MIGRATION, WAGE LABOR, AND DOMESTIC RELATIONSHIPS:

IMMIGRANT WOMEN WORKERS IN MONTRÉAL

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Des femmes de quatre origines ethniques ont été interviewées dans le cadre d'une étude de l'insertion des immigrées ouvières au Québec. On trouve que l'immigration a permis à ces femmes d'augmenter leur contribution financière au ménage mais que la participation des hommes aux tâches domestiques reste, pour la plupart, limitée à la garde des enfants pendant que la femme travaille à l'extérieur. Quant au pouvoir décisionnel des femmes, les patterns budgétaires ont tendance à camoufler leurs contributions financières, tout en mini-misant ses effets sur les rapports de pouvoir entre les couples. Cependant, les femmes interviewées jugent leur nouveau pouvoir salarial un acquis positif, pour diverses raisons. *Grosso modo*, nos données confirment celles provenant de nombreuses autres études de populations non-immigrées en Amérique du Nord, à l'effet que le travail salarié des femmes ne mène pas forcément à des rapports domestiques égalitaires.

As part of the study on the economic and social insertion of immigrant women workers into Québec society, women of four ethnic origins were interviewed. It was found that while immigration had allowed women to make greater financial contributions to the household than before, men's participation in domestic tasks was mostly limited to child care when necessitated by women's outside work. Budgetary patterns tend to obscure the importance of women's financial contributions insofar as decision-making is concerned. Nonetheless, their new wage earning capacity is seen as positive by the women studied. Overall, our data tend to confirm the findings of numerous other studies of non-immigrant populations in North America to the effect that wage work by women does not necessarily lead to egalitarian domestic relationships.

In the words of one sociologist, "Power and the division of labor appear to be two of the most central concepts for describ-

ing familial behavior" (Bahr 1974:167). As the same author continues, these two issues affect emotional patterns as well as social interaction in the family (Bahr:ibid.). Moreover, we would add that they are of critical importance for evaluating women's status in industrial society. It is no longer possible to assume, as certain Marxists once did, that women's participation in so-called "social production" (referring to labor outside the home) is sufficient to guarantee sexual equality. Nor can it be assumed, as many sociologists have in the past, that female participation in the labor market is necessarily indicative of a shift to greater egalitarianism. The latter is often phrased in terms of "less traditionalism" or "greater modernity." A large body of feminist scholarship has developed around the problem of how women's domestic labor and their "subordination," as Young et al. (1981:ix) term it, in the household are interrelated with gender inequality in the labor market (see also Sokoloff 1980).

In this paper, we will describe certain changes in domestic relationships experienced by immigrant women of four ethnic origins in Montréal, Québec, Canada. The question that initially guided our examination of this topic was: "Do migration and the changes in remunerative work it entails for women have any effect on their position in the household?" Elsewhere, we discuss changes in women's remunerative work (Labelle et al. 1987), and in the structure of their workday since migration (Meintel et al. 1987) in some detail. Here, we concentrate on what, if any, changes occur in the sexual division of labor in the household and in domestic power relationships, especially as these are reflected in decision-making pertaining to the household and to women's work and leisure activities.

A number of North American studies demonstrate that women's employment is likely to have little effect on their husbands' participation in domestic tasks (for a useful discussion of this research to date, see Vandelac 1985). As Goode points out, although employed women are likely to spend less time on domestic tasks than non-employed women, husbands whose wives are employed devote only slightly more time to those tasks than men whose wives are not employed (1982:143). A few recent studies show increased domestic participation by husbands of employed wives (Epstein 1971; Pleck 1977; Scanzoni 1978), and Scanzoni's research shows increasing preference for sex role interchangeability on the part of women. Overall, however, it appears that housework and child care are still treated as women's responsibilities (Bird et al. 1984; Vandelac 1985).

In 1972, Scanzoni anticipated that "provider status interchangeability," whereby both partners are seen as responsible for supporting the household, would be associated with interchangeability of roles regarding other domestic duties such as repairs, child care, washing dishes, and food shopping. In 1975, Scanzoni found that women were moving much more into the traditional male

domains of co-providing and household repairs than men were moving into traditionally female domains. When male participation in traditional female domains increased, it was likely to take the form of child care (Scanzoni 1978:77). Since this is the area of domestic work most directly affected by a woman's employment outside the home, change in men's behavior may to some degree be obliged by the household's need for the women's wages.

Scanzoni's research focused primarily on women's normative perceptions (as in, "Whose duty is it to do . . . ?") rather than on reports of actual practice ("Who does . . . ?"). Berk and her associates used an admirably detailed list of household tasks (partially reproduced in Berk 1980:71) to discover who carried out which tasks and how often in a mostly upper-middle-class, suburban population in the United States. One of the major findings of the study was that "for neither husbands nor wives did employment have any real impact on the reduction of wive's household labor contributions or on an increase in husband's contributions" (1980:75). Berk also notes that the more detailed the questions posed, the less substantial men's contributions appeared to be (1980:72). Along the same line, Vandelac (1985: 353) points out that certain studies which affirm that the household division of labor by sex has changed use such minimal criteria for male participation that their results give a highly inflated impression of how much domestic responsibilities are shared across gender lines (1985:353).

Domestic power is a complex issue (a "swamp" in one sociologist's words), as McDonald (1980) makes clear in his review of recent sociological literature on the subject. Most studies of domestic power to date have emphasized decision outcomes rather than "power processes." Moreover, decision-making is only one aspect of control, and there is also the more subtle problem of "who controls the definition of the family situation which determines the possible range of relevant decisions" (McDonald 1980: 844). McDonald also notes that most studies of "family power" focus on the husband-wife dyad to the exclusion of children and other kin, relying for data on reports by women in their role as wives. Finally, we add that although sociological research in this area mainly deals with nuclear family households, any comprehensive approach should examine other domestic forms. In some cases, our own data suggest that kin living outside the household may have a considerable say in its affairs.

Numerous studies have focused on women's employment as an independent variable affecting the allocation of domestic power (e.g., Blood and Wolfe 1960; Pleck 1977; Scanzoni 1972, 1978). Overall, women's wage work seems to be associated with greater domestic power. However, Bahr qualifies this, citing studies which show that any increased power is directly related to a woman's provider status and mainly concerns "external" decisions, notably major purchases (1974:173-175). Another common finding is

that the greater the husband's earnings and occupational status relative to his wife's, the less her employment affects the distribution of power in the household (Bahr 1974; Blood and Wolfe 1960; Scanzoni 1972). Similarly, the degree of a woman's financial contribution is likely to affect her power in the household, such that women working full-time are more likely to acquire power than those working part-time (Bahr 1974:176).

Where immigrant households are concerned, women's wage labor may be only one of several influences affecting the domestic division of labor and power relationships. While few studies treat these issues in detail, existing data suggest that other relevant factors include immigration policy, the social and cultural characteristics of the receiving society, and changes in kin networks and household composition.

In a study of Pakistani women who maintain purdah (see Note 2) after migration to England, Saifullah-Khan (1976) finds that the absence of kin in England creates social isolation, but also allows closer relationships between spouses to develop, thus giving women greater control over housekeeping and children (in Pakistan this control rests largely with senior women in the household, especially the mother-in-law). At the same time, life in England forces women in purdah to make incursions into what were formerly male domains in Pakistan: using public transport, dealing with salesmen and repairmen, and handling larger sums of money. In England, household tasks and child care are more demanding than in Pakistan, but are carried out in greater isolation, without company or social support. Although such tasks remain women's obligations and responsibilities, Saifullah-Khan anticipates changes when these women begin to enter the work force—a trend which is already evident.

