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Review

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Youth in Brazil: old assumptions and new approaches

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The author examines the situation of young people within the framework of the deep changes that have occurred in Brazil in recent decades. There are three aspects that interest her most. First, she addresses employment and, in this context, the evolution of employment and wages and the effect the crisis has on them. In this regard, the most outstanding observation is that the urban economically active population has become younger since the 1970s as a result of the increased rate of young people's participation, contrary to conventional assumptions that modernization will have the opposite effect. Second, she examines education and stresses that educational levels in Brazil are lagging well behind the observed economic progress. In fact, the proportion of young people with no instruction or only a few years of schooling is very large, particularly in rural or relatively less-developed areas, such as the North-East. Finally, she deals with the family, which has been greatly affected by changes in other spheres of society, and with young people's relations with their families, which has given rise to a complex interplay of solidarity and conflict.

Over the past 30 years, drastic changes have occurred in Brazil, as in the rest of Latin America, and have brought about deep quantitative and qualitative transformations in the geographic, demographic and social structure of the country. Some basic trends include the predominance of paid jobs, increased mercantilization of trade relations, monetization of labour relations, progressive increases in urban jobs, a tendency towards growing concentration of income, the appearance" of great regional imbalances, and progress in educational opportunities.

The 1970s saw the acceleration of such trends and the emergence of others, including particularly the increase in the numbers of young people and women in the economically active population of the cities, the intense penetration of the mass media and new consumption patterns spread through such media, and the greater general availability of consumer credit. Beginning in the 1980s, however, Brazil entered into a period of recession generally characterized by greater unemployment in the dynamic sectors, increased underemployment and deterioration in the working class' standard of living.

A significant number of studies have already been conducted to try to understand how these new conditions came about. Such studies have made use of official statistics, referring to a set of "classical" socio-economic variables, covering such factors as income, employment, place of residence and educational level.

Within this set of "classical" variables, most of these studies do not take into account the specific place occupied by such biological and demographic groups as young men, young women and adult women, who, each in their own way, have helped to create the new social order.

Without speculating too much on the reasons why such aspects are considered secondary or marginal (the arguments would certainly be different for adult women than for young people of both sexes), a common explanation may be found for this lack of attention: the scant importance given to the family in determining the population's living conditions.

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In fact, family relations were for many years only dealt with in the most conservative studies, and the main analysis was consequently limited to their ideological functions. On the progressive side, concern for family relations was considered typical of researchers contaminated by bourgeois ideology, since problems formulated in such terms ended up concealing the reality of the class struggle.

As secondary information, fundamental importance was attached to the parameters of the situation of adult males, since they were generally the head of the family and responsible for the family's biological survival or its standard of living, when this was above mere subsistence.

Through a number of paths that eventually crossed, a new perspective on the family was gained, and it became an important field of study when emphasis began to be placed on the "joint economic activity" of its members in maintaining and reproducing family living conditions. After being thus legitimated, solidarity and harmony among the different family members eventually became important in analyses. In recognizing the economic value of household work, this perspective also favoured the development of a fruitful debate on the links between capitalist productive space and the family as a sphere of production (including procreation and household work).

Although this new form of viewing the family legitimated studies on the economic significance of the wife's activities, the question of the activities of the children and young people of the family is still practically unexplored. An analysis of the family from this approach gives rise to a whole gamut of questions. For example, if the family is analysed as the main place of organization of the "family survival strategy" or from the standpoint of the woman's contribution, what is most evident is the solidarity aspect; if viewed from the standpoint of young people, however, what is outstanding is the conflict or the relation between conflict and solidarity. If discussion of women immediately leads to consideration of the relation between productive and unproductive work, discussion of young people almost inevitably refers to the future, to the democratization of schooling and, hence, to social mobility, the manipulation of aspirations, frustrations, and so forth.

The lack of studies that take into account young people would, in itself, justify a study on what has happened in Brazil over the past ten years as regards the participation of this segment of the economically active population. Such a study may also be considered opportune, because the patterns that have arisen over the last ten years and have basic implications for the future path to be taken by Brazilian society particularly affect young people of both sexes.

Furthermore, the most recent investigations bring out two needs. The first is to place less emphasis in analyses of the place of children and young people in the labour market, on the most common approach, which tends to underline marginalization and poverty, and to begin instead to think analytically (as was done with the work of women) about the work of people in these categories as an integral and structural part of the social production process. The second need is to approach labour relations and the significance of schooling not only from the standpoint of capital, as is generally done, but also from the viewpoint of the specific actor involved, that is, the young person.

The present study was designed to perform two basic and complementary tasks: first, to demonstrate how young people were conditioned to participate in labour market trends during the period in question and thereby to assist in shaping the new profiles of Brazilian society, and, second, to see how these changes ultimately put into operation mechanisms that expanded or provided access to young people's identity.

To that end, the concept of young people's identity is first of all analysed in order to highlight the young population's specific behaviour within labour market trends during the last decade.

Data organization is based on official statistics of the 1970-1980 population censuses and the National Home Sample Survey (Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicílios, PNAD). The information presented always refers to the country as a whole and to two poles: one, the State of Sao Paulo, which is the most dynamic in the country, and the other, the State of Pernambuco which is the area afflicted by the most harmful effects of the development style that prevailed in Brazil during the 1970s.

Frequently, information is used from studies on work-school integration in the daily activities of young people in São Paulo, based on qualitative empirical references.

Whenever possible, information is broken down by sex, because of the different impact that the main changes have had on each sex. It was also decided to subdivide age groups, so that

those between 10 and 14 years of age are considered children, those between 15 and 19 years of age, adolescents, and those between 20 and 24 years of age, young people, in accordance with the subdivision of the censuses. This division reflects important differences in the work, school, leisure, and related responsibilities of each of these age groups in recent years.

I

What is a "young person"?

These statements made by the mass media, political parties and the organized sectors of society in relation to the International Youth Year are of two types: either they refer to Brazilian youth in general or they insist on the enormous differences among young people. In the later case, the positions taken are naturally more controversial.

"That is why we understand that it is impossible to talk about youth in general, since we must characterize youth on the basis of its living and working conditions and the class to which it belongs. The young worker, then, is a young person who belongs to the working class and shares its living and working conditions."¹

For some time, one of the television channels presented short interviews with the most diverse types of young people (workers, vendors, *bóias-frias*,² and preachers of sects) and adults on what a young person is or what it means to be young. In spite of the enormous diversity of those interviewed, their answers showed that being young meant, above all, taking advantage of a transitory period of less responsibility, either in relation to work or the family, and enjoying leisure to the full, frequently including "curtir um som",³ going out with members of the opposite sex, practicing a

sport, living it up with friends, and so forth. In essence, the set of testimonies demonstrated a relatively clear and generalized social perception of what it means to be young, in spite of enormous differences in the forms of participation in society.

Braslavsky (1985) successfully translates the meaning of the set of testimonies as a whole when she depicts youth on the basis of two criteria. The first criterion distinguishes the stages that human beings pass through according to their greater or lesser degree of autonomy. In this regard, what characterizes young people is a margin of autonomy that is greater than that of children but more limited than that of adults. This makes young people oscillate between two types of behaviour. On the one hand, they perceive themselves as being capable of performing specific tasks and of confronting certain social challenges: a feeling that frequently takes the form of personal and social "omnipotence". On the other hand, they sometimes express worries, reflecting the internal and external limits imposed by the family and society. In practice, young people often end up making even their most regulated activities, school and work, "intermittent"; they come and go, as is typical of people who do not have to be fully responsible. These distinctive traits of youth certainly lie at the roots of another factor that inevitably appears in the discourse characteristic of youth: conflict with the adult world.

¹ From "Quem somos", a document prepared by the *Jornal Juventude Operária* for the International Youth Year.

² Rural wage earners who live in urban areas.

³ Young people's expression that means to enjoy loud, modern music.

A second criterion sees youth as a stage of transition between childhood and adult life: a transition that does not take place in only one form, but almost always involves a number of parallel or consecutive changes that vary both historically and culturally. Scientific publications have identified five forms of transition, which appear most frequently in the testimonies and in the light of common-sense considerations: i) leaving school; ii) entering the labour force; iii) leaving the family of origin; iv) marrying; and v) establishing a new home.

