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Families and Women in Alfred Marshall's Analysis of Well-being and Progress

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Abstract: Some commentators state that Marshall conceptualizes the well-being primarily in terms of the consumer's surpluses, whose interdependence with the moral character rests on the ability of markets to produce their effects on character spontaneously. The purpose of the article is to show that evolutionary faith is not really enough to remove the tension between the economic and moral dimensions of Marshall's definition of the well-being. Marshall understands that progress would not happen without assigning a peculiar role to families and women in cultivating family affections as an essential means to secure the link between these two dimensions. To prove this point, the article examines several economic texts written before Marshall's major economic book, *Principles of Economics*, the first edition of which appeared in 1890. These writings have received little consideration in the existing literature about Marshall's treatment of the role of women in a capitalist economy. Yet, they prefigure and allow to better understanding the theory expounded in *Principles.*

Keywords: Alfred Marshall, family environment, women's role, well-being, progress

JEL Codes: B13, I31

Marshall is one of the few Victorian economists who have addressed the question of the role of women in the achievement of the well-being and progress.[1] He deals with the question not only in his major economic book, *Principles of Economics*[2], the first edition of which appeared in 1890, but also in earlier economic writings dating from the 1870s. While the question is often neglected by nineteenth century economists, partly because it involves ethical aspects which would escape the field of study of economics, Marshall's concern for

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1. John Stuart Mill–in the line with Jeremy Bentham, generally recognised as the founding father of classical utilitarianism, but also the Owenist William Thompson, French Saint-Simonians and others–was one of the first economists to treat the question in his major economic book, *Principles of Political Economy* (1848), then more extensively in the essay *The Subjection of Women* (1869). He championed women's freedom to work and, more generally, to choose their life and career, whether in the labor market or at home. Some years later, William Stanley Jevons addressed the issue of married women's work entirely within the field of legislation, notably in the article "Married Women in Factories" (1882). He focused on the necessity to thwart, by appropriate legislation, the harmful effects of the work of mothers on children in the working classes (Gouverneur 2013).

2. Now *Principles*.

this question, we argue here, reflects the key role that he assigns to families and women in promoting the "true" aim of progress, the "human" well-being (Marshall 1895: 80; 1961[3]: 20; Nishizawa 2021).

To borrow Martinoia's terms, Marshall has a "bi-dimensional definition" of the well-being (Martinoia 2006: 96). According to Marshall, the well-being includes two dimensions–one economic, measured by the individuals' surplus in satisfaction or income, the other moral, referring to the character, made up of non-measurable elements such as mental and moral health and strength. The connection between these two dimensions–which refers to the relation between economics and ethics in Marshall's work–is still debated today[4]. Some commentators state that Marshall conceptualizes the well-being primarily in terms of the consumer's and producer's surpluses–this implying a reformulation of utilitarianism as an economic principle (Black 1990)–, whose interdependence with the moral character rests on an evolutionary explanation of the progress, that is on the ability of markets to produce their effects on character spontaneously (Coats and Raffaelli 2006; Dardi 2010: 406, 421). The purpose of this article is to show that evolutionary faith is not really enough to remove the tension between the economic and moral dimensions of Marshall's definition of the well-being. It is in line with the work of some commentators, who have pointed to the relevance in Marshall of political intervention–in particular in the field of education–for the elevation of the people's character and increase of industrial efficiency (Chasse 1984: 322-324; Cook 2009: 245-58; Groenewegen 2010). Marshall understands that progress would not happen without assigning a peculiar role to families and women in cultivating family affections as an essential means to secure the link between the economic and moral dimensions of the well-being. It thus presents in a new light Marshall's treatment of the role of women in a capitalist economy.

In the early 1990s, Pujol focuses on Marshall's depiction, in the last edition of *Principles*, of the role of women in economic growth. She points out the divergences between this analysis and Marshall's marginalist model, which "rests on the assumption of individualistic (selfish) rational economic behavior" and implies no state intervention since "[m]arket mechanisms yield the maximization of economic returns and an optimal state of economic welfare" (Pujol 1992: 122, 128, 139). This interpretation fails to capture the fundamental importance that Marshall attributes to the cultivation of family affections–that he will include among the motives guiding the economic agents's behavior–as a means of increasing the economic well-being as well as the moral well-being of humanity. Two years later, Groenewegen extended Pujol's analysis of Marshall's views on the role of women in society by arguing that they partly "arose from" Marshall's interest with "the 'science' of heredity and eugenics" and "his social Darwinist vision of race survival, race preservation and race progress"; according to Groenewegen, "these evolutionary views were not really interwoven with the fabric of [Marshall's] mature economic thought until he started writing the *Principles* from the early 1880s" (Groenewegen 1994: 97–103; see also 1995: 499–501, 508, 510-511). This is a first step towards taking into account the ethical dimension of Marshall's analysis; however, it does not allow to explain why Marshall was already discussing the role of families and women in the well-being and progress in economic writings previous to *Principles*. In a recent article, Bankovsky (2019) defends the thesis that Marshall's household economics, as expounded in the last edition of *Principles*, challenges the standard interpretation of his economics as pre-ethical or a-moral. The family–of which Marshall's

3. Whenever the 1961 edition is cited, it will be volume 1 "Text".

4. Marshall himself has changed his position over time about the relations between economics and ethics. In 1874, in an article published in the Labour newspaper *Bee-Hive*, he wrote that the science of political economy must leave to her "sister", "the Science of Ethics", the task of answering "questions of moral principles" (Marshall [1874] 1993: 128) ; he later defined ethics as the "mistress" of economics (1893: 389).

depiction is informed by Hegel's vision of the family–appears therein as the ideal sphere for cultivating ethical virtues favorable to the development of the capitalist society. Our intention here is to expand Bankovsky's thesis by clarifying how Marshall features in *Principles* the role of families and women in promoting family affections as a means of conciliating the economic and moral dimensions of the well-being. For this purpose, the paper examines several economic texts written by Marshall before *Principles*, which have received little consideration in the existing literature, focusing–albeit not exclusively–on the last edition of *Principles*. Moreover, it reviews the changes occurring throughout the book's eight editions (1890, 1891, 1895, 1898, 1907, 1910, 1916, 1920). In this way, it apprehends Marshall's analysis of the role of families and women in the well-being and progress fully as the fruit of a long process of maturation resulting in the theory offered by *Principles*; moreover, it highlights the relevance of Marshall's early economic work in understanding this theory. The first part of the article sheds light on Marshall's analysis in its infancy. As early as the 1870s, Marshall, notably in his *Lectures to Women* (1872-3b), "The Future of the Working Classes" (1873) and "The Theory of Foreign Trade" ([1873–7] 1975), expresses ideas on the subject, embedded in considerations relating to the laborer's well-being. They will be developed and systematized from the late 1870s in *The Economics of Industry* (1879). The study of these writings pre-dating *Principles* allows us to better grasp the role played by Marshall's analysis in *Principles*, more generally in his economic thought. This is the subject of the second part of the paper, which also examines new elements emerging on the subject in Marshall's mature thought–about the definition, development and economic value of housewives's abilities.