Foner's study of Jamaican women in London (1978) offers another slant on the loss of female kin networks through migration. While women feel the loss of moral support and sometimes have difficulty in arranging child care, men are also affected by the absence of their own female kin. Wives' threats to leave their husbands carry more weight, given that no one else will provide the domestic services that, in Jamaica, a man's mother or sister might assume. Moreover, women who are far away from their own families feel less social pressure to stay in unhappy marital relationships. Most enjoy greater financial autonomy than would be possible in Jamaica, and regard themselves as "more independent" than before. Their sphere of activities is enlarged by being able to drive, smoke, and frequent pubs, activities less permissible in Jamaica. However, it is clear that housework and child care are still women's responsibilities. Though some men alternate working hours with their wives and share in child minding, this is unlikely when an older child is available to baby-sit (Foner 1978:74).

Research on Greeks in Canada and the United States indicates that immigration results in husbands losing some of their patriarchal control of internal household affairs, including socialization (Papajohn and Spiegel 1974; see also Note 3). Gavaki (1979) and Constantinides (1983) report that Greek women in Québec often share the provider role with their husbands; yet, according to Constantinides (ibid.:161), even women who work full-time are still likely to carry total responsibility for domestic tasks as well as for daily child care. Moreover, even women who are employed outside the home are unlikely to have social outlets independent of their husbands (Gavaki 1979:12).

Constantinides mentions that over eighty-seven percent of the women he studied report that they "participate" in decisions in the home; however, he phrases this as "being able to put their word in" (1983:162). Gavaki adds an interesting element to the discussion of domestic power in remarking that children, being more proficient in French or English than their parents, often are able to manipulate the household's contacts with the wider society through their role as interpreters (1979:13).

In a study of Portuguese migrants in Paris and in Poitiers, France, Brettell and Callier-Boisvert (1977) find that the absence of kin networks, along with the fact that many couples leave children with the maternal grandparents in Portugal, make for greater sharing of roles between husband and wife. Where no children are present, wives often work longer hours than their husbands, with the result that men often take over many "feminine" responsibilities (laundry being the one exception). In couples with co-resident children, women are likely to work as concierges or do occasional cleaning: in these cases, husbands participate less in domestic chores, perhaps doing some shopping and cooking. Role sharing is greatest in young couples without children present. The fact that traditional public spaces are not available to the man (there being no Portuguese bars or cafes) is cited as one of the reasons couples spend leisure time together. Despite all this, considerable disparities of domestic power are found to exist; important budgetary decisions are still referred to the husband, and women avoid behaving in ways that their spouses would oppose, such as going out alone after dark.

As is the case with the above cited studies of Jamaicans and Portuguese, Ng and Ramirez' study of immigrant women of various origins in Toronto, Canada indicates that where older children are present, they, rather than husbands, are likely to increase domestic task participation when women are employed (1981:48). Whether or not they are employed, women often see family allowance checks as their only discretionary income (see Note 4); yet this, too, may be used for daily expenses (ibid.:42). While major budgetary decisions are referred to husbands, even minor ones for which wives are responsible are subject to husbands' criticisms. Ng and Ramirez point out that Canadian immigration policy

has tended to define married women as "housewives," regardless of their economic activities in their countries of origin, and to classify them as dependents of their husbands. This in fact enforces dependence, since these women are excluded from welfare, day-care subsidy, and other benefits. In practice, they are also largely excluded from government language programs and manpower training (Ng and Ramirez 1981:52-53).

THE STUDY

The data presented here are derived from an exploratory study of the social and economic position of immigrant women workers in Québec society (see Note 5). Four ethnic categories were included; namely, Portuguese, Greek, Haitian, and Colombian. The first two categories represent groups of longer residence, since Greek and Portuguese immigration to Canada peaked during the period 1956-1971. These migrations were preponderantly male, especially in their early stages, and men often preceded wives and children. In 1981, Québec had 21,595 Portuguese-born residents, 10,585 of whom were women (forty-nine percent of the total), and 28,635 Greek-born residents, 13,805 of whom were women (forty-eight percent of the total; Desrosiers 1985).

The Haitian and Colombian women are, on the whole, more recent arrivals and represent new patterns of immigration that have manifested themselves since 1970 in Canada, as is also the case in the United States (see Note 6). Later, America, Asia, and the Caribbean have superseded Europe as sources of migrants; the latter include a considerable number of illegals and political refugees, and are preponderantly female (see Note 7). Many women arrive alone, often sending for spouses and/or children to join them at a later date. In 1981, there were 25,775 Haitian-born and 1,805 Colombian-born people officially residing in Québec. Fifty-four percent (14,025) of the Haitians and fifty-three percent (950) of the Colombians were women (Desrosiers 1985).

All four groups are concentrated in the Montréal area of the province of Québec. Haitian migration to Canada is mostly oriented to Québec; the other three groups are more widely dispersed, the majority residing in the other provinces. As of 1981, there were 27,370 persons of Portuguese ethnic origin (including those born in Portugal) in Québec, while those of Greek origin numbered 49,420, and those of Haitian origin, 32,500 (Desrosiers 1985).

Altogether, seventy-six women were interviewed using a semi-structured format devised in consultation with research assistants who were themselves immigrant women students of the same mother tongue as those they interviewed. The interviews centered largely on women's domestic and market work, both in the country of origin and in Québec. Attention was also given to the process of migration, kin networks, and to household decision-making.

Research subjects were selected by a non-random quota sample wherein roughly equal representation was given to the industrial and service sectors of employment. In order to diversify the social networks represented in the study as much as possible, population references for potential subjects were obtained from diverse sources: community organizations serving immigrants, ethnic associations, and professionals working in the immigrant milieu.

The women interviewed were all of "popular" class origins and came from backgrounds such as peasants, craftswomen, industrial workers, or service employees. They had come to Canada primarily for economic reasons, as well as to join family members who might already be established here. We deliberately chose respondents who currently or in the recent past were employed in manufacture or service occupations in Québec. Most immigrant women are "economically active"; sixty-five percent of all Haitian-born women fifteen years of age and over, sixty-two percent of Colombian and Portuguese women, respectively, and fifty percent of Greek-born women were so classified by 1981 census figures for the province of Québec (see Note 8). Moreover, these percentages did not include the many immigrant women employed in the informal sector—e.g., as cleaning women in private homes or as home-based pieceworkers.

We also selected for respondents who had domestic responsibilities, including spouses, children, or other relatives. Most were between the ages of twenty-five and fifty. Of the seventy-six women interviewed, fifty-eight had children who in most cases co-resided with them. Eight of these fifty-eight women supported children living in their countries of origin.

Marital status varied: most of the Portuguese and Greek women were married, whereas over half of the Haitians were variously divorced, single, or separated. The Colombians also included a number of non-married women (widowed, divorced, or separated) at the time of the study.

METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF THE STUDY

Our study shares some of the same methodological drawbacks that are found in many of the sociological studies of domestic task-sharing and "family power." For example, we have relied on self-reporting by women rather than on observation or reporting by a number of family members. However, Berk finds that such reports are generally quite accurate when asking questions about actions rather than attitudes (1980:69). In some cases, our interviews did provide useful observations on the household context. Our questions pertained largely to "who decided" certain matters and "who did" certain tasks rather than in-depth details of the process of decision-making and implementing. Nevertheless,

many women added pertinent statements that gave some elucidation on this score, especially concerning the decision to emigrate.

Unlike most studies of domestic task and power sharing, our research did not focus exclusively on the marital dyad, nor was it restricted to women living in nuclear family households. As will be shown in a later section, many of the women interviewed resided at some point in households whose composition differed from the nuclear family model. In a number of cases, no spouse was present. This study, then, is more concerned with the division of labor between males and females (including children) than between husbands and wives. Also, in our investigation of kinship roles as a source of responsibilities and support, we found that nonresident kin often play a role in decisions and tasks that other studies have presented as affairs of the individual household.

Although we emphasize changes brought about by migration that seem to have a bearing on women's domestic roles, it should not be forgotten that other factors may be at work. Changes in what Fortes calls the "cycle" of the domestic group (1966), such as the appearance or departure of children, may influence task-sharing and decision-making. Blood presents data from the United States showing that over time, men tend to leave more and more daily household decisions to their wives (1972:428). What might be construed as an increase in wives' power may have less to do with women asserting themselves than with male withdrawal from domestic affairs. This last finding also suggests that participants' perceptions of how and why roles have changed should be taken into account. Though our interviews were not oriented to eliciting explanations of changes, these were often supplied spontaneously by the women themselves.