The task of preparing a profile of young people goes far beyond pure theoretical or academic interest. Young people's specific problems need to be made visible and be socially recognized so that consideration may be given to formulating public policies especially aimed at this sector of the population. Furthermore, it is essential to bear this set of traits in mind in order to interpret the qualitative and quantitative results of research, particularly because such results are, ultimately, of valuable assistance in formulating public policies in two decisive social spheres: education and the labour market. The special characteristics of these members of society must be kept in mind, even when analysing official data such as those of population censuses. In fact, the normative and motivational criteria that are implicit in census categories, such as unemployment and inactivity, become evident when these concepts are borne in mind, as demonstrated in the present study. The bias of official data is a fact already widely denounced in studies on women; analysing such data from the standpoint of youth discloses other facets of them.

Similarities between the question of youth and the question of women do not end there. Neither the State nor employers ever forget that autonomy that is only relative and a lower level of responsibility are characteristic traits of young people. They are rated as workers who make a secondary contribution to the family and are treated quite differently from adult social agents in the same social sector, which in practice means attributing lower market value to work of greater comparative value.

One sector of the population in Brazil may now be said to possess a certain degree of homogeneity because of the relative autonomy it is aware of and enjoys. In other words, it is possible to talk about a certain youth identity common to Brazilian society as a whole. This does not, however, mean that it is possible to speak generically about "Brazilian youth", just as we cannot speak about Brazilian children or Brazilian women in a generic manner. Young people are just as segmented as Brazilian society as a whole. They are divided by sex; they are rural, urban or metropolitan; they are rich, middle-income or poor; they are integrated or marginalized; they come from the North or the South-East; they are young girls, young mothers, workers, students or worker/students. Naturally, each of the specific situations in which young people live limits their capacity, their aspirations, their field of action, as determined by written and unwritten social codes, their level of conflict, and their degree of responsibility.

From the standpoint of identity versus differences among Brazilian youth, by way of a brief summary and as a foreglimpse of conclusions, we could say that a significant part of the young population was able to participate in society through work, school or leisure in a more "modern" manner during the 1970s. This does not mean that the relative and objective distances between young people have diminished, but the changes registered during that period have reinforced the identity of young people and even spread it to a wider sector of society. Expansion of opportunities for paid work and formal employment strengthen ambitions and also the sense of omnipotence, and the conflicts between generations become markedly more explicit. More democratic educational opportunities, while stimulating aspirations, also make up for deficiencies in sociability, particularly in the case of female youth; the mass media create clear and visible symbols of youth's identity; and the consumer society makes such symbols available either through inferior quality, cheapening of products or systems of credit.

II

Work: the activity of many young Brazilians

1. *Employment*

According to the theory of modernization, urbanization and industrialization are expected to bring about a decrease in both the participation and the proportion of children, adolescents and youth in the economically active population (EAP) as a whole. The reason is simple. The greater the proportion of the population in the primary sector, the greater the utilization of young and elderly labour. As modernization continues, the availability of such labour decreases because with increasing urbanization schooling is longer, labour legislation is introduced and the social security system is improved.

In general, this expectation was fulfilled in Brazil up to 1970. The surprise in the 1970s was that some of these trends reversed; it could even be said that one of the characteristics of that time was that the urban EAP became younger.

This fact alone disproves the paradigm of the theory of modernization: the evolution of the labour process and the school system during the 1970s has encouraged rather than hindered the hiring of minors. In absolute figures, the number of minors from 10 to 17 years of age who worked increased by 41% between 1970 and 1980. Although this percentage is lower than the total growth in the contingent of workers, which increased 48%, the relative increase occurred in spite of the great reduction in the rural labour force, in which the proportion of minors is quite large. If the urban labour market is considered by itself, it may be seen that its capacity to absorb child, adolescent and youth labour grew 94%, while the absorption of adult labour increased 85%.

The relevant data are presented in table 1. Before proceeding to analyse the figures, two general considerations should be noted. The first is related to the differences between men and women in all of the age groups and shows that these become apparent at a very early age. The second refers to expectations of participating in

the labour market among the different subgroups in these categories, which are very similar throughout the country and also present differences by sex.

As far as males are concerned, for example, it may be said that the economically active population included nearly one-fifth of the children, slightly more than half the adolescents (between 15 and 17 years of age) and three-fourths of those who had reached the age of legal majority.⁴

Grouped together in this manner, however, these figures conceal significant differences between polar situations that exist between urban and rural areas and between São Paulo and the North-East. The participation rates of children are nearly five times greater in rural areas than in urban areas. They are also greater in Pernambuco, although rates increased at both poles during the decade. In São Paulo, the figure rose from 28.3% to 30.7%, and in Pernambuco from 37.6% to 42%.

Urban rates, although lower, refer to greater absolute numbers and their percentage increases were more significant. Thus, in São Paulo, they rose from 8.8% to 13.4%, and, in Pernambuco, from 4.3% to 11.7%.

Adolescent workers are not only much more numerous than child workers but also work under very different conditions. Their proportion is greater in São Paulo than in Pernambuco, and it is also greater in urban areas, where the growth rate is faster.

Male adolescents increased their participation in urban areas: in São Paulo, they increased from 53.0% to 63.0% and in Pernambuco from 35.6% to 49.4%. In the rural area of São Paulo, the corresponding figures only matched population growth and in Pernambuco they even decreased.

It was interesting to distinguish between adolescents above or below 18 years of age (the

⁴There are various different legal provisions in this respect in Brazil. The age of legal majority in election and labour laws, for example, is 18; but in civil law, it is 21.

Table 1

BRAZIL: YOUTH EMPLOYMENT RATES BY SEX AND LOCATION, 1970 AND 1980

Location	Children		Adolescents				Young people		Total ⁱⁱ	
			15-17		18-19					
	1970	1980	1970	1980	1970	1980	1970	1980	1970	1980
Males										
Brazil										
Total	19.5	20.0	54.9	57.7	73.5	76.9	87.7	90.5	71.9	72.4
Urban areas	6.6	11.3	38.8	50.4	61.4	73.3	82.2	89.0	65.5	70.3
Rural areas	33.4	35.6	73.4	72.2	87.0	85.0	94.6	90.0	80.1	78.8
Sao Paulo										
Total	13.1	15.6	57.9	64.4	74.7	82.8	88.8	93.0	72.3	75.3
Urban areas	8.8	13.4	53.0	63.0	70.6	81.8	87.3	92.5	70.3	75.0
Rural areas	28.3	30.7	74.0	74.7	88.9	90.1	94.7	97.0	80.0	79.5
Pernambuco										
15-19 ^o										
Total	20.1	24.4	57.3	60.4	.	-	86.2	87.9	71.0	69.7
Urban areas	4.3	11.7	35.6	49.4	-	-	77.2	85.2	58.1	64.5
Rural areas	37.6	42.2	81.7	78.8	-	-	96.9	93.5	75.3	78.2
Females										
Brazil										
Total	6.5	8.4	21.4	27.4	27.3	37.1	27.7	38.5	18.2	26.6
Urban areas	5.6	7.1	25.0	30.1	34.6	43.4	36.3	45.7	22.3	30.8
Rural areas	7.6	10.8	16.5	22.8	17.0	22.4	15.0	20.3	12.3	17.6
São Paulo										
Total	9.0	10.0	37.2	43.4	42.3	53.6	38.8	48.8	23.0	32.6
Urban areas	9.1	9.2	39.3	43.9	46.9	57.0*	43.4	51.5	25.5	34.2
Rural areas	9.0	14.7	28.1	39.3	21.8	30.5	15.6	25.0	11.3	20.6
Pernambuco										
15-19 ^o										
Total	5.0	8.9	18.8	24.7	.	-	24.2	34.9	17.0	25.4
Urban areas	3.9	5.9	22.3	23.9	-	-	33.2	39.3	25.0	26.8
Rural areas	6.4	13.6	14.0	26.0	-	-	12.7	25.5	12.2	22.7

Source: 1970, special tabulation: IBGE, *Perfil estatístico de mães e filhos*; Pernambuco, 1970, IBGE, *VIH Recenseamento Geral - 1970*. Regional Series. Vol. 1, Section X. Population census. Pernambuco; IBGE, *IX Recenseamento Geral do Brasil - 1980*. Population census.

*Separate data for the 15-17 and 18-19 age groups are not available.

legal age for working), and it was noted that those over 18 increased their participation. In this regard, it should be noted that it is very difficult for those between 17 and 18 years of age to find a job, since companies reject young people of this age because of military service commitments. Young people also have the right to a number of labour benefits and employers prefer to avoid such protective laws.