1. The infancy of Marshall's analysis

Marshall's serious study of economics began in 1867, connected with his interest in ethics and his growing concern with social questions. The analysis of his early economic writings allows us to show how his economics progressively becomes permeated by the idea that the family environment, with stay-at-home mothers, contribute to the development of those values and etiquette associated with gentlemen and ladies, to which Marshall wanted to working-class families to aspire. Later, in the subsequent period, the development of Marshall's ideas in *The Economics of Industry* at the end of the 1870s has the result of clarifying the role of the family and women in the progress and well-being, and initiates the approach taken in *Principles*, in which Marshall's global analysis of progress and well-being (and the role of women in this process) reaches maturity.

1.1. Early writings

Four economic texts written during the first half of the 1870s are considered in this section: *Lectures to Women* ([1872–3b] 1995), "The Future of the Working Class" ([1873] 1995), "The Theory of Foreign Trade" ([1873–7] 1975) and "Some Features of American Industry" ([1875] 1975). These contain the seeds of Marshall's analysis of well-being and progress, as they reveal his views on the great social issues of pauperism, poverty and more generally the means of progress in the laborers' welfare. Simultaneously, they mark the beginnings of a strong conception of the influences of family, the home and housewives as driving forces in the improvement of the working class.[5]

5. This may reflect the influence of Friedrich Hegel's theses on Marshall. Marshall was interested in Hegel's *Philosophy of History* (1837[1975]), and Bankovsky has shown that he extends Hegel's vision of the family in two philosophical texts dating from the early 1870s, "Notes on Hegel's Philosophy of History" (1871–3[2005]) and "Long Essay on the History of Civilisation" (1872–3a[2005]). Marshall would deduce from his reading of

Lectures to Women (1872-3): The laborer's welfare depending on family ties

In the Easter Term of 1872–3, in Cambridge, Marshall delivered his six-part *Lectures to Women* addressing economic questions directly connected to the welfare of laborers. They aim notably to highlight the means of bringing "into existence causes that tend perpetually to increase welfare", and thus contain the outlines of Marshall's definition of welfare (Marshall [1872–3b] 1995: 148).[6] In the lectures, welfare is described as having a moral dimension that depends on the strength of "moral character" and the capacity to feel pleasure through the noble sources of joy, as well as an economic (or a material) dimension depending on "efficiency" (105, 140). Its basis appears to be wealth, which includes both material items such as comforts and non-material elements such as "culture" and "time" (123–4). It therefore depends above all else on the laborers' "general education", which, according to Marshall, requires a strengthening of the "family tie" and of the sense of parental responsibility, and the provision of "leisure" time that can be devoted to recreation and family life (106, 116, 140).

In pointing out the urgency of remedying the evils affecting laborers, Marshall condemns in particular the "sacrifice of man to production" (96, 99). There is an urgent need to alleviate the plight of the poor people by making them into "gentlemen and ladies", or into men and women of "a higher order" (98, 119, 128). Marshall thinks that the "best investment of the capital of the country is to educate the next generation"; they would thus become "productive" and "valuable men" (106, 119, 138). In other words, the "right" expenditure consists in investing in the "production of culture"–or in "the cultivation of the lower classes"–which constitutes "real wealth" just as much as do factories (92, 96, 123, 127, 141). Education improves man's "moral tone" by allowing him to acquire the "qualities" of a "gentleman", namely "an agile cultivated mind", "trustworthiness", "self-reliance" and unselfishness (107, 145). The "pliability of intellect, rapidity in managing things … power of managing men", as well as trustworthiness, are essential to the laborer's efficiency and depend on his or her childhood education (105). Self-reliance refers to the capacity to raise oneself, without "being a burden on society", through one's own powers, that is through the power "to judge rightly" rather than being "patronised", through "work" rather than relying on private charities (97, 107, 117). Individuals' "work" is an important element in their capacity to raise themselves. Lastly, unselfishness may be understood as the willingness "to bear and to forbear to do and to suffer for the welfare of those around him" (107): this is conducive to the tendency to make sacrifices for others.

The development of these qualities and personal "powers" of mental growth opens up the "noble sources of joy", including the "joy of independence" or freedom of individual action, and the joy of "caring for … one's children" (117, 118, 119). It is closely associated to the "sense of family obligation" (140). Intelligence and trustworthiness rest in particular on the education received by the child, which itself depends on his or her parents' education and capacities of self-reliance and unselfishness. In regard to the fulfillment of family duties, Marshall draws a distinction between the educated and uneducated classes. Two responsibilities have to be inculcated in the members of the lower classes, as they are in particular essential to strengthen the man's moral character and his feeling of responsibility as head of family (141). First, imprudent marriages would be avoided if he were aware of the obligations taken on with marriage (105). Marshall states, in Malthusian terms, that early

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Hegel's *Philosophy of History* that the modern family promotes self-reliance as well as unselfishness through a conception of unity based on the capacity to feel at one with a whole (Marshall 1871–3[2005]: 73; Bankovsky 2019: 7). Moreover, family life would teach individuals about the social value of work (Marshall 1872–3a[2005]: 24; Bankovsky 2019: 8).

6. In his *Lectures to Women*, Marshall uses primarily the term "welfare" to refer to "the welfare of mankind" (Marshall [1872–3b] 1995: 148). In later writings, he priviledges the term "well-being" ([1873–7] 1975: 24). This may reflect his concern for "human well-being" rather than "economic welfare" (Nishizawa 2021: 77).

marriage encourages an uncontrolled growth of the population which exerts pressure on the means of subsistence (116). A man must learn to feel that, before starting a family, he must be able to guarantee a certain "state of comfort" (100): in this sense, the "strengthening of the family tie" would mitigate the harmful rapid growth of the population (140). Second, the members of the lower classes must feel parental responsibility toward their offspring and see the necessity of sacrificing for them, whose future wages depend on their efficiency as laborers (103-5). Yet this parental willingness to sacrifice for "the future welfare of their children" is seen as lacking in the lower classes and must therefore also be increased (104–5).

To inculcate these responsibilities amounts to kindling new "noble" sources of enjoyment, such as the capability of "rejoicing as their children grow in everything that they would have them grow in" (118–9, 123, 127, 129). By teaching people to love their children, the connection between the interests of children and parents will be increased (103–5, 107, 119). Marshall points out that there is a positive link between the strength of "the family tie" and the sense of family obligation, and the ability to make sacrifices for others, in particular for the children who will form the next generation (107, 140). The strengthening of family ties will bring into existence new sources of joy which will tend perpetually to increase welfare, since "each new joy is a new stimulus to work; a new cause for avoiding vice; a new means of living" (148). Family life and family ties will induce the father to send his child to school and will give him "new tendencies to work for an end" (127); the child, in turn, will gain a higher perception of the value of work and the "capability of feeling the pleasure of being able to stand up and feel that one is doing one's work" (118). Only love, rather than lure of profit, can promote this exemplary behavior on the part of the paternal figure. Indeed, "the parent … in most cases does not reap the benefit of the increased expenditure" on the education of children (103). Carried by the joys of family life, the father would work and save in view of the welfare of his family, and his children, or his sons in particular, would be encouraged to adopt the same behavior once they are adults (153).

