is a matter-of-fact rejection which reflects a practical rather than an ideological perception of the roles of men and women in the labour market. Eugenia displays a similar mix of practical and ideological interpretations on the issue of education for girls:

Because it's the man who will always have more responsibility, because the woman would have to [become educated] if she became alone in her marriage, she would have to get [education] to maintain her house. But in a case like that, parents would have to give [education] to the man because it's a responsibility which he will have when he gets married. (Eugenia)

Thus, for Eugenia, education is beneficial for women, but practical considerations mean that women can not always have access to it. In any case, Eugenia appears to concur with

the traditional view that a man will always need an education as he will be the breadwinner when he establishes his household.

### 5.2.3.3 Raquel

Raquel's (49) perceptions show a reflective questioning of the bases of traditional gender role ideology. It seems as though her attitudes have altered under the influence of her paid work experience in an egalitarian direction. Raquel has moved from the role of exclusively housewife and mother to take on paid employment which provides an important contribution to the household income (see chapter four). Thus, she does not agree with the statement that married women should not work:

In this moment, no, I disagree. I think that she can fulfil her obligations, as long as she wants to, if she wants to work, I think that if she organises herself, she can fulfil her obligations at home and with the children. Now, I think that it's better that the person (..) wants to do it, because if it's forced, because sometimes the mother doesn't want to stay at home and she has to do it through obligation. That is a martyrdom, I think, being at home all the time worried about the children. But if she can [work], I think she ought to. (Raquel)

Raquel is cautious about expressing generalities for all women, and qualifies her reasons in the light of her own experience. However, Raquel's attitudes are informed by an egalitarian gender role ideology, as she disagrees with the statement that the exclusive responsibility for maintaining the household lies with the man:

I think it belongs to both of them, because the family belongs to both of them. So the way to succeed is for both to struggle. (Raquel)

Raquel describes how her attitudes regarding housework have undergone a change since she began to work. She now feels that it is fair to ask the husband to help out with the chores:

Well, until a little while ago, I also thought it was unfair. But afterwards, you start realising all by yourself, that if one works the same, why should I have to come home and do everything myself? So, perhaps, not in the moment that he's coming through the door say to him "go to the shops", because logically, .. well, but after a while, I think that he can help with something. I do think it's fair. (Raquel)



Under the influence of her experience of combining paid work and her domestic responsibilities, Raquel has questioned the division of labour within the household. This has enabled her to rework gender relations within her family to an extent, as she has succeeded in gaining her husband's and sons' participation in some of the housework (see chapter four).

In the area of wage levels for men and women, Raquel's attitudes are pragmatic, rather than ideological:

I think that if the woman is a professional, the same as her husband, then they should both earn the same because they have studied for that. But if it's not the case, which is my case, for example, maybe I'm less trained than him to earn [a lot], so, well, one has to adapt to that. (Raquel)

Raquel's attitudes are based on the practical realities she experiences, and she shows an astute perception of the ways in which traditional expectations intertwine with social and economic changes. She goes on to discuss the significance of wives earning more than their husbands:

Well, I know various cases where I live. Well, I know that sometimes the man doesn't want his wife to work, and in the end, it's because she earns more than him. But sometimes, he has to recognise that that money is useful to him and put up with it, he just has to put up with it! (..) it's the older people who still have that criteria, they feel demeaned. (Raquel)

Moreover, Raquel recognises that the husbands' attitudes she is describing are based on cultural and traditional norms rather than practical realities. She has noticed how younger people have contrasting attitudes and has drawn her own conclusions:

There are boys who were brought up with my son, and that they are now married, and the wife earns more, because she has more education, because she is better trained. And they take it well, almost as a joke, as something natural: "oh, I should stay at home", or in fact, when the baby is ill or something, it is him who has the day off (..) to stay with the baby, because if the wife does, they lose more. And she is the one who provides the money for the baby, because it is she who has her job (...). But the people of my age start to feel demeaned. The people of today are more realistic, because that's the way the reality is today. (Raquel)

In keeping with this attitude, Raquel is of the opinion that education is essential for both men and women in these times:

No, no I think that one should give the same studies to your children. In these times, both of them need to have, men and women, as much education as possible. In these times, they should study the same. Even if she doesn't use it, because (..) Or at least just to be better, even if the husband works, but for her be able to have, I mean, that he sees her in a better light, the fact that she has the same level of education as him, or better, even if she doesn't work. (Raquel)

For Raquel, education for women is important, not only as a means to gain employment or financial reward, but as means to improve the status of women within the household, to enable her to command the respect of her husband as his equal.

#### **5.2.3.4 Marilyn**

Marilyn's (32) attitudes are coloured by an egalitarian gender consciousness. She disagrees with the notion that married women should not work, emphasising that women, as much as men, need to validate themselves and have some independence:

No, because the man as much as the woman needs to work. Because, the woman feels, I, what I feel is that with my money I also am contributing to the household, I am not depending entirely on him, do you see? I feel that I depend as much on what is mine as much as what is his. (Marilyn)

However, Marilyn concurs with the view that it is the man's responsibility to maintain the family:

Of course, it's supposed that if he wants to form a family, he has to maintain it, and the wife must help him as much as possible. (Marilyn)

By the same token, Marilyn feels that a husband should help with the housework. She emphasises the workload that is involved in fulfilling domestic responsibilities, contrasting this with men's remunerated work. However, Marilyn has not been successful in obtaining her husband's help:

It is fair that one ask him to help with the housework. Yes, it's fair. Because one works a lot in the house too, looking after the children, and sometimes the man is sitting down all day, and it's not as much as the woman. Women's work is harder than men's, because the woman has to take care of the children, their studies, and the house. And if she works too, then it's double. (...) No, he's accustomed to not doing it. (Marilyn)

Marilyn perceives no problem in women earning more than men, particularly as there was a time when she was earning more than her husband. This did not create any conflicts in her household.

Marilyn disagrees that women should not study. In her own case, she feels that completing her education would have enabled her to gain access to better quality employment:

No, because, education will always be useful for a woman, especially further on [in her life]. It's true that if I had finished my secondary education a long time ago, I would not be working in what I am now. I would be a bit better off. But, it wasn't possible, and now I hope to succeed. No, education is very necessary, to have an education. (Marilyn)

Marilyn intends to complete her secondary education at night school, as well as gain further qualifications in order to obtain a better job. In this, she shares the other women's perception that education and economic independence are important steps towards achieving a greater degree of independence and personal worth.

#### **5.2.4 *Funcionarias* in the Municipality**

The attitudes and opinions of the *funcionarias* offer a different insight into the workings of gender ideology. The interviewees from this sector tend to have higher educational levels than the other women, and this influences their expectations and attitudes. As they come from slightly more affluent backgrounds, most of the participants have had an opportunity to study for professional qualifications and thus have expected to take on paid employment. Nevertheless, they share the same conflicts in gender role ideologies and expectations as the other participants.



#### 5.2.4.1 Claudia

Claudia (26) disagrees with the principle that married women should not work, but does not make generalisations for all women. For her, it is a matter of individual choice whether to remain at home or take on paid work:

I mean, it depends on the role that each person has, because if the person feels happy to be at home, then there she should be. (Claudia)

Claudia's attitudes are oriented along traditional lines, although her expectations reflect a more egalitarian ideal. She disagrees that it should be the man's exclusive responsibility to maintain the household, and that he should participate in housework. However, this participation is again expressed in terms of parenting and help with childcare rather than with general housework, and Claudia takes responsibility for her husband's lack of co-operation:

Because your child you don't have it alone, you have it together, so why shouldn't the two of you take charge of the baby, changing the nappies. I made a mistake, because I wouldn't let my husband change my daughter, because he might have done it wrong, but then he was supposed to learn some way, it's just that I never let him learn. But he should co-operate. (Claudia)

Claudia's more egalitarian expectations are qualified by a conservative perception of gender relations in wider society:

I don't know if I am machista, but in a marriage, it's always the man who is better paid (...). You see in the newspaper, men, they ask for men, I mean that society is machista, I can't aspire to be the head of the household, or the one who contributes the most, the one who maintains the house. Also, as men are machista that would lead you to have bad relations in your marriage. My husband, I don't know if he is machista or not, (...) but what would happen if I earned more than him? (Claudia)

The marital problems that could arise from the threat to a husband's status as breadwinner is another theme that emerges. This is indicative of an underlying traditional gender role ideology, which Claudia articulates as *machismo*. This shows a degree of consciousness of the cultural norms which govern power relations between men and women, although

Claudia herself is unsure whether she shares this traditional ideology. According to this perception, Claudia disagrees that women should earn less than men as their salary is only a help:

Not less, how can I say it, perhaps if they were equal, (...) it would be good if both earned the same. I think a balance. (Claudia)

Claudia interprets this statement in a private sense at first, relating it to her marriage relationship. However, she is also aware that she and her husband do the same job for very different salaries. Claudia attributes this to the differential salaries in the public and private sectors, rather than any discrimination against her as a woman:

It's my case, but I don't think it's because of the circumstance that I am a woman, but, in my case, it's because I work in the fiscal or public [sector], while he works in the private sector. (Claudia)

Claudia's opinion on education for women is individualistic and reveals her middle-income background:

I think if you like something, you should do it. (Claudia)

It seems that Claudia did not have any economic problems during her period of study, enabling her to pursue the education she desired. This is a different experience to that of the interviewees from poorer backgrounds, for whom study was not an easy path to follow, and it therefore has a much more important place in their aspirations.

#### **5.2.4.2 Verónica**

Verónica (28) has a more egalitarian gender role ideology, based around a perception that a cultural change has already taken place and traditional gender role expectations no longer predominate:

No, I think that is a myth. I think that a woman cannot be obliged to do anything. I think that before, the upbringing that our grandparents had, that women had to be more submissive, that they have to always take orders

from the man. Young people aren't like that any more. No, that I think is a myth, that's all. (Verónica)

The perception that the social norms governing gender roles have already changed influences Verónica's attitudes towards the provider role in the family. She does not accept that there is a cultural absolute which determines which partner maintains the household, it is more a matter of individual choice and opportunity:

I don't believe that either. It's that it's not a responsibility, a man is supposed to work, if he is a man and he is not married then he has to work for himself. But if he is married, he has to fulfil a role, he got married, and it's not that he has to maintain the family, because that can be done by common agreement, by both [partners]. (..) But it's not necessarily, it doesn't have to be "you don't work and I'll maintain you", I don't think you see that any more, not in these times. (Verónica)

By the same token, Verónica does not agree that it is unfair to ask a spouse to help with the chores. However, she offers contradictory perceptions, first that it is up to the individual woman to encourage her partner to participate, while at the same time restricting the activities that her husband can help in:

No, it's not unfair because it's good for them to work, if the woman works too, and has to come home to do the things in the house. But that is a matter of training them, of leading them down a path of laziness, of comfort, of expecting the woman to do everything for them. (...) No I don't like that. I say to him, he helps me iron when I'm too tired to do the ironing. Washing no. (..) And what would he do in the kitchen? They are useless! (Verónica)

Verónica has similar feelings regarding male and female wage levels. This does not seem to hold any potential problems for her in terms of gender relations within the marriage or the labour market. It is again a question of individual opportunity:

If she has the opportunity to earn more, then that's great, even better. (Verónica)

Verónica emphasises women's right to personal development through education:



No, a woman has to develop herself too, her intellect and it doesn't matter that she may have to stay at home afterwards. And if she is intelligent, then maybe she can work at home with what she knows. (Verónica)

Thus, Verónica has egalitarian expectations in connection with gender roles and gender relations between men and women. She perceives that there has been quite a degree of social change, bringing about an equality in opportunities for men and women. It seems that it now up to the individual to make the best of their skills and these opportunities.

#### 5.2.4.3 Mónica

Mónica's (34) views are based on an egalitarian gender consciousness, wherein the value of the woman as a person in her own right is emphasised. In her attitude towards married women working, Mónica emphasises that women perform a multiplicity of roles as part of their lives, rather than one role conflicting with another:

No, because, I mean, the fact that they go out work, they won't stop being women, they won't stop being mothers (...). Sometimes, you even appreciate being a mother more when you're away from your kids, being away from them during the day. (...)No, it's knowing how to co-ordinate your activities. (Mónica)

In line with this, Mónica disagrees that it is the exclusive responsibility of the husband to maintain the household. Again, the theme of one salary being insufficient to maintain a family arises. Moreover, Mónica views women's participation in paid work as a positive contribution to the marriage relationship rather than one which causes conflict:

No, in these times, no, because in reality it has to be shared, I mean if the economic situation is not the best, then there's even more reason to share the burden. Economic problems can have a lot of influence in the couple's relationship, so why not avoid them, if you can? (Mónica)

The idea of sharing the burden also applies to housework, in Mónica's opinion. She also emphasises that the paid employment of both spouses has equal value, not that one is less demanding than the other:

And if the woman works? I say that it is fair! Why should he have a holiday at the weekend, I say. No, I tell you that it's fair that it should be

shared. No, because that would be supporting the view that your work is less than his. I mean that all types of work, whatever it is, are equal, not that one is better than the other, or more tiring than the other. (Mónica)

Mónica shares Verónica's view that wage differentials depend on the individual to a certain extent. If a woman wants to earn a higher salary, then she is free to study, to take training and improve her position in the labour market:

In reality, it's just luck if the woman earns less than the man, or if the man earns more than the woman. It's just fate, that's all, or if professionally, (..) well that's what it depends on if she earns more or less. But it does depend on the woman to maintain that, because if you want to train, or study, you can do that. (Mónica)

Training and education for women represent the path to gain access to employment and leave the confines of the domestic sphere, in Mónica's opinion. She emphasises again the value of the woman as an autonomous person, not merely defined by her gender role. This sense of 'personhood' is lost if a woman remains at home, with no personal development:

What happens with her, I mean what happens to the person? She becomes stupid left in the house, and ends up being just an object in the end. (..) I think it's because many women don't have any alternative. And well, then they stay there, stay where they are from apathy or because it's difficult to fight to want something and not be able to do it because of the economic situation. (Mónica)

Mónica's own aspirations are influenced by her egalitarian gender role ideology, wherein women and men have equal status and the same rights. Thus, the twin burdens of maintaining the household financially and domestically should be shared between the two spouses, not divided along the lines of traditional gender roles.

#### **5.2.4.4 Alicia**

Alicia (47) is a female head of household and her attitudes have been formed and re-shaped by her life experience. Alicia's perceptions combine an underlying traditional gender ideology with a pragmatic recognition of the realities of the time. Together with

Mónica, Alicia also emphasises that women can perform multiple roles without having to sacrifice her traditional role in the household:

I disagree, women should work because she can do everything without neglecting her home. A woman should develop herself, especially if she is a professional, she shouldn't stay there because she will get frustrated. Of course, it's ideal if the woman starts when the children are a little older. That's the way I see it because of my experience, well I was obliged [to work]. (..) But I agree that the woman should work. Especially today, to co-operate. (Alicia)

In keeping with this, Alicia disagrees that men have the exclusive responsibility to maintain the household:

No, both have their responsibilities, and if the woman can contribute, then she should do so with even more reason. Then things will be better. (Alicia)

Alicia also has the view that men should participate in the housework. She can see no reason why they should not do so:

Oh no, I agree that the man should co-operate, the man should co-operate, yes. That doesn't take away any manliness from him, on the contrary. The man should share, hopefully feed, change the nappy. (...) it's not an obligation, but why not? (Alicia)

As Alicia does not necessarily believe in the role of the husband as breadwinner, she is reluctant to agree with the statement that women should earn less than men. This is a question for the individual couple to deal with, Alicia cannot make general statements in relation to this:

Well, that is, I couldn't say. It's a question of each person's capacity, if they earn more or less depends on the couple. I mean, there's no reason for a man to feel less because his wife earn more. (..) It all depends on the communication they have as a couple. (Alicia)

Alicia's own life experience leads her to disagree firmly with the notion that women should not study. She feels that her life would have been very different if her parents had not held this traditional attitude that women did not need to study:



No, there I am in total disagreement, because I would have been something else, because in my house, they said to me “what are you going to study for if you’re going to get married?” I am totally in disagreement now because that shouldn’t be, the more a woman knows, the better, even if she doesn’t work, because then, as we also have to educate our children, it’s convenient to know. (Alicia)

Reflecting on her life and work experience, Alicia recognises that her attitudes have changed. The traditional gender role ideology she had in the past has been modified towards a more egalitarian position, leading her to question the household division of labour and emphasise the importance of paid work and education for women.

### **5.3 Gender relations**

Gender relations are the expression of power relationships between men and women in specific interactions and in different social arenas. As has been discussed before, patriarchal cultural norms impose an unequal gender relation, wherein men have power over women. This shapes men’s and women’s expectations and attitudes within the family as much as in wider society. This section will deal with the participants’ attitudes to gender relations in the marriage relationship, in society and in the arena of politics. The figures 5.6 - 5.8 show the participants’ responses to statements relating to gender relations, again representing views which served as a starting point for discussion and explanation. As these themes deal with more personal, and therefore complex, interpretations of gender relations, there is less polarisation between egalitarian and traditional views than was observed in the previous section.

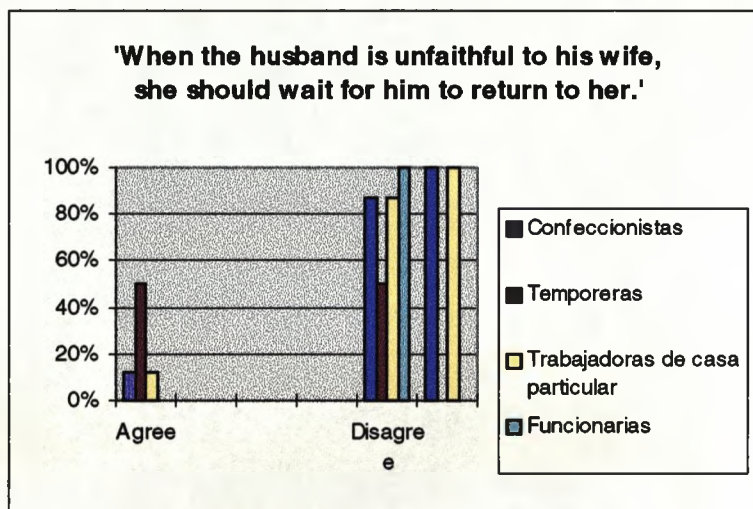
The issue of male infidelity within the marriage elicited a range of responses. For some interviewees, agreement or disagreement with the statement is bound up with issues of self-respect and dignity, while for others, it is linked to the realities of the established household and family. In the case of the second statement, the interviewees tended to agree with the principle, while qualifying their answers to reflect the social reality determined by patriarchal cultural norms.

The issue of women’s political participation elicited contradictory responses, even prompting some women to state that they had no opinion. This reflects the traditional

view that politics is a male arena, a view which is made explicit by some of the participants. However, others emphasised the importance of women participating in politics in order to bring a different point of view to a male-dominated arena. Again, these attitudes are shaped by a combination of ideological and practical considerations, re-interpreting and strengthening the themes that are intertwined in the women's perceptions.