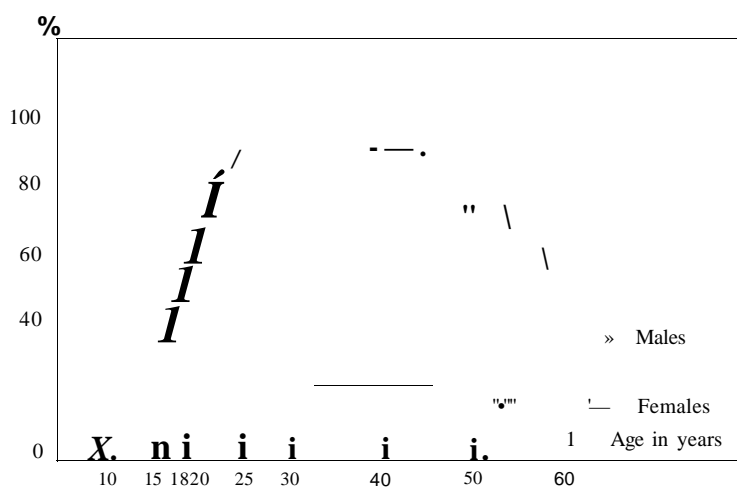
Young males, in general, followed the trends of adult males and labour market participation indicators remained relatively stable in the country as a whole and in the different regions. The figures on the participation of these age categories in the total contingent of workers seem to contradict the experience in the developed countries, whose modernization paradigm postulates a systematic downward trend in the participation of children, adolescents and young people in the labour force as development progresses. In this regard, the participation of children and adolescents in the total economically active population decreased percentagewise in the country as a whole; the drop was less accentuated among adolescents and the proportion remained practically stable

among youth. If the rural and urban population are taken separately, a stable or slightly downward trend may be noted in rural areas in the participation of children (which went from 8.2% to 8.5%), adolescents (9.2% to 9.5%) and young people (14.8% to 14.4%). In urban areas, participation rose in all groups: children rose from 1.8% to 2.6%; adolescents, from 5.4% to 6.7%; and young people, from 15.5% to 17.3%.

To understand the trends among female children, adolescents and young people, it must be borne in mind, first of all, that the situation among women is quite diverse, as shown in figure 1, in which male and female participation curves are compared according to age. While the male curve drops only when advancing age suggests the proximity of retirement, female participation rates usually drop after 25 years of age (possibly because of marriage and motherhood). In contrast to what happens in more developed countries, women in Brazil do not reintegrate themselves into economic activities, once their children have grown up.

The figure shows that female participation rates are highest in the group from 20 to 24 years of age and then decrease. This pattern is valid for

Figure 1
BRAZIL: ACTIVITY RATES OF MALES AND FEMALES,
BY AGE, 1970



Source: Bruschini (1985), with data from the 1970 Population Census and from the *Perfil Estatístico de Crianças e Maes no Brasil*, UNICEF, 1982.

the country as a whole and for urban areas, but not for the countryside, thus reflecting both the structure of the employment available to the women in each region, as well as their possibilities of gaining access to the market, in view of their responsibilities in bearing and raising children. The more formal structure of the non-agricultural economic sectors, with standard working days and a clear separation between family space and production space, is an obstacle to making the different activities of women compatible and causes a reduction in their participation rates when they are fulfilling child-bearing and rearing responsibilities. Furthermore, the labour market is more favourable for young and single women, partially because of the prejudices of employers. In rural areas, the age profile of female participation is more irregular and suggests that the nature of work performed there allows for greater compatibility between the innumerable responsibilities of women. More than a few investigations have highlighted the combination of productive and reproductive activities that women perform in the house, in the yard and in small gardens. Performing several jobs at the same time frequently leads women to classify themselves as unemployed and causes data to suffer from underestimation, as observed further on (Bruschini, 1985).

It should be noted first of all that the data in table 1 indicate that during the 1970s the total young female participation rate grew substantially from one-fifth in 1970 to one-fourth in 1980, while the male rate for the same age groups was far lower. Examination of the relation between sex and age shows that the most pronounced differences among children occur in rural areas, where the participation of girls is only one-third that of boys. More than half of the male adolescents (15 to 17 years of age) worked, while the proportion of female adolescents was not even one-fourth (21.4% in 1970 and 27.4% in 1980). In the case of female adolescents, the differences between the most developed and the least developed areas are enormous. In São Paulo, almost 40% of female adolescents had some paid employment in 1970, while in Pernambuco the proportion did not even reach 20%. This distance between the two poles tends to remain very pronounced: in 1980,

43.4% of female adolescents in the São Paulo area were already working, in comparison to only 24.7% in the Pernambuco area. Among young women, differences between rural and urban areas and between the most developed and least developed poles are likewise maintained.

Participation rates of young men remained stable during the 1970s; in contrast, young women increased their participation in the labour market in general, both in rural and urban areas.

If trends in the development of women's participation are examined within the framework of the total contingent of workers, the results reinforce what was observed in relation to men: in urban zones and the most developed areas, the labour force incorporated a larger proportion of young people and women. The data show that the dynamic industrial economy, which was in full expansion in the 1970s, rapidly incorporated adolescents of both sexes and married women, while the male labour force grew very slowly during that same period of time.

To gain a more accurate idea of the factors that played a role in this percentage increase of young workers and adult females, consideration should be given to two aspects stemming from the economic model implemented in Brazil during the last decade. One involves the "artificial" increase in workers and the other, the "real" increase.

In the first case, the monetization of labour relations, in which wage earning became the predominant and most common form of work in the countryside and the city, increased the number of people registered as workers. The development of the domestic market in Brazil, together with greater social division of labour, has gradually eliminated the possibilities of producing for self-subsistence or for the local community and has forced workers to devote themselves to wage-earning activities as a means of survival. Consequently, during the 1970s there was a great increase in the number of wage-earners and the monetization of income.

It is widely recognized that unpaid work tends to be underestimated in censuses and particularly in population censuses. On comparing the differences between sexes, it may be seen that such underestimation is much

greater for women than it is for men. In this sense, the increased activity rates of children, young people and women in rural areas may be partially due merely to the monetization of labour relations.

The data clearly indicate that between 1970 and 1980 there was a decrease of four percentage points (from 16.7% to 12.6%) in the proportion of men who were in the Brazilian labour force, but did not receive related monetary compensation. Among women, the decrease was even greater (from 47.2% to 38.9%). Since the proportion of unpaid workers tends to be concentrated in the child and youth population, decreases were greatest in these sectors. Naturally, in São Paulo, where antiquated forms of production were eliminated by the much stronger capitalism, the reduction in the proportion of unpaid workers was also more pronounced, as shown by a comparison of the 1970 and 1980 census results. In the urban sector of the economy, the participation of unpaid workers was already of minor importance in 1970 and had practically disappeared by 1980. Interviews conducted during field surveys showed that even family workers, such as children of small shopkeepers, of vendors at travelling fairs, etc., demanded payment for the assistance they gave, whether this was permanent or sporadic.

Although it is pertinent to bear in mind this "artificial" increase in the participation levels of so-called secondary workers, the "real" increase, based on the dynamic growth of the industrial economy, which was in full expansion during the 1970s, was undoubtedly of great importance. This experience was different from that of Latin America as a whole, and the most generally accepted explanation of it is as follows: "Contrary to what happened in many other countries, the growth of the Brazilian economy did not stop after the first oil crisis in 1973. Although there was a considerable decrease in expansion rates, particularly if compared with the industrial growth rates of 15% to 20% reached at the time of the "economic miracle", the government's policy of increasing the foreign debt in order to finance large industrial and development projects made it possible to maintain industrial growth up to the end of the decade. The difficulties began to become

enormous as of the second oil crisis in 1979, however, when the government adopted an "orthodox" policy restricting credit and public spending in order to confront problems of inflation and balance of payments" (Humphrey and Hirata, 1984).

Although it is true that the dynamic growth of industry and services created hundreds of thousands of new jobs in the most active sectors, it did not completely absorb the great surplus of manpower forced out of rural regions. Every day, this surplus further swells the contingent of the underemployed linked to personal consumption and small business services, to small manufacturing and repair activities of low productivity, and to non-monopolistic construction sectors.

Various indicators show that young people participate in both types of employment generated by this process, which contradicts the common idea that economic development is accompanied by a continuous and systematic process of using child and youth labour as a form of limited participation in the so-called underemployment of the informal sector.

If the evolution of the structure is taken as the basis, it is immediately observed in the distribution of employment by sectors of the economy between 1970 and 1980 that there was a factor that strongly affected the relocation of all workers, regardless of sex, age and place of residence: the primary sector's decreased importance in absorbing manpower. This generalized decrease certainly reflects the intense urbanization process experienced in the country during the present decade. In fact, in spite of all the attempts to keep the population in the countryside, Brazil, in the late 1980s is defined as an eminently urban country.