Finally, we cannot purport to offer conclusive confirmation or negation of hypotheses concerning the impact of wage labor on domestic relationships, in that we did not study a control group of immigrant women who were not engaged in wage work. Thus, we offer our comparisons with others' research findings in a tentative spirit. Our major aim, given the exploratory character of the study, is to depict as faithfully as possible the interweaving of many and various factors in our subjects' histories that appear to have a bearing on the issue.

MARKET WORK BEFORE MIGRATION

A number of writers have called attention to the fact that the productive roles of women in less developed nations are often underestimated or ignored by government planners and international development agencies (Arzipe 1977; Ferchiu 1983; Michel 1983; Rogers 1980). Often, female cultivators are defined as "wives of cultivators," and are not considered "economically active." At

the same time, urban women working in the "informal sector"—e.g., street vendors and home-based pieceworkers—are likely to be missing from official statistics. Thus, it seems all the more important to underscore the point that immigrant women workers often have some experience of income-producing labor before migration.

This is, in fact, the case for virtually all the women included in our study. Greek and Portuguese respondents were mostly of peasant background, and some were obliged to seek work as domestics or in industry in the city. Those who remained in rural villages after reaching adulthood had participated in a wide range of agricultural tasks on a daily basis (e.g., tending animals, cultivating kitchen gardens, gathering firewood), as well as lending a hand in the peak season. Such work was commonly described as "helping" husbands or fathers. Married women often took over the management of the peasant enterprise for long periods after their husbands emigrated to Canada. Typically, the married peasant woman supplements the household's cash income by crafts such as sewing, knitting, or embroidery, or by piecework done at home.

Most of the Colombian and Haitian women interviewed had spent the greater part of their lives in towns and cities. Some practiced the "feminine" crafts mentioned above, while others were active in small commercial endeavors. In the latter case, Haitian women usually worked alone (e.g., as street vendors), while the Colombians worked for a family enterprise (e.g., a shoe repair shop). Women who earned cash by work outside the home tended to see their income as a necessary contribution to household subsistence. They also tended to be women who were either single and childless, or separated mothers of children.

In a number of cases, income-producing work was carried out in the service of a family enterprise (whether peasant or commercial), and involved no remuneration. Those Portuguese and Haitian women who worked as live-in domestics received only a token wage above their keep and, in several Haitian cases, none at all. In all, about a fourth of the women had been employed in the formal sector at some point, mostly in textile manufacture, food processing, or service jobs, and this usually during young adulthood. After marriage, women who engaged in market labor usually worked in their homes producing crafts or piecework, or for the family enterprise.

Few of the women interviewed had more than a primary school education: four years or less for the Haitians and the Portuguese, and about seven years for the Colombians and the Greeks. Distance from schools, poverty, and negative parental attitudes concerning the education of daughters were frequently cited reasons for terminating studies. Most of the respondents received some training in sewing or related crafts, as these were usually

considered the most useful and appropriate skills for girls to acquire.

DOMESTIC RELATIONSHIPS AND COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

Nuclear family households are the norm in the Greek and Portuguese accounts of life in the country of origin. In some cases, these households were truncated by the absence of a spouse who had already emigrated, but who was still regarded as head of the household. In both instances, collateral ties were of secondary importance for day-to-day mutual aid, a finding confirmed by ethnographic accounts (see Cutileiro 1977 on the Portuguese, and Campbell 1964 on Greek kinship patterns). However, mutual aid among adult siblings and between parents and adult children is often considerable, especially among the Portuguese. Though housekeeping tasks tended not to be shared, a mother, mother-in-law, or sister residing in proximity could usually be counted on for help with children. Since most of the Greek and Portuguese women who were married before emigrating based their remunerative activities in the home, the need for such help tended to be occasional. Men's participation in household and child-related tasks was minimal, and was usually limited to household repairs.

Although it is difficult to reconstruct decision-making patterns several years after the fact, it appears that Portuguese women, though often influential in decisions such as those pertaining to emigration or children's schooling, generally regarded the husband or father as head of the household. In a number of cases, the male head controlled all cash transactions and was given all wages earned by other members of the household. In several cases, the wages of young girls working as domestics were paid directly to their fathers. It was also common among the cases we studied for wives to take over responsibility for administering the budget while still leaving final say for any major expenditures to the husband. Unmarried women might save a portion for their trousseau and contribute the rest to the parental household. After marriage, earnings were likely to be small, and were usually absorbed in daily expenses for food and clothing.

In nearly all cases, Portuguese women consulted their husbands about any leisure activities outside the household. However, the presence of kin in the vicinity allowed many legitimate excursions to which husbands were unlikely to object. Unmarried women usually resided with parents, and although mothers sometimes colluded with daughters to facilitate outings without the father's knowledge, fathers were seen as holding ultimate authority over daughters' activities, including employment. Women whose husbands had emigrated took over responsibility for daily decisions without usually infringing on the husband's traditional power, as he was normally consulted on "important" matters (in-

cluding daughters' social activities, children's schooling, and major expenses). Several women mentioned the weight of community surveillance and criticism (*critica*), which seemed to have been as important as the husband's authority in limiting women's social activities to the sphere of church and family.

The picture emerging from the accounts of Greek women is roughly the same, although here the role of older brothers was apparently more prominent. In the past, elder brothers were partly responsible for assuring their sisters' dowries, and they continue to have considerable authority over, and responsibility for, the behavior of their sisters in public. This finding coincides with Campbell's ethnographic observations (1964:178-79; see also Papajohn and Spiegel 1974:180). Again, the husband/father is likely to have financial control over the household income (including the wages of co-resident adult sons and daughters), even though his wife may administer the budget.

Judging from our subjects' accounts, Berkowitz' assessment of women's domestic position in southern Italy seems to apply to rural Greece and Portugal as well: "Few sensitive ethnographers would deny that women actually exercise more power and influence in the household than the notion of patriarchy indicates" (1984: 87). Berkowitz also notes that although women often "hold the family purse strings" and "participate actively" in family discussions, they have "essentially a derivative or indirect power and influence . . ." (ibid.).

Haitian and Colombian women, speaking of their lives before migration, make it clear that housework, cooking, and children were almost exclusively women's work in their milieux of origin, and that men's contributions were confined, at most, to repairs. However, women's domestic work was much more likely to be shared on a daily basis, given the prevalence of households comprising several adult women. Browner's research (1983:501) among working-class women in Cali, Colombia, a city from which a number of our respondents originate, indicates that the arrival of children often precipitates abandonment by the husband (legal divorce is virtually non-existent in Colombia).

In extended-family households, housework and child care were usually shared among the women and girls. In addition, Haitian women often had live-in domestic help, made possible by the tradition of placing the destitute with marginally better off relatives, and by the extremely low cost of female labor (some of the Haitians interviewed had themselves been live-in domestics).

Nuclear households among the Colombians tended to follow the pattern described above for the Portuguese, whereby formal authority was vested in the husband/father, and a wife's power was based on her ability to influence decisions. However, when the husband/father figure was deceased or absent, decisions were

usually made jointly among adults, with a mother or an elder sibling often playing a paramount role. In Haitian matrifocal households, the senior woman usually acted as head and chief decision-maker, although males might exercise control to the extent that they made financial contributions (e.g., a nonresident father who was financing his child's education could decide where, and for how long, the child could go to school). Among our Haitian respondents, legal marriages had been more the exception than the rule in Haiti. Most of these respondents were themselves the offspring of temporary (and often, extra-residential) unions.