Education, then, promotes the welfare of laborers by strengthening family ties and, reciprocally, family ties encourage self-reliance, unselfishness, and a sense of duty and work. That being said, these positive effects on the progress of the members of the working classes would reach their full potential only if children and parents are freed from stultifying overwork. In order for the education of the poor to make them "productive" and provide them with "intelligent capital", it is necessary to reduce their hours of labor (95, 119). The expenditure of time, "that most valuable wealth, most real capital", is an essential question for Marshall (124). Children and adult laborers must benefit from sufficient leisure time to be able to devote themselves to recreation and culture (150). This has different implications for adult women and men in terms of labor regulations. Marshall lists the Factory Acts passed during the 1840s as among the elements which have most fundamentally promoted the progress of the working class. They have partly remedied the "awful abominations in the factory districts", notably through the regulation of the work of women and children (116).[7] Marshall notes that in most of the inquiries about the way in which children were overworked, it was found that the only point considered important by the parents was how far it would affect themselves; in some cases they had even "pawned their children's future wages at the pawn shop for drink" (104, 137). Moreover, the reduction of men's hours of labor would induce a better use of wages and leisure time which, after long and exhausting hours of labor, can only be wasted by smoking and drinking in a public house (106). Marshall

7. The first laws limiting children and women's labor were introduced in the 1840s. In 1842, the Mines and Collieries Act prohibited their underground work in coalmines. The Graham's Factory Act of 1844 limited their daily working hours in factories to 12 hours. In 1847, the Ten Hours Bill for women and children marked the end of this series of restrictions. No further legislative attempts to reduce the length of the working day were made until the beginning of a new campaign for a nine-hour day in the early 1870s (Lewis and Rose 1995: 101).

then develops in three texts the idea that overwork, even more so with regard to children and women, hurts family life and blocks the noble sources of joy that it can provide. He also places a little more emphasis on the influences of home and women on character.

Three texts: Home influences on efficiency and character

Marshall's ideas on the progress of the working classes are summarized in a paper entitled "The Future of the Working Classes", that he reads on 25 November 1873 at a *conversazione* of the Cambridge Reform Club. The paper is concerned with how to help members of the working classes to become gentlemen and ladies. By re-introducing the distinction between the cases of skilled artisans and unskilled laborers, Marshall indicates several elements which promote "culture and refinement of character" (Marshall [1873] 1995: 158). Among other things, he points out the necessity to relieve the working classes from excessive work. This must give place to "work in its best sense, the healthy energetic exercise of faculties", which "is the aim of life, is life itself" (168). In order to illustrate the dangers induced by long hours of rough work Marshall transcribes the words of a "needle-woman", revealing the unceasing and harsh character of her work (162). Alongside this reference to women's working conditions he posits that the woman's presence at home is beneficial to her husband, who, once back from work, "may pass a tranquil and restful evening in a healthy and happy home, and so may win some of the best happiness" (161). At the same time, an uneducated man, whose brain is dulled by exhausting work, cannot fully enjoy the "pleasures of home" (161). A better education, as well as the reduction of his hours of labor, and the regulation of his wife's paid work, would promote better use of his leisure time by increasing his openness to the noble sources of joy to the exclusion of drunkenness.

In the mid 1870s Marshall began to work on a book expounding his theory of foreign trade ([1873–7] 1975), which would never be published in its entirety. In the existing manuscripts, we find explicit references to the determining role of home influences on character. As Marshall explains, these influences would be kindled by a rise in the wages of the present generation, for such a rise "improves not only the physical nurture and the school education of the next generation, but also what is even more important the general tone of the home influences by which their character is formed" (24). These influences are determinant in the culture of the qualities of "trustworthiness and prompt intelligence" which are required to perform "higher classes of work" and "to make a profitable use of … leisure" (24). In this way, an increase in the wages of one generation causes an increased efficiency in the next generation, except in those districts "in which men, women and children have been subjected to such severe toil as to disincline them for the peaceful pleasures of home" (24). In particular, "the children of mothers who have been debased by their work have but little appreciation of any but sensual pleasures", so that many of them "are apt to make such use of any increase of their wages so as to diminish rather than increase their own efficiency and the well-being of their households" (24). Thus, Marshall posits a link between the presence of women in the home and individuals' character, efficiency and capacity to promote the well-being of their family, long before the 1880s when he began to write *Principles*.

In "Some Features of American Industry", written in the same period, he also endeavors to highlight the links between economic conditions and the character and sources of "ethical growth" ([1875] 1975: 375). He again lists the qualities which are the attributes of gentlemen and ladies and points out the family's role in nurturing fundamental factors of "ethical growth" (375). His depiction of American families as spheres of ethical conduct contrasts with his condemnation of the working-class British families' immorality. The contrast may be seen as an effect of the promotion of different cultures in America and Britain: while the British context emphasizes collective freedom through a strong tradition of trade unionism, American workshops emphasize individual freedom and self-reliance (352-3). This induces

differences in the nature of the British and American wives. The latter would be more able to comprehend the need for "hard work and self-sacrifice", with a view to their daughters' benefit (370). In such circumstances, the stay-at-home mothers are a role model for their daughters. The effects of the quasi-permanent presence of women at home on the individuals' character are further clarified in *The Economics of Industry*, first published in 1879.

1.2. *The Economics of Industry* (1879)

Here we examine developments of Marshall's ideas on the role of families and women in the progress of society in *The Economics of Industry*. The book contains a deeper analysis of the role of family affections–a concept replacing that of family ties–and highlights the effects of *female* character on the character of the nation as a whole. These developments initiate the systematization of Marshall's ideas leading to the theory later expounded in *Principles*. By emphasizing this continuity between the two books, we adopt a different perspective from that espoused by Pujol and Groenewegen. They focus on the contrast between the study of the sources of women's low wages offered in *The Economics of Industry*, and the appeal to keep women's wages low expressed in *Principles* (Pujol 1992: 129; Groenewegen 1994: 82–5; 1995: 508-510).

Women's wages

The Economics of Industry results from the joint work of Marshall and his wife Mary Paley Marshall. It was published under both their names in October 1879. One of the peculiarities of the book is to contain a paragraph devoted to the analysis of wage inequalities between men and women, as well as ways to reduce these inequalities (A. and M. P. Marshall 1879: 175–7). This paragraph identifies the reasons why women's wages are lower than those of men when both sexes are doing work of equal value, highlighting two great sources of wage inequality. First, it points out the role of custom, by which "both women and their employers have been in the habit of taking it for granted that the wages of women must be low" (175). Then it explains that the effect of the custom is reinforced by the fact that the "occupations for which women are well fitted are few, and therefore overcrowded and badly paid" (175). Lastly, it presents remedies to women's low wages. While the progress of machinery opens new opportunities of work for women (notably in the domain of telegraphy), women's employment as teachers in higher education is growing. Moreover, Alfred and Mary Paley Marshall encourage the better usage of women's managerial capacities, urging that they be employed in business management.[8]

Marshall would never repeat this type of analysis in other works. This may in part be explained by the fact that the opinions expressed in the paragraph were rather more those of Mary Paley Marshall (Gouverneur 2018: 78-81). Although the joint production was a sales success–it was reprinted nine times between 1879 and 1891 and a revised edition was published in 1881–, Alfred Marshall never liked the book, criticizing its elementary nature and brevity. Thus, despite continuing high demand, the book was allowed to go out of print in the early 1890s, being replaced by an abridged version of Marshall's *Principles of Economics*, published in 1892 under the title *Elements of Economics of Industry* under his name alone. Marshall's attitude may also be explained by the evolution of his own position on women's access to high education, which, as highlighted by McWilliams-Tullberg (1995), underwent significant changes between the late 1870s and the beginning of the 1880s. Before 1877, Marshall, then lecturer at St. John's College in Cambridge, was invested in the fight to

8. A. Marshall would no doubt view these advances as consistent with an extension of women's true duty to the home, now extended to include education outside the home and social service.

promote women's access to higher education, something that can in part be explained by the influence of Henry Sidgwick and several members of the Grote Club heavily involved in the women's education movement. His thoughts on the subject underwent a reversal after his move from Cambridge to Bristol College in 1877, Marshall opposing more and more to any activity of women which would interfere with their role within the domestic sphere[9].

