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Review

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Youth and unemployment in Montevideo

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The crisis unleashed in 1981 has had a considerable effect on the work situation of young people and has exacerbated factors which had emerged before that time. The first discernible consequence is that young people are pushed towards the work market and this increases their participation rates. This widespread phenomenon is of great importance even in the case of women, who disregard traditional discriminatory obstacles and seek jobs. However, the supply of jobs has not met expectations, and there has been a sizeable rise in youth unemployment, in particular among first-time job seekers. The number of students also increases, because it is assumed that formal education remains an important asset in the search for work; similarly, there is an increase in the proportion of students trying to find work.

These unfavourable circumstances, in turn, have far-reaching and diverse consequences. The author emphasizes the importance acquired by emigration to other countries as a means of trying to fulfill aspirations which the home country cannot satisfy; this process, which has gained great force, removes from the country the young sap which is an essential ingredient in the transformation of the development pattern which lies at the root of the problems described.

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Introduction

An analysis of the situation of young people in Uruguay must begin by acknowledging certain basic features of the country's economic and socio-demographic structure.

Firstly, since the mid-1950s Uruguay has sought in vain for a development model which can adequately combine its natural and human resources and take the place of the "imports substitution" model. One manifestation of the economy's stagnation since that time has been the weak growth in the per capita gross domestic product which, except in the period 1975-1980, has been below the average for the countries of Latin America.

Secondly, the ageing of the population must be taken into consideration. In 1985 the proportion of young people in the region's total working-age population was 35%; in Uruguay it was only 23.1%. At the same time, the country had the highest proportion of persons aged over 65 in Latin America. In 1980 this group represented about a fifth of the country's total population. This figure contrasted strongly with the regional average, which was less than one in 10 at that date. The marked increase in the numbers of adults, a reflection of a sustained weakness in Uruguay's demographic growth, reduced the opportunities for young people to take on responsible roles and thus for society to acquire a potential for innovative change.

Thirdly, the country's social development clearly outstripped its economic development. The increasing imbalance between these two dimensions was reflected, in particular, in the sustained expansion of education despite the stagnation of the production apparatus (Taglioretti, 1977), generating aspirations which could not be satisfied by finding a suitable place in the work structure.

Fourthly, as a consequence of the interweaving of the three factors mentioned above, the 1960s saw the start of a gradual acceleration of the rate of emigration to other countries, and it is estimated that, between 1963 and 1975, some 218 000 persons left the country—approximately 8% of Uruguay's total population (Wonsewer and Teja, 1983)—Half of these emigrants were under 25 years old (DGEC,

1983). It is very probable that the emigrants were precisely the best educated and most enterprising young people, which implies a

significant and selective loss of the country's human resources and, therefore, a major reduction in the potential for change.

I

Youth participation in the Montevideo work market

1. *Its relative weight*

The data on the structure of the economically active population in Montevideo show that between 1970 and 1984 the relative weight of young people increased from 20% to 21.6%. The evolution of this growth was different for men and women. The number of young men in the labour force was 13.3% and 13.2% in 1972 and 1973 respectively, and it fell to 12.3% in 1974-1975, certainly as a result of the strong current of emigration in those years. The number then rose again to 13.3% in 1977 and 1978, only to decline from 1981 to below the 1970 level (12.1%). The number of employed young women also rose up to 1977 (9.9%). Their relative weight then fell, more slowly than for men, but without reaching the levels of the first years in the series. In 1983 and 1984 it resumed its increase, achieving a relative participation (9.5%) higher than the 1970 rate (7.3%).

The most remarkable thing about this whole period is the deluge of women entering the work market. In 1984 almost 43% of workers were women, in strong contrast with the 31% at the beginning of the 1970s. Although this massive break-out into economic activity was made up primarily of women over 25, young women also increased their market share. As has been pointed out, in 1970 they made up 7.3% of the labour force as against 9.5% in 1984.

The relative ground gained by women was ground lost by men. Adult males were the largest group in 1970 (56.5%), but by 1984 they accounted for only 45.2% of the EAR. In the same period young men reduced their participation from 12.7% to 12.1%.

The large fluctuations in the relative weight of the groups reflected different forms of

household and individual organization generated by the economic and political vicissitudes.

