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**The Family Organization of Wage and
Education Transitions in Rural Development**

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Social scientists have long recognized the mediating position of families in larger processes of social transformation. Early studies in this century (Ogburn and Tibbets 1933) directed attention to many of the themes that have emerged in more recent studies of family transitions throughout the world (Caldwell 1982; Goode 1970; Thornton and Fricke 1987). The starting point of all of these studies is that in nearly every historically known setting the basic principle of social organization has been the family. Prior to social changes such as increases in schooling, participation in market economies and wage labor, and the mobility associated with urbanization and industrialization a wide range of individual activities was organized along family and kinship lines. Among these activities were those concerned with production and consumption, distribution of goods and services, co-residence, socialization of the young, and the transmission of property. Societies in which the widest range of these activities are organized by kinship may be characterized as having a family mode of organization and social change can be measured by examining the extent to which family versus external organization of these activities continues through time (cf. Caldwell's categorization of societies from 'primitive' through 'traditional' and 'transitional' [1982])..

Until recently, the primary questions addressed by research have tended to focus on the impacts of these changes in family organization on the character and intensity of subsequent family relations themselves. Thus numerous studies from societies as diverse as Euro-American, Chinese, South Asian, and Southeast Asian settings demonstrate that increasing individual participation in non-family organized wage production and schooling alter the balance of intergenerational control over later life course options. In Taiwan, for example, young women's school attainment, participation in wage work, and living experience outside their families is positively associated with greater autonomy of spouse choice, later age at

marriage, and limitation of family size (Thornton et al. 1984). Similar findings from other socio-cultural regions suggest the generality of many of these relationships (Caldwell et al. 1988; Cherlin and Chamratrithirong 1988; Goode 1970).

In spite of these striking similarities from diverse settings, comparative studies suggest that patterns and sequences of change can vary in important ways from society to society. Moreover, longstanding models of social transition associated with "modernization" theory have been shown to be inadequate to explaining social changes occurring in many settings (Thornton n.d.). Even the classic understanding of western transition from extended to nuclear families as motivated by industrialization has been proven inaccurate by revisionist historians who have traced continuities in English family form and sentiment from well before the industrial era through the 19th century (Macfarlane 1979, 1986). Thus, historical and comparative studies have directed attention to the structuring of social change itself by existing family contexts. "Specific aspects of change have varied across settings because of significant pre-existing differences in family structure, residential patterns of children, age at marriage, autonomy of children, and the role of marriage within ramifying systems of kinship and alliance... [C]hanges within the family cannot be understood without considering the family's role in specific cultural and social contexts" (Thornton and Fricke 1987: 770). Equally, the adoption of novel behaviors associated with development cannot be understood without prior attention to the family contexts mediating them.

A new set of questions emerges from these insights. How do existing family systems channel participation in novel activities such as wage labor production and schooling? What are the important dimensions of family organization defining the motivations of decision makers? Such questions draw attention to the multiple contexts--cultural, social, and familial--in which individual decisions are made. They highlight important continuities

in family organization even in those societies experiencing the most dramatic social changes. Finally, they suggest that planned interventions through development programs will be most successful where prior attention is given to the key contextual dimensions affecting individual participation in novel activities.

Although family modes of organization are compatible with various economic strategies such as cottage industry (Tilly and Scott 1987; Medick 1976) and market agricultural production (Brush 1977; Barlett 1982; Kertzer and Hogan 1983), their strongest association is with rural economies that include a high degree of subsistence production. In such settings, one finds household production organized for ends that include reproducing the means of existence and achieving social goals defined along familial lines. It is within such rural subsistence agricultural settings that the dimensions considered here are especially relevant.

Defining Family and Household

Any consideration of family and development must account for the wide variation in family systems noted by comparative social scientists. A key distinction exists between definitions of household and family even though definitional problems remain unresolved by the many researchers considering these issues (Bender 1967; Yanagisako 1979; Hammel 1984; Wilk and Netting 1984). These problems aside, most researchers agree that these two levels of organization be kept conceptually distinct. Here, I limit household to those people, related or not, who identify a single person as having authority in the widest range of decisions in the activities of production, consumption, distribution, and property transmission. The definition encompasses such structural variants as single roofs under which household members co-reside around a single hearth as well as compounds that provide separate living quarters for conjugal units or multiple spouses as described for various Chinese (Cohen 1976) and African (Guyer 1981) settings. It also allows those cases in which multiple units co-reside

under a single roof while producing for separate hearths (see Fricke 1986 for an example) to be divided into separate households.