So varied reasons may explain Marshall's reversal on the issue of women's wages between *The Economics of Industry* and *Principles*. Nevertheless, this must not mask the consistency of Marshall's views on the role of working-class women over time. Marshall's paragraph on women's wages co-exists with strong positions against women's work outside the home, unexamined by Pujol and Groenewegen.[10]

Family affections, mothers' influences and progress

The introduction of *The Economics of Industry* explains that the science of economics is concerned with that part of "human well-being" which is directly connected with the acquirement of material wealth (A. and M. P. Marshall 1879: 5–6). Its subject matter is thus wealth, including material wealth as well as personal wealth, the latter consisting of the physical, mental and moral faculties that contribute to make men efficient in the production of material wealth. Therefore, the attainment of the economic conditions of well-being is inseparable from the nurture of varied faculties and, more generally, the culture of the character of the people. Indeed, "the efficiency of man's labour in production" depends on "his physical strength and energy, his knowledge and mental ability and his moral character" (9). The growth of these elements is in great part conditioned by family-related decisions and the childhood environment.

In line with the ideas expressed in the *Lectures to Women*, Alfred and Mary Paley Marshall explain that "the efforts of the legislator and of the moralist should be directed towards improving the character of the people; and towards discouraging … the rapid increase of numbers" (30). According to them, "economic progress depends much on changes in the Standard of Comfort of the people, and therefore on the strength of their family affections" (28, 38). A rise in wages will be permanent only if it leads to a rise in the "standard of comfort" which, acting as an inducement to prudence in marriage, is sure to increase the supply of efficient workers (63, 101-2, 130).[11] Such a rise would only "fail to benefit" the next generation of workers "in districts in which men, and, what is perhaps more important, women have been rendered hard, coarse and reckless by the nature of their occupations" (102). The supply of skilled labor rests on parents' investment of capital in the education of their children, which depends on their resources as well as their capacities for forethought– that is, their ability to discount future advantages to their children at a low rate of interest–and self-sacrifice (38, 106–7). Family affections are also a driving force for the accumulation of capital. While "[l]avish expenditure generally indicates a selfish disposition that cares … for its own enjoyments", those who care about "the well-being of others are more likely to save, than to spend all their incomes » (38).

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9. Groenewegen dates this change to 1878, suggesting that Marshall was badly affected by the sudden death of his mother in june of this year. Marshall was upset about his mother dying without the comfort of the presence of daughters and husband. Groenewegen supposes that this "may have easily induced some re-thinking by Marshall on female family responsibilities, leading to his acceptance of the traditionnal Victorian model", albeit admitting that he lacks the textual evidence to prove it (Groenewegen 1995: 498).

10. These positions, while echoing views expressed by Marshall in his earlier writings, may had been reinforced by the context surrounding the publication of the book. In particular, the campaign for the Nine Hours Bill resulted in the 1878 Factory and Workshop Act, which brought all the previous Acts together in one consolidated form, and again reduced women's and children's hours of labor.

11. Later, in *Principles*, Marshall will rather insist on the rise of the "standard of life" as the "right means to raise wages" (Marshall 1891: vi ; 1961: 690). The point will be developed in section 2.

Defending the male-breadwinner model, Alfred and Mary Paley Marshall suggest that the wife should not participate in the family income (102). Even though they recognize that "when the laborer's wife and children can earn good wages, he may be able to bring up his family in comfort even when his own wages are low", they consider that "this correction is of much less importance than at first sight appears" (102). A mother working for wages neglects the part of the household work which "would promote the health and the moral, if not the intellectual education of her children" (102). Moreover, some of her wages would be wasted by hiring domestic servants to do the rest of the domestic tasks (102). Thus, the gains obtained through the wife's work outside the home, equivalent to the opportunity cost of the woman staying at home, would be lower than expected. By breaking the family tie and disrupting domestic life, married women's work damages the physical, mental and "moral well-being" of the children, as well as their efficiency as future workers (102, 110).[12] Several passages of *The Economics of Industry* develop the idea, present already in "The Theory of the Foreign Trade" ([1873–7] 1975), that home influences, and particularly the mother's influences, play a decisive role in the formation of the character and the development of the qualities conditioning efficiency: "the character of a nation depends chiefly on that of the mothers of the nation–on their firmness, and gentleness and sincerity. It is in childhood, and at home, that the workman must learn to be truthful and trusty, cleanly and careful, energetic and thorough, to reverence others and to respect himself" (12).

Some years later, in "Three Lectures on Progress and Poverty" (1883), Marshall would reiterate his point by linking the progress of society to the character of women. According to him, "Progress in general and the abolition of poverty depend above all things on the strength and gentleness and purity and earnestness of the women of England"; indeed, "[i]t is they that form character when it is most plastic", so that "[i]f the mothers of a nation are ignoble that nation must fall; if they are noble it must rise" (Marshall 1883: 210). In embarking on writing *Principles* in the early 1880s, Marshall undertakes to perfect his theory of the role of families and women in the well-being and progress.

2. The final theory expounded in *Principles*

The study of Marshall's early writings has demonstrated how important it is for families to enjoy the material and moral conditions which allow family affection to flourish, particularly between mothers and children, in a way supporting the development of the character required for contributing efficiently to the economy. Let us now show how this preliminary study helps to improve our understanding of the theory set out in *Principles* and to better grasp its place within Marshall's work and thought. Family affections appear as the pivot around which Marshall's analysis of the well-being and progress revolves. They have to be strengthened in view of attaining a higher well-being through bettered conditions of life. Institutions must be designed in ways which permit families to cultivate these affections, and subsequently enjoy improved character from contribution to economic activity. This implies keeping women in their homes. There, they will work for the future well-being of their children. The strengthening of family affections also responds to the need to develop the women's abilities as housekeepers. While Marshall introduces the figure of the "skilled housewife", he develops new elements of thought about the measurement of her economic value. That said, he will refrain from drawing all the practical implications of these theoretical developments.

12. These comments thus predate Jevons' analysis of the role of mothers in the supply of efficient workers (Jevons 1882; Gouverneur 2013). Jevons will use the available statistics on infant mortality–probably in a dubious way–to highlight the disastrous effects of women's work on children and calling for the total prohibition of the work of mothers of young children in factories. Marshall will also refer to the argument of high rates of infant mortality in *Principles*, without however relying on statistics as Jevons did to justify his drastic proposals.

2.1. Promoting family affections as a means of achieving higher well-being

In *Principles*, Marshall seeks to define more precisely his concept of well-being as well as the pillar role that family affections play in the progress of the well-being. Actions motivated by affections fall within the field of study of economics, including in particular the contribution of parents, more specifically women, to the future well-being of their children.

2.1.1. The role of family affections in the children's well-being

While Marshall's understanding of the well-being already permeated his early writings, in *Principles*, it appears in a synthesized form in the objectives that he assigns to economics, and whose achievement depends irremediably on the strength of family affections. The latter are included in the economic agent's motives for action.