2. *The participation rates*

In a description of the relative weight of young people in the labour force attention must be drawn to a dynamic growth rate of any one of the categories (adult women in this case), which can distort the overall picture. Table 1 shows, in fact, that for both sexes and in all age ranges the adjusted participation rate¹ increased between the beginning and end of the period in question. There was also a rise in the rate for adults aged 25 to 54, whose relative weight—as has been pointed out—had declined. The rate for this group had been very close to 100% in 1973 (94.8%), and it had risen to 97.2% in 1984.

The participation of Montevideo's young people fell into step with this general trend. Its rate showed a sustained increase from 40.3% in 1973 to 58.9% in 1984 for both sexes: for young women it rose from 30.3% in 1973 to 50.6% in 1984; and for young men from 58.2% to 67.6% for the same years. In other words, at the end of this period somewhat more than two in three young men and one in two young women were active.

Although these figures are remarkable, there is perhaps an even more extraordinary fact, which reflects both the seriousness of the crisis affecting the population of Montevideo and the work market's possible degree of

¹Active persons as a percentage of the total population for the age range and sex.

Table 1

MONTEVIDEO: ADJUSTED ANNUAL PARTICIPATION RATES, BY AGE AND SEX

Age group	1973 ^a	1974/ 1975	1976	1977 ^o	1978	1979	1981 ^e	1982	1983	1984
Total women	28.0	30.4	35.9	37.8	36.0	36.6	41.8	42.0	43.3	44.8
14-24	30.3	34.8	44.8	47.5	44.4	44.6	48.1	47.2	49.0	50.6
14- 19	17.9	24.2	31.4	32.3	30.4	31.7	31.7	28.8	30.9	30.9
20- 24	48.5	50.5	62.5	64.9	62.5	63.0	66.4	68.4	69.1	71.9
25- 54	38.7	42.6	49.7	51.8	51.8	52.2	57.1	58.3	61.5	63.8
55-64	12.8	13.9	19.3	20.8	18.1	20.5	25.1	24.6	24.9	28.0
65 and over	2.4	3.3	3.6	4.7	4.0	3.6	6.1	6.7	5.6	6.2
Total men	72.4	71.2	73.8	74.5	73.1	72.3	75.2	75.0	74.3	74.9
14-24	58.2	57.0	63.0	67.9	66.6	66.2	68.4	66.6	67.0	67.6
14- 19	41.0	41.3	44.1	51.1	48.8	49.3	50.0	48.2	46.4	48.0
20- 24	86.4	84.3	89.1	90.6	89.7	89.8	90.4	88.9	90.0	89.8
25-54	94.8	95.0	96.8	96.6	96.4	96.2	95.9	96.6	96.9	97.2
55-64	58.6	61.0	67.8	70.2	67.0	65.5	67.9	68.8	68.3	69.7
65 and over	17.9	18.2	19.9	17.3	16.3	16.4	20.6	22.7	18.5	21.3
Total both sexes	48.2	48.7	52.9	54.2	52.9	53.0	56.7	56.9	57.2	57.8
14-24	40.3	45.5	53.7	55.3	54.9	54.9	57.8	56.7	57.8	58.9
14- 19	29.7	32.7	37.7	39.1	39.1	39.8	40.7	38.5	38.4	39.4
20- 24	66.8	66.0	75.4	76.9	75.5	75.9	77.6	78.3	79.2	80.5
25- 54	64.0	65.7	70.1	71.2	71.6	71.9	74.7	75.5	77.6	78.8
55-64	33.2	35.0	40.9	42.3	38.8	39.8	44.4	44.3	44.3	46.2
65 and over	8.5	9.4	9.9	9.7	8.8	8.6	11.7	13.1	10.6	12.0

Source: ECLAC, on the basis of figures from the General Statistical and Census Office (DGEC).

^aFirst six months.

^e August 1974 to February 1975.

^f Second six months.

openness towards young people: this is the increase in the participation rates of adult women (aged 25 to 54) and of older adults (aged 55 to 64). The first group increased between 1973 and 1984 from 38.7% to 63.8%, i.e., by almost 65%, an increase which explains its present relative weight in the EAP. The second group increased from 33.2% in 1973 to 46.2% in 1984, with sharp growth in both female and male rates.