The shift of the population from the countryside to the city stems from a number of interrelated factors. "The fencing off of land in regions where agricultural frontiers were still in expansion prevented more intense occupation of these areas and, at the same time, expelled the remaining subsistence populations. In a parallel manner, the concentration of land ownership and the modernization of rural activities both for the internal market and the external market favoured great shifts of people to the cities" (Patarra and Medici, 1983). This process has

been continuous since the 1950s, but it reached its peak in the 1970s. During that period, changes in labour relations in the rural areas of Brazil were so drastic that they even required the reorganization of census categories. The counterpart of this substantial fall in the population employed in the agricultural sector is the relative expansion of the economically active population employed in the secondary and tertiary sectors.

In addition to this general observation, consideration should also be given to topics such as the differences in job distribution by region, sex and age.

In the country as a whole, after the relative loss of 13 percentage points in the share of rural workers which took place in the 1970s, the male working population was distributed among the three sectors in a balanced manner. In Sao Paulo, the share of the agricultural sector was much less (13.8%) and the remaining labour force was divided almost equally (around 40% for each sector), with a somewhat greater percentage of workers in the secondary sector. In Pernambuco, which represents the North-East—the region most harmed by the development model imposed—the situation was quite different. Almost half of the economically active population was concentrated in agriculture, followed by the tertiary sector. Furthermore, the proportion of own-account workers in the secondary and tertiary sectors was much greater.

It is a widely recognized fact that specific historic conditions resulted in different levels and patterns of development in the different regions of the country. Already in 1940 the regional differences were pronounced and they became even more marked as benefits became concentrated in the South-East region (especially in Sao Paulo); in the North-East, in contrast, the deformations in Brazilian development are evident.

At both poles, the participation of children, and particularly of adolescents and youth, during the 1970s was principally in the secondary sector of the economy and, within this sector, as wage-earners. In Sao Paulo, the share of children rose from 17.6% in 1970 to 27.4% in 1980; of adolescents, from 32.0% to 45.2%; and of youth, from 40.0% to 51.0%. In Pernambuco, there was also significant percentage growth from

2.8% to 6.9%, from 10.5% to 20.6%, and from 18.7% to 30.7%, respectively.

Spindel (1985), analysing only registered adolescent workers, concludes that "when calculations are made on the basis of data for the Law of 2/3 and the "RAIS" (annual report on wages) —that is, only on the basis of registered minors— much more rapid growth is revealed. In the most capitalized sector, the incorporation of minors over the past ten years took place much faster than in the labour market as a whole. The growth rate of jobs for minors in the 12 to 17 age group was of the order of 250%. It can therefore be concluded that, in addition to the "Rejuvenation" of the urban labour force, that force also became more "formal"." The great surprise in the 1970s, however, was not only the increase in the proportion of married women and young people of both sexes in the economically active population, but also the "formalization" of female employment in specific sectors. A careful examination of the employment structure over the past 30 years shows that the services sector, consisting mainly of female teachers and domestic workers, became less important and its weight in the creation of jobs for women decreased from more than 50% to less than 30% in the 1970s. The contribution of social activities in the creation of jobs also dropped in the 1970s; in contrast, there was a significant increase in the employment of women in commerce and manufacturing.

The trend was even more evident in S2o Paulo. Except in the services sector, women increased more than the general mean in all urban activity sectors. The most significant increase took place in manufacturing (clothing, footwear, textiles, electrical equipment, food products and plastic and metal goods).

Although there was also an increase in the number of women holding office jobs, Hirata and Humphrey (1984) point out that such jobs did not constitute the majority among the women employed in the industries of Sao Paulo: women constituted 29.4% of the total in establishments with more than 50 employees, but only held 28.9% of the administrative positions. They occupied few technical positions or skilled manual jobs, except as seamstresses or operators of overlock machines in the textile industries; a great many of them occupied semi-

skilled positions. They made up 38.8% of the semi-skilled labour force in industry in São Paulo and three of every four of the total women employed were, in one way or another, linked to manual production jobs. The same authors also suggest that job vacancies in industry were above all for very young women. Already in 1970, the labour force in industry was very young and it became even younger in the State of São Paulo during the past decade. Activity rates for young women also increased significantly and there are clear indications that there was a shift of young women from the services sector to industrial jobs. Older and married women, for their part, moved over to jobs for day workers.

To understand the preference of employers for young women, it should be noted, on the one hand, that the socialization of young women has favoured obedience to standards and patterns of behaviour, which is certainly an advantage in the eyes of employers. On the other hand, these behavioural factors take on new value in modern industry, since they are important variables for good relations between the worker and the machine. As Spindel indicates, "What employers consider good experience in the work of girls or young women many times consists of what is known as home skills: sewing for the garment industry, or embroidering or knitting skills, which provide highly-valued evidence of capacity in the electrical and electronic industry, not only because of the manual dexterity they involve, but also because practice in memorizing stitches is valuable in the assembly processes".

The above data show how limiting it is to approach problems of child or young workers, as has traditionally been done, by focusing on the evident factors of marginalization and poverty. Analytical consideration must also be directed towards the work of children and adolescents as an integral and structural part of the social production process, as has been done with the work of women.

2. Wages

The proportion of people who received less than the legal minimum wage decreased in all sectors of the economy during the 1970s. Some preliminary studies (Medici, 1983) warn against drawing overly optimistic conclusions from this

and point out that there was no déconcentration of income during the 1970s, but only a less pronounced concentration than during the previous decade. Nor can the wage increase be considered an improvement in the quality of life, in view of the drop in the real value of wages during this period of time and the differences between one area and another. Even with figures that have not been broken down to provide a clear understanding of such differences, however, wages are still the most concrete indicator for evaluating the general working conditions of children, adolescents and young people in particular.

During the last ten years, low-income groups continued to constitute the majority of the population. No less than 64% of Brazilians receive an income equivalent to not more than twice the legal minimum wage. There are factors of structural change that could affect the figures, such as, for example, the partial elimination of unpaid workers, who now receive wages, but extremely low ones. Furthermore, the economically active population now includes a greater proportion of young people and women who, as is generally known, are paid less. Possibly in this way the base of the individual wage pyramid is growing, whereas that of the family-income pyramid is decreasing.

This is not the appropriate place for an exhaustive analysis of the reasons and interests for maintaining this wage hierarchy for women. It is sufficient to mention some factors that have widely been accepted as having an influence: less access of women to positions of leadership and supervision, the narrow range of job opportunities, their reduced power for lodging claims (a direct consequence of a form of socialization that attempts to make them docile and submissive), and less political and union tradition in the tertiary activities in which women are concentrated in comparison with those in manufacturing. As regards young people, the lower wages paid to them are socially justified on the basis that the earnings of young men's work are less important for the family than those of adult men, and that the wages of young women are less important than those of adult women. Thus, a certain pattern of type of family division of labour by sex and age, and contribution to the family budget is

universalized, although it does not always represent the actual situation. Although the question can only be posed, and not answered here, it is worth asking up to what point the possibility of other members of the family participating in the labour market has had an influence in maintaining low wages in Brazil. This possibility enables the level of family consumption to be maintained or even improved in spite of low wages.

At all events, the big differences in wages are the most concrete and tangible manifestation of the relations of domination and exploitation involved in the polarization between men/women, adults/youth and developed poles/underdeveloped poles, as can be clearly seen in table 2,

There can be no doubt that the most unacceptable relation of domination/exploitation is that established between the North-East and South-East. More than half the male economically active population of the North-East receives less than the minimum wage. This figure rises to 76.6% for women, which represents a difference of 22.6% between the two sexes. In comparison, the situation in SSo Paulo is substantially better, since 13.6% of the men received up to one minimum wage, while the figure was 35.0% for women. It should be noted, however, that the percentage difference between the sexes remains the same at both poles. Such inequalities occur in different regions and in different age groups. In summarizing the overall results, it could be said that adolescents receive twice the wages of children, while young people receive twice the wages of adolescents. It can also be concluded that, in general, the wages of women tend to be half those of men.

One of the most frequent arguments for justifying wage differences is the number of hours worked, since it is assumed that women and young people work fewer hours. Background data on average wages, age groups and hours worked make it evident that this argument is false, however (Madeira, 1985). The vast majority of children, adolescents and young people are not underemployed, if hours worked are taken as an indicator; from the standpoint of wage level, however, practically all of them count as underemployed. In fact, children and

adolescents continue to receive extremely low wages and the vast majority are concentrated in the groups that receive only up to one minimum wage.

From the standpoint of comparison between sexes, the smallest differences occur in the adolescent group, which indicates that marriage is probably one of the factors forcing women to accept lower-paying jobs.