The progress of the well-being as the ultimate aim of economics

As early as the first edition of *Principles*, Marshall stressed the role played by economists in the attainment of "the higher well-being of man" (Marshall 1890: 4; 1961: 4). Later, in the fifth edition of *Principles*, he added a chapter which seeks to identify "the order and aims of economic studies" (Chapter IV, Book I, 1907: 38–48; 1961: 38–48). Economics then appears more explicitly than before as a "scientific tool in the service of a normative end,"[13] the higher "well-being of the present and coming generations" (Marshall 1907: 38, 46; 1961: 38, 46). Marshall puts emphasis on the case of young people, "whose faculties and activities are of the highest importance both to the moralist and the economist", so that "the most imperative duty of this generation is to provide for the young such opportunities as will both develop their higher nature and make them efficient producers" (Marshall 1891: 748; 1961: 720). The economist has "to inquire whether the present industrial organization might not with advantage be so modified as to increase" these so-called opportunities; for, indeed, "the argument that if such a change had been beneficial, it would have been already brought about by the struggle for survival, must be rejected as invalid" (1890: 308; 1961: 248). Challenging social Darwinism, Marshall states that there is room for favoring the "true progress of the human race" (1895: 81; 1961: 20): by modifying "circumstances" and "character" it is possible to "bring about new conditions of life still more favourable to character" and "to the economic, as well as the moral, well-being of the masses of the people" (1907: 48; 1961: 48).

Just as in Marshall's earlier economic writings, the attainment of this end appears inseparable from the fight against poverty. Progress in well-being requires above all the remedying of social problems. Marshall considers that the economist must provide "guidance in the practical conduct of life, and especially of social life" (Marshall 1895: 118; 1961: 42). As he explains, "'the destruction of the poor is their poverty' and the study of the causes of poverty is the study of the causes of the degradation of a large part of mankind" (1890: 2–4; 1961: 3). Hence the importance that he attaches to the study of "the growth of population in numbers, in health and strength, in knowledge, ability, and in … character" (1895: 215, 252; 1961: 139, 173). Economics is a study of human beings, which aims at solving human beings' practical problems (1890: 1; 1961: 1). This implies taking into account the importance of "ethical forces"–including the sense of family obligation and family affections–among the motives influencing the individuals' actions (1890: vi; 1961: vi). These ethical forces, which induce responsible behavior and greater propensity to self-sacrifice, have to be strengthened through appropriate institutional changes, to provide future generations with the environment and education required for the development of their moral qualities and efficiency as workers.

13. The expression is borrowed from Martinoia 2010: 1.

Family affections as motives guiding the economic agent's behavior

Marshall believes in the importance of avoiding the degradation of nature by improving nurture. While the eugenicists insist on the hereditary transmission of characters, he points to the influence of environmental factors on character, echoing in this respect the hygienists of the time (Martinoia 2010: 13–4).[14] For Marshall, childhood education and environment are among the main causes affecting the character. In the lower ranks of society, "[m]any of the children … are imperfectly fed and clothed; they are housed in a way that promotes neither physical nor moral health; they receive a school education which … goes only a little way" (Marshall 1890: 2, 590; 1961: 2, 562).[15] Conversely, the children of parents who have grown up under wholesome influences "are likely … to be better nourished and better trained; to acquire more wholesome instincts; and to have more of that regard for others and that self-respect which are the mainsprings of human progress" (1895: 329; 1961: 248).

On the issue of population growth, Marshall once again lays emphasis on the necessity to inculcate the lowest classes with "the sense of duty"; otherwise, he says, "we must affirm with Mr Galton that … it would cause the race to decay" (1890, 256; deleted in the third edition). Family-related decisions would be improved through the spread of the idea that "the parents can often do better in many ways for a small family than a larger one" (1890: 257; 1961: 202). Marshall also reiterates his view that "the investment of capital in the rearing and early training of the workers of England is limited by the resources of parents … by their power of forecasting the future, and by their willingness to sacrifice themselves for the sake of their children"; therefore, "any change that awards to the workers of one generation better earnings, together with better opportunities of developing their best qualities, will increase the material and moral advantages which they have the power to offer to their children" (Marshall 1890: 282, 590-1; 1961: 561–2, 660–3). In so far as "increased wages are used to improve the physical, mental and moral strength of the present rising generation … high wages are a cause of that efficiency and 'social morality' which enable wages to be permanently high".[16] The rise in wages must go hand in hand with "a rise in the standard of life", that is an increase of "higher activities" adjusted to "wants"–rather than an increase of "artificial wants" (Marshall 1891: vi, 738; 1961: 689-90).[17] This includes the development of better "methods of consumption and living" generally exerting an influence on efficiency (1898: 504; 1961: 504). Material wealth is not good for itself. It is a prerequisite for non-material wealth: "the power of rightly using such income and opportunities, as a family has, is in itself wealth of the highest order"; but it is "of a kind that is rare in all classes" (1898: 720; 1961: 720). This sort of power depends on two faculties. First, the "telescopic faculty", which rests on

14. In 1883, Galton, upon whom ideas about the heredity of character had already had a certain impact, described his social thought as "eugenics", namely "the science which deals with all influences that improve the inborn qualities of a race" (Galton 1904: 1). Marshall would take careful note of further developments in the field of eugenics; the changes made in the several editions of *Principles* aim in large part at integrating these developments as he saw them (Groenewegen 1994: 101; 2007: 134). However, he departs from the eugenicists on an important point, namely the role of heredity in the formation of moral character.

15. Bowman draws the conclusion from these remarks that private parental initiative is inefficient and therefore State intervention is necessary (Bowman 1990, 35–44). Here we put more emphasis on Marshall's recommendations for getting parents to play their role in the investment of capital in children's education. We thus agree with Nishizawa who has argued that, for Marshall, the family and the individual are central and strategic to economic progress and growth (Nishizawa 2002: 307).

16. Marshall 1885[1996], Letter 160: To the editor, *The Times*, 30 May, "The Present Position of Political Economy": 193. See also Marshall 1890: 295; 1961: 229–30.

17. Marshall makes a sharp distinction between the rise in the standard of comfort and the rise in the standard of living. The first consists in the satisfaction of artificial wants, including the grosser wants; the second consists in the satisfaction of wants "adjusted to activities", which gives the physical and mental strength necessary to indulge in a particular set of activities, inducing the development of a particular type of character (Parsons 1935: 111-113).

prudence, temperance and "self-control", and gives "the power of realizing the future" by estimating "at a high rate future ills and benefits" (1890: 611–2; 1961: 680). Second, the propensity to self-sacrifice, which depends on "family affections"; these, as "fairly regular" as economic laws, impact "the accumulation of "material" capital *for* children–by inducing the man "to work and save in order to secure a future provision for his family" (1890: 611–2; 1961: 680)–as well as the accumulation of "personal" capital *in* them (1890: 590, 701; 1961: 562, 660–1). Marshall thus describes an "economic man" who is not perfectly selfish (Marshall 1885: 28), including among the influences which govern such a "man"'s actions the "ethical forces" or altruistic motives which lead to "self-sacrifice and devotion" and are a strong "stimulus to energy and enterprise" (Marshall 1890: vi; 1961: 6, 228). This, then, is not an "abstract man" but "a man of flesh and blood", who is not below delight "in sacrificing himself for the good of his family" and "the love of a virtuous life for its own sake" (1895: 89; 1961: 6, 27). While Marshall's depiction of the economic agent applies to both parents sacrificing in favor of the well-being of their children, it has distinct implications for men and for women. In particular, women, contrary to men, should exercise their agency only within the home.