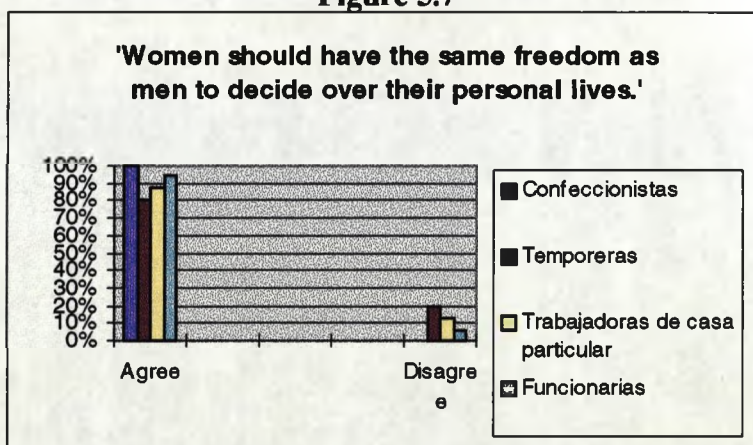
**Figures 5.6 - 5.8 Interviewees' responses to opinions on gender relations, percentages by sector**

**Figure 5.6**



Source: Survey by the author, Chile 1993-1994

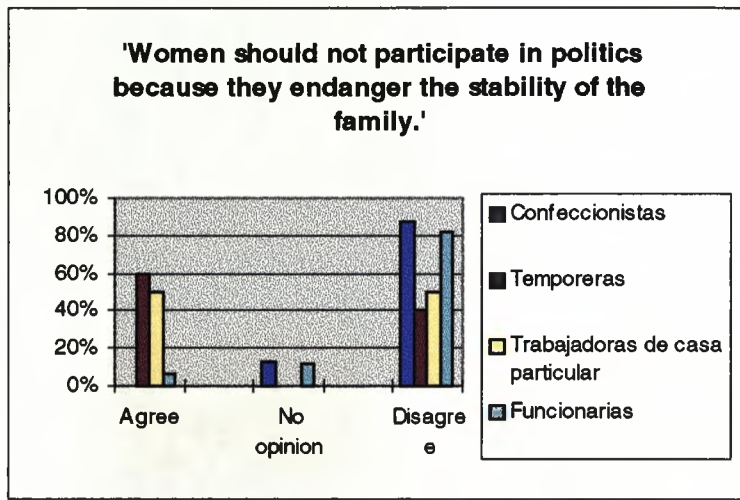
**Figure 5.7**



Source: Survey by the author, Chile 1993-1994



**Figure 5.8**



Source: Survey by the author, Chile 1993-1994

### 5.3.1 *Confeccionistas*

#### 5.3.1.1 Ester

In the previous section, we have seen that Ester (34) has a strong egalitarian gender consciousness, as well as views which are consistent with a feminist ideology. This is made clearer in her attitudes towards gender relations. For Ester, male infidelity is an accepted reality of married life in Chile. She is adamant however, that a woman should not wait for her partner, while emphasising that paid work experience has led to a shift in women's expectations of the marriage relationship:

No, she has to find herself another. (...) Look, you know that things are changing in couples' relationships. It's no longer the situation that there was before, that oppressed women would wait at home and "oh, how sad, he abandoned her!", and all that. When they start to work, women know that there are other men, that there is another world. So, that's being left behind. (..) Of course work influences that. When the man gives money to the women, it's like he's demanding of her - as he maintains the house - that when he comes back, she will have to do what he wants. (Ester)

The economic independence that a woman can achieve through paid employment is a means by which she can gain the freedom to decide over her personal life and the quality of her marriage relationship. This is a theme which Ester takes up again in response to the next statement:

But it's not like that. I feel that us women, we can no longer keep on complaining "that this here, that that there", we have to make changes. And those changes start here, from the home. Because there's no point in shouting in the streets "we want women's liberation...!" if in your own home, you don't demand that your rights be respected. And of course, that's where you're bringing up your son, and you're bringing him up machista, the same as other men. (Ester)

Ester is expressing feminist ideas, recognising the need to bring about changes, as well as identifying the home as the place to begin to establish equality in gender relations. From this base, Ester expands this to articulate a political project which legitimates women's presence in the political arena:

No, I don't agree with that [women should not participate in politics]. The stability of the family is endangered when women don't participate in politics. Because everything is cut in the political thing, the future of the country, so it's also the future of the family. No, because if you participate in a political party, it's supposed to better the life of the family. Because the family is the fundamental base of society, so from there, if the people obtain more social justice, for example, if we have more resources, then we will have the right to recreation with our families, maybe, to spend more time with them. If we have better salaries, all that is related. And if we are participating in politics, it's for the future of our children. (Ester)

Ester's responses are shaped by her life experiences of moving from the role of married housewife and mother to that of female head of household through the separation from her husband. Ester had to enter the labour market in order to support herself and her son, and the experience of paid employment has been positive. In other sections, we have seen how Ester is proud to have provided for her son through her own efforts and gained economic and personal independence (see section 3.5 and chapter four).

From her perceptions, it emerges that Ester herself has been empowered by her paid work experience. She has evolved a defined feminist gender consciousness, which is expressed in terms of a social and political commitment. As we have seen, education and paid employment are key for women's empowerment in Ester's perception, enabling women to become independent and begin to challenge the basis of traditional gender relations, as she herself has done.

### 5.3.1.2 Ana

Ana's (29) egalitarian gender consciousness also colours her attitudes to gender relations. In keeping with this, she rejects the traditional view that a wife should wait for her husband if he has been unfaithful. It is a question of self-respect and dignity:

No, I don't think so. That is not the way. Waiting for your husband to get bored and to come back to you is a question of, more than anything, of dignity. In the personal aspect, I see it like that, I'm not going to wait for him to get bored in the other house and come back. (Ana)



Ana also formulates a 'feminist' interpretation of gender relations in wider society. She agrees that women should have the same freedom as men, while recognising that this is not the reality. Ana expresses her perception of the *machista* ideology which leads to the discrimination of women, emphasising that changes need to be brought about if women are to 'advance', and articulates the actions that women need to take to achieve equality:

Yes, but it's not the reality. Because we women have always been discriminated. To be able to make steps forwards, we have had struggles with men. It's that the mentality of men is very closed. The man is very machista, so in order to gain recognition for ourselves, we have had a lot of struggle, a lot of work. Taking the decision-making, taking responsibilities, taking on posts that men think we are not capable of taking on. Taking on [posts] in work and in the political arena. To show that women are also capable of assuming important political office. (Ana)

In keeping with this, Ana disagrees that women should not participate in politics. There are already women who are prominent in politics:

I don't think so, it's an error. Because we have the example of that lady (...) They are women with homes, with independence, how shall I say? housewives, mothers, wives and they have important political posts. (Ana)

Ana clearly perceives inequalities in gender relations within Chilean society. This is interpreted along the lines of a feminist ideology, incorporating notions of a social struggle and effort on the part of women to bring about a cultural change. Throughout, Ana has emphasised that independence for women, both economic and personal, is a vital element in bringing about a change in gender relations.

Ana's attitudes and expectations have changed as her life has unfolded. As mentioned in section 3.5, after she separated from her husband, Ana made important self-discoveries which have modified her gender role ideology. Ana's independence is something she treasures and this freedom may be incompatible with a marriage relationship which is defined in terms of the traditional gender role ideology predominant in Chilean society. Ana's life and work experience have led her to develop an egalitarian gender role ideology which, while empowering, also poses difficult questions which Ana has yet to resolve.

### 5.3.1.3 Gladys

The conflict that has arisen in Gladys' (40) marriage as a result of her undertaking paid work shapes her responses. Gladys interprets the issue of male infidelity in individualistic terms, reflecting on the present state of her marriage:

I think, that it depends, when there is love, yes [she should wait for him]. But if right now, they came and said to me, "you know, your husband is having an affair", Oh what happiness ..! (...) But when there is no love left, the man becomes an obstacle. (Gladys)

It is apparent that the situation with her husband has become unbearable for Gladys. This personal experience also influences her response to the question of gender relations in wider society. Gladys agrees that women should have the same freedom as men, but is only too aware that this is not necessarily the situation:

Yes, yes I agree that one has the right to decide. (..) But I think that it's not like that, I even live it. (..) Because I have tried on all sides, ... and anyway he [her husband] knows that if he tried to ask me to leave work, I won't do it. Because I have tried to make him see that I like working, that I wanted to work, and that I am going to carry on working, whether he likes it or not. And I think I have every right to do that, anyway. (Gladys)

Gladys defends women' ability to participate in politics, emphasising that women are as capable as men:

Because there are women who are really intelligent and they are capable of doing lots of things, sometimes more so than men. (Gladys)

We have seen that Gladys' new-found independence through her employment has led to enormous conflict between herself and her husband. This paid work experience has led her to question the traditional gender roles that she previously accepted, changes which her husband finds difficult to accept. However, this new situation may well have forced to the surface tensions and frustrations which were already present in their marriage.

Nevertheless, Gladys feels that she has discovered her potential and independence late in life, and is therefore prepared to defend her right to this freedom, even at the cost of her marriage.

#### 5.3.1.4 Carmen

Carmen's (45) attitudes are shaped by a traditional gender role ideology. However, in relation to the question of male infidelity, Carmen and her husband have an egalitarian attitude. Carmen interprets infidelity by either of the partners as signifying the end of the relationship, and this is something that she and her husband have discussed:

I say, in the case of my husband, we have always talked about it, that between us there should not be any infidelity, because the day that one of us stops loving the other, well (...) if they have fallen in love with another person, they will leave. I would not sit down to cry, to wait for him, why? If he has fallen in love and wants to leave, let him leave. (Carmen)

This may reflect a romantic ideal of equality between the partners within Carmen's own marriage relationship. However, it may be an indication Carmen's own traditional attitudes in that she does not mention the possibility of an infidelity on her part.

This traditional view is confirmed when Carmen agrees that women should have the same freedom as men, while qualifying her answer almost immediately:

I think that yes, that she has no rights taken away from her; if the man can do it, why not the woman? Except that the woman, has to have, has a little more delicacy, more modesty regarding her person that's all, and the man does not have to. (Carmen)

In this interpretation, Carmen is agreeing in principle, but makes it clear that women can not behave in the same way as men in their sexual lives. Women have to guard themselves in a way that men do not.

Interestingly, Carmen did not want to give any opinion at all in connection with women's participation in politics, nor did she offer explanation. It could be that she considers politics a male province, which is an opinion expressed by some of the women later in this section. On the other hand, it may be that Carmen had strong opinions regarding women's participation in politics which she preferred to keep to herself. Carmen's opinions are complex in that they incorporate a degree of gender consciousness as well as



an awareness of gender relations in society. However, Carmen does not seem to exercise this awareness in any political or social form, which might mean that she has more conservative views on women's political participation.

### **5.3.2 *Temporeras***

#### **5.3.2.1 Ruth**

Ruth (38) has given opinions which are based on traditional gender ideology. Thus, she also has conservative attitudes towards gender relations. On the issue of male infidelity, Ruth agrees that the woman should wait for her husband to return:

Yes, I think that for the children, for the house,, and you should talk about it. (Ruth)

This attitude reflects the traditional gender roles where the wife and children depend on the male partner. Moreover, Ruth emphasises that a wife should wait for her husband because of the children, in accordance with the traditional female role.

Ruth agrees with the principle that women should have the same freedoms as men, although it has never been her experience. It is precisely because of women's domestic role that their freedom is restricted:

I think that one doesn't have the same opportunities as the man because of the children and all those things, because the man doesn't, because he is free, because he works and all those things. And the woman doesn't, because she is always more drawn to the children and I think that it's because of that that one never has the opportunity, to do the same things that they do. (Ruth)

Ruth has a conservative attitude regarding women's participation in politics. She reluctantly agrees that women should not participate in politics, while giving a contradictory opinion:

Yes, because I think that the man always gives more, well in some things yes, the woman knows more about what's going on, but I don't know, I don't really imagine women. (Ruth)

Ruth has a traditional gender role ideology which is the basis for her interpretation of gender relations. However, this reflects her experience of life rather than ideological considerations. Ruth's opinions reflect the more traditional gender relations of the Chilean countryside, despite the fact that she herself has extended her family role to allow her to take on paid work.

### 5.3.2.2 Luisa

In the previous section, Luisa (23) expressed attitudes which are consistent with traditional gender ideology. However, on the issue of male infidelity, she appears to be clear in that a wife should not wait for her husband to return:

No, because if he went and found himself another, then he should go with her. (Luisa)

Luisa shows a similar attitude in connection to gender relations in a wider social context. She agrees that women should have the same freedom as men, but is brusque in qualifying this statement:

Yes, but they never have the same freedom. (Luisa)

With regard to women's political participation, Luisa adheres to traditional gender role ideology. She agrees that women should not participate in politics because a political career is not compatible with a wife's responsibilities towards her family:

Yes, I think that the families of the women representatives do suffer. (Luisa)

Luisa, together with Ruth, reflect the more traditional mores of rural areas. Her attitudes regarding gender relations tend towards a traditional ideology of gender. However, as can be seen from previous chapters, Luisa's paid work experience has had a subtle effect on these perceptions. She has begun to question the exclusivity of the male breadwinner role, as well as the traditional gender division of labour within the household (see chapter four).

### 5.3.2.3 Anita

Anita (29) has expressed opinions which show a re-interpretation of traditional gender role ideology, while maintaining traditional expectations. In her attitudes towards gender relations, however, Anita has a more specific egalitarian gender consciousness. She disagrees with the idea that a wife should wait for her husband to return, regarding this as a transgression of the relationship of respect between partners, as well as respect towards their children:

If one of you were to fail, they lose the children, they just leave that's all. Because that would be a complete lack of respect, and because it's got to do with the children. (Anita)

Anita believes that men and women should have the same freedom, based on their equal rights within the social arena. However, it is the traditional expectations regarding what is acceptable behaviour for women that prevent this equality from occurring:

Yes, she has the same right, it should be like that. But it's not like that. The man always has more freedom than the woman, yes in many things. Because, the thing is, that you can't do something that's not appropriate. (Anita)

Anita's attitude towards women's political participation illustrates further her perception of gender relations. She believes that men and women should have the same rights and opportunities, while perceiving that changes have already taken place to make this a social reality. Her paid work experience shows her that employment opportunities for women are improving. This means that women have as much right to participate in politics as men, in the same way that they participate in the labour market:

Yes, I say that she can, she can [participate in politics]. It has to do with the man understanding the woman, because a woman has the right to jobs too, now that men's jobs are becoming women's, of course she has a right. She has the same mind, she has the capacity to do that, so why not? (Anita)

Anita's attitudes speak of an underlying egalitarian gender ideology, although her perceptions are complex. Anita recognises that the economic needs of the times impose



paid work on married women and that this in turn may impose changes in the practicalities of the division of labour within the domestic environment. At the same time, her interpretation of gender relations within the household places these changes within the boundaries of women's traditional gender role, extending these boundaries to incorporate new economic realities.

However, Anita has a much more egalitarian attitude towards gender relations in the 'public' arenas. She believes in equality of status and conditions between men and women as much in the labour market as in the political arena, posing a definite challenge to traditional ideology regarding women's participation in these arenas. At the same time, Anita does not appear to share the notion of any kind of 'struggle' on the part of women in order to bring about equality. Changes are already taking place and are being accommodated into the existing social framework, for example, 'men's jobs are becoming women's'. Thus, Anita's egalitarian gender consciousness and ideology fits with these changing social norms.

#### **5.3.2.4 Clara**

It has been observed that Clara (42) has a definite egalitarian gender role ideology. This ideology is made more explicit in her attitudes towards gender relations. In relation to the question of male infidelity, Clara expresses attitudes which are in complete contrast to traditional Chilean cultural expectations of women's behaviour:

When he [the husband] is unfaithful, I have another idea. A woman has no reason to wait for him, if one has the same opportunities, why should one die waiting for a man? If, I think, God made one all alone, one knows how to move ahead, and there's no reason to wait for a man. And imagine if with the other woman, he is happy, he has found what he did not find with you, why make his life impossible? Of course, one can find one's partner, your ideal man, somewhere else. So I think that [waiting for him] is out of the picture now, compared to how it was before. Now you must renew yourself! (Clara)

Several of the other women disagreed that a wife should wait for her husband. However, Clara goes further in making explicit the idea that women have the same right as men to pursue personal happiness with another partner if their marriage fails. This is an attitude

that challenges the accepted norms of behaviour for women, which are strictest in the case of women's sexuality. Moreover, in Chilean civil society, the sanctity of marriage is paramount and divorce does not exist as a legal option. Thus, Clara's attitude is quite controversial in this context, indicating that she has fairly progressive views.

All the interviewees' show an awareness of the social and cultural restrictions of women's freedoms. Although the majority of them agreed with the principle that women should have the same freedoms as men, there is widespread recognition that this is difficult to put into practice. Clara too, feels that this is the case, although she perceives that the situation is changing:

One says sometimes, as a woman, of course, I would such and such a thing, but from saying to doing, is sort of difficult, it's difficult for one to do so. Because that is only just beginning to change. (Clara)

In keeping with her egalitarian outlook, Clara sees no problems in women participation in politics. It is a question of the individual's right:

She is a person like any other, and she ought to give her opinion. (Clara)

Clara has an egalitarian gender ideology which shapes both her attitudes and behaviour. She has a clear belief in the equality of status of men and women within both the public and the private sphere, and she draws attention to where patriarchal gender relations lead to inequalities in the workplace. Clara's own work and life experience have shown her the tensions and difficulties of transgressing the boundaries of women's traditional role by taking on paid work outside the home. Nevertheless, she does not attempt to justify a wife's paid work in purely economic terms, but advocates it as a means to attain personal development for both women and men. Education is also a means for women to reach independence and succeed through their own merits.

This leads on to a confident egalitarian interpretation of gender relations within society, together with the assertion that important changes are taking place which will bring about greater equality in gender relations. Thus, it appears that Clara's egalitarian gender ideology, shaped by her experiences of paid work, have allowed her to, firstly,

successfully rework traditional gender roles within her household, while, secondly, attaining an important degree of self-empowerment which enables her to challenge the fundamental nature of patriarchal gender relations.

### 5.3.3 *Trabajadoras en casa particular*

#### 5.3.3.1 Clementina

In section 5.3.1, Clementina (36) expressed attitudes that are shaped by a traditional gender ideology. This underlies her attitudes towards gender relations. In the case of male infidelity, Clementina disagrees with the idea that a wife should wait for her husband, although she feels that a wife may share some of the responsibility for the husband's infidelity:

It depends on the motives, because if he is unfaithful, one of the two persons probably committed an error that made him leave. (..) The man left for a reason, because sometimes it's due to the poor understanding of the woman, it might be, because of all the problems that there are in a home that the man leaves. (...) But she should carry on with her life and re-form her home, try to re-make her life. What if the man takes all his life to come back, she will spend her whole life waiting for him. No, I don't share that idea. (Clementina)

The perception that the wife may be partly responsible for causing her husband's infidelity fits with the traditional expectation that it is the wife's role to take care of her husband. However, Clementina's attitudes show a complex mix of traditional ideology with a more egalitarian dimension which reflects the practicalities of her situation as a single parent, as well as her independent outlook.

This is also the case on the issue of women's right to the same freedoms as men. Clementina agrees that women should have the same freedom, but the tension between her traditional and egalitarian viewpoints surfaces here:

In this present life, we are all equal, I think that we are all equal because the woman has as much freedom as a man. I think that now the woman has more freedom (..) than before. (...) In marriage, it's different, because the woman is dependent on her husband and she should tell him "I'm going to



such-and-such a place". (..) In any case, the man has more freedom , he is more independent. (Clementina)

Clementina qualifies her opinions in terms of women's marital status. She has more egalitarian attitudes when considering the rights of women as individuals, while the more traditional interpretations surface when she considers women in their roles as wives. This may reflect the fact that Clementina has never been married, and so conserves her traditional expectations of gender roles within marriage.