3. *Youth and the crisis*

The period of recession in Brazil, which began in 1978, has resulted in contraction in the supply of jobs for both sexes in industry, especially in SSo Paulo. Hirata and Humphrey (1984) indicate that this has particularly affected manufacturing and, within this, the durable consumer goods sector. "In the automobile assembly plants there were strikes and movements against mass layoffs in 1981 and overall employment in this branch fell by more than 20%. In two electrical equipment companies and one automobile parts company in S3o Paulo studied in 1982, hourly-paid labour was reduced by more than 50% at mid-1981, and although personnel were rehired at the end of that year, the number of workers continued to be smaller than at the end of 1980."

Several reports at that time showed how the unemployed were confronting the crisis: "After seeking work for some time without finding it, the unemployed get along any way they can. They try to register themselves legally as own-account workers. They become door-to-door vendors selling pastries, clothing and trinkets in general; they set up their stands in fairs or in city centres' (*"Caderno de Economia"*, *Folha de São Paulo*, 24 February 1985).

The figures for 1983 show an increase in the percentages of workers in the commerce and services sectors, which include "bicos" (casual jobs) and other occupations that do not have typical capitalist links with the labour market: the workers seek such jobs simply in order to cope with unemployment. In fact, the data of the National Home Sample Survey (Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicílios — PNAD) indicate that the number of independent or own-account workers increased from 9 million in 1976 to almost 11 million in 1983 and that the number of own-account workers in the State of

Table 2

**BRAZIL: BREAKDOWN OF ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE POPULATION
BY MONTHLY INCOME, 1980**

Average monthly income	Males				Females			
	Total	Children	Adolescents	Young people	Total	Children	Adolescents	Young people
Brazil								
Up to 1/4 of minimum wage	2.4	29.8	5.5	1.6	9.2	48.2	16.4	7.3
1/4 - 1/2	8.3	30.6	15.2	5.3	18.5	25.8	21.0	11.2
More than 1/2 - 1	21.1	27.4	37.9	22.1	24.8	16.4	29.2	24.9
More than 1 - 2	29.1	10.4	34.3	39.3	25.5	7.2	28.1	35.9
More than 2 - 5	25.1	0.8	6.1	26.3	15.0	0.4	4.1	17.7
More than 5	13.2	0.07	0.4	4.8	5.9	0.05	0.2	2.3
Not declared	0.3	0.1	0.3	0.5	0.3	0.1	0.3	0.3
Receiving income	73.9	11.6	53.0	84.1	32.3	6.8	28.6	38.0
Not receiving income	25.7	88.2	46.6	15.4	67.4	93.1	71.1	61.7
S3o Paulo								
Up to 1/4 of minimum wage	0.9	22.0	1.9	0.3	3.6	30.5	4.0	1.9
1/4 - 1/2	2.9	23.9	5.5	0.7	9.6	27.6	11.4	4.2
More than 1/2-1	9.8	33.2	25.9	6.7	22.0	26.1	29.7	17.3
More than 1-2	28.7	19.1	53.8	40.0	33.7	14.7	46.5	43.6
More than 2 - 5	36.2	1.1	11.8	43.4	21.9	0.6	7.8	28.9
More than 5	20.9	1.0	0.6	8.2	8.4	0.05	0.2	3.7
Not declared	0.4	0.05	0.3	0.5	0.3	0.04	0.2	0.2
Receiving income	80.7	14.7	66.8	89.6	39.8	10.7	46.3	49.8
Not receiving income	18.9	85.3	32.9	9.9	59.9	89.3	53.5	50.0
Pernambuco								
Up to 1/4 of minimum wage	4.5	35.9	10.2	3.1	15.9	66.5	34.8	15.1
1/4 - 1/2	16.2	42.7	30.5	11.9	30.8	24.7	31.9	21.5
More than 1/2 - 1	33.3	18.7	44.3	39.9	26.9	7.4	24.4	33.1
More than 1 - 2	24.1	2.2	12.9	31.0	14.5	1.0	7.7	21.4
More than 2 - 5	14.9	0.3	1.8	11.9	8.2	0.1	1.1	7.8
More than 5	6.8	0.05	0.2	2.1	3.5	0.08	0.06	0.9
Not declared	0.3	0.1	2.9	0.5	0.3	0.08	0.2	0.2
Receiving income	70.1	12.7	45.8	81.2	30.2	5.4	20.1	32.5
Not receiving income	29.6	87.1	51.4	18.3	69.5	94.5	79.7	67.3

Source: 1980 Census.

Sao Paulo increased 51.2% during the same period, or twice as fast as in the country as a whole, which shows that when the crisis makes it necessary to seek informal jobs, they are more easily found in the most developed pole of the country.

There are no employment data broken down by sex and age for 1983, which makes it impossible to verify whether this phenomenon was more intense among children, adolescents, youth or female workers. The different effects of the economic crisis on the two sexes and different age groups have really not yet been sufficiently clarified. There are those who believe that the discriminatory conditions under which women and young people are incorporated into the labour force may, in a certain manner, work to their advantage. Hirata and Humphrey (1984) believe that the sexual division of labour can, up to a certain point, protect women (regardless of whether they are young or not) against the effects of the economic crisis: "The concentration of women in certain sectors of economic activity and in predominantly female jobs limits the possibility of discrimination, since they cannot readily be replaced by men". Spindel, who interviewed adolescents in the formal sector of the economy, including some who worked in the sectors most affected by the crisis, maintains that the simple fact that young people remained in their jobs, in spite of the mass lay-offs that took place during the time the survey was taken, implies that they were highly valued in the market. In contrast, Hirata and Humphrey found that companies justify laying off women and adolescents first, because they supposedly do not make a basic contribution to the home budget.

4. *Youth: unemployment, inactivity or intermittence?*

Youth unemployment, as such, is similar in Brazil to that in the rest of Latin America, if conventional indicators are taken into account. Open unemployment rates are traditionally very low. It is widely recognized, however, that these data have very little to do with the real availability or desire of the young Brazilian population to obtain permanent paid jobs. The great majority of young people are in a situation

of disguised unemployment, either because they have precarious jobs, commonly known as "bicos", or because they are unemployed and discouraged: they have stopped looking for work because of the lack of stimulus in the market.

It is also well known that, when concrete possibilities of finding work increase, as occurred in Brazil during the past decade, unemployment among young people reaches extremely high levels and generally accounts for more than half of the total unemployed population.

To evaluate this phenomenon, however, appropriate methodology needs to be used, as was done, for example, in the case of the Survey on Employment and Unemployment in the Metropolitan Area of São Paulo (Pesquisa de Emprego-Desemprego na Grande São Paulo), conducted by the State Data Analysis System Foundation (Fundação Sistema Estadual de Análise de Dados — SEADE) and the Inter-Union Department of Socio-Economic Statistics and Studies (Departamento Intersindical de Estatísticas e Estudos Sócio-Econômicos — DIEESE), as shown in table 3- In this survey, an unemployed individual was defined as a person in one of the following situations:

- a) Open unemployment: work has actually been sought in the 30 days prior to the day of the interview and no other occupation has been performed during the last seven days.
- b) Unemployment hidden by precarious work: some work, either paid or unpaid, is performed in an isolated manner by assisting in the businesses of relatives; work is being sought.
- c) Unemployment hidden by discouragement: no job is held, nor has one been sought in the past 30 days because of lack of stimulus in the labour market or because of accidental circumstances, although work was sought at some time during the last year.

The data show that both open and hidden unemployment are particularly acute among young people. It should also be noted that this is not only the case with regard to child and adolescent unemployment, but such unemployment is also extremely high among young people between 20 and 24 years of age, where it is equivalent to almost half the unemployment of children and adolescents.

Table 3
**SAO PAULO: RATES OF OPEN AND
 HIDDEN UNEMPLOYMENT, 1984**

	Total	Open	Hidden
Sex:			
Female	15.5	10.1	5.4
Male	10.4	5.6	4.8
Age:			
10- 14	39.7	24.0	13.0
15 - 17	34.8	22.3	
18- 24	16.2	10.4	5.9
25 -39	8.2	4.5	3.8
40 and above	6.0	2.9	3.1

Source: Departamento Intersindical de Estatísticas e Estudos Sócio-Econômicos (DIEESE), Stto Paulo, October to December 1984.

Although the data are not broken down by sex and age, the general trend gives grounds for assuming that unemployment affects young women in particular. This finding is not only a reason for pessimism, however. The simple fact that young women openly assume the need to work also means that employment opportunities have, in fact, been opened up to them and that they are willing to take advantage of such opportunities. Consequently, they no longer form part of hidden unemployment.