2.1.2. The mothers' influence on character and family affections

Marshall affirms that family affections lead fathers to work and save for the well-being of their children–especially of the male sex. As for mothers, he assigns them the duty of developing their children's general abilities. Thus, by staying at home, women will serve industrial society much more than by going to work. Their influences will also nurture the growth of family affections in family members.

The role of mothers in developing general ability

In *Principles*, Marshall distinguishes two types of education and abilities. The investment of capital in the technical education of children develops the "specialized ability", namely "that manual dexterity and that acquaintance with particular materials and processes which are required for the special purposes of individual trades" (1890: 263; 1961: 207). Though both parents participate in the sacrifice, Marshall suggests that it is the role of the male-breadwinner to support the payment for the studies of "his son" (1890: 701; 1961: 660–1). "General ability", meanwhile, refers to the moral and mental qualities proper to gentlemen and ladies described by Marshall in his earlier writings. It consists of "those faculties and that general knowledge and intelligence which are in varying degrees the common property of all the higher grades of industry" (1890: 263; 1961: 207). Its development occurs in the family and depends greatly on the preservation of home influences. Marshall develops on this point his old argument against overwork. Rescuing parents from excessive work is necessary to increase efficiency and strengthen the character of the producers of the coming generation, thus saving them from "living in a home in which the father and the mother lead joyless lives"; indeed, "[a]ble workers and good citizens are not likely to come from homes from which the mother is absent during a great part of the day; nor from homes, to which the father seldom returns till his children are asleep" (1891: 748; 1961: 720–1). Among the influences shaping the character, those of the family, especially the mother, play a decisive role: "[g]eneral ability depends largely on the surroundings of childhood and youth", and "[i]n this the first and far the most powerful influence is that of the mother" (1890: 263; 1961: 207). Notably, "self-mastery", this "important condition for the highest work", depends on the "elevation of the ideals of life", due in great part to "the influence of the mother in early childhood" (1890: 251–2; 1961: 198).

It follows that "in estimating the cost of production of efficient labour, we must often take as our unit the family"; "the cost of production of efficient men" cannot be treated "as an

isolated problem; it must be taken as part of the broader problem of the cost of production of efficient men together with the women who are fitted to make their homes happy, and to bring up their children vigorous in body and mind, truthful and cleanly, gentle and brave" (1890: 592–3; 1961: 564). Marshall includes among the "necessaries for the efficiency of an ordinary agricultural or of an unskilled town labourer and his family … a sufficient freedom for his wife from other work to enable her to perform properly her maternal and her household duties" (1890: 123; 1961: 69). The use of the term *freedom* contrasts sharply with Marshall's proposals in favor of a reinforced regulation of women's work, necessary to strengthen the family affections on which the future laborers' efficiency and well-being depend.

Strengthening family affections through the regulation of women's work

Marshall believes that "the degradation of the working classes varies almost uniformly with the amount of rough work done by women"; women subjected to too hard working conditions lose their "tender and unselfish instincts" and are "hardened by the strain and stress of unfeminine work" (1890: 592; 1961: 564).[18] These words suggest that the propensity to sacrifice is above all else a feminine quality, transmitted by the mother to her children. By working, women are striped of this quality and can no longer fulfill their "duty of building up a true home, and of investing their efforts in the personal capital of their children's character and abilities" (1890: 727–8; 1961: 685). This justifies forcing them to stay at home to perform their supreme duties.

According to Marshall, the limitation of women's hours of labor imposed by the Factory Acts must be supplemented by the control of their wages (Pujol 1992: 128; Groenewegen 1994: 90). The rapid rise of women's wages compared to those of men is a "gain" insofar as it develops their faculties, but an "injury" insofar as it tempts them to desert the home (1890: 727–8; 1961: 685). It causes infant mortality (1890: 252–3) by inducing women to "neglect their family duties in order to earn money wages" (1891: 256–7; 1895: 280, 594; 1961: 198, 529). As Reisman has argued, there is here both a substitution effect–the opportunity cost of spending time at home rather than at work is all the higher–and an income effect–the family money income increases all the more through women's work (Reisman [1987] 2011: 49–50). It is therefore necessary to modify incentives by keeping women's wages low, thus preventing them putting their natural duties behind the attractions of "dearly bought wages" (Marshall 1890: 263).

The above remarks imply that women suffering from a loss of freedom to work for wages bear the greatest share of the sacrifice made by parents for the benefit of their children. Then, how would this sacrifice be rewarded? Marshall is aware of the difficulty of measuring the strength of ethical forces guiding parents' behaviour, since it implies to identify exactly the part of the laborer's efficiency which is attributable to the sacrifice endured by *his* parents. He finally resolves (eludes?) the question by asserting that "whoever may incur the expense of investing capital in developing the abilities of the workman, these abilities will be the property of the workman himself"; therefore, "those who bear the expenses of rearing and educating him receive but very little of the price that is paid for his services in later years" and their "virtue … remains for the greater part its own reward" (1890: 588-9, 593–4; 1961: 560–1, 565). Parents are "the only persons, who … are very likely to invest much in developing

18. This reference to women's natural instincts echoes Darwin's remarks made in *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex* (1871), although there is no factual evidence indicating precisely when Marshall read or re-read *The Descent of Man* (Groenewegen 1995: 500). In a paragraph about the differences in the mental powers of the sexes, Darwin explains that the "woman seems to differ from man … chiefly in her greater tenderness and less selfishness", and presents the traditional sexual division of labor, based on "the present inequality between the sexes", as being an essential part of evolutionary progress (Darwin [1871] 1906: 326–9; Groenewegen 1995: 500).

the personal capital of a youth's abilities", precisely because no future returns can be expected from such an investment (1891: 705; 1961: 661). Women's sacrifice is thus rewarded by the sole joy of living a "virtuous life" (1895: 89; 1961: 6, 27). That said, if their contribution to their sons' economic well-being does not require to be measured in monetary terms, what about their contribution as housekeepers?

2.2. Valuing housewives' contribution to the economic well-being

In the sixth edition of *Principles*, Marshall explains that "progress may be hastened by … the appropriate education of the faculties of either sex" (1910: 248; 1961: 248). We have seen that the investment of capital in the development of children's abilities depends on family affections and love of virtue, which must be strengthened through specific regulation of women's work and wages. The question now is to know what, for Marshall, are the peculiar abilities which must be developed in women and their daughters and how these abilities can be valued in relation to those of men, exercised in the labor market.

2.2.1. An education focused on household management

In the *Principles*' first edition, Marshall minimizes the loss of money income suffered by households deprived of the wife's wages by offsetting this loss with the gain of real income induced by the wife's performance of the household and care activities. A slight shift of perspective appears in the second edition: Marshall develops new insights into how turning housekeeping to the benefit of the family's efficiency and saving.