THE DECISION TO EMIGRATE

Besides revealing patterns of authority, control, and influence in the family, the way the decision to emigrate is made may set the stage for relationships for some time thereafter. Space does not permit a full discussion of the various ways that relatives already established in Québec, who usually have played an important role in the decision to come to Canada, assisted new migrants upon their arrival. Whether they were spouses, parents, adult siblings, sons, or daughters, these already established immigrants could lend or give money for the trip, offer food, clothing, and shelter, and assist in finding a job and in dealing with immigration officials and legal sponsors.

Most of the Portuguese women in our study had arrived with or after their husbands. In several cases, they had come to marry a man chosen, with their consent, by parents or emigrant brothers. Almost never was the decision to emigrate taken unilaterally by the husband. Most of the women had been eager to emigrate, and some had in fact persuaded husbands to do so (see Note 9). One woman recounts:

> I was working and my husband was working overtime, but often I was angry because he worked so much. Yet when we got to the end of the month with 500 *escudos* left over, it was because of his overtime. . . . It was I who insisted [on leaving]; I influenced him to come abroad. . . . He was a very hard worker, but from one end of the year to the other, he couldn't sleep late a single morning. That's what upset me . . . (Portuguese, thirty-seven years old, two children, home-based pieceworker, nine years residence in Québec).

It should be added that a number of those coming as married women had relatives of their own in Montréal whose encouragement and readiness to provide assistance influenced the couple's decision. Cutileiro (1977) notes a certain tendency to matrilocality in rural Portugal that our data suggests may be perpetuated, to some degree, in the migration to Québec.

The Greek women who participated in the study also came to Québec, for the most part, as wives or fiancées. In this respect, they seem to be following the long-established pattern of rural to urban migration in Greece, whereby women rarely left their natal villages except to join their husbands (Friedl 1976:372-373). Unlike their Portuguese counterparts, the Greek women arriving as spouses of immigrants seldom had close relatives of their own in Montréal. *Grosso modo*, the roles of husbands, fathers, or brothers in our Greek respondents' decisions to emigrate seem somewhat more preeminent than among the Portuguese.

Actually, in a number of cases, the decision to emigrate was not taken by the women themselves at all. Rather, they came against their will, as they see it, at the behest of the husband or under parental pressure to accept an arranged marriage with an emigrant living in Québec. "Irene," twenty-six years old and living in Montréal for two years, left her job in a textile factory in Greece in order to care for a sick brother living in Montréal:

> What made me come was my brother's situation, because of his bad health. . . . My parents sent me here with the plan that I should come and take him back to Greece. . . . He had fallen ill and after that, two years later, his wife left him and went away. . . . After that, my sister took him in for six months because he wasn't capable of taking care of himself . . . but she couldn't go on helping him that way . . . because she has her own family. . . . She has two children and he wants his quiet, he wants everything. He is like a little kid. . . . So I was obliged, since I didn't have any personal affair, I didn't have a family, in other words, I was independent . . . I came here. I talked to him about going back, but he didn't want to. . . . Because he's used to it here, his child is here . . . (twenty-six years old, single, two years residence in Québec).

Haitian women workers in Canada are part of a new, post-1970 type of migration where women predominate, as noted earlier. Also, most of our respondents, though of rural origin and keeping close ties in the countryside, have spent much of their lives in urban environments marked by a prevalence of matrifocal households and high conjugal instability. Given all of this, it is probably not surprising that senior women, i.e., mothers, aunts, and guardians-employers (*tutrices*), have played a decisive role in the emigration of a number of the Haitians interviewed. To give but one example, "Martine" arrived in Québec at the age of twenty-four. Most of her childhood was spent in the care of a paternal aunt because her widowed mother had remarried, and:

> . . . her new husband didn't like us [Martine and her two brothers] very much. So my aunt, who is also my godmother, took me in with her. Since I was a child, I knew affection only from my aunt, not from my mother (thirty-three years old, nine years residence in Québec).

Nonetheless, her mother sent regular financial support from her wages as a hotel chambermaid in Freeport in the Bahamas. Later, the aunt emigrated to the United States and, in consultation with Martine's mother, arranged for Martine and her sister to come to Montréal (entry into the United States was too difficult). Five years later, Martine and her Haitian-born husband, whom she met in Montréal, brought her mother to join them. She now lives with them and looks after their children while they work.

Less commonly, the woman's migration might be the result of the husband's decision. One of the most striking elements in the Haitians' accounts of the decision to emigrate is the fact that this decision is so rarely presented as one taken by the couple. Rather than constituting a couple project, emigration appears more often as women's response to male partners' economic unreliability and sexual infidelity (which usually means that his slender resources are spread among several households). In cases where women did come at the husband's behest, they did not see it as a matter of "choice." Significantly, of the four groups studied, Haitians most frequently mentioned hunger as a motive for migration.

For most, economic responsibility for children and/or other needy relatives was a major consideration:

> They [relatives in Haiti] were all glad I left. Because the first person to leave would help the others and so on down the line (Haitian, forty-three years old, thirteen years residence in Canada).

How Colombian women decide to emigrate seems to depend a great deal on their marital situation and household arrangements in Colombia, judging by our data. The minority who were married and left with (or to join) husbands saw emigration as the couple's decision, even though the husband seems to have played the major role in these cases:

> My husband had a sister here, arrived thirteen years before. She wrote to him saying there was lots of work here and that maybe it would be good if he came to work here for two or three years, and that he could save at least half the money to buy house in Bogotá. . . . My husband said sometimes he was going, sometimes that he wasn't. Finally he decided to come here. . . . He was

> four years alone here. Then he asked if we [the respondent and her three children] wanted to come, or if he should go back to Colombia. We told him to stay (eventually the family settled in Montréal; Colombian, forty years old, three years residence in Québec).

Most of the Colombians interviewed were single, separated, or widowed at the time of departure. In these cases, the nuclear family of origin was usually influential in the decision, and assisted financially and in other ways. One young woman, the second youngest of twelve children who lived with her parents in Colombia, explains:

> When my mother died there were three of us younger children still at home. One of my brothers had been living here for ten years. So he decided to take charge of us so that we could get out of the hole we were in. But especially because of my other brother who was, as they say, in an even deeper hole. . . . He needed us, the younger ones, and his papa [to go with him]. It wasn't really a decision. We couldn't refuse to go (the respondent's father came to Québec, but was unable to adapt, and so returned to Colombia; Colombian, twenty years old, one and one-half years residence in Québec).

The influence of the nuclear family of origin was evident even among married women. Norma (see Note 10), nineteen years old when she left Colombia, attributes the decision for her emigration to her mother, and to her brothers and sisters already in Montréal. Her mother, a widow, sold the family home to pay the airfare for herself, Norma, and Norma's fiancé. Another married Colombian, Eulalia, the mother of six children, came to Canada largely because of her sister's influence, but also for her husband's sake:

> It was my sister who took the initiative. Since she already here, and had married here, she wanted us to come and see the place for ourselves . . . (Colombian, forty-one years old, ten years residence in Québec).

Some of our Colombian respondents were themselves the initiators of a family chain of migration that later brought their siblings to Canada. Even when a Colombian woman comes alone, with no relatives already in Canada, the decision is likely to be a collective one. Alicia, thirty-five at the time, wanted to emigrate because, she recounts, her attempts to support her aged parents, four siblings, and son with a shoe repair shop inherited from her husband were "a failure." Loans from her mother and sister as well as the proceeds from the sale of a television set her brother won in a lottery paid her passage.

Finally, a few of the Colombians interviewed cite the influence of adult children already in Québec as the most important factor in their choice to migrate. Overall, the Colombians' accounts give a great deal of evidence for the involvement of adult members of the nuclear family in the decision to migrate and in the practical aspects of migration. In comparison to the other three groups, the roles of siblings are particularly pronounced, and many of our respondents appear to be links in a chain migration of brothers and sisters.