In another survey (Madeira, 1985a), it was found that in low-income sectors of the metropolitan area of São Paulo, the mere fact of having reached the age of 15 places the young person, in his own eyes and those of his family, in a situation of availability and intense desire to work. In the same survey, the use of a qualitative supplementary technique with a small group revealed interesting factors concerning this high level of unemployment among young people. The group was composed of young people who were finishing their secondary education and belonged to families which had a family income of up to five times the minimum wage, so the population involved could be considered poor. Practically all of them stated that they were

unemployed, not because of difficulty in finding a job, but because they were unable to find one that met their expectations. In the case of young females whose option was domestic service, for example, both the family and the young women preferred the mother to work (generally by the day or in cleaning companies), with the daughter replacing her at home.

The most interesting finding in the data was the enormous amount of intermittence in the activities of young people. Although the nature of the survey makes it impossible to generalize, it did suggest that the behaviour of a significant number of young people, particularly girls and adolescents, represented a rapid transition from dual activity (school and work) to a single activity (school or work) or to complete inactivity. This does not necessarily mean that the nature of the work was unstable; on the contrary, the activity itself was frequently quite formal, but it was often considered transitory and sometimes was undertaken only to acquire some article such as a bicycle or audio equipment. Some young people shifted so often and so rapidly from one situation to another that it seemed that they could fit into any category—dual occupation, student, worker or idle—depending on the moment.

Such changeableness certainly demonstrates that their sense of responsibility is only relative. It also poses a question: are the rigid categories of activity/inactivity or employment/unemployment appropriate for defining the specific situation of the child or the adolescent? As a final consideration, the importance of the inferences made on the basis of the categories of activity/inactivity should be underlined. The problems of drugs and delinquency are frequently associated with inactivity; in view of the intermittency of occupation to which reference has been made, however, there are young people (and even children) involved in the consumption and trafficking of drugs both among those who are "integrated into an activity" and among those who have recently experienced a period of idleness.

III

School: an activity for few young people

The state of the Brazilian educational system is not in keeping with the level of growth and modernization of the basic sectors of the economy, which have placed Brazil in a relatively outstanding position on the periphery of the capitalist system. In fact, considered solely from the standpoint of the indicators regarding education, the social situation in Brazil is critical and the proportion of children, adolescents and young people who still lack education is extremely large.

If Brazil is compared with Latin America as a whole, the relative magnitude of its levels of illiteracy can be better understood (table 4).—

Table 4

LATIN AMERICA (SIX COUNTRIES):
ILLITERACY AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE
BETWEEN 15 AND 24 YEARS
OF AGE, 1980

Country	Total	Percentages
Argentina	85 559	1.9
Brazil	3 917 520	15.7
Chile	43 065	1.8
Mexico	905 091	6.5
Panama	17 106	4.7
Peru	217 524	6.3

Source: UNESCO (1984).

If we examine the past ten years, an enormous difference between plans and accomplishments is evident. The First Sectoral Plan for Education and Culture (1971-1974) was intended to eradicate illiteracy by the end of the century and established a goal of only 10% illiteracy by the end of the 1970s. To that end, the plan provided for the expansion of obligatory schooling, an increase in the number of places available in primary education and the establishment of a specialized agency for adult literacy training.

The data of tables 5 and 6 show that the rates of illiteracy did go down by the end of the decade, but a significant proportion of people still lack education. The progress achieved has been slow and there are no good prospects of the problem being solved, since the phenomenon does not affect only the older population (in which case it would merely reflect the remnants of a previous deficiency) but all ages, including young people who come under the present educational system. In other words, the percentages indicate that illiteracy is not being stopped at its origin.

What is most outstanding in the tables referred to is the enormous disparity between regions. In a previous study (Madeira, 1985a), it was shown that 50% of Brazilian illiterates between 15 and 24 years of age live in rural areas in the North-East, and that the differences between literacy rates in urban and rural areas of Brazil continue to be great. If the group between 15 and 24 years of age, whose levels of education tend to be higher, is considered, it may be seen that illiteracy in cities during the period from 1976 to 1982 tended to stabilize at 7.5% for men and 6.5% for women: in rural areas, the corresponding percentages are approximately 30% and 23%.

Another two indicators of educational failure that are frequent in Latin America —school drop-outs and repetition of grades— are also important in Brazil. Of 100 children who enrolled in the first grade of primary school in 1972, only eight were enrolled in the final year of secondary school in 1983. It is also estimated that Brazilian children take an average of 12 years to finish primary school, although it has an eight-year programme.

In spite of these pessimistic indicators, tables 5 and 6 clearly suggest that the schooling of Brazilian children and youth increased considerably over the past decade, particularly in the *young worker* population and in the *group that combines school and work on a daily basis*.

The data also show that during the decade schooling became a more important credential,

Table 5

BRAZIL: DISTRIBUTION OF FEMALES WITHIN AND OUTSIDE OF THE ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE POPULATION, ACCORDING TO YEARS OF SCHOOLING, 1970-1980

Years of schooling	Girls				Adolescents				Young women				Total			
	1970		1980		1970		1980		1970		1980		1970		1980	
	In EAP	Not EAP	In EAP	Not EAP	In EAP	Not EAP	In EAP	Not EAP	In EAP	Not EAP	In EAP	Not EAP	In EAP	Not EAP	In EAP	Not EAP
Brazil																
1 - 4	58.3	54.7	58.0	59.7	52.6	41.5	38.8	37.8	38.9	42.6	30.8	43.9	39.7	42.3	38.8	48.0
5 - 8	10.5	14.9	20.4	16.5	18.9	22.4	34.4	33.3	16.1	12.1	23.5	19.6	14.2	12.1	16.1	15.6
9 - 11	0.2	0.2	.	*,	5.7	8.1	15.4	11.7	9.3	5.6	26.9	11.4	6.5	3.3	14.0	5.4
12 or more	-	.	-	*	2.2	1.2	0.9	0.5	18.2	4.4	10.4	3.8	11.4	1.7	7.4	1.2
No schooling	31.0	30.2	21.6	23.9	20.6	26.7	10.5	16.6	17.4	35.2	8.4	21.1	28.2	40.5	23.6	29.7
SSo Paulo																
1 ^4	77.5	65.7	61.8	65.8	65.5	46.2	34.6	30.2	52.6	58.1	32.5	47.5	53.8	53.6	42.0	53.2
5 - 8	13.0	25.6	31.3	26.6	17.2	25.3	42.0	43.8	10.9	7.8	25.5	24.5	9.0	10.8	19.5	19.5
9 - U	0.2	0.3	-	-	6.9	15.9	18.3	19.7	10.0	7.5	24.3	12.7	6.9	5.0	13.9	7.1
12 or more	-	.	-	-	2.1	3.0	1.1	0.9	17.5	8.9	13.3	6.7	13.3	8.4	9.2	2.1
No schooling	9.3	8.3	6.9	7.5	8.2	9.5	4.0	5.3	9.0	17.6	4.3	8.7	17.0	27.2	15.3	17.9
Pernambuco																
1 - 4	32.5	42.7	45.0	53.2	34.7	33.1	36.5	34.1	27.1	29.6	26.1	33.4	26.7	30.2	30.8	38.5
5 - 8	4.8	10.4	8.7	11.6	14.7	23.1	23.2	30.2	16.2	13.7	19.1	18.3	12.2	11.2	11.2	13.7
9 - 11	-	-	.	-	3.3	5.0	12.0	9.8	7.1	4.8	27.6	12.6	4.4	2.3	11.8	5.1
12 or more	-	-	-	*	1.8	0.7	0.6	0.3	16.5	3.5	8.4	3.3	10.0	1.3	6.3	0.9
No schooling	62.6	46.8	46.3	35.2	45.5	38.1	27.7	25.5	33.1	48.2	18.1	32.3	46.6	54.8	39.9	41.8

Source: 1970 and 1980 Censuses.