It is important to point out that the participation rates of the young age groups diverge clearly from the urban averages for Latin America. In this period Montevideo had an average rate of over 50%, with a much higher proportion of active young people than the urban sectors in the other countries of the region (about 40%).

It must also be emphasized that, in the case of Uruguay's urban areas, the CELADE forecasts indicated rates below 50% for young people. This makes it clear that the effects of the economic and political changes altered youth participation in employment more than might have been expected in the light of demographic patterns and the "normal" evolution of the country's social structures.

The work market was taking in formerly marginal sectors of Montevideo's population. This was true, primarily, of adult women, but it also held good for young people and older adults. It is important to underline the consequent extension of the active cycle. In the case of older adults (aged 55 to 64), there was very probably a resumption of activity by a number of retired persons or pensioners or a postponement of

retirement, helping to block both upward mobility in the jobs hierarchy and the incorporation of first-time job seekers, with a consequent reduction in the job opportunities of young people.

3. *Possible causes of the evolution of the youth participation rates in Montevideo*

The variation in the youth participation rates can be attributed to a combination of structural trends and transient situations. The structural trends included the expansion of education and the growth in women's participation. The transient situations included economic expansion or recession and their effects on personal living standards. We shall now consider briefly the relative significance of these factors for Uruguay.

The expansion of the education system and the subsequent increase in school attendance are often invoked as a cause of the declining trends in the participation of adolescents (aged 15 to 19) in economic activity in other countries of Latin America. The underlying assumption is of a degree of incompatibility between the productive role and the student role. Between 1981 and 1984 Montevideo saw a sharp increase in the proportion of students, among both adolescents and young adults and for both sexes. At the same time, as can be seen from table 1, there was a slight decline in the participation rates of these groups, which seems to support the initial argument.

However, other data give rise to doubts: they indicate that in the same period there was an increase in active students, whose proportion among male adolescents rose from 20% to 27%, and among females of the same age from 12% to about 15%, with similar trends among young people aged 20 to 24. When the distribution by work situation is examined more closely, however, it can be seen that in all the age and sex subgroups there is a fall in the proportion of effectively employed students, and that what actually produced the increase in their participation rates was the growth in the proportion of unemployed persons and first-time job seekers. In short, the larger numbers of students in the work market in 1984 was due to a

greater proportion of students in each sex and age group and to a more vigorous search for work, rather than to effective employment.

The degree of compatibility of the roles of student and worker must be considered in the light of the extent to which the content of education is adjusted to the market demand, of the pressures on young people to produce income, and of the degree of flexibility in response to these two roles displayed by the educational institutions and the businesses which employ students.

The greater the adjustment of the educational to the production system, the greater the possibility of using work training as an investment in the future performance of jobs. But even if there is little adjustment, the mere fact of participation in the market is positive, for it produces greater awareness of the rules governing the market's operation and greater familiarity with the patterns of labour relations.

In view of the profound and prolonged deterioration of the living standards of Montevideo's population, it is reasonable to suppose that there were strong pressures on young people to contribute to the family budget. In these circumstances, it is not surprising that students should continue to seek work even when the market picture is discouraging and that they should remain on the lookout over long periods for any job possibility. If they find a job, they must decide whether to continue the dual role of student and worker, and this depends to a large extent of the flexibility of the education system and the relative advantages and disadvantages on the situation. Uruguay's education system is in fact very relaxed, with minimum requirements for entry and attendance, special timetables for workers and a fairly broad network of accessible study centres. In assessing the advantages and disadvantages, it must be born in mind that attendance at an education institution may result—depending on prevailing economic and social conditions—in a better use of free time, in terms of better job opportunities in the future and increased opportunities for social and leisure activities and meeting persons of the opposite sex. There are also a number of material advantages: for example, Montevideo provides a low-cost travel pass for students and access to services and

various recreation facilities at preferential rates. All this ought to encourage people, especially the unemployed, to continue their studies. When the job picture is very discouraging and there is therefore no great expectation of success in the search for work, young people can find an advantageous temporary refuge in education institutions.