This review of how the women in our study decided to come to Québec, or had the move decided for them, has been presented in order to illustrate decision-making processes in the context of origin. At the risk of stating the obvious, it seems important to emphasize several points in light of the existing literature on family power and migrant women. First, very few of the women studied could have migrated without the accord and help of other family members—although which kin were usually most involved varied from one to another of the four groups. Second, even when women followed their husbands in the migration process, they did not usually see the couple's migration as the husband's decision alone (see Note 11), though they might portray their own role as one of agreeing with or influencing the husband's decision.

Haitians were more likely than women of the other three groups studied to speak of their emigration as the result of being "sent for" by other individuals, whether these were husbands, mothers, guardians, or employers. This may be related to the fact that the Haitians were by far the poorest of the four groups. The women who reported that they came to Québec because someone "sent for" them were usually already completely dependent on remittances from that individual. Laguerre notes that Haitians abroad tend to invest in helping relatives emigrate when possible rather than sending remittances (1978:422). This seems to us to be another indicator of the extent of economic need in the milieu of origin (see Note 12).

Finally, the decision to emigrate sometimes represents, for our respondents, a challenge to traditional paternal authority, or a solution to problems in couple relationships. Of course, this alternative may create problems of its own. A young Greek woman eager to join her older brothers in Québec now finds their tutelage more restrictive than her parents'. One of the Colombians, deserted by her husband for another woman, was persuaded to emigrate by her grown children in Canada. Yet the children objected when she chose to marry one of their friends, a man seventeen years younger than herself. Still another Colombian decided to break with her erstwhile husband and bring her three young sons to Montréal to be near her parents. In Montréal, she has quarreled with her father and hardly speaks to him. Now living with a new "fiancé," she says she must manage alone without the help of her family.

The next section of this paper will examine changes that occur after migration in women's domestic position regarding the division of household labor and women's participation in decision-making. As much as possible, our discussion will take into account the changed context of kinship and household created by emigration.

DOMESTIC TASK-SHARING IN QUÉBEC

As explained earlier, nearly all of the women we interviewed carried out some kind of income-producing work before emigrating to Canada. With immigration, the structure and context of such extra-domestic labor changed in several important ways. First, the distance between home and the locus of remunerative labor has increased for most of the married or cohabiting women (see Note 13). Second, both the workplace and the workday associated with it are likely to be more rigidly structured than was the case in the country of origin. For example, children cannot be attended to, nor can women leave during "working hours" to respond to domestic demands. Third, the pace of work is likely to be much faster and less amenable to determination by the worker, something noted even by women doing home-based piecework in both contexts. Fourth, in Québec, these women are likely to earn wages that represent a far greater proportion of household cash income than was the case in their countries of origin.

Before emigration, few women living with a spouse worked outside the home unless they worked in a nearby family enterprise. In Québec, women's earnings are often required for many reasons, including greater cash needs in the context of an advanced capitalist society, husbands' vulnerability to unemployment, debts incurred in the process of migration, and (especially for Haitians and Colombians) the obligation to support dependents in the country of origin or to help them emigrate. Nearly all of the married and cohabiting respondents in the study reported that their income went for the family's food and clothing needs—not "extras," as Whitehead found in a study of working-class English households (1981; see Note 14). It should also be added that nearly a third of those interviewed have no support from a male breadwinner, including those who are single, separated, divorced, or widowed; those whose spouses remained in the country of origin; and those whose husbands are ill or unemployed. Several of the women share expenses on an equal basis with siblings.

At the same time that wage work becomes more demanding of the female immigrant's time, energy, and physical presence, her traditional resources for coping with domestic demands are likely to diminish. Most had previously lived with or near a number of female relatives who could be counted on for help as needed. Now, these same women are likely to live in nuclear family households. Even when female relatives live nearby, they themselves are

likely to face similar constraints with respect to wage work and family responsibilities. As one woman described it:

> Of course things change a bit, because everyone is always busy; it's not the same anymore (Colombian, sixty years old, seven years residence in Québec).

A substantial minority, or about twenty percent of the women in our study, share the same roof with another adult woman, most often a mother or sister whose passage and living expenses have been paid by the respondent herself. Others, including most of the Haitian mothers and some of the Colombians, have left children with a mother or sister in the country of origin. Some Haitians have even sent infants born in Québec to Haiti. But most commonly, housework and child care become "nuclearized" affairs of the individual household, to be accomplished by the woman herself with or without the collaboration of other nuclear family members.

Our subjects' accounts show considerable variation in the organization of the sexual division of domestic labor in the Québec context. However, two general patterns emerge: (1) men and boys are likely to participate to some degree in tasks that were defined as "women's work" in the society of origin; (2) women, nonetheless, have much greater responsibility for these tasks.

Although it is unusual, some men participate in the full range of domestic tasks:

> When I worked in the steel plant, I got off at 4:30 p.m. and had time to get home and do everything. When my husband arrived, he found supper ready and he always helped me. . . .
>
> Now, when I come back from work I don't have problems either because he's out of work. He does everything and when I arrive, the meal is ready. . . . He takes care of our daughter during the day (Colombian, twenty-four years old, garment factory worker, five years residence in Québec).
>
> He does the food shopping, the vacuuming, washes the kitchen floor, and I do the rest. Sometimes on weekends I don't have the energy to clean house, so he does it all by himself. I do laundry, ironing, dishes, cooking. He takes care of the car (the respondent does not drive), does the repairs in the apartment . . . (Haitian, thirty-three years old, slaughterhouse worker, two children, nine years residence in Québec).

In the few cases where men participate in a wide range of domestic tasks, one of two factors is usually present: (1) the

woman has changed marital partners since arriving in Québec; or (2) her husband has been unemployed or out of the work force for some time due to disability. Most often, men limit themselves to caring for children while their wives are at work. Some couples alternate working hours to save on child care expenses.

Men's contributions in other areas are usually occasional and perfunctory:

> My husband helps with the cooking . . . if he has the time and patience . . . once in a while . . ." (Portuguese, forty years old, seamstress, two children, thirteen years residence in Québec).

With few exceptions, cooking, cleaning, and child care are still defined as "women's work." This is evidenced by the fact that women usually describe husbands' and children's contributions as "helping" her. These same women often describe their own wage work, even when it is full-time, as "helping" their husbands support the family. It is also telling that in all four of the ethnic categories studied, when more than one woman is present, men and boys rarely do *any* of the above-mentioned tasks. Furthermore, when the husband's income permits, women are likely to seek part-time work or piecework to do at home so that they may better adjust their schedules to household demands. Husbands of women who leave full-time jobs outside the home for one or the other of these alternatives are likely to reduce their domestic participation accordingly.

Moreover, many of the women who have taken on full-time jobs still do all cleaning and cooking by themselves, and possibly food shopping as well. As children grow older, men who have "helped" in the past may do less than before, as several women whose children are now in school report. This appears to be a widespread pattern in North America (Blood 1972). Once again, it also indicates the possible importance of this phase in the household life cycle as a factor in conditioning task-sharing arrangements.

DECISION-MAKING: CHANGES AND CONTINUITY

Some of our subjects' histories indicate that the migration process itself may affect household/family decision-making patterns, in that the individual who initiates a family chain may carry more weight than before, at least for some time. Several Colombians and Haitians, all single, mention an older sister not co-resident with them as the final arbiter of major decisions, such as costly purchases or a change of residence (see Note 15). Several of the Haitian respondents have themselves played such a role in relation to other family members, such as sisters or mothers who followed them to Québec.

We have already alluded to instances among the Greeks where migration has entailed the substitution of a brother's or husband's authority for that of the father. A few Portuguese and Greek women cite the husband's brother who received the couple initially as having decided, for example, where the woman would work or that she did not "need" language classes.

Among married women, the most marked changes in decision-making patterns (as well as task-sharing, discussed earlier) are usually found in cases where there has been a change of partner or where the male has lost his provider role. An example is Alicia, a thirty-six-year-old Colombian who comes from a family of eight children (five others died at birth) and has lived in Montréal since 1978. Though Alicia's father was given to spending his wages on drink and mistresses, and was uninvolved in the daily practical decisions of the household, he kept close watch over the comings and goings of his wife and daughters. Shortly after Alicia married at the age of seventeen ("the only way to get out of the house"), her husband took her to an ice cream parlor. Such excursions had been so stringently forbidden in her upbringing that "I wept for fear that my father might see me." Within two weeks of the wedding, her husband began to beat her. He began to spend money on drugs and other women.