However, in relation to women's political participation, Clementina firmly favours traditional gender roles, and she agrees that women would endanger the family if they participate in politics:

Yes. The woman has never been made for politics, I think. That has always been for men, it's not that I am very machista, but I think politics looks ugly in a woman. The man is made for that, the woman no, because the woman belongs more to the home. I mean, work and home, both those areas, but not to politics. (Clementina)

Clementina makes the same association between men and the 'public' sphere of politics, and women and the 'private' sphere of the home as patriarchal ideology does.

Clementina holds to traditional gender role attitudes, although her successful independence at times draws her towards more egalitarian views. Nevertheless, it appears that Clementina herself may be aware of the contradiction between her egalitarian and traditional viewpoints. After stating that the woman belongs to the home, she appears to correct this to include work as a legitimate arena for women, although politics remains a male preserve.

### **5.3.3.2 Eugenia**

Eugenia (40) has expressed views which tend to be pragmatic and reflect traditional views. However, in her attitudes towards gender relations, she makes plain that she has an egalitarian ideology which underpins these perceptions. Eugenia is dismissive of the idea that a wife should wait for her husband to return if he has been unfaithful:

No, no she shouldn't wait for him, because if he is going around with another woman, how is she going to wait for him, if he has been with another woman? (Eugenia)

It is on the question of whether women should have the same freedom as men that Eugenia identifies herself as a feminist. She is the only woman of the group to do so, and she also identifies the different cultural interpretations of male and female behaviour:

Because I am also a feminist. And yes [women should have the same freedom as men], because I think that we are also human beings, the only difference between men and women is that men are womanisers and women cannot do the same thing, that's the only thing. But in everything else I think it's the same because we are also human beings. (..) Of course, because other people recriminate a woman very much for being unfaithful to her husband and they don't a man, because they are used to them cheating on their wives. A woman should have the same freedom because she is not doing anything wrong, she is with her group, with her friends; she should have the same freedom, but some men won't permit it. (Eugenia)

Again, Eugenia is giving a truthful picture of the double standard that exists in Chilean society as a result of the predominant gender ideology. Under patriarchal gender ideology, female sexuality is controlled within the obligations of the marriage relation and restricted to the 'private' sphere. Male sexuality, on the other hand, is regarded as an important aspect of masculinity. While religious mores might oblige men to be faithful to their wives, *machismo* condones men's sexual activity outside marriage as an expression of 'masculinity'. This means that, as Eugenia points out, it is common in Chilean society for men to have extra-marital relationships. On the other hand, while individual women may also have relationships outside marriage, this is both socially and culturally unacceptable. The existence of this double standard will be taken up again later in the chapter.

In keeping with her egalitarian ideology, Eugenia disagrees with the statement that women should not participate in politics:

No, because I don't think that there are problems because one likes politics. (Eugenia)

Eugenia's paid work has enabled her to maintain her family through her own efforts and has given her an important degree of independence. We have seen that her views tend to be pragmatic rather than ideological. However, Eugenia has a gender consciousness which she defines as 'feminist'. This leads her to aspire to equality between men and women in terms of status and rights, while conserving the idea of a female 'morality' that is superior to men's. Women should have the right to the same freedom as men precisely because they are not going to do 'anything wrong'. Eugenia's gender ideology is an empowering one, allowing her to challenge accepted notions of gender roles within the marriage relationship, and live her life on her own terms.

### 5.3.3.3 Raquel

Raquel (49) has shown that she has re-evaluated her attitudes towards gender roles within the household in an egalitarian direction. However, her attitudes towards gender relations remain grounded in traditional gender ideology. On the question of male infidelity, she offers a personal view, although Raquel does consider that the wife shares some of the responsibility for her husband's infidelity:

I think that if she loves him, more than waiting she should fight to get him back, reconquer him. If she doesn't love him, then it's better that she should get rid of him. If there is no love left, if there's no getting around that, it's better to finish a relationship that is affecting both of them and possibly the children too. But if there are children, and they love each other. (..) His wife, maybe she was too preoccupied with the children, with work, and he was left behind and there was no solution but to find himself another. And if one recognises that and well, that happened because it was my fault, then she should try and get him back, to reconquer him. (Raquel)

This attitude shows an adherence to traditional ideology and the importance of marriage. This ideological consideration is carried through to Raquel's opinion on whether woman should have the same freedom as men. She disagrees with this statement, emphasising the care of the children as the paramount concern for women:

No, I think that there no. Because if both of them dedicate themselves to realising themselves as individuals in that way, then who sees to the children? (..) No somebody has to be there to look after the children. So they can't do the same, or do it as a revenge, it's not the correct thing. (Raquel)



The importance of women's role as mother precludes them from having the same freedoms as men, according to this more traditional expectation. Despite this, Raquel sees no conflict with the family, if women choose to participate in politics:

Why would they endanger the family, I think they can participate. (Raquel)

Raquel's attitudes and opinions show a reflective questioning of the bases of traditional gender role ideology in terms of the gender division of labour within the household and in the labour market. This questioning has arisen as a result of her paid work experience which has enabled Raquel to demand more participation in the household chores from her husband and son. Raquel has also been successful in her paid work experience, making a significant difference to the standard of living of the family through her income contribution. This has given Raquel a sense of achievement as well as empowerment, influencing her attitudes in a more egalitarian direction. However, in the aspects of gender relations within the private sphere of the marriage and the family, she retains a more traditional gender role orientation.

#### **5.3.3.4 Marilyn**

Marilyn (32) has attitudes which are characterised by an egalitarian interpretation of gender roles. On the issue of male infidelity, Marilyn has a clear view. An act of infidelity is a betrayal of the couple's relationship, the family, and the relationship itself is forfeit. Marilyn is firm in her refusal to accept it:

No, because if the man is unfaithful, he will always be so. It's enough to do it once, and he will keep on doing it, so there is no solution. I, at least think, that if R. is unfaithful to me ever, then he leaves the house, simply that, and he lets me re-make my life, and neither will I wear mourning for him, nor anything like that, but I will try to re-make my life as a person. (Marilyn)

Marilyn emphasises that a woman is a person, not just a wife or a mother. In keeping with this, she agrees that women should have the same freedom as men.

Marilyn disagrees with the statement that women should not participate in politics. Her own experience of political participation was a positive one:

Because, I feel that all women have the right to participate and to say what she thinks, and participate in politics, because it's better for one to know a little more, I don't know. At least, when I was in the Democratic party, we all spoke, we all thought, we all said what we thought, and I don't think it's bad for women to think about politics. (Marilyn)

Marilyn has an egalitarian gender ideology which enables her to perceive that women can have roles beyond that of wife and mother. She aspires to ideals of equality, although she has not been able to alter the gender division of labour within her household. However, Marilyn is cautious about generalising for all women, and limits her insights to her own experience and aspirations. However, she shares with many of the other women in the group the aspirations of education and paid work as the means of improving women's position in society.

#### **5.3.4 *Funcionarias***

##### **5.3.4.1 Claudia**

Claudia (26) has a conservative perception of gender roles, as can be seen in section 5.2.4.1. She has an individualistic interpretation of gender relations, as can be seen in her response to the issue of male infidelity:

I'll change the lock, and he won't ever come back! Because it would be like being submissive, I see it as that. (Claudia)

Claudia also indicates that accepting a husband's infidelity would be a blow to her sense of self-worth. However, Claudia does not apply this perception to a wider social context of gender relations or gender ideology. It remains a private matter between her and her husband.

This individualistic interpretation is also apparent on the question of whether women should have the same freedom as men. Claudia agrees, and, although she does not perceive that she has any restrictions, recognises that women are not as free as men:

Yes, I don't have those problems, but I know that no, women aren't as free.  
(Claudia)

Claudia feels that women should participate in politics, there is no conflict with the family. However, she does not have strong feelings on this issue. From her attitudes, we can see that Claudia has certain egalitarian expectations of gender roles, particularly in connection with work and the maintenance of the household. However, she does have a conservative, individualistic interpretation of gender relations. This means that she does not perceive that any inequalities between men and women have their roots in a gender ideology and cultural norms. Rather, inequalities arise from the differences in each individual's opportunity and determination to pursue a particular course within society, the labour market or the household. Thus, Claudia does not attribute the same importance as some of the other interviewees to education and paid work for women. If women want to work, they should, and if they like a subject, they should study it. Thus, Claudia's attitudes are based on an individualistic interpretation of gender relations, coupled with a traditional gender ideology.

#### 5.3.4.2 Verónica

Verónica (28) has an egalitarian interpretation of gender roles which incorporates a perception that a cultural change has already taken place and traditional gender role expectations no longer predominate. This influences her perceptions of gender relations, particularly in the area of infidelity. She perceives that waiting for the husband to return is a thing of the past, that women no longer have the same expectations they used to, while recognising that it is a complex issue:

I'll kill him first! (...) But if he was to be unfaithful to me, I don't know what I'd do. Look, it's complicated, it sounds like a situation that my family is living through. (...) if I was her, I would have thrown him out of the house, because it's fine to think, well he was my first love, she says, he was my first man, but I think that the time of those stupid women is over, those submissive women, who say, who think that - that he was my first love, things like that, no I wouldn't put up with it. (Verónica)



However, although Verónica believes that some social norms have changed, she is aware that women are still restricted by traditional expectations. She agrees that women should have the same freedom as men, but then qualifies her answer:

Yes, But women in general? No, [they do not have freedom]. Because it's frowned upon that a woman deceive her husband, imagine, no, no, she couldn't have the same freedoms. The same freedoms, no, but yes the same rights. Freedoms no, because society is more reserved. (Verónica)

Verónica is reluctant to give an opinion regarding politics. Finally, she does agree that women should have the right to participate, although she removes herself from having any connection with the subject:

You know that about politics I know nothing, nothing, I am totally foreign to that subject. (...) I think that yes, [women should participate], if it's an opinion, if it's expressing your feelings for your tendency, yes. (Verónica)

Thus, Verónica's attitudes tend towards the notion that men and women have equal opportunities, indicating an egalitarian gender ideology. However, she shares with Claudia attitudes which are characterised by an emphasis on the individual person. They do not perceive that traditional gender relations may create unequal conditions for men and women, the emphasis is on the fruits of individual effort. It is merely a question of each individual, whether they be male or female, making the best of the opportunities offered to them in the labour market or education, according to their personal choice. Perhaps, it is because Verónica does not seem acknowledge cultural or ideological influences, she declares that she has no political knowledge.

#### **5.3.4.3 Mónica**

Mónica has a definite egalitarian gender ideology which characterises her opinions. She places emphasis on the value of the woman as a person in her own right, a notion which is important in her attitude towards male infidelity. She does not agree that a woman should wait:

That she stay there waiting for him? No, because you have to start from the principle that she is a person, right, that for me is fundamental. I do not

agree with paying back with the same coin, that goes against my principles. But, for me, what is fundamental is that she is a person, I mean, if she is not respected, it could be, then that is not the way to make yourself be respected, that being submissive and deferential. And that is not right either. (Mónica)

In keeping with her egalitarian view of gender relations, Mónica agrees that women should have the same freedom as men. However, she points out that this cannot be the case, as there are important innate differences between men and women that resist social change:

No, we are not [as free], I mean I say it, there are things that belong to men, I mean, that men were born to do certain things, I don't know if I am machista or not, thinking like that, but (..) there are things that belong to men. I mean, you can't with certain liberty, go to a topless bar in the same way that a man can. I mean, for me, there are roles that men have well-defined, and women cannot enter there. (..) I'd say it's something more innate, society has broken a load of taboos (...) that society has managed to break with. But, I'd say that there is something that men were born to and that is something innate, I'd say. (Mónica)

Mónica is identifying the divisions that are made between male and female sexuality, that Eugenia also highlighted (see section 5.3.3.2). She interprets these characteristics as being innate to men, in keeping with the patriarchal cultural norms of 'masculinity'. However, Mónica does offer a clue as to the possible cultural origins of these perceptions: firstly, she is unsure whether she is *machista* in holding this view, and, secondly, she recognises that social change can break with many taboos which were once perceived to be innate or natural.

Mónica can see no reason why women should not participate in politics. For her, it is a professional career like any other, where a woman can do as well as a man. Moreover, any individual, man or woman, who holds a public post may endanger the stability of the family:

No, (...) Because politics is a development the same as any other career, I think that women are prepared for any type of career. And I don't see why she would expose the family. (...) I mean the fact of being a public figure you are exposing the family anyway. (...) And professionally, a woman can manage just as well as a man perhaps. Without taking anything away from

the man, I mean, politics can be just as much for women as for men.  
(Mónica)

Mónica appears to have an egalitarian gender role ideology which leads her to perceive men and women as equals in capacity and status, while she places special emphasis on the value of a woman as a person in her own right. As we have seen in previous chapters, Mónica and her husband are joint providers. Moreover, Mónica has achieved a degree of equality in the division of labour within the household, with her husband as well as her children participating in the domestic chores. Mónica's egalitarian aspirations lead her to emphasise education and paid employment as an important aspect of a woman's personal development, as well as a means for her to gain independence and power.

#### 5.3.4.4 Alicia

Alicia's (47) attitudes have a pragmatic interpretation of contemporary gender relations. Although she has an underlying traditional gender ideology, she observes that expectations are changing towards a more egalitarian orientation. Nevertheless, she shares with Mónica and some of the other interviewees a sense of the value of men and women as individuals, regardless of their marriage or family role. This is expressed in connection with the question of male infidelity:

If he is unfaithful she should wait for him? Well, you know that no woman can say, nobody is the property of anyone else. One acquires a commitment, but not for that does one become your property. So my husband likes another woman, well! If he has stopped loving you, accept it. There are some things that can't be done. I see it like that. He is not my property, he is a companion and the woman is a companion, it's not a property as if you had bought a house and this is mine, mine. (Alicia)

This interpretation reflects Alicia's pragmatic viewpoint. She emphasises the ideal of the marriage relationship as companionship, with its inherent ideal of equality between the partners.

Alicia agrees that women should have the same freedoms as men, although she feels that society remains resistant to notions of equality between women and men. However, Alicia perceives that expectations are changing amongst young people:



It's that here in these Latin countries we are not very, there is still a lot of *machismo* here, it's quite difficult, but it's happening. From what I see in young people, it's happening. They are more realistic, they don't have those loves like Romeo and Juliet where they die of love, no, that has passed into history now. (Alicia)

Although Alicia has clear views on the above issues, she is reluctant to give an opinion on women's participation in politics. She disagrees with the statement that women should not participate in politics, but she remains uncertain of her reasons for this:

Ah, that question, I don't know, I think that today one ought to, for me I think yes, because how can they endanger the family? But that's where I stay because I don't have much experience. (Alicia)

Alicia has an underlying traditional gender ideology, although this is tempered by more egalitarian expectations. She has pragmatic rather than ideological expectations, as she perceives that social norms are undergoing a degree of change. Her life experience of becoming a female head of household and becoming obliged to maintain her household have altered the traditional gender role expectations she had as a wife and mother. In view of this, Alicia's attitudes draw on the same themes that many of the interviewees have expressed. Education, economic independence and a sense of self-worth are all important for women in a changing social context.

However, although these women perceive that social norms are changing to accommodate new realities of women taking on important roles outside the family in employment and politics, the prevailing gender ideology may remain resistant to change. The next section deals with the issue of discrimination against women, which is a further indicator of the perceived degree of social change.

#### **5.4 Perceptions of discrimination**

This section will aim to examine the participants' perceptions of discrimination against women in the areas of paid work and politics. Discrimination in the labour market is defined as 'unequal terms and conditions for equally productive workers.' However, discrimination can also be taken in a broader sense to indicate unequal treatment, based on ideological prejudices. Whether discrimination is actually taking place or not can be difficult to evaluate. This study does not aim to evaluate how 'true' the interviewees'

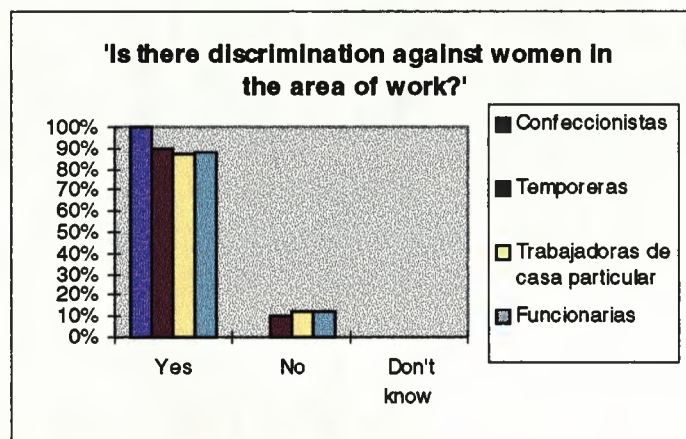
perceptions of discrimination are. Instead, these perceptions allow an insight into the material discriminatory practices that mediate employment relations and political participation for women.

Moreover, they offer an insight into the interviewees' experiences and their expectations of discrimination against women in different social arenas. The perception and identification of instances of discrimination involve an awareness of the nature of the prevailing gender ideology on the part of the interviewees, as well as a questioning of the gender relations this imposes. This adds to the insights already gained in the previous section regarding permanent changes in the predominant gender ideology.

Figures 5.9 and 5.10 show that a majority of the interviewees from all activities perceive there to be discrimination against women in work and politics. While perceptions were less clear-cut in the area of politics, the majority of the interviewees felt that discrimination existed in this area also. The analysis will focus on some of the interviewees perceptions of the ways in which discrimination takes place.

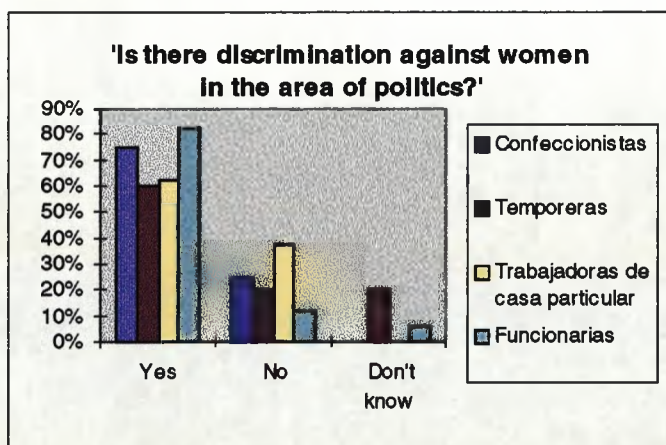
**Figures 5.9 and 5.10 Interviewees that perceive there to be discrimination in the areas of work and politics, percentages, by sector**

**Figure 5.9**



Source: Survey by the author, Chile 1993-1994

**Figure 5.10**



Source: Survey by the author, Chile 1993-1994



## Discrimination in paid work

There was a majority of interviewees from all the sectors who perceived there to be discrimination in the area of work. This includes 100 per cent of the *confeccionistas*, 90 per cent of the *temporeras*, 85.5 per cent of the *trabajadoras en casa particular* and 88.2 per cent of the *funcionarias*. These high responses in the area of work are likely to reflect negative experiences that the interviewees may have had in the labour market. The participants identified a variety of different occurrences which resulted in discrimination against women. These fell into the areas of discrimination on the basis of motherhood and maternity leave, discrimination in terms of wages and salaries, and more, generally, stereotypical preconceptions about the types of jobs that are suitable for women.

In Chile, many of the practices that discriminate against women arise from employers' perceptions of the extensive labour legislation which is supposed to protect women workers. As regards maternity, women workers have the right to pre-natal and post-natal leave, while employers must provide adequate childcare facilities if they hire over twenty women. In order to avoid this, many employers may simply hire a man rather than a woman, if they can. In any case, as the legislation is difficult to enforce, employers do not always comply, so this is a mere justification for practices which discriminate against women. Moreover, as it is ideological perceptions which mean that the women are primarily responsible for the care of the children, employers often assume that a female worker will take more time off to look after ill children than a male worker.