On the other hand, the main disadvantage of early entry into the world of work is without doubt the restriction that this places on study and on the range of education options which the young worker can consider, given the little time available.

Lastly, there is an increase in the numbers of adolescent and young adult males who are not studying, working or seeking a job. These of course are young people who have become discouraged by the fruitless search for work. Society ought to give these groups particular attention and monitor changes in their situation carefully, for prolonged idleness can lead to a degree of social marginality which is difficult to overcome.

As has been pointed out, another of the factors relating to structural trends which can explain the increase in the youth rates is the growth in women's participation, particularly between the ages of 20 and 24.

The structural trends usually associated with this phenomenon are the changes in demographic patterns—decline in the birth rate, changes in the marriage rates and in the age of marriage—the increasing cultural effects of greater equality of rights and opportunities between the sexes, and the availability of services and technology which reduce or facilitate household tasks.

As was pointed out above, in the 1970s women's participation increased in Montevideo at a remarkable rate. The acceleration of this rate of change is in fact what makes one doubt that it is a response only to the structural changes described above, which usually produce their effects slowly and over long periods. This doubt is also fuelled by the fact that all the other age groups showed increases, although smaller ones, in their participation rates.

Both the rate of increase in youth activity and the widespread nature of the phenomenon, as well as the characteristics of the country's

socioeconomic situation already described, seem instead to point to the operation of two causal factors in the growth in the participation rates of young women: on the one hand, the deterioration during the period in question in general personal living standards and, on the other hand, the changes in cultural patterns with respect to the role of women in the family and in society.

It can be argued that the general increase in the participation rates reflect a massive flow of household members into activities which generate income. The effects of the fall in real wages in the second half of the 1970s, which worsened in the early years of the next decade, seem to have prompted previously inactive people to make up for the decline in family incomes by working themselves.

Any interpretation of the fluctuations in the rates in the 1970s and in part of the 1980s must take into account the development of the product as well as the changes in real wages, and it must be born in mind in particular that in the second half of the 1970s low real wages were accompanied by high rates of product growth, a situation which fostered increased employment.

With regard to the changes in cultural patterns, it is important to remember the low proportion of men in Montevideo (87 men for every 100 women, according to the 1985 census), a proportion which is even smaller in some of the middle-age ranges. This strengthens the trend for women to abandon their traditional role as housewives and to seek greater future independence. The incorporation of women in the work market seems irreversible, for the decline in family incomes has legitimized their entry into the world of work and broken down the social obstacles to the free expression of women's aspiration for greater and increasing independence. This point will be taken up again.

4. *Youth unemployment*

a) *The proportion of young people in total unemployment*

Young people account for some 20% of the total labour force and 50% of the unemployment total. These proportions have not changed greatly since 1970; however, from 1975 a decline

is apparent in the proportion of unemployed among young people, largely as a result of a steady increase among adult women. This latter group increased from 19.5% to 31.5% of the unemployment total between 1970 and 1984. The marked increase in the participation of adult women seems therefore to have been matched by an increase in the obstacles to their effective incorporation in the employment structure.

In the case of young males, there was a significant decline in their relative share in total unemployment between 1970 and 1984: almost 10 percentage points. It would be naive to think that from 1970 the market situation for these young men improved much more than for the other groups. Perhaps, paradoxically, the opposite happened. As was pointed out in the introduction, in Uruguayan society in recent decades emigration has been a means of channelling abroad the excess of youth pressure on the work market, and this was encouraged by the fall in wages and a political climate which discouraged any kind of participation by society in the search for solutions to the economic and social problems. The decline referred to above must be seen in this context, and it must be born in mind that emigration affected primarily the young male groups, and that it was very considerable in the mid-1970s, coinciding with the most pronounced drop in the relative weight of young men in total unemployment.