Housewives' contribution to the family's real income

In *Principles*, Marshall develops the idea–briefly expressed in *The Economics of Industry*– that mothers' work outside the home is the result of an irrational choice, based on the persistent belief among the lower classes that "the family income" is "increased by all that the mother earns when she goes out to work" (A. and M. P. Marshall 1879: 102; Marshall 1890: 252–3). The wife, by working, actually substitutes "less important gains for more important" and diminishes "the income of the family" (1890: 281, see also 179). The argument refers to the way in which wages are used in working-class households: the decrease of the family money income is not a real evil if it "could be met exclusively by the abandonment by all classes of the least worthy methods of consumption" (1890: 731; 1961: 720). Given the prevalence of bad consumption patterns at the time, "the things" that the wife "can buy with her earnings are of far less importance for the health and happiness of the family than the mere material services she could have rendered them if she had stayed at home, to say nothing of her moral influence in educating the children, in keeping the household in harmony and making it possible for her husband to be cheered and soothed in his evenings at home" (1890: 253). The consumption gains obtained by adding the wife's wages to the family's money income do not counterbalance the losses induced by her absence from the home. Besides a negative effect on the family's health and happiness, the wages paid to domestic workers, hired by "the factory woman … to tend her children and to do some of her household work", come as a deduction from these gains (1890: 140). Then "by staying at home", the wife, while "diminishing the [family's] money income by the amount of her wages", "would increase [its] real income" by the amount of saved income, equivalent to the economic value of the services rendered, assessed by the wages which would be otherwise paid to hired domestic workers (1890: 140).

All these passages mentioning the effects of the quasi-permanent presence of women at home on the family's real income are deleted from the second edition of *Principles*. From this

edition onwards Marshall rather insists on the gains obtained in the family's physical and moral health through a careful management of the household budget. This may be in part linked to his growing emphasis on bettered spending and saving patterns as a key element of human betterment (Reisman 1977: 9). Marshall explains in the second edition of *Principles* that "the true key-note of economic progress is the development of new activities rather than of new wants", that is the development of activities fostering and expressing traits of character such as energy, enterprise, frugality, industry rather than of artificial or grosser wants, the satisfaction of which aimed only at raising the standard of material comfort beyond the necessaries of life; better consumption patterns would emerge with "a rise in the standard of life", which "implies an increase of intelligence and energy and self-respect; leading to more care and judgment in expenditure, and to an avoidance of food and drink that gratify the appetite but afford no strength, and of ways of living that are unwholesome physically and morally" (Marshall 1891: 738; 1961: 689). The needed transformation must begin in the family, especially through the development of women's abilities as housekeepers.

Developing women's abilities as housekeepers

In the second edition of *Principles* Marshall includes a chapter (Chapter V, Book III: 175-180) on the "choices between different uses of the same thing", which addresses in detail the subjects of expenditure and household consumption. A good management consists in deriving the greatest "utility" from the household's resources, by distributing them "wisely between different uses" (1891: 177; 1961: 119). Marshall emphasizes the role of experienced housekeepers in advising young working-class households of the need for the careful management of their budget. In particular, "they may avoid spending impulsively a great deal of money on furniture and other things; for, though some quantity of these is really needful, yet when bought lavishly they do not give high (marginal) utilities in proportion to their cost" (1891: 176–7; 1961: 119). Women must learn to manage the family budget without incurring superfluous expenses on things which satisfy only "artificial wants"–such as food and drink which gratify the appetite–and have no permanent results in that they do not serve "productive consumption", i.e. industrial efficiency by affording strength–such as food and drink which satisfy hunger (1890: 123; modified in 1891: 118-9; 1961: 67-70).[19] Economical consumption would also favor saving. In a commentary on Henry Higgs' paper "Workmen's Budgets", Marshall affirms that "Something like the whole imperial revenue, said 100 millions a year, might be saved if a sufficient number of able women went about the country and induced the other women to manage their households as they did themselves" (Higgs 1893: 288). The widespread good management of households would have positive effects on the national saving rate, so that the total value produced by able female managers could be assessed in terms of the imperial revenue saved.[20] However, Marshall does not develop further this point.

Marshall considers that good management of the household budget must go hand-in-hand with the efficient production of goods and services consumed by the family members. Throughout the editions of *Principles* he lauds the "skilled housewife" who "with ten shillings a week to spend on food will often do more for the health and strength of her family

19. This corroborates Bankovsky's thesis that Marshall views families and their consumption practices through the lens of their contribution to the efficiency of production (Bankovsky 2020). It may seem at odds with the idea, expressed in *Lectures to Women*, of preventing the "sacrifice" of individuals "to production" (Marshall [1872–3b] 1995: 93, 99). However, Marshall also sees the limitation of "lavish expenditure" as a means–complementary to the rise in wages resulting from increased industrial efficiency–of counterbalancing the loss of material wealth due to the the reduction of the hours of labor devoted to "production" (100-101). Lavish expenditure thus has to be distinguished from "productive expenditure", which, including "expenditure on recreation", increases "culture", i.e. capital in the sense of "stored up sources of enjoyment" (123-5).

20. We therefore agree with the idea defended by Le Bouteillec and Charles (2006-7 : 21) that, in Marshall, the consumption of working-class families appears to create economically quantifiable values. Nevertheless, this does not lead to the building of a real theory on how the economic value of the able housewife may be measured.

than an unskilled one with twenty" (Marshall 1890: 248–9; 1961: 195–6). For him, the excessive infant mortality in the poorer classes "is largely due to the want of care and judgment in preparing their food; and those who do not entirely succumb to this want of motherly care often grow up with enfeebled constitutions" (1890: 248–9; 1961: 195–6). Marshall develops the point in the second edition of *Principles* by stating that "the vital problems of domestic economy relate as much to wise action as to wise spending" (1891: 177; 1961: 119). Indeed, "the greatest faults in domestic economy … are faults of production rather than of consumption" (1891: 177; 1961: 119). Marshall states that "the French housewife" is able to produce with limited means more "good finished commodities" than "the English and American housewife" (1891: 177; 1961: 119). He pursues this celebration of the French housewife in *Industry and Trade*, saying that "[the Frenchman's] income is generally smaller than that of the Englishman; but his wife is an economical manager, and turns inexpensive food to good account … expenditure is generally kept down below income; and France is in the first rank of capitalist countries" (Marshall [1919] 1920: 117).

So Marshall insists on the necessity of developing English housewives' abilities in household management. Able housewives would could pass on their knowledge to their daughter(s), who would become good housekeepers in their turn. A question then arises: wouldn't the economic valuation of household work be a means of maintaining this virtuous circle (rather than imposing a gendered division of tasks through the regulation of women's work and wages)?

2.2.2. The economic valuation of the household work

Marshall has the merit of proposing some avenues for reflection in estimating the economic value of the services rendered by wives in their homes. However, these theoretical reflections are ousted when he gives up challenging the traditional boundaries between market and non-market activities. From the first editions of *Principles*, Marshall affirms that in the "language of the market-place" (1891: 123; 1961: 71), "business" entails commodification and must be contrasted with the "kindly services which are prompted by … family affection" (1890: 353; 1961: 291). Later, he will exclude the income generated by wive's services from the official definition of income, thus privileging habits over scientific consistency.

Valuing housewives' services through their contribution to the family's income

In the first edition of *Principles*, Marshall explains that "for some of the practical purposes of life it is customary to consider only [a man's] money income", defined as "those elements of the [individual's] total real income which come to him in the form of money" (Marshall 1890: 139–40).[21] While a service for which a person receives a payment directly or indirectly in money "swells his nominal income", "no services that he performs for himself are commonly reckoned as adding to his nominal income" (1890: 139–40; 1961: 72). Yet, as Marshall points out in the three first editions of *Principles*, these services "may be a very important part of his total real economic income if they are of a kind which people commonly pay for having done for them" (1890: 139–40; slightly modified in 1891, 135; modified in 1898: 149, see below). This extract is modified in the fourth edition of *Principles*, in which most references to the "real income" are deleted (1890: 140). Marshall replaces it by a distinction between two types of unpaid services. While it is best generally to neglect "trivial" services,[22] "account should for consistency be taken of" services which are "of a kind which people commonly pay for

21. This became in the third edition: "with the growth of a money economy there has been a strong tendency to confine the notion of income to those incomings which are in the form of money" (1895: 143–4; 1961: 71).