The following extracts indicate that there is often open discrimination against women on the basis of maternity. Ana mentions direct intrusions of privacy as employers demand pregnancy tests, while absenteeism due to children's illnesses is likely to jeopardise a woman's employment:

Yes, [they discriminate] openly. In various factories, they ask a woman to have a pregnancy test before she starts to work to know if you are pregnant or not, or if you are a mother, they want to know if you have small children. And if you have too many problems with the children at home, then they discriminate against us because they prefer it to be a man and not a woman. (Ana, confeccionista)

Both Claudia and Mónica highlight how female employees' right to maternity leave and childcare works against them with employers, who prefer to employ men or else may create difficult conditions for female employees with children:

Well, there are things, for example, the pre-natal and the post-natal [leave] which men don't like. So they hire only men, or they don't put in any childcare and then there are problems which make the women leave. (Claudia, funcionaria)

Well, from experience, I tell you that yes, (..) when they have to choose between giving an important post to, and there is a man and a woman competing for it, I know that they will leave the man for the same reason. I mean, because they will begin to analyse the situation, they will say, "well, she's going to get pregnant, she will leave this post unattended for a while," of course there's discrimination, they give preference to the man in that sense. (Mónica, funcionaria)

It is unclear on what basis women are paid lower wages than men, although national statistics indicate that there is a significant gap between male and female wage levels across all sectors (see chapter 2, 2.3.3). Suffice it to say that this is perceived to be another area where women are discriminated against in the area of work. The interviewees perceived its basis to be ideological rather than material, based on employers' perceptions that women are less physically able than men within work, as Ruth points out, as well as perceptions that women are less likely to complain than men, as Ester mentions:

Yes, there is discrimination, in the salaries, in working conditions. They put the woman to work in any thing and they can see that she isn't going to complain, something like that. That she accepts everything more easily, while the man, they can't do what they like with him. (Ester, *confeccionista*)

Yes, they always pay the woman less, and sometimes for the work, they say, "Ah no, this work is too heavy for women, we won't give it to them.", and we always do the same work as the men. Because in that same job, (...) the onions, they said that putting the onions in the bins was too heavy for us, and yet we filled a truck quicker than they did. But afterwards, they just kept the men on, and they paid them a lot more, they paid us per day and they paid them piecework, and we worked faster than them. (Ruth, *temporera*)



In chapter three, Ruth mentioned that the *temporeras* working in the onion field were paid both daily and piece-rates, depending on the type of work. However, as she implies here that men and women were doing the same work for different wage rates, Ruth is correct in surmising that this was discriminatory.

As discussed in chapter three, certain occupations are gender-typed, and perceived as either 'women's work' or 'men's work'. The interviewees perceived that these stereotypical notions also work to discriminate against women workers wishing to enter a 'man's' occupation. It would appear that some employers discourage women from entering occupations that are male-dominated, such as construction and computing, which are the examples given here:

I think that in some parts, yes [there is discrimination]. For example, if you ask for a job in a construction company, to drive a machine, you won't get it. There are a lot of women who know how to drive and they can do it, and they don't give them opportunity there. (Marilyn, *trabajadora de casa particular*)

I think that sometimes yes, because I have seen, looking in the newspaper, (..) and it says, "programmers needed", men, and why can't it be a woman, if they are as intelligent as a man? And now, for example, I am studying, and my teacher is *machista* - he's a young man, but he's *machista* - he says that a woman can't be more intelligent than a man at programming. (..) They are *machista*, I think in the aspect of work, there is, if she's not a secretary, no they can't think that there might be a woman who is a systems analyst or a programmer, it's as if it was just for men. (Verónica, *funcionaria*)

All of these perceptions point to different aspects of discrimination against women. The interviewees' own paid work experience has brought them into contact with discriminatory practices in terms of pay and conditions, with the issue of maternity leave which leads many employers to discriminate outrightly against women, as well as with sexist attitudes which could lead to discrimination.

However, although the large majority of participants stated that they felt there was discrimination against women in the workplace, there is some evidence that stereotypical attitudes that prevent women from participating in certain activities are nevertheless changing. There is an intriguing situation in the north of Chile that raises interesting



questions regarding the occupational segregation along gender lines. In the Chuquicamata copper mine, female mine-workers have entered what was traditionally a totally male-dominated activity. Until recently, women were not allowed into the mine, ostensibly for reasons of safety, but also because of a long-held superstition that women brought bad-luck to the mine. This appears to have changed only as recently as 1992, and women have rapidly been incorporated into every level of production, not merely in administrative posts. There are skilled women working as mechanics, truck drivers, computer systems operators and geologists, although women remain under-represented at the executive level. Moreover, the women workers at the mine have succeeded in forming a strong organisation with around five hundred members, which has already made important links with the male-dominated unions (Crawford, 1993). Although this may be the result of local labour market factors connected with a shortage of male skilled labour, this nevertheless indicates that discriminatory practices and *machista* attitudes can be transformed.

#### **5.4.2 Discrimination in politics**

The political arena is where a majority of the interviewees perceived there to be discrimination against women. This is an area where the participants have less personal experience, but as it is one of the most visible social arenas, the participants perceive that, numerically alone, there are less women politicians than men. Moreover, politics is considered to be a male-dominated activity, thus the participants perceive that discriminatory practices may be responsible for preventing women from holding visible posts in politics.

From Figure 5.10, it can be seen that amongst the interviewees, there is less certainty that there is discrimination in the political arena. However, the participants offered a variety of reasons for why women are discriminated against in this area. Again, the participants perceive that it is stereotypical notions of women's capacities, based on traditional gender ideology, which makes both men and women discriminate against women politicians:

I would say that yes, still. In fact, how many women ministers do we have, one? I mean, there it's really clear. But, to get to have the President's confidence, we have only one woman. (Mónica, *funcionaria*)

Yes, for the same reason, in politics, there are few women, and it is always the men who attack the women more. (Ruth, *temporera*)

Both Ruth and Mónica perceive the political arena to be where there has been the least change in gender relations. Moreover, *machista* attitudes that perceive women as being less capable than men are shared by women voters, as Raquel points out, further preventing women from breaking into politics:

I think that yes, because even the same women try not to vote for women. But I at least try and vote for the women. (..) I think that in the moment of voting, they don't do it because she is a woman, they think that she won't do it well. Raquel, *trabajadora de casa particular*)

Ana shares this perception, adding that *machista* attitudes mean that women are considered too emotional to make difficult decisions:

Yes, in taking political office. I mean, always in the most important political posts, the head is a man. The woman will always assume inferior posts. Because they always think that the woman is not capable, that she is too sentimental in taking the cold and calculating decisions of the men. (Ana, *confeccionista*)

Claudia points out that in a *machista* society, a woman's physical appearance may draw more attention than her political ability:

Yes of course [there is discrimination]. Because I have seen that men look at her legs, and they don't listen to what she is saying. (Claudia, *funcionaria*)

These attitudes are based on gender stereotypes of women and their capacities which arise from the prevailing gender ideology in Chile. It is unlikely that the dearth of women politicians is due solely to this type of discrimination. The participatory political system has only recently been re-activated after the long break imposed by the military regime, and although sexist attitudes persist, the slow process of democratisation will be reflected in fewer numbers of female politicians.

The next section will explore some of the links between traditional gender ideology and the constraints that women experience when they participate in the 'public' world outside the home. An exploration of what the participants perceive to be the barriers which prevent women from participating on equal terms to men, the importance of the nature of gender relations will emerge.

### **5.4.3 Barriers to women's participation**

This section draws together the different dimensions of gender relations and women's labour force participation which have formed the basis of this study. The final question in the interview relates to the interviewees' perceptions of the barriers which limit women's participation in the different social arenas outside the home. Therefore, the question required the interviewee to reflect on the issues which had been discussed during the course of the interview. Due to this, the responses come to represent a summing-up of the individual interviewee's experience of paid work, family, and the juggling of multiple roles that this entails. As the question was an open one, four interviewees' responses have been selected to provide an in-depth insight into themes that emerged. Ester is quite clear that the demands of time imposed by the twin responsibilities of work and family that prevent women from participating in social and political activities, while anxiety over children's welfare is felt more strongly by women than by men:

It is that she has a double day of work, and that the husband is there saying "Ah don't get involved in that or the other", and also the influence of the family. (..) But what most influences is the double day, because the woman gets home to do the things in the house, she doesn't have any time left. Because we have learned to say that the man has to respect the fact that you participate in an organisation. But he can go and play football, he can go to the stadium, he can go everywhere, and he is not worried at the stadium "what are the children doing at home? Have they been fed or not?" (Ester, confeccionista)

Marilyn points to the same factors, that if household and family responsibilities were more equally shared between wives and husbands, then women would be freer to participate:



It's that in the case of women, the woman has to be in charge of many things: she has to be in charge of the children, she has to be in charge of the house, she has to be in charge of everything. So sometimes she has time and sometimes she doesn't. So if it wasn't like that, the woman would be able to enter in more activities.

Instead, the man no, the man comes home, eats and goes to bed, or goes out, so it's different for men. (..) I mean, if I said, "Look R. I am going to a meeting, can you stay with the children?" and he said yes, then I would have the opportunity to be in meetings and participate in things like that. Instead, it's few times that you can count on the support of a man, men are very machista, so he likes it only for himself, he doesn't like it for the woman to take on things or get ahead. (Marilyn, *trabajadora de casa particular*)

For Anita and Mónica, it is *machismo* which prevents women from participating on equal terms to men. This culture fosters perceptions of women as inferior to men, less capable; both interviewees highlight that changing this perception is an on-going struggle:

That's what we are oppressed in doing, we can't do anything, for the same reason that wherever she goes, well, she's a woman, she can't do anything. Because it's lovely for one to work, it's desirable that a woman should work, because she gets out of the routine of the house, that every day, the food, the cleaning... I get bored, I miss my friends, one shouldn't shut oneself up. (Anita, *temporera*)

The fight against *machismo*, first of all. No, what happens is that it is a great struggle, I mean to convince the men and society that women are equal. I mean, as I said to you before, that being able to do the same things in the sense of personal development. I think that we are always going to fight against that, because we are enveloped in a society that has that way of thinking, and we are going to fight against that always, try to convince them that we are capable. (Mónica, *funcionaria*)

The themes that emerge here revolve around traditional gender relations and the ways in which this imposes barriers to equality between men and women. While none of the interviewees regret their family and its accompanying responsibilities, it seems that there is agreement that, culturally, women carry an unfair weight of responsibility for the family. If this was shared more equally between partners, then the burden of women's double days would be alleviated. The existence of *machista* stereotypes regarding women's roles and capacities are also highlighted as a barrier, working against perceptions of gender equality. Despite this, it seems that the interviewees are daily engaging with these traditional gender relations, challenging and negotiating these barriers and taking some power for themselves through this process.

## 5.5 Discussion

This chapter has explored the opinions and attitudes of the interviewees towards gender relations and the importance of these individuals' gender ideology on these perceptions. These ideological considerations have been shaped under the influence of individuals' life and work experiences, which in turn, can stimulate changes in attitudes. It is important to note that the discussions raised around the statements presented in the interview provoked much thought and self-analysis on the part of the women interviewed. The interviewees had an awareness of the ways in which ideological considerations were linked with their own experiences of paid work, which formed the basis of the interview. Thus, the attitudes and opinions presented in this chapter are articulate and reflective interpretations of complex issues that all of the interviewees perceived, but perhaps had not expressed before in words. Consequently, there arise differences between the participants' ideological interpretations and the realities of their situations. From this point of view, the individual's gender role ideology is shaping their aspirations and expectations, rather than dictating their actual behaviour, which may be significant in pointing towards the important changes and re-workings that are taking place within the predominant gender ideology. What are the implications of these ideological changes in terms of lasting cultural and social change?

The significance of changes in individuals' ideological expectations is most clearly demonstrated in the issue of sharing the housework with male partners. Here, the majority of women felt it was fair to ask husbands to take on a share of the housework, as both partners were working. However, very few of them had actually managed to successfully change the distribution of domestic tasks within their households. Nevertheless, as this attitude still represents a shift from the traditional gender role ideology, it allows the potential for change in this area. Indeed, in section 5.2.3.3, Raquel explains how her attitudes regarding housework have undergone a change since she began to work. Under the influence of this change, she has succeeded in gaining some co-operation with the domestic chores from her husband, where before there was none.



There was widespread disagreement with the traditional notions of the wife staying at home to take care of the children while the husband maintains the household. The maintenance of the household was regarded as a shared responsibility, given that all the interviewees were working and contributing to the household income. There was, however, recognition of the conflicts that arose between work and family responsibilities for women in particular. Nevertheless, there was a general emphasis on the fact that one salary was simply not enough to maintain a suitable standard of living, and therefore women needed to work.

There was further emphasis on the fact that paid work is a positive activity for women to undertake, regardless of whether there was economic necessity. Those women with a more egalitarian gender ideology felt that women could gain economic independence through employment and that this was vital in allowing women personal development. These women have a gender consciousness in that they value the notion of women as individuals in their own right, rather than defined in terms of their gender roles as wives and mothers. This means that they have expectations of taking on roles in society, through education, employment and salaries, that are of equal importance as their family roles. This represents a highly significant break with traditional gender ideology and represents a vital step in these women's empowerment.

The issue of women earning less than men was interpreted by some of the interviewees as a workplace issue, depending on the job. These women rejected the ideological notion that women should earn less as they are not breadwinners, a perception which appeared to be based on their own experience of making substantial contributions to household income. These interviewees also perceived that if a woman was doing the same job as a man, they should be paid the same salary. This was in keeping with egalitarian gender ideology and the perception that women's work is of equal value to men's.

However, there were a few women who interpreted this statement as a 'private' issue relating to gender relations within the marriage. In these cases, it was felt that within a couple, the wife should not earn more than her husband, a perception which was related to avoiding conflicts within the relationship, as it was felt that a husband could feel belittled if his position as breadwinner and head of household was threatened. This was



acknowledged to be an ideological issue, as Claudia stated in section 5.2.4.1, dependent on the *machismo* of husbands and society.

The issue of education was an important one for many women. The majority of women felt that education was vital for women to gain good employment, to free them from being dependent on their husbands and enable them to 'get ahead'. Education was also important in terms of personal development, even if a woman had the intention of dedicating herself to raising her family later on. The majority of the interviewees felt that denying women education on the basis that they were going to get married and not work was an outdated attitude.

There was a widespread perception that social changes had already taken place and that many traditional attitudes were now old-fashioned, emerging most significantly in the attitudes towards male infidelity in marriage. Only amongst the *temporeras* was there a significant proportion of women (50 per cent) who felt that a wife should wait for her husband. The rest of the group disagreed with this statement. Some of the interviewees felt that this was an old-fashioned attitude, that women were no longer submissive in this sense and would not put up with this behaviour from their partners. For many women, an infidelity would mean the end of the relationship or marriage, and having economic independence through their paid employment, they felt confident of re-building their lives.

These attitudes are linked to the idea of women's independence, and it seems that many of the interviewees no longer expect to find personal fulfilment exclusively through the traditional roles within marriage and the family. In addition to these roles, women expect to take on paid employment and education, pointing to another fundamental change in attitudes. The interviewees appeared to have higher expectations of marriage as a relationship between equals, with an emphasis on the quality of the relationship, of mutual respect and companionship between the partners. Moreover, there was an awareness that marriage may not last for life, as traditionally expected, and that it was possible to find happiness with another partner. These more pragmatic attitudes to marriage seem to be grounded in more realistic expectations gained through experience, rather than the ideals of romantic love which the interviewees might have held in their

youth. The social realities of marriage failure and separation represent an important cultural change which has only recently begun to be debated within the political and legislative arena. Divorce remains a controversial issue amongst political parties, and is not legal in Chile. All of the interviewees pointed to the persistence of traditional as well as *machista* ideologies which prevent women from having the same freedom as men to decide over their personal lives. In many cases, these attitudes were expressed by the interviewees themselves, showing that traditional ideology shapes moral considerations in the most private and personal area of gender relations.

The political participation of women elicited a range of responses, and it was here that the most conservative attitudes were expressed. Many interviewees felt that politics was not for women, while others were either reluctant or not confident to give an opinion. This may be due to the traditional lack of political participation amongst women, or perhaps is better attributed to the absence of participatory politics during the military regime. Whichever combination of factors lies behind women's lesser participation in politics, the interviewees' comments highlight that traditional gender ideology, and overtly *machista* attitudes persist within the political arena.

In view of the clearly-stated perceptions of discrimination against women, it seems that discrimination in the workplace remains a significant issue for all women workers, regardless of their individual gender ideologies. As workers, they have an interest in ensuring that they enter the labour market on equal terms to their male counterparts, which can lead to an increasing awareness of and consciousness of gender relations. As was argued at the beginning of this chapter, gender consciousness has a potentially empowering dimension, offering the gender conscious woman a basis from which to challenge the ways in which gender relations work in society. The attitudes and opinions presented in this chapter indicate that these particular women are effectively engaged in a process of questioning, challenging and negotiating gender and power relations, successfully combining paid employment with their family responsibilities. This provides an avenue for the potential re-working of gender identities which move beyond the traditional female role of wife and mother, encompassing wider dimensions of work and society.

## **CHAPTER SIX: Conclusions**

### **6.1 Conclusions**

The aim of this study has been to explore women's experiences of paid employment in Chile, in the context of macro-economic changes over the last twenty years. The neo-liberal model has proved to be successful in Chile, with sustained growth leading to the emergence of a demand for female labour in the dynamic sectors of the economy and a permanent incorporation of women into the labour market. This means that gender relations have been altered to an extent, as women move out of the home and into paid employment, giving rise to conflicting expectations of gender roles. These cultural changes have taken place in a context of changing social and economic relations which have parallels in other developing countries which have adopted the free market model, either through programmes of structural adjustment or as a strategy for growth.

In chapter one of this thesis, some comparative case studies of women's paid employment were examined (Lawson 1995; Aranda and Arizpe 1981; Deere and León 1981; Elson and Pearson 1981). While these studies cover different regions and the processes of change taking place under a variety of local conditions, they all explore the ways in which gender relations are altered in contexts of capitalist expansion and economic restructuring. As was argued in this chapter, gender relations are interwoven into wider social relations, shaped by local economic, political and cultural relations of power (Kabeer 1994). In contexts of economic restructuring, pre-existing social relations are re-worked or transformed in different ways, and within these, so too are gender relations. The case studies of Young (1981) in Mexico and Deere and León (1981) in Colombia and Peru bear out these conclusions. These case studies highlight how with the commercialisation of agricultural production, waged employment opportunities for women emerge, either in temporary and seasonal work in agriculture or in service occupations such as domestic service. Moreover, as subsistence production became displaced by households' increasing dependence on wage work, women's wage work provides a potential source of income to purchase goods and services.



Elson and Pearson (1981) and Arizpe and Aranda (1981) focus on female employment in the context of global trade liberalisation and export-oriented production, in a context of 'flexible' employment. Within export-oriented production across many sectors, flexible female employment became a central feature, as patriarchal gender relations interact with capital to create a cheap workforce. In many developing countries, women became incorporated into new, specifically female occupations within export manufacturing and agriculture.