> My role was to serve him . . . I couldn't say a word to him; there was no discussion . . . it was a terrible life . . . he was one hundred percent "machiste."

The birth of each of her three sons led to separations, the last of which was final.

Alicia came to Montréal in order to be closer to her parents and siblings who were already established here. Now, she lives with her fiancé, also Colombian, whom she describes as being as different from her ex-husband "as day from night." He shares in all the housework except for laundry, which her now teenaged sons do, and ironing. Decisions, including financial ones, are taken together by the couple in consultation with Alicia's sons.

> . . . I had that [first] experience when I was too young. But afterward, with all the time I was alone, I saw that not all couples are the same, not all men are the same. . . . I had all sorts of propositions, but me, I analyzed the person. . . . It only worked out with the one I'm with now. . . . You notice how a man treats others . . . because a "machiste," if he's going out or going to the swimming pool, he has to go alone . . . and when he gets home, you have to serve him and run after him. This one, he's very different. . . .

Forty-seven-year-old Stella came to Canada from a peasant village in Greece nineteen years ago. In Greece, she did all

housework and child care (she has two daughters) in addition to working as a seamstress to earn some cash, and helping her husband in the fields. In her words, "he decided everything," including whether or not she might leave the house and for whom she would vote.

Several years after the couple's arrival in Montréal, Stella's husband was injured in an accident on the job that left him unable to work ever since. Stella now supports the family by doing piecework at home, having found factory work too stressful. She is able to earn more than many pieceworkers because her husband does all her work-related errands, such as picking up materials and delivering finished work. Her husband also "helps" in various household tasks. Major financial decisions are taken by Stella, who has become, in her own eyes at least, "head of the household."

Several of the women whose married life began in Québec report decision-making and task-sharing arrangements that are remarkably egalitarian if compared to the typical patterns of their milieux of origin. This is not, however, to suggest that all first marriages contracted after immigration resemble those just described. In one Portuguese case of this type, the husband beats his wife frequently, spies on her at work (both hold jobs in the same hospital), and confiscates her salary.

When a marriage has been established in the country of origin and the husband's role as primary breadwinner has remained stable, we do not often find major changes in decision-making (see Note 16). Whenever a shift occurs, it is likely to be found in the economic domain; i.e., some wage-earning women take part in major financial decisions from which they were formerly excluded, and most now pay for and make small daily purchases for the household themselves. This seems to confirm Bahr's assertion, cited earlier, that any increased domestic power which is derived from women's wage-earning status will be located in what he calls the "external" domains which are linked directly to their "provider" status (1974:173-175).

The history of Magdalena, a Colombian woman who has lived in Québec for nearly ten years, illustrates our preceding remarks with particular clarity. Thus, we cite her account at some length:

> I had two sisters here and they invited him [her husband] to come. . . . He liked it a lot here, so after a year and a half, I came. . . .
>
> At that time [before her emigration], women didn't work in my country. . . . He kept all the money . . . except he gave me an order slip that allowed me to get what I needed at the store of the factory [where he worked].

He would ask if I needed anything; if I said yes, he would give me an order slip.

[After immigration] we lived close to a garment factory. I accompanied my husband one day when he was taking two Colombian women there because he spoke a bit of French. I told him I wanted to work . . . and the lady who was taking care of us understood and said to me, "You, too, do you want to work?" And I said, "Yes, yes". . . and my husband said, "No, she's not going to work yet, she doesn't feel well." She said, "She can try." I gave it a try and in the end I was the only one who stayed. . . . My husband would have preferred that I not work, but I did anyway. . . .

I used to give the money [her salary] to my husband and he would take care of everything, because I had never worked before. He distributed it; he gave me a bit of money for my expenses because I wanted it. . . . Now he has his account and me, too, I have mine. . . . Each one takes care of his part of the budget. . . . Before I gave it all to him. Now, since the girls are older, they need a lot of little things, so I told myself, with my money I can buy food and with the rest I can get little things for the girls. . . . I do the food shopping because he says, "You know what has to be bought, so pay the food with your money and with what is left over, spend it on the girls and yourself." First I buy the meat, the most expensive thing, then during the next two weeks I get the other things. . . . For bigger things, we decide together . . . (forty-one years old, married, six children).

Magdalena's account is atypical of the study population in that married women's decisions concerning employment are usually taken in accord with the husband. For some of the married women, the husband's preferences were a determining factor:

Well, he decided that I should stay at home to take care of my children, but I also think it's a good idea. . . . It doesn't mean that only he decides; I do too, but he said that it's better if I stay home, and I agree with him (Portuguese, currently unemployed, twenty-nine years old, mother of two children aged four years and two months, sixteen years residence in Québec).

Most of the married Portuguese and Greek women in the study pool their income with their husband's. Like Magdalena, Colombian women often have their own separate accounts. Haitian women living with a spouse are likely to keep separate accounts, and indeed may not know their husband's salary, nor he theirs (see

Note 17). Whatever the case, women's wages usually go toward food and clothing, with major purchases budgeted from the husband's earnings. With few exceptions, this means that husbands will have a greater say in those expenditures. One of the Portuguese women, who did a substantial amount of piecework at home and also managed the budget when she and her husband lived in Lisbon, makes the interesting observation that her husband now controls the budget because the couple has a much greater income than before.

Several women mention that they "consult" or "ask" their husbands before buying something for themselves, while others feel freer than before to make minor purchases for themselves and the household, and express satisfaction about participating in more important budgetary decisions.

> Before [in Colombia] my husband paid for everything. When we got here, it was very difficult and we could barely make it. After that, I began to work. . . . Now I have my own bank account. . . . My husband pays the rent and pays one food shopping trip a month . . . and I take care of the rest. . . . If I want to buy anything, whatever it may be, I do. . . . We buy everything together, I mean the big purchases (Colombian, forty years old, full-time assembly line worker and part-time office cleaner, three years residence in Québec).

No matter how great their say in financial matters, few of the married women ever leave the house without consulting or asking permission of the husband. A Portuguese woman describes the anxiety she felt when her employer asked her to work one evening:

> It was the first time. And I was afraid of my husband, that he'd yell at me because I was leaving at mealtime, at the time that he gets home and the children are there. . . . I never go out and I don't do anything on the sly. But I was a bit afraid . . . he was coming home and counting on me being there and I wasn't . . . but it went okay (office cleaner, forty-six years old, mother of six, three years residence in Québec).

Clearly, this was an exceptional event. Indeed, when asked whether they need the husband's permission to leave the home, a frequent response was, "Where would I go"? For many, their limited hours of leisure are taken up by the family. The woman just cited goes on to explain that her husband, for his part, never goes out without her and the children:

> There are men who like to go out alone, but not him. For him to be happy, he has to be with me and the children.

Though this is not the case for all Portuguese couples in our study, it is only among the Portuguese that we find the ideal of shared leisure clearly expressed by several respondents. Brettell and Callier-Boisvert (1977) found this to be the typical pattern of behavior among Portuguese immigrants in Paris (see Note 18).

Our data on practices and attitudes about fertility control (contraception, abortion, and the decision to have children) are rather sketchy. In most cases for which we have data, these are described either as decisions of the couple or, just as frequently, of the husband alone. Only rarely does the woman regard these as primarily her decisions. Contraceptive pills are rarely used, being seen as dangerous to health; rather, the method most often mentioned is sterilization of the woman, most often by hysterectomy and otherwise by tubal ligation. Indeed, the number of women who report hysterectomies performed in Québec as their "method of birth control" is disquieting, presuming that these are indeed hysterectomies and not tubal ligations. In no case was a vasectomy reported.