Table 6

BRAZIL: DISTRIBUTION OF MALES WITHIN AND OUTSIDE OF THE ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE
POPULATION, ACCORDING TO YEARS OF SCHOOLING, 1970-1980

Years of schooling	Boys		Adolescents				Young men				Total					
	1970		1980		1970		1980		1970		1980		1970		1980	
	In EAP	Not in EAP	In EAP	Not in EAP	In EAP	Not in EAP	In EAP	Not in EAP	In EAP	Not in EAP	In EAP	Not in EAP	In EAP	Not in EAP	In EAP	Not in EAP
Brazil																
1 - 4	41.0	53.8	49.5	58.5	45.1	39.7	39.6	34.6	44.1	36.0	40.6	31.9	43.6	46.2	45.4	48.0
5 - 8	8.8	13.8	16.8	13.4	16.7	26.4	18.9	34.9	14.0	14.4	22.6	18.6	11.0	16.5	14.7	19.4
9 - 11	0.1	-	-	-	4.5	8.7	9.1	11.7	6.7	10.0	15.2	18.8	4.3	3.5	8.0	5.1
12 or more	-	-	-	-	0.6	1.4	0.3	0.5	5.2	13.4	4.4	11.0	5.0	1.9	4.9	1.4
No schooling	50.0	32.2	33.7	28.1	33.0	23.8	20.1	18.2	29.9	26.0	17.1	19.5	36.0	31.7	26.4	26.0
S3o Paulo																
1 - 4	69.4	66.5	59.6	69.0	61.4	40.3	36.4	24.3	59.4	37.5	41.8	25.4	57.8	54.6	50.0	52.9
5 - 8	19.2	24.5	32.6	21.7	21.3	32.8	44.9	47.3	11.5	10.2	27.7	18.2	8.0	22.5	19.4	26.4
9 - 11	0.4	0.3	-	-	7.4	21.2	13.1	22.0	9.3	13.5	17.6	25.3	6.2	5.6	9.9	7.6
12 or more	-	-	-	-	1.1	2.6	0.5	0.9	8.1	28.6	6.6	23.3	7.9	3.7	7.2	2.6
No schooling	11.0	8.7	7.8	9.3	8.8	0.8	5.1	5.3	11.7	10.0	6.3	7.7	20.0	13.5	13.5	10.4
Pernambuco																
1 - 4	19.7	39.8	31.0	49.5	27.9	36.9	33.0	20.8	29.1	26.2	32.1	24.4	28.3	34.5	33.6	41.0
5 - 8	2.5	8.9	4.7	8.8	11.4	24.8	18.4	30.4	13.4	16.7	18.3	19.1	9.4	13.7	10.6	15.8
9 - 11	-	-	-	-	1.9	5.1	5.4	9.0	4.5	8.6	13.8	18.7	2.8	2.4	6.4	4.3
12 or more	-	-	-	-	0.3	-	0.2	0.4	3.6	9.3	3.2	8.2	3.5	1.3	3.4	1.0
No schooling	77.8	51.2	64.3	41.7	58.4	-	42.9	28.2	49.3	39.1	32.6	29.5	55.9	48.1	46.3	37.9

Source: 1970 and 1980 Censuses.

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since the educational levels of children, adolescents and youth in the economically active population (EAP) are higher than the levels of those outside of the EAP. This finding is particularly true of São Paulo. This fact, suggested by the overall figures, was verified in a study with more qualitative methodology applied in the low-income sectors of São Paulo (Madeira, 1985a).

Interviews with young people between 14 and 20 years of age in peripheral areas of São Paulo showed that families, as well as adolescents and young people themselves, made enormous sacrifices, including not only daily physical efforts, such as fewer hours of sleep and lack of time even to eat, but also going without some consumer goods or postponing their purchase in order to complete eighth grade. The interest in completing at least basic education is also the reason for frequently returning to school, in spite of having to repeat grades or of interruptions for many different reasons.

The very fact of working increases the efforts made by the young person and his family for him to remain in school. The content of the education itself is less important within this attitude than the awareness that the requirements for admitting workers to even unskilled positions in the different sectors of the economy increase as access to the education system expands; this was evident in the experiences of the young people interviewed.

The importance of the level of schooling as a credential was confirmed and extended through the statements of employers. Spindel (1985) found that the employers from large and medium-sized companies who were interviewed considered schooling as the most important factor in selecting adolescents. They are not particularly interested in the specific knowledge acquired in the educational system, but rather in the "habit of obedience to certain norms and patterns of more or less standard behaviour, which provide the businessman with a certain assurance of being able to foresee what the reactions of the minor will be to conditions of discipline and work" (Spindel, 1985).

The visible change in the educational levels of the young working population in Brazil is already evident among children. For the country as a whole, 9.0% of the children who worked in

1970 had finished the fifth grade. By 1980, this proportion had risen to 16.8%; the proportion of children with this educational level outside of the labour market remained unchanged. Furthermore, the proportion of child workers with no schooling decreased substantially. Naturally, the effect of the increased expansion of school attendance is most notable in São Paulo, where no less than 32.5% of the children who worked in 1980 had already finished fourth grade.

Among adolescents, differences are even more notable and an increase in secondary education among working adolescents may be observed.

The second trend suggested by the overall data—the combination of school and work—may be examined better by comparing the situation in São Paulo with that in Pernambuco.

Everything indicates that legally obligatory education has only become a reality for the low-income sectors in the city of São Paulo, and it is evident that the proportion of young people who have finished their basic education is much greater there. In 1980, this level was reached by 25.3% of the young men in São Paulo; in contrast, the percentage in Pernambuco was approximately 18.7%. The same was true among young women. Since the expansion of schooling beyond the first four years of basic education is quite recent and only took place in the 1970s, however, it is more notable among adolescents. In 1970, only 21.3% of the male adolescents in the labour market in São Paulo had gone beyond the first four years of basic education. Ten years later, this percentage had more than doubled. The trend is even stronger among female adolescents: in 1970, only 17.2% of those who worked had completed primary education, while in 1980 the percentage was 42.0%, nearly equal to that of the male adolescents. Among those not included in the EAP, the growth was also significant, although smaller.

In Pernambuco, the trends were somewhat different, not only because of the lower levels of education, but also because of less intense growth. In 1970, only 11.4% of the male adolescents who worked had an educational level above fifth grade. Ten years later, this percentage had increased to 18.4%. No

indication of greater participation of female adolescents in the labour force was observed. In contrast to what occurred in São Paulo, the proportion of those who completed primary education but are outside of the labour market is much greater.

In summary, São Paulo not only offers more job opportunities to adolescents of both sexes, but also greater opportunities for extending their education.

The data also indicate that delays in completing education are quite generalized, which brings up the question of the relation between school attendance and work. In examining this question, the qualitative survey was enlightening. It showed that schooling alone cannot be considered a factor in keeping young people out of the labour market. On the contrary, both activities are usually complementary in the metropolitan area of São Paulo: that is, work encourages staying in school. In this survey, an analysis of the reasons for interrupting studies showed that the need to work was less important than difficulties in access to school life—"schooling was taking too long", "no school was available", "the school was full"—or situations linked to the structure of teaching as regards organization, content and teaching techniques. By the time that young people reach the age of 15, they are usually behind the corresponding school level, which underlines the importance of night school and supplementary courses. The data are quite clear: the establishment of night schools and supplementary courses is the most effective manner of making it possible to reconcile school with work and, through such courses, the schooling of young people is becoming more democratic. Almost half the young people in the city of São Paulo study after 6:00 p.m., although only 80% of them are available for work (employed or unemployed). The statements of families confirmed that the possibility of studying is always closely linked to that of

working. School and work appeared to be so closely interrelated that it was difficult for young people (and also the family) to decide which was more important. Sometimes, the young person's income was insufficient to cover all school expenses and the family had to contribute as well. In other cases, the young person supported himself, almost always paid for his schooling and also contributed to the family income from his wages. At all events, wages facilitated remaining in school.

With regard to the average income according to the different levels of education, the first factor that should be noted is not only the clear positive link between number of years of study and wages, but also the existence of very sharp separations according to years of study. Thus, there is a great difference in wages between those without education and those that have attended primary school; the distinction is not so clear, however, in the case of those who have studied past fourth grade. The greatest wage differences occur between secondary and higher education. These differences are more important for the total population than for the young population, however, and also more important for men than for women.

Although wage levels, measured in terms of average minimum wages, increased over the past ten years, the increase occurred particularly at the upper educational levels, especially at the secondary level and above, which is also indicative of the income concentration process that occurred during that period of time.

Wage disparities between men and women, which become more pronounced as they move up the scale in level of education, are a widely recognized factor, but are nevertheless surprising. In 1980, the average wage for men with full secondary education was equivalent to almost ten minimum wages, while for women of the same level it was equivalent to only four minimum wages.

IV

The family and young people: conflict and solidarity

All of the changes referred to may be expected to have an enormous impact on family organization and its socializing role. The monetization of the economy and the possibility of the different members of the family working certainly break with the old structure centralized in the head of the family, whose power is now also questioned by the greater schooling of children; it is common for illiterate parents to live with children who have reached the level of secondary education.

Basically, the following questions arise: What is the capacity of parents to understand the new representations that have emerged from a different form and organization of family income? What is their reaction to women working and to the new image of motherhood that such work implies? How do parents react to their daughters performing paid jobs, their consequent independence and even the generalized use of contraceptives? Finally, what are the new forms of management and expression of authority in the family?