Contradictory outcomes for women arise as a consequence of these transformations. Women's access to employment opportunities do appear to increase in these conditions, and the receipt of a money income which is paid directly to them opens up possibilities for gaining financial independence and increasing the opportunities for empowerment. For example, in their study of women in export agriculture in Mexico, Arizpe and Aranda (1981), highlight the ways in which women's paid employment can draw them out of their isolated roles within the household, offering wider horizons and different social experiences. Sharing a collective experience of paid work can also increase self-confidence, which coupled with their money income, offers possibilities for independence and empowerment.

However, while the potential for empowerment is present, this is constrained by several factors. Because the advantages of female labour lie in its flexibility and low cost relative to male labour, traditional gender relations are reinforced in order to justify the payment of lower wages to women as secondary earners, as well as allowing firms to return women to their homes when production schedules change. In this way, women become incorporated into low-quality, low-wage, unstable work, which is often unregulated, such as outworking, domestic service, and temporary and seasonal agricultural work. Also, women tend to be employed in occupations which draw upon stereotypical 'skills' which women are perceived to possess. Skills learned within the home, such as sewing, cleaning or food preparation, are adapted for wage-work, reducing the need for workplace training. This serves to further devalue female occupations as semi- or un-skilled. Further, while in the case of export processing in South East Asia it was young single women who made up the preferred labour force, in Latin America, it is often married women with families who take on employment in export-oriented manufacturing and

agriculture. Given the cultural attitudes regarding gender roles, it is likely that women will retain most of their domestic responsibilities, resulting in working wives taking on a double burden of paid employment and domestic responsibilities. All of these conditions severely limit any potential for empowerment.

This study is set in a similar context of economic restructuring. Chapter two traced the processes of social and economic change that took place in Chile from the 1960s to the 1990s, highlighting the ways in which the modernising and reforming governments of first Frei, and then Allende failed to bring about lasting changes in gender relations. This was largely due to the fact that women were targeted as beneficiaries of reforms through their traditional roles as housewives and mothers. These reforms included state-sponsored attempts to mobilise women and incorporate them into the political process through the *Centros de Madres*, which provided training in handicrafts and other skills. In effect, these programmes did not aim to question the underlying gender ideology, but rather to 'modernise' the role of women and encourage them to consume the newly available and relatively cheap manufactured goods which were becoming available in the market. Furthermore, as women had only recently been enfranchised, these programmes represented an attempt to gain the support of women voters, while at the same time controlling this support by reinforcing traditional values. This contradictory view of women reflects the 'traditional-modern' tension that appears to underpin Chilean women's gender identities, as several scholars have identified (Guzmán, 1990; Montecino, 1990; Mattelart and Mattelart, 1968). While Allende may have gained the support of working class women, the government failed to win over women from the middle and upper class sectors, who mobilised themselves in protest against what they perceived to be the government's assault on traditional family values. Once again, the conflict between traditional versus modern had emerged in Chilean society, creating a potent political force which provided a springboard for right-wing groups to successfully overthrow Allende's socialist government.

In view of these processes, it is a forceful paradox that it was the military regime which became the first government to implement policies that put the transformation of gender relations on the agenda, despite its extremely conservative social doctrine. With the establishment of the neo-liberal economic model in the late 1970s, a short boom was



succeeded by periods of crisis in the early 1980s, with high levels of male unemployment. At the same time, the restructuring of the economy and the deregulation of the labour market meant that there was an increasing, and sustained, incorporation of women into the labour force into export-oriented sectors. This reality was in direct contradiction to the conservative doctrine of the military regime which promoted women's role within the home. Prompted by economic necessity, married women with families, who might otherwise have stayed at home, began to enter the labour market, seeking waged employment for the first time.

The literature reviewed in chapter one highlights the ways in which, under restructuring, it is the poor-quality, unstable, or unregulated occupations which become available to women. Similar trends can be observed in Chile, as the gender-typing of occupations means that women tend to be employed in occupations which are paid piece-rates, employed by virtue of their 'feminine skills' and the cheaper labour costs they represent relative to men. Despite these trends, increasing numbers of women have become wage-earners, and households have come to depend on a minimum of two earners in order to survive. Moreover, as we have seen, it is possible for women to earn as much, or in some cases, even more than their husbands and male partners, most notably in agribusiness which depends on mobilising a large seasonal, female labour force. These changes in social relations and within them, gender relations, must be negotiated and accommodated on several levels: within households as traditional gender roles of breadwinner and housewife are challenged; within the workplace as women become established as full-time, permanent workers with rights and demands; and within wider society as traditional attitudes and gender relations are contradicted by economic and social realities. As this thesis has explored, women negotiate and mediate between the conflicting demands of home and paid work, living out the tension between traditional and modern roles in their lives. Thus, economic restructuring transforms both social and gender relations, often in partial and contradictory ways, and it is through the negotiation of these contradictions in their work, social and personal lives that women may gain some power.



## 6.2 Working conditions and employment relations

The interviewees, whose perceptions form the basis of this study, were drawn from activities which could be regarded as 'typical' female employment. They were employed in garment manufacturing, agribusiness, domestic service and public administration, all of which incorporate activities which are regarded as almost exclusively 'female'. The examination of the working conditions supports the view put forward in the literature that, under conditions of restructuring, women tend to be incorporated into poor-quality occupations which are characterised by a combination of instability, unregulated or informal employment relations, poor working conditions, low pay, piece-rates, few prospects for advancement, and little or no worker organisation to represent their interests. Women are also employed according to female stereotypes so that certain skills are already in place, reducing the need for workplace training. Garment manufacturing and fruit work can be associated with the domestic tasks of sewing and food preparation, associated with traditional feminine stereotypes, reinforcing the gender-typing of these jobs. Domestic service and public administration represent different aspects of female employment. Both activities fall into the service sector, but are very different in character. However, together with the activities discussed above, these sectors have characteristics which are also associated with perceptions of women's gender role.

Although the municipality offers by far the most advantages to women, with fixed hours of work and guaranteed employment, for almost all the women interviewed, conditions which were comfortable and flexible, enabling them to combine paid work with domestic responsibilities was a more important consideration than wage levels. This emerges in the employment decisions the women made, as well as in the reasons they gave for remaining in a particular occupation. These non-monetary considerations highlight the way in which female employment is shaped by traditional gender relations, and combining work and family means making considerable sacrifices in terms of both roles. All these factors constrain any potential for empowerment: women are employed as cheaper labour in occupations which reinforce traditional female stereotypes, often obliged to accept less than satisfactory working conditions in order to lighten the double burden of paid and domestic work.

While this is the case for many of the women interviewed, a closer exploration of work histories and the women's attitudes to their paid work throws up a more complex picture. The work histories show clearly how the labour market is differentiated along lines of gender, making the most easily accessible occupations those which involve an adaptation of the skills acquired through the process of gender role socialisation, for example, sewing, food preparation and housework. As such, the women had certain skills which they had acquired outside the labour market which they were able to adapt in order to begin work immediately. While this means that those occupations tend to be classified as semi- or un-skilled, and women are employed on the basis of a perceived range of 'feminine' skills, this at least allows women to gain access to these income-generating occupations. Women are able to actively adapt the skills learned in another environment in order to begin working and earning a wage relatively quickly. This can be viewed as an advantage, given that many women were prompted to seek wage work by economic necessity. Also, skills learned through a hobby can be adapted to generate a money income, as two case studies show. Here giving private dance classes provides a relatively effective means of generating extra income. In one case (*Alicia, funcionaria*), in the absence of any formal qualifications or skills, dance classes became the only means of providing for herself and her daughter in the first years following her separation from her husband, until more stable work became available. This illustrates how in situations of economic necessity, women creatively adapt and make use of skills that they have learned in a different environment in order to take on paid employment and provide for their families. Successfully adapting these skills seems to be an important element of the pride that the majority of the interviewees take in their work, highlighting the confidence that these women have in their abilities to obtain waged employment and provide for their families.

The majority of the interviewees have perfected their abilities to do their jobs well, becoming 'professional' in their activities, whether it be as a machinist, a fruit packer or a domestic servant, often becoming effectively self-employed. In the garment workshops and the packing houses, the perfecting of these skills is reinforced by piece-rates, where greater skill and experience results in higher wages. In addition, the work histories examined in chapter three point to a high degree of labour market knowledge on the part of the interviewees. While circumstances often make it impossible to choose a particular



occupation, it does seem that the interviewees are able to improve their position within the relatively narrow range of employment opportunities open to them. The analysis of the work histories illustrates the ways in which the interviewees make decisions to move from one job to another, on the basis of their individual goals, as their work experience and confidence grows. Factors such as better conditions, a more convenient location, or opportunities to learn new skills influence the employment decisions the interviewees are making. This analysis allows us to perceive these women as independent and decisive individuals, actively engaged in making the best of poor quality, unstable employment opportunities, rather than passively accepting them.

Another paradox which emerges is that women can turn flexible employment relations and unregulated employment to their advantage in various ways. As Lawson (1995) highlighted, home-working can offer women certain advantages in terms of combining work and family. While this is an unstable, unregulated activity, when faced with restricted employment opportunities and the problems of finding adequate childcare, working from home can at times be a good option. Giving up paid employment and working informally from home appears to be one way of generating a vital income without abandoning family responsibilities for at least two of the women who took part in this study. Both women (Eugenia, *trabajadora de casa particular*, and Inés, *funcionaria*) have industrial sewing and knitting machines at home, and they make clothes and toys to sell amongst friends and colleagues (see chapter three, section 3.5.3.3 and section 3.5.4.2). These are financially viable enterprises, as both women appear to generate a higher income from this informal business than from their employment. They coincide in their perception that this type of work is more flexible for women with families, and both aim to establish workshops at home and dedicate themselves full-time to running their businesses, an option which would allow them to make a relatively good living whilst taking care of their children. In another case study (Ana, *confeccionista*), a small business selling shoes and clothes to colleagues at cost price is another financially successful enterprise (see section 3.5.1.2). This also generates a significant extra income, and is successful enough to be a serious future business enterprise. Although these women are employed in relatively stable and regular occupations, it seems that they aim to increase control over their employment conditions by becoming self-employed. By doing this,



they may be able to create for themselves the best conditions for combining paid work and family responsibilities.

Some of the least regulated employment is found within agribusiness and domestic service. Yet, even in these unstable and unprotected occupations, we can see that women create opportunities for themselves within the extremely restricted options available to them. Due to the macro-economic conditions discussed in chapter two, the demand for female labour in agribusiness has resulted in the specialisation of the *temporeras* in this activity. The seasonality of the work means that employment is not guaranteed year to year, yet experience and skill are vital requirements for employment. This means that, out of all the occupations, the *temporeras* have become the most 'professional' in their particular task, as a high degree of skill is likely to secure them employment. All of the *temporeras* interviewed, in both regions, had worked for many years in agribusiness and had little paid work experience outside this activity. Consequently, they had an important degree of knowledge regarding the local employment conditions. They were aware of the advantages and disadvantages of the different employment opportunities in the local orchards and packing plants, often returning to the same occupation season after season, where they could work under relatively satisfactory conditions and wages. This enabled the women to make informed employment decisions, albeit within the limitations imposed by the temporary and unstable nature of this activity.

The fact that only one of the women had worked outside agribusiness in the past highlights the lack of employment opportunities available to women in rural areas, and the importance of agribusiness in providing female employment in these areas. However, the case studies highlight the precariousness of relying on seasonal wage work in agribusiness for survival, as well as the poverty that this creates during the winter months. There was a widespread desire to be able to work continuously throughout the year, although the dominance of agribusiness in shaping local labour markets makes it extremely difficult to find alternative, year-round employment.. Moreover, the dependence of whole communities on agribusiness means that it is almost impossible to create alternative income-generating activities. Despite the problem of seasonality, there are also contradictions here. For some of the *temporeras*, the seasonality of employment can be an advantage, as a relatively high income can be earned by working only a few

months in the year. This means that the domestic routine need only be disrupted for these few months, allowing the women to minimise the effect of their paid work on their family and domestic responsibilities.

Perhaps most surprisingly, domestic service appears to provide the most flexibility in terms of successfully combining work and family roles, with the unexpected possibility of earning relatively high wages. Although domestic service is perhaps the most unregulated occupation of all, labour market changes (discussed in chapter two) have had contradictory effects on the market for domestic service. The growth of the economy has allowed women to find better employment options, reducing the labour supply for domestic service. This has increased the wages being offered for domestic service *puertas adentro*, as well as *puertas afuera*. Working *puertas afuera*, the majority of the interviewees were able to set their own schedules, perhaps work only three or four days a week, and earn comparatively high wages. This flexibility can make it easier to meet the demands of both work and family. The most striking paradox lies in the fact that live-in domestic service, once considered the least desirable employment option due to its servile connotations and lack of personal freedom, is being considered as an advantageous employment option by some of the interviewees due to the extremely high wages being offered as a result of labour market changes.

The analysis of the terms and conditions of employment supports the view presented in much of the literature that, under restructuring and a deregulated labour market, women tend to be incorporated into informal, unstable, temporary or seasonal employment. The specific Chilean context offers some contrasting perspectives to this view. While it may be broadly the case that women are working in poor quality occupations, the results of this study indicate that this view may be too general to capture the complexities of the situation. Contradictions are rife, perhaps most visibly in the fact that the very occupations within agribusiness and domestic service where workers are exposed to very poor conditions and have minimal guarantees, actually appear to offer some of the highest wage-earning potential of all the female occupations. Similarly, assumptions regarding the negative consequences of flexible employment relations and seasonality can be confounded when a more careful exploration reveals that some women combining work and family turn this to their advantage. Of course, it is important to avoid an over-

optimistic picture of female employment in Chile, and the case studies highlight the struggles, difficulties and disadvantages faced by working women with families, particularly those from poorer households who make a vital contribution to the welfare of their households. However, we can also observe how these particular women are decisive and independent, with the confidence and knowledge to successfully negotiate labour market conditions in the face of limited opportunities, and not entirely powerless. As such, they do seem to have been empowered by their paid employment, despite the evident constraints, albeit on a personal level. Moreover, these individual processes of change and empowerment are an important step in forming the basis of potential organisation within the workplace.

### **6.3 Negotiating for changes: gender and labour relations in the workplace**

The analysis of the impact of restructuring on women highlights how traditional gender relations are modified and re-worked in order to release female labour. This creates further contradictions within the workplace which must also be negotiated as women become a permanent presence in the labour market. It emerges from the case studies that, alongside more individual changes, traditional gender relations are being re-worked within the context of the workplace. Again, this may be a result of the wider context of change, but nevertheless, an opportunity is presented for women to gain a degree of power through these negotiations.

The exploration of the issue of sexual harassment seems to indicate that it is possible to bring about changes in gender relations, at least within the workplace. There is increasing recognition of sexual harassment as a workplace issue. Traditional patriarchal relations, reinforced by informal and flexible employment relations, lead to much abuse of women workers by employers or prospective employers. This seems to be particularly extreme within the agribusiness sector, where the problems of seasonality and informality make women workers vulnerable to sexual exploitation. In garment manufacturing, informal employment relations can lead to the same exploitation. However, it appears that continuing unwanted attentions from male supervisors or employers can have practical repercussions in terms of worker productivity. In a workplace context where maintaining productivity is paramount, such as in a fruit packing plant, the traditional relations which



permit men to exert this power over women interfere with the smooth-running of the production process. In one case study, the solution to problems in the packing plant was to replace all male supervisors with women. While in this case, the solution was provided by managers rather than workers, this was nevertheless an important step in changing attitudes and bringing the issue of sexual harassment into the open as a workplace issue, rather than a private one between individuals.

As sexual harassment becomes a concrete workplace issue, specific measures can be taken to combat the problem. In the garment workshops, workers have a legal right to organise unions and negotiate collectively for improvements in conditions, although gaining recognition of this right this can often mean a hard battle with employers. From the case studies, it seems that the formation of unions has indirectly been key to dealing with sexual harassment. The establishment of worker organisations has created formal and open channels of communication between workers and bosses, as well as establishing official tariffs and wage-levels for each occupation. This removes employers' ability to offer special favours or individual tariffs in exchange for sexual favours. While harassment does not appear to have been tackled directly, these measures have gone a long way towards increasing workers' power to resist pressure from employers, particularly as the formal status of the union has allowed women employees a legal recourse to turn to if sexual harassment occurs. Moreover, through the union, other improvements in conditions, such as a mid-morning break and a minimum wage have also been negotiated. This particular case illustrates forcefully how organisation is central to workers' empowerment, as in this factory at least, women workers have succeeded in changing employment relations, together with the working environment and bringing about a significant change in terms of gender relations within the workplace.

As temporary workers, *temporeras* are excluded from legislation allowing collective negotiation. Moreover, the informality of labour relations in this sector means that some *temporeras* are offered contracts, while others work with only good faith agreements to maintain their employment. The lack of union organisation to represent workers' interests in agribusiness further complicates the problem of sexual harassment, as informal labour relations are perpetuated, influencing their access to employment. Moreover, the absence of avenues for negotiating pay and conditions means that workers

in this sector must employ other strategies in order to gain any improvements for themselves. While this employment appears to be the most precarious, workers are still not quite powerless. Spontaneous, yet highly effective stoppages belie the stereotype that women are a passive and docile workforce. *Temporeras* seem to have a clear perception of the vital importance of their labour at this one point in the global chain of agribusiness and they do not hesitate to exert the limited power this offers them. The central role of *temporeras*' labour at this one crucial point in time means that by simply crossing their arms, they can gain improvements in pay, if not conditions, for at least the duration of that particular job. Thus, it seems that even within this diverse group of workers, collective action can be achieved, albeit in an ad hoc and often spontaneous manner. However, the seasonal nature of this employment severely curtails the possibilities for sustaining this unity once the season is over, and it has proved difficult to sustain more formal organisations out of season. The experience of group action may nevertheless provide an important precedent if labour legislation changes in the future to allow *temporera/os* collective negotiation powers.

Solidarity does not automatically arise between co-workers, despite the fact that they may face common problems within the workplace. The systems of piecework dominant in both garment manufacture and agribusiness promote competition between workers and the emphasis on individual gain works against unity. However, the successful formation of a union also appears to have beneficial effects in promoting fellow feeling between co-workers, creating a friendlier working environment. Whether it be through a spontaneous strike or a formal collective negotiation, women workers in these activities have made their influence felt and succeeded in gaining small improvements for themselves as workers. .

These case studies illustrate that stereotypes of women as a docile workforce can be very inaccurate. While it may be true that women have less historical experience of formal union organisation, this does not impede female workers from forming informal networks which can often prove effective, as we have seen. Moreover, it may be difficult to remain indifferent to these processes, as all workers will need to engage with and negotiate aspects of employment relations such as wage levels and contracts. Through the negotiation of workplace demands, women seem to identify themselves as workers, an



identity which while it has a gender basis, nevertheless represents an added dimension of the traditional feminine role. This re-working of gender identities is an important aspect of empowerment.

#### **6.4 Attitudes towards paid employment**

The interviewees' attitudes towards their paid work highlight the value that all of them place on their work. The same positive aspects are repeatedly emphasised, advantages such as the widening of social horizons beyond the home, interaction with other people, as well as the feeling of confidence and self-sufficiency that can be gained. It appears that paid work is a source of personal satisfaction, as well as the means of making an important contribution to the household income. For the women who are heads of households, successfully supporting their families through their own efforts is emphasised as a significant personal reward.

The case studies underline the key importance of financial autonomy for the interviewees. They make a direct link between financial independence and personal independence. This is reflected in recurring statements which stress the importance of not depending on husbands and male partners. In one case (*Gladys, confeccionista*), a housewife's new-found independence and self-confidence engendered by paid employment has come into conflict with the husband's more traditional attitudes, while for some of the women heads of households, this financial and personal autonomy, together with successfully maintaining their families single-handedly, is sufficiently valuable to lead them to question the notion of a traditional partnership with a man.