> I took contraceptive pills for a while [after the birth of her sixth child]. Then my husband told me that it was giving me headaches and that it would be better to have an operation. . . . Men are very selfish. . . . They can be operated on and yet it's us women who have to do it . . . (Magdalena, Colombian, cited earlier).

> It's him [the husband] who decides [on abortion] because a woman would never want to have an abortion. She would always want to keep her child. . . . The husband has the right to say that he doesn't want any more children . . . one is obliged then to have an abortion (Haitian, twenty-four years old, recently separated, one child, four years residence in Québec).

Many of the women whose first marriage has endured (the majority) see their husband's greater domestic power as normal and even desirable. For example, a forty-four-year-old Haitian woman confirms that her husband orders her about sometimes. "Well, he's a guy, you know."

> It's he who gives the orders, right? He decides. If I think I should give some advice, I do. . . . If I see that it [his decision] isn't a good one, but for him it's good, I agree . . . (Portuguese, forty years old, married, two children, thirteen years residence in Québec).

> The man directs, the woman follows (Greek, twenty-seven years old, married, two children, eight years residence in Québec).

Women who have divorced and remarried since they arrived in Québec contrast the relative egalitarianism of their present unions with their previous experience. Like Alicia, the Colombian woman cited earlier, several of the women in the study report that their present partner was chosen partly because of his more enlightened attitudes and behavior. One woman explains why she will not remarry:

> Oh, I've had plenty of chances here, and in Colombia. Yes, I know that some women marry to save a bit of money, but I don't need a man for that. Now I'm very independent. Having a man would just be a bother. Imagine—having to ask for money to eat and clothe yourself! (Colombian, fifty-six years old, separated, nine years residence in Québec).

Nonetheless, changes in gender relationships are not always experienced without ambivalence, particularly for those recently separated or those remaining in a relationship where such change has been accompanied by deterioration of the emotional bond between the spouses.

> If I were in Haiti I wouldn't have all these problems. . . . Man and woman go by man's law in Haiti. . . . For supporting the woman, he's the one who's supposed to provide everything. Once here [in Québec], he sees that women work, he pushes his wife to earn money like him. Then he doesn't take care of the family anymore. . . . The husband, when he needs money, might ask his wife for it and maybe she refuses. Sometimes he doesn't take care of his wife, doesn't help her in the house. . . . All these things cause problems in the home . . . (Haitian, twenty-four years old, recently separated, one child, five years residence in Québec).

Among the Haitians, we find a number of cases where domestic violence has increased since the couple has been living in Canada. Possibly husbands feel threatened by wives' greater financial autonomy, although this is a factor affecting all four of the groups studied. The Haitian male may experience a particular loss of status in that the wages he earns in Québec would allow him to have numerous mistresses if he were living in Haiti.

The loss of female domestic help from relatives and servants may provoke tensions between partners. Also, as Foner's study of Jamaicans in London suggests, it may leave husbands feeling more vulnerable than before since they may not have a network of female relatives present who will be ready to provide domestic services in the event of a separation (see Note 19).

Even women who are pleased with changes in the marital relationship may at the same time need to contend with a felt loss of power in another sphere—e.g., they may feel less able to control their children in the new environment, a preoccupation voiced by a number of mothers. Several women attribute this to "modernization" rather than immigration, pointing to difficulties which parents now experience in the home society. As we have pointed out elsewhere, immigrant women may feel a more generalized loss of control over their lives, owing to the more structured and pressured "double workday" in Québec (Meintel et al. 1987).

On the other hand, women whose wage labor in Québec has not led to greater egalitarianism or satisfaction in the marriage, may nonetheless focus on other rewards linked to wage work. Lucia, a thirty-four-year-old Portuguese woman, has a double workday that goes from 6:30 a.m. to 11:00 or 11:30 p.m. every weekday. She feels "more distant" from her husband, who does virtually no tasks around the house. Yet she declares, "I'm not a slave," because she manages to go to the country on weekends with her husband and to take a seaside vacation every summer. Another Portuguese woman sees her work in a garment factory as her only social outlet and her only respite from the surveillance of a jealous husband, who becomes angry if she so much as sings at a gathering of compatriots. "I'd work overtime if we didn't live so far away," she declares. Others among the Greek and Portuguese, as we have mentioned, derive pride from "helping" their husbands support the household.

Probably because of the high incidence of conjugal instability in their respective milieux of origin, Colombian and Haitian women are the most likely to express the value of employment opportunities gained by migration in terms of the greater autonomy they afford.

> Even if I spend it all [her salary], it's by my hand that it is spent (Haitian, thirty years old, cohabiting, two years residence in Québec).

> I feel more independent here. In Colombia I was always dependent on my brothers; besides that, I didn't help much [financially] at home. Here, one works, one manages better, one can make decisions. . . . I used to think of getting married so I could leave home, but now I don't think that way . . . (Colombian, single, twenty years old, residing with her mother and brother, two years residence in Québec).

The Colombians, in particular, were likely to comment on the "better" position of women in Québec society, as did a few of the others:

> Down there in my country, they [men] don't do a thing. They're always in the street. Not like here where the men are well-behaved. Here they change; in my country, no . . . (Colombian, thirty-one years old, single, six years residence in Québec).

> Men in Colombia, and I think in all of Latin America, don't help. You have to put the plate in their hands, give them their clothes all ready and do everything for them. . . . It's here in Canada that one can have a real husband. . . . The Colombian woman, even if she works, is completely repressed. . . . For the woman there is no cinema, no discotheque . . . no rest, not a flower. . . . Here it's totally different (Colombian, forty years old, married, six children, eleven years residence in Québec).

CONCLUSIONS

Probably the most important question emerging from our data is the same one that has preoccupied many researchers working among nonimmigrant populations: "Why is it that married women's financial contributions to the household do not result in greater change in task-sharing and decision-making patterns?" The expectation that women's wage labor should change their position in the domestic sphere largely rested on the supposition that decision-making power (including decisions about task-sharing) is based on the "resources" that each individual contributes to the household, and that women's wages as a new "resource" would foster greater egalitarianism between husband and wife (see, for example, Scanzoni 1978). Rubin has pointed out that this position rests on a devaluation of the contribution women have been making all along—i.e., their unpaid domestic labor (1976:175-176). Rubin's critique applies all the more to the women in our study, many of whom contributed as unpaid laborers to family subsistence in their countries of origin. Yet as Rubin observes, this devaluation is a pervasive one, often shared by women themselves, as in the phrase, "just a housewife." By the same token, holding a job and earning wages can make a woman *feel* more useful, and thus lead to greater independence (Rubin 1976:176).

Although a number of our respondents bear out this last assertion, there is also evidence in our study to suggest that women's contributions through wage work, like their domestic work, can be rendered less visible, and their importance minimized, such that their impact on domestic relationships is less than might be expected. For example, budgetary patterns are one mechanism whereby women's financial contributions may be largely "neutralized" insofar as their consequences for domestic power are concerned. The fact that both spouses *see* the woman's wages as going toward food and children's clothing is likely to limit

her influence over other, more substantial expenditures, even though these are made possible partly through her earnings. Also, this budgetary division reinforces the image of women's wage work as an extension of preexisting roles such as cooking and child care. Whitehead adds that the confounding of women's individual needs with those of the children in the household budget tends to encourage "maternal altruism," whereby mothers are likely to sacrifice themselves in order to better provide for their children (1981:107). Indeed, such "altruism" seems obligatory for those of our subjects who never purchase anything for themselves without first consulting their husbands. It would be worthwhile to investigate whether or not nonimmigrant households' budgetary patterns have a similar camouflaging effect on women's contributions and sacrifices.

Our data tend to confirm other studies which propose that when changes in task-sharing and decision-making occur in conjunction with women's wage earning, they are likely to be found in areas which are most directly affected by the women's employment; e.g., child care as opposed to housework, and financial decisions as opposed to those concerning freedom of movement or contraception. Also, many of our interviews give the impression that changes in actual behavior by either spouse may not have immediate effects on the normative level, insofar as they are conceived of in terms of one spouse "helping" the other (see Rubin 1976:228-229; see also Note 7). When seen as "helping" the wife, male participation in housework or child care takes on a provisional, *ad hoc* character. A similar situation applies to the wage labor of women who are defined as thus "helping" their husbands, no matter how necessary their financial contributions may be.

The status of immigrant women in the household may be affected by certain factors related to migration, including language. Nearly all the married and cohabiting women in our study assessed their spouse's linguistic abilities in French or English as superior to their own. It seems likely that this perception reflects reality insofar as this is typical of many immigrant populations (see Thorne and Henley 1975:276-279 for details on several studies that bear this out). A major reason for this difference between our own respondents and their spouses, besides the fact that many of the men have lived longer in Québec, is the much more restricted access which women are given to government-sponsored language programs. Either the women have entered Canada as "dependents" of their husbands, no matter how incongruent this categorization may be with their economic activities before and after migration, and are thus ineligible for such programs, or they have already found work and are thus deemed not to "need" language training. Still others in our study have been refused entry on various specious grounds (e.g., Magdalena, quoted earlier, was refused access to a Québec government-sponsored language program because she "could learn from the children"). In

addition, the fact that most of the married women in our study are still responsible for child care, at least during the hours they are not working outside of the house, and in a number of cases, husbands' objections to wives going out in the evening, may impede women from taking low-cost evening courses. Disparity of linguistic competence between husbands and wives adds new reinforcement to the husband's position as head of household. As Harris writes, "The authority located in a household head is not intrinsic to relations between household members, but must be sought in wider social structures" (1981:59).

Several researchers have noted that immigrant ghettos and kinship networks may encourage a certain rigidification of norms, thus making the immigrant milieu more resistant to change than the society of origin (Saifullah-Khan 1976:233; Taboada-Leonetti 1983:217). Our data do not permit a full investigation of the impact of kin networks in the Québec context on women's position in the household. However, we note interesting differences between the Portuguese and the Greek women in our study. Unlike the Haitians and Colombians, Portuguese and Greek women are likely to have been married when they arrived in Québec. While Portuguese women are more likely than Greek women to have relatives of their own in Montréal, they more frequently report continuity in patterns of task-sharing and decision-making. Also, a few of the Greek women, but none of the Portuguese, have been divorced since their arrival.

By continuing to take on the same domestic responsibilities ascribed to women in their countries of origin, and insofar as they accept the same domestic power arrangements, immigrant women may in a sense be acting as buffers for their families for the stress of change and the incursions on identity which emanate from their new context. This point is intimated in several of the interviews; e.g., the Colombian who refers to her husband's new domestic participation as reflecting his exceptional ability to "adapt." Meanwhile, another Colombian sympathetically recounts her husband's dismay at having to handle dirty laundry in his hotel job, considered by both as demeaning to his masculinity. Many women do their utmost to arrive home before their husbands and to have supper prepared for his arrival. A number of women lament that employment outside the home does not allow them to continue ethnic culinary habits during the week, and state that they try to compensate for this on weekends.

Finally, we should not forget the positive impact of women's wage-earning capacities which were remarked upon so vividly by widowed, single, separated, and divorced women. Now, these women have the choice of deferring or refusing marriage without the indignity and loss of autonomy of having to depend on others because they are able, however minimally, to support themselves. And, although married women do not enjoy the measure of increased decision-making power or relief from domestic responsibilities

that would seem warranted by their new financial contributions and obligations related to employment (e.g., the pressure of time constraints is often a hardship), they nonetheless value whatever autonomy and other satisfactions wage work allows. At the same time, however, their accounts by and large lead us to believe that the gender division of power and labor in the household finds its logic less in any calculation of the actual "contributions" made by each partner than in the different evaluations accorded their respective contributions. That is, women's new financial contributions can be obscured and devalued, just as their unpaid labor at the service of the household has been in the past. Under what circumstances this does or does not take place remains to be explored.

NOTES

1. We wish to mention the contribution of our research assistants, who carried out the interviews on which our study is largely based: Monique Dauphin, Nora di Negri, Rosemay Eustache, Irène Furnaris, Ilda Januario, Cecelia Millan, Maria Salvador, and Popi Solterun. Acknowledgments are also due to Andrée Demers, a sociologist who participated in the early phases of the study, and to Denise Desrosiers, who has provided us with useful demographic analyses.

2. "Purdah" refers to the extreme form of sex role differentiation and segregation of the sexes practiced in Pakistan. For a more complete description, see Saifullah-Khan (1976:224-230).

3. The authors' discussion focuses on families where the wife/mother remains in the home. Men's loss of control over internal affairs of the household in the American context is attributed to longer absences from home because of work and to the greater distance between home and the workplace (Papajohn and Spiegel 1974:189).

4. The same is observed by Brettell and Callier-Boisvert among Portuguese immigrants in France (1977:175).

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6. The higher proportion of females among immigrants in recent years may be partly accounted for by increasing demands in the service sector of the economies of receiving countries. See Portes and Walton (1981) and Mortimer and Bryce-Laporte

(1981) for discussions of recent trends in immigration to the United States.

7. Québec census figures for the period 1968-1980 show ninety-one males per hundred females for Haitians arriving in Québec, and only eighty-eight males per hundred females for Colombians.

8. In 1981, 49.8 percent of all immigrant women in Québec are categorized as "economically active" in the census. However, this does not include the many who work "under the table" as domestics and as pieceworkers at home.

9. We suggest, in other words, that the role of many Portuguese women in the decision for the husband or the couple to migrate is often an active one that goes beyond mere "acceptance" of the husband's decision, as Apalhão and da Rosa put it (1979:128).

10. All proper names of women interviewed are pseudonyms.

11. Those who did describe their migration as decided by the husband alone were usually divorced from him by the time of the study.

12. The Haitian women interviewed in our study seemed oriented to helping able-bodied close relatives to migrate, particularly mothers and sisters; however, they also sent considerable aid to such relatives, who were not always able to emigrate themselves, and lesser sums to a wide range of collaterals and fictive kin.

13. This is probably true for men as well (see Note 3).

14. The difference between the two cases seems more subjective and ideological than concrete. That is, the "extras" mentioned by Whitehead's subjects include holidays, consumer goods, and clothing. For her subjects, this meant that "if the wife's income disappears, then the family does not have a level of compulsory expenditures to keep up" (1981:106). Our subjects see their earnings as going for "necessities," but nonetheless tend to regard their income as an adjunct to the husband's.

15. Before migration, husbands and fathers determined such decisions in these cases. Even if a brother is also present in Montréal, the sister's authority may prevail if she has arrived earlier.

16. Brettell and Callier-Boisvert suggest that the same may be true among Portuguese couples in France (1977:175).

17. Foner found that among Jamaicans in London, typically neither spouse knew the other's salary and each kept a separate bank account (1978:67). Perhaps this is a Caribbean pattern which is linked to patterns of conjugal instability and women acting as breadwinners for themselves and their children.

18. They attribute this to a lack of the "males only" spaces for recreation available to men in Portugal—e.g., Portuguese bars and cafes (1977:166). This is less the case in Montréal, where there are a number of clubs, cafes, and bar-restaurants run by Portuguese, which may be part of the reason why only some of our subjects report all leisure activities as being shared by the couple. One of our Portuguese research assistants adds in a field note that some of the women she knows prefer to live in the suburbs instead of in the central city because this is likely to promote leisure activities by couples rather than by all-male groups.

19. In an essay on the adaptation of Haitian fathers in the United States, Laguerre asserts that their authority is "greatly weakened" because of factors such as "the liberal North American climate, the buying power of women, the environment of apartment life. . . ." Laguerre also mentions the absence of women other than the wife-mother to count on for child care, and the fact that many of the men have been able to immigrate because of their wives, who arrived first (1983:7).

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