With respect to young women, it is of interest to note that their share in unemployment reached its highest levels at the time of greatest economic activity in the period (second half of the 1970s), when the general unemployment rates were showing a downward trend. One possible interpretation is that the increase in activity occurred without a corresponding increase in real wages and that it therefore remained necessary for young women to supplement the household income by working; they were encouraged to do so even more by the growth in job opportunities. It is also important to remember the effect of the changes in cultural patterns described above. In any event, the desire for participation stimulated in this way was greater than the market could absorb, and this produced an increase in the relative share of young women in unemployment.

b) *Evolution of the youth unemployment rates*

Between 1970 and 1984 the rates of open unemployment reflected the uncertainties of economic activity: they reached a maximum in 1976 and then declined up to 1981; from that year, driven by the crisis, they climbed to levels not previously observed in the period.

The rates for young men and women show trends similar to the general ones but at significantly higher levels. It must be emphasized, confirming what has already been said, that the rates for young women were not significantly different from the rates for men of the same age up to the mid-1970s. From that point the differences are big and in 1984 the gap is almost 12 percentage points.

This growth in unemployment among active women aged 14 to 24 indicates that they are exercising persistent pressure, which is increasing but relatively ineffective, for incorporation and a degree of job stability. In the first half of the 1970s there was approximately one unemployed young woman for every five employed, but in the second half of the decade the ratio changed to one in four and, finally, from 1983, to one in three: there was a great reluctance on the part of young women to yield to discouragement, despite the steady frustration of their job expectations. This picture is confirmed by an examination of the behaviour of the rates for female first-time job seekers: they tripled between 1981 and 1984 from 7.8 to 21.0.

The lower the age, the more serious the situation. Throughout the period from 1981 to 1984, the number of female adolescents (aged 14 to 19) seeking work for the first time exceeded the number of females unemployed. In 1984 some 40% of the female adolescents with previous work experience and wishing to work failed to find jobs.

Young adult women (aged 20 to 24) seemed to take a similar direction, for the numbers of first-time job seekers increased over the period much more than the unemployment rate.

Throughout this period the unemployment rates for male adolescents were lower than for females, and there were more unemployed males than first-time job seekers up to the last half of 1983- In 1984 the situation was reversed and the

relative weight of the two groups of unemployed males fell into line with the situation of female adolescents.

Lastly, in the second half of 1984 there was also a sharp increase in the number of young male adults seeking work for the first time, accompanied by a relative decline in the unemployment rate.

To sum up, analysis of the available information indicates a work market increasingly inaccessible to young people. This block, which for female adolescents was a persistent feature of the work situation, gradually spread to other youth groups as the crisis worsened.

c) *Youth unemployment and education*

So far, young people have been discussed as if they constituted a homogeneous category and their members were all equally affected by the ups and downs of the economic situation. A distinction has only been made between young people attending and not attending education establishments, without defining different levels, merely for the purpose of examining the compatibility of the productive role and the student role and putting forward some ideas about the role of education in a crisis situation.

However, it is clear that the possibilities of participation in the work market and the specific forms of this participation varied according to the young people's education levels. For young people, given their scant work experience, education level is a good indication of qualification; at the same time, it is an indirect pointer to the social stratum of the homes from which they come.

With a view to isolating the effect of young people's education efforts on their position in the work market, we have excluded from this analysis those who were attending a teaching institution at the time of the survey.

The most general conclusion which can be drawn from the survey data is that the higher the education level, the greater the rate of participation and the lower the unemployment rate, and that these trends have been strengthened by the economic crisis. Furthermore, among both men and women, but particularly among women, educational

attainments imply not only a better chance of stable employment but also greater opportunities of actually finding work.

What is even more important, analysis of the connection between education and employment confirms the difference between men and women in terms of the obstacles to their entry into the market. When all young people are classified by sex and education level and this is compared with their unemployment rates in 1984, we obtain the results shown in table 2.

Table 2 illustrates the considerable discrimination exercised against women by the mechanisms of access to the work market. The table also shows that one of the effects of the crisis was to accentuate the existing discrimination even further, including the "putting in their place" of women with high

Table 2
MONTEVIDEO: UNEMPLOYMENT RATES
IN THE 14-24 EAP
(Percentages)

	Category by sex and education level	
	1981	1984
Women with primary education	19.8	41.4
Women with some secondary education	15.6	35.8
Women with technical education"	15.2	26.4
Women with full secondary or with university education	9.0	20.9
Men with primary education	12.9	19.8
Men with technical education"	10.4	15.6
Men with full secondary or with university education	11.7	13.4
Men with some secondary education	9.2	12.7

Source: ECLAC, on the basis of figures from the General Statistical and Census Office (DGEC).