Other advantages of working were mentioned, such as the advantage of having two sets of wages with which to meet household necessities and a reduction in the anxiety arising from having to make ends meet with only one salary. For other women, particularly the *temporeras*, their incomes allowed them to provide school supplies and clothes for their children, and thus alleviate some of the problems of economic hardship. However, the interviewees also perceive disadvantages. It was commonly felt that by working, mothers miss out on their children's babyhood. Moreover, the practical problems of arranging satisfactory childcare is an important concern for all the women.



Despite these disadvantages and regret at not having enough time to spend with the children, none of the interviewees felt that it was impossible or too difficult to combine paid work with family responsibilities. However, amongst the *funcionarias*, there is a greater degree of guilt expressed at taking on paid work than amongst the other women. This persists despite the fact that the majority of these women had taken higher education, presumably with a view to working in the future. It may be that the *funcionarias* do not feel justified in working for personal fulfilment rather than for economic necessity. In view of this, they may feel they may be neglecting their domestic responsibilities needlessly. These perceptions are also reflected in terms of gender relations within the household and male partners' attitudes towards women's employment. In the cases of the women who are married, there seems to be a degree of opposition from the male partner when the woman takes on paid employment outside the home, a fear that domestic routines will be disrupted, as well as anxieties arising from the challenge this poses to traditional gender relations. However, once the household begins to feel the material benefits of the second income, the opposition from husbands appears to lessen. The material benefits that can be gained from a wife's work seems to help overcome conflicts arising from changes in gender relations within the household, reinforcing interviewees' statements that they are working for economic necessity, when motives are likely to be more complex. Nevertheless, these attitudes highlight the importance for women of gaining direct financial control over their incomes.

### **6.5 The impact of women's paid work on household relations**

In chapter four, the importance of the interviewees' contributions to household income was assessed, as well as the implications of this for gender relations within the household. An examination of the data showed that women's contributions were, in many cases, essential, as they themselves had indicated. Amongst nuclear households, the women were contributing around 40 per cent of the total income, while amongst extended households, the women were providing just over 30 per cent of household income. In those households with a female head, they provided the bulk of the income.

An initial analysis of the allocation of the two incomes within the households seemed to support the ideological perception that the male spouse is the 'breadwinner' who maintains the household, while the female spouse provides 'extras'. Male partners' incomes tend to cover the basic household expenditure, while wives' incomes are important in providing over and above that minimum. However, a closer analysis revealed a more complicated set of dynamics. While husbands and partners tended to contribute a proportion of their income, rather than their total wages, to the household 'pool', wives tended to contribute the totality of their income. In many cases, this amount equalled male partners' contributions and effectively doubled the income available for household expenditure. This means that, in practical terms, they are equal providers. Moreover, as administrators of the bulk of the household budget, the interviewees can see the difference that their wage income makes to the standard of living of the household. This data would indicate that the roles of 'breadwinner' and 'supplementary earner' are ideological ones associated with traditional gender relations, and do not reflect economic realities within Chile today.

In many households, the extra income gained from women's wage work is essential to alleviate the effects of poverty. Amongst the *temporeras*, the interviewees' incomes were used to provide shoes and clothes for the children, carry out structural repairs to the dwelling and provide food staples for the winter. Although these are not the basic necessities of the household, neither are these items 'extras' in the sense that they are luxuries. The *temporeras*' income provides essential food items and prevents the household from living in conditions of poverty during the winter of unemployment. In other cases, wives' contributions help to consolidate the economic situation of their families through the purchase of consumer goods and contributing towards the cost of a house.

The examination of the household decision-making process reveals further the complexities of the effects of women's wage work on gender relations within the household. From the case studies, it emerges that decisions remain divided along the lines of the traditional division of labour. For example, women retain the sole responsibility for the decisions regarding food purchases. However, the key managerial role that women hold within household decision-making processes was also highlighted, a role

which makes it unclear whether or not women are gaining more control within household relations through their economic contributions. What does seem to hold true is that women are able to exercise this role more to their satisfaction, and possibly with more independence, when they are making a major contribution to household income.

Despite these difficulties, a high proportion of the interviewees were also solely responsible for decisions involving substantial extra expenditure, such as the purchase of electrical appliances and the education for their children. Some of the appliances that the interviewees were purchasing with their wages included television sets and video recorders. These represent 'extras' or luxuries which are for the direct benefit of all the members of the household. Many of the women stated that they had made these purchasing decisions alone. In addition to these items, the women dedicating a part of their incomes to free themselves from some of the time constraints imposed by their domestic role through the purchase of labour-saving devices such as washing machines, floor waxers and microwaves. This seems to be an important step in terms of autonomy and self-confidence, as the purchase of expensive electrical items can be an intimidating process, involving a serious financial commitment.

Another indication that women's autonomy may be increased through earning their own income was their ownership of goods which could be sold or pawned in case of economic need (see chapter four, section 4.4.4). Around 64 per cent of the interviewees owned items of value, the most important of which was a house or a dwelling (23 per cent of this group). Equally important were new consumer items which the women had purchased themselves, with their wage income, providing a visible reward for their effort.

Within this area of household relations, contradictions again emerge as traditional and modern roles continue to co-exist. Taking on the responsibility for important household decisions may be a positive effect, reflecting an increase in women's power and influence within household and family relations. However, as over 85 per cent of the interviewees felt that there had been no change in the decision-process, it may be that these kinds of decisions have been incorporated into wives' managerial role, adding extra responsibilities, rather than conferring greater power. We have seen how the distinction between a husband's 'breadwinner' income and a wife's 'extra' income is probably an



ideological rather than a material one. Despite this reality, it seems that traditional expectations persist, leading to contradictory interpretations of wives' and husbands' economic roles within the household.

While the participants all recognise that their income is essential if the household is to have an acceptable standard of living, some de-value the importance of their contribution relative to that made by husbands and partners. This appears to stem from the need to minimise the threat to the status of husbands as the head of the household (see chapter four, section 4.4.5). Thus, although in the majority of nuclear and extended households the economic burden is shared between husbands and wives, in some cases, traditional gender relations serve to obscure the changes that have taken place in women's and men's relative economic power. In order to take on paid employment, the interviewees have had to negotiate with their husbands, neutralise potential conflicts of roles within the family by stressing that they are 'helping out', as well as resolving the very real problems of childcare. This is the challenge that all the women have faced by taking on paid employment in a cultural context where the predominant gender ideology is characterised by *machista* gender relations. A slightly different experience is that of the female heads of households interviewed in this study. They take considerable pride in the fact that they provide for their families single-handedly and do not appear to feel the lack of a male partner's economic contribution, indicating that perhaps traditional expectations have diminished considerably in importance in their households.

The examination of the interviewees' interpretations of the role of the head of the household shed further light on these contradictory perceptions and highlight the significant changes that have taken place in interpretations of household relations. In chapter four, section 4.4.5, it was seen that around 32 per cent of the interviewees identified their husbands as the head of the household, giving reasons which point to the ideological roots of conferring this status on husbands. By contrast, a very high proportion, around 40 per cent, identified themselves as the head of the household, a larger share than the actual 21.9 per cent of female heads of households, while 12.5 per cent indicated that there was joint headship in their households. These interpretations of the role of head of the household break with all traditional expectations, particularly in those households with a male partner. This quite radical response, while reflecting certain

dynamics of the interview process (discussed in chapter four), seem nevertheless to be based on material and practical considerations. It is as if the interviewees are recognising for themselves the importance of the central administrative role they exercise, as well as highlighting their own position as co-providers. Moreover, the multiple roles of wife, mother, breadwinner and worker seem to encompass the whole arena of the household and family, so in terms of carrying the main burden of household responsibilities and decision-making, these women may feel that they are, in fact, heads of household. These contrasting interpretations of the role of the head of household indicate that important changes are taking place within household relations as a result of women's participation in paid employment. The interviewees who identify themselves as the head of the household, or who view this as a shared role appear to have 'modern' expectations rather than 'traditional' ones. Traditional ideology may be retreating as the reality of dual-earner households comes to the fore, offering an opportunity to modify gender relations, at least within these households.

Changes in the decision-making process are important, but this is again constrained by the fact the division of labour within the home remains basically unaltered. Over 50 per cent of the interviewees stated that they were solely responsible for the domestic chores, with only around 5 per cent of husbands and partners sharing the housework. Perceptions of gender roles mean that other female relatives are more likely to provide essential help for working wives and mothers, rather than husbands or male partners. When husbands and sons do help, they carry out a limited range of tasks, the most notable being grocery shopping. Weekly or monthly shopping trips to the supermarket are becoming increasingly common due to the dominance of supermarket chains, lifestyle changes, and greater levels of affluence amongst dual-earner households. Increased levels of female employment means that the bulk of the grocery shopping is carried out on a weekly or monthly basis rather than daily, due to time restrictions. These shopping trips are likely to involve the whole family as more of an outing than a chore, as is the case in the rural community of Las Mercedes, where husbands and children tend to go along on the monthly shopping trip to town.

There is considerable heterogeneity in perceptions of the amount of domestic work to be done. Over 48 per cent of the sample felt that they had the same amount of domestic



work to do, regardless of their paid work commitments, with 34.2 per cent felt that they had less housework to do when they were working, while 17.1 per cent of the interviewees stated that they had more to do when they were working. These contradictory statements again illustrate how traditional and modern attitudes continue to exist side by side. In terms of the traditional female role, the cleanliness and tidiness of the house is an important source of pride and status for women, in the eyes of their family and the wider community. Although they may attract criticism from family members, and even neighbours, some women do seem to compromise their standards in view of the pressure of the 'double day' and do less at home during the week, or limit the heavier chores to the weekend. However, for other women, is vital to maintain high standards of housekeeping, despite the time and effort this requires. This social and cultural pressure often increases the burden of the 'double day' already faced by most working wives. Nevertheless, it seems that the gender division of labour can be altered, as some of the interviewees have succeeded in re-negotiating the domestic chores so that other family members participate more effectively. It does seem that this requires considerable patience and effort on the part of the interviewee to bring about changes, particularly in husbands' expectations.

Despite employers' legal obligation to provide childcare for female employees, and the existence of state childcare provision, the principal problem for the interviewees remains finding adequate childcare while they are at work. Employers are legally obliged to provide childcare facilities if they employ nineteen or more women workers. However, this does not necessarily guarantee childcare as the legislation does not stipulate that provision of facilities must be on-site, while a loophole exists which allows employers to employ up to nineteen women, thus avoiding the legislation. So, the majority of the interviewees tackled this problem with traditional strategies, with around 65 per cent of the interviewees relying on their mothers and other female relatives to take care of children while they were at work. Many of the interviewees mentioned that without this help, they would be unable to go out to work. A smaller proportion, around 27 per cent, had paid help, either a domestic servant at home, or a nursery. In other cases, grandparents or help from neighbours played an important role in childcare during the week. Although the dual-earner household appears to be becoming increasingly common,



it seems clear that resolving the practical problems of childcare still falls to women, despite their new roles within the labour force.

The accounts of a 'typical day' vividly convey the ways that women organise themselves to meet the demands of both their paid work and their household routines, demonstrating the extent of the 'double day', which can mean several hours of domestic work. In order to successfully carry out both sets of activities, the interviewees plan their schedules meticulously, taking into account the various routines of other family members. In this, they demonstrate finely-honed organisational skills which appear to be taken for granted. Complicated household routines are maintained, even though this represents a significant burden of work for working women. These accounts shed light on the complex dynamics behind women's negotiations of paid and domestic work roles, as women constantly shift between one role and another. For many women, the demands of their domestic role often shape paid work schedules. For example, women may need to take an hour from work to accompany children to medical appointments, or they may plan the meal for the next day according to food items which can be picked up on the way home. Moreover, domestic responsibilities are closely bound up with the affectionate care of the family and therefore remain a priority for women. Given this, employment decisions may prioritise flexible conditions, proximity to childcare facilities or residence over wage levels, for example. The number of hours that can be worked are also likely to be limited by individual women's physical as well as organisational capacities to take on a 'double day' of work.

The double day does therefore impose an extremely heavy burden of work on working women with families which places a distinct constraint on the positive personal benefits of working. However, while this may seem an exhausting routine, and despite regret at not having enough time to spend with the children, many of the interviewees do not seem to feel that it is impossible or too difficult to combine paid work with family responsibilities. While they emphasise their roles as mothers, paid employment has become an important dimension of their lives, and does not necessarily preclude being a wife and a mother. It is not a question of having to choose between traditional domestic roles and modern paid work roles, but it is the ways in which these roles are negotiated

that is important. The successful negotiation of the multiple roles of mother, wife, provider and worker may thus be a positive assertion of these women's gender identities.

## 6.6 Gender ideologies and perceptions of gender relations

Chapter five explored the interviewees' gender role attitudes and their interpretations of gender relations. This exploration highlights the influence of life and work experiences on the individuals' gender ideologies. These ideologies, in turn, shape aspirations and expectations and can illuminate the direction of changes in attitudes. As was discussed in chapter two, Chile's is a society undergoing a process of social change. As part of this, the interviewees are also engaged in individual processes of change, within their paid employment and their households. This means that their attitudes and perceptions are contradictory and may, at times, conflict with the reality of their situations. Moreover, the 'traditional-modern' tension which has surfaced before is also strongly present in the interviewees' interpretations of gender relations.

The attitudes and perceptions of gender roles explored in chapter five indicate how interpretations of gender ideologies are lagging behind changing economic and social realities. In their perceptions, the interviewees appear to be bridging this gap, drawing out new gender identities for themselves which incorporate their multiple roles. It is these changing gender identities that are potentially empowering, as individual shifts in ideology can result in re-definitions of gender roles within the household.

In terms of the gender division of labour within the household, a widely-held view was that maintaining the household is a responsibility which is shared between the partners, particularly given that one salary no longer seems to be sufficient to support the family. Equally, in terms of male partners' participation in housework, the majority of the interviewees felt that, given that both partners work, it is fair that housework should be shared. However, although few of them had achieved an equal distribution of domestic chores between partners, once the attitude shift has occurred, the potential for change is there, as the case studies illustrate. In other cases, economic necessity has played a role in dramatically altering gender relations within certain households, particularly in the case of *temporero* households where both partners rely on seasonal work. In these households,



the gender division of labour appears to have been radically re-worked, with both domestic and economic burdens shared equally between partners.

Another important theme that emerges from the case studies is that paid employment is a positive activity for women to undertake, for personal rather than economic reasons. For the interviewees with a more egalitarian gender ideology, employment is a means for women to gain economic independence and, through this, personal development. This indicates the existence of a gender consciousness, as it emphasises the importance of women as individuals in their own right, rather than defined through their gender roles as wives and mothers. These interviewees have expectations and horizons which move beyond finding fulfilment through their family roles. In this sense, they are re-defining their identities, moving beyond traditional gender roles to incorporate many other dimensions to their lives.

This consciousness emerges again in the discussions over male and female wage levels. Again, those women who value their paid work for personal reasons interpret this as a workplace issue. The rejection of the ideological notion that women should earn less as they are not breadwinners is based on their work experience and an awareness of the notion of 'equal pay for equal work'. For them, wage levels reflect the type of job and the individual's qualifications. Other women adhere to more traditional notions that men work more, or harder, than women, and thus it is right that they should earn more (see section 5.2.1.4). While women's increasing economic power is linked to wider social and economic changes, it has repercussions on personal relationships within the household which also have to be negotiated. So, for other interviewees, male and female wage issues were interpreted as a 'private' issue related to gender relations within the marriage. Here, they were aware that husbands are likely to feel threatened and undermined if wives earn more. Therefore, they felt that it was better for women to earn less than their husbands, in order to avoid conflicts within the relationship. The anticipation of this conflict stems from the uncertainty arising from changing gender relations within the household. The interviewees are aware that they are making substantial contributions to household income, and that husbands are no longer sole 'breadwinners'. It may be that in these situations, some women call upon traditional gender role ideology in order to defuse potential conflict within personal relationships.



By contrast, some of the attitudes expressed are rooted in a notion that many social changes have already taken place. Thus, many of the interviewees regarded some of the traditional attitudes under discussion as 'old-fashioned'. This was most apparent in the attitudes towards male infidelity in marriage. Only amongst the *temporeras* was there a significant proportion of women (50 per cent) who felt that a wife should wait for her husband. Amongst the other interviewees, there was disagreement with this statement. Although they recognised that the infidelity of husbands is commonplace in Chilean society, the interviewees felt that to accept it was an old-fashioned attitude. The interviewees perceive that women, and therefore themselves, are no longer dependent to the extent of having to accept infidelity. Many of them felt that an infidelity on the part of their husbands would mean the end of the relationship or marriage. The significance of this lies in the fact that these women felt completely confident of re-building their lives and providing for their children independently.

These perceptions reinforce the fundamental shift in attitudes which emerges through these discussions. As many of the interviewees seem to be enjoying greater independence, they no longer appeared to expect to find personal fulfilment exclusively through the traditional roles of marriage and the family. As a consequence, expectations regarding the marriage relationship appear to have shifted. Many women emphasise the importance of the quality of the relationship, rather than traditional benefits such as economic security. The co-operation between partners, based on mutual respect and companionship was emphasised. It seems that the economic independence of the interviewees enables them to expect this quality, as many of the case studies imply. Moreover, the interviewees show less attachment to the romantic ideal of marriage, as they are aware that it may not last for life, as traditionally expected. They see possibilities of making new relationships with another partner if the marriage fails, consequently, the interviewees tended to have pragmatic attitudes towards infidelity. In particular, the two female heads of households, who now have new partners, appear to have very different expectations than when they were married. They value their independence and seem to be reluctant to compromise this by entering into conventional relationships with their new partners.

In keeping with this sense of greater female independence, the importance of education for women is a central issue. Among the reasons given are that education enables women to gain good employment, to become independent from husbands, and allows them to succeed and 'get ahead'. The emphasis on women's personal development emerges here, as even if a woman is not going to work in the future, education will empower her and give her the means to manage her own life. Thus, for the majority of the interviewees, denying women education on the basis that they will get married and not work is a traditional attitude which no longer has a place in modern society. However, these changes in attitudes do conflict with the prevailing ideology. The interviewees accept that women do not have the same freedom as men to decide over their personal lives. The participants recognise this as a consequence of *machista* ideology, which shapes sexual morality in both men and women. So while many subtle but important gains have been made in terms of women's personal power, traditional mores continue to constrain women's freedom in their personal lives.

It is interesting to note a qualitative difference between the attitudes of the lower income women and the middle-income women. The *funcionarias* often apologise for sounding *machista* in their opinions, while the other interviewees mention *machismo* in connection with men or male domination. It may be that the middle-income women have had qualitatively different experiences of gender and social relations from their lower-income counterparts. Contradiction emerges again, as one might expect to find more 'progressive' attitudes amongst the more educated middle-class women. This may be due to a different socialisation which, while it offers middle-class women the potential for empowerment through education and career prospects, it may at the same time subtly reinforce traditional gender role expectations. These interviewees have a greater adherence to an idealised notion of being a good wife and mother, with the accompanying feelings of guilt at abandoning these roles. By contrast, the women from lower-income backgrounds may not have had the same expectations and advantages, and have had to overcome barriers and difficulties during the course of their experiences of paid work. Thus, it may be that through surmounting these obstacles and challenging traditional gender relations, these experiences have had a more profound effect on their attitudes, enabling them to achieve a truer independence. At the same time, traditional gender ideology retains a strong influence over individuals' perceptions. Economic necessity provides a justification for

poorer women to 'abandon' their domestic role, while working for personal reasons, as many of the women from more affluent households do, is less justified. It seems that the traditional-modern dichotomy remains a strong influence in defining female gender identities.

