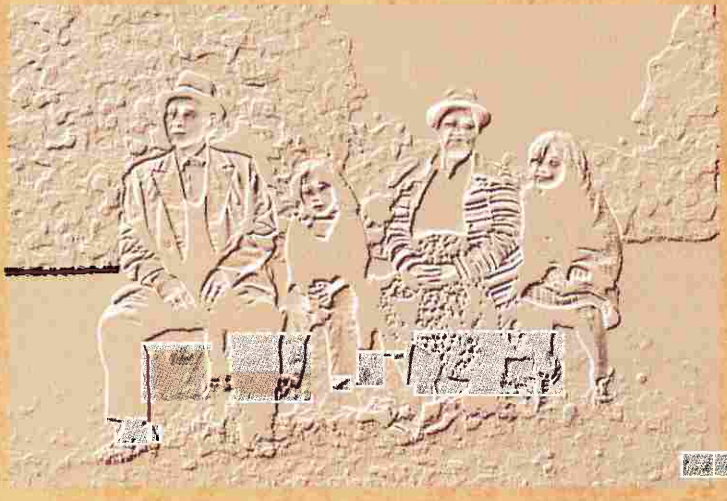
FAMILY AND FUTURE

A REGIONAL PROGRAMME IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN



ECONOMIC COMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN / ECLAC

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International Year of the Family

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Foreword

THE FAMILY'S PLACE IN THE CONCERNS OF ECLAC

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The selection of agenda items to orient the debates at the Latin American and Caribbean Regional Meeting Preparatory to the International Year of the Family, held at Cartagena, Colombia, was linked to some of the most recent concerns of ECLAC regarding the evolution of Latin American and Caribbean societies. For the past few years, the Commission has been developing a proposal on changing production patterns with social equity, which has been reflected in a number of publications.* This approach, whose most important conclusion is that economic growth with social equity in a context of democracy is not only desirable but also possible, has become the linchpin of the institution's thinking and a source of inspiration for its work in different areas.

The subject of the family has not escaped this influence. Some of the findings presented in the latest edition of the *Social Panorama of Latin America*** point to the mounting difficulties faced by low-resource sectors in trying to form complete and stable families; they also bear witness to the adverse effect of the new family structures on the academic performance of children and young people, which tends to aggravate the lack of equity that characterizes the region's societies.

Issues related to the family overlap in a number of areas with issues related to changing production patterns with social equity in a context of democracy. First, when the family fails to meet (or to meet adequately) certain essential responsibilities, the social and financial cost of assigning these duties to other private or public institutions is usually very high. This situation is disturbing in countries such as those of the region,

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* See ECLAC, *Changing Production Patterns with Social Equity: The Prime Task of Latin American and Caribbean Development in the 1990s* (LC/G.1601-P), Santiago, Chile, March 1990. United Nations publication, Sales No. E.90.II.G.6; ECLAC, *Sustainable Development: Changing Production Patterns, Social Equity and the Environment* (LC/G.1648/Rev.2-P), Santiago, Chile, May 1991. United Nations publication, Sales No. E.91.II.G.5; ECLAC, *Social Equity and Changing Production Patterns: An Integrated Approach* (LC/G.1701/Rev.1-P), Santiago, Chile, 1992. United Nations publication, Sales No. E.92.II.G.5; ECLAC/UNESCO Regional Office for Education in Latin America and the Caribbean, *Education and Knowledge: Basic Pillars of Changing Production Patterns with Social Equity* (LC/G.1702/Rev.1-P), Santiago, Chile, 1992. United Nations publication, Sales No. E.92.II.G.6.

** ECLAC, *Social Panorama of Latin America, Edition 1993* (LC/G.1768), Santiago, Chile, 1993.

which must concentrate their scarce resources in vocational training, the establishment of the infrastructure needed for sustained production and the steady absorption of technical progress. Second, the growing consensus that human resources training is the basic pillar of changing production patterns with social equity has been accompanied by increased recognition that families are key actors in influencing children's academic success. Thus, the capacity of families to play a role that efficiently complements that of the school system is a highly significant resource for the economic growth of nations. Families and schools are social units that must be mutually reinforcing in processes of socialization for development, duly combining the inculcation of civic values with an ethos that reflects our peoples' own cultural identities. Third, social democracy is based on a series of values, including responsibility, tolerance, moral obligations towards others and respect for their rights, which are nurtured and consolidated in family life. Genuine democracy begins at home, with the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and of authoritarianism in inter-generational relations.

The idea, then, is that directing many of the actions carried out in the social field towards families, seeking to build their autonomous capacity to achieve better standards of living for their members, is an efficient and effective way to promote individual well-being.

THE FAMILY'S PLACE IN THE CONCERNS OF UNICEF

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The position of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) on the family is based on the role played by the latter in ensuring the survival, protection and development of children, which is the primary aim of the Fund's activities. The Convention on the Rights of the Child affirms that the family is the fundamental group of society and the natural environment for the growth and well-being of all its members, particularly children. Likewise, the Plan of Action for Implementing the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children in the 1990s also recognizes the family as the social institution that has the primary responsibility for the nurturing and protection of children and adolescents, and for their introduction to the culture, values and norms of their society. The Plan of Action also asserts that "for the full and harmonious development of their personality, children should grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding". The importance which UNICEF attaches to the family is also based on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The role played by women in the full development of the family has become even more important than in the past, owing to the decline in men's role in providing material sustenance for the family. As a direct result of the economic crisis of the 1980s, many families became poor or indigent, or were even destroyed as social units. Some of the repercussions of the economic crisis, such as the increase in the number of households headed by women and single-parent households, and the rise in child labour, are of particular interest to UNICEF. Another notable phenomenon, which is not necessarily related to the economic crisis, is the increase in early parenthood.

The diminishing (and sometimes non-existent) role of men in meeting the family's material needs has undermined their position of authority and forced women to shoulder a double workload. This has also helped to weaken the father figure as a moral authority. Programmes to support female heads of household must therefore be an integral part of programmes to assist families.

Thus, a series of problems associated with changes in the structure and functions of the family must be taken into account. These problems are also directly conditioned by economic and social processes, which can erode or eliminate families' capacity to fulfil the functions expected of them.

Since the above-mentioned phenomena are widespread in the region, policies to support the family must be conceived as a substantive part of social policies and must be directed towards all families, regardless of the forms of *de jure* or de facto organization they may adopt, and with due respect for their cultural identity. The family unit is justified as a focus of State policies because it can be more functional and efficient than individuals or institutions in many areas, such as social security, housing, nutrition, health promotion and basic sanitation.

It is also important to recognize that the family remains primarily responsible for the socialization of its members. This process includes education, inculcation of social norms, promotion of gender strategies, reproduction of the labour force and redefinition of the power relations between men and women. However, some of the family's socialization functions (in the areas of basic education and labour) have been transferred to or complemented by other institutions, such as schools and enterprises. None the less, the family is still better able to perform functions such as affective socialization and the development of relations of solidarity among family members, which enable individuals to develop stable inter-relationships of solidarity with others and better equip them to resolve conflicts within the family and to deal with pressures at work and in the social and political spheres.

For all of these reasons, the family should not be considered as merely the sum of its parts, but rather as a group entity with irreplaceable functions and special needs.

Undoubtedly, the reformulation of policies to benefit the family must involve an overhaul of the public institutions linked to family development. This calls for the allocation of more financial resources, the recognition of specific areas of competence and the provision of the human resources needed to take appropriate action to design and implement new family policies. In nearly all the countries of the region, institutions that serve families seem to lack the capacity to carry out diagnostic studies and implement policies, and do not have enough reliable information. That situation makes it hard to improve the efficiency of public decision-making on measures to benefit the family, seen as the main determinant of child survival, protection and development. To help families meet all of their responsibilities, it is necessary to pursue some specific objectives which, on the one hand, take the mandate of UNICEF into account and, on the other, seek to solve a number of what are considered key problems with the structure and functioning of families in the region: a) providing social services (health care, nutrition and education) and legal and judicial support to promote greater family stability, in the context of efforts to improve economic conditions; these services should include providing families with the information and education they need to take appropriate decisions regarding children's health and education, and could also include specialized education and counselling services to foster the democratization of family relations; b) directing these economic support measures and social services towards the lowest-income families on a priority basis; and c) designing mechanisms to ensure the protection and development of children who, for some reason, have lost their original family unit, by integrating them into another family unit or placing them in appropriate institutions.

INTRODUCTION

At its plenary meeting of 8 December 1989, the General Assembly of the United Nations, by its resolution 44/82, proclaimed 1994 as International Year of the Family and designated the Economic and Social Council as the coordinating body for the Year. ECLAC, in turn, was designated as focal point for preparatory activities in the Latin American and Caribbean countries.

In that capacity, ECLAC organized a series of meetings of government and non-governmental experts to review and discuss existing information on the situation of families in the region. The ultimate objective of those meetings was to gather all available information to serve as a basis for the elaboration of guidelines for action to strengthen families' autonomous capacity to enhance the well-being of their members.

The first of those meetings was the Workshop on Family, Development and Population Dynamics in Latin America and the Caribbean, conducted in collaboration with the Latin American Demographic Centre (CELADE) from 27 to 29 November 1991 at Santiago, Chile, to study the situation of families in the region. That effort was supported by a number of United Nations bodies and received generous financial assistance from the CELADE/Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) Exchange and Cooperation Project (phase III). A selection of the documents presented at that workshop was published in the book *Cambios en el perfil de la familia: la experiencia regional*. Subsequently, ECLAC and the National Institute of Statistics, Geography and Informatics of Mexico (INEGI) organized the Methodological Workshop on Analysis of the Family in Latin America, which took place at Aguascalientes, Mexico, from 27 to 30 October 1992. The participants in that workshop reviewed the status of information on the structure and functioning of families in selected Latin American countries, studied the comparability of the sources used for the regular compilation of data and the need to formulate policies and programmes of action in that field, and made suggestions and recommendations for improving the use of existing information sources.

In close coordination with the Government of Colombia and the secretariat of the International Year of the Family, ECLAC organized the Latin American and Caribbean Regional Meeting Preparatory to the International Year of the Family. That event, held at Cartagena, Colombia, from 9 to 13 August 1993, was attended by representatives of the States members of ECLAC, the United Nations system, intergovernmental agencies, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council and other non-governmental organizations.

This book contains seven documents submitted at the Regional Meeting. The

first five were prepared by ECLAC to provide a substantive basis for the debates. The other two are the result of the government experts' joint efforts at Cartagena, and reflect the consensus reached on the priorities that should be addressed in actions to strengthen the institution of the family. These last two documents are the Cartagena Declaration and the Regional Proposal for the Elaboration of Action Guidelines for the Benefit of Latin American and Caribbean Families. Both documents were adopted by the representatives of the 24 States members of ECLAC attending the meeting.

The document "Situation and prospects of the family in Latin America and the Caribbean" served as a general frame of reference. It notes that the evolution of the family in the Latin American and Caribbean countries reflects a number of world-wide trends: smaller family size; growing family instability, as shown by higher divorce and separation rates; an increase in premarital sexual relations; a decline in the sexual double standard; and the proliferation of families in which both spouses have jobs, of single-parent families, of families where the partners have not formalized their union and of cases of successive unions that translate into a variety of child-rearing arrangements.

The document examines how these trends, also seen in countries that have long been industrialized, take on a different meaning in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, in light of five specific characteristics of the region: i) the current stage of demographic transition in many of the countries; ii) the influence of poverty and uneven income distribution; iii) the speed of socio-cultural changes; iv) the shifting role of the State; and v) the importance of national idiosyncrasies, which are largely a product of the mixture of aboriginal, European and African cultures and institutions such as slavery.

Lastly, the paper offers some general guidelines for strengthening the family's capacity to link and implement life plans or agendas, which are considered indispensable for enabling families to act as effective agents of development.

The document "Intrafamily relations in Latin America", prepared by Elizabeth Jelin, begins by noting that changes in the institution of the family in Latin America have been associated with the processes of urbanization and development. From this perspective, the paper analyses the role of kinship networks in migratory processes; the relationship between household/family organization, the labour market and social networks; and changes in family organization.

As regards internal dynamics, the family is seen as a social organization with a hierarchy of power based on the criteria of age, sex and kinship —a hierarchy which has been radically altered as individuation and autonomization have gained ground, especially among women and youth. The analysis focuses on the tensions resulting from this process, which occur between generations within the family and between the privacy and intimacy of the family, on the one hand, and the public responsibilities of the State in defence of civil rights, on the other. Both domestic violence and sexual and reproductive practices are analysed from this perspective.

As for the relationship between the family and State policies, the family should be seen as a mediating institution in measures to promote social equity while guaranteeing basic human rights and the integration of the individual into social and community networks.

Barry Chevannes prepared the document "Stresses and strains: situation analysis of the Caribbean family", which asserts that even though the structure of the African-Caribbean family seems to be a chaotic *mélange* of different types of arrangements, in reality it follows a well-recognized cultural pattern, which begins with a visiting, non-residential form of conjugal union, followed by a consensual co-residential form and ending in legal marriage. Viewed from this perspective, and not according to the traditional Western model, the family characteristics initially identified as

problems —i.e., illegitimacy and male irresponsibility— no longer appear as such. Taken in its entirety, the family achieves its socializing role; one of the underlying principles enabling it to do so is the principle of blood ties.

The African-Caribbean family is influenced by economic conditions, such as those that accompany structural adjustment programmes, which erode the ability of parents (particularly men) to discharge their parental roles, and place an enormous burden on mothers. At the same time, owing principally to the recent progress made in women's struggle for equality, the need to upgrade the laws to be more in keeping with cultural and economic realities has been recognized throughout the subregion; however, this development is uneven among the various countries.

Lastly, the document underscores the need to give due respect to African-Caribbean cultural norms and to take measures in the areas of policy analysis and design to incorporate the role of males in their purview.

In the document "The urban family and poverty in Latin America", Mercedes González de la Rocha deals with family and household responses to the worsening of poverty in Latin American cities. She contends that social responses to the economic deterioration caused by the crisis have been largely private, as households have employed a series of strategies to cope with and mitigate the effects of the crisis. It is therefore crucial to analyse these strategies in order to understand the real impact of the economic policies implemented in the Latin American countries. Moreover, this impact is differential. The drop in the income of middle-class households was proportionally greater than that of working-class households. None the less, working-class households are at a greater disadvantage, especially young households, those that are at very advanced stages of the domestic cycle (elderly households) and female-headed households. Lastly, within each household, some members are more vulnerable than others. Gender and generational relations —which are unequal and create unequal access to resources and benefits— make children and women more vulnerable to poverty and its consequences (malnutrition, disease, violence) than other family members.

Manuel Chiriboga prepared the document "The rural family and ethnicity in Latin America". Given the vastness and complexity of the topic, and the diversity of regional and national situations surrounding and defining rural families, the paper focuses on families of subsistence farmers and small-scale producers, and covers only some general trends that can be inferred from the information available.

The study analyses the interaction between the socio-economic dynamics of rural families and their various manifestations in the areas of marriage and child care and the relationships between genders and generations that are formed within this framework. The study proposes a typology of family situations in rural areas of the region, on the basis of which it builds a typology of rural families.

The study is divided into five sections, including the introduction. The second section presents a socio-economic characterization of rural families, and the third describes the main forms of organization of these families. The fourth identifies some of the processes that are changing family behaviour, and the last offers recommendations for public policies targeting rural families.

The second part of this book contains the **Cartagena Declaration** and the **Regional Proposal for the Elaboration of Action Guidelines for the Benefit of Latin American and Caribbean Families.**

The Declaration comprises a set of agreements reached by the representatives of the Governments of the countries of the region at Cartagena, Colombia, in relation to a number of issues, such as promoting family-oriented public policies, taking into account the diversity and cultural identity of families; encouraging the development of

decentralized institutional structures, of a high technical and political level, in order to integrate actions in the areas of prevention, protection and family development; reinforcing programmes designed to satisfy the basic needs of families; and furthering actions under the Regional Proposal.

The **Regional Proposal**, for its part, puts forward the main objectives for the overall development of the family and identifies priority areas of action with respect to the family and public policies, namely legislation, institution-building, socialization and cultural identity, family resources and services, and research and human resources training. The Proposal concludes with recommendations on international cooperation and regional integration.

Chapter I

SITUATION AND PROSPECTS OF THE FAMILY IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

A. URBANIZATION, MODERNIZATION AND THE FAMILY

The evolution of the family in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean reflects a number of world-wide trends: smaller family size; growing family instability, as shown by higher divorce and separation rates; an increase in premarital sexual relations; the decline of the sexual double standard; and the proliferation of families in which both spouses have jobs, of single-parent families, of families where the partners have not formalized their union and of cases of successive unions that translate into a variety of legal, economic and child-rearing arrangements.

Although the intensity and features of these phenomena vary from one country to another, they show similar tendencies in all the countries, implying that they reflect the overall process of development in Western societies. The multiple facets of this process are inextricably intertwined with changes in the structure and functions of the family. One of the most important of these is the change in the degree of autonomy of unions *vis-à-vis* their social environment, and of each partner in relation to the other. This autonomy has increased along with the urbanization and modernization of societies. Urbanization has enhanced the family's autonomy with respect to its social surroundings in two principal ways. On the one hand, it has widened the gap between the public and private spheres, thus undermining social control mechanisms and reducing the pressure on individuals to adjust their behaviour to social norms. On the other, social expectations concerning the formation and organization of the family have become more flexible. The various issues that have arisen with regard to the family's diversity need only be mentioned to illustrate their significance: the secularization of marriage, the family's dissociation from marriage, the split between the roles of husband and father, the reversal of the sequence of marriage and child-bearing, etc. In fact, in some countries the idea of progress tends to be linked to greater tolerance of the diversity of family structures, which is perceived as reflecting greater pluralism and broader opportunities for choice, freedom and personal fulfilment. The combination of these processes has reinforced the trend towards family privacy and autonomy and the feeling that the stability of unions should depend more on the quality of the relationship than on factors external to the couple.

Modernization is characterized by a growing differentiation and specialization of institutions. In the case of the family, it has translated into a progressive concentration on affective functions, with traditional instrumental functions being absorbed by other institutions. As a result

of this process, ties of mutual dependence among family members have weakened, and their interpersonal relations have changed.[1]

The growing economic independence of women has widened their margin of negotiation with regard to domestic rights and responsibilities. Couples have had to adapt to a more symmetrical relationship than was common in the past. The stability of these relationships has come to depend more on compatibility between life plans and the similarity of expectations concerning each partner's role than on adherence to traditional family models. The relative emotional cost of a split between the partners is higher in the new models of family organization.

In sum, the formation and dynamics of relationships between partners have come to depend less on social norms; women have gained independence from men; and the meaning of male-female relationships has changed.

B. SOME DETERMINING FACTORS OF WOMEN'S GREATER INDEPENDENCE

Undoubtedly, the current changes in family life revolve around the evolution of the status of women. Regardless of what type of union is formed, its viability and stability hinge on the progressive broadening of women's opportunities for participation in public life and the spread of values that question the traditional division of labour within the family. A brief look at some of the most important structural roots of these processes is therefore in order.

Demographic and technological factors and changes in occupational, educational and service structures helped to broaden women's opportunities for participation in public life. In the demographic sphere, lower fertility, longer life expectancy and the concentration of reproduction in the initial phases of conjugal union enabled women to prolong the period during which they had no reproductive responsibilities. Consequently, women began to have more time for work outside the home. This increase in women's free time was boosted, on the one hand, by rapid advances in domestic technology that cut down considerably on the time required for household chores, and, on the other, by the expansion of social services related to the care or education of children.

At the same time, the notable increase in women's levels of education enabled them to take advantage of the new employment opportunities in the service and information sectors which opened up with the expansion of "post-industrial" economies. This situation facilitated women's entry into the labour market and raised the opportunity costs of early marriage, pregnancy and limitation to purely domestic labour. Likewise, the gradual consolidation of family consumption patterns which many one-income households could not afford encouraged more women to participate in the economy.

In the area of values, there arose two possible motives for questioning traditional standards. First, it became evident that the requirements of traditional family organization contradicted the opportunities and independence which the new situation offered women, so that the idea of a more equitable definition of men's and women's roles within the family became

1 To understand this phenomenon, it is useful to compare the relative cost of breaking family ties in different systems of family organization. For example, ties between the members of families who own enterprises, such as small farms, workshops or urban trades, are usually very strong, since a rupture would entail the destruction of not only the living arrangements, but also the sole or main source of subsistence, of all the members of the family. This instrumental dependence is also very strong in the breadwinner system, in which the husband/father works outside the home while the wife/mother takes care of the children and the household chores. Each partner's role is defined on the basis of obligations in the public and private spheres, which differ according to sex and are mutually related and complementary.

more attractive. Second, a new system of values, closely linked to the dominant trends in the development of Western capitalism, began to emphasize personal fulfilment, authenticity and individualism, in clear opposition to the requirements of female dependence implicit in patriarchal models.

Lastly, women's personal expectations and plans underwent a profound change owing to technological progress and the dissemination of knowledge about contraception, which gave them control over their fertility and, ultimately, the ability to dissociate sexual activity from reproduction.

C. SOME CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES OF LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

In most Western countries, the aforementioned trends went hand in hand with the processes of urbanization and modernization. However, in Latin America and the Caribbean, they took on certain specific features owing to the factors analysed below.

1. Demographic transition

The Latin American and Caribbean region has a very young population. Around 1990, an estimated 19.6% of Europeans and 21.4% of North Americans were under the age of 14, while that proportion was as high as 35.8% in Latin America and the Caribbean.[2] In fact, children make up the region's largest age group. This means that families in the process of expansion are more numerically significant than in other regions; their composition, needs and functions must therefore be taken into account.

Whereas in Europe, the population age structure and the decline in fertility to less than replacement levels in many countries have led to an emphasis on the family functions of emotional support for adults and reproduction, the demographic features of Latin America and the Caribbean have shifted priority to functions relating to the socialization of new generations. Indeed, the great challenge of training human resources posed by the modernization of the region's economies makes the family's socialization capacity, and particularly its effectiveness in complementing the role of the schools, a necessity for development. This need is accentuated by the poor quality of the instruction provided by educational systems and their scant capacity to compensate for inadequate family socialization.

In recognizing the importance of these functions, the fact that the countries of the region are in different stages of demographic transition should not be ignored. In some countries, the greatest demographic pressure is exerted by young people seeking to enter the labour market, while in a few others, a trend towards population ageing is becoming a significant factor. Countries whose demographic transition is well advanced are taking a growing interest in seeking social mechanisms to ensure the elderly population's access to services and material resources, considering that during the 1980s, many national social security systems lost much of their capacity to provide the elderly with their own autonomous means of subsistence.

2. Poverty and income distribution

Today, in the early 1990s, about 44% of Latin America's population is living in poverty, mostly in urban areas. Since poor households have more children than other households, over half of the population under 14 is in this situation. At the same time, the region has the world's highest indexes of household income concentration. Although there are no solid grounds for predicting how the progress

2 See United Nations, *The Sex and Age Distribution of Population. The 1990 Revision of the United Nations Global Population Estimates and Projections*, Population Studies series, No. 122 (ST/ESA/SER.A/122), New York, 1991. United Nations publication, Sales No. E.90.XIII.33.

of the restructuring and adjustment policies being implemented in the region will affect poverty and income distribution, the situation in most of the countries still shows no signs of improving in the near future.

One of the most noteworthy characteristics of poverty in contemporary society is its occurrence in the midst of widely-disseminated images of opulence and conspicuous consumption, which set up a dramatic contrast between poverty and increasingly high expectations and, moreover, sharpen the impression that available material resources are insufficient for forming a family.[3] Poverty affects the formation, structure and functions of families. Young people in poor sectors, especially males, are more reluctant than other young people to formalize a union and take on long-term responsibilities, since they have only to look at their immediate surroundings to realize that making this type of commitment can drastically reduce their chances of fulfilling their ambitions and overcoming poverty. In many countries, the proportion of families headed by teenage mothers is growing,[4] apparently as a result of the combination of weaker social control of young women's sexual behaviour, lack of information on pregnancy prevention and the attraction of romantic love as a source of gratification and an escape route from a basically frustrating environment.

With respect to family structure, the stability of family relations is subject to more tensions in poor sectors than in other socio-economic strata, owing to a number of factors. First, the roles of the various family members often undergo changes that do not conform to the family's aspirations, but rather to social forces, especially those of the market, over which the poor have little control. For example, the father's unemployment and migration in search of work usually place greater economic responsibility on the wife and mother, and in some cases on children and young people. Second, consensual unions are more common among the poor. They are less stable than legal unions and generally are not based on a consolidated life plan or agenda for the family, judging *inter alia* from the results of studies showing that in low-income populations, women in consensual unions often wish to formalize the relationship, while men resist taking this step. Third, the stability of family structures is affected by models of patriarchal domination that clash with the growing trend towards more egalitarian participation by men and women in social, economic and political life.

The socialization capacity of families is also directly and indirectly affected by their socio-economic situation. The scarcity of means, the inevitable concentration on problems of daily subsistence, inadequate housing and overcrowding have a direct impact on children's nutrition, health and emotional and cognitive maturity, and on the family's capacity to complement the education imparted in the school system or even to keep children in the home, as shown by the phenomenon of street children in many cities of the region. With respect to the indirect effects of these factors, the instability of poor families and, particularly, the absence or replacement of the father figure, limit their socialization capacity still further.

Paradoxically, the smooth functioning and stability of the family are more important for the poor than for other sectors, since their more limited access to health services, care of the elderly, education and other services makes it incumbent on the family to fulfil these functions. Moreover, it is through the family that individuals are integrated into networks of mutual assistance based on

3 In countries where personal income is highly concentrated, images of opulence usually come from the highest economic strata of those countries; in contrast, as international communications networks expand to countries with middle- and low-income strata, the latter's aspirations are increasingly moulded by lifestyles in the developed countries.

4 See Mayra Buvini and others, "La suerte de las madres adolescentes y sus hijos: un estudio de caso sobre la transmisión de la pobreza en Santiago de Chile" (LC/R.1038), Santiago, Chile, ECLAC, 1991.

links such as kinship, proximity and geographical or ethnic origin; these networks can play a very important role in the subsistence strategies of the poor.

3. The speed of change

In countries where industrialization began early, family structure evolved gradually over the course of a century, whereas in most Latin American and Caribbean countries this process was compressed into only a few decades. In 1950, the region's population was still predominantly rural and the most common family model combined production, consumption and reproductive activities. Between 1950 and 1970, the cities of the region grew rapidly as a result of mass migration from rural to urban areas; on average, Latin America's urban population grew from 41% to 57.4% over those 20 years. Encouraged by the State and the church, the mass communications media idealized the breadwinner system (the father as provider, the mother as home-maker). The fact that most families believed in this ideal did not prevent, in practice, a progressive increase in married women's participation in the labour market. That trend swiftly gathered momentum in the 1980s, undoubtedly in response to the economic crisis and the consequent deterioration of living conditions. An ECLAC study in Uruguay in 1984 and 1986 showed that the percentage of urban families living below the poverty line might have risen considerably in that period had women not contributed to household income.

These rapid social changes had destabilizing effects at both the personal and institutional levels. For individuals, the gradual loss of validity of the traditional frame of reference as a guide to the behaviour required for family members to adapt to the new circumstances became a major source of normative conflict and psychological tension. At the institutional level, the family's growing inability to fulfil its traditional functions was not sufficiently offset by the establishment of services designed to lighten the burden of family obligations.

These processes shifted the balance of power within families and, particularly, called into question the legitimacy of the model that vested authority in the role of the husband/father. Traditionally, this authority had been grounded primarily in men's fulfilment of obligations as the family's main provider (or sole provider, as in the breadwinner system), as leader of a collective enterprise, as possessor and transmitter of the abilities and skills required for male children to enter the labour market, and as mediator with the outside world, especially the State bureaucracy. Men are reluctantly retreating from the position which all of these aspects of their traditional role had given them, and the legitimacy of their demand for power within the family is being undermined in the process.[5] Moreover, the redefinition of family members' roles is a slow and difficult process, especially since clearly defined alternative models with strong collective support have yet to emerge.

In this regard, it is noteworthy that very few studies have been conducted on the change in men's role within the family and its influence on their attitudes towards the formation of families, domestic conflicts and other aspects of social life. The wealth of research on women carried out in recent decades is, of course, a valuable source of information on men. However, to understand the family's process of change, it is necessary to redress this imbalance, especially since many male attitudes are acknowledged to play an important role in generating the tensions that trigger changes in family structure.

4. Changes in the State's role

In response to the economic crisis, the region's Governments implemented

5 Rubén Kaztman, "Why are men so irresponsible?", *CEPAL Review*, No. 46 (LC/G.1717-P), Santiago, Chile, April 1992.

public spending cuts that seriously curtailed the provision of education, health care, social security and housing services. Some analysts see this process as a drastic change in the relationship between the State and society and as a reversal of the trend observed in previous decades, when an embryonic "welfare state" seemed to be emerging. Consequently, large sectors of the population had to set out to procure services to which they had begun to consider themselves entitled as citizens, especially in the Southern Cone countries. Families began to take on more responsibility so as to compensate in part for the reduction in public services, and eventually played a crucial role. This represented an additional burden, especially for families that were mobilizing and pooling their resources in an effort to protect their members who were facing a slow job market, and to counteract the consequent decrease in family income.[6]

5. Cultural factors

Undoubtedly, the family's reaction to external circumstances also depends on cultural factors and the norms shared by family members. These norms may originate in the history of the subsystem and reflect traditional values, and inhibit, or at least delay, the effects of changes in the conditioning environment. But the cultural sphere has a dynamic of its own, in which changes may speed up or shift direction in response to new opinions or new points of view.[7]

The population of Latin America and the Caribbean comprises a wide variety of ethnic groups, including descendants of the indigenous peoples that populated extensive areas of the territory before the conquest and the groups transported from other parts of the world as slaves. Some elements of these groups' traditional value systems weakened and others became consolidated in the course of their history of discrimination and prejudice, economic exploitation and social and political exclusion. To understand the high rates of illegitimacy and fatherless families in countries where much of the labour force once consisted of slaves, it must be remembered that slaves usually were not allowed to marry and that children were the responsibility of the slaveholder and the mother.[8] In general, it is difficult to comprehend the various forms of unions, the nature of family conflicts and alternatives for solving them without taking into account the complex identity problems affecting those who have been marginalized and whose options have been severely limited for long periods of time, as well as the norms and the world view that shape the attitudes of communities and kinship networks in this regard towards their members.

In sum, as noted at the beginning of this paper, an initial analysis of indicators of change in models of family formation and levels of stability does not reveal great differences between trends in Latin American countries and those in the most highly developed Western societies. However, a closer examination shows that although the same indicators may be found in both contexts, they reflect phenomena that stem from different causes and have different effects. A brief description has therefore been given of the region's characteristic features and their influence on the family. In a region where

6 Bryan Roberts, "Household coping strategies and urban poverty in a comparative perspective", *Urban Life in Transition*, M. Gottdiener and C. Pickvance (eds.), Newbury Park, California, Sage, 1991.

7 See Laszlo Cseh-Szombathy, "Modelling the interrelation between macro-society and the family", *International Social Science Journal*, vol. 42, No. 4, Paris, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 1990, p. 447.

8 Some authors do not consider this family structure an unhappy legacy of a history of slavery and colonialism; in their view, these circumstances of the past helped to consolidate this model, but were not determining factors. See Errol Miller, *Men at Risk*, Kingston, Jamaica Publishing House Ltd., 1991, pp. 97-98.

over half of all children live in poverty, where most families are still growing, where public services began to shrink long before reaching universal coverage, where there is a marked discrepancy between the requirements of internalized family models and those imposed by the environment, the family's structural weakness has much more serious effects on its members and on the functioning of society than in developed countries. In the latter, the level of well-being and solid institutional support enjoyed by families have placed society in a better position to absorb the effects of debilitated family structure.

D. THE SOCIALIZATION CAPACITY OF DIFFERENT FAMILY STRUCTURES

In Western countries, family structures are clearly becoming more diversified. Many observers feel that this process is so deeply rooted in the inexorable forces of modernization that it cannot be stopped. However, at the same time, there is a widespread sense of uncertainty as to which family model or models will predominate in the future, though both optimistic and pessimistic viewpoints have been expressed with regard to the consequences of the process.

The optimists' view is that this diversification represents the triumph of pluralism, individual freedom of choice and broader opportunities for the pursuit of happiness. The pessimists, on the other hand, draw attention to the trend towards social disintegration and anomie and to an exaggerated individualism that takes precedence over solidarity and emotional commitment, and argue that the new family structures threaten the well-being of adults and children alike, as well as the functioning of society as a whole. The attempt to address these issues has opened up a debate on the priority that should be given to values which often appear conflictive. Although debate is inevitable, the arguments it involves should not, at any rate, reflect purely ideological positions, and should be supported by empirical evidence in so far as possible. However, a severe information gap is apparent in this respect.

Despite its enormous potential, the information collected in censuses and household surveys sheds light on only a few isolated aspects of the new family models. The data-gathering tools used in most countries of the region do not investigate second and third marriages and unions, children who do not live with their biological parents or children who live with their mother (but without their father) in their grandparents' home. Correcting these shortcomings is the highest priority for research on the family.

The second priority is the conduct of a detailed study of how each of the new family structures carries out the functions which society seems to expect of it. This calls for careful analysis of the correlations between each family structure and infant mortality, children's nutrition levels and school performance, anti-social conduct among young people, the stability of couples and the probability that families will bear the responsibility of caring for the elderly. To orient the actions of public and private agents interested in creating the conditions families need to carry out functions essential to their members and to society, it is indispensable to clarify these linkages. The countries of the region must take the first step in that direction by decisively addressing the problem of families' "statistical invisibility". This can be done by gradually adapting national systems for gathering, processing and disseminating statistical data to the need for information on the family and for an integrated research programme on the relationship between family structures and functions in different socio-economic contexts.

Meanwhile, the scant information available on some countries of the region after 1980 indicates that the family structures that have spread fastest are those that seem to have weaker socialization capacity, at least with respect to children's performance in school. The socialization capacities of female-headed

households, consensual unions and legal marriages can be compared on the basis of research carried out by ECLAC.[9] Although these categories reflect only one aspect —perhaps not the most important one— of the process of diversification of family structure, their analysis can reveal significant correlations.

Table 1 illustrates changes in the structure of households with children under age 15 between 1980 and 1990 in urban areas of Argentina, Colombia, Uruguay and Venezuela. It appears that throughout this period, female-headed households and consensual unions were concentrated in lower-income strata. The proportion of households in these categories rose from 14% to 19% of all households with children under 15, and from 21% to 26% of all low-income households.

Table 2 shows similar trends in the case of children who reside in these types of households. As a result of this trend, by the end of the past decade about 20% of all children under 15 lived in nuclear families headed by women or consensual unions, while in low-income sectors this proportion reached 25%.

Table 3 presents information on changes in the proportion of young people between the ages of 15 and 24 living in a consensual union, compared to the total number of young people living with a partner. These changes anticipate possible trends in family structure, and in the proportion of children who will be affected by these variations, in the coming decades. The table shows an increase of about 63% in the proportion of households made up of young people in a consensual union. This increase is higher than that observed among all nuclear families with children (48%), and foreshadows changes in household structure as increases in the number of consensual unions among the young are reflected in households consisting of older adults.

Moreover, consensual unions are more common among young people with lower levels of education. In the early 1990s, approximately two out of every three young people who had not completed primary school were cohabiting in a consensual union, but only one out of every six young people with 10 or more years of education were in this situation. Also noteworthy is the marked increase (25%) in consensual unions among less educated youth. In Europe and the United States these unions are more common among better-educated young people and appear to represent an attempt to test the relationship, which might contribute to a more stable marriage and more responsible parenthood. In the case of Latin American countries, however, most consensual unions seem to reflect a set of circumstances associated with poverty, its reproduction and a lack of opportunity for social mobility, and therefore seem to indicate that young people (especially young men) who are not equipped to control the forces that will determine their personal destinies are reluctant to make commitments involving long-term economic responsibility.

The data in table 4 confirm that household income is a powerful determinant of children's school performance. However, they also show that within each income bracket, children do better or worse in school depending on the type of relationship that exists between their parents. Children born of parents who live together without having legalized their union have twice as much chance of being left behind in school as children of legally constituted unions, and those who reside in female-headed households are also at a disadvantage in terms of school performance.

It is worth noting, however, that while the negative association of consensual unions with children's school performance is present in all countries and income strata, it has been observed in several countries that when female heads of household have sufficient income, their children may perform better in school than children of legally constituted marriages.

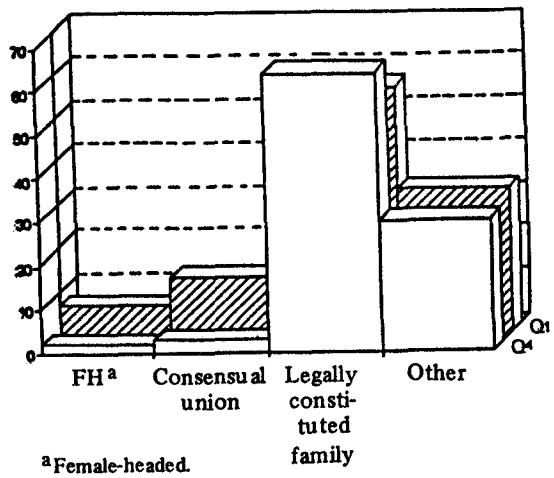
9 See ECLAC, *Panorama social de América Latina* (LC/G.1688), Santiago, Chile, October 1991.

Table 1
URBAN HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHILDREN UNDER 15[a]
(Percentages)

Household type	1980s			1990s		
	Total	A1[b]	Q4[c]	Total	Q1	Q4
Nuclear family	65.7	67.7	70.1	69.1	68.2	78.2
Female-headed	5.3	8.3	2.5	6.2	8.2	3.7
Consensual union	8.5	12.8	4.0	12.6	17.7	5.8
Legally constituted union	51.9	46.6	63.6	50.3	42.3	68.7
Other	34.3	32.3	29.9	30.9	31.8	21.8
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Source: ECLAC, on the basis of household surveys conducted in Argentina, Colombia, Uruguay and Venezuela.
[a] Unweighted averages.
[b] Lowest income quartile.
[c] Highest income quartile.

SITUATION IN THE 1980s



[a] Female-headed.

SITUATION IN THE 1990s

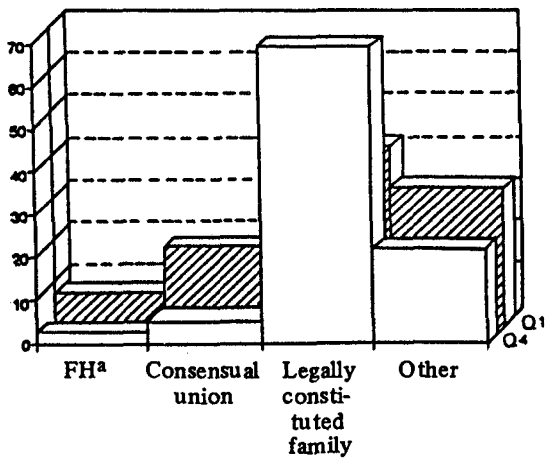
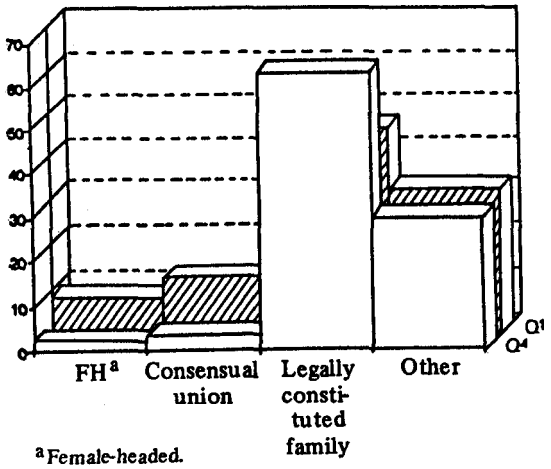


Table 2
CHILDREN UNDER 15 IN URBAN AREAS[a]
(Percentages)

Household type	1980s			1990s		
	Total	Q1[b]	Q4[c]	Total	Q1	Q4
Nuclear family	65.0	67.0	69.7	68.3	67.9	78.4
Female-headed	4.7	7.0	1.9	5.8	7.6	3.0
Consensual union	9.3	13.5	3.2	13.7	18.3	5.7
Legally constituted union	51.0	56.8	64.6	48.8	42.0	69.7
Other	35.0	33.0	30.3	31.7	32.1	21.6
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Source: ECLAC, on the basis of household surveys conducted in Argentina, Colombia, Uruguay and Venezuela.
[a] Unweighted averages.
[b] Lowest income quartile.
[c] Highest income quartile.

SITUATION IN THE 1980s



[a] Female-headed.

SITUATION IN THE 1990s

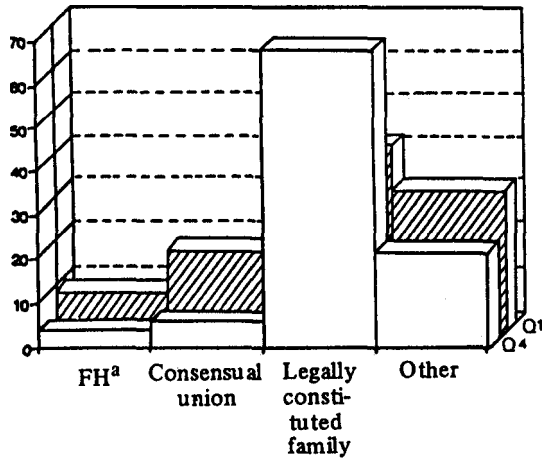


Table 3
YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 15-24 IN CONSENSUAL UNIONS IN URBAN AREAS[a]
(Percentages)

	Years of study			
	Percentage of all unions aged 15-24			
	0-5	6-9	10 or more	Total
1980s	42.5	22.0	6.2	22.7
1990s	67.0	40.3	16.1	37.1

Source: ECLAC, on the basis of household surveys conducted in Argentina, Colombia, Uruguay and Venezuela.
[a] Unweighted averages.

YOUNG PEOPLE IN CONSENSUAL UNIONS

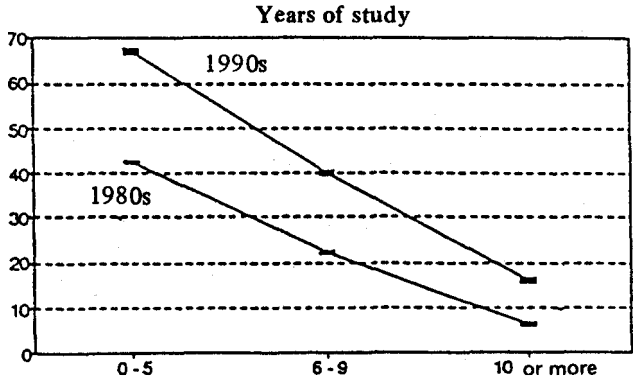
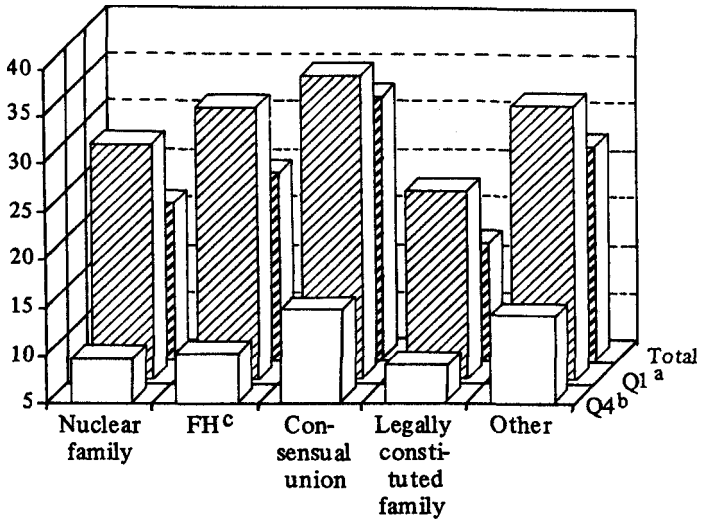


Table 4
URBAN CHILDREN AGED 7-14 LEFT BEHIND IN SCHOOL[a]
(Percentages)

Household type	Total	Q1[b]	Q4[c]
Nuclear family	21.4	29.6	9.3
Female-headed	24.5	33.5	9.9
Consensual union	32.6	36.9	14.5
Legally constituted union	17.2	24.8	8.8
Other	27.3	33.9	13.8

Source: ECLAC, on the basis of household surveys conducted in Argentina, Colombia, Uruguay and Venezuela.
[a] Unweighted averages.
[b] Lowest income quartile.
[c] Highest income quartile.

CHILDREN LEFT BEHIND IN SCHOOL



[a] Lowest income quartile.
[b] Highest income quartile.
[c] Female-headed.

As indicated above, consensual unions are increasingly common. The few existing studies on the subject indicate that these unions are concentrated among persons at lower socio-economic levels; that they are significantly more unstable than formal marriages;[10] that they reflect the fact that women, who are likely to prefer a legal union, have less bargaining power than men;[11] and that households where the parents are living in a consensual union and those headed by women with low incomes have less socialization capacity than legally constituted marriages, and this is reflected in the school performance of the children (see table 4).[12]

E. NECESSARY CONDITIONS FOR THE FORMATION AND CONSOLIDATION OF A FAMILY

No analytical effort has yet been made to identify the necessary conditions for forming and consolidating family structures which are able to protect the well-being of their members and, in turn, to contribute to equitable and democratic development. These functions may be performed by various kinds of families, regardless of their organization, as long as there is some type of family "agenda".

A family agenda is a plan for a shared life, which sets forth goals and orders priorities for achieving them. The comparative advantage of the family as an institution lies in its primary solidarity. A family agenda potentiates this resource and channels it towards the attainment of collective goals. In addition, solidarity and collective achievements have a synergistic effect; the shared efforts and goal orientation strengthen the familial social fabric. When this fabric is strong, the economic, social and cultural opportunities of each member of the family are maximized; when it is weak, the family lacks the capacity to stimulate its members to make use of existing opportunities or to find and adequately utilize the resources offered by the State or public welfare organizations.

In order for the familial fabric to withstand and respond to changes in the sociocultural and economic environment, family relations must be democratic; otherwise, there can be no dynamic adjustment to the external or internal demands on its members.

What are the main factors that must be taken into account in formulating policies to create favourable conditions for elaborating family agendas with the above-mentioned characteristics? These policies should be built around four pivotal factors: families' access to material resources, availability of basic services, opportunities for social mobility and a democratic family structure.

1. Minimal material conditions for family consolidation

Poverty limits the possibilities of forming a strong, stable family. It is very difficult to formulate and sustain a collective plan and cope with destructive forces when family members are hardly able to determine their own destinies and when the day-to-day struggle for survival absorbs all their energies, especially when

10 Sonalde Desai, "Family structure and child nutrition in Latin America and West Africa", *Population and Development Review*, vol. 18, No. 4, December 1992. See also Norsen Goldman, "Dissolution of first unions in Colombia, Panama and Peru", *Demography*, vol. 18, No. 4, November 1981. Goldman finds that, in Colombia, Panama and Peru, consensual unions are several times more likely to break up than legal marriages (p. 659).

11 Rao Vijayendra and Margaret E. Green, *Marital Instability, Inter-spouse Bargaining and their Implication for Fertility in Brazil*, 1991, cited in Sonalde Desai, op. cit.

12 A recent study shows that, regardless of their socio-economic level, children living in households where the family head has a consensual union show lower nutritional indicators than children of married parents (Desai, p. 710). The author of the research states that, since men feel that consensual unions are less stable, their commitment to this type of relationship is weaker, and hence they devote less time and money to maintaining the home and caring for the children.

poverty occurs in the midst of images of opulence, as in the case of the region's cities. Such images, which invade most homes through the television screen, mould the aspirations of children and youth, and make it a much more arduous and complex task to adapt their goals and priorities to the family's income. The discrepancy between the aspirations fomented by these messages and the nuclear family's material means to satisfy them is a constant source of frustration, and weakens the familial fabric.

In addition, the lack of a shared agenda reduces the possibilities of overcoming poverty, since family disintegration and poverty go hand in hand in a downward spiral. Constantly having to cope with difficulties in trying to meet the basic needs of their members gives families a sense of helplessness and dependence on external factors, and engenders fatalistic, apathetic attitudes. All this reduces the family's ability to marshal its own forces and gain some control over outside influences. Poverty reduction policies must therefore provide access to resources and services and, at the same time, create conditions to allow passive families to become more active. To achieve that goal, policies must take advantage of the family's social capacity —i.e., its ties of solidarity— to establish relationships that enable families to make optimal use of existing opportunities. It is not realistic to regard poor families as agents of development if measures are not designed to activate their social capacity.

2. Access to support services

The family's ability to develop and put into practice a collective agenda also depends on the type of external support services to which its members have access. These resources include, for example, information to help promote more responsible sexual behaviour —which would give parents more control over the number and spacing of children— or child care facilities, which represent crucially important services for working parents and, in particular, for mothers who are the sole source of support for their households.[13]

3. Opportunities for social mobility

Opportunities for social mobility are another factor in determining whether family agendas are feasible. Open societies create the necessary conditions for enabling their members to participate in the achievement of concrete objectives, and this generates a positive synergy that stimulates new efforts and the establishment of new goals. Social mobility and the perception that goals are attainable are important incentives for collective efforts to reach them. On the other hand, the lack of incentives can provoke reactions of despair, fatalism and "existential gloom".[14]

The perception of opportunities for social mobility is based on a comparison between the permeability of the social structure and the type of goals which individuals and families set for themselves. The experience of the 1980s was especially dramatic in the region, since the mass media kept sending out messages that stimulated the desire for consumption in all social classes, even as avenues of social mobility were being closed. At the same time, the unevenness in the quality of education available to children and youth of different social strata became more marked. In view of the growing recognition of the contribution of human resources to development, the degree of permeability of a society is increasingly defined by the degree to which all its members have access to the codes of modernity, regardless of their

13 Several examples of this type of situation are presented in studies done in Brazil and included in A. Fausto and R. Cervini (eds.), *O trabalho e a rua: crianças e adolescentes no Brasil urbano dos anos 80*, São Paulo, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) / Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences (FLACSO), 1991.

14 In view of this situation, comparative research should be conducted on the various forms of family integration in environments that offer differing possibilities for social mobility.

social or ethnic origin. Thus, the existence of an equitable education system —i.e., one that is based on the recognition of the different socialization capacities of the various social strata and that concentrates its resources where these capacities are weakest— can be of considerable help in stimulating or reinforcing family agendas. Even among the poorest families, the expectation that their offspring may be able to achieve a better standard of living encourages parents to try harder to make that future possible.

4. Democratization of intrafamily relations

One of the bases for consolidating family agendas is the democratization of domestic relations. This is because the stability of the ties of solidarity among family members largely depends on the consistency between rights and obligations, and on the degree of consideration and respect which family members enjoy both within and outside the home. The relationship between family and society has been markedly affected in recent decades by the growing incompatibility between the traditional family model and the gradual incorporation of married women or women living in other types of union into the labour market, a process which accelerated with the economic crisis. These inconsistencies require a profound change in gender relations, which should be established on the basis of a more equitable distribution of domestic rights and responsibilities.

Intergenerational relations within families are also being affected by the speed of the changes taking place and, in particular, by the transformation of young people's outlook on life. On the one hand, the growing requirements of the labour market force young people to prolong their studies, and this postpones their entry into the workplace and extends their economic dependence on their parents. On the other hand, the rapidity of change, the prolongation of studies and exposure to the mass media (which compete with families as agents of socialization) help to create youth subcultures which institutionalize the "generation gap". This combination of greater economic dependence and more cultural autonomy is the core of the domestic friction that exists between youth and adults. A democratic family atmosphere, in which mutual rights and obligations are recognized, can keep these tensions from turning into open conflicts.

These considerations suggest the more general issue of the influence of cultural factors on family integration. Although this topic has aroused a great deal of interest, little is known about the relative influence of these factors and the characteristics of the social support mechanisms (legislation, mass media, education system, community or kinship networks) which promote respect for values and norms and punish deviations from them. Any progress made in this field will require more thoroughgoing studies on at least two value-related subjects. First, the values underlying the predominant images of the domestic division of labour, which affect attitudes towards the relation between the sexes, need to be examined. It seems obvious that the flexibility needed to maintain family cohesion in a constantly changing world, where opportunities for men and women are increasingly similar, cannot be based on criteria of solidarity whose underlying premise is the gender-based division of labour as an organizing principle of the family. Second, more research must be done on how the requirements of family solidarity can be reconciled with the primacy of individualism and personal fulfilment stressed by the consumer society.

F. SOME THOUGHTS ON FAMILY POLICY

In conclusion, some considerations on the desirable characteristics of public actions targeting families are presented below. These comments deal with the limits between the private and public domains;

whether such measures would contribute to greater family autonomy; and the concrete meaning of "family policy".

The initiatives of public and private agencies concerning the family will have to move carefully, according to Jelin, "along the uncertain, unstable path"[15] of the tension between respect for privacy and the public responsibilities of those agencies. Actually, even more than in other areas of social policy, it would seem preferable in this field to limit direct intervention to extreme cases in which the general well-being or the human rights of family members are seriously jeopardized. Efforts in this area should focus, instead, on creating favourable conditions in which families can potentiate and combine their resources and channel them towards the formulation of a collective agenda in which the rights of all those involved are respected.

In this context, family policy-makers are interested in clarifying under what conditions social benefits may inhibit, rather than stimulate, the emergence and consolidation of family agendas. There are those who feel that this inhibiting effect may result from policies which channel benefits mainly towards families in danger of falling apart, but which do not provide incentives for overcoming difficulties through joint efforts that would enable each family member to associate such solidarity with the achievement of greater collective well-being.

Strictly speaking, family policy —beyond family-related legislation, which defines the rights of family members and regulates the formation, organization and dissolution of families— could be regarded, on the one hand, as an aspect of overall social policy and a necessary factor in the effectiveness of the latter,[16] and, on the other, as an element of normative orientation towards strengthening the family that should always be present in the design of public policies.

For example, a nutrition policy that takes into account the findings of recent research on the differential allocation of resources within families would recognize that women devote a higher proportion of their income —or the money available to them— to buying food. Thus, in order to maximize the benefits of a nutritional subsidy, it would seem more reasonable to give it to the mother, not the father. This appears to indicate that a sectoral policy will be more effective if it takes family dynamics into account. However, a distinction must be drawn between short- and long-term effects. Strengthening the socialization capacity of families to ensure that children grow up in a family environment that fosters their development would be considered a long-term effect. This consideration is important because, in the absence of other corrective measures, a public policy that grants nutritional subsidies to mothers may have the undesirable effect of reinforcing the pattern of differential income allocation by men and women, and may weaken the family structure in the long run. On the other hand, a policy which recognizes the need to strengthen the family's socialization capacity would promote better child nutrition and, at the same time, encourage parents to adopt more democratic ways of deciding how family income will be spent.

Policies to raise the productivity of family micro-enterprises meet the dual objective of augmenting the effectiveness of sectoral policies and strengthening family structures, to the extent that, as a result of the functioning of such enterprises, family members learn to associate the attainment of economic goals with the joining together of individual efforts in solidarity. These enterprises may become a mechanism for bolstering family agendas by serving as a means of achieving collective economic goals which

15 See chapter II.

16 Carlos Eroles, *Cuestiones actuales de familia*, Buenos Aires, National Commission on Family-related and Population Policies, Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, 1989, p. 82.

largely depend on the effective combination of individual efforts. Social benefits linked to employment (child-care centres, parental leave, family allowances, etc.) should take into account their potential effect on the division of domestic tasks between men and women as an organizing principle of the family. The same is true of educational, housing, health care and social security policies and those dealing with the mass media. In any case, the important thing is to recognize that all measures designed to enhance people's quality of life should be channelled through the family, and that their effectiveness depends on whether they contribute to a workable family agenda that is compatible with the demands which society places on each of its members.

Chapter II

INTRAFAMILY RELATIONS IN LATIN AMERICA

A. BACKGROUND

Since the post-war period, the key issues in Latin America have been economic development, political stability, population growth and urbanization. Social and cultural aspects have been seen as "obstacles" or as "consequences", but rarely as phenomena with their own effects on the major development challenges.

The incorporation of the institution of the family into the analysis of the region's main social, economic and political processes —and even taking into account the micro-social level and everyday life— are the result of a number of changes which have taken place in the past two decades, including, first of all, the crisis that occurred in the development paradigm when social practices began to emerge which could not be fully grasped with the analytical tools of that paradigm. For example, in order to understand the "informal sector", it is not enough to ascertain the percentage of independent workers in the economically active population; research must be done on how, within a family unit, the process of integration into production is combined with the satisfaction of consumption and reproduction needs. The analytical logic that had been applied to peasant units —where the processes of production and reproduction are permanently interconnected— had to be extended to urban areas. At that point, household organization became an object of study, since it linked the social processes of ***production*** and ***reproduction***.

Second, the impact of the debates and discussions stemming from international feminism is beginning to be felt in the region. The recognition of women's "invisible" work in the domestic domain led to its explicit incorporation into analytical models, both in debates on the cost of reproducing the labour force and in the study of the factors that determine the supply of female workers in labour markets. Symbolically and culturally, the analysis of the notions of ***public*** and ***private*** from the feminist viewpoint became a key axis for rethinking the division of labour and of power domains according to gender.

Third, there are new social phenomena that need to be understood: the increase in the number of households consisting of a woman and her children without the permanent presence of a man; the increase in the percentage of marriages that end in divorce; the gradual increase in the elderly population, with the concomitant problem of deciding who should take responsibility for supporting them; and the increase in the proportion of women in the labour force and its effects on family organization. These trends have implications for household organization and the restructuring of co-residence bonds and kinship-based obligations.

These realities, magnified in times of crisis like the present one, encourage research and analysis of the underlying social processes, thus contributing to the renewal of studies on the family.

The central issues in the analysis of the family are the relationship between the social processes of production and reproduction; kinship and the family; and the differentiation between private and public. These issues are described separately below:

a) **The relationship between the social processes of production and reproduction.** While the emphasis of economic analysis —and, for a long time, of sociological and anthropological analysis as well— used to be placed on the social processes of production, the systematic, explicit inclusion of reproduction helps to close the cycle of the economic process. After all, social production is complemented by the distribution and consumption of what is produced, and consumption takes place primarily within families and households. Furthermore, unless the agents of production reproduce themselves —both in the sense of reproducing new generations of people to replace the previous ones, and of reproducing working capacity through the daily maintenance of people— the whole cycle is interrupted. The questions of what tasks are required in this regard, who will carry them out and which group will socialize its resources in order to perform these tasks are all bound up with domestic organization in everyday social life.

b) **Kinship and the family** is the classic focus of anthropology. Hypotheses concerning modernization seemed to indicate that the nuclear family was becoming the norm. In Latin America, however, recent studies have highlighted the importance and vitality of extended kinship networks, even if they do not involve co-residence. At the same time, the basic dimensions of the family, the legitimate channelling of sexuality and procreation and the establishment of filial bonds have undergone significant transformations, caused by the increase in divorce and the liberalization of sexual practices. A fresh look should therefore be taken at kinship, family, residence patterns and domesticity.

c) **Differentiation between private and public.** Since the industrial revolution, during which the separation between "home" and "work" and between the life environment and production space took place, a differentiation has emerged, geared towards separating women's and men's spheres of action into those of power and emotional life. The "exit" of women from the home to the public world and the "entry" of social controls into the private domain are phenomena that have only recently been acknowledged, even though, in practice, they have existed for a long time.

From the outset, it is important to point out the enormous **diversity** of family situations to be found in the region's urban social reality. This diversity and heterogeneity reflect tensions inherent in the institution of the family, which encompass everything from the most instrumental aspects linked to demands of everyday maintenance to the need for love and affection, privacy and personal security.

B. CHANGES IN SOCIAL ORGANIZATION: URBANIZATION, INDUSTRIALIZATION AND FAMILY RELATIONS

In Latin America, the rapidity of the urbanization process and of the growth of large metropolitan areas since the 1930s, which gained momentum in the post-war years, is well known. Its relationship to the organization of the family —both the impact of urbanization and the role of family networks in the urbanization process itself— is a phenomenon that requires comment and attention.

A number of significant processes in urban family organization are discussed below: 1) the role of kinship networks in migratory processes; 2) the relationship between household/family organization, the labour market and social networks;

and 3) changes in family organization, as reflected in current socio-demographic trends such as declining fertility rates; rising divorce and separation rates, with new patterns of household and family formation; increased numbers of one-person and female-headed households; and population ageing and a higher percentage of elderly persons, which imply changes in the composition of households (more one-person and three-generational households).

1. Rural-to-urban migration and kinship networks

The process of urban growth since the early 1930s was related to the proliferation of internal migratory flows in the region. In the 1930s and 1940s, migration to cities was numerically small. The first migrants to arrive in cities and towns, the "pioneers", were probably alone, with no support networks in the city. Beginning in the 1950s, migration became a more massive phenomenon. The migrants who arrived later could then benefit from the presence of previous migrants, who served as veritable support networks in the process.

What purpose do these networks serve? They provide the human context of social relations in the migratory experience. Doubtless they have an instrumental value: migrants are not isolated beings who arrive in an unknown world. The contents of the network and the type of help vary according to social class: since time immemorial, the provincial upper classes have sent their children to study in the capital cities, relying on kinship networks to provide them with a residence and ensure their daily maintenance. Greater access to intermediate and higher education, basically in the larger cities from the 1950s onward, only served to expand the social sector that used this form of kinship organization typical of the middle and upper classes.

In the less well-off classes, networks ensure that migrants, on arriving in the city, will have a house where they can spend the first few nights and contacts that will facilitate their relatively smooth integration into the urban labour market. In more global terms, the presence of these channels of communication between the areas of origin and the cities facilitates the integration of domestic units in the city and in the country into a single network, with migratory flows in both directions and remittances of money and goods, all of which form part of a shared strategy between those who remain in the country and urban dwellers.

Migration frequently occurs in the social context of vertical, or even servile, networks based on clientage. This arrangement, which was much more common in the 1930s and 1940s, is still evident in the migration of women for urban domestic service. Currently, young women are recruited on the basis of ties of family dependence. The power of the female "boss" over the domestic employee goes beyond the work relationship, since the former assumes responsibility for "taking care" of the latter on behalf of her family of origin. This ensures the domestic employee's security, but deprives her of freedom of movement in the city.

Until the 1950s, in the context of large migratory flows and urban expansion, the daily life of migrants was centred on adapting to urban life; i.e., finding a place to live and helping the network of relatives and family members in the migratory process. The growth of urban employment opportunities for men gave rise to a marked sexual division of labour, with women in charge of reproductive tasks and men in the labour market. The children, in turn, had to contribute as best they could to supporting the family.

In a second phase, which began in the 1960s, the situation changed. Migration ceased to be the engine of urban growth and significant changes occurred in the labour market. As men's job and income-earning opportunities shrank and the complexion of the job market changed (more services, more subcontracted industrial work and outwork, lower relative wages), adult women entered the labour market *en masse*, and changes in

domestic organization began to be visible. The 1980s and the impact of the crisis also generated new kinds of collective responses, including the establishment of governmental and non-governmental community service organizations.

2. Family, labour market and mutual support networks

Urbanization and industrialization involve a separation between the family home and the workplace. In recent years, this trend has shown some signs of reversing itself: the impoverishment and "deproletarianization" that went along with the crisis of the 1980s led to an increase in outwork and family-run micro-enterprises. Both processes were accompanied by a basic change in women's social position.

Over the course of the twentieth century, but especially in the past two decades, women's place in urban society has changed from the traditional model of the woman who, in all social classes, prepares to become a mother/home-maker/wife (although, on the side, she may engage in some sort of paid productive work), and who is dependent on men —first her father, then her husband. Today, whether by choice or circumstance, women are exercising more economic and domestic autonomy.

In the 1930s, few women in Latin American cities had any prospect other than to live shackled to their families: young women and single women to their families of origin; married women to their families of procreation. In both cases, the female world was necessarily the domestic, private world. The "street", for women, was synonymous with prostitution and vice. It should be recalled that even the anarchist and socialist movements of the turn of the century considered that women's basic role was to bring up future revolutionaries. And if, because of living or class conditions, women had to work in factories, this was hardly viewed as a desirable situation. The working woman had to be protected; her social situation had to be improved so that she would no longer have to work. The situation was slightly different in the middle classes in the 1930s, when there emerged a group of educated women who demanded their civil and social rights. Without a doubt, however, they represented a minority.

Society has changed a great deal since then. The increase from the low levels of participation of urban women in the labour force in the 1930s has been significant, although levels of participation and rates of change vary widely from one country to another. The 1960s marked the beginning of a time of major change in the region, which included an increase in the participation of not only young, single women, but also married women and married women with children. This change triggered a change in the overall organization of everyday life. The new patterns of women's integration into the labour market are, in fact, one of the manifestations of the profound transformation of the family.

Thus, expanded access to education on a massive scale, especially in urban areas, meant that women had access to literacy, secondary school and higher education. As educated women came to participate in the labour market to a greater degree, there was a visible increase in employment among middle-class women who, in former times, would have been housewives. A recent ECLAC study noted the following with respect to this phenomenon:

> Women have been the main source of the expansion and multiplication of qualified jobs and income within the non-manual sector.... There are indications, however, that nearly 80% of urban women in non-manual employment are not heads of household, but rather that many are married and are from households belonging to the upper half of urban society. Nearly one third of upper-class households rely on the combined incomes of husband and wife to maintain their standard of living (ECLAC, 1986b, p. 65).

This trend has had a significant impact on how daily life is organized. In the middle classes, young women study and, as a result, make different decisions about marriage; housewives/mothers with secondary and higher education hold part-time jobs or re-enter the labour market when their children are of school age.

There are also changes (and significant continuity, too) in the position of working-class women. Women in urban areas are still most commonly employed as domestic helpers, with all the disadvantages that such jobs entail. Moreover, for women in both middle-class and working-class strata —although the latter are particularly affected— the gender-based division of labour within the home is slow to change. Women are still responsible for household chores and child care, regardless of their work situation. Help, whether paid or unpaid, is always provided by and among women. In fact, the increase in women's rates of participation from 1960 onward was concentrated among women between 20 and 30 years of age, who have the heaviest burden of housework; the combination of responsibilities inside and outside the home means that these women are tremendously overworked.

Women's growing role in managing daily crisis situations is manifested in the changing composition of domestic units. The steady increase in the percentage of female-headed households in the region and in the world is a recognized fact. In the past, such women were predominantly widows. In recent decades, changing patterns of family formation, especially as concerns marriage and separation, have also had an effect. While the higher divorce rate may reflect greater autonomy and freedom in the case of professional and middle-class women, the prevalent situation in the working classes is that the man often abandons his family when he finds he cannot solve his employment problems in the labour market. In those conditions, separation and male abandonment almost invariably leave women and children in extreme poverty. Although the association between poverty and female-headed households is well known, no reliable longitudinal data are available for determining whether this implies a trend towards the **feminization of poverty**.

These circumstances are aggravated by the fact that women in charge of reproductive tasks also bore the brunt of the State and public-service crisis of the 1980s. Long waits in hospitals for medical care or even the inaccessibility of such services, together with the deterioration or absence of services in the home or neighbourhood, had to be compensated for by increasing domestic activity and stepping up the informal help provided by women. Some studies point out that in these extreme situations women could count on more help and protection from their male blood relatives, especially fathers, brothers and young sons, than from their companions or husbands.

In the search for alternative solutions to everyday emergencies, women have moved outside the domestic domain and into the public, forming groups to demand their rights and organizing soup kitchens, dining halls or other collective activities. These experiences imply a change in the way the daily tasks of maintenance and reproduction are carried out, which has *transformed the domestic environment* and laid the groundwork for women's presence in collective movements to demand services. The fact that women have moved out into the public arena because they have been unable to satisfy their maintenance and reproductive needs in the domestic and family domain is compelling proof of the link between reproduction in that domain and macro-social processes of change.

Indeed, the urban domestic unit, as an organization charged with the daily tasks of maintenance and reproduction, is an integral part of a broader mutual support system, composed of kinship and neighbourhood networks. These networks are activated and maintained by women/housewives, even though they minister to the needs of all members of the family and the neighbourhood. Studies on

this topic show that such integration into horizontal mutual assistance networks functions on an everyday level and acts as an informal social welfare system that people can turn to in emergency situations: illness and death, loss of a job, housing crises, protection against violence, etc. Although few longitudinal studies are available on the subject, this system appears to represent a stable anchor in the structuring of urban social relations in daily life, and its importance grows as it involves more people (depending on the length of time they have lived in the city or neighbourhood) and as alternative resources for meeting everyday needs become scarce for reasons such as economic crises, recessions or extreme poverty.

The role of vertical relations and clientage in the organization of daily reproduction is a different phenomenon. In these cases, reciprocity is based on an attempt by the dominant classes to be manipulative and to do favours to obtain political support, either through informal mechanisms or through religious or political organizations in working-class neighbourhoods. In this case, the members and beneficiaries of the networks tend to be men, in their dual role as actors in the political domain and authority figures in their families.

What these networks show is the considerable historical continuity of the cultural tradition of **family-centredness**, which is especially strong in the countries that were once Spanish colonies. Secularization may have extended the role of access to public services in solving some everyday problems. It may also have made more room for choice in social relations, in particular the bonds of friendship in the middle classes. None the less, especially in the working classes, *kinship networks* continue to be more reliable than formal mechanisms. They function as resources for problem-solving in daily life when there is no other alternative, or when the alternatives are insufficient or ineffectual. This accounts for their renewed vigour in times of economic crisis and reduced State services.

Kinship and informal relations are important not only for the working class. They are also fundamental to the thinking of the middle and upper classes. In the latter, where more resources are available, kinship has been and continues to be one of the basic criteria for organizing economic activity.

It should be pointed out, however, that not all city dwellers are deeply involved in networks of informal relations and that such networks are not always stable and predictable. Although there is no systematic, complete evidence, it seems that the situations of most extreme poverty and uncertainty are precisely those associated with the absence of networks that provide a sense of belonging. Households headed by women, especially single mothers rejected by their relatives, are extreme examples of this situation. Mutual support networks, moreover, cannot compensate for the absence or insufficiency of State welfare services. Networks may well become strengthened in such situations, but they may also come apart when the burden of demand is too great for the network's material and human resources.

3. Family and household structure

Some socio-demographic trends have had a major impact on changes in the family during the twentieth century. First, life expectancy has increased. This trend has been very significant, since it has compounded the effect of decreased fertility by lengthening the lives of individuals in the adult and elderly phases. Since the age at which the first union is formed has not changed significantly, what has happened is that the *potential duration of marriage* has increased. It used to be that widowhood was the most common means of breaking the marital bond. As life expectancy increased, the possibility that marriage would end in divorce or separation also increased. In turn, the difference between the sexes in terms of life expectancy means that widowhood is a more common

phenomenon among women than among men. In fact, the situation of men and women is very different where marriage is concerned; there are always many more widows and divorcees than there are widowers and divorced men, and there is a clear upward trend in their number. What comes into play here is not only the difference between the sexes in terms of life expectancy but also the cultural model according to which the male partner in a couple is generally older than the female. As women age, the likelihood that they will be left alone without their spouse increases. This idea is reflected in the title of a study on the subject, ***Pirâmide da solidão?*** (Berquó, 1986).

Second, fertility rates have declined as a result of the decrease in the number of household members. Lower fertility also means that the population is ageing and that the proportion of adult and elderly persons is growing; consequently, the number of younger persons forming households will tend to decline and the number of households composed of or including older persons will increase. Traditionally, elderly people —most of whom were widows— lived with one of their daughters or sons and the daughter's or son's family of procreation, in a three-generational household. Increasingly, this pattern of co-residence has been supplemented by other forms such as elderly couples, one-person households and "non-nuclear" households (elderly sisters living together, for example).

The increase in the number of one-person households in urban areas is attributable in part to the process of population ageing and can be expected to continue in the future. It also reflects other social trends, although they have not been very widespread thus far. The growing autonomy of young persons leads them to try to establish their own residence, separate from their parents, either independently of the process of forming a couple or in order to cohabit before marriage. This trend is incipient, and occurs only in the middle and upper classes, given the economic constraints involved. Moreover, in the prevailing gender culture, it is more common among men than among women.

Third, the effect of crises, old and new, on the formation of households must be scrutinized. When urban residences are expensive and there are no social policies on housing, young couples tend to postpone setting up house or decide to live with their parents. Often, this arrangement is not reflected in censuses and surveys, making it appear that the trend towards nuclear households has continued. In working-class neighbourhoods, relatives commonly share a site, living in relatively independent housing units instead of in the same household, but sharing many aspects of daily life.

These trends constitute a framework for understanding two important phenomena which are on the agenda of social policies and should be analysed: the increase in the divorce and separation rate and the rise in the number of female-headed households.

The increase in divorces and separations should be examined in the context of complex sociocultural processes linked to the process of individuation. The modern values of personal autonomy, free choice of a partner based on romantic love and the growing social expectation of being able to act on one's feelings and emotions are becoming more widespread; the counterpart of these values is the freedom to sever ties when there is no more love, when the personal cost of a stormy life together crosses a certain threshold. The growing incorporation of women into the labour force, which affords them a degree of economic autonomy, enables them to break conflictual ties based on gender domination. Many women previously had no escape from troubled marital situations: separation carried a strong social stigma and victimization of women, while their lack of economic independence strengthened the institution of marriage. The shift towards greater gender equity in the cultural models that govern couples' relations is, in

fact, associated with a greater degree of freedom.

The issue is more complex in poorer social strata, since the man or father frequently abandons his family as a result of labour-market crises and his loss of status as the family's financial provider. These same men, however, sometimes act as providers and/or protectors of women and children who are blood relatives, such as their mothers or sisters (Fonseca, 1991). The solution for the future does not lie in returning to traditional gender roles, but rather in promoting changes in gender relations within the family.

The increase in the number of women living alone with children is a transitional phenomenon in two senses: in terms of women's lives, this situation may be part of a transition to the formation of a new couple; in the larger historical sense, it represents a transition to new kinds of families that are more open and further removed from the full-fledged nuclear model. Not all women who live alone with children are heads of household. Often, they share the house with other relatives (parents or siblings, for example). Thus, they represent a relatively small proportion of female heads of household (25% to 30%). In view of the double demand placed on women —as economic providers for their children and as mothers-housewives— such family units are especially vulnerable to uncertainty and risk.

Actually, as a cultural model, the nuclear family developed in a very peculiar way: though idealized as the norm, and assumed to be "normal" by educational and health institutions, the nuclear family of mother, father and children is combined in the region with a strong **family-centred** ideology in which blood relationship and kinship are the basic criteria that determine responsibilities and obligations towards others. Little is known about the extent of conflicts that arise from the tension between the demands of the nuclear family and the obligations rooted in kinship ties, especially with the family of origin.

C. SOLIDARITY AND CONFLICT IN INTRAFAMILY RELATIONS: PATRIARCHAL AUTHORITY AND INDIVIDUATION PROCESSES

The family unit is not an undifferentiated group of individuals who share activities related to its maintenance. It is a social organization, a microcosm of relations of production, reproduction and distribution, with a power structure and strong ideological and affective components that bind the organization together and help it to endure and reproduce, but that also include structural bases of conflict and struggle. There are collective tasks and interests, but members have their own interests related to their place in the production and reproduction processes inside and outside the household.

The basic principles of the family's internal organization reflect differentiations by ***age, gender*** and ***kinship***. In the socio-political and ideological context of patriarchal capitalist societies, children are subordinate to their parents, to whom they owe respect and obedience, manifested in the obligation to collaborate and participate in tasks for the common good, as defined and maintained by parental authority. Over the last few centuries, the Western world has witnessed marked processes of individuation on the part of offspring and a breakdown of patriarchal authority. In terms of intergenerational relations, the rise in educational levels entails longer economic dependence, while at the same time giving greater cultural autonomy to youth. Rural-to-urban migration, which mainly involves young people, leads to the separation and often the autonomy of youth with respect to their family of origin.

Given the process of growing autonomy among youth and the loss of patriarchal authority, intergenerational confrontations can occur relatively early in the life cycle in relation to the children's contribution to domestic work, parents' demands that they seek employment to help maintain the family, decisions on

whether the resources thus obtained belong to the individual or the family, or the degree of freedom and autonomy in the use of leisure time (where the difference between male and female adolescents is still enormous). Intergenerational confrontation also occurs in relation to consumption, especially in terms of pressure from adolescents to obtain a series of goods —from fashionable clothes to electronic items— demanded by youth culture. In the household, these pressures lead to conflicts about consumption priorities and the distribution of benefits.

Historically, the process of achieving autonomy and asserting individual interests took place more between generations —youth opposed to their parents— than between the sexes. The patriarchal model began to break down when the material basis of subsistence ceased to be land ownership, which was passed by inheritance from parents to children, and became the sale of labour in the market-place, where the relevant unit is the individual, not the family. For women, the individuation process and the recognition of their own interests and rights as opposed to those of the male head of household is much more recent. Thus, the issue of the division of labour and the struggle for power between the sexes has appeared only in recent years in the literature on domestic work, the subordination of women and the social organization of reproduction.

In household dynamics between the sexes, the lines of conflict are drawn around the issue of domestic responsibility, as women participate more in the workforce. Time-use studies clearly show that women carry a heavier burden, and this is becoming an issue of feminist struggle and demands, both in the privacy of each family and in social movements. With respect to distribution, however, mothers seem to be maintaining their position of "defenders of the common good" in the collective domestic environment, against the attacks of the other members of the unit. The current situation in Latin America is ambiguous. On the one hand, women demand recognition of their individuality as persons. At the same time, women continue to be —and recognize themselves as— the mainstay of the family, based on their role as wives and mothers.

1. Domestic violence: public intervention in the private sphere

The family is a paradoxical space. On the one hand, it is a place of affection and intimacy; on the other, it is the prime setting of violence, but violence between members of the same family is something which is not mentioned. It is secret and shameful; it escapes public knowledge. The only witnesses are the family members, who keep silent either to preserve the family image or for fear of reprisals. Only the most obvious cases are detected: the discovery of a cadaver, marks from blows. The family is at once the place of love and violence. In general, it is estimated that between a quarter and a third of all homicides are domestic killings, where one member of a family kills another (Chesnais, 1992).

This phenomenon is beginning to come out into the open. Even though its very nature implies that there are no reliable aggregate data, a few figures (Carrillo, 1991, p. 180) are sufficient to illustrate it:

- A Mexican non-governmental organization estimated that violence between spouses takes place in at least 70% of Mexican families, although it is not reported in most cases.
- A survey taken in Santiago, Chile, showed that 80% of the women interviewed admitted they were victims of violence in their households.
- In Nicaragua, 44% of the men surveyed admitted that they hit their wife or girlfriend on a regular basis.

— A study of child prostitution in Cochabamba, Bolivia, showed that 79% of the girls surveyed said they became prostitutes because of economic necessity after fleeing from violent households or after having been victims of incest or rape by male family members.

Obviously, family violence is gender-related; the victims are women in conjugal relationships and girls (and, to a lesser extent, boys) in the filial relationship. Lately, however, cases of family violence against elderly members have begun to be made known publicly.

There is a growing body of research that seeks to understand and explain this phenomenon in order to help prevent and eliminate it. Violence is undoubtedly a form of learned behaviour that can be changed; it is rooted in the unequal relations between men and women, the sexual hierarchy and the expression of masculinity through domination of women. In other words, it occurs in traditional patriarchal family organization, where the power of the man is manifested in a variety of ways, even physical violence, which is taken to be *natural* in traditional gender relations. Evidence indicates that most men who beat and women who are beaten are from violent families. Often, they see domestic violence as something *natural*. The domestic isolation of women in the home, marriages contracted before women develop a sense of their autonomy and the family as the only institution that shapes the identity of women are all factors that help to reproduce this phenomenon. The entry of women into the workforce, changes in their status and the visibility and growing social awareness of the problem all point in the opposite direction, towards a change in the family situation.

However, this change is not as rapid as might be expected, owing to the modernization process itself. Indeed, patriarchal domination is called into question by urbanization and modernization, as reflected by the change in women's social position, which makes men's place less clear and erodes the bases of their authority. Accordingly, some men react by trying to impose their will on other members of the family in an authoritarian and violent fashion. Evidence shows that domestic violence is more common in families where working women have become the main source of income for supporting the family on a daily basis.

At the institutional level, the juridical and cultural structure of society erects barriers to State intervention in the "private" sphere of the family. In fact, the dominant paradigm of human rights draws a basic distinction: since individuals are thought to have civil and political rights in *public* life, violations of those rights in the *private* sphere of family relations are not considered as such. Unlike structures of political domination and inequality among men, male domination of women is expressed socially and economically —often in private contexts, defined as *family life*— and involves no explicit act of the State. In practice, it can be said that the dichotomy between the public and private spheres distorts women's civil rights. At the same time, the family's right to privacy is used as a justification for limiting State intervention in that sphere.

This illustrates the ***tension between respect for privacy and intimacy on the one hand and the public responsibilities of the State on the other,*** which calls for a redefinition of the distinction between what is public and what is *private and intimate.* This is a symbolic and ideological, but not a practical, distinction because the modern State, in practice, has always had supervisory authority over the family. The affirmative obligation of the State to protect its citizens from violations of their basic human rights in the private sphere of the family urgently needs to be enforced. However, this does not eliminate tension or contradiction. State intervention in the private world has two sides: the defence of victims and subordinates (male or female) of the patriarchal system, on the one hand, and arbitrary intervention, control and even

terror, on the other. Social reactions to the two are different: anything that could be an object of arbitrary State intervention should be kept private and protected from State interference, but anything that reinforces subordination and the arbitrary power of the paterfamilias should not have such immunity.

The traditional discourse on human rights is seriously limited when it is based on the distinction between public and private. But that same human rights paradigm can be used in another way, as a tool which, by eradicating legal privileges, establishes limits to power and promotes equity in the organization of family relations.

2. Sexuality and reproduction

Changes in sexual practices and the social norms related to them have been momentous throughout the world, not least in Latin America. Although systematic research on sexual practices as such is almost non-existent, the direction, if not the magnitude, of those changes in recent decades is clear: sexual restrictions and taboos have undoubtedly diminished, and people are becoming sexually active at an earlier age, but remain ignorant of the physiology of reproduction (sex education) and of contraception, and therefore run a considerable risk of contracting venereal diseases such as AIDS.

For many women, these changes have meant more sexual freedom and an acceptance of pleasure as something good. Among young women, this sexual liberalization has led to an increase in teenage pregnancy, abortion and trafficking in children. More generally, it has led to **more vulnerable sexuality and maternity**, especially among teenage girls.

Rates of adolescent maternity, which declined in the developed countries during the 1970s, have remained high in the developing countries. In Latin America, the fertility rates of women between 15 and 19 years of age have declined more slowly over the last few decades than those of the non-adolescent population, and remain comparatively high. It should be pointed out that adolescent maternity is not synonymous with unwed mothers; many young women marry because they are pregnant, and a certain proportion of women who are either married or in unions have children at an early age. The proportion of children born out of wedlock has, however, increased. As might be expected, adolescent maternity is inversely related to the young mother's educational level.

Women who become mothers at an early age are more vulnerable, as are their children. Personal plans for education often have to be interrupted. Also, these women are more likely to have a higher fertility rate, to be heads of household in charge of their children and, consequently, to live in precarious and uncertain conditions. Evidence points to a transmission of vulnerability and precariousness from one generation to another, since many women who become mothers at an early age are from families which show the same pattern.

The whole question of sexuality has taken on a new dimension since the emergence of AIDS. Sex education and preventive practices now have much more complex functions: family planning and responsible parenthood on the one hand, and prevention of illness and death combined with control of the epidemic, on the other. In this area, the implications for policy-making are clear: **sex education involves both the family and health**, and should be the object of an **integrated social policy**, aimed especially at young people of both sexes.

Fertility rates in the region have shown a marked decline since the 1970s. This is basically due to the more widespread use of contraceptives rather than to changes in the marriage rate or in mating patterns (Berquó, 1991; Chackiel and Schkolnik, 1990). It seems that fertility rates would have fallen further if not for the fact that in many countries the demand for contraceptives is not fully met, since the trend in women's reproductive intentions is towards more planning to ensure smaller family size. Of course,

notable differences still exist between social classes and between urban and rural areas; here again, the basic determining factor is access to and quality of health care services.

3. An alternative approach: reproductive rights as human rights

Sexuality and parenthood should also be approached from a human rights perspective. Given the history of others' appropriating women's bodies, over the last 20 years the social struggle in the field of sexuality and fertility has centred on the demand for *reproductive rights*.

Women's ability to regulate their sexuality and reproductive capacity —in other words, to take control of their own bodies— implies a dual imperative: others should not consider themselves owners of women's bodies, and women should have the power to resist the coercion and imposition of others. In the final analysis, the guarantee that a woman's body will not be dominated or subjected to any practice without her consent and willingness entails the recognition of her *basic human rights*; this guarantee can be seen as part of the right to life and freedom and the prohibition of slavery, servitude, torture and cruel treatment. In the same vein, rape is an extreme form of physical violence; but so is the imposition of contraceptive methods (the extreme case being irreversible surgery) and its opposite, the denial of the right to access to health care that enables women to control their sexuality and reproduction.

The distance between this principle and normal practice in the contemporary world is enormous. Rape is seldom punished; the right of a raped woman to terminate a pregnancy is not recognized in many countries; and women seldom exercise their sexuality as an expression of their freedom. The ideal of ensuring women's freedom of decision on reproductive matters can only be achieved if the necessary material conditions are present. Social reality is far from this ideal. Population policies, whether oriented towards birth or birth control, imply demographic planning of fertility, an essential component of which is control over women's bodies. It is one thing to provide incentives that orient reproductive choices, based on easy access to information and education about sex and reproduction. It is a very different thing to impose reproductive strategies that pay little heed to the desires and choices of women themselves and of men. The lack of education and means for planning fertility —as seen, for example, in adolescent and unwanted fertility—, as well as quasi-compulsory programmes to control birth rates (sterilization programmes, uninformed distribution of contraceptives) reinforce the view of women as objects, as bodies to be manipulated and controlled.

The recent emphasis on new reproductive technologies and the need to legislate on their application have brought the question of reproductive rights to the fore once again, this time from the other side of the issue, namely the treatment of sterility and technological manipulations for "assisted" conception and gestation. The paradox is that, while reproductive rights (contraceptive methods and practices) are problematic basically in the peripheral countries and lower economic classes, conceptive practices ("assisted" fertilization) are developed and applied in the central countries and in the upper classes of the peripheral ones.

Population control programmes and the development and application of conceptive techniques are both based on a biologistic view of the family: bonds of affection and caring, which are cultural developments, are ideologically presented as genetic, thereby making family-related inequalities "natural". In the context of the new reproductive technologies, the desire for parenthood is manifested in the obsession with having one's own child, which stems from the symbolism of blood as the vehicle that unites generations and transmits the essence of the person. Stolcke describes this as a desire for biological parenthood by means of technological maternity (Stolcke, 1991, p. 82).

The issue of men's and women's reproductive rights opens up new dimensions of the debate. Are these women's rights or rights rooted in gender relations? Are they individual rights or do they belong to the couple? If the responsibility for caring for children is to be equally shared by mothers and fathers, it is clear that both should have a say with respect to the timing and method of conception and gestation.

Moreover, the sum and combination of the multitude of decisions taken by individuals and couples has long-term social consequences, manifested in birth and population growth rates. The issue is therefore a legitimate object of national and even international policies. How many children to have should ideally be decided by the couple, according to the costs and benefits involved. A State population policy can modify the balance between costs and benefits through differential incentives. The question, however, is how to establish priorities, when the interests of class, gender, professions and enterprises are all intertwined. None the less, the complexity of the phenomenon should not obstruct a critical view: **what** resources should be used to guarantee which reproductive rights? Such questions imply that citizens should take part in the public policy debate.

The winning of reproductive rights is neither simple nor conclusive. First, there is a cultural block —gender socialization— whereby women's identity is still strongly associated with motherhood, while their sexuality and reproductive capacity are controlled by others. Second, there is a material and instrumental block: choices can be made about sexuality and reproduction only if conditions are adequate in terms of quality of life and access to services, and these are far from being assured or equitably distributed in the region.

4. Intergenerational relations: youth in the family and in society

The family, whose role revolves around procreation and the socialization of new generations, is the agent that transmits opportunities and expectations. Within families, relationships between generations are not always harmonious; there are conflicts linked to young people's responsibilities towards the rest of the family and to the processes by which they achieve autonomy.

The importance of the family for the socialization of children and young people is well known. Norms, values and identities take shape and are transmitted in the context of family relations, with their tensions, contradictory messages and controls. The family is also the domain of caring and affection. Experiences in the context of the family combine, in a complementary or contradictory way, with those in other institutions and social relations —from the school to the street, from friends to the police— in the process of individual development. Moreover, families vary in terms of not only social class and economic level, but also their capacity to socialize children to enable them to live a full life and to prepare them for democratic relations inside and outside the family.

Some family situations are clearly unfavourable and risky for the socialization of children and adolescents: domestic violence, lack of material resources to ensure daily subsistence, absence of stable bonds and solidarity with others, social isolation, traditional patriarchal authoritarianism or lawlessness. Early experiences are known to strongly influence basic interpersonal patterns of solidarity and caring for others, as well as the development of a moral sense. Although a democratic upbringing —in which tolerance and solidarity are incorporated into daily living— can be based on experiences in different institutional contexts, family relations play the central role in this process.

The ideal situation is characterized by formative and moral complementarity among families, kinship groups and community and State institutions. Since this situation is not easily attainable, processes of socialization and moral

development depend on a system of checks and balances among these institutions, whereby the damage done by one can be repaired and compensated for by another. This requires, in practice, great care in formulating proposals for strengthening the family in general, and the provision of substitute agents of socialization when the family cannot fulfil this task.

Mention should be made of another area where the family as an institution is limited. The socialization imparted by the family does not aim at social equity, but rather its opposite: the family transmits privileges and reproduces social inequalities. These processes represent de facto and *de jure* restrictions on the ideal of equal opportunity. This is why social intervention is needed to compensate for more vulnerable family situations.

In terms of the internal dynamics of families, the relation between generations is a source of conflict, especially when offspring reach adolescence. Youth is a time of transition from an eminently formative and dependent stage of life to greater personal autonomy, the development of specific skills and full incorporation into the world of social production. This stage typically entails the progression from general education to specific training and the working world, on the one hand, and from dependence to autonomy in relation to the family of origin and to the formation of one's own family, on the other. But it is also the stage in which patterns of sexual behaviour are established, with all the affective elements involved in socio-sexual relations. Lastly, it is a stage in which interaction in peer groups, from violent gangs to intimate and lasting friendships, becomes especially significant.

These transitions are constantly being redefined in law and in the daily practices of social services. The law sets an arbitrary limit, **full legal age**, at which a person is publicly recognized as having adult responsibility, including penal responsibility. In practice, people go through a gradual process of social maturation. There are tensions and contradictions implicit in this process: who has the right to decide for minors? Traditionally, this right primarily belonged to the father; in recent years, the right of the mother has been recognized. But to what extent do parents have authority over their children? Who defends the rights of minors in cases of family conflict? Is there only one "full legal age", or are different areas of responsibility assumed at different times? In what circumstances can the State and community institutions intervene and restrict or eliminate the power of one member of the family over the others?

All of these questions have a public dimension, in law and in the practices through which the State exercises control over juveniles (for example, by imposing curfews or deciding which films and places are allowed or prohibited). They also have a family dimension, in which parental control plays a major role and conflict and negotiation are the stuff of daily interaction between generations.

From the standpoint of society, the question of youth has another character. Quantitative and qualitative data on social problems, or simply a close reading of a newspaper from any major city, present young people as problematic: unemployment rates are systematically higher among youth, while **social problems** linked to violence and crime, drug abuse, vagrancy, unconventional sexuality (teenage pregnancies and unwed mothers; sexually transmitted diseases, especially AIDS; etc.), "street kids" and other forms of non-family life are found predominantly among youth. At the same time, society rests its hopes for the future on young people. The formation of **human resources** depends on the education of young people for employment and technological change and on the preparation of young people for citizenship and the renewal of political leadership, as well as for family and domestic roles (especially in the case of women).

One more perspective needs to be considered: the view of youth as **subjects** with their own identity. Instead of looking

at youth from the adult world and defining them positively (human resources) or negatively (social problems), this perspective incorporates the way young people see themselves: who they are, how they express their identity, what practices and patterns they develop as their own, and how they react to the parameters of a social, economic, political and cultural environment constructed by others (i.e., the adult world). In the context of the current crisis in Latin America, youth are less active politically, utopian ideas have less impact and youth are seen less and less as "saviours" and builders of the future, and more and more as "victims" of the social system. Little is known about how young people, especially poor ones, see their role in present and future society, or whether the role they envision will allow them to disprove the dominant opinion of them as "social problems" or "victims".

D. CONCLUDING REMARKS: FAMILY, PUBLIC POLICIES AND PRIVATE SPACE

The relation between family dynamics and State intervention calls for a fresh look at the dichotomy between *public* and *private*. In everyday life, the State and various social agencies constantly intervene, *shaping* the family and the roles within it, *controlling* its functioning, setting limits and offering opportunities and options. This process is not confined to extreme cases in which the State takes parents to task, or even deprives them of their parental rights, because of negligence or abandonment of their children; it is also seen in countless, ongoing actions, both *small* and *large*, that have direct or indirect effects on daily family practices. These include **social policies** such as population or reproductive health policies, educational programmes, housing schemes and social security. There are also **legal and juridical mechanisms** for the defence of human rights (such as those of minors) and the establishment of penalties, such as the penalization of abortion and recognition of marital rape as a criminal offence. Third, policies and legalities manifest themselves in **concrete institutions and practices**: police and legal actions, practices of educational or public health institutions and State policy governing the mass media. Lastly, there is the mediating role of institutional practices and daily interaction in **civil society**, which provides meaning and cultural criteria for interpreting the relation between the family and the State.

The family is subject to this ***supervisory authority*** and at the same time is seen ideologically as **private** space, separate from public and political life. The formulation of State and community policies concerning the family requires a critical analysis of this symbolic construct and recognition of the *tension between respect for the privacy of the family and the State's public responsibilities.* In each historical circumstance, public policies will have to move carefully as if on a cornice along the uncertain, unstable path of that tension.

On the other hand, the whole social edifice —both at the micro-social level of the division of labour within the family and at the social policy level— is based on another fundamental ideological assumption: the gender-based division of labour, according to which the woman/mother is always ready and willing to organize and carry out reproductive tasks, in relation to both her husband and her children, but also, increasingly, in relation to her parents and her husband's parents. Rethinking public actions concerning the family entails introducing **gender equity** into all such actions as one of their guiding criteria, in order to redress situations that place an unfair burden on women.

Besides the specific field of gender equity within families, there are three broad areas in which Latin American States should intervene in family relations through explicit policies and legal reforms with well-defined objectives and targets: the advancement of equity, defence of human rights and promotion of group solidarity.

1. Family and equity

The family is an institution that forms future generations. In this sense, it mediates between the social structure at a given historical moment and the future of that social structure. With no external intervention, it tends to transmit and reinforce existing patterns of inequality. If it is to promote a more equitable society, it requires affirmative action by the State or other collective actors.

From the inheritance of property and wealth to the positive impact of the "family educational environment" on the educational levels of children and youth (studied by ECLAC, 1991), the family as an institution tends to perpetuate privileges for some and to reproduce the vicious circle of poverty, marginality and violence for others.

From an intergenerational perspective, then, the broadening of opportunities that could generate more equity —in terms of education, employment and living conditions in general— requires affirmative action by the State, based on early detection of *populations at risk*. The following example illustrates this perspective by exploring the potential interaction between State policies and the family as it affects children and youth.

A number of *social problems* have a tremendous impact on adolescents and juveniles:

— in sexuality, AIDS and teenage pregnancy;
— in education and work, dropping out of school and unemployment;
— in the family, street children and domestic violence;
— in peer groups, gangs, violence and drug abuse.

These phenomena are normally thought of as separate "problem behaviours" that should be addressed individually. An alternative approach is to see a certain unity in these phenomena, incorporating the notion of **damage** that affects the life outlook of young people and tends to be cumulative. This damage consists of serious difficulties that impede an individual's development of his or her potential as a person in different spheres of social life (work, family, citizenship). These difficulties affect both the present and the future of young people, limiting their capacities and prospects. Above all, damage is a process of personal deterioration caused by social factors deriving from the individual's conflictual or "needy" environment. However, this must be further qualified. Although juveniles in all social classes are at risk, poverty increases their vulnerability by affording them fewer resources for dealing with risk and less protection from it. Instead of assuming, a priori, that the family is "good" or "bad", efforts to address this problematic situation should focus on developing tools for identifying the social contexts that protect from and prevent damage. The family environment can act in either direction, as the case may be: when there are values or privileges to transmit, or when what is transmitted is neediness and vulnerability. In so far as the family is always part of a ***broader social context*** that includes the other institutions to which young people belong, the latter must compensate for deficiencies in its socialization capacity; hence the importance of designing ***integrated social policies*** in this field that are not aimed exclusively at one symptom or one institution (the family, for example).

2. Human rights in the family: prevention and protection

Today, this issue has become very concrete and direct. The various manifestations of domestic violence —bodily torture, sexual harassment and rape, psychological violence, limitations on freedom of movement (slavery)— clearly violate basic human rights. Hidden for centuries beneath the mantle of the "privacy" of emotional life and patriarchal authoritarianism, this violence has begun to be brought out into the open in the past few decades.

Intensive efforts to promote respect for these basic rights are needed in order

to uphold the democratic rule of law. Such efforts require sweeping legislative changes (in the classification of marital violence, for example); changes in police action (more recognition of the crime and less blaming of the victim in cases of violence or rape); and preventive policies to protect citizens.

3. Family and social networks

The profound changes in the family during the twentieth century can be summed up in three major trends:

i) The family's role as a unit of production has been gradually eliminated, owing to changes in the production structure;

ii) Young people and women have developed their individuality and become more autonomous, thereby weakening patriarchal power, causing greater temporary instability in the traditional family structure and making more room for the expression of alternative individual choices;

iii) The separation of sexuality from procreation has led to diverse forms of sexual expression outside the family context and changes in the ways families are formed.

All of this indicates that the family is losing some of its functions and is no longer a "total institution". From the standpoint of the individual, what remains constant is not so much "the family" as a series of **family ties** between mothers and fathers and children; between brothers and sisters; and with more distant relatives. These ascriptive bonds carry certain obligations and rights, but they are relatively limited. The rest enters the realm of choice, becoming optional.

The fragility and limitations of family ties do not imply a concomitant isolation or self-sufficient individualism. It is well known that for physical, psychological and social well-being, the individual needs to be integrated in community social networks which contain and channel affectivity and in which the capacity for solidarity and responsibility towards others comes into play; such networks confer identity and meaning. While this function was basically fulfilled by the family in the past, when no other options were available, today the limited and partial character of family ties points to the need to promote and support the creation of alternative opportunities for sociability —i.e., alternative or complementary intermediate organizations that promote mutual recognition and democratic participation.

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Annex

SOME CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS: THE DOMESTIC ENVIRONMENT, THE PUBLIC DOMAIN AND PRIVATE LIFE

The first term that should be clarified analytically is *reproduction*, which comprises three dimensions or levels: biological reproduction, which at the family level means having children and at the societal level refers to the socio-demographic aspects of fertility; daily reproduction, or the maintenance of the existing population through domestic tasks to provide for its subsistence; and social reproduction, or all tasks other than production aimed at maintaining the social system.

A second set of analytical distinctions should be drawn among the terms *residential group, family, domestic unit, reproductive unit* and *economic unit*. These distinctions are very important for Latin America, where migration (initially) and changes in marital stability (more recently) have significantly affected the interrelationships among these dimensions.

The distinction between the domestic and public domains is usually seen as a sharp division of social reality. The distinction between these two spheres has been identified with gender differentiation —men in charge of public tasks, women in charge of private and domestic tasks— as though it were a universal constant of social organization. Recent comparative anthropological research shows that the analytical model based on the opposition between the *private domestic domain/women/powerlessness* and the *public domain/men/power* is basically cultural and ideological in nature. In reality, the family and the domestic domain are not a closed space, but are constituted in relation to the public domain. Services, legislation and social control mechanisms, as well as more symbolic aspects, such as views on the application of medical science, prevailing social images of the family and normality, and educational ideologies and institutions all help to define the sphere of action proper to the family and domestic life in each historical and cultural situation.

Critical analysis of this dualistic view emphasizes the public and social character, whether real or potential, of the domestic activity carried out by women. In short, the *domestic domain* basically includes activities of daily production and consumption of food and other goods and services for subsistence, along with activities connected with generational replacement, such as having children, caring for them and socializing them —an area of activity that takes shape and changes in relation to other institutions and spheres of society.

The *family*, on the other hand, has a biological substratum linked to sexuality and procreation, and is therefore the social institution that regulates, channels and confers social and cultural meanings on these two needs. The family, moreover, is included in a broader network of kinship relations, governed by established social rules and patterns. The social importance of the family, however, goes beyond its role in setting sexual and filial standards, since it is the basis for recruiting domestic units. Empirically, most domestic units consist of members who are interrelated, but the degree of coincidence between the

domestic unit and the family, and even more, the social definition of the closeness (in terms of family relations) of the group living together, vary notably from one society to another and over the life cycle of its members.

Recent studies in urban anthropology have highlighted the importance of *kinship networks* for carrying out tasks connected with the daily maintenance of the members of domestic units. In the contemporary urban world, the composition of the domestic unit, always regulated by family ties, is the result of diverse processes that take place over the life cycle of its members. On the one hand, the composition of the future domestic group is influenced by events linked to the formation of the family, including marriages, separations, births and deaths, as well as relocations, migrations and other accidents or decisions in specific circumstances. On the other hand, changes in the economic and political situation —and especially in social policies— at the time of these life-cycle transitions influence domestic organization at each specific moment, and this in turn affects its later dynamics.

Thus, even though most domestic groups are composed of persons with immediate family ties between them, the inclusion or exclusion of certain members is not determined exclusively by the closeness of kinship, nor can it be explained solely by the current situation of the members of the domestic unit. Parents whose children do not live with them but who are in charge of children of more or less close relatives, and patterns of dual residency (children of separated parents, for example, or grandparents who rotate among the households of their children), are common phenomena that should be taken into account by policy makers.

The difference between domestic units and kinship units, in turn, points to another key problem: by definition, kinship bonds that reach beyond the unit are different for each household member, since each one has his or her own kinship network, with its system of mutual relations, reciprocities, rights and duties, which vary according to the stage of the life cycle of the person in question. More systematically, the different members of a domestic unit contribute in different ways to the tasks of daily maintenance. In terms of both monetary resources and the personal time devoted to those tasks, each member's contribution to common activity varies according to the kinds of obligations and duties the person has towards his or her own kinship network.

At the same time, domestic units are not necessarily at the core of all activities connected with the maintenance of their members. With regard to some areas of consumption, especially for daily maintenance —meals, personal hygiene, cleaning, etc.— the domestic group seems to be the basic social unit. But needs in other areas, such as health care, housing and domestic equipment, can be met by units that are larger (kinship, neighbourhood or community networks) or smaller (isolated individuals) than the domestic unit itself. In the generational reproduction of the population, family relations, whether or not they coincide with the domestic group, are the fundamental social relations.

The boundaries of the domestic unit and the family are highly permeable. The degree of involvement in and commitment to the activities of the domestic unit does not vary by chance. There are social conventions that differentiate each member's expected commitment according to his or her place in terms of age, sex and kinship with the other members. What is expected of a small daughter changes as she becomes an adolescent and, of course, differs from what is expected of a male adolescent. Likewise, different patterns of behaviour are expected of the mother, father, siblings, uncles, aunts and grandparents. In other words, even though the social institution of the family as the centre of affectivity is the same for all its members, ***it has different meanings and is experienced in very distinct ways by individuals of different sexes, ages and social classes.***

Certain resources are necessary in order to carry out activities relating to need satisfaction. The domestic unit must devise mechanisms for obtaining or creating, defending and constantly reproducing and administering those resources. The domestic unit's consumption and reproduction activities are not limited to the tasks of processing the goods produced and selling them in the market-place. The provision of collective goods and services is a very important input for those activities. The provision of services by the State —which involves identifying those services and their users and determining when to provide them and at what cost— historically has been a battleground for the struggle to incorporate all social sectors into the benefits and rights inherent in social citizenship. Differences in access (and in the need for access) to these services historically have been a salient feature in the definition of social class.

Resources can come from different sources —the labour and direct efforts of household members, official transfers from institutions accredited for that purpose (especially the State) and informal transfers based on exchange and mutual aid networks. They can also take the form of money or of goods or services for direct use. The following table summarizes the elements of this process:

Domestic activities fall into two major categories: production, which requires organization of the division of labour, and consumption, or the organization of the distribution of goods and services to meet needs. Decisions about the division of labour are based on the view of when and how much each member of the family can and should work; that is, which ones should contribute to the activities that support the group and when. Changes in domestic roles are linked to life-cycle transitions, which determine when a boy (or more frequently, a girl) should help with domestic chores or obtain paid work, or when an older person should stop working outside or within the household.

Decisions on consumption revolve around how to organize expenditure or the family budget in terms of what is spent, what the priorities are and who controls and decides. Internal organization, control and discipline are needed. These tasks are traditionally assigned to the woman-housewife, but a woman's responsibility for domestic organization does not always give her authority and power.

The domestic unit is distinguished from other organizations by the kinds of incentives used to motivate the members to carry out assigned tasks, since they bring affection and solidarity into play.

Source	Kind of resource	
	Monetary	Non-monetary
Work of the members of the domestic unit	Participation in the work-force	Domestic production
Indirect official transfers	Pensions, retirement funds	Access to public services, social services, subsidies
Informal transfers from relatives and neighbours	Mutual aid based on reciprocity and barter	

Indeed, the basic criterion that convinces members to participate in common tasks by contributing earned income to the family budget and/or helping out with domestic work is not the individual's utilitarian calculation of the costs and benefits of living together; instead, predominantly moral appeals have to be made to different members according to their place in the structure of the domestic unit. In fact, the classification of gender roles (the man as the "family head" who provides resources and the woman who takes care of the household and children) and the system of duties and obligations between parents and children constitute the ideological pillars on which this process of moral persuasion is based; the mother's selflessness, the father's responsibility and the child's obedience are the traditional social values underpinning the incentive system. These traditional values, based on an ideological view of the division of labour between genders and generations as "natural", are now in crisis in the modern family, where the effect of democratic and egalitarian values is beginning to be felt and is calling for a change, which will always be charged with deep feelings and desires that find their expression in highly personalized social relations.

Chapter III

STRESSES AND STRAINS: SITUATION ANALYSIS OF THE CARIBBEAN FAMILY

A. BACKGROUND

The population of nearly all of the 13 countries of the English-speaking Caribbean, from the Bahamas in the north to Guyana in the south, and from Belize in the west to Barbados in the east, is predominantly African in ethnic origin. Only in Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana is this predominance superseded by another ethnic group —Indians, in both cases— owing to migration and higher rates of reproduction over the last 150 years. The main focus of this chapter is therefore the African-Caribbean family, but due reference is also made to its Indian counterpart, not least because of important differences in both structure and functions.

No area of Caribbean studies has been the subject of more discussion and debate than the African-Caribbean family. The main question that has dogged the issue for some 50 years is how, in describing it, to explain its apparent dysfunction.

What does the African-Caribbean family look like? How does it discharge its functions as an agent of socialization and social stability?

B. STRUCTURE AND PROCESSES

1. Family structure

To begin with, observers and students are confronted with a multiplicity of family types. In terms of structural composition, the following have been identified:

i) the standard nuclear family, comprising an adult man (usually designated its head), his wife and their children;

ii) a unit comprising a woman and her children;

iii) a unit comprising an adult man, his wife, their children and some grandchildren;

iv) a unit headed by a woman and including her children and grandchildren;

v) structural variations of all of these four, to include members of the wider kinship group at any generational level —siblings, cousins, nieces and nephews, grandnieces and grandnephews of the mother and/or father;

vi) units that incorporate in-laws, stepchildren and other children and adults not related by kinship to the other occupants.

Census data, however, only partially reflect this degree of variation, as shown by table 1.

Table 1

JAMAICA: POPULATION ACCORDING TO RELATIONSHIP TO HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD

Relation	Frequency	Percentage
1. Head	508,938	23.5
2. Spouse/partner	228,829	10.5
3. Child of head or spouse	813,351	37.5
4. Spouse of child	10,025	0.5
5. Grandchild	230,398	10.6
6. Parent of head or spouse	17,204	0.8
7. Other relative	180,665	8.3
8. Other	82,123	3.8
9. Not stated	96,127	4.5
TOTAL	2,167,660	100.0

Source: Population census of Jamaica, 1982.

This table does not reveal the structure of Jamaican households, but it gives a clear picture of the variety of relationships found in them: 24%, or nearly one quarter, of all Jamaicans are not directly related to the head of the household in which they live (categories 4 to 8). These are known as extended households.

Other Caribbean countries provide census data on types of households, as shown in table 2.

Table 2 shows that the proportion of nuclear households exceeds that of extended households by a ratio of two to one; however, in terms of population, each type accounts for roughly half. The "composite" category refers to nuclear households that include non-relatives (e.g., boarders).

In short, African-Caribbean family structure appears, at first glance, to be a complex amalgam of different types of household arrangements.

Regarding conjugal relationships, a similar mixture of types is apparent:

— legal marriage

— common-law marriage or concubinage

— visiting unions

— single persons.

Legal marriage is established and recognized by law, whereas common-law marriage is established by simple consent and recognized by folk custom. Legal marriage may not be annulled except by a court of law, whereas common-law marriage may be annulled by mutual consent or by the decision of one of the parties. Legal and common-law marriages are co-residential, but visiting unions are not. Sexual relations are maintained from the respective domiciles of the partners, usually their parental homes. The term "single" refers to persons who are no longer or have never been engaged in any sexual union.

Table 2

ENGLISH-SPEAKING CARIBBEAN (3 COUNTRIES): TYPE AND PROPORTION OF HOUSEHOLDS AS PERCENTAGES OF POPULATION

Country	Household type	Percentage of: Households	Population
Barbados	Nuclear	65.1	50.9
	Extended	28.3	40.2
	Composite	6.6	8.9
	Total	**100.0**	**100.0**
Guyana	Nuclear	62.8	52.7
	Extended	32.6	41.1
	Composite	4.2	5.2
	Not stated	0.4	1.0
	Total	**100.0**	**100.0**
Saint Lucia	Nuclear	61.3	49.6
	Extended	31.2	41.0
	Composite	7.5	9.4
	Total	**100.0**	**100.0**

Source: Population census of Barbados, 1980; population census of Guyana, 1980; and population census of Saint Lucia, 1980.

Table 3 shows that, except in Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago, between one quarter and one third of all women over the age of 14 are legally married, an even larger proportion are living without a spouse, one or two out of every ten are living in a common-law relationship and a handful maintain visiting arrangements. The distribution is somewhat different in Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago, where Indians make up the largest segment of the population. These countries show the highest frequency of marriage and lowest frequency of visiting unions. Indian cultural tradition in these two countries encourages early marriage, although younger generations of women, taking advantage of the upward mobility provided by the education system, are marrying later.

Table 3

ENGLISH-SPEAKING CARIBBEAN (6 COUNTRIES): PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF FEMALES AGED 14 YEARS AND OVER, BY TYPE OF CONJUGAL UNION

Country	Married	Common-law	Visiting union	Single
Barbados	32.4	10.2	3.5	48.5
Grenada	28.6	13.0	7.3	45.9
Guyana	48.1	9.1	2.7	35.2
Jamaica[a]	25.3	16.2	2.8	14.2
Saint Lucia	29.5	16.1	6.5	43.4
Trinidad and Tobago	45.7	12.6	1.7	37.3

Source: Population census of Jamaica, 1982, and 1980 population censuses in the rest of the countries.

[a] The "not stated" column, which is on the order of 4% to 5%, has been omitted, and hence the percentages do not add up to 100%. Since the "not stated" category for Jamaica amounted to 41.5%, the figures should be viewed with caution.

Thus, owing to the nature of both the kinship relations among the residents of households and the conjugal bonds between men and women, the African-Caribbean family appears to be a loose and temporary arrangement which is unlikely to fulfil its primary role of socializing the young, and it is only a step from there to the problems of deviance and a breakdown of social order which now threaten many countries of the region. The family has been blamed for many of the ills of society.

The earliest studies of the African-Caribbean family saw the multiplicity of household and mating forms as manifestations of the sexual irresponsibility of the Caribbean male, which had been shaped by the chaos and anomie of slavery but continued as a result of the economic hardships of the post-emancipation period. One result of it was a deficient family life, in which the main burden for the upbringing and maintenance of children fell on the mother. Simey (1946), Henriques (1952) and Clarke (1957) were all influenced by the work of E. Franklin Frazier (1951), whose study rejected the contention of Melville Herskovits (1941 and 1947) that illegitimacy and matriarchy among African-Americans were survivals of traditions derived from the polygamous mating patterns in continental Africa, and instead propounded the view that African-American family structure was a progeny of slavery and its aftermath. Clarke, however, felt that the conditions under slavery which Frazier had identified as the source of this pathological state still existed in the present. In this regard, she was supported by scholars such as Cumper (1958), who demonstrated the instability of mating patterns and family structure on sugar plantations.

Thus, both under slavery and in the present, the various forms of mating, such as "faithful concubinage", the "companionate" and "disintegrated" families (Simey, 1946) or the "maternal or grandmother" and "keeper" families (Henriques, 1953), were influenced by economic and social conditions.

It was not until the publication of the anthropological studies of R.T. Smith (1956) and M.G. Smith (1962) and the demographic analyses of George Roberts (1955 and 1979) that the different types of families or households made sense when put in a diachronic perspective. The two Smiths took opposite approaches, but

reached the same conclusion: that people first mate extra-residentially at a very early age, then cohabit consensually, and in later life go on to legalize their unions through marriage. This process was validated statistically by Roberts (1955), using age cohort data from Jamaica's 1943 census; later by Roberts and Braithwaite (1961), using survey data from Trinidad and Tobago; and again by Roberts (1975), using 1960 census data for Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. As Roberts puts it, women enter "keeper", or visiting, relationships at around the age of 19 or 20; some of them go on to marry, while others go on to cohabit in common-law unions. Eventually, a majority of women in the latter group get married.

It seems, then, that African-Caribbeans practice a form of mating that results in family relationships that move from structural instability —because the unions can be and usually are dissolved at will by the partners after some time together— to structural stability.

2. The conjugal cycle

a) Visiting unions

Visiting unions mark the formal beginning of the mating cycle. Whereas premarital sexual relations are established in secret, visiting relations are, as M.G. Smith noted, carried on in public. They give the male exclusive sexual rights, a "*sine qua non* of determinate paternity" (M.G. Smith, 1962, p. 251). Public recognition implies social sanction. Yet, like common-law unions, but unlike legal marriage, this kind of union may be dissolved at will. This is the source of its apparent instability.

One of the first problems, therefore, is determining the degree of instability of the visiting type of union. Using data from the World Fertility Survey (WFS) carried out in Jamaica in 1974-1975, Harewood (1984) calculated that the average number of partners for women in visiting unions was 2.4, which is to say that the "average" woman would have had two or three partners by the time she changed her union type.

Though they do not constitute clear evidence of stability in these unions, the results of one nationally conducted random sample survey of men aged 18 and over are instructive: nearly 40% had only one babymother[1] and 30% had none at all (Chevannes, 1985). Using a clinic-based sample, Brody (1981) found that half the mothers surveyed were still living with the father of their first child at the time of the interview, and more than half the men in the sample were in a common-law or legal marriage with the mother of their second and subsequent children. He concluded that the pattern of impregnation by the men represented a movement towards conjugal stability. Dann (1987) drew similar conclusions for Barbados. Thus, R.T. Smith's earlier contention (1963, p. 36) that extra-residential mating was a means by which men avoided responsibility is not supported by more current data. His later position (1988) sees the outside relationship and ideal of marriage as functions of class, and the resulting kinship system as a successful means of humanizing a dehumanizing system of slavery, racism and economic exploitation and creating bridges of identity across the gulf of class differences.

Table 4 shows the incidence of visiting unions in Jamaica, as given by Roberts and Sinclair, for the census years 1960 and 1970, using the union status of females between the ages of 15 and 44.

The table shows that eight or nine out of every ten females aged 15 to 19 who are in some type of union are in a visiting union.[2] The remaining one or two are

1 "Babymother" is a folk term meaning "mother of one's baby"; i.e., the mother of a man's child or children. Similarly, "babyfather" refers to the father of a woman's child or children.

2 In considering this table, it should be borne in mind that the incidence of visiting unions throughout the whole population is generally low, as indicated in table 3, which presents data for all women aged 15 and over. What is significant here is the trend that becomes apparent when the data are arranged according to age.

either married, in a common-law relationship or no longer living with their partner. The proportion who are in a visiting union drops sharply over the next 10 years, by three or four out of ten up to age 24, and by a further two or three up to age 29. By the age of 34, slightly over 20% of all women in unions are in visiting relationships. Harewood (1984), working with WFS data collected a few years after the 1970 census, on which Roberts's figures are based, presented similar findings, namely that only one third of the women who had originally entered a visiting relationship were still in that union type by age 29, most having shifted to common-law marriage.

Table 4

JAMAICA: FREQUENCY OF VISITING UNIONS, BY AGE COHORT, 1960 AND 1970

(Percentages)

Age group	1960	1970
15-19	89.2	86.8
20-24	52.5	54.8
25-29	29.9	30.2
30-34	21.2	19.7
35-39	17.7	14.9
40-44	16.1	13.3

Source: George W. Roberts and Sonja Sinclair, *Women in Jamaica*, New York, KTO Press, 1978.

What, then, of the transition to other conjugal forms? When does it occur? It should be mentioned that the general consensus on a sequential conjugal pattern has been challenged by one anthropologist, who charges that it is methodologically wrong to use synchronic data to infer diachronic patterns (Rubenstein, 1977). However, not only is he unable to explain the high synchronic rate of visiting unions in lower age groups; he is least convincing when he suggests "that early marriage is the norm in other lower-class Afro-Caribbean rural communities as well" (Rubenstein, 1977, p. 209).

Up to the 1950s, when the category "single" covered both the truly single and those in visiting unions, Roberts (1955) estimated the average age of marriage by single persons at 29.8 years for males and 26.1 for females. He calculated that the average male, by age 55, had been single for some 15 years and married (legally and/or by common law) for nearly 25. He calculated the corresponding figures for females aged 15 to 45 as 14.5 and 15.5 years, respectively.

Once blamed as being the source of Jamaica's population explosion, visiting unions have long since been recognized as the least fertile of the three union types (Roberts, 1955 and 1975; Cumper, 1966; Roberts and Sinclair, 1978; Harewood, 1984; Charbit, 1984), presumably because they involve the lowest level of exposure to coitus. This assumption was proved correct by Roberts (1978, pp. 69-70), despite the small aggregates. Among women under 25 years of age, the monthly average frequency of intercourse was 6.71, compared to 7.04 for common-law wives and 12.44 for legally married wives. Lightbourne (1970 and 1984) and Lightbourne and Singh (1982) do not dispute this characteristic of visiting unions for earlier periods, but argue that later advances in contraceptive technology have reduced the advantage of visiting unions, so that in the 10 years prior to 1975 the difference *vis-à-vis* marital unions was reduced in the 20-24 age group, had disappeared in the 25-29 age group and was reversed in the 30-44 age group. Moreover, Lightbourne (1984, p. 121) argues that there is proof that entry into new partnerships raises slightly "a woman's likelihood of wanting another birth, has little effect on her likelihood of using contraception for stopping reasons, but is associated with substantially lower likelihood of using contraception to postpone the next birth and involves a considerable likelihood of being pregnant".

But, he acknowledges, the effect is marginal. It thus remains to be seen

whether the changes which the author claims to observe in the relative fertility of visiting unions are confirmed as authoritatively as the fact that visiting unions are the least fertile. Even if such changes were substantiated, they would affect the fertility differential, not the frequency of coitus, which would remain lowest of all.

It would indeed be futile to deny that social and economic changes can have an impact on the mating pattern. There is evidence that visiting unions are inversely associated with the couple's level of education (Boland, 1983; Harewood, 1984). The lower the level of education, the higher the frequency of visiting unions as the initial type of relationship. However, Roberts and Sinclair (1978) observe that people in common-law relationships show the lowest levels of education, and that this trend was first established as far back as the 1943 census. Data from MacFarlane and Warren (1989) support this latter contention: the highest proportion of visiting unions is found among secondary-school graduates.

The visiting type of mating still has a number of disadvantages for women, one being the man's ability to deny paternity or to escape his obligations. This, no doubt, was at the root of R.T. Smith's (1963) earlier charge of avoidance of responsibility. But Roberts and Sinclair (1978) argue that these unions entail advantages as well: independence and freedom from male dominance.

In sum, visiting unions mark the formal start of the conjugal or mating process, though there is evidence to warrant giving this place to casual mating. However, to borrow from Rubin (1978, p. xx), visiting unions are neither as promiscuous as the moralists say, nor as unstable as the structuralists say, nor as responsible for high fertility rates as the family planners say.

One factor that led some observers to assume, incorrectly, that visiting unions were the most fertile was the characteristically early start of child-bearing in the Caribbean. Roughly one quarter of all live births are to women under the age of 19. There is no evidence to suggest that adolescent pregnancy is a new phenomenon; quite the contrary. Early sexuality, which is valued among both males and females, begins between the ages of 14 and 15 for boys, and 16 and 17 for girls. By the time adolescents reach the age of 18 or 19, a majority have already had their first sexual encounter and become sexually active. Teenage pregnancy, far from being anomalous, has been quite normal in the Caribbean.

Also contributing to the tendency towards early pregnancy is the cultural value placed on childbirth as the ultimate fulfilment of womanhood. In a culture without any traditional rite of transition, having a child becomes a way of asserting the change in status from girl to woman.

What has made teenage pregnancy a vexing problem for families is the halt that it brings to a girl's pursuit of a career, and hence her upward mobility and that of her family. She inevitably drops out of school and is unable to resume, even when the family absorbs the newborn, as is the norm.

Understanding the important cultural need to prove one's womanhood, some experts have argued for institutional arrangements that would make it possible for young mothers to get on with their lives. Notable in this regard is the initiative in Jamaica known as the Women's Centre, which operates a rehabilitation programme for teenage mothers. The Centre counsels both expectant mothers and fathers, rebuilds their self-esteem, continues the girls' education during pregnancy and obtains places for them in other secondary schools. The success of the programme may be judged by a consistent repeat pregnancy rate of less than 4%, and expansion of the programme to various urban areas of Jamaica and other countries.

Teenage pregnancy has declined steadily over the past two decades, though it remains high in some countries, such as Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, where 37% of all live births have been to adolescents. This decline seems connected to the decline in the overall birth rate.

Antigua's crude birth rate declined from 21.68 in 1976 to 13.93 in 1988. Saint Kitts and Nevis showed a reduction from 43.14 in 1960 to 23.32 in 1985. In Saint Lucia, the rate fell by one third, to 21.40, over the seven years between 1982 and 1989. Nevertheless, there are indications that sustained attention to the problem of teenage pregnancy may have been responsible for reducing the proportion of live births to adolescents in Jamaica from 30% to 25% between 1977 and 1988.

b) Common-law marriage

The next stage in the mating cycle begins when a man and woman take up common residence. The common-law union retains the voluntary and informal character of the visiting type, but assumes the form of legal marriage through its co-residential nature. Recently, in Jamaica, it has won some legal recognition, in that the surviving spouse of such a union may make claims to the estate of her partner, provided that the union lasted no less than five years.

Notwithstanding this recent change, common-law marriage has the lowest status when measured against socio-economic indicators (Roberts and Sinclair, 1978), and is therefore the predominant type among the poor peasantry. Legal marriage is an ideal to which most common-law partners aspire, and in this respect the common-law union is ideally also a transitional type.

The highest proportion of common-law unions —more than one third— is in the 25-29 age group among women (Roberts and Sinclair, 1978). However, the average age of transition from other types of unions to marriage is 34 years for females and 42 for males (Roberts, 1955).

In more recent years, common-law unions have replaced marriage as the most fertile type of union (Boland, 1983; Harewood, 1984).

Very little is known of sexual relations at this stage of the conjugal cycle. Many men —up to half of the sexually active male population— engage in regular sexual relationships with women other than their main partner. Such relationships are called "outside relationships" and seem to be a function of the male's economic ability to maintain them. Outside relationships are found among men of all ages, but available evidence shows that they are most frequent among young adults.

c) Legal marriage

Marriage represents the culmination of the conjugal cycle which begins with visiting unions. As indicated above, it is usually entered into from the middle of the female reproductive cycle onwards —a little later for males, a little earlier for females.

The first point established about marriage is its legal character. It bestows certain rights and lays certain obligations on the contracting parties.

Second, from the social point of view, marriage confers higher social standing on the parties. This is a constant throughout the literature on the subject, which reveals that status is acquired not just through the act of marrying itself, but also through the conditions attending it, the first and foremost of which is the economic advancement of the male. This condition explains the relative lateness of marriage observed by all scholars, and the elaborate wedding expenses usually incurred by the parties.

A third point is the dominance of the male in marriage. The husband-father, as described by Clarke (1957), is the undisputed authority in the household. In the sexual division of labour, he meets the family's economic requirements, while the wife assumes responsibility for all routine domestic work. Perhaps for this reason, married males participate less in domestic work than males in the other two union types (Chevannes, 1985). Moreover, the former are less likely to use contraceptives than the latter. Why men who would have been willing to carry out certain kinds of domestic work in earlier union types resist these duties once they are married is one aspect of gender-segregated roles that needs

further study. However, if marriage entails respectability in the eyes of society —as Edith Clarke, R.T. Smith and others have demonstrated— and if gender role expectations run along the private (female)-public (male) axis —as Powell (1986) and others have pointed out—, then it is not surprising that the union conferring the most respectability will at the same time be the most markedly segregated by gender roles.

Fourth, until contraceptives were introduced in recent times, marital unions showed higher fertility rates than either common-law or visiting unions. As mentioned earlier, this feature now characterizes common-law unions.

The conjugal cycle that comprises a transition from visiting to common-law to marital unions is undoubtedly cultural. Roberts (1955, p. 199), who argued against the view that it was pathological, showed with Lloyd Braithwaite that mating patterns were different among East Indians in the same population (Roberts and Braithwaite, 1962), among whom the rate of marriage was consistently higher; with Sinclair (1978), he argued that the pattern had been the same since emancipation in 1838. Reviewing the 1970 census data, he compared nuptiality rates in Caribbean islands where the concentration of Africans was over 90% with those in islands where it ranged from 60% to 90% and where it was less than 60%. He found that "where Negro concentration is highest the marriage pattern is overwhelmingly one of low proportions at ages under 20, with pronounced rises, so that at the childbearing period well in excess of one half of the women are married. Where proportions of Negroes fall below 60% marriage is throughout the age scale a much more prominent feature and the increase with rising age means that at the close of the childbearing period the proportions reach 70% [...]" (Roberts, 1979, p. 257).

As far as class is concerned, R.T. Smith (1988, pp. 112 and 377) argues that the differences observed concern the "rate of occurrence and not a difference in systems of mating", meaning that the middle and lower classes practice the same mating patterns, though "the proportion of common-law and visiting unions increases as one moves from the established middle class to the lower class".

Under the weight of these and similar arguments, the issue of irresponsibility and illegitimacy has disappeared from scientific literature. Even the amount of economic support provided by absent fathers is shown by Stycos and Back (1964) to be far greater than generally assumed. However, a more detailed discussion of male behaviour is given below.

The African-Caribbean peoples have a family structure that is culturally acceptable. From their point of view, the important principle underlying their concept of family is neither residence nor domestic economy, but consanguinity, or as they say, **blood**. Family members are those who are bilaterally related by descent from a common ancestor. Each person's family thus has two distinct branches: one established through the mother, the other through the father. The two overlap and unite only through the siblings of a person's own generation by the same parents. This blood principle is effective at two levels: one functional, the other symbolic. Functionally, it entails a moral obligation to render assistance when called upon to do so. The main form such assistance takes is child-rearing and other domestic arrangements. In this way, many household units have come to be composed and structured in the various ways described above. At the same time, once socialization and upbringing have been completed, and children have "passed the worst", all obligations cease and only the symbolic aspect of the blood principle remains.

The most important symbolic institutional arrangement deriving from the blood principle is family land, which is owned corporately by all cognatic descendants of an ancestor for their use. A non-marketable asset, it is held in customary tenure established by oral tradition. Characteristically, family land is

small, but whether small or large it is a productive source of revenue not for the family members as a whole, since the family does not function as a corporation, but for individual members. Since such individual use is often the subject of internal feuds, family land tends to be underused from the viewpoint of production.

As a symbol, however, family land bestows on the family members a sense of identity and solidarity. Where family land is at the same time the site of the household, a burial plot established within the yard serves as a visible link between the living and the dead members of the family. Growing urbanization throughout the Caribbean, however, threatens this important symbol of family.

C. FUNCTIONS

Failure to think of the African-Caribbean family in terms of anything but the nuclear family model has led many to overlook the crucial fact that, as Raymond T. Smith has pointed out, it accomplishes its socializing function. It does this primarily through role expectations that are segregated by gender. Fathers are expected to "mind" their children —that is, to provide economic support— while mothers are expected to "care" for them —that is, to provide emotional support.

The prime socializing agent, then, is the mother. She is the stabilizing influence in the African-Caribbean family. One of the earliest studies, Edith Clarke's *My Mother who Fathered Me*, linked the different types of mating and family composition to the family's economic circumstances. The wealthiest of the three communities studied showed high rates of marriage and pronounced patriarchal relations, while the poorest showed a low incidence of marriage, a higher rate of mother-centredness and little male involvement in the home. Nevertheless, Clarke found that, regardless of class differences, children's most intimate relationship was with the mother, "even in those cases where the father is present and associates himself with the upbringing of the child"; conversely, the father is "always more strict, more exacting and infinitely less well-known" (Edith Clarke, 1957, pp. 158-159); fathers entertained great hopes for their children, but these were attainable only among the most well-to-do.

A man's authority within the family derives from his status as husband and father, since his main function is that of provider. If he is unable to fulfil his role as provider, he will be unable to assert his authority over his wife and children. If he does not live with his children, he effectively relinquishes his rights as their father. However, this does not imply a total breakdown. As R.T. Smith notes, "there is the general social acceptance that every individual has both a mother and a father" (1970, p. 134). As an ideal, this means that even if the father is not present, he is identified and recognized. The child's contact with him is maintained through visits if he lives in the same village, or through presents from him. It is therefore not normal for a child to be without a father. Second, children are never without father-substitutes, for every woman will have some semi-permanent liaisons with one or several men. Third, fathers are mainly providers, seldom acting as enforcers of discipline; though they head their households, they are "on the fringe of the effective ties which bind the group together" (1970, p. 223). It is the woman as mother around whom activities in the household are centred. In this respect, the family is "matrifocal".

Thus, mothers —not fathers— are the main socializing agents for both male and female children, regardless of the structure of the family or type of marital union. Because fathers or father-figures function mainly as providers, they tend to be marginal in the day-to-day relationships of the household, though not entirely absent. The poorer and more materially deprived men are, the greater their marginality, and the greater the role of women as well. Conversely, the better off they are, the more active they tend to be as sources of patriarchal authority over their spouse and children.

Since the problems associated with the family structure are assumed to emanate from the husband-father, it may be useful to cite some of the findings of Brown and others (1993) about the role of men in the family. Conducted in two rural and two urban communities in Jamaica, the study clarifies a number of important concepts at the heart of family relations. First, with respect to headship, it reinforces earlier findings that in the Caribbean, women will defer headship to men even when they themselves are financial contributors to or de facto managers of the household,[3] but also establishes that "a man's firm and respected place in the family as rightful head is attached to the condition of economic support" (Powell, 1986, p. 61). Economic support is his main responsibility. Even his manhood, both men and women in the study agree, is linked to it (Brown and others, 1993).

Second, men distinguish "having" a child from "getting" one. Having a child means accepting responsibility as the father —i.e., the obligation to provide—, whereas getting a child merely establishes unwanted paternity. To have a child is to become father to it. Fatherhood is therefore both biological and social and is critical to men's self-esteem. Three quarters of the men surveyed reported that "they would have negative self-assessments if they had been unable to father children, while the proportion who said that having children had changed their lives ranged from 64 percent to 87 percent" (Brown and others, 1993, pp. 138-139).

The powerful and even primordial feelings which men had about fatherhood came tumbling out in response to the question of how they thought they would feel if they had no children. This intensity was evident from the language in which they phrased their replies:

"I would feel like a bird without a wing"
"I would feel like a tree in a forest without leaves"
"I would feel no good as a man"
"Like a eunuch"
"I would feel haunted"
"Like I am wasting my time"
"Jealous of others who have"
"I would run away from my wife"

Other adjectives included: useless, empty, lonely, embarrassed, irresponsible, unbalanced, strange (Powell, 1986, p. 139).

Fathering children was described by the men as a moral duty and a law of nature, "since children were part of the man" (Powell, 1986, p. 161). Some respondents likened impregnation to disturbing children where they were, and therefore felt that they carried the greater responsibility for their children's life.

As far as the content of fathering goes, apart from meeting economic needs, a large majority of the men in the sample claimed to play with their children and counsel them every day. Between 40% and 50% stayed with them daily; a slightly smaller proportion helped them with homework, and approximately one third tidied them —both as daily chores.

The authors' most disturbing finding was the neglect of outside children; that is, children born outside the current union. When fathers had only outside children, their frequency of contact was higher than in cases where they also had inside children. Thus, the neglect of outside children was associated with the presence of inside children. Considering that a majority of the men had at least one outside child, since 45% of the total sample had two or more babymothers, the magnitude of the problem is apparent. And although, as indicated above, it should not be assumed that outside children are deprived of father-substitutes, the pressure that this places on single mothers is great indeed.

With respect to one-parent households, a comparison between the total proportion of heads of household and the percentage who are working

3 "For the large majority of women in unions, the male spouse is head. Based on these figures, the conclusion is that female headship is confined largely to households in which a man in the role of husband/partner is absent" (Powell, 1986, p. 104).

conveys an idea of the type of pressure that besets women who have to assume the role of both main provider and nurturer of their children. Table 5 shows that approximately four out of every ten households are headed by women. But whereas most male heads of household are employed (two thirds in Jamaica, three quarters in Barbados and between eight and nine out of ten in Saint Lucia and Guyana), only a minority of female heads have jobs (one quarter in Barbados, one third in Jamaica and Guyana and between four and five out of ten in Saint Lucia). As indicated above, female headship usually implies the absence or lack of a male partner. It can therefore be inferred that the burden on female heads as a group is especially severe.

Table 5

ENGLISH-SPEAKING CARIBBEAN (4 COUNTRIES): HEADS OF HOUSEHOLD ACCORDING TO GENDER AND EMPLOYMENT STATUS

(Percentages)

Country	Total		Employed	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Barbados	56.0	44.0	75.3	24.7
Guyana	76.0	24.0	84.0	34.5
Jamaica	62.0	38.0	66.0	37.0
Saint Lucia	61.0	39.0	83.0	43.0

Source: Population censuses, 1980, and population census of Jamaica, 1982.

As a phenomenon, female headship arises from two sources. One is the longer life expectancy of females. Households that become female-headed in this way are usually vertically extended —the "grandmother household" described by the earliest generation of scholars. The other source is the breakup of unions and the women's failure to establish new ones. These households may or may not be nuclear, though the younger the head, the more likely it is that the household will comprise only the woman and her children. Subsequent establishment of a visiting relationship does nothing to alter female headship, and many women prefer such a state of affairs because it affords them independence from male control. Nevertheless, for the sake of the children, some women revert to other unions.

This is where the family, in the sense discussed above, becomes a buttress of support. Children may be sent to stay with grandparents, older siblings, uncles, aunts or other blood relatives, including their own fathers, until the situation improves or on a permanent basis.

Given the tendency of visiting and common-law unions to break up in the early child-bearing years, a cultural pattern may correctly be inferred from it, which sociologists and demographers calculate at roughly one third. Rates higher than this, however, tend to be associated with increased impoverishment, as many unions become casualties of men's failure to live up to their expected role as providers. In Jamaica, where nearly 30% of the population lives in the Kingston metropolitan area, the proportion of household heads who are female rose to 44% during the 1980s, while in the inner-city area, characterized by substandard housing, overcrowding, high unemployment and crime, the proportion rose to 52%. Many of these inner-city areas, which house the indigent and destitute, "are now more closely connected to the illegal underground Brooklyn economy than they are to the Jamaican economy" (Robotham, 1991, p. 11). The reference, of course, is to drug trafficking. Not surprisingly, the greatest problems identified by inner-city residents are unemployment and lack of housing.

These conditions pose great problems in the socialization process. Studies carried out over the years by both undergraduate and postgraduate students in the Faculty of Education at the Mona campus of the University of the West Indies link poor primary- and secondary-school performance with impoverished conditions at home. Poor school performance generally leads to poor preparation for the labour market, and this in turn reproduces another generation of poor people. When mothers

are also the sole providers, the problem is worsened by the large number of children. Unable to exercise parental guidance and to provide adequately, these parents leave children to their own devices. Many boys drop out of school and become street children; their sisters become the girlfriends of men of means.

D. POLITICAL ECONOMY OF THE FAMILY

All of the Caribbean economies are based on the production and export of primary commodities: sugar and bananas, but also bauxite. Sugar has been the mainstay for 300 years and was the reason for European enslavement of the Africans in the first place and indentureship of the Indians and Chinese throughout the nineteenth century. Sugar production was plantation-based. Banana production, which started in the final decades of the nineteenth century, became an important source of development for the peasantry, a relationship that has continued up the present in the Windward group of islands, except Grenada, which produces nutmeg.

Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago are the only countries with mining industries: the first two produce bauxite, while the third produces oil and asphalt.

Over the last 40 years, attention has increasingly turned to the development of tourism as an important source of revenue. Tourism has become the largest contributor to gross domestic product (GDP) in Antigua, where it accounts for 67%, and in Jamaica it competes with bauxite for first place.

All the countries of the subregion have been prone to high rates of inflation, largely because of their heavy reliance on imports, and every one of them experienced two-digit rates of inflation in the 1980s, as well as balance-of-trade deficits. The Caribbean economies are therefore dependent and quite vulnerable to external shifts and shocks. The guaranteed market for commodities agreed upon under the Lomé Convention has had to be renegotiated following European unification in 1992.

During the 1980s the external debt increased significantly throughout the Caribbean. Jamaica's total external debt mounted to US$ 4.5 billion, or US$ 1,800 per capita. Its debt service ratio in 1989 was in excess of 40% of export revenue. With a population of 70,000, Antigua saw its debt rise to US$ 422 million, but the country has managed to keep its debt service to 8.9% of GDP. Debt service in other countries ranges from a mere 4% to over 13%.

1. Structural adjustment

All the Caribbean countries have had to undergo structural adjustment programmes, most of them voluntary. The programmes entail cut-backs in public-sector employment, privatization of public entities, liberalization of import restrictions and elimination of subsidies, among other things. Both Jamaica (over the past 15 years) and Trinidad and Tobago (more recently) have recorded currency devaluations.

Jamaica's structural adjustment —the earliest— was part of an agreement with the International Monetary Fund. From a rate of J$ 1.78 per United States dollar, Jamaica's currency fell to an all-time low of J$ 28.0 in June 1992, but has since stabilized at J$ 23. Public-sector employment was cut by over 25%. The result of these and other measures was a sharp rise in the cost of living, an elevation of the poverty threshold and a decline in the health status of vulnerable sectors of the population (IDB, 1992).

Data obtained from the Jamaican Ministry of Health reveal that the cost of feeding a family of five for one week rose from J$ 24.27 in mid-1979 to J$ 207.04 by the end of 1989, while the statutory minimum wage moved from J$ 26 to J$ 84. Thus, while the minimum wage as a percentage of food costs stood at 107% in 1979, by the end of 1989 it had dropped to 40.6%. This means that the combined income of a family with two adult members earning the minimum wage

would fall nearly 20% short of the weekly requirement for the purchase of food alone. Such a family would have nothing to spend on clothing, shelter or transportation.

Using similar data to construct a poverty line, sociologists of the University of the West Indies calculate that 30% of the people living in the Kingston metropolitan area are poor, while half of that group are destitute. For rural areas, the poverty rate is estimated at 41%. The mean per capita expenditure of small-farmer households is 40% below the national average.

At the same time, it should be pointed out that the impact of structural adjustment is not always negative. Indeed, the aim is to build a stronger economy in the long run. Anderson and Witter (1991, p. 73) show that the ratio of individual earnings of employed heads of household to the minimum required income improved between 1985 (when Jamaica's structural adjustment programme was at its height) and 1989. The proportion of all heads of household earning up to half the minimum declined from 55.9% to 44.3% between 1985 and 1989. At the same time, the proportion earning up to one quarter more has grown from 5.1% to 8.9%, while the proportion earning up to twice the minimum has risen from 8% to 11.2%.

Women's participation in the labour force has also increased under structural adjustment. In Jamaica, it is well known that most of that increase is in low-paying jobs in the free-zone garment industry. In Antigua and Barbuda, women's labour-force participation rose from 38% in 1970 to 46% in 1982 and, following the restructuring of the economy around tourism, is expected to show further increases once figures from the recently conducted census are available. Saint Kitts shows a similar increase, from 40% in 1980 to 48% in 1987, owing mainly to free zone-type manufacturing. Indeed, women's participation rates have risen in the Caribbean as a whole. However, they are well below what they were a century ago, owing mainly to the decline in agricultural production (Reddock, 1989).

As the cost of food has risen, malnutrition has spread. Apart from the fact that the food intake of the poorest households is well below the recommended daily allowance of energy and protein, UNICEF (1991, p. 39) has shown that between 1979 and 1989, "as purchasing power decreased, the number of [hospital] admissions for malnutrition increased. Decreases in admissions in 1987 and 1988 were accompanied by a stabilization of food costs".

Even the Leeward Islands (Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Saint Kitts and Nevis and Montserrat), whose economies are the strongest in the anglophone Caribbean, have had to undergo structural adjustment. Expenditure on health and education has stagnated, and the civil service, which is the largest employer, has been whittled down and wage restraints imposed.

2. Urbanization and migration

Impoverishment, whether attributable to man or to natural disaster, has from time immemorial forced peoples to migrate. In the Caribbean, it explains why more of the nationals of some islands live outside their country than inside, and also accounts for the growth of cities in the subregion.

Opportunities for the emigration of Caribbean peoples opened up in the last quarter of the nineteenth century with the development of banana production in Central America and the construction of the Panama Canal. Later, in the early decades of the twentieth century, the United States and Cuba became destinations. To this day, there are enclaves of people in Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Panama and Cuba who can trace their ancestry back to the anglophone Caribbean.

The closure of these outlets in the 1920s led to the rapid expansion of cities such as Kingston in Jamaica and Port of Spain in Trinidad and Tobago.

For two decades after the end of the Second World War, the United Kingdom was the main destination for tens of

thousands of Caribbean nationals, until immigration policies in that country changed in 1962. Thereafter, Canada and the United States received steady streams of migrants. This movement continues up to the present time and, together with contraceptive programmes, has helped to slow down the rate of population growth. With more than 20,000 people emigrating each year, Jamaica's growth rate has declined from 5.54 in 1970 to 3.48 in 1980 and 2.90 in 1989. In the Leeward and Windward Islands, the growth rate has been less than 2.0. Indeed, in five of the nine intercensal periods between 1871 and 1980, Saint Kitts and Nevis recorded negative growth, first in 1901, 1911 and 1921, and later in 1970 and 1980. For Nevis alone, the loss in 1980 was shown to be on the order of 1.62.

External migration is not without its impact on the family. In the movement to the United Kingdom, females were generally outnumbered by males, who found work in the transport and postal services. Often the migrants were reunited with their spouses before being reunited with their children. Some men used migration to escape from previously established relationships and obligations, but generally these were the exceptions. Since the 1970s, however, the gender bias has shifted towards women, who work either as domestic employees or as trained professional teachers and nurses. This circumstance has brought about a novel and as yet unresearched situation in some countries: fathers who are raising their children without female support.

The reunion of families continues apace, but is affected by the unhealthy state of the host countries' economies. One trade-off for the temporary separation is the level of remittances home, which in some countries equals more than 40% of GDP.

The search for better opportunities for advancement also results in the growth of cities. Saint John's, the capital of Antigua, now accommodates 55% of the total population of Antigua and Barbuda, while half of the Jamaican population lives in that island's cities and towns. This growth places great stress on the physical environment as well as on social services. Slums such as Riverton City in Kingston and Green Bay-Gray's Farm in Saint John's represent high concentrations of poverty, accompanied by improper disposal of faecal and solid wastes and degradation of the environment. Infant morbidity, especially respiratory tract infections and gastro-enteritis, and malnutrition are higher among residents of these areas.

Yet rural areas as a whole consistently experience greater poverty. In 1977, for example, according to Anderson and Witter (1991, p. 78), the proportion of employed rural workers in Jamaica earning half or less of the minimum required family income was nearly four and a half times greater than the proportion of urban workers in that situation (42.2% versus 9.7%). On the other hand, the proportion of urban workers earning more than two or three times the minimum outnumbered their rural counterparts by two to one. Moreover, analysing data from the 1989 survey of living conditions carried out by the Planning Institute of Jamaica, UNICEF reported that:

> "the poorest quintile were more likely to live in rural areas, to be employed as small farmers or wage-workers in agriculture, to have low education, or to live in female-headed households. ... Rural poverty was found to be extensive, with 40.0% of the rural population and 32.5% of rural households below the poverty line in July 1989" (UNICEF/PIOJ, 1991).

The survey also established that, whereas the food gap was on the order of 21.7% in the Kingston metropolitan area, meaning that the urban poor were, on average, spending over 21.7% less on their nutritional needs than the non-poor, the gap was 34.6% in rural areas.

The situation, therefore, is one in which urban poverty is more concentrated and more visible, but in reality less intense, than rural poverty. Without programmes to alleviate rural impoverishment, migration to cities will prove impossible to halt.

E. MALFUNCTIONS

Notwithstanding the misconceptions about the Caribbean family that have dogged its history, there are critical problems that must be faced. The first has to do with the male, both adult and child. There is growing concern that the upward mobility and achievement evinced by women is being matched by a converse movement among men. The vehicle of social progress traditional to the Caribbean, namely education, provides the best example of the problem. At all levels of the education system, females are outperforming males. In Jamaica, the pattern of enrolment is now biased towards females at the high-school level. The same is observed in Trinidad and Tobago, even among the Indian population, which had until recently maintained a traditional cultural bias towards the male. At the University of the West Indies, which serves the anglophone Caribbean, two thirds of all 1992 graduates at Mona, Jamaica, were women.

Using these and similar data, Miller (1989) argues that women's advancement is a function of efforts by the traditional wielders of power to marginalize black Jamaican males and prevent them from challenging the power structure. Thus, women's upward mobility is accompanied by men's downward mobility, and therefore does not constitute structural change. In a later publication, Miller (1991) universalized this argument, adding data from the United States and the former Soviet Union.

Some commentators argue, however, that such data do not prove anything pathological about the behaviour of males, only that they no longer consider education as an avenue for upward mobility. To find out what men are doing, they say, one must look at the small-business and informal sectors, where many men are involved in high-risk activities. Whether this argument is sound or not, the undeniable fact is that crime rates have been increasing across the Caribbean, and the main offenders are male, including juveniles. The leading criminal activities are burglaries and break-ins. In Jamaica, where political cleavages drew adolescents into gun-related crimes backed by local "dons", the trafficking and abuse of psychoactive substances, especially cocaine, have transformed the quality of crime. The homicide rate is growing steadily year after year in Jamaica and now approaches the all-time high recorded in 1980, when political violence claimed the lives of over 800 persons, most of them in metropolitan Kingston.

Street children pose another problem. "Street children" must be distinguished from "children on the streets". The latter have homes to which they return at the end of the day. Usually organized by parents to sell various commodities, they are most noticeable on market days. A recent study in a small section of Kingston discovered that many children on the streets attended school from Monday to Thursday, but dropped out on Friday to participate in marketing, which traditionally intensifies on the weekends. This trend in school attendance is a long-established pattern throughout the Caribbean, as children are drawn into family labour in a weekly or seasonal cycle.

Street children, in contrast, live on the streets, in nooks and alley-ways, abandoned cars, bus stops or anywhere else they can find shelter. Although the problem is not so serious in the smaller islands, where such children are known and can be identified, it has caused enough concern in larger countries such as Jamaica to prompt non-governmental organizations to take action to rehabilitate street children. Virtually all street children are male, and many have been victims of sexual abuse.

A second problem concerns single female heads of household, the type most prevalent in inner-city slums and ghettos. Those who work often do so at the expense of their children's socialization; those who do not quite often are engaged in illegal activities such as prostitution. It is instructive to note that, according to a survey, the most frequently cited place for

first sex among adolescents and young adults in Jamaica was the home before parents returned from work.

Third is the problem of abuse of women and children. Woman-beating, though it is becoming less frequent, is none the less still quite prevalent. Because it is culturally permissible, it seldom prompts intervention by outsiders or police. Rape, incest between fathers or stepfathers and their daughters or stepdaughters, and carnal knowledge of non-related minors are offences that have been attracting wide attention, owing mainly to the effective lobbying of women's movements in the subregion.

F. THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Over the past 15 to 20 years, some progress has been made in exposing the archaism of the laws and their inadequacy to advance the interests of family members, particularly women and children. To cite one example, up to 1991 in Antigua the rape of a female under the age of 16 —the age of consent— was classified as indecent assault. But whereas rape carried a maximum penalty of 20 years' imprisonment, indecent assault carried a maximum of two years. Thus, the law protected women but discriminated against their daughters.

Many countries of the anglophone Caribbean, stimulated by external as well as internal pressure, have used the authority of their legislatures and government bureaucracies to protect women. One of the most important measures has been the Status of Children Act, which eliminated the status of illegitimacy. Before its adoption, children born out of wedlock were classified as such and could not inherit if their fathers died intestate. As Roberts stated, an "illegitimacy" rate of up to 70% in some countries is an indication of nothing other than a mating pattern *sui generis*, rather than a manifestation of pathology. A number of countries, however, particularly those where the majority of the population is Catholic, still retain the status of illegitimacy.

In some countries, such as Jamaica, the Act also makes it possible for a woman who has been a man's common-law spouse for at least five years to inherit his assets should he die intestate. This amendment of the Status of Children Act, therefore, represents a partial triumph of cultural practices over colonial prejudices —partial, in the sense that common law is not fully recognized, for only a legally married wife, not a common-law spouse, may be entitled to support from her husband's estate even if provision is made to the contrary in his will.

In other areas, women have won the right to maternity leave, which amounts to as many as three months with pay and three months without pay in some islands, such as Saint Kitts and Nevis and Jamaica. Other countries of the region observe this right indirectly through national health insurance schemes.

Under British law as adopted by the anglophone Caribbean islands, a wife had chattel status in relation to her husband. She could not by law refuse him sexual access. Women in Trinidad and Tobago have succeeded in making marital rape an offence punishable by law. Other countries are planning to follow suit.

The establishment of a family court in Jamaica has provided a forum for the settlement of family disputes through arbitration and counselling, in addition to force.

Since the United Nations Decade for Women, many countries have instituted bureaus of women's affairs or women's desks to promote the general welfare of women at the level of political decision-making.

Notwithstanding these advances, far more needs to be done. In the area of employment, women throughout the Caribbean are paid at lower rates than men. Jamaica is the only country that has instituted equal pay legislation. Some low rates may be justified by the menial status of many of the jobs performed by women, but the differentials are too uniform not to be discriminatory. One study showed

"that female-headed households in urban areas of Jamaica had an average monthly income which was 22 percent less than the average monthly income of households headed by a co-resident couple" (Davies and Anderson, 1986, p. 224).

Some countries still find it difficult to institute certain measures because of strong religious barriers. For example, family planning programmes have to be downplayed in some islands. Saint Lucia, where 85% of all live births take place outside marriage, has been unable to erase completely the distinction between legitimacy and illegitimacy: children born in wedlock are entitled to maintenance of $75 per week; those born out of wedlock, to only $25 (Peters, 1991, p. viii).

G. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The African-Caribbean family has represented a great challenge to social scientists and reformers over the past 60 years. One reason for this is that it has been approached according to the model of the Western nuclear family and Western conjugal form. Indeed, during the 1940s, the wife of the colonial governor spearheaded an attempt to raise the rate of legal marriage by providing couples with money to purchase wedding rings and host a big feast. Known as the mass marriage movement, it assumed that when people said they did not have the money to marry, they were referring to these expenses. What they in fact meant was that they had not yet achieved the economic **status** to make marriage meaningful. It was not the inability to put on a big feast that deterred people from getting married, but the inability to reach and maintain economic stability. The mass marriage movement failed.

A more fruitful approach to the family must begin with what is culturally normative. For example, there can be little doubt that conjugal forms are a function of both economic stability and cultural values. While it is true that people will get married only when they are economically secure, a status which generally comes later in life, it is also true that they will get married only when they are confident about their mutual compatibility. African-Caribbean peoples regard marriage as binding and permanent. Thus, there is a need for counselling to focus on the quality of relationships rather than on the forms the relationships take. The aim should be not necessarily to persuade couples to become legally married, but to empower them to find appropriate solutions, especially with a view to creating deeper and more lasting bonds.

A second subject on which more attention should be focused is the male. Men's importance in fertility matters was first recognized when women began citing their spouse as the source of their resistance to family planning. Further, the impetus given to the advancement of women by the United Nations Decade for Women, not least the general heightening of awareness of the injustice of the status differences between men and women, has broadened gender concerns to include males.

In this regard, special mention should be made of the plight of the female-headed household. What has emerged clearly so far is that its incidence, beyond the levels that are the normal result of death, divorce or legal or voluntary separation, is directly related to poverty. However, the extent to which men are reluctant to maintain functional relationships unless they can first maintain their primary role, that of providing, is not yet sufficiently understood. It is generally assumed that the impoverished condition of households headed by a single female is attributable to male delinquency, but more research is needed to find out whether male delinquency may not itself be linked to poverty. Kaztman (1992), reviewing data for Latin America, makes a similar proposal. If such a link exists, policies to alleviate the effects of structural adjustment, such as Jamaica's food stamp programme, should target not only females, but males as well. They must also seek to give both men and women the capacity to rise above their situation.

The problem of the outside child must also be addressed. The men in the study by Brown and others (1993) who reported that they had been unhappy at the age of 12 mentioned separation from a parent as one of the reasons. As far as their current satisfaction with their own fathering role was concerned, there was consistently greater dissatisfaction among those with outside children than those without. That dissatisfaction did not derive solely from a lack of economic resources, but from a lack of contact as well, as many men reported resentment on the part of their spouse. The solution is rooted in the ability of young men and women to postpone pregnancy. Given certain cultural regularities, the continued promotion of contraceptive use offers real prospects for reducing the number of children who, through no fault of their own, are separated from their fathers.

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Chapter IV

THE URBAN FAMILY AND POVERTY IN LATIN AMERICA

A. PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

Without a doubt, the 1980s were a period of change throughout Latin America. The region's economies, the structure of labour markets and the organization of households underwent changes that have left their mark on the evolution of Latin American societies. In the decades of boom and growth (the 1960s and 1970s), poverty decreased and the middle class increased as non-manual jobs proliferated and wages rose. The crisis of the 1980s changed the course of the region's societies and, to a large extent, reversed the trends established in previous decades. One of the most alarming effects of this change was the increase in poverty, reflected in the larger number of individuals and families living in precarious conditions, with very meagre resources on which to survive.[1] In some countries, such as Argentina and Chile, poverty doubled in the 1980s (ECLAC, 1992a). Workers' real income in the mid-1980s was similar to what it had been several decades earlier. That is why the 1980s came to be known as the "lost decade".

The Latin American economies have undergone a structural adjustment process which has involved changes and transformations in domestic and family economies. The division of labour, consumption and patterns of household organization have also been restructured. The restructuring of households and their capacity to adapt and flexibly manage scarce resources kept income in working-class urban households from falling as drastically as individual wages and income. The sense of collectivity and unity provided by the domestic group served to cushion the blow dealt by the crisis, as individuals redoubled their efforts, worked harder and increased their contributions, though not without significantly greater pressure, conflict and trade-offs between household members and the collective interests of the domestic group (Benería, 1992; González de la Rocha, 1991). This seems to have been a discernible pattern in most Latin American cities (Fortuna and Prates, 1989; Hardy, 1989; Ortega and Tironi, 1988; Pastore and others, 1983; Schkolnik and Teitelboim, 1988).

i) *Family and domestic responses to the aggravation of poverty.* This chapter

1 Indexes for measuring the extent of poverty vary according to the indicators used. The most appropriate are those used by ECLAC, Ortega and Tironi and other authors, which are based on the level of household income and its capacity to satisfy basic needs. This method, the "income method", is based on the calculation of poverty lines by analysing the ratio between the cost of a basic food basket and the level of household income (ECLAC, 1991; Ortega and Tironi, 1988).

analyses the mechanisms that households have used to deal with the changes forced on them or generated by economic policies. Some of the factors that enter into the process of reproducing poverty from one generation to another are also explored, with the aim of forming a sounder basis on which to design public welfare policy. Specifically, this chapter affirms the pressing need to provide support to certain types of poor urban households which, because of their particular characteristics, are especially vulnerable: very young, very old and female-headed households. It also suggests that the special needs of certain individuals within poor households —especially children and women, who are in subordinate positions and receive fewer benefits— must be identified. Efforts to measure and promote well-being must take into account the heterogeneity existing within domestic units and the differentiated positions individuals hold within households (Blumberg, 1991; González de la Rocha, 1986 and 1993).

ii) *Households as active social units and not simply the objects of external processes, forces and policies.* Individuals are organized in domestic groups[2] and this organization is the basis for survival and reproduction in urban contexts, which, as described below, are characterized by a high incidence of poverty. The actions undertaken by individuals as part of the organization of family and domestic life have been described as "the resources of poverty" (González de la Rocha, 1986). Implicit in these actions and in the social organization of households is the dynamism and capacity for action and resource management which, although limited, make it possible for the urban poor to survive in the persistent poverty of Latin American cities.

iii) *Internal differentiation of domestic groups.* The approach taken in this chapter does not presuppose a harmonious, undifferentiated environment. There is sufficient evidence to show that domestic groups are internally differentiated and that power relationships exist between individuals who hold different positions in the home. It has also been observed that relationships of domination and subordination, and processes of conflict and negotiation in the sometimes violent clashes between individual interests and between individual and collective interests, are based on a domestic hierarchy where gender and generation are the most important criteria. Households, then, combine relations of solidarity, affection and cooperation —which facilitate their members' life together and enable households to function as social units of labour, survival and reproduction— with the clash of interests, negotiation and conflict. In this connection, and based on analyses done in Mexico, it seems that the crisis of the 1980s aggravated the contradiction between the solidarity, unity and cooperation among household members that are necessary for intensifying labour, on the one hand, and conflict and negotiation of individual and family interests, on the other (González de la Rocha, 1991).

Even though individuals also responded to the crisis by taking part in social movements and mass protests, this chapter contends that such responses largely took shape within the home, and accordingly describes the "privatization" of the crisis and the measures taken to deal with it.

Recognizing the dynamism of the activities undertaken by household

2 The term "domestic group" (household or domestic unit) refers to a set of individuals who, whether or not they are related by kinship, share a residence and a common social and economic organization (shared consumption, division of labour, etc.). Although emphasis is placed on the need to distinguish between the concepts of "domestic group" and "family" to highlight the notions of shared organization of reproduction and co-residence, on the one hand, and kinship and family relations, on the other, the two terms are used interchangeably here. In this context, "family" does not refer to the social institution consisting exclusively of persons related by kinship ties, but to households, groups or domestic units that share a home.

members and understanding the bases of domestic organization are important not only for elucidating how domestic groups organize and struggle to survive day in and day out. The dynamism and capacity to act of domestic groups must be priority elements to be taken into account in the design and implementation of social policies if domestic groups are to act as vehicles of change and not only of survival.

B. TRENDS IN POVERTY AND PROFILES OF POOR HOUSEHOLDS IN THE REGION

After two decades of more or less steady economic growth, Latin America in the 1980s was characterized by economic recession and the after-effects of the crisis. Both the boom and the recession had a strong impact on the organization and economy of domestic groups, owing to the conditions imposed on workers and their families, in the one case, and the opportunities available to them in the other. The era of economic growth had created new options and alternatives in terms of both employment and working conditions. Wage increases had led to increased participation in the goods and services markets, thereby increasing consumption and consolidating the domestic market for manufactured goods in each of the Latin American countries. Employment and consumption opportunities moulded family and domestic survival and reproduction initiatives and strategies.

In times of economic growth, there is greater dependence on factors external to the domestic group that are vital to survival and reproduction. The opposite occurs in times of recession and scarcity, when the available and "unavailable" members of households[3] are forced to increase paid labour, work longer hours, partially withdraw from the goods and services markets by reducing consumption and increasing the domestic labour of women and children, etc. While growth offered outside options to the domestic group —particularly employment options—, the crisis and the adjustment and restructuring measures narrowed the range of such options, with the result that workers and their families had to put more pressure on "internal" resources such as the labour of adult males and of women, children and adolescents, and took steps to reduce consumption by trimming family budgets and making changes in the use of individuals' time and the division of household labour. Although domestic organization and modifications have a dynamic all their own, they are moulded and conditioned by the external context. Not all urban working-class households, however, are equally equipped to respond to situations of prosperity and growth or of economic hardship. There are households whose vulnerability —in terms of their social apparatus and their economic base, which consists essentially of their manpower— makes them less capable of "seizing" labour market opportunities that arise in periods of prosperity and increased employment, and less capable of "defending" themselves against plummeting wages and economic deterioration.

1. Economic growth and its impact on domestic organization

In the 1960s and 1970s, most Latin American countries experienced a process of considerable economic growth, accelerated urbanization, increased employment and changes in occupational structures. Industrial activities were consolidated and acquired greater importance as sources of employment and income. Personal services, as well as financial and productive ones, also grew in importance as sources of employment and as mainstays of a flourishing industrial sector. Rural-to-urban

3 "Unavailable" members are those under 15 years of age and elderly persons. For a more precise definition of available and unavailable members, see Pastore and others (1983, p. 18).

migration increased and the cities became not only places where jobs were more likely to be found and it was more desirable to work, but also where life was more attractive and more viable.

Growth was doubtless reflected in the population's levels of well-being. From 1970 to 1976, the extent of poverty decreased considerably. The proportion of middle- and high-income families rose, with the result that the middle classes expanded and their patterns of high consumption of sophisticated goods and services were consolidated.[4] Non-manual jobs increased and job mobility rates were high. Although, in the case of Mexico, growth was accompanied by the proliferation of slums and urban settlements with substandard infrastructure where the underprivileged settled, there are indications that wages went up.

Despite the increase in certain indexes of well-being and growth in the 1960s and 1970s, poverty —though it affected a smaller percentage of the total population— remained a dominant characteristic of the region. In the early 1970s, 40% of the region's people were living in poverty. In 1980, poor people accounted for 35% of the Latin American population (ECLAC, 1991).

The period of economic buoyancy, reflected in the overall figures, has also been emphasized in specific analyses of well-being and family organization. Vital changes occurred in urban households. Brazil, predominantly and irreversibly urban, and one of the countries with the region's highest indexes of poverty and social inequality, is an illustration of the social changes that took place in urban households in the era of economic growth. The Brazilian family, according to a study by Pastore, Zylberstajn and Pagotto (1983), was the true reflection of the huge change that took place in Brazil in the 1960s and 1970s, which were marked by continuous, fast-paced economic growth and profound demographic changes. In the 1970s, Brazil saw a decline in demographic growth.[5]

The relatively lower percentage of young people and the growing percentage of adults were accentuated in the 1970s. In the early phases of population ageing, the available labour force increased and households had more members who participated in the labour market, which had been enlarged by the expansion of manufacturing and services. Thus, the increase in Brazil's economically active population in the 1970s was faster than overall population growth (50% versus 25%), owing partly to the stepped-up dissemination of the use of contraceptives among women of child-bearing age (García and others, 1983).

Another process observed in the region's societies, along with population ageing, is the growing participation of women in the labour market. In the decades leading up to the 1970s, a trend towards increased participation by women in the economy was already becoming apparent. Women participated in the informal economy in undeclared jobs in small industrial and service enterprises, but mainly, and increasingly, in formal employment, including manufacturing and State-operated services. By and large, they were single women without domestic responsibilities and with above-average education, who doubtless represented a select type of working woman. This trend later reversed itself somewhat when female participation in urban labour markets became a survival mechanism for thousands of families impoverished by the crisis. The changes discussed below are

4 In Brazil, the proportion of middle-class families (with income higher than five times the minimum wage) went from 1/20 in 1970 (963,300) to 1/4 in 1976 (5,576,700) (Singer, 1986). The larger number of non-manual jobs and the higher rates of job mobility seem to have reflected a general trend.

5 García, Muñoz and de Oliveira (1983) described similar trends in their study on Brazilian cities. Subsequently, there was a slow-down in population growth (see Pacheco, 1993).

particularly interesting because they provide insights into how households respond to situations of prosperity and economic growth.

a) Changes in household size and structure

The size of households shrank during the 1970s. It seems that poor families became smaller, while the size of more well-to-do families did not decrease as much. Possibly, most of the families that emerged from poverty in those years were large or medium-sized. It is well known that the size of domestic units is related to the phase of the domestic cycle the family is in, tending to be small in the early stage of expansion, when the couple begin their life together and their reproductive life, and becoming larger in later stages. It is also known that the phases of the domestic cycle are associated not only with the size of the household but also with income-generating capacity and, therefore, with levels of economic well-being. Thus, consolidated households, where the children are grown and are able to work, are often extended households with greater income-generating capacity, given their real possibilities of sending a larger contingent of individuals out to the labour market. Similarly, young or elderly households are usually nuclear families with a large number of dependents. They are therefore unable to generate multiple incomes and, in fact, their total and per capita income levels are lower (González de la Rocha, 1986). In other words, not all urban households are affected alike in situations and times of growth and economic prosperity, as their ability to take advantage of new options varies according to the internal characteristics of the households and the phase of the domestic cycle they are in. Consolidated, mature homes composed of individuals capable of entering labour markets were able to generate more income and thus to move out of the urban poor category.

Two noteworthy phenomena in the decade were the rise in female-headed households, especially among poor families, and the relative decrease in extended households. Nuclear households were in the majority and their relative proportion increased slightly between 1970 and 1980 (from 68.4% to 68.9%). The vulnerability of female-headed households has been the subject of many studies which analyse the reasons why their income levels are consistently lower than those of households headed by men.

b) Participation in the labour market and household economies

Household members' participation in the labour market increased. There was a considerable decline in the number of households in which more than one available member was unemployed or underemployed and a rise in the number of households in which all available members were working. The incorporation of women —both housewives and single young women— into the labour market increased (García and others, 1982). Many of the jobs in the tertiary sector, which expanded more than any other in the 1970s, were secured by women. Those already employed, however, also worked harder. The Pastore study found that the percentage of urban families that showed signs of overwork (as "unavailable" members began to work and available members worked more hours) increased from 35% in 1970 to 49% in 1980. While it is true that this labour force ended up mainly in the tertiary sector, employment opportunities in the manufacturing sector also arose throughout the region. Therefore, the increase in the participation of household members in the labour market during the period of growth differed from the increase recorded in subsequent years in terms of the kinds of jobs they found. While so-called informal-sector jobs existed in the 1970s, there were also stable full-time jobs, which accounted for a large proportion of total employment.

Per capita family income went up as a result of the intensification of work.[6] The rise in per capita income was a product not only of wage increases in that decade but also of the aforementioned decrease in household size. The sum total of individual incomes and the contributions that individuals make to the household depend on the number of available workers, which, as noted earlier, depends on the stage of the domestic cycle and on the household's composition and structure. The domestic cycle has an important differentiating effect that sometimes (as in Mexico before the crisis) is more important than wage differentials —at the manual level— in the demarcation and formation of different groups within the working class. Thus, within the low-income urban population, the phase of the domestic cycle —and not the head of household's occupational category within the working class— is what determines different levels of poverty. The implications of this phenomenon are significant and have been discussed in other studies (see González de la Rocha, 1986).

2. The crisis and major changes in urban economies

The economic crisis erupted in the midst of a process of economic growth and made the already precarious living conditions of the urban masses even worse. The urban poor were very hard hit by the deterioration of real wages, unemployment, the downturn in formal employment and government budget cuts in social spending. Middle-class households, which had benefited from the previous period of growth, also felt the negative effects of the crisis as their income levels and consumption patterns changed (ECLAC, 1991).

The result was a restructuring of family life and organization and a series of changes in low-income households (Benería, 1992; González de la Rocha, 1991). The fresh outbreak of poverty and the scarcity brought on by the economic crisis placed new demands on the private capacity to respond.

In the 1990s, poverty in Latin America is an urban phenomenon. In absolute terms, poor individuals and families who live in cities greatly outnumber those who live in rural areas (ECLAC, 1992a and 1992b). In 1990, poverty affected 34% of all urban households, or nearly 23 million households. Of the total urban population, 39%, or 116 million persons, lived in poverty.

Groups that had not been in the urban poor category in the pre-crisis years entered the ranks of the poor during the 1980s. Studies on the impoverishment of the middle class have shown that, in the case of Mexico, the first half of the 1980s witnessed a process of "social equity by impoverishment", in which the middle class was very hard hit (Cortés and Rubalcava, 1991). Data on other countries of the region tend to confirm that the unequal distribution of income was aggravated in the 1980s.[7]

6 According to Pastore and his co-authors, while nearly 44% of Brazilian families survived on less than one fourth the minimum wage per capita in 1970 (7.3 million families), that percentage had fallen to 18% by 1980 (4.4 million families). As a result of this decrease, the proportion of families whose income equalled one half to one minimum wage per capita had risen from 16.6% in 1970 to 25.5% in 1980; those with one to two times the minimum wage, from 8.5% to 17.4%; and those with more than twice the minimum wage, from 5.7% to 16.2% (Pastore and others, 1983, p. 21).

7 In Chile, for example, while the wealthiest 20% of the population received 50% of total income and the poorest 40% received 12.9% in the period from 1970 to 1973, between 1982 and 1984 the former received 60% and the latter, 9.8%, of total income (Ortega and Tironi, 1988). In Brazil, where real GDP fell 3.8% between 1980 and 1983 and real per capita output decreased by 10.6% over the same period, the real minimum wage decreased by 8.8%. In 1982, 46.2% of families were below the poverty line (defined as family income equivalent to twice the minimum wage) (Singer, 1986).

The cuts in social welfare subsidies and budgets were part of the new economic policies. Such measures had a severe impact on households, essentially in three ways. First, the decrease in public social spending spelled the elimination of jobs formerly available in government agencies. Second, public services declined in quantity and quality and, if they had been inadequate before the economic crisis, they became very scarce and hard for the needy population to obtain once the crisis had set in. Third, government subsidies to bring down basic food costs also decreased or even disappeared, so that production costs were reflected in consumer price hikes.[8] The impact, then, was felt in the areas of employment, access to public services and consumption of goods purchased on the market.

The crisis had a strong impact on urban employment, which fell in the manufacturing and public sectors and rose in services, especially personal ones, since social services were subject to severe budget cuts.[9] Because of its link to employee health insurance, the decline in employment in the public sector and in large firms affected access to public health services. Formal employment stagnated or fell and there were more part-time workers with no benefits or legal protection (informal workers) and unemployed persons. The number of self-employed workers increased in the 1980s, in reaction to the stagnation or decline of wage-earning employment (ECLAC, 1991, p. 21). The worsening employment situation, coupled with the paltry sums workers earned in wages, created a situation in which individuals, organized in domestic units, faced a daily struggle to survive.

C. STRATEGIES OF POOR URBAN FAMILIES IN RESPONSE TO ADJUSTMENT PROCESSES AND RESTRUCTURING OF THE STATE AND THE ECONOMY

This section discusses some of the most important strategies that have been devised by households to cushion and moderate the effects of the crisis. While these changes may also be attributable to the ageing of households —in other words, the process of change that the domestic cycle produces in household composition, structure and economy—, it is safe to say that households have made significant changes in response to both the internal processes produced by the domestic cycle and the external processes of economic change and deteriorating living conditions.

1. Intensification of work

First of all, increased unemployment among male heads of household has had an effect on the participation rates of other members of domestic groups. Between 1979 and 1987, economic participation by female heads of household in non-metropolitan urban areas of Brazil increased by 16%, and participation by women who were not heads of household went up by 25%. Both increases were much greater than the increase in the participation rate of the population aged 15 and over, which stood at 9%. The same trend, with slight variations, was evident in the other countries as well. In Argentina, for example, women who were heads of household and those who were not showed the same increase in economic participation (10%) between 1980 and 1986, but also followed the pattern

8 Social spending in Mexico as a percentage of gross domestic product fell from 7.6% in 1981-1982 to 5.6% in 1987-1988 (Cordera and González Tiburcio, 1991). Government spending on social services decreased in all countries of the region. Fortuna and Prates (1989) have drawn attention to what happened in Uruguay, where the Government reduced social spending and stopped providing low-income housing. Responsibility for the reproduction and survival of the workforce devolved almost exclusively on families and domestic units.

9 Only in Costa Rica was there no change in the employment level of wage-earners in the public sector. In the other countries, employment in this sector declined more sharply than in the private sector.

observed in the other countries, whereby women's participation increased more than that of the entire population aged 15 and over. In non-metropolitan Colombian cities, on the other hand, female heads of household increased their participation in the economy more than did women who were not heads of household. The same occurred in metropolitan and urban Costa Rica and in the non-metropolitan cities of Venezuela (ECLAC, 1991, table 3).

Although urban labour markets are still predominantly male, they have witnessed a steady increase in the number of women employed in recent years. Research done in Mexico has highlighted this process, and **it has been suggested that the determinants of female labour have changed, so that a growing number of women with children, little formal education and a heavy domestic workload have entered urban labour markets** (González de la Rocha, 1991, and Oliveira and García, 1990). Previously, it may be recalled, the trend had been towards an increase in employment among single, better-educated women with no domestic responsibilities. Existing studies show that the crisis drove housewives and mothers with heavy domestic workloads and little education into the labour market (González de la Rocha, 1986). Children, domestic chores and little formal education ceased to be obstacles for women whose poverty forced them to seek poorly paid jobs in the informal sector or to become self-employed (Oliveira and García, 1990).

As for the incorporation of non-heads of household into the labour market, in five of the six countries for which comparable data are available for the early and late 1980s the number of hours worked by heads of household went down as a proportion of the total number of hours worked by all household members (ECLAC, 1992b). The increase in workers was accounted for by those who took jobs in small businesses and in the informal sector, which afforded no security. In seven countries —representing 80% of the region's total economically active population—, between 1980 and 1989 the total number of persons employed increased much faster than the total population or the working-age population. In the informal sector and small-scale enterprises, employment grew at twice the rate of growth of the working-age population and three times the rate of total population growth (ECLAC, 1992a, table 4).

Qualitative analyses carried out in various Latin American countries have confirmed that urban households were forced to increase their number of working members and also their sources of income. As wage-paying jobs became unstable and difficult to obtain, domestic units diversified their sources of income so as not to depend solely or primarily on any single source. In so far as possible, however, families tended to send more of their members into the labour market. The intensification of work, or what Pastore and his co-authors have called "overwork", mainly affected women, although children and adolescents were also directly or indirectly involved in it.[10] This phenomenon kept total household income from sliding as rapidly or as drastically as individual income. The total income of urban households in Venezuela shrank by 22%, whereas individual income fell by 34%. The same occurred in urban areas of Uruguay and Costa Rica, where total household income declined by 14%, and individual income, by 22% (ECLAC, 1991, pp. 23 and 41).

10 These groups are involved either directly through employment or indirectly through other types of activities. Women who work at home, for example, request help from their children when they return from school and over the weekends. The "errands" that children and young people do for their mothers, and the care of younger brothers and sisters (although this is done mainly by teenage and young girls) are common everyday tasks. It even seems that, in general, women have delegated more responsibility and work to their children as they themselves have had to take paid jobs (though this has not eliminated women's "double working day").

Urban heads of household contribute no more than 80%, and in most countries no more than 60%, of total household income (ECLAC, 1991). Existing information shows that the amount of income contributed by other household members has risen in recent years. It should be noted that these trends prevail despite the fact that, during the same period, heads of household also increased their contribution as a percentage of their own income. While it cannot be said that men curtailed their individual consumption in the interest of collective consumption by the domestic group, the need to increase household income did force male heads of household to increase their contributions to collective expenditure. The fact that these increased contributions nevertheless declined as a percentage of total household income highlights the importance of the income contributed by the other members.

Despite the implementation of this strategy, total household income decreased, by around 10% in most cases. A study conducted in Guadalajara, Mexico, at various times during the decade showed that total household income (deflated according to the inflation rates for that period) dropped by 11% between 1982 and 1985. However, considering that individual wages lost 35% of their purchasing power during that time, the true importance of the family and the domestic unit in moderating poverty and cushioning the blow of the crisis becomes apparent. Between 1985 and the end of the decade, the number of workers per household returned to its 1982 level. This is probably why statistics for the beginning and end of the decade do not show a major increase in the number of workers. This finding, in turn, may reflect the fact that in most countries, the crisis reached its height in the early 1980s. It is also possible that the cost of sending more household members into the labour market outweighed the benefits obtained, especially in urban areas where wages were very low and benefits were minimal. What is certain is that ethnographic accounts reflect an intensification of paid and unpaid work, a growing interdependence among household members and an accentuation of domestic conflict, all of which doubtless formed the basis for the survival of the urban poor.

These changes brought about significant changes in the structure of household income as well. Generally speaking, salaries and wages decreased as a percentage of total household income in most urban households in the region. In contrast, the percentage of income from self-employment and from retirement schemes and pensions rose. These changes were especially marked among poorer households (ECLAC, 1991, table 16).

Urban households in the 1980s were characterized by an increase in the number of workers per household, the intensification of unpaid domestic work and the growing importance of extended households as a strategy for economizing on housing and incorporating more members able to work. Sending out more members of the household to seek paid jobs, however, was not sufficient to mitigate the effects of inflation and wage deterioration. The following section examines four phenomena: changes in consumption patterns, increased domestic services and labour as a result of reduced access to the goods and services market, changes in household composition and changes in the participation of household members in mutual assistance and solidarity networks.

2. Consumption patterns

Income levels do not automatically determine consumption patterns, which are culturally and historically defined, but they do certainly establish the framework which breeds certain tastes, preferences and product choices. As their income levels increase, individuals have greater access to goods and services markets. During the era of economic buoyancy, wage increases went hand in hand with an increase in the consumption of food, clothing and shoes and more durable consumer goods (household appliances,

etc.).[11] The deterioration of the real wages of most Latin American urban populations strongly affected consumption patterns.

First, reduced access to goods and services markets prompted women to shoulder more responsibilities, such as mending more clothes, preparing lunches for working household members to take to their workplaces, etc. Women were thus forced to work harder on the home front in order to save and use those savings to maintain the level of basic food consumption, while household expenditure on recreation, clothing, education and even health decreased. A domestic strategy[12] thus became evident in which families stopped consuming certain things in order to keep consuming other more important items such as food. None the less, despite these protective measures, food consumption also changed.

Typical food consumption patterns of the urban poor in the period of economic growth and prosperity were deficient primarily in terms of the products and quantities consumed. In Mexico, for example, the diet of poor families in the cities consisted mainly of carbohydrates and sugars that provided quick energy. However, it also included —albeit in meagre quantities— other, more expensive products to diversify the diet and provide other types of nutrients, such as animal proteins. Efforts to ensure a more well-rounded, nutritious diet did not necessarily ensure equitable consumption and more even distribution of goods and food. The consumption patterns of different members of families and households vary widely. Qualitative studies have shown that portions and types of food are distributed according to each individual's position in the household. Thus, as a result of the gender- and age-based hierarchies prevailing in the region's societies, women and children are given what is left over in the pots after working males, especially adults, are fed (González de la Rocha, 1986).

As real income decreased, households budgeted a higher percentage of their income for food and, consequently, less for other areas of consumption, such as education, health and clothing. In Chile, between 1970 and 1985, the consumption of wheat, sugar, rice, meat and dairy products took such a plunge that per capita levels of consumption of these items in the mid-1980s were lower than they had been in the 1960s. Oil and maize seem to have been the only exceptions (Ortega and Tironi, 1988, p. 44). The steps taken to protect nutrition were insufficient, and Chileans therefore had to consume less. The information and analyses contained in studies done on consumption patterns among the low-income population in Mexico paint a very similar picture. The most significant changes in food consumption patterns included much lower intake of expensive animal products, which were replaced by cheaper animal products such as eggs and entrails, whose consumption rose. Meat, which was seldom consumed at any time, was virtually absent from the tables of the urban poor during the crisis years ("we have become vegetarians"). The decisions taken by housewives at local marketplaces and in their homes were clearly reflected

11 Singer notes that the purchase of household appliances (refrigerators, radios, televisions) rose considerably in Brazil, and that this trend also seems to have been reflected in the other countries of the region. Manufacturers of those goods had to expand and consolidate the domestic market for their products. According to information provided by Singer (1986, p. 36), between 1960 and 1970 the percentage of urban households with refrigerators increased from 23.3% to 42.5%, while the percentage with televisions also increased, from 9.5% in 1960 to 40.2% in 1970.

12 A number of qualitative studies have been done on such strategies, including the ones by Ortega and Tironi (1988), Schkolnik and Teitelboim (1988) and González de la Rocha and others (1991). The case studies presented by Schkolnik and Teitelboim (1988) describe the mechanisms employed by Chilean families, such as the use of more economical fuels (or none at all) instead of gas for home heating and meal preparation. Families stopped paying their electricity and water bills in order to maintain their level of food consumption. Similarly, the urban poor of Santiago, Chile, changed their mealtimes so that they ate two meals a day instead of three.

in the overall figures. It has been calculated that in Mexico, the cost of the basic food basket as a percentage of the minimum wage increased from 34.7% in 1980 to 49.5% in 1987. As a result of housewives' difficulties in "stretching" their money, national per capita meat consumption fell by five kilograms between 1982 (when it amounted to 16.7 kilograms) and 1985 (when it was down to 12.1 kilograms). Milk consumption hit an all-time low in 1987. Even the consumption of products such as rice, beans and maize, which were part of the traditional Mexican diet, went down in those years (Cordera and González Tiburcio, 1991, p. 33). The result, as might be expected, was an undernourished urban population.

Evidence and analyses on Mexico show that not all households sought to maintain their consumption patterns equally or were equally affected. Extended households that had a large number of working members and were in the consolidation or equilibrium[13] phase of the domestic cycle were better able to preserve their spending and consumption patterns, though with some modifications. Young households, on the other hand, which were frequently nuclear and comprised fewer workers, were more vulnerable and altered their consumption patterns more drastically than other households. These analyses also indicate that female-headed households, though poorer than male-headed households, tended to be more equitable in the distribution of the resources and goods purchased for consumption and to have more "balanced" food consumption patterns with more fruits and vegetables in the daily diet, largely because female heads of household budgeted a higher percentage of income for food. In fact, per capita consumption can even be higher in those households. It has been observed that such alternative patterns are facilitated by women's greater control over income and the material bases of survival in those households (González de la Rocha, 1993).

3. Changes in household composition

As noted earlier, the boom years witnessed a trend towards the nuclearization of households. This reflected the modernizing urbanization process which, among other things, led to the formation of nuclear family structures and a decrease in other types of family and domestic units. Qualitative studies have shown that as part of the strategies undertaken by city dwellers in the crisis years, extended households increased as a means of saving money on housing and of retaining —in the case of children who remained in their parents' home after marriage— and/or adding members able to engage in paid and domestic labour, such as daughters-in-law or other co-residents. Although nuclear households still represent the majority (between 50% and 68% in five countries surveyed by ECLAC, 1992b), extended and female-headed households are common family structures in the region's societies. In fact, it has been estimated that even though extended households are not as numerous as nuclear ones, they include more of the population owing to their larger size.

It must be recalled, however, that different types of household structure are not mutually exclusive. A single household may show features of both nuclearization and extension over time, and it has been observed that a structure with features of extension affords the household greater flexibility, especially if the additional household members are fit and able to participate in the income-generating strategy and in domestic labour. However, the emphasis on the economic benefits of extended households should not obscure the fact that extension often entails increased

13 This phase of the domestic cycle is characterized by greater equilibrium between consumers and income-earners, higher levels of total and per capita income and a high proportion of extended households.

conflict between household members. For example, many married sons who live in their parents' home continue to turn over their economic contributions to their mothers, often to the great discontent of their wives. Control over resources and the education of children or grandchildren in multi-generation households are some of the sorest areas of conflict among members of extended households.

Moreover, the legality of unions is not homogeneous. There is great diversity among the different countries of the region. Even where there has been an increase in legal unions, the incidence of consensual unions is very high, especially at certain stages of women's lives (mainly between the ages of 15 and 24) and in the poorest and least educated sectors (ECLAC, 1992a).

4. Participation in mutual assistance networks

The social responses discussed above are private in nature, as they are devised and implemented within the home. Although they are of great importance, survival and reproduction are based on relationships that go beyond the domestic realm. The rise in "collective kitchens" in Peru and the "soup kitchens", "glass of milk" and "March for Life" initiatives in Bolivia attested to the enormous capacity of poor inhabitants of those places to come up with responses outside the home. In other countries, however, responses were more private in nature. In Mexico, the measures taken to deal with the crisis were highly privatized (Benería, 1992; González de la Rocha, 1986 and 1991). The hypothesis that there had been an increase in collective associations and organizations was not borne out by the findings on Mexico, which pointed instead to a population bent on survival, organized at the level of the home with its own resources, and much more silent and overwhelmed than in previous years. It has been pointed out that, surprisingly, social harmony prevailed in Mexico during the crisis years, and that social harmony and order were based on harder work and increased conflict and negotiation within households. None the less, the emphasis on the "private" nature of the strategies should not diminish the importance of mutual assistance networks among relatives, neighbours, godparents, friends and fellow workers, which have been a source of income and resources for the Latin American urban poor. In fact, the validity of hypotheses about reciprocal exchange and mutual assistance has been tested through analyses of deviant groups that have no peer relationships. These analyses have shown that social isolation makes it harder for people to find jobs, cope with emergencies and even deal with everyday obstacles in the daily struggle to survive.

D. MECHANISMS THAT TRANSMIT POVERTY FROM ONE GENERATION TO ANOTHER

1. Teenage pregnancy

Teenage pregnancy is usually associated with dropping out of school, becoming a female head of household and transmitting poverty from one generation to another. Pregnancy among the teenage population occurs primarily in urban contexts marked by poverty, unemployment and low wages, and should be analysed within the framework of the family and the domestic group, as social structures for mediation, survival and reproduction.

Few studies on teenage pregnancy have been conducted in the region. The research done by Mayra Buvini has doubtless been the most useful tool available for the detailed examination of various urban and rural contexts in Latin America. Unfortunately, many of these studies are still in progress and their findings are not yet available. However, some very important conclusions can be drawn from them, including the following:

i) Teenage pregnancy, far from being on the rise, has declined sharply. According to Buvini and her co-authors, data on

Chile show that the teenage fertility rate has gone down in recent decades, although not as much as the fertility rate for the non-adolescent population.

ii) The percentage of illegitimate births to teenage mothers has increased. Buvini's calculations for Chile show that the proportion of illegitimate children born to teenage mothers rose from 29% in 1960 to 60% in 1980.

iii) Most of these women live with their parents for six to eight years after the birth of their first child. Thus, not all teenage mothers immediately become female heads of household. The teenage mother's family and original domestic group plays a major role as a support institution during pregnancy, birth and in the early years of the child's life. In Barbados, 71% of the teenage mothers surveyed continued to live with their parents during that initial period; in Chile, the figure was 50%. Apparently, economic necessity determines whether teenage mothers remain in their parents' home, since many of them would prefer to live on their own. Women's desire for independence must be weighed against the advantages of staying in their parents' home, which are not limited to the benefits of belonging to a household where other members contribute their incomes and where domestic labour is shared among several women. The information on Barbados indicates that a high percentage of teenage mothers remain in school, which would obviously be much more difficult if they had the sole or primary responsibility for earning income and doing domestic chores. Nearly 50% of young mothers in Chile and Barbados participate in the labour market, which has a positive influence on their children's nutritional status. If these women could not rely on the economic and social infrastructure for child care provided by their parents' household, it would be much harder for them to begin or continue working, since low-cost day-care and child-care centres are few and far between.

iv) Existing studies have not shown any clear correlation between the father's presence and the children's well-being in terms of health, especially as concerns their nutritional status, but they have pointed to a possible connection between the father's absence and poor school performance.

Undoubtedly, there is a relationship between teenage pregnancy and unemployment among young men. This disadvantageous situation brands individuals who are in the "marriage market". Becoming a teenage mother makes girls more vulnerable in the medium and long term. Studies have shown that women who begin their reproductive lives at an early age are more likely to have a larger number of children and shorter intervals between pregnancies. It is very probable that these women will become female heads of household without a steady partner, and that they will therefore face serious obstacles in trying to pursue their studies; moreover, their job performance will be seriously affected by their large number of children and deficient education. From this perspective, the benefits that these young women derive from their immediate support group —their household of origin— are insufficient and inadequate, and in the medium and long term, teenage pregnancy is one of the factors that help to transmit poverty from one generation to the next.

2. Unequal distribution of resources. Households headed by women versus households headed by a resident male

Reference has already been made to the vulnerability of female-headed households. The approach that stresses the vulnerability of such households has recently been contrasted with another which, without losing sight of the factors that result in lower incomes, stresses the positive features of female-headed households, such as more equitable distribution of labour and of the resources and income it generates, less differentiated patterns of consumption and greater emphasis on food consumption (Buvini, 1991; Chant, 1985;

González de la Rocha, 1993). Therefore, while it can be said that the absence of a male head of household increases the likelihood of remaining poor, thereby turning female-headed households into a permanent "residual category" of poor people, it is necessary to take an approach that offers insights into the existence of more balanced consumption patterns (quantified in terms of the percentages of income budgeted for the purchase of food, alcoholic beverages, cigarettes, clothing, medicine, etc.), consumption practices that are less gender-determined and environments that are more conducive to a fairer distribution of labour.

The vulnerability of such women and their children should be assessed through an analysis of per capita consumption levels and the subtler aspects of what constitutes, facilitates or precludes well-being (diet, health, education). It is a fact, however, that this type of household is mainly concentrated in the lower-income levels and that its incidence has increased fastest in the poorest sectors. It has been suggested, however, that women and children in poor urban households headed by men may be just as vulnerable, owing to unequal relationships of domination and subordination fraught with gender and generational overtones (González de la Rocha, 1993). Such relationships find expression in unequal helpings of food served to different members of the household and in differential access to educational and health care facilities. Power and relations between genders and generations are evident in the different levels of well-being found among members of the same domestic group. Thus, the fact that a household's income level places it slightly above the poverty line does not mean that all the individuals belonging to that household enjoy similar and equitable levels of well-being. Differential consumption practices and unequal access to resources and services in the context of poverty give rise to high indexes of malnutrition, which erodes the physical and intellectual capacities of the individuals affected. Undernourished children usually perform very poorly in school and end up with fewer job opportunities in the long run.

3. Dropping out of school or falling behind

Available data indicate a correlation between school attendance and household income: rates of absenteeism and falling behind in school are higher among lower-income households. Based on empirical evidence furnished by ECLAC, different levels of academic performance can be linked to different family structures. For example, female-headed households show higher rates of preschool attendance than other households (probably because these women need to work) and higher rates of falling behind and absenteeism among children between the ages of 6 and 14. On the other hand, children of consensual unions systematically fall behind in school more often than children of legalized unions. Female-headed households and consensual unions are concentrated in the lower-income brackets and therefore lack the conditions that encourage children to attend school regularly and to do well in the classroom. As noted earlier, young and poor households tend to have more children. Unequal food consumption in those households does not work in their favour, and child malnutrition has increased, as have diseases that are directly or indirectly related to poverty and malnutrition. Moreover, children frequently combine their schooling with work, but most drop out of school because of a personal and family need to generate additional income.

Access to educational facilities (and probably, also, levels of academic performance) vary not only among different family structures but also among different members of the same household, depending on their position in the domestic structure and the stage of their family's domestic cycle that coincides with their school years. It is a well-established fact that the educational levels of first-born children are much

lower than those of their brothers and sisters, because they are the ones hurt by the most difficult phase of the domestic cycle: the expansion phase. The younger children, on the other hand, benefit from a situation of greater economic prosperity to which their older siblings often contribute by earning income and carrying out domestic chores. Clearly, access to education is differentiated, and the early years of the domestic cycle are devoted primarily to economic investment for a better future for the younger children born later on, although there may not be any explicit plan to this effect. The impact that differential access to education can have on the future working life of these individuals is evident. The first-born have few opportunities for social mobility, while the younger ones will probably be better prepared to hold higher-paying jobs.

4. Economic dependence on the family labour force

As indicated previously, in the context of urban poverty, households base survival and reproduction on ties of mutual dependence and on the use of internal resources, chiefly labour. The model of the nuclear family that is supported by the wages of the male head of household is rarely reflected in reality. The vast majority of poor households must combine diverse sources of income, and more than one member must participate in the labour market. The work of women, young people and children is a resource that is exploited in cases of need, however small its contribution may be. Intra-domestic economic dependence increases as individual survival becomes more difficult. The consequences of this phenomenon include dropping out of school or falling behind, a double working day for women and an overload of work for all household members. The limitations of this "strategy" are illustrated by its effect of increasing the number of young men between the ages of 15 and 25 who are neither in school nor working. On leaving basic education, driven by the need to supplement their household income, they have trouble finding jobs. Going out to work at an early age doubtless has an impact on educational levels and on how such individuals will integrate into the working world not only when they first go out to work, but also in their future working lives and in terms of their medium- and long-term income levels. This situation makes it even harder for men to fulfil their traditional role as providers. Women's increasing responsibility for the household economy and the rise in so-called "female economic heads of household" leave men caught in a contradiction between what is expected of them and their limited opportunities to live up to such expectations (Kaztman, 1992).

E. SOME THOUGHTS ON POSSIBLE ACTION

Based on the elements discussed above, some points that should be considered in designing public welfare policies are worth summarizing. Given the importance of the family and domestic units for survival and reproduction, any attempt to promote the welfare of the urban poor must be based on an understanding of family dynamics and of the differentiated levels of well-being found within urban households. Efforts to identify risk groups should also look at what happens within households, whose most vulnerable members are children and women. Specifically, it is urgently important to recognize:

i) *The importance of women in the social processes of survival, reproduction and the promotion and maintenance of family well-being.* If there is anyone in the family and in the household who is interested in promoting well-being —especially that of children in terms of nutrition and general good health— it is, without a doubt, the female home-maker. Women are artisans of survival and reproduction and could become effective allies of social policies.

ii) *The fact that women's control over their own income translates into substantial*

improvements in children's well-being, in very concrete areas such as nutrition, health and education. There is evidence in various countries that when mothers earn and have control over their own income, their children's nutritional levels increase. This suggests that there is a need for fresh thinking about the criteria for granting subsidies and loans; if they are to reach the population that needs them most, women's crucial role in creating and safeguarding family well-being must be seriously taken into account.

iii) *The need to boost female income and to narrow the gap between men's and women's access to resources in the region's societies.* Clearly, sex-differentiated wages are typical of the countries' labour markets. Changes are needed in the gender-based segmentation of labour markets and in the wage levels they offer. Society must realize that women's wages are not just "supplementary income" and that they have become an important mainstay of the family and household. Increasing women's wages and salaries will have direct and rapid effects on the urban population's diet, access to medical care and medicine, and housing conditions.

iv) *The need to expand and upgrade child care centres, especially for young families and single women.* Studies on households in the region have shown that women who must work outside the home often leave children alone or in the care of an older sister or brother because physically and economically accessible child care centres are scarce. The few systematic studies done on child malnutrition have revealed an increase in the percentage of "seriously malnourished" children under two years of age. This could have something to do with the fact that small children are more likely to be in very young households which are just beginning their expansion phase and which have had difficulty in maintaining their pre-crisis levels of food consumption. It could also be related to the shorter nursing period necessitated by women's increased participation in paid employment. It has also been associated with children's lack of power and, increasingly, their abandonment.

v) *The vulnerability of certain types of households.* As has been shown, young households, elderly households and female-headed households typically have lower incomes than other households because they are less likely to be able to send out a large contingent of individuals in search of jobs. Moreover, they find it harder to maintain their levels of consumption during periods of economic slump. The vulnerability of young households is particularly alarming because they are the social units where the bulk of the child population is concentrated. However, the poverty indexes of households headed by elderly persons are also very high. The elderly population is increasing, and its needs in terms of health care and economic support will multiply. In addition, female-headed households tend to be very poor owing to the gender-based inequalities in the income available on the labour market.

vi) *The special features of consensual unions and their impact on children's prospects in life.* The sharp increase in such unions in the past decade, their concentration among poorer households and indications that the children of such unions do less well in school point to the urgency of studying this phenomenon further through systematic research that takes into account the diversity of marital unions, the different types of family structure and children's well-being.

vii) *Men's difficulties in fulfilling their traditional role in a context where there are no alternative models.* This phenomenon is part of a complex aggravation of the contradictions that have developed within the home. On the one hand, the crisis has forced women to participate in gainful employment, though without releasing them from their domestic responsibilities; on the other, the standards and values culturally assigned to men and women have not changed. The conflict between what men and women are supposed to be and what they actually are has resurfaced, and efforts to resolve it should rely on solidarity and consensus rather than confrontation and violence.

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Chapter V

THE RURAL FAMILY AND ETHNICITY IN LATIN AMERICA

A. INTRODUCTION

In view of the vastness and complexity of this topic and the diversity of regional and national situations surrounding and defining rural families, this chapter covers only some general trends, based on available information, focusing mainly on families of subsistence farmers and small-scale producers. It does not analyse families of medium- and large-scale producers in the region, on the assumption that they tend to be similar to medium- and high-income urban families. However, they should be the subject of a specific study, which is outside the scope of this chapter.

The basic aim is to analyse the interaction between the socio-economic dynamics of rural families and their various manifestations in the areas of marriage and child care; the relationships between genders and generations that are formed within households are therefore examined. Furthermore, a typology of family situations in rural areas of the region is proposed, on the basis of which a typology of rural families has been developed.

Existing information on rural families presents a series of problems and limitations. Although demographic and agricultural statistics are available, no complete data has been gathered on the social characteristics of these families. Household and population surveys are only beginning to be conducted in rural areas. However, the many existing case studies are a very valuable source of information that partially fills these gaps.

This chapter is divided into five sections. The first section outlines general aspects of the problem; the second presents a socio-economic characterization of rural families; the third describes the main forms of organization of these families; the fourth identifies some of the processes that are changing family behaviour; and the last offers recommendations for formulating public policies focused on rural families.

B. CHARACTERIZATION OF RURAL FAMILIES IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

1. Rural population and families

The rapid rural-urban migration processes that began in the early 1950s as a consequence of macroeconomic policies emphasizing the cities have changed the population's territorial distribution. Whereas nearly 60% of Latin Americans and Caribbeans lived in rural areas in the early 1950s, the percentage fell to only 29% in the early 1990s.[1] Despite this change, the rural population is still growing in absolute terms.

1 The population's rate of urbanization seems to have slowed in almost all the countries of the region. In Brazil, for example, the growth rate fell from 4.4% to 2.9% between the 1970s and 1980s.

Further analysis of this data reveals great differences among the countries of the region. In almost half of them (Barbados, Bolivia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay and various countries of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS)), 40% or more of the population is rural.

The region's population is still growing, but at a slower pace that reflects a drop in fertility rates in both urban and rural areas. This drop was particularly steep in the last decade, when the rate fell from 4.1 in the early 1980s to 3.4 in the 1990s. The decline reflects lower birth rates owing to more widespread use of family planning to determine the number of children born. Adult and infant mortality rates have also decreased.

Even though the reduction in these rates is widespread, there are marked variations among countries. Fertility rates are still high in countries such as Bolivia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua and Paraguay; i.e., in some of the countries with the largest rural populations. While information on rural fertility is not available for the entire region, this rate probably has also fallen to a similar degree, even in low-income sectors, though from a higher initial rate.

These processes have affected average family size in rural areas. At the end of the 1980s, there were about 23 million rural households in the region, with an average size of 5.3 people. A large proportion of them were in Brazil, the Andean subregion, Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean. However, average family size varies by subregion: families are smaller in the Southern Cone and larger in Central America.

Some 79.8% of the region's rural families live in Brazil, Mexico, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Haiti, the Dominican Republic and the Central American countries. Their proportion of all families, however, is smaller in predominantly urban countries such as Brazil, Mexico, Colombia and Peru than in the other countries, where rural families represent the largest segment of all families.

2. Indigenous families

The quantification of the indigenous population poses a series of difficulties owing to both the indicators used to define a person as indigenous and the lack of relevant information. In general, the indicator used is based on information on which language is used. As a result, estimates vary considerably; in Ecuador, for example, they range from one to three million people, depending on the source. The actual figure is probably about 1.4 million.

Table 1
LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN: RURAL POPULATION AND FAMILIES

Subregion or country	Rural population	Percentage of regional total	Rural families	Percentage of regional total	Persons per family
Brazil	35,570,000	29.0	6,587,037	28.7	5.4
Andean subregion	25,999,000	21.2	4,902,788	21.4	5.3
Mexico	24,238,000	19.8	4,406,909	19.2	5.5
Central America	14,696,000	12.0	2,520,301	11.0	5.8
Caribbean	12,950,000	10.6	2,381,906	10.4	5.4
Southern Cone	9,104,000	7.4	2,143,337	9.3	4.2
Regional total	**122,557,000**	**100.0**	**22,942,278**	**100.0**	**5.3**

Source: International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), *The State of World Rural Poverty*, 1990.

According to the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), there were about 29 million indigenous people in the region around 1988. More recently, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) estimated the figure at 40 million. The IFAD study, which appears more realistic, suggests that there are about 8.3 million indigenous families in the region, mostly in the Andean and Central American countries (Mexico, Guatemala and parts of Honduras and El Salvador). Some 92% of the region's indigenous families live in Mexico, Bolivia, Guatemala, Peru and Ecuador, and nearly 90% of them live in rural areas.

Indigenous families are not a homogeneous group except in that they belong to national minorities that usually are subject to some type of discrimination. They comprise about 130 language groups, but three large groups stand out: the *Aymaras* of Bolivia and Peru, the *Quechuas* of the Andean region, including some groups in Argentina, and the *Mayas* and *Aztecs* of Guatemala and Mexico, all of whose societies were organized as states at the time of the conquest.

Indigenous people can be divided into two groups on the basis of social and economic traits and place of residence: indigenous subsistence farmers and tribal indigenous populations living in tropical forests, which make up about 70% and 7%, respectively, of all indigenous families. The rest live in cities or on reservations (ILO, 1986).

The vast majority of families of indigenous subsistence farmers have limited access to land; they are smallholders who live in rural communities, with agricultural activity, and to a lesser degree handicrafts, as their main economic activity. More recently, as a result of better economic integration, they have forged links with labour markets.

Indigenous small-farming communities are traditionally organized on the basis of family groups that are recognized as descendants of common ancestors, linked together by multiple kinship ties between their members. Access to community resources is generally reserved for descendants of the founders or persons who enter the community by virtue of ties of kinship.[2]

Indigenous communities are not closed groups, either economically or socially. They maintain significant relationships with other communities, especially those of the same cultural group, with whom they intermarry and trade not only labour and products but also information and knowledge. They

Table 2
LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN: INDIGENOUS POUPULATION

Subregion or country	Rural population	Percentage of regional total	Indigenous population	Percentage of regional total	Percentage of rural population
Brazil	35,570,000	29.0	150,024	0.5	0.4
Andean subregion	25,999,000	21.2	11,629,024	40.6	44.7
Mexico	24,238,000	19.8	12,000,000	41.9	49.5
Central America	14,696,000	12.0	3,791,000	13.2	25.8
Caribbean	12,950,000	10.6	72,004	0.3	0.6
Southern Cone	9,104,000	7.4	989,517	3.5	10.9
Regional total	**122,557,000**	**100.0**	**28,631,569**	**100.0**	**23.4**

Source: International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), *The State of World Rural Poverty*, 1990.

2 There is a great deal of literature on indigenous small-farming communities. See De la Cadena, 1986, and journals such as *Allpanchis* (Cuzco), *Estudios rurales latinoamericanos* (Bogotá), *Ecuador debate* (Quito) and *Debate agrario* (Lima), which continually publish articles on the subject.

also set up structured relations with subregional, regional and national (and, increasingly, international) urban centres, where they buy and sell products, sell their labour, receive information and develop ties with institutions such as schools, churches, health centres, political parties and trade unions. The expansion of communications infrastructure, including not only highways but also radio and television, has moved them even closer to mestizo society.

The community also provides a sense of identity and family membership, as well as a basic network of protection, even for migrants. To a large extent, this security is grounded in membership in a family group and in a community, and participation in productive activities (such as growing maize and beans in a truck garden), the diversified management of resources and the symbolic practices surrounding them. This seems to explain, in part, what has been called "a sense of long-distance belonging", which characterizes such groups as indigenous Mexicans who emigrate to the United States, Bolivian *Quechua* subsistence farmers transplanted to Buenos Aires, or crafts dealers from Otavalo, Ecuador, scattered almost all over the world.

In many areas inhabited by indigenous small-scale farmers, confrontations have occurred between them and the landowners and authorities, a number of which have turned into lengthy, violent conflicts. Impoverishment is not unrelated to these conflicts, which have caused lasting upsets in rural areas, including deaths, forced migrations and uprootings, and incomplete families. In some places these conflicts are linked to the violence generated by drug trafficking and the cultivation of psychotropic substances, sometimes used for ritual consumption by the growers. This violence adds to the insecurity and instability to which indigenous families are subject.

The indigenous populations of tropical jungles are undoubtedly a diverse sector, consisting of a vast number of small, isolated ethnic groups. Their presence is particularly significant in the basins of the Amazon and Orinoco rivers, and in the Darién, Chaco and Guajira regions of Colombia and Venezuela. Although some of these groups have only sporadic contacts (often violent) with national society, others, especially those located at the foot of the Andes, in the department of Petén and in some other areas, have established stable relations, as in the case of the *Shuar* of Ecuador.

Tribal indigenous families typically consist of a chief (usually a man), a group of women and their descendants; they live in a territory including an area for fishing, hunting and gathering (the men's responsibility) and they have another area for producing maize or yucca (the women's responsibility). In general, they use systems of long fallow periods and itinerant, slash-and-burn agriculture. Groups which have established ongoing relations with national societies have adopted patterns of stable residence, with permanent crops and livestock-raising, and are closer to the model of indigenous subsistence farmers. Those who have not made this transition and whose territories have been threatened by settlers or by petroleum or mining enterprises have retreated to increasingly remote areas, or else have become subordinate to the enterprises and settler groups.

3. Rural families and poverty

A substantial proportion of rural families are poor, judging from either income or the satisfaction of their basic needs. Estimates of the extent of rural poverty vary; the percentage of the rural population living below the poverty line ranges from 54% (according to ECLAC) to 63% (according to IFAD) to 67% (according to IDB). In the late 1980s, the number of poor rural families was estimated at 14.5 million, 86% of whom lived in Brazil, the Andean region, Central America and Mexico.

The rural poor represent slightly less than half of all the poor people in the region, despite the marked urbanization process and the increase in urban poverty

during the 1980s. Poverty is more chronic and structural in the countryside than in cities, where the number of poor people has grown because of decreased income. This is reflected, *inter alia*, by the number of rural indigent households (30% of the rural population) versus urban ones (11%).[3]

Rural poverty is characterized by a combination of low income and unmet basic needs. In general, the coverage of basic services such as education or electricity is inadequate in rural areas, despite the efforts made in the past two decades (Fresneda, 1991). It has been pointed out, in that connection, that poverty in rural areas reflects a combination of factors related not only to the low purchasing power of families, but also to the limited availability of basic services.

Poverty is distributed unevenly among rural families, depending on the ecological and geographical areas in which they live, their ethnic background, the gender of the head of the family and other socio-economic characteristics of households. A high proportion of the Latin American and Caribbean region's poor families are found in north-eastern Brazil, the central and southern states of Mexico, the uplands and mountains of the Andean countries, the hillsides of Central America, the mountainous areas of Guatemala, the central border area between the Dominican Republic and Haiti, and the jungles of the Amazon, the Orinoco, Darién and Petén.

The geographical distribution of rural poverty coincides with the ethnic distribution of the population, especially in the Andean and Central American countries. Thus, in Mexico, with the exception of Querétaro, the nine states with the highest levels of poverty and marginalization are those with the highest proportion of indigenous people. Some 62.5% of Mexico's indigenous rural population lives in these states, compared to 18.5% of the non-indigenous rural population. The figures for Ecuador and Peru are similar. Not all rural poverty in the region is linked to ethnicity. Large pockets of rural poverty among non-indigenous groups are found in countries with or without indigenous populations.

Lastly, poor rural families share certain socio-demographic features. In many countries, they are incomplete or headed by women, especially in places where armed conflicts have torn families

Table 3
LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN: POOR RURAL FAMILIES

Subregion or country	Poor rural families	Percentage of regional total	Poor families/ rural families
Brazil	4,808,519	33.15	73.00
Andean subregion	3,583,321	24.70	73.09
Mexico	2,247,455	15.49	51.00
Central America	1,526,312	10.52	60.56
Caribbean	1,585,983	10.93	66.33
Southern Cone	755,253	5.21	35.24
Regional total	**14,506,843**	**100.0**	**63.21**

Source: International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), *The State of World Rural Poverty*, 1992.

3 The relative significance of rural poverty varies according to how it is quantified and the data sources used. The figures cited here are from IFAD. Indigence is measured on the basis of the percentage of households whose income is less than the cost of the basic food basket.

apart. In Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua, such families constitute an identifiable group of chronically poor people.[4] Likewise, the poorest households tend to be larger, with more children, most of whom live at home; moreover, the parents have a lower level of education and usually obtain a considerable proportion of their income through self-employment.

4. Socio-economic activities of rural families

From a socio-economic perspective, rural families constitute an extremely heterogeneous sector in which the demarcations between the different groups are blurred, especially among the poorest groups. Around 1980, this sector consisted basically of subsistence farmers, who made up nearly two thirds of the rural population; rural wage-earners, who represented 29.5% of that population; and indigenous gatherers and other categories, who represented 4.2% (IDB, 1992).

Although recent developments are unclear for want of relevant information, it seems that families with little or no land and smallholders are probably growing at a faster rate than other groups. In some countries of the region, including not only Chile and Argentina but also Colombia, Costa Rica and Mexico, the increasing number of landless agricultural workers points to a greater proletarianization of the rural working population. This trend, however, is neither uniform nor universal.

The number of agricultural employees has not increased only among stable rural wage-earners; on the contrary, the most significant growth is among temporary and casual workers, *bóias frias*, semi-proletarianized subsistence farmers and the rural population occupied in casual services and small-scale trade i.e., all activities forming part of the informal sector.

Despite these changes, most Latin American rural families are still subsistence farmers, although a considerable proportion of them earn a small income from agricultural activity. These families differ from entrepreneurial units in three ways: i) they basically perform the work themselves, while the latter rely more on hired workers; ii) in terms of the quantity and quality of the resources they manage, since the most abundant resource of subsistence farming units is labour, while those of entrepreneurial units are capital and land; and iii) subsistence farming units can be defined as units of production and consumption, or of production and reproduction, while these functions are clearly separate in entrepreneurial units.

Small-scale farming families differ among themselves with respect to their assets, sources of income and economic opportunities. Two basic types can be distinguished: i) smallholders, who farm small lots with the help of their families, produce primarily to meet their own consumption needs and obtain most of their cash income from non-agricultural sources, wages and migration; and ii) small-scale producers, who derive their income from the sale of agricultural products.

A great many intermediate situations exist between these two general types of farming families, forming a kind of continuum between semi-subsistence farming units and small-scale producers with capital. The differences are attributable not only to the quantity of land, but also to factors such as proximity to markets, available infrastructure (roads and irrigation) and linkage with credit and technological institutions and producers' organizations. These factors have been becoming more important for

4 This is not always the case; in areas with high international migration, households headed by women generally live on remittances from husbands, and tend to differ from complete families without migrants (Fletcher and Taylor, 1992).

distinguishing various types of small-scale farming families.[5]

a) Access to land among small-scale farming families

Today, in the early 1990s, there are about 17 million agricultural units in the region, occupying 700 million hectares of land[6] and distributed very unevenly. Family farms consist of at least 11.7 million smallholdings and 4 million small properties,[7] representing, respectively, 62.4% and 23.7% of all such units and occupying barely 3.3% and 9.1% of agricultural land. Large entrepreneurial operations, in contrast, constitute 2.4% of the total, but control 57.4% of agricultural land.

Family farming predominates throughout the region, representing 85.8% of all farms, compared to the 14.2% represented by operations with hired manpower. In the Andean region and Central America, family farming exceeds 87% of all operations, and covers a larger proportion of the total agricultural land area.

For the region as a whole, 72.5% of all family farming operations are smallholdings and 27.5% are small properties. In Central America and the Andean region, smallholdings represent over 82% of all family farms, while small properties represent less than 18%. In contrast, in Brazil, Mexico and the Southern Cone, at least 35% of all family farms are small properties.

The ratio of smallholdings to small properties within a country tends to approximate that of small-scale farming areas, located mainly in uplands, on hillsides and in tropical forests, to entrepreneurial areas, located in flat areas, irrigated and with greater access to markets.

Between 1980 and 1990, the number of smallholdings throughout the region increased by 46.6%, from 7.9 million to 11.7 million. Smaller operations grew especially fast in the Andean countries, Central America, Mexico and Paraguay. In contrast, the number of smallholdings in the rest of the Southern Cone countries decreased quite significantly. This disparate evolution reflects the relative importance of small properties, the ethnic background of the farmers and the general context in which agricultural activities are carried out. Where indigenous people predominate, especially in the Andean plateaus and on the Mexican and Central American hillsides, as well as in certain jungle areas, smaller farms have multiplied. This phenomenon is even more pronounced in places where farmers have few stable economic opportunities outside agriculture.

In contrast, the number of smallholdings stabilized or fell in areas with sustained entrepreneurial expansion and a statistically insignificant indigenous population. In countries or areas where entrepreneurial agriculture predominates, many small units disappeared, absorbed by the larger units. This is what happened in Chile and Uruguay, but also in Colombia's Valle del Cauca, the Ecuadorian coast, northern Mexico and south-central Brazil, where the number of family operations fell and the concentration of land ownership rose.

5 While it is difficult to quantify accurately the various types of rural families, some approximations can be arrived at on the basis of agricultural censuses and household surveys.

6 These figures refer solely to the following countries, for the years indicated: Argentina (1988), Bolivia (1985), Brazil (1985), Chile (1987), Colombia (1984), Costa Rica (1984), the Dominican Republic (1981), Ecuador (1987), El Salvador (1987), Guatemala (1979), Honduras (1988), Mexico (1990, public land only), Nicaragua (1983), Panama (1990), Paraguay (1991), Peru (1984), Uruguay (1990) and Venezuela (1985). The definitions of small holdings and small properties vary by country.

7 Obviously, basing the distinction exclusively on size does not take into account small entrepreneurial units with intensive production or large holdings farmed communally by a number of families. These references should be taken as approximations. The figures do not include Cuba, Haiti or any of the English- and French-speaking Caribbean countries, which could represent at least another 400,000 family units, bringing the total to nearly 15 million family units.

The increase in small farms was accompanied, in most cases, by a decrease in the average size of the smallest ones, especially where the increase did not reflect an expansion of the agricultural frontier. Except in Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay (and probably Chile), the average size of the smallholding shrank. This emphasizes that the growth in their number was largely a result of the subdivision of existing smallholdings, and not of access to land formerly controlled by larger operations. It must be recalled that redistribution initiatives have dwindled in recent years. Currently, the region's small-scale farming families have less land, on average, than they had a decade ago.

b) Production strategies of small-scale farming families

The agricultural activities of small-scale farming families are highly concentrated in food products, mainly maize, beans, yucca and potatoes, in many of the countries. However, production of agro-industrial crops such as rice, sugar cane, cotton, sorghum and soya is not insignificant among subsistence farmers and small-scale producers. Also important are some perennial crops, such as coffee and cacao, and small-scale livestock-raising, including goats, sheep, hogs, poultry and, increasingly, cattle. Recently, many small farms have begun to produce garden vegetables, tropical fruits and, in some cases, coca and marijuana.

In Central America, the Andean region, Mexico and, to a lesser degree, Brazil and Paraguay, the agricultural production of small-scale farming families is not specialized. However, it reflects complex systems of production characterized by the simultaneous management of various crops —singly, in association with others or successively, according to long cycles of rotation and by the use of simple technologies in which the family's labour predominates. This represents a way of adapting to low-productivity ecological zones with poor soil containing low levels of nutrients and dependent on rainfall for irrigation, susceptible to erosion and at high climatic risk. Crops are therefore grown in various vegetation belts and microclimates, sown at various times of the year and combined, associated or rotated; and a multiplicity of species and varieties of flora and fauna are raised.

Smallholders live in rainy areas, since they depend on precipitation to begin their agricultural cycle. Irrigation water is almost non-existent and, when available, irregular in its flow. These farmers not only have little land, but also very few (and usually only simple) production facilities and farming tools, and no regular access to mechanical means of ploughing and preparing the soil. They rarely have access to credit institutions or technical assistance; even when they have, the latter are ill-adapted to their needs.

A large proportion of smallholder farm production is consumed by the family itself, although sales of farm products are not insignificant. In general, smallholders supply local or regional markets. Production is used not only for consumption and earning money, but also for buying seeds or breeding stock (cuttings, seedlings), for paying workers and, in some cases, for family or community celebrations, often linked to communal projects.

Small-scale producers, in contrast to smallholders, are more specialized; they use "modern" technologies, complement the family's labour by hiring workers and sell a sizeable portion of their production on the market. They also have or have access to more agricultural tools, implements, equipment and machinery. Furthermore, their relations with credit and technological institutions are more permanent, which helps them increase the productivity of their agricultural activity. However, adjustment policies and the scaling-down of the State have diminished access to such institutions.

Families of small-scale producers are generally more vulnerable to the economic risks associated with variations in the prices of their products and of the

inputs they must purchase on the market. The current liberalization of agricultural markets in the region has affected them considerably, especially when they compete with imported goods or when their export products suffer from the effects of sudden price decreases. In many cases, they are more vulnerable than other producers because they operate in oligopolistic markets.

5. Income diversification and migration

The vast majority of small-scale farming families combine agricultural and non-agricultural income, obtained both on and outside the family farm. Because of their limited access to land and capital, these families need outside income, largely from the sale of their most abundant resource: manpower. Such income is earned in nearby entrepreneurial operations, distant plantations, cities and even outside the country.

Although no detailed studies have been done on the incomes of small-scale farmers, data from household surveys indicates that smallholder families are highly dependent on wages.

Migration, which is a permanent resource for small-scale farming families, takes various forms depending on the type of rural area from which migrants come, the characteristics of rural families and the alternatives available in the place of destination. Two basic types of migrants can be distinguished: permanent migrants, who break their ties with their areas and families of origin, at least in economic terms, and integrate themselves into the place of destination; and migrants who maintain active relations with the area of origin, without giving up the possibility of returning. Between these two types are a series of intermediate situations and a variety of sub-types.

These two types of migration are associated with two types of small-scale farming areas in Latin America and the Caribbean: those inhabited by farmers who are not ethnically different and those inhabited by indigenous farmers. In the first type, migration is accompanied by processes of differentiation and social mobility, and involves the subdivision of rural families and the departure of some of their members; in the second, migration is one of the economic and survival strategies of rural families, through which they diversify the places of residence and consumption of their members without sacrificing their economic unity. This second type of migration may involve a transition to the first type after two or three generations.

Traditionally, migrants from rural areas have moved to agricultural zones where industrial plantations and enterprises are located and, increasingly, to the region's metropolitan areas. These migrations have affected both the relative demographic weight of different zones and urban growth. North-eastern Brazil; northern Argentina; the Andean uplands of Peru, Ecuador and Bolivia; and the states of south-central Mexico, among others, were the areas of origin of many migrants to south-central Brazil, the Argentine pampas, the Andean lowlands, northern Mexico and Mexico City.

The diversification of income sources has led to ever-increasing international migration. Members of rural families in such diverse areas as Patzcuaro, Mexico; Cañar, Ecuador; the border areas between the Dominican Republic and Haiti; the Jamaican inlands; much of rural El Salvador and Honduras; and even southern Brazil have migrated to other countries in search of additional income. Many of them went to the United States, but some went to their more prosperous neighbours, such as Argentina and Costa Rica.

In many rural areas, the income obtained from international migration has replaced income generated in the country of origin. A study of the town of Patzcuaro, Mexico, conducted by Taylor and Wyatt, found that the percentage of families with members who had migrated to the United States had risen from 17% to 34% between 1982 and 1988. In that

period, the town's income from domestic remittances had decreased from 24.1% to 3.7%, while that received from abroad had remained at 14%. These migrations had a considerable impact on local income distribution (Taylor and Wyatt, 1992).

International migration largely follows the internal migration patterns of small-scale farming families, especially indigenous ones. It does not entail a rupture with the area of origin, with which goods, money, information and contacts continue to be exchanged. Furthermore, studies have found that the most influential factors in the rural population's international migration are the quality of land on the one hand, and membership in a network of migrants and its extent over time on the other. These latter factors determine the amount of the remittances sent by migrants to their areas of origin, which, as the families' migratory capital, are a significant factor in the decision to migrate. They often seem more important than other factors, such as the family's resources or education (Taylor and Wyatt, 1992).

Both international and national migration affect the composition, volume and flow of rural families' incomes. At the beginning of the migratory process, agricultural activity sustains migration; subsequently, the process is reversed. Resources from migration are largely devoted to agricultural activity, and often lead to its diversification. For example, resources may be used to buy livestock, fertilizers or even land. The flow of income may also change depending on the relative well-being of rural and urban areas, as a consequence of macroeconomic policies.

C. FORMS OF SOCIAL ORGANIZATION AMONG RURAL FAMILIES

There appear to be at least two main systems of social organization among rural families in the region: nuclear families and extended families.[8] A third type of system consists of apparently unstable family arrangements involving multiple unions. Generally speaking, the first type is characteristic of families in the Southern Cone; the second, of families in indigenous areas of the Andean and Mesoamerican countries; and the third, of families in Central America and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean.[9] The systems are distinguished by their more or less nuclear character, the greater or lesser importance of networks of kinship and relationship and the family's degree of formalization and stability.

These families, in turn, may be classified in terms of their economic basis and activity level: families of landless agricultural workers, smallholder families, semi-proletarianized families and families of small-scale agricultural producers. Obviously, the actual situation is more complex and comprises a series of intermediate and combined models. It should be emphasized that these family types are being transformed by the growing linkage of their productive and income-earning activities to steadily broadening markets, and by the effects of changes in cultural models.

1. Extended rural families integrated into family networks

Extended families of small-scale farmers, generally found among the

8 The extended family consists of a nuclear family and other relatives (aunts and uncles, cousins, brothers and sisters, in-laws, etc.). It usually forms part of a constellation of families with active processes of economic, social, informational and other exchanges.

9 These models are analytical constructions and do not correspond to specific national, regional or local situations. Other models exist, including tribal indigenous families and families in the English-speaking Caribbean, which will not be analysed here. The former, as noted earlier, are organized around a male chief, several women and their descendants. For information on the latter see chapter III.

indigenous populations of the Andean and Mesoamerican countries, implement complex production systems through forms of labour and technical cooperation within and between families. Community organizations play an important role in practising crop rotation and simultaneous production systems in the greatest possible number of vegetation belts in Andean zones; in Mexico such organizations facilitate the management of pasture areas (De la Cadena, 1986). However, rural migration and greater market integration are affecting the functioning of these forms of co-operation by taking away the manpower needed to carry out these agricultural practices. As a result, the systems tend to become simpler; more labour-intensive practices are abandoned, rotation periods are shortened and farming in higher-productivity microclimates is intensified, at greater risk to the sustainability of these production systems.

The management of these complex systems requires the cooperation of all family members, regardless of gender, from a very early age, and of relatives and neighbours. Extended small-scale farming families normally include not only spouses and their children, but also their parents and, in some cases, their brothers and sisters, nieces and nephews, and grandchildren. They typically form part of an interrelated complex of nuclear families, united by ties of kinship and a strong sense of belonging. Tasks are distributed among the family members not only according to their physical capacities and skills, but also in line with cultural traditions. The gathering of various plants, the pasturing of animals, the sorting of fruits, the selection of seeds and the preparation of land, among other chores, are assigned to various family members. Each person performs a vital function for family production and reproduction, following culturally established patterns.

The family, then, is a resource whose labour can be used in a variety of combinations, which have traditionally called for large families. Children are incorporated early into agricultural activities, through which their immediate socialization takes place. There is no period of adolescence and youth, as defined in terms of urban life; children are fundamental for acquiring new resources, working with those already available, diversifying agriculture and adapting to the changing economic climate.

Large families are also important for obtaining additional income outside the family farm. The family members who leave the farm (almost invariably men) maintain an economic obligation to those who remain behind. In many cases, the extended family adapts to a diversified economy, in which labour and consumption take place in geographically different areas but are unified through the constant exchange of goods, money and information, thus ensuring the reproduction and, in some cases, the capitalization of resources. In many of these families, membership in kinship systems offers possibilities for broadening economic activity while keeping much of the surplus income within the family network.

Marriage, both civil and religious, is very widespread among families of indigenous subsistence farmers. Intermarriage establishes formal alliances between families, and is therefore usually associated with complex methods of exchanging gifts, holding celebrations attended by various members of the community and obtaining the sanction of civil and religious authorities. Marriage traditionally takes place between members of the same community or neighbouring communities, setting up family alliances. Only recently have people begun to marry irrespective of family ties, as a result of the families' more frequent external contacts, women's access to education, and other factors.

Women play an important role in these systems, since they are involved in both productive and reproductive activities. They work not only on domestic tasks, especially the raising and socialization of children, but also on the

farm, in the garden and in caring for animals. In many cases they sell their labour, either on neighbouring farms and ranches or in large agro-export enterprises that produce fruits, vegetables, flowers or other crops.

Traditionally, the status (Archetti, 1984) and role of women in subsistence-farming families are closely associated with biological reproduction: bringing children (preferably male) into the world. Usually all the women in the family group share responsibility for the care and socialization of children; they also play a central role in transmitting indigenous languages, and are more likely than men to be monolingual because they have fewer contacts outside the family group.

This role seems to be changing in rural areas of the region as a result of women's greater incorporation into the labour market and their decisive role in agricultural production, as well as changes in the family's demographic strategies, as reflected in falling fertility rates. Other influential factors include women and children's growing access to school systems and the expansion of family planning systems.

The speed of these changes is neither uniform nor unidirectional in the region. For example, children tend to be better educated than their parents, but this has not induced them to break family ties. Circumstances external to the family also come into play: in many countries of the region, children's level of education appears to have diminished in the 1980s as a consequence of families' greater economic needs. The economic and spatial diversification of sources of family income has given women a central role with respect to the movements and decisions of the family group.

2. Rural nuclear families

In areas with no marked ethnic divisions, such as the Southern Cone, the nuclear family model predominates, families are smaller, the partners are relatively stable, marriage and filiation are usually formalized and kinship relations do not reflect common economic strategies.

In these families, the processes of capitalization and proletarianization operate within the immediate family. Capitalization is made possible through the linkage of subsistence farming families with dynamic markets; moreover, as a result of inexpensive technologies that increase productivity, family labour is gradually being replaced by hired labour. Often, this phenomenon is related to more family planning, fewer children and a general tendency among new generations to participate in other economic activities. Obviously, these changes are facilitated if they are accompanied by changes in cultural norms and values, such as those concerning the roles of women and children. Proletarianization of subsistence farmers tends to take place when the children leave home and enter the labour market. In some cases, the entire family may decide to migrate after some initial contacts with the area of destination.

Smallholders, the landless and temporary workers are continually moving in search of work, often over great distances and following complex agricultural cycles. This entails the constant uprooting of the family. The house, as synonymous with the home, is not established in a given spot; on the contrary, the home moves along with the work. Even when there is a house, the family as a centre of socialization and emotional life is destabilized by the high mobility of the parents, who spend a good part of their time outside the home, while the children are entrusted to neighbours or relatives, which generates tension in the family. There is evidence that in some areas of temporary employment, the number of incomplete families is growing and the children leave home sooner.

Among these families, new forms of support and solidarity that are more characteristic of the urban environment, such as food cooperatives and group purchases of food, are taking on importance; neighbours or groups of families who share the same labour cycle

participate in these actions to meet common needs.

The social behaviour of rural families in ethnically undifferentiated areas is similar to that of working-class urban families. Marriage is freely decided upon by the prospective spouses on the basis of affection; it is generally exogamous, though membership in a certain social class is a determinant of eligibility. The formalization of marriage is considered important, and takes place before public authority. Although the population is aware of family planning methods, these are used in a highly precarious context. Education is generally valued, and children are sent to school. Children's level of schooling in this type of family is high. In Chile, for example, young people between the ages of 15 and 24 have had an average of 7.9 years of schooling, while the average in Guatemala (where the indigenous population predominates) is 3.1 years.

3. Family arrangements based on multiple unions

In certain parts of Central America, the predominant rural family models are quite different from those described earlier, and are characterized by extreme instability of the family group during its cycle of expansion. In her childbearing years, a woman may have offspring from various unions, which are not formalized until the partners have reached an advanced stage of their lives. The socialization of children is the responsibility of older people, usually women living in the areas of origin.

This type of rural family is strongly influenced by the former plantation culture, in which farmers had to move constantly according to the demand for labour and slash-and-burn production systems were involved. It is also reinforced by a highly male-centred culture in which a man's status was linked to the number of unions he established and the number of children he fathered. The rural family had no ties with a farm or a stable, consolidated home; instead, relationships were constantly re-created as people moved from place to place.

This situation of instability was further accentuated by armed conflicts, such as those in Central America, with their aftermath of deaths, separations, displacements and mass migrations. This entailed, *inter alia*, a rupture of family ties for more or less prolonged periods, and the establishment of new households among people from different areas.

Older women act as organizers, taking charge of children's education, health and general care. They are the most stable members of the family, and play the predominant economic role in both agricultural activities and the sale of labour. They act as principal breadwinners, but the family's instability limits their economic opportunities.

This situation has had various effects on rural families, and the following have been observed: large numbers of children, low school attendance, poor educational performance, various forms of domestic violence, little stability in support institutions, etc. However, peace processes in the region have begun to help families normalize their relations, although many of these situations will take years to correct.

D. CULTURAL CHANGES AND RURAL FAMILIES

The changes that have been taking place in rural families reflect changes not only in economic activity, but also in the predominant cultural models in the region. It can be argued that family behaviour is explained by how these two processes are linked. The principal changes in the cultural sphere include:

i) Greater secularization of rural societies and changes in the messages transmitted by religious authorities concerning the role and obligations of the family. On the one hand, the Catholic Church has shifted its traditional emphasis, moving from upholding the patriarchal and reproductive conception of the family to social commitment. On the other, new

religious denominations have emerged and altered the content of traditional messages on the family, the role of its members and conjugal responsibility.

ii) Increasing emphasis on education as a mechanism of personal fulfilment and social mobility. This is largely an effect of the expansion of the educational system in rural areas and of the new demands created by the modernization of agriculture. Despite continuing educational needs in rural areas, schools, teachers and parents' associations have begun to have a strong impact. This has changed cultural conceptions of childhood and youth.

iii) Spread of consumerism in rural areas, mainly through the mass media. Access to radio and television has brought urban culture to rural areas and increased the consumption of new articles not produced locally.

iv) Better health care owing to the wider coverage of health care systems, which has considerably modified the ideas of health and illness and strengthened awareness of family planning methods.

v) Expansion of new ethnic, gender and other identities in rural areas, which has given individuals self-esteem as active agents capable of changing their current situation.

vi) Active voter registration efforts among small-scale farmers and an increase in political participation, thereby generating a sense of belonging to larger social conglomerates. Inter-party competition for the rural vote has empowered individuals to decide and elect.

vii) Presence of many new institutions in the countryside, with a wide-ranging supply of services that transmit new cultural values. Training which targets specific age, gender, ethnic and other groups is introducing new values and knowledge.

viii) Growing monetarization of the small farming economy and the impact of national economic problems, such as inflation and changes in relative prices and costs, also involving the use of arithmetic and necessitating more careful economic planning.

These changes have not been taking place in the same way or to the same degree in all rural areas of Latin America, nor have they affected all the countries simultaneously. This means, among other things, that their effects on rural families are diverse, even though they explain the general trends described above. Moreover, their impact is greater or lesser depending on the strength of traditional cultures in the region. Recent studies have highlighted how changes in fertility among rural families in Argentina or Chile differ from the patterns observed in Ecuador, Guatemala or Peru (Archetti, 1984).

Many of these changes are hastened or slowed by the debilitation of the region's systems of public health, education, social security and production support, as a result of economic adjustment policies and the scaling-down of the State. Paradoxically, families must deal with the above-mentioned changes without institutional support. Rural families in Latin America not only are affected by these phenomena, but also are active agents of change.

E. FINAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

One widespread characteristic of rural families is poverty, regardless of the index used to measure it.

Multi-ethnic and pluri-cultural countries are characterized by a large number of rural small farming families.

Many rural families are subsistence farmers who have their own cultural traditions and do not belong to the officially recognized institutional world; however, new types of rural families linked to unstable employment are emerging rapidly.

These characteristics translate into a stratified system in which close correlations exist between socio-economic and cultural indicators that adversely affect rural families, placing most of them at the bottom of the social pyramid.

Despite the above-mentioned variety of processes of change and types of rural families, which range from the traditional patriarchal model to new models whose profiles have not yet been clearly delineated, some general features can be identified, which are more or less evident according to the national realities in question. These include:

— Rearrangement of roles among spouses, parents and children and between the immediate family and blood relatives.
— A tendency among both female and male family members to seek well-being and advancement through migration and employment in cities, and even in foreign countries.
— The forging of identity-affirming processes involving work, income and learning through secondary relations in new environments.
— The re-creation of ties of kinship and solidarity to enable individuals to perform in various institutional environments and to leave them when they limit individual opportunity.
— A growing emphasis on emotional ties, solidarity and identity within the family, though not without tensions and contradictions.

These changes among families and their members are accompanied by contradictions, uprootedness, high psychological and emotional costs and unmet needs of all types. However, they point to a wealth of social energy, operating independently of theoretical considerations, which has helped to redesign the social fabric and redefine the cultural values of rural, and in many cases national, societies. In view of the crisis observed in traditional models, one of the region's greatest challenges is to find ways of linking the new family types and gender, generational and conjugal roles with the new conceptual and institutional models being designed.

From the foregoing, it appears that a basic task of public institutions in response to the processes which rural families are undergoing is to coordinate social and economic policies, in order to consolidate and/or generate an inclusive institutional structure that helps to strengthen social organization and cohesion, to redefine economic, political and social rights and to develop the capacities of rural family members.

The strategy requires the identification of key areas and special programmes of action in which State participation and resources are linked to community organizations' initiatives. These areas are listed separately below; however, they can be effective only if they are coordinated.

i) Access to productive, economic and institutional resources. In general, these include measures to promote rural development in micro-regions with the participation of small-scale farmers; policies on access to and use of land and water; development of credit and financial systems in rural areas; public investment in physical, road and institutional infrastructure; and strengthening of grass-roots organizations, modernization of local governments and linkage between the two.

ii) Overhauling and reinforcement of models of socialization, child-rearing, psycho-emotional development and health care. This involves actions such as raising public awareness through the mass media, