

Greta Friedemann-Sánchez
Family Caregiving, Property Ownership and Intrahousehold Bargaining in Colombia

Intrahousehold resource allocation and bargaining. Until recently it was assumed that households functioned as units (Becker 1991) and that providing resources to heads of households, usually men, was a way of improving family wellbeing. It is now known that women's and men's household roles differentially influence the process of intrahousehold resource allocation and that the process of socioeconomic development, via the household, is gendered. In most parts of the world households do not behave as cohesive units (Dwyer, et al. 1988; Quisumbing 2003): household members do not always pool their material and time resources, nor do they make decisions in unison. In fact, bargaining over the allocation of resources and the decision-making processes is intensely conditioned by gender-based power differentials, although how and why this happens is not entirely clear (Deere 1995; Doss 1994; Doss 1996a; Doss 1996b; Folbre 1996; Folbre 2001; Folbre and Bittman 2004; Haddad, et al. 1997; Hoodfar 1988; Pfeiffer 2003; Quisumbing 2003; Wolf 2004).

To guide policy makers, scholars studying families and intrahousehold economics have attempted to determine the components of intrahousehold bargaining, and how such components may influence an individual's fallback position and negotiation outcomes. The "fallback position" (or "threat point") reflects the amount of power that each individual brings to the bargaining process: the person with the strongest threat point or fallback position will obtain the best outcome (Hart 1992). This manipulation of power is accomplished through the influence individuals have, which seems to depend upon the negotiation components they possess (i.e., property ownership, wages, income, social capital). Thus, it is important, both theoretically and for policy, to understand the ways in which bargaining components determine the fallback positions. My research in Colombia suggests that domestic violence, wages, formal employment, and social capital are integral elements in the negotiation process (Friedemann-Sánchez 2006a; Friedemann-Sánchez 2006b).

Property ownership and caregiving. Recent research has revealed that land rights improve women's bargaining power (Agarwal 1994). Deere and Doss, for example, focus on ascertaining whether there is a gender gap in the distribution of property ownership and point to a dearth of knowledge on the subject worldwide (Deere and Doss 2007). My prior research suggests that Colombian women are not able to purchase as much property as men (Friedemann-Sánchez 2006b). In fact, it takes women more years and more modes of acquisition (informal and formal loans, formal and informal savings, housing subsidies) than men to acquire property even after controlling for age and income in a sample of agro-industrial employees.

The emotional realm that underpins families is largely absent from intrahousehold bargaining models and ethnographic accounts, although a few have proposed domestic violence as a bargaining component (Bloch and Rao 2000; Friedemann-Sánchez 2006a). Economic studies have explored the time allocated to caring for children (Folbre 1994; Folbre 2001; Folbre and Bittman 2004; Ilahi 2000), the opportunity cost of caregiving (Carmichael and Charles 2003; van den Berg, et al. 2006; Wolf 2004), and the marketplace value of the care provided by caring services (Arno, et al. 1999). Medical anthropologists have focused on the health outcomes of child care practices (Stansbury, et al. 2000). In summary, economists and anthropologist have placed more emphasis on the commoditization of care (England 2005).

Is caregiving culturally assigned by gender? The gaps in the literature regarding caregiving and household economics are vast. While caregiving influences the long-term future of caregivers (Arber 1997; Bittman, et al. 2004; Folbre and Bittman 2004) as well as their health (Gordon 1997; Grand, et al. 1999; McCubbin and Patterson 1983) little is known about caregiving activities, the cultural variation of the

assignment of those activities by age, gender, and kinship relationship, or the gendered intrahousehold bargaining effects of caregiving and its long-term economic, health and cultural effects.

In summary, caregiving is not monetized and is culturally invisible and yet, to the extent that it reduces wealth accumulation, it also reduces women's bargaining power. This reduction in bargaining power has negative effects on women's health due to the domestic violence they are subjected to, as my previous work has shown. Hence the objectives of the paper are to respond to the following questions: Is caregiving a component of bargaining? What are the tensions between the local cultural norms on social reciprocity and individual obligation? How are caregiving responsibilities allocated within the extended family and how do they fit the cultural norms? Is there gender bias in the allocation of caregiving activities between extended family members (i.e., female and male siblings)? Does the participation in the formal labor market affect the allocation of caregiving by gender? What are the effects of caregiving for extended family members on bargaining power within the household?

Methods. In order to answer the questions I conducted 40 individual in-depth semi-structured interviews stratified by gender and by employment status (formal labor, informal labor, unpaid labor) in Andean central Colombia. The interviews were conducted in August and September of 2008. The inclusion criteria were individuals with living and ailing relatives who had at least one sibling of the opposite sex. Individuals were recruited in the vegetable, fruit and cattle markets in the towns of Chía, Cajicá, Subachoque, and Bojacá. A standardized interview guide probed with regards to the culturally appropriate definition of caregiving; the range and nature of caregiving tasks; the terms of reciprocity responsibility and obligation; and the contextual factors of caregiving. The design will allow comparisons by sample strata. Interview transcripts will be imported into the Atlas.ti for management and analysis.

Summary of preliminary results: The costly caring trap for women in Andean Colombia. The cultural "ideal" of caring responsibilities is that they be distributed equally among siblings. However, upon questioning study participants of current responsibilities, most women interviewed stated that they were the primary caregivers or that they shared the responsibility with a sister. Men stated that they provide money, arguing that caring chores are a female domain. Of 20 men interviewed, only one was the primary caregiver and one was a former primary caregiver. Thus, caregiving is culturally assigned to women in Andean Colombia and most often to the smallest of female children in the family. Caregiving comprises the physical aspects of caring for an aging ailing parent, such as washing, clothing, and feeding. It also includes housing the elder parent, buying groceries and clothing, medical care and the like. I found that women with visible facial disfigurement (cleft palate) or with a history of being victims of domestic abuse by parents and siblings are likely to not be allowed to attend elementary school and to be placed as the "maids" for the family since children. These women become by default, the caregivers of the elder as time goes by trapping women into the caregiving role, unable to find paid employment. A 42 year old women's voices the situation this way: *"Did I have a choice in being the family's maid and now my father's nurse? (laugh) No! I used to be hit by my brothers and my father all the time. They just took me as their maid. I realized later that they had no right to hit me, to turn me into their servant, but by then I had lost 10 years of my life. I never married, never had children. I tried getting a job but he [father] got sick, so here I am again. I have no saving, no security, nothing. Only old clothe. GFS: Do you worry about who will support you in your old age or where you will live? Respondent: yes, but what can I do now? When he dies I will figure out a job. Until then I have accepted I am enslaved."*

A surprising finding and absent in the intrahousehold bargaining literature is that while caregiving does not appear to be a direct component of *intra*household bargaining, it most certainly is of *inter*household bargaining among siblings. This interhousehold bargaining has indirect effects on individuals' negotiation power inside their own homes among their nuclear family since they might have less resources and more

responsibilities. Women do not accept passively the cultural assignment of caregiving. Among sisters there is intense negotiation regarding the amount, type and timing of the caring done. Women often will press male sibling to contribute more financially given the lack of physical care or time transfers they give their ailing relatives. However, the pressure is most effective when the sibling lives near the area. In summary, women contribute most of the physical care for their relatives as well as incur in most direct costs. Women also are unable to engage as full time wage earners or if they are in paid employment, they are unable to work extra hours and earn extra income.

The interviews conducted show that men are able to accumulate their wage income more readily than women, in part because of (1) gendered cultural norms regarding caregiving responsibilities toward parents, children and the ill; (2) women are expected to share a portion of their time and wage income with their parents regardless of other responsibilities and employment; and (3) men are not obliged to share their time and wage income.