Although little systematic study has been done in this regard, the existing broad generalizations always hint at the existence of enormous conflict between generations, which is seen as partially responsible for the growth of juvenile delinquency and the spread of drugs among the young people of Latin America.

Although this is not the appropriate place for such observations, it should be remembered that family studies have not so far given prominence to this problem. The family has only recently reappeared as an object of study through two lines of academic concern: studies of the family survival strategies of low-income groups and studies on the situation of women. Both approaches have ended up stressing the aspects of harmony and solidarity in the idea of the family, bearing in mind the common objective of its members, which is to achieve family well-being.

Although the assumed solidarity and harmony is being questioned, even within these

same approaches, it is interesting to point out that the topic of the family, when viewed from the standpoint of young people, immediately brings up the question of conflict. The set of studies conducted by ECLAC in relation to the International Youth Year provides a clear and vivid example.

In short, we know that both conflict and solidarity exist in families and that, depending on the social actor taken as the point of reference, each of these factors tend to assume different importance. What it is desired to stress most in this study, however, is how, through the combination or interplay of solidarity and conflict, and even through a kind of play of counterpoint, it becomes possible for young people to reach social levels above the average level of their social group of origin and, in this manner, to enjoy "youth identity" more intensely. This process can be observed in Brazil in part of the population of the low-income sectors, particularly in SSo Paulo, if we look at the information provided by population censuses, the National Home Sample Survey (PNAD) and the case studies on the integration of work and school in the life of young people in low-income sectors of SSo Paulo.

Such information reveals the inverse relationship between rates of participation and the level of family income, which is exactly what would be expected. At the same time, however, it may be seen that in groups with a reasonable family income, there is a significant proportion of adolescents and young people who work. It is therefore erroneous to assume that poverty and the need to maintain a minimum standard of living are what prompt young people and especially adolescents, to seek paid jobs. Hence, the expression "survival strategies" really ought to be changed to "family life-style strategies", thus covering a phenomenon that affects not only the most impoverished sectors, but all segments and social groups.

There is another inaccurate assumption, which is that the family forces the young person

to work, either because of objective material problems or the conviction that work is the "school of life" or an important socialization process for the future worker. This form of considering a young person's work ignores the outlook of the specific "young" social actor. For someone whose "autonomy is only relative" and who wants to increase it, working and receiving wages can only mean greater freedom. Other authors have already observed this outlook, but have done so exclusively in relation to young people in the middle sectors of the population. Bourdieu, however, also detects this phenomenon in the worker population and notes that it is not only a Latin American phenomenon. He states that "one of the reasons why young people in low-income groups wish to begin working very soon is the desire to become an adult as soon as possible, with the economic power that that implies: having the money to consolidate their position in relation to their friends and girlfriends and, consequently, to be recognized as a man by themselves and others" (Bourdieu, 1983). At least three investigations conducted in Brazil clearly underline the sense of freedom involved in young people's decision to work. Being free means having greater independence in taking decisions relating to their lives, especially as regards consumption and remaining in school (Gouveia, 1982; Spindel, 1985; Madeira, 1985b).

Talks with young people show that the consumption typical of this age group, such as clothing (designer jeans, shorts, tennis shoes, and so forth), free time and audio equipment (tape recorders, cassettes, weekend dances), are a permanent point of discussion and controversy at home. A young person who works increases his power and ensures his privileges within the family. Finally, the need to display visible signs of belonging to the category of youth —especially the signs publicized by the mass media— is one of the key points of friction with the family and a source of intense and violent conflicts. Consumer pressures among young people are a generalized phenomenon in Latin America and the mass media tend to offer an integrated set of symbols and representations of what it is to be young.

In this regard, it may be appropriate to note the specific characteristics of the situation in

Brazil. The first characteristic is that many young people are able to convert their aspirations into actual consumption because they find a job. This is so true that an increase in the consumption of goods directed towards low-income young people has been registered in recent years. The proportion of records and cassettes of Brazilian pop music sold rose from 63% in 1977 to 69.9% in 1980, while the share of international pop music fell from 35.4% to 28.9% during the same period of time (Micelli, 1983). As regards clothing, a survey conducted in Sao Paulo clearly shows that the largest percentage (59%) of those who stated that they intended to buy clothing in the near future were young people between 15 and 29 years of age. The proportion of those who intended to buy clothing was greater among the lower-income sectors. (The greatest interest was in purchasing street clothes, which play a role in social identity (*Revista Novidades da Moda*, No. 202, June 1976. Regular survey conducted in Sao Paulo by public opinion research organizations).)

At the same time, young people's consumption reflects two other characteristics of the decade. The first is the expansion of the system of buying on credit. The second is the astounding advance of telecommunications in Brazil. In 1975, television reached 40% of the urban population; today, it reaches 75% of the same population. In rural areas, three of every 20 homes had television sets. The progress of the electronics industry in Brazil was the result of enormous investments in telecommunications by the authoritarian government of 1964, with a view to national integration. Micelli (1983) suggests that television consumption in Brazil is closely linked to the educational capital of its public. "The brutal fact of the widespread illiteracy that persists in Brazilian society is a decisive factor in the tremendous penetration of television in the country." He considers television as a kind of parallel and integrating teaching system: "Although the industrial consumer society is heavily concentrated in the South-East and Southern regions of Brazil, as exhaustively shown by the data available on the regional distribution of most cultural goods, and income disparities between regions and social groups persist, the Brazilian cultural industry is contributing decisively to the process of unifying

the market for cultural goods by acting as a parallel teaching system and by exposing subordinate social sectors to broadcasts and messages that, to a certain extent, break down their original language, values and meanings".

The possibility of studying is also closely linked to the possibility of working and, in this sense, it is usually considered a type of consumption by young people. Going to school and having a student credential are characteristics of "modern" young people. Bourdieu makes the following observation: "Being a student involves a number of situations that together make up the school scene: carrying books tied with a cord, sitting on motorcycles to attract girls, meeting friends of both sexes outside of work and, at home, being excused from doing household chores because of study" (Bourdieu, 1983).

The paradox in all this is that young people receive low wages, which do not provide them with this independence unless the family assumes part of the cost of their reproduction: that is, unless they are still accepted as family members and dependants. Although there is conflict and tension, young people are consequently fully aware of the advantages of shared living. In spite of constant threats about leaving home by all members of the family, they generally remain, since pooling income and combining housework with paid jobs is the only way it is possible to maintain a certain level of consumption and quality of life.

Up to this point, reference to interest in working has only been made from the standpoint of young people. The family, however, shares this interest, either for purely economic reasons, because work is considered an exercise in discipline for character training, or for a combination of such reasons. The family's desire for their children to participate in the labour force may be noted in their efforts to place them in some paid job and in the privileges they are granted at home.

From the considerations on relations between young people and their families, it is interesting to suggest that an in-depth study be conducted on the existence of a phenomenon that, to a certain extent, would contribute to forming a more favoured stratum among low-income sectors. Spindel (1985) found that

"formal" jobs are generally held by young people whose families belong to segments of the working class whose level of employment or of income provided them with access to information on such job vacancies. The same was found to be true in another study (Madeira, 1985b). Sons are frequently found to be working with their fathers and daughters, with their mothers.

Spindel (1985) investigated the topic on the basis of responses on the criteria that employers use to contact young people who could be selected and on the manner in which minors gain information on job vacancies. "More than 50% of large and medium-sized companies state that the minors they hired were contacted through information obtained from their own workers; approximately 65% of the minors responded that they had obtained their job, thanks to the indications of relatives or friends. Even among minors who were in their second job, 70% of them had obtained it in an informal manner, within their circle of relatives and acquaintances, which reinforces the idea of involvement of family and friends in determining the degree of participation of its members in the labour market."

In other words, some families with low incomes, but a certain reserve of "material and cultural goods" (especially work skills and a certain level of schooling), were able to benefit from the increase in formal jobs produced during this period of time by placing some of their members in such jobs, thus providing them with certain social mobility, measured on the basis of the level of family income. In contrast, in the case of groups that are near levels of "critical poverty", with sporadic or temporary jobs, the possibility of incorporating other members always refers to the same type of work and does not bring about any effective improvement in the quality of life.

In conclusion, it may be stated that some adolescents and young people of the so-called low-income sectors have begun to gain access to better-paying jobs, to greater permanence in school and to the mass media. They have thus also gained access to "adolescence" or "youth", understood as intermediate or temporary categories in which they are neither children nor adults and a certain degree of irresponsibility is tolerated.

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