The area of political participation elicited some of the most conservative attitudes, as well as some of the most progressive. Many interviewees felt that politics was not for women, while others were either reluctant or not confident to give an opinion. It is likely that the effects of the period of military government persist, making people unwilling to discuss politics. However, for other interviewees, politics is an arena where women should begin to make their influence felt, to bring new issues into a male-dominated arena. As Ester points out, 'If we are participating in politics, it's for the future of our children.' (section 5.3.1.1).

The case studies show that the interviewees have a definite awareness of the existence discrimination against women. A majority of them consider that there is widespread discrimination in the workplace. This perception cuts across the differences in gender ideologies, and seems to be linked to the interviewees' identities as women workers. As workers, they may have had direct experience of discrimination which has prompted an awareness of the traditional relations which subordinate women in the labour market. This is an issue which faces all women workers, and as such, could provide an important 'public' focus for collective action.

The interviewees' perceptions of the barriers which prevent women from participating in the 'public' arena on equal terms to men draws together the many dimensions of this study. The themes that emerge here all revolve around the gender division of labour and its ideological construction of gender roles. The interviewees question this division of labour which imposes a whole set of family and domestic responsibilities on women, while exempting men. In the context of the wide-ranging changes in economic and social conditions, in which the women themselves are taking part, this ideological construction does not fit with their present material circumstances.



Thus, many interviewees have identified explicitly interpreted the constraints imposed on them as *machismo*, and questioned this in the light of their own experience. Identifying these relations as an ideology and not a 'natural' order is vital in opening up important possibilities for change. This consciousness of gender and gender relations has a direct relationship to the interviewees' experiences of labour force participation, and their individual processes of change. Through these processes within their paid work as well as within their households, they are actively engaged in challenging the prevailing traditional gender role ideology and forging new gender identities.

This study has drawn attention to the contradictory effects of women's participation in the labour market in Chile. Despite the constraints imposed by insecure and flexible employment conditions, unexpected spaces have opened up for women to gain a degree of power for themselves as they take on paid employment and become a permanent presence in the labour force. While the conclusions from this study are specific and located within the Chilean context, they illuminate the day-to-day processes through which women exercise and take power. By focusing on the nuances and contradictions, inherent in personal perceptions and interpretations, it appears that taking on paid employment has been an empowering experience for these particular women. Whilst it is important not be over-optimistic about female employment in Chile and the many constraints on the potential for empowerment must be taken into account, nevertheless, the women who participated in the study have influenced gender relations within their individual households, through actively negotiating the tensions that arise. As independent agents, the women who took part in this study have made both material and ideological changes felt within the household, changes which can be observed in the workplace as women form organisations, as well as in wider society as women participate in social organisations and political activity. In a context of sustained economic and social change, there is a strong possibility that these subtle changes in gender relations can become permanent steps forward in terms of achieving greater gender equality in Chilean society.

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**APPENDIX A**

**METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH AIMS**



## **APPENDIX A: Methodology and Research Aims**

### **Introduction**

This appendix aims to explain the formulation of a research methodology, together with the theoretical and methodological considerations guiding the selection of the in-depth, semi-structured interview technique as the chosen method. The questions of sampling will also be addressed, as well as how the participants in the study were selected. Next, the fieldwork procedure and the particular processing techniques used to analyse the data will be detailed. The terminology and concepts used to facilitate this analysis will also be defined.

### **Methodological and theoretical considerations**

Methodological debates in social science have revolved around two conflicting arguments. The first proposes a parallel between the epistemological bases of social science and the natural sciences, which favour the use of quantitative survey methods, providing an empirical base from which to generalise and define an objective 'reality'. The other position questions this epistemological base, proposing that the aim of social science research is to 'understand' rather than 'prove' social phenomena (Hekman, 1990: 3). The second position favours qualitative, observational and interpretative approaches. However, much social science research in the last two decades has shown that neither approach is inherently superior to the other, emphasising a recognition of the need to combine methodologies within a single study.

Recent critiques have informed the methodological debate within the social sciences. The emergence of postmodernism has led to a critique of the 'grand theories of the past' (Parpart and Marchand, 1995: 2) and has questioned the existence of a measurable reality and the absolutism of knowledge<sup>1</sup>. The principal aim of this Ph.D. study was to gain an understanding of Chilean women's paid work experiences from their own interpretations of their daily negotiations of work and family responsibilities. Given this inherently qualitative aim, the selection of a research methodology was guided by the theoretical considerations which emerge from the feminist/postmodernist debate. In this way, it was hoped to achieve a study set within a local and specific context, prioritising the qualitative exploration of the complexities of the women's lived experiences, rather than emphasising quantitative, empirical data. Nevertheless, in order to complement this qualitative aim and provide a basis for comparison, the secondary aim of the study was to gain some quantitative data covering, for example, working conditions, wage levels, and household budgets. The methodology therefore needed to

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<sup>1</sup> For an outline of the discussion of postmodernism and the debate surrounding its value for feminist research, see chapter one of this thesis.

integrate both the qualitative and quantitative aims of the study. An in-depth, semi-structured interview technique was chosen as the best method to obtain both the qualitative and quantitative data.

### **The semi-structured interview**

At this point, it is useful to consider the dynamics involved in the interview process and the implications this holds for the nature of the data so obtained. An interview is not a natural, conversational interaction, but rather an artificial process involving complex dynamics and power relations. The interviewer has an agenda which aims at obtaining certain information from the interviewee. This forces the interviewee into the position of 'object' of the investigation, robbing them of much of their power as autonomous agents within the context of the interview. Moreover, as much of the information relates to lived experiences, the interviewer may be attempting to obtain information from the interviewee which may be both private and personal.

Added to these internal dynamics of the interview are the inequalities of power which exist between the foreign researcher from a 'developed' country and an individual from a 'developing' one. This raises many political issues, particularly if one is attempting to conduct responsible and ethical feminist research. An awareness of the power relations that are inherent in this situation, and their influence on research results, is vital, even if practical considerations dictate that the research must proceed with only partial resolutions of these issues (Wolf, 1992). There are other methodologies which can go some way towards redressing this imbalance of power. Setting up focus groups can provide rich qualitative data and also go some way to avoiding the bias of the data towards the researchers' agenda, as well as serving to contextualise data and provide a dynamic exchange. However, for a Ph.D. researcher working alone, this methodology poses several practical problems. First and foremost, it would have proved extremely difficult for working women with families to take time out of their busy schedules to attend a focus group session, posing problems with regard to childcare and the needs of other family members. Secondly, the practical problems of finding a convenient venue, plus meeting any additional costs were beyond the financial scope of this Ph.D. project. Finally, this methodology, while potentially an enriching interchange for both researcher and researched, would have placed considerable demands on the time-scale of the fieldwork.

Given these constraints, the use of a semi-structured interview represents a compromise between the research aims and the practical concerns of successfully carrying out the fieldwork. The interview was conducted by means of a semi-structured questionnaire (see Appendix B). Some questions were structured, which allowed the gathering of quantifiable and comparable data, while the openness of other questions allowed for a deeper exploration of thoughts, opinions and ideas. The questionnaire was organised around three main subject areas. These were paid work, the household and family, and a final section on attitudes and opinions. Within each area, both closed and open questions were combined, while the main topic areas included a range of issues. For



example, the section relating to paid work covered issues such as pay and conditions, the work history of the interviewee, as well as a section on the qualitative aspects of their paid work.

Although the questionnaire was designed before the commencement of the field research, its structuring allowed for flexibility and the incorporation of new issues which emerged from and during the interview process. This was vital given the need for the researcher to incorporate ideas relating to the subject which were impossible to foresee prior to the undertaking of fieldwork. Thus, the interview process itself allowed the researcher to reflect on the experience of the interviews and refine the methodology accordingly.

My own position as a Chilean to some extent reduced the distance between myself and the women I interviewed in terms of language and culture, although I was still in a privileged position as a researcher from a UK university. There was much surprise expressed and ironic comments made relating to the notion that an institution from 'outside' should be interested in the views of Chilean women. These issues were dealt with by an open and transparent presentation of the aims of the research, as well as a review of the questionnaire which would guide the interview, in order to allow the individual the fullest possible information prior to giving their consent. This went a long way to establishing a rapport and the atmosphere of trust and openness necessary to conduct a 'successful' interview. Moreover, as contact was established through other women who had participated in the study, the majority of the women I met were both interested in the project and willing to be interviewed, which further enhanced the quality of the interviews.

Having established at the outset that the interview is an artificial situation, and biased in favour of the interviewer's agenda, there was little need for the researcher to employ techniques aimed at eliciting 'true' responses. Rather, the flexibility of the questionnaire permitted the interviewee to guide the direction of the discussion to reflect their own needs, concerns and interests. As the interviews tended to last for between one hour and two hours, the relationship of co-operation and trust was deepened as the interview progressed, making it a fruitful experience for both parties. Many of the women welcomed the opportunity to focus on themselves, to resolve certain issues and reflect on their aspirations and future options. This meant that the interview became a dynamic exchange, closer to the nature of a conversation, and not a one-way flow of information.

### **Selection of interviewees and sources**

The data are drawn from in-depth interviews with fifty-six women who were working in different occupations. Given the range of occupations, a 'snowball' sampling technique was used in order to have maximum heterogeneity. This meant sacrificing representativeness, but nevertheless permitted the gathering of rich and varied data. Initial contacts were established with individual women through formal and informal networks,



with each interviewee providing further contacts through colleagues and friends. It was aimed to interview women who were working in those sectors which concentrate female employment in Chile, the characteristics of which are discussed in chapter two. Four activities were selected, namely garment manufacture, domestic service, public administration and export agriculture. The interviews with women working in the first three activities were conducted in Santiago, while the women working in export agriculture were drawn from Regions VI and VII, to the south of the capital. A number of interviews were also conducted with women working in other activities in Santiago. The interviews were conducted during the fieldwork period of 1993-1994.

There are a large number of non-governmental and governmental organisations working within the area of women and employment. These provided much invaluable background material and sources, as well as providing the initial point with which to make contact with many of the interviewees. Key individuals from these institutions were also interviewed, allowing a refining of the methodology and the aims of the study. Contacts in the garment manufacturing sector were established through CEDAL, an NGO providing training and professional support for women's groups, and the *Directorio Femenino* of the CUT, the national trade union federation. Through these organisations, I made contact with the people involved in CONTEXTIL, one of the national federations of textile and garment-workers unions. This provided an invaluable opportunity to gain knowledge of the sector, as well as providing contact with women workers.

Contacts in Graneros in the VIth region and Curicó in the VIIth region were established through the individuals working within SERNAM (*Servicio Nacional de la Mujer*) projects with women temporary agricultural workers, as well as through trade unions and municipalities. In this way, I was able to meet many of the interviewees several times before conducting the interview.

Due to the fragmented nature of employment in domestic service, there are few organisations linked to this activity. The two workers organisations which exist to represent the interests of domestic servants (SINTRACAP and ANECAP) were unwilling to open their doors to a foreign researcher, having had recent negative experiences. Thus, contacts were made through private individuals' introductions.

The women working in public administration were contacted through the employees' association at the Municipality of La Florida in Santiago with the co-operation of the individual departments involved. After the initial contact was established, women were contacted through the introductions of colleagues and co-workers.

Further documentary and statistical information was gathered from these institutions and organisations, as well as from the *Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas* (INE), the *Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales*

(FLACSO), the *Programa de Economía y Trabajo* (PET), as well as various women's organisations, such as *Centro de Estudios de la Mujer* (CEM) and the *Instituto de la Mujer* in Santiago.

### **Conducting the interviews**

The fieldwork for this study was carried out in Chile during 1993-94. The total number of interviewees from each activity were as follows: eight women involved in garment manufacture, a further eight in domestic service, while sixteen women working in public administration were interviewed. Fourteen women working in export agriculture were interviewed in the regions. A preliminary ten interviews were conducted at an early stage of the fieldwork with women working in other activities in Santiago (insurance sales, education and commerce) in order to refine the structure of the questionnaire.

Due to pragmatic considerations, the interviews were conducted in different situations and locations. The problem of finding a space and a period of time when we would not be interrupted was a recurring one. All the women had extremely busy schedules, so making time for the interview required creativity and flexibility from both sides. The interviews with the women working in export agriculture were carried out after the season had ended, as finding time before then proved impossible. In the majority of these cases, the interview was conducted in the interviewee's home, usually in the afternoon when the bulk of the day's domestic tasks had been completed. The presence of children meant that the interview was often interrupted, although none had to be stopped for this reason. The arrival of a third adult, particularly a male partner, was more problematic, changing the whole atmosphere of the interview. There was an advantage in conducting the interview in the afternoon, as male partners were unlikely to be present. When there were interruptions of this nature, the interview was usually stopped by mutual agreement, and resumed after the third party had left or at a later date.

In other cases, interviews were conducted at home in the late afternoon after the interviewee had returned from work, before the arrival of other family members made it impossible to proceed. In yet other cases, busy domestic schedules meant that it was easier to create space and time at the interviewee's place of work. This was surprisingly the case with a number of women in domestic service, whose work schedules mirrored those of the housewife. As the women worked alone, the place of work proved to be the most convenient location, with the consent of the employer. The interviews in the municipality were conducted at the place of work, where it was also relatively easy to find both space and time, while three interviews with garment manufacturers were conducted during the working day at their small workshop. Some of the interviews with the women in the garment manufacturing sector were carried out in the space provided by the trade union federation in the evening after work.

These varying locations provided different insights. The opportunity to visit the interviewee in their place of work allowed observation of the working conditions which provided an important context for later interpretation and analysis. Visiting the interviewee at home was also fruitful in observing the ways in which the women organised their domestic schedules. In every case, the women were interested and willing to give up their time to help me in my research, and were not put off by the problems of finding time and space. In fact, many of the solutions to these problems came from the ingenuity and organisational capabilities of the women who participated in the study. By the same token, those women who were unwilling to participate, or felt that the demands on their time made it impossible for them to do so, were prompt and direct in saying so, saving valuable time.

### **Processing and presentation of the data**

The interviews were taped in their entirety and transcribed textually both during the fieldwork period and after my return to the UK. The quantitative data was extracted from the questionnaires and entered into spreadsheets. This data was used to provide simple descriptive statistics which were used as a context for the analysis of the qualitative data.

### **Concluding remarks**

The chosen methodology for this study reflects the inherent qualitative nature of the research aims. The semi-structured, in-depth interview was chosen as the best method for this study. This permits the gathering of quantitative data, while overtly seeking to allow people to speak about their own lives and experiences. The semi-structuring of the interview around a questionnaire permitted a degree of comparability across the interviews, while allowing flexibility to reflect the needs, concerns and interests of each interviewee. The length of the interview itself provided extremely rich data.

With hindsight, it is possible to say that the use of focus groups would probably have improved the quality and coherence of the empirical data. At the very least, a pilot study using focus groups and unstructured interviews would have brought up many unanticipated issues, clarified the aims of the study and permitted a more efficient questionnaire structure and use of fieldwork time. The decision to interview only women limited the scope of the study of the dynamics of gender relations, to which an exploration of men's attitudes and perceptions would have added an important dimension which is missing from this study. In this case, again the use of a number of focus groups, such as one of only women, another with only men, and third with a mixed group, would have enriched the data. However, this would have extended the scope of the study considerably, and an exploration of the dynamics of men's and women's perceptions of gender relations is probably a complete study in itself.



In view of the central role held by the interviewees, the presentation of the data in chapters three, four and five reflects this paramount concern. However, despite best efforts to allow the participants' voices to provide the information and interpretation of their paid work and family roles, the extensive intervention of the researcher in selecting and presenting the data is recognised. While this compromises to a great extent the ethical and political considerations of research discussed above, as these considerations have informed and directed this study from the start, it is hoped that the final product reflects this ethical imperative. As this type of research in developing countries is always likely to be fraught with ethical and political tensions, the researcher must aim to be as sensitive as possible to these issues and strive to achieve an acceptable balance in their interventions, within the constraints imposed by any type of academic social study.

**APPENDIX B**  
**SEMI-STRUCTURED QUESTIONNAIRE**

## Questionario

### Section A: DATOS PERSONALES

A1. ¿Cuántos años tiene usted?.....

A2. ¿Dónde nació usted? Ciudad.....

Comuna.....

Región.....

A3. ¿Dónde vive ahora? Ciudad.....

Comuna.....

Región.....

A4. ¿En qué año llegó usted a vivir en esta ciudad? 19...

A5. ¿Porqué se vino del lugar donde vivía antes (razones)..

.....

A6. ¿Qué nivel de estudios tiene? .....

A7. ¿Tiene estudios superiores\técnicos?

Si... Esp.....

No...

A8. Cuando estudiaba, ¿cual era el principal problema que tenía? p.e. problemas económicos; de locomoción etc.

.....

.....



A9. ¿En este momento usted está? Soltera.....  
 Casada.....  
 Con pareja (unión consensual)..  
 Separada....  
 Viuda.....

A10. ¿A qué edad se casó usted?.....  
 ¿Qué edad tenía su esposo?.....  
 ¿Cuántos años llevan/estuvieron casados?....

A11. ¿Tiene usted hijos? Si... ¿Cuántos?.....

<u>Hijo</u>	<u>Fecha de nacimiento</u>

A12. ¿Cuántos viven con usted actualmente?.....

A13. ¿Usa o usó algún método de planificación familiar?

Si..

¿Cual?.....

.....

No...

¿Porqué no?.....

.....

Section B: ESTRUCTURA FAMILIAR

B1. ¿Dónde vivía usted antes?.....

B2. ¿En la última casa, ustedes eran: propietarios...

arrendatarios..

allegados.....

(en la casa de parientes)

B3. Su casa actual, la arrienda, o es el propietario?

Dueño...

Arrienda...

B4. ¿Cuanto paga de cuota/arriendo al mes\semana?.....

B5. Si arrienda, ¿está ahorrando para una casa propia?

Si.. Más o menos, ¿cuanto ahorra a la semana\mes?

.....pesos

No..

B6. ¿Como es la vivienda actual?

agua potable..

alcantarillado..

cocina y baño..

cuantas piezas/dormitorios...

B7. ¿Usted se cambio sola o acompañada? Sola.....

Acompañada: por sus padres..... por sólo marido.....

por sus parientes..... por familia y marido...

por sólo hijos..... Otro: (esp).....

B8. ¿Cuántas personas están viviendo con usted en este momento?

.....



B9. ¿Me puede ayudar a hacer una lista de los miembros de este hogar?

Persona	Rel.inf	Edad	Sexo	Ests.	Ocupac.

B10. Quisiera saber algo acerca de los cambios en la familia en el último tiempo. De las personas que están viviendo actualmente en la casa, ¿quién ha llegado hace uno\dos\tres años atrás?

Nadie.....

Persona	Relación informante	¿En que año llegó?	¿Por qué vino a alojarse con ustedes?

B11. ¿Ha vivido algún otro pariente o otra persona con ustedes durante los últimos cinco/seis años que ya no vive aquí?

No.....

Persona	Rel.inf.	Cuanto tiempo	Desde 19..a 19..	Por qué cambiaron


B12. ¿Cree usted que entre más gente (parientes, hijos etc.) viva con ustedes en la casa, usted recibe más dinero para el gasto familiar? ¿Es mejor o peor económicamente para la familia?