"Universidad del Trabajo del Uruguay.

levels of education; in 1984 the unemployment rates for such women were somewhat higher than those for men with lower education levels.

An assessment of this discriminatory effect of the work market must also take into account the fact that in each of the education levels studied women receive lower remuneration than men. However, as has been seen, even the lower cost of female labour is insufficient to improve their work situation.

d) *Reaction of young men and women to the jobs shortage*

It must be pointed out that, unlike the young men, the women in this age group do not seem to be discouraged by the lack of job opportunities; quite to the contrary: their participation rates increase with the crisis, in conjunction with an increase in the rates of first-time job seekers. This shows clearly the different behaviour of the two sexes. Faced with a profound deterioration in the work situation, a segment of the male labour force, whatever its level of education, withdraws from the work market and the group's participation rate then declines. The women, in contrast, respond with increased participation in a less favourable market than the one available to men.

The reasons for this difference in the behaviour of the sexes are not clear. There is certainly no justification for asserting that the reluctance of young women to withdraw from the market is due to their greater commitment to the survival strategies of the households most seriously affected by the crisis. What is more, the data from the 1985 household survey show an increase in women's participation rates, even when at the same time there is a clear increase in

wages and family incomes. This indicates that, although the decline in the family income might at the time have triggered the influx of women onto the work market, other forces subsequently emerged to consolidate the process.

A more interesting explanation seems to lie in the changes in the cultural patterns which determine women's behaviour. Firstly, the traditional standards governing the essentially domestic nature of women's activity have been eroded by the combined effect of cultural, social and economic changes. Secondly, the predominantly male emigration has produced a numerical imbalance between the sexes and has made marriage more difficult: a new demographic situation has thus arisen which makes it more difficult to maintain the traditional female role and obliges women to seek economic independence. Lastly, mainly as a result of the persistence of certain traditional patterns in Montevidean society, the opportunities for social intercourse are fewer for young women who do not work. For example, young men meet their peers in the street, café and club and at the sporting events which they attend as players or spectators; women, in contrast, find strict cultural restrictions on their contacts with other women and with men outside their places of education and work. In short, in these circumstances women who do not attend teaching institutions appear to have a triple motivation for seeking work: helping in the effort to increase the family income; the desire for increased autonomy and independence, related to demographic changes and constantly fed by new images of the role of women in society; and access to places where they can have stable relationships with their peers and possibly find a partner.

II

The employment of young people

As in other Latin American cities, the majority of the young people and adults who work in Montevideo do so as employees in the private or public sectors. But in recent years, coinciding with the arrival of the crisis, there has been a

significant increase in own-account workers and in unpaid family workers. In fact, between the second halves of 1981 and 1984 non-waged workers increased from 23% to 26% of the labour force.

The changes in the relative proportion of waged workers have kept in step with the shifts in the economy. One of the effects of the more dynamic economic growth in the second half of the 1970s was an increase in the proportion of young and adult labour working as employees. When the effects of the crisis began to be felt in 1981, the trend was reversed and expressed itself in a greater relative proportion of own-account workers and unpaid family workers in both groups.

A more detailed examination of changes in the distribution of young people by job category indicates a significant increase in the proportion of young workers in the public sector during the 1970s. This increase was matched by a decline in own-account workers and unpaid family workers. In contrast, among adult workers there was a sizeable increase in the proportion of private waged workers at the expense of the other categories, mainly the category of public waged workers.

A first reaction to these data is that, as a result of the economic recovery, the application of political and ideological criteria in the recruitment and replacement of State workers, and the increase in recruitment to the armed forces and forces of public order, there was a displacement of adults to the private sector and of young people to the public sector. When the first symptoms of the crisis appeared, these processes changed direction: own-account work and unpaid family work increased.

The crisis also affected the relative absorption capacity of the various sectors of activity. On the one hand, there were considerable cutbacks in jobs in the production of goods (agriculture, industry and construction), in services such as water, gas and electricity, and in establishments engaged primarily in the provision of services to business. The transfer of workers was primarily to trade and social and personal services.