22. Marshall gives an example in the fourth edition: "For a similar reason it is not worth while to take separate account of the simple services which nearly every one renders to himself, such as putting on his clothes; though there are a few persons who choose to pay others to do such things for them" (1898: 149; 1961: 76).

having done for them" (1898: 149; 1961: 72). By applying this reasoning to the services rendered by the housewife, who prepares food as would a domestic cook and keeps her children rather than entrusting them to a nurse, it appears that she increases the family income by the amount of the wages which would be paid to hired workers. Her work thus appears as an income-generating activity. These considerations stop, however, at the doors of the home; they collide with the gradual exclusion, over the subsequent editions of *Principles*, of incomes deriving from non-market activities from the definition of the national income.

The gradual exclusion of unpaid activities from national accounts

In the first four editions of *Principles* Marshall writes that "every service rendered … is a part of the national income", this including the "services which one person may be hired to perform for another" (1890: 141; deleted in the fifth edition). The sentence is replaced in the fifth edition by the idea that the inclusion of the work of domestic servants "raises no great statistical difficulty", since it can be "assessed … at the value of their remuneration in money and in kind"; but there is "some inconsistency in omitting the heavy domestic work which is done by women and other members of the household, where no servants are kept" (1907: 79; 1961: 79–80). Despite this inconsistency, as Marshall explains in the third and subsequent editions of *Principles*, "it is best … to follow the common practice, and not count as part of the national income or dividend anything that is not commonly counted as part of the income of the individual" (1895: 589; 1961: 524). Thus, "the services which a person renders to himself, and those which he renders gratuitously to members of his family or friends are not reckoned as parts of the national dividend, but are left to be accounted for separately" (1895: 589; 1961: 524). When the passage was added in the third edition of *Principles*, Marshall's remarks were completed with a footnote–itself an abbreviation of a longer footnote dating from the first edition (1890: 561)–in which he recognizes that "[i]t would be possible, and for some theoretical purposes, it would be best to include them" in the national dividend (1895: 589). In this way, housewives' efforts involved in rendering services would "be counted as part of the labour and capital which are agents of production", while the "services and the benefits themselves" would "be counted as earnings of labour or interest of capital" (1895: 589). Finally, the footnote is deleted from the fifth edition, in which Marshall also adopts the definition of "labour" and "capital" simply as "the sources of all that income of which account is commonly taken in reckoning up the National Income" (1907: 79; 1961: 79). As Brennan and Pujol have argued, Marshall chooses to allow the "customary discourse" and "popular conventions" finding expression in "national accounting standards" to prevail over theoretical consistency (Brennan, 2006: 415–7; Pujol 1992: 133–4). This attitude may reflect Marshall's stance toward economics. His ambition is not to build a true science for itself, but to perfect its tools in order to put them at the service of practical ends. As Marshall notes in the *Principles*' third edition, the economists, to fulfill their role, must adopt a "language that is intelligible to the general public", namely the "language of the market place" (1895: 103, 144; 1961: 51, 71). Admittedly, by refraining from breaking down the barriers commonly erected between market and non-market activities, Marshall fails to consider all the institutional changes and viable alternatives which would be likely to promote the cultivation of family affections. In particular, he never considers the economic valuation of the household work as a potential alternative to the regulation of women's work and wages in view of encouraging them (and why not men) to stay at home rather than working for wages. However, such an alternative would undoubtedly run counter to the idea that wives should represent and inculcate within their families a model of virtue, self-sacrifice and hard work. For Marshall, the family, preserved from any market-oriented relationships, is the primary place of the expression and growth of the ethical forces governing the behavior of the citizen and economic agent.

5. Concluding remarks

Marshall's analysis of the role of families and women in the well-being and progress developed throughout the course of his career as an economist. In the early 1870s his views on the subject appear in the background of his study about ways to increase the laborers' welfare, which above all involves educating them so that they become true gentlemen and ladies. At the end of the 1870s, Marshall presents home influences, and especially the influence of the mother, as determinants of the character of individuals, and of the efficiency of laborers. In these early economic writings, the strengthening of family affections appears as an essentiel lever for the progress of the laborers' economic and moral well-being. It involves improving the living conditions, whever material or moral, of poor working-class households, in particular through education and the regulation of child and female labor. These, then, are the premises upon which the theory later set out in *Principles* is built. In *Principles*, Marshall denies that spontaneous evolution alone could produce the elevation of the moral character essential to the achievement of human well-being. He endeavours to examine the changes in industrial organization which would favor the progress of the economic and moral well-being, notably through the cultivation of family affections.

Marshall's analysis of the role of families and women in the well-being and progress began to take shape before Marshall started writing *Principles*. Therefore, although we agree with Groenewegen's conclusion that Marshall is "A Failed Feminist", we have shown that Marshall's analysis, anchored in his more general analysis of the well-being and progress, cannot be fully understood without returning to his early economic writings (Groenewegen 1995: 493-530). Examination of these writings also contradicts Pujol's thesis that there is a double contradiction between Marshall's treatment of the role of women in capitalist society and the marginalist model underliying his economic theory. Marshall would depart from this model both by abandoning individualistic economic motivations to explain intergenerational transfers between family members, and by emphasizing the need for government intervention in the work of working-class women. But if we consider, as we have done in this article, that Marshall's primary object is not to build an economic theory distinct from reality, but to think about the concrete changes necessary to promote the culture of family affections–by providing families and women with the conditions required to perform this role properly–, then his analysis is in this respect consistent with his overall analysis of the well-being and progress.

That being said, this semblance of consistency is undermined by the fact that Marshall does not go through with his thoughts on how to properly measure and value the unpaid domestic work. In doing so, he shows himself clearly reluctant to scrupulously examine possible alternatives to the restrictive measures that he advocates, and which involve greater sacrifice on the part of women. He distinguishes the *female homo economicus* from the *male homo economicus*: while the "man is largely influenced by egoistic motives in his business life"–most of his actions being guided by the selfish desire for pecuniary gain–, the conduct of the good housewife is entirely ruled by "delight … in sacrificing [her]self for the good of [her] family" and in living "a virtuous life" (1895: 89; 1961: 26–7). The *female homo economicus* kindly puts her abilities at the service of her family, devoting all her time and energy to the development of the general abilities of her children and to the household management. In Marshall's mind, this state of things does not induce true gender asymmetry since women would fulfill themselves by deploying vigorous enterprise and energy in housekeeping, just as the men do in their places of work (1890: 1; 1961: 1–2). Nevertheless, Marshall deviates here from the principle that he dictates to economists concerned with "the ultimate aims of man", namely that they must "take account of differences in real value between gratifications that are equally powerful incentives and have therefore equal economic measures" (1895: 77; 1961: 17). He seems to assume that, in the case of women, living a

virtuous life has greater real value than doing economically and socially recognized work, and that it creates incentives powerful enough to encourage women to stay at home and to perform their *natural* duties. But if that were really the case, why forcing women to stay at home by imposing lasting restrictions on their freedom to work? Marshall's reasoning is biased by a stereotypical view of the ideal woman and of her role within the nuclear family which takes precedence over his concern for scientific objectivity.

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