References

- Agarwal, Bina
 1994 A Field of One's Own: Gender and Land Rights in South Asia. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Arber, S., and J. Ginn
 1997 Informal Caregivers for Elderly People. In Women and Social Policy. C.U.a.M. Kember, ed. Pp. 357-358. London: Macmillan.
- Arno, Peter , Carol Levine, and Margaret Memmott
 1999 The Economic Value of Informal Caregiving. Health Aff (Millwood) 18(2):182-188.
- Asocolflores
 2007 Hoja de Datos de la Floricultura, <http://www.asocolflores..>
- Becker, Gary Stanley
 1991 A Treatise on the Family. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Bittman, Michael, et al.
 2004 Making the Invisible Visible. The Life and Time(s) of Informal Caregivers. In Family Time. The Social Organization of Care. N. Folbre and M. Bittman, eds. Pp. 69-89. London: Routledge.
- Bloch, Francis, and Vijayendra Rao
 2000 Terror as a Bargaining Instrument. A Case Study of Dowry Violence in Rural India. In Policy Research Working Paper 2347. Washington: World Bank.
- Carmichael, Fiona, and Susan Charles
 2003 The Opportunity Costs of Informal Care: Does Gender Matter? Journal of Health Economics 22(5):781-803.
- Deere, Carmen Diana
 1995 What Differences Does Gender Make? Rethinking Peasant Studies. Feminist Economics 1(1):53-72.
- Deere, Carmen Diana, and Cheryl Doss, eds.
 2007 Women and the Distribution of Wealth. London: Routledge.
- Doss, Cheryl R.
 1994 Models of Intrahousehold Resource Allocation: Assumptions and Empirical tests. St. Paul: Dept. of Applied Economics, University of Minnesota.
- Doss, Cheryl R.
 1996a Do Households Fully Share Risk?: Evidence From Ghana. St. Paul: Dept. of Applied Economics, University of Minnesota.
- 1996b Women's Bargaining Power in Household Economic Decisions: Evidence from Ghana. St. Paul: Dept. of Applied Economics, University of Minnesota.
- Dwyer, Daisy Hilse, Judith Bruce, and Population Council.
 1988 A Home Divided : Women and Income in the Third World. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- England, Paula
 2005 Emerging Theories of Care Work. Annual Review of Sociology 31:381-399.
- Folbre, Nancy
 1994 Who Pays for the Kids?: Gender and the Structure of Constraint. London: Routledge.
- 1996 The Economics of the Family. Cheltenham, UK: E. Elgar Pub. Ltd.

-
- 2001 The Invisible Heart: Economics and Family Values. New York: New Press.
- Folbre, Nancy, and Michael Bittman
2004 Family Time: the Social Organization of Care. London: Routledge.
- Friedemann-Sánchez, Greta, Nina Sayer, and Treven Pickett
2008 Provider Perspectives on Rehabilitation of Patients with Polytrauma. *Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation* 84:171-178.
- Friedemann-Sánchez, Greta
2006a Assembling Flowers and Cultivating Homes: Labor and Gender in Colombia. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.
- Friedemann-Sánchez, Greta, et al.
in press Communicating Information to Families of Polytrauma Patients: Narrative Literature Review. *Rehabilitation Nursing*.
- Friedemann-Sánchez, Greta.
2006b Assets in Intrahousehold Bargaining among Women Workers in Colombia's Cut-Flower Industry. *Feminist Economics* 12(1-2):247-269.
- Gordon, S.
1997 The Impact of Managed Care on Female Caregivers in the Hospital and Home. *J Am Med Womens Assoc* 52(2):75-7, 80.
- Grand, A., et al.
1999 Caregiver Stress: a Failed Negotiation? A Qualitative Study in South West France. *Int J Aging Hum Dev* 49(3):179-195.
- Guest, G., A. Bunce, and L. Johnson
2006 How Many Interviews are Enough?: An Experiment with Data Saturation and Variability. *Field Methods* 18(1):59-82.
- Haddad, Lawrence James, et al.
1997 *Intrahousehold Resource Allocation in Developing Countries: Models, Methods, and Policy*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Hart, Gillian
1992 Imagined Unities: Constructions of the 'Household' in Economic Theory. In *Economic Process*. S. Ortiz and S. Lees, eds. Pp. 111-30. Baltimore: University Press of America.
- Hoodfar, Homa
1988 Household Budgeting and Financial Management in a Lower-Income Cairo Neighborhood.
- Ilahi, Nadeem
2000 The Intra-household Allocation of Time and Tasks: What Have We Learnt from the Empirical Literature? In *Policy Research Report on Gender and Development*. Washington: World Bank.
- McCubbin, H. I., and J. M. Patterson
1983 The Family Stress Process: The Double ABCX Model of Adjustment and Adaptation. *Marriage & Family Review* 6 (1/2):7-37.
- Pfeiffer, James
2003 Cash Income, Intrahousehold Cooperative Conflict, and Child Health in Central Mozambique. *Medical Anthropology* 22(2):87-130.
- Quisumbing, Agnes, ed.
2003 *Household Decisions, Gender, and Development: A Synthesis of Recent Research*. Washington, DC: International Food Policy Research Institute.
- Stansbury, James P., William R. Leonard, and Kathleen M. Dewalt
2000 Caretakers, Child Care Practices, and Growth Failure in Highland Ecuador. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 14(2):224-241.
- van den Berg, Bernard, et al.
2006 Economic Valuation of Informal Care: Lessons from the Application of the Opportunity Costs and Proxy Good Methods. *Social Science & Medicine* 62(4):835-845.
- Wolf, Douglas A
2004 Valuing Informal Elder Care. In *Family Time. The Social Organization of Care*. N. Folbre and M. Bittman, eds. London: Routledge.