1. *The young men*

As was pointed out above, between 1981 and 1984 young men reduced their participation in economic activity, from 12.3% to 10.6% of the total labour force already incorporated in the

market.² This reduction was matched by a decline in the group's weight in the total of waged public and private workers resulting from the transfer of its members to own-account work or unpaid family work. On the other hand, in both 1981 and 1984 young people were over-represented among private waged workers in industry, trade, construction and productive services (banking, insurance, real estate, business services) and among waged public workers in construction and transport. These sectors are not all of equal relative importance for the employment of active young men. For example, in 1981 young men accounted for 30% of waged public workers in construction, a much higher proportion than their share in the total labour force, which was 12.3%. However, against this figure it must be remembered that public employment in construction had a very low weight (0.4%) in the total of young male employment. The case of private waged workers in trade and industry is different; although the over-representation of young people seemed smaller, these jobs absorbed 23.9% and 30.9%, respectively of the total of active young men. When the degree of over-representation in each job category is compared with the category's relative share of total employment in each sex and age group (table 3), it is possible to forecast the effects which would be produced by a policy of sectoral reactivation to increase the capacity to absorb young workers in each type of employment.

The degree of over-representation of men aged 14 to 24 in the various categories undergoes a significant change in 1984. In 1981 there were few young men among the unpaid family workers, but in 1984 five out of the eight categories with youth over-representation were made up of these workers. From another angle, this indicates that the increasing restriction of access to the work markets caused by the crisis has shifted young people to the more marginal sectors of the production structure, such as small family businesses. This fact must be assessed, however, in the light of the overall employment picture, which indicates a continuing decline in the proportion provided by such businesses. The

²These data do not include first-time job seekers.

Table 3

MONTEVIDEO: MAIN JOB CATEGORIES IN WHICH YOUNG PEOPLE ARE OVER-REPRESENTED'*(Percentages)*

Category	Second half of 1981		Second half of 1984		
	Percentage of total youth employment	Percentage of category total	Category	Percentage of total youth employment	Percentage of category total
Industry private waged	30.9	17.5	Men 14 - 24		
Trade private waged	23.9	19.2	Industry private waged	23.1	14.4
Construction private waged	6.1	19.5	Trade private waged	21.4	21.7
Transport public waged	4.5	22.1	Transport unpaid family	4.7	17.8
Construction public waged	0.4	30.0	Construction private waged	4.7	18.3
			Trade unpaid family	2.8	17.2
			Social and personal services unpaid family	1.2	22.5
			Industry unpaid family	0.9	28.0
			Construction unpaid family	0.5	28.6
			Women 14-24		
Social and personal services private waged	23.6	15.6	Social and personal services private waged	26.7	12.7
Banking, insurance, etc. private waged	5.1	14.2	Industry private waged	21.5	9.7
Trade public waged	0.6	18.1	Trade private waged	20.4	15.2
			Trade unpaid family	2.6	11.5
			Social and personal services unpaid family	0.7	10.0

Source: ECLAC, on the basis of official figures.

"Classified according to the relative share of the categories in the active total in each subgroup of the young EAP.

case of waged workers in private industry and trade is different; 1984 saw a drop in the proportion of young people employed in industry, and this category in turn experienced a sharp decline in its relative capacity to absorb males aged 14 to 24, but both branches continued to have the greatest concentrations of persons in this age and sex group, so that it can be asserted that any increase in economic activity in industry and trade will have immediate repercussions on the job opportunities of young men.

2. *The young women*

As a general observation it can be said that the employment of young women in the production structure is more concentrated than for men of the same age.

In 1981 waged jobs in trade and in social, personal and productive services in the private sector were the largest categories in which young women were over-represented. They were also

concentrated in public jobs in trade, but this category represented a very small proportion of the total. Although the situation did not change much in 1984, it is interesting to note a decline in the proportion of young women in each of the categories mentioned above, accompanied by an increase in the contribution of each of these categories to the total employment of young women. This fact probably reflects the tertiarization of the whole economy between 1981 and 1984. Another novelty in the latter year was the increase in the relative participation of young women in the categories of unpaid family workers in the tertiary sector.

Unfortunately, no information is available to enable us to follow the evolution of female domestic employees over this period, for they certainly represent one of the most important employment categories for this group.³

³Not until June 1985 did Uruguay's household survey begin to classify as active persons female domestic employees in private households.

III

Final considerations

The profound and prolonged deterioration in personal living standards in Montevideo has produced a massive influx of family members onto the work market. Young people have made a substantial contribution to this flow: their participation rates have risen above the normal levels for their coevals in other Latin American countries, to higher levels too than those projected for Uruguay's urban areas on the basis of previous performance.

But this desire for participation has not found a positive echo in the market. Apart from the period of expansion in the second half of the 1970s, the rates of youth unemployment stayed at very high levels, largely as a result of the crisis which struck in 1981. It is important to remember that the problem of youth

unemployment in Montevideo, although subject to short-term influences, does have genuinely structural characteristics.

In any description of the youth employment situation attention must be drawn to the increasing numbers waiting at the gates of the job market, as reflected in the sustained increase in the number of first-time job seekers.

The sharp increase in participation rates, especially among young people, was matched by the increase in the numbers of persons seeking work for the first time.

In the period of crisis there was an increase in the proportion of young people attending education institutions and in the proportion of active students. Analysis of the data shows that, strictly speaking, the proportion of effectively

employed students has declined and that of unemployed students or students seeking work for the first time has increased. The teaching institutions remain the main channel for the development of strategies for stable employment in the production system, for they expand the range of options and also offer possibilities of access to certain services and an appropriate framework for socializing with peer groups.

The young people who have managed to find a place in the employment structure have done so in the categories of waged workers in industry, trade and social and personal services. During the period of economic reactivation in the second half of the 1970s there was a shift towards public employment, possibly as a result, on the one hand, of the gaps left by adults dismissed for political reasons or drawn away by the dynamic growth of the private sector and, on the other hand, of the expansion of the armed forces. Once the crisis had arrived, both young people and adults—but primarily young people—were pushed towards marginal positions in the production structure and there was an increase in the numbers of young people among own-account workers and unpaid family workers.

The migration of young people to other countries has been a central feature of the backcloth on which are projected the vicissitudes of these groups. This migration has been essentially of active male young people. In some years, for example between 1974 and 1975, the scale of this phenomenon was reflected in a sharp drop in the relative weight of young people in the total unemployment figure.

The country's demographic structure is another important feature of this backcloth. In Latin America as a whole more than one in three persons of active age is young, but in Uruguay the ratio is less than one in four. The country's present demographic patterns, in particular the persistence of the causes of selective emigration, do not hold out hope of great changes in this situation.

The deterioration of personal living standards seems to have affected certain socio-

demographic patterns among young people. This can be seen in the decline in the marriage rates of men and women. It has also become more difficult to set up an independent household and, consequently, there has been an increase in the number of couples who have to live with parents. This seems to be the cause of the decline of the proportion of married young men who are also heads of family. If these trends continue, it will be necessary to investigate their effects on the birth rate by delaying the production of children and on the participation of women in the work market as a result of the increased time which that delay makes available.

Lastly, perhaps the most remarkable feature of youth employment in the past decade has been the sharp increase in the rates of female participation. Despite the discrimination in the work market, the increasing difficulty of finding effective employment, and the consistently lower wages than those paid to men, women have not been discouraged in their growing desire to work. It might be suggested as a hypothesis that this situation has been brought about, on the one hand, by the crisis which legitimized women's exit from the household and entry into the work market and, on the other hand, by the predominantly male emigration and the consequent decline in the proportion of men in the population of Montevideo, which consolidated the trend for greater female independence and the erosion of their traditional domestic role, and, lastly, by the limited opportunities for social intercourse available to young women in Montevidean society (in comparison with men of the same age) which makes the work place into a favourable location for stable contacts with peer groups and for finding a partner. Observation of the actual situation shows that these mechanisms do indeed explain the recent dynamic increase in the participation of women in Montevideo, and certain new elements can now be added to the traditional explanation of the factors determining the incorporation of women in the work market, including the demographic and cultural factors which strengthen or weaken the secularization of female roles.

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