No sabe.....

Lo mismo.....

Hay más dinero..... ¿Por qué?.....

.....

.....

.....

Hay menos dinero..... ¿Por qué?.....

.....

.....

Section C: TRABAJO

C1. Antes usted dijo que x, y & z tienen trabajo pagado. ¿Cuales son sus ocupaciones?

OCUPACION	Persona	Persona	Persona
Rama de actividad eg. comercio, agro etc.			
Categoría de actividad eg. trabajador indepen- diente, obrero etc.			
Trabajo: fijo : casual			
¿Cuántas otras personas trabajan en la misma empresa?			
¿Cuántos días por semana trabaja?			
Generalmente, ¿cuánto gana por semana en su trabajo? sueldo fijo/semana promedio/semana no sabe/cálculo/semana			



C2. Entonces, ¿quién gana más dinero en esta familia?

Persona..... Relación con informante.....

C3. Y ésta persona, ¿cuanto tiempo ha estado en este trabajo? .....

C4. ¿Dónde trabaja? (eg. en sitios/trabajos distintos; en casa propia; fuera de la ciudad).....

### TRABAJO DE LA MUJER

Ahora quisiera que me cuente algo sobre los trabajos que usted ha tenido.

C5. ¿Que tipo de trabajo ha tenido en los últimos años?

Me ayuda a hacer una lista de los trabajos que ha tenido, empezando con su trabajo actual.

Ocupación	Duración del empleo 19..-19..	Ubicación del empleo (en casa, empresa; fuera de comuna)	Sueldo/ganacia promedio semana/mes

C6. ¿Porque escogió este trabajo (más reciente)? ¿Como empezó en esto?.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

C7. En su trabajo actual, ud. tiene algun contrato o acuerdo formal con el empresario? Si...  
¿Por cuanto tiempo?.....

No....

C8. ¿Aproximadamente, cuanta gente trabaja en la fabrica/empresa? .....

C9. Más o menos, ¿cuantas son mujeres?.....

C10. ¿Cuantas personas trabajan en su sección?.....

C11. Y, ¿cuantas son mujeres?.....

C12. El jefe de su sección, ¿es hombre o mujer? .....

C13. En el trabajo, ¿tiene oportunidad para conversar con compañeras? Si.... No....

¿Cuando conversan generalmente? .....

.....  
.....

C14. ¿Como diría que se lleva con las compañeras de trabajo en general?

Bien.... Más o menos.... Mal....

¿A que se debe esto? .....

.....  
.....

Y, ¿como se llevan los jefes y los trabajadores?

Bien.... Más o menos.... Mal.....

¿A que se debe esto? .....

C15. Me interesa saber de las condiciones de su trabajo. Para empesar, ¿me puede describir un día típico en el trabajo. (Chars. de lugar físico de trabajo; tareas que desempeña; ritmo de trabajo; descansos; etc.)

.....

C16. ¿Cuanto dura una jornada de trabajo para Ud.?.....horas.

Y ¿cuantos días a la semana trabaja Ud.?.....días.

C17. ¿Cuales son las condiciones de pago? (trabajo a trato; al día).....

¿Como se pagan las horas extra que trabaja?

.....

C18. Aproximadamente, ¿cuanto gana por semana/mes?.....

C19. ¿Cuantos minutos/horas de ida y vuelta se demora en llegar al trabajo?.....

C20. ¿Que tipo de movilización usa?

A pie.....

En bicicleta.....

En micro.....

En camión.....

En auto.....

Otro.....

C21. ¿Cuanto gasta diaramente en locomoción? Pesos.....

Otro esp.....



.....

C22. ¿Tiene algún otro gasto asociado con el trabajo? (eg.comprar uniforme) Si.....

.....

¿Cuanto?.....

No.....

C23. ¿Por qué trabaja usted? ¿Cuales son las razones?

.....

.....

.....

C24. Para una mujer como usted, ¿cuáles son las ventajas de trabajar?.....

.....

.....

¿Cuáles son las desventajas?.....

.....

.....

.....

C25. ¿Cuán importante es el dinero que gana en su trabajo para su familia? .....

.....

C26. ¿Quien se encarga de cuidar a los niños mientras Ud. trabaja?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

C27. Aparte del cuidado de los hijos, ¿cuál es el principal problema que tiene en trabajar? .....

.....  
.....

C28. ¿Cree que se necesita hacer algun cambio en la empresa para mejorar la situación de las trabajadoras?

Si.. ¿Que se debería cambiar?.....

.....  
.....  
.....

No...

C29. Si pudiera escojer, ¿cuál sería su ocupación preferida?

.....  
¿Por qué? .....

.....

C30. ¿Como ve usted su situación económica en este momento en comparación con la que tenía antes?

Mejor....

Igual....

Peor.....

C31 ¿Porqué? ¿A que se debe?.....

.....

C32. ¿Ud. cree que de aqui a 1 año más va a estar trabajando en lo mismo? ¿Ganando lo mismo?

Si...

Más..

Menos..

¿Cuanto?.....

No.. ¿Porqué? (razones).....

.....

Section D: PRESUPUESTO FAMILIAR

D1. ¿Cuanto se gasta en la casa?

Comida.....

Agua.....

Gas u otro combustible.....

Luz.....

Renta vivienda.....

Transporte/locomoción...

Otro: esp.....

Doctores y remedios.....

D2. ¿Quién administra el dinero para el gasto?

Ama de casa (inf.)....

Marido.....

Los dos.....

Hijas.....

Hijos.....



Madre/suegra.....

Otro: esp.....

D3. ¿Quién de las personas que viven en esta casa dan plata para los gastos, y cuánto (promedio semanal)?

Pesos

De su propio trabajo

De su esposo

De su(s) hija(s)

De su(s) hijo(s)

De los parientes que viven aquí

De algun(os) pariente(s) que no viven aquí

TOTAL

D4. Alguna vez ud. ha recibido un préstamo? No..

Si:

¿De quien? ¿Cuándo? ¿Por cuanto?.....

.....

¿Ha sido devuelto el dinero? Si.. No....

¿Cada cuanto hay que pagarlo? .....

¿Cuanto paga/pagaba de interés?.....

Y tiene algun sistema de crédito? No...

Si:

¿De quien? ¿Por cuanto?.....

.....

¿Cada cuando tiene que pagarlo?.....

¿Y el interés?.....

D5. ¿Qué hace cuando se siente enferma? .....

.....

.....

¿Porqué?.....

.....

Section E: TRABAJO DOMESTICO

E1. ¿Quién se encarga del quehacer en esta casa?.....

.....

E2. ¿Hay alguna(s) persona(s) que le ayudan con el quehacer?

No.....

Persona Persona Persona Persona

SI - siempre

a menudo

de vez en cuando

E3. ¿Cuáles tareas en particular son compartidas por estas personas? Por ejemplo, ¿quién hace las siguientes tareas?

	Persona	Persona	Persona	Perso
Hacer compras				
Cocinar				
Lavar los platos				
Lavar ropa				
Planchar ropa				
Coser/arreglar				
Barrer				
Trapear				
Sacudir				
Cuidar niños				
Hacer arreglos en la casa				



E4. ¿Cuántas veces al día hay que cocinar?.....

¿Cuántas horas se gasta diariamente en cocinar y lavar los platos?.....

E5. Generalmente, ¿cuántas veces a la semana tiene usted que

1) Barrer? 2) Limpiar la casa?

Diariamente

Cada tercer día

Una vez a la semana

E6. De las tareas que Ud. hace, ¿cual le gusta más y cual menos?

¿Porqué?.....

.....

.....

E7. ¿Tiene usted algunas de las siguientes cosas?

cocina eléctrica o gas.....

refrigerador.....

lavadora.....

radio.....

estufa de parafina....

televisión.....

teléfono.....

bicicleta....

auto.....

E8. ¿Ha comprado algún electrodoméstico desde que empezó a trabajar?

Si....

No....

E9. ¿Qué compró?.....

¿Cuánto costó?.....

E10. ¿Quién decidió comprarlo?.....

E11. ¿En general, que se hace con el sueldo que Ud. gana? ¿Se le destina algún uso en particular?

.....

.....

.....

E12. ¿Le alcanza su sueldo para guardarse una parte para sus gastos personales, o para ahorrar?

Si.... Cuanto....

No.....

E13. Desde que usted comenzó a trabajar, ¿ha habido algún cambio en sus responsabilidades, como el trabajo de la casa? O sea, ¿tiene más o menos que hacer ahora?

No sabe.....

Lo mismo.....

Tiene más que hacer..... ¿Por qué?.....

.....

.....

.....

Tiene menos que hacer..... ¿Por qué?.....

.....  
.....  
.....

E14. ¿Considera usted que los otros miembros del hogar le ayudan más con los quehaceres de la casa cuando tiene que trabajar?

Si.....

No.....

Lo mismo....

E15. ¿Alguién de su familia se opone a que usted trabaje?

.....  
.....

E16.Cuál es el motivo, ¿en su opinión?.....

.....  
.....

E17. ¿Como diría que están las relaciones familiares?

Buenas... Más o menos..... Malas.....

¿Se han mejorado o empeorado desde que empezó a trabajar?

.....  
.....

¿A que se debe esto? .....

.....  
.....



Section F: TOMA DE DECISIONES EN LA FAMILIA

F1. ¿Quién decide como y en que se gasta los ingresos de la familia?

Usted sólo.....

Usted y su marido.....

Toda la familia.....

Cada uno que gana.....

Depende del caso: esp.....

.....  
.....  
.....

F2. ¿Quién decide como se debe gastar el dinero cuando se trata de:

Alimentos	Usted sólo
Eléctro-domésticos	Su marido
Ropa para los hijos/marido	Los dos
Ropa para usted	
Educación(para los hijos)	Toda la familia
Cursos de capacitación(para adultos)	Los que ganan

F3. ¿Qué hace cuando necesita comprar ropa para usted?.....

.....  
.....  
.....

F4. ¿Usted es dueña de alguna cosa que podría vender, empeñar o hipotecar en caso de emergencia?

Si... Esp.....

No....

F5. En su opinión, ¿quién es el o la jefe de ésta familia? .....

¿Por qué opina así?.....

.....

F6. ¿Ha podido ver cambios importantes en como se toman las decisiones en su casa? Si:

.....  
.....  
.....

No....

F7. En su opinión, ¿a qué se deben estos cambios? .....

.....

F8. ¿Siente que su propia participación en la toma de decisiones ha aumentado?

Si..... Igual/No.....

F9. ¿Por qué opina así?.....

.....  
.....  
.....



Section G: AUTOIMAGEN Y CONFIANZA EN SI MISMA

En este estudio nos interesa saber lo que piensan las mujeres de ellas mismas.

Le voy a leer varias situaciones y quiero que me diga cuando considera que es más importante hacer lo que una quiere y cuando es importante tomar en cuenta las opiniones de otra gente.

G1. Si deja las cosas de la casa más a un lado para tomarse tiempo para hacer las cosas que a usted le gustan, u otros asuntos personales.....

.....

G2. Si acepta más responsabilidad en el trabajo o el grupo/organización.....

.....

G3. Quisiera que compare como era Ud. antes y como es Ud. ahora. Cuando tiene que decidir sobre los asuntos que la afectan en lo personal (p.e. trabajo, vida sexual, política, religión etc), ¿considera Ud. que es más independiente que antes?

Si.....

Igual que siempre.....

Menos independiente.....

G4. En su opinión, a qué se deben estos cambios?.....

.....

.....

G9. Si esta en un grupo de personas en el trabajo que están conversando sobre un tema que es importante para Ud.

¿Daría su opinión al respecto?

Si.....

No..... ¿Por qué?.....

.....

G10. Y si su esposo/pareja/padre la reta por algo, ¿se queda callada aunque él este equivocado?

Si.....

No..... ¿Por qué?.....

.....

G11. Quisiera que comparara como se comportaba en grupos antes y como se comporta ahora. Cuando tiene que hablar en público o explicar sus ideas y proyectos a otra gente, ¿se siente con más confianza en si misma que antes?

Si.....

Igual que antes.....

Con menos confianza que antes.....

G12. En su opinión, ¿a que se deben estos cambios?

.....

.....

Section H: PERCEPCIONES SOBRE LOS ROLES DE GENERO

Me interesa mucho que me cuente algo de sus opiniones sobre la familia, y los roles que tienen las mujeres y los hombres dentro de ella. También quisiera que me comente sobre los roles de las mujeres y los hombres en la sociedad. Quisiera que me comente sobre las opiniones que le voy a leer, si esta de acuerdo o no, y por qué opina así:

H1. Mujeres casadas no deben trabajar fuera de la casa porque su responsabilidad es el cuidado del marido y los hijos .....

.....  
.....

H2. Es responsabilidad exclusiva del hombre trabajar para mantener a la familia

.....  
.....

H3. Está bien que las mujeres ganen menos que los hombres porque su sueldo es sólo una ayuda

.....  
.....

H4. No es justo pedirle a un hombre que trabaja que ayude con los deberes de la casa.....

.....

H5. Decisiones más importantes deben der tomadas por los hombres porque son menos emocionales que las mujeres .....

.....

H6. Es mejor que sea siempre el hombre el que tome la inciativa en el acto sexual .....

.....

H7. Cuando el hombre es infiel a su mujer, ella debe esperar que él regrese a ella .....

.....

H8. Mujeres debieran tener la misma libertad que los hombres para decidir sobre su vida personal



.....  
.....

H9. Mujeres no deben participar en política porque ponen en peligro la estabilidad de la familia

.....

H10. No vale la pena que estudie una mujer porque luego se casará y tendrá que ocuparse con la casa y los niños

.....  
.....

En su opinión, en Chile, se discrimina en contra de la mujer en:

H11. El trabajo      Si... No.....      No sabe.....

H12. La educación      Si... No.....      No sabe.....

H13. Los servicios  
de salud      Si... No....      No sabe.....

H14. Para obtener  
crédito      Si... No...      No sabe.....

H15. Lo político      Si.... No...      No sabe.....

H16 Otro: esp.....  
..... Si.. No....      No sabe.....

H17. ¿Cree Ud. que las mujeres deberían organizarse como MUJERES en el mercado laboral, las organizaciones y la política? .....

.....  
.....  
.....

Section I: PARTICIPACION EN ORGNIZACIONES

Para terminar, le voy a preguntar algo sobre su participación en grupos y organizaciones.

I1. En los últimos cinco años, ¿en que grupos a participado regularmente y que puestos ha ocupado en cada uno?

Grupos	De 19.. a 19..	Puesto ocupado
--------	----------------	----------------

I2. ¿Ha tenido que enfrentar alguna limitación para poder participar en grupos?

Si..... No....

I3. ¿Que tipo de problemas ha tenido?.....

.....  
.....

I4. ¿Cuales son los factores que limitan la participación de la mujer en el mercado laboral, las organizaciones y la política?

.....  
.....

-----

Nombre completo de entrevistada.....

Dirección.....

.....

Teléfono.....

Fecha.....



**APPENDIX C**  
**TABLE OF FAMILY MEMBERS' CONTRIBUTIONS TO**  
**HOUSEHOLD INCOME**

CONTRIBUTIONS TO HOUSEHOLD INCOME						
Contributor	Wages/ Contribution (approximate)		Household expenditure (food, rent utilities, transport) US\$1 =	Ch\$420		% Contribution to household income
	US\$1 =	Ch\$420		US\$1 =	Ch\$420	
<b>Confesionarias</b>						
Ester	\$ 142.86		80,000			63.15
Partner	\$ 83.33		35,000			36.84
Total	\$ 226.19		95,000	\$ 209.52	88,000	100
Ana	\$ 261.90		110,000			52.38
Ex-Husband	\$ 238.10		100,000			47.61
Total	\$ 500.00		210,000	\$ 321.43	135,000	100
Gladys	\$ 171.43		72,000			21.68
Husband	\$ 357.14		150,000			45.18
Daughter	\$ 166.67		70,000			21.08
Mother	\$ 95.24		40,000			12.05
Total	\$ 790.14		332,000	\$ 285.71	120,000	100
Gloria	\$ 285.71		24,000			13.79
Father	\$ -		120,000			68.97
Sister	\$ -	?				17.24
Total	\$ 414.29		174,000	\$ 214.29	80,000	100
Carmen	\$ 190.48		80,000			44.44
Husband	\$ 238.10		100,000			55.56
Total	\$ 428.57		180,000	\$ 222.38	93,400	100
<b>Temporeras (wage average in season)</b>						
Ruth	\$ 180.38		67,360			57.4
Husband	\$ 119.05		50,000			42.74
Total	\$ 279.43		117,360	\$ 209.52	88,000	100
Luisa	\$ 188.19		78,200			59.15
Husband	\$ 142.86		60,000			45.39
Total	\$ 314.78		132,200	\$ 105.00	44,100	100
Sara	\$ -					
Berta	\$ 138.10		58,000			19.46
Other residents	\$ 142.86		60,000			20.13
	\$ 142.86		60,000			20.13
	\$ 142.80		60,000			20.13
	\$ 142.80		60,000			20.13
Total	\$ 709.20		298,000	\$ 90.48	38,000	100
Clara	\$ 95.24		40,000			50
Husband	\$ 95.24	(average)	40,000			50
Total	\$ 190.48		80,000	n/d	n/d	100
Gloria	\$ 176.19		74,000			63.25
Husband	\$ 102.86		43,200			36.86
Total	\$ 274.29		115,200	n/d	n/d	100
<b>Trabajadoras de casa particular</b>						
Clementina	\$ 250.00		105,000			84.2
Sister	\$ 46.90		19,700			15.8
Brother-in-law	\$ 46.90					
Total	\$ 296.90		124,700	\$ 186.43	78,300	100
Eugenia	\$ 180.95		76,000			71.7
Partner	\$ 71.43		30,000			28.3
Total	\$ 22.38		106,000	\$ 30.64	12,870	100
Juanita	\$ 238.10		100,000			37.31
Husband	\$ 400.00		168,000			62.69
Total	\$ 638.10		268,000	\$ 152.38	64,000	100
Marilyn	\$ 76.19		32,000			24.24
Partner	\$ 238.10		100,000			75.76
Total	\$ 314.29		132,000	\$ 83.33	35,000	100
Raquel	\$ 219.05		92,000			36.22
Husband	\$ 385.71		162,000			63.78
Total	\$ 604.76		254,000	\$ 128.24	53,880	100
<b>Funcionarias</b>						
Rosa	\$ 278.57		117,000			50.43
Husband	\$ 273.81		115,000			49.57
Total	\$ 552.38		232,000	\$ 203.81	85,800	100
Inés	\$ 273.81		115,000			27.71
Husband	\$ 714.29		300,000			72.29
Total	\$ 988.10		415,000	n/d	n/d	100
Claudia	\$ 200.00		84,000			17.36
Husband	\$ 952.38		400,000			82.64
Total	\$ 1,152.38		484,000	\$ 157.14	66,000	100
Verónica	\$ 666.67		280,000			58.33
Husband	\$ 478.19		200,000			41.67
Total	\$ 1,142.86		480,000	\$ 129.05	54,200	100
Adriana	\$ 1,190.48		500,000			62.5
Husband	\$ 714.29		300,000			37.5
Total	\$ 1,904.00		800,000	\$ 585.71	246,000	100
Monica	\$ 357.14		150,000			42.86
Husband	\$ 478.19		200,000			57.14
Total	\$ 833.33		350,000	\$ 557.14	234,000	100
Alicia	\$ 166.67		70,000			100
Total	\$ 166.67		70,000	\$ 167.62	83,000	

Source: Survey carried out by Vogel, Chile 1993-94

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