Family, on the other hand, is a wider network that may encompass household levels of organization in most societies. Here I define family as "a social network, not necessarily localized, that is based on culturally recognized biological and marital relationships" (Thornton and Fricke 1987: 748). This definition approaches the general anthropological understanding of kinship (Barnard and Good 1984) and introduces a number of dimensions along which societies may vary. Key among these are the identity of people having authority to direct other people's activities, the rights and obligations associated with a person's structural position within the family network, and the significance of marriage for organizing inter-familial relationships and wealth flows. Since households are embedded within wider family systems, variable household structures may be thought of as providing differential opportunities for decision makers to attain goals within any given system. The family system is part of the structure of motivations constraining people's participation in wage labor and schooling.

Confusion between household and family levels of organization may lead to a misreading of trends in wage labor and schooling participation. Evidence from South Asia and Taiwan, for example, indicates that households may be structurally nuclear to take advantage of distant wage labor opportunities but retain lateral links with each other to continue a joint economic unit at the family level (Kessinger 1974; Greenhalgh 1985). A single-minded focus on household to the exclusion of family levels of organization also runs the risk of ignoring decision making contexts where lineage structure units families into clan groups, whether matrilineal or patrilineal. Such groupings have been shown to be important to the organization of individual activities in diverse settings including North India and China (Dyson and Moore 1984; Kessinger 1974; Cohen 1976; Thornton

and Fricke 1987). Finally, lack of attention to lateral links between households excludes attention to cooperative relations between households linked by marriage. These may form particularly relevant contexts for decision making in societies characterized by cross-cousin marriage exchanges (Dyson and Moore 1984; Acharya and Bennett 1981; Barnard and Good 1984; Thornton and Fricke 1987).

Variations in Authority, Household Process, and Family Structure

Most social scientists take individual behavior in rural settings to be directed toward strategic ends. These ends are determined in part by the differential authority of household and family decision makers who strive for goals partially motivated by cultural contexts (Sahlins 1972). Appropriate strategies vary by family and gender systems within which production units exist and anthropologists have grouped these into a small number of categories easily incorporated into development plans.

Authority. In most subsistence agricultural systems decision making authority inheres in a single person associated with control over primary productive resources. Where agriculture is central, this person is usually the person who controls household land. In those areas, such as parts of sub-Saharan Africa and Asia (Bledsoe 1980; Acharya and Bennett 1981; Boserup 1970) where small-scale market activities co-exist with subsistence production, authority is often dispersed among household members. Secondary decision makers in these settings are quite often women (March and Taqqu 1986).

Since, in pretransition rural settings characterized by Caldwell as "primitive" and "traditional" (1982: 134-138), the authority of these people crosses activity domains, our understanding of participation in novel behaviors must attend to the interests of those with authority.¹

¹ The differential interests of household members is a complicated subject and this discussion simplifies a complex set of issues involving potential conflicts among household members (cf. Wilk 1990).

Among their interests are sustaining the viability of the productive unit, providing for social security in old age, and fulfilling culturally given social ends (Sahlins 1972). In a wide range of rural subsistence societies, those with authority to decide the activities of household members are senior men controlling land (Caldwell 1982). Their authority is buttressed by (1) the lack of alternatives in pre-transition settings and (2) the expectations of others that they, too, will benefit from the system.

Household Processes. The expected benefits that may accrue to junior members of the household are a function of the aging process and the developmental cycle of households with their implications for the younger generation's assumption of resource control (Fortes 1958). In systems of partible inheritance, where land is nearly equally divided among sons (less often sons and daughters), all sons may eventually expect to acquire authority in their own households. In impartible inheritance systems where a single child inherits these resources, non-inheriting children are potentially disadvantaged and one may expect correspondingly less control over their activities by household seniors. Historical studies in European impartible systems suggest that these non-inheriting children were innovators on their own behalf, often migrating to urban areas or establishing small market enterprises. Most existing rural household contexts in developing societies are characterized by partible inheritance for sons with corresponding control by senior males over their activities.

Family and Gender Systems. Both the goals and the strategies for attaining them are conditioned by the particular family and gender systems within which household decision makers live. While all rural households will attempt to sustain themselves and all senior generation members everywhere will be concerned with social security in old age, other social ends are in part a product of their family system. Decisions about whether to send children into wage labor or schooling in the earliest stages of

transition should be determined by the advantages they confer in achieving these ends. The gender of children is relevant here since, in systems in which women are precluded from control of primary resources, investments in a daughter are not likely to benefit household seniors once she has married. An exception here is in those systems in which part of the future security of seniors is determined by affinal connections made through marriage alliance. In these cases, investing in a daughter's education, for example, may attract more desirable sons-in-law who bring their own advantages to seniors. Such advantages appear to obtain, for example, in South India (Caldwell et al. 1988:). Elsewhere, education of daughters may enhance marriage options for less materially tangible prestige benefits (Fricke et al. 1986). Such cases highlight the importance of family and gender systems for understanding participation in wage labor and education.

Family systems may be broadly reduced to three prevalent kinds with various complications in any empirical case:²

(1) Cognatic systems--lacking unilineal descent groups and strong lineage organization; associated with a greater focus on household levels of organization and greater flexibility or association; in many of these societies, women may control property and provide for the future security of the senior generation; associated with societies in Euro-America and Southeast Asia.

(2) Lineage systems--patrilineal systems in particular, stressing strong cooperative ties among households within lineages but not between groups united by marriage; in many of these systems, where patrilineal, women excluded from property ownership and may lose close association with their natal families after marriage; associated with societies in China and North India.

² Although these terms are common to anthropological studies of kinship, my use departs from the standard.

(3) Alliance systems--systems in which marriage unites lineages or smaller groups into closely cooperative relationships; often associated with cross-cousin marriage; women's property ownership varies across societies, but women retain importance to social security of parents by acting as links between groups; associated with societies in South India, Himalaya, Southwest China, and numerous sub-Saharan groups.

Implications of Family Organization for Individual Activities

Few studies explicitly compare the implications of these three systems for individual participation in activities associated with development. Nevertheless, existing empirical research suggests that family and kinship systems are associated with education, wage labor employment, later ages at marriage, and other development goals, especially for women. The now classic comparative work along these lines is Dyson and Moore's (1984) analysis of women's autonomy in India. For that country they find that northern states associated with lineage forms of family organization show sharply contrasting demographic educational, and wage labor patterns with southern states in which alliance systems prevail. In the north, women are much less likely to engage in family planning, to marry late, to engage in wage labor, and to attend schools than in the south.

Although Dyson and Moore argue that these are outcomes of the greater autonomy of women in cross-cousin marriage settings, this does not explain the motivation of family decision makers to send daughters into schools and wage labor to begin with. If as argued here one needs to look for motivation in terms of the advantages to the senior generation at the initial stages of transition, then the difference between the two settings lies in the extent to which daughters bring benefits to seniors after their marriages. In lineage systems as defined here and prevalent in North India, women are not only lost to the household after marriage, but little cooperative advantage is returned by their marital families. In alliance

systems, on the other hand, women not only continue to provide assistance through frequent post-marital contact with their natal kin, but they also bring along the assistance of in-laws. This differential is potentially reinforced by the frequent association of these systems with contrasting cultural expectations for obligation flows between families. Thus, in lineage systems wife-giving groups are frequently thought to rank lower than and owe obligations to wife-receiving groups while the opposite is generally true of alliance systems.

Along these same lines, we might expect cognatic family systems to structure even greater motivation to encourage daughters' participation in schooling and wage work than alliance systems. This is because they provide greater potential for daughters to contribute to parents after their marriage. Indeed, in some contexts such as Thailand they are positively enjoined to do so. Here comparative data is again thin although one analysis of World Fertility Survey data is suggestive. McDonald (1985: 98) presents aggregate comparisons for countries on the education and pre-marital agricultural work experience of surveyed ever-married women aged 40-49. Although his table does not break respondents into urban and rural samples, these older women are the least likely to be affected by urban transitions. Comparisons for the cognatically organized societies of Thailand and the Philippines and the lineage organized societies of Bangladesh and Pakistan are presented below. Again, in spite of the limitations of these figures for drawing firm conclusions (the samples embody different percentages in strictly rural agricultural environments and different levels of exposure to development schemes), the differentials suggest different motivations for encouraging woman's participation in non-agricultural, non-family organized activities consistent with differences

in family organization.³

	Age By Which 50% Married	% With No Education	% Worked Outside Agriculture Before Marriage
Thailand	19.6	29%	19%
Philippines	20.3	10%	17%
Bangladesh	12.4	85%	1%
Pakistan	15.0	94%	5%

While these data suggest the extent to which differential family systems may structure differences in educational and wage labor participation between groups, studies from within societies make clear that rural transformations occur in their early stages in conformity to the strategic advantages of household decision makers. Recent analyses of family transition since the second world war in Taiwan, for example, show that in spite of increasing participation in schooling across cohorts of rural women, the levels attained are far less than those for women in urban areas (Fricke et al. n.d.).

Where 97% of women in the 1955-59 marriage cohort obtained less than junior high education, only 34% of those in the 1980-84 marriage cohort did so. This compares, however to 87% and 16% for the same cohorts of urban women. These levels are the minimum required by law and education beyond them introduces serious conflict with other household production goals in rural environments. Similarly, participation in non-agricultural wage labor occasioned higher potential conflict with other household activities for rural than urban households. This is clear because higher percentages of rural than urban non-home workers live away from home while working. This incompatibility with other household pursuits helps to explain the lower percentages of women working at non-family jobs in rural than urban

³ I have extracted figures from the McDonald table for the 2 extremes of the family organization continuum. Interested readers should consult his table for other cases, notably Sri Lanka and Indonesia which are more mixed.

areas. Nevertheless, part of the motivation for having daughters participate in wage labor jobs is indicated by the high percentages who turn most of their income over to their parents, consistently higher for rural areas across all cohorts. The potential contribution to family production has been argued as the primary motivation for allowing daughters to work outside the family in Taiwan (Greenhalgh 1985).

Finally, within society research which includes data for both men and women indicates the extent to which gender, life course position, and household structure can affect wage labor participation. In a cluster of rural settlements in Nepal, non-family forms of work were engaged in by at least 60% of all males between the ages of 15 and 40. For women, the highest level of such participation was reached at 41% for women between the ages of 15 and 20 with extremely rapid declines in participation for subsequent ten year age groups (Fricke *et al.* 1990). Further analysis revealed that young unmarried women were more likely to work at these activities while still resident in their natal homes than unmarried men. Marriage and movement to the marital home removed these women from participation in wage work. The authors suggest that in this setting, part of the reason that daughters-in-law participate less in wage labor is that they are much less likely to turn their wages over to the household pool, saving it instead for eventual provisioning of their own households when their husbands claim their inheritance. The logic of keeping daughters-in-law out of the wage labor force is thus partly mandated by the household developmental cycle in which sons typically partition from parental families a few years after marriage. This same analysis also shows that the participation of never-married sons is affected by household structure: sons living in stem or extended families are much more likely to work at wage labor than those in nuclear families. This is as we would expect where agriculture is still primary since a larger household labor pool would allow diversification outside of agricultural activities.

Summary and Caveats

This brief review has been directed toward an understanding of the impacts of familial organization on participation in wage labor and education in rural, largely subsistence agricultural, settings. It suggests that research and applied programs distinguish between family and household, that family systems are more germane to understanding who primary household decision-makers are likely to be, and that family systems form a context in which some of the motivations driving decisions are made. The authority of primary decision-makers is contingent on their control of primary resources; once alternatives are introduced into a setting, we might expect this to diminish in ways described by a range of empirical studies (Caldwell 1982; Caldwell et al. 1988).

The review also describes 3 general and easily determined categories of family organization and suggests some of the ways they may affect participation in novel activities such as wage labor and education. Family organization is, of course, not the only variable affecting participation. Not considered here, but certain to be important, are a range of other factors including distance from urban centers, availability of transportation, and the relationships between rural locales and governments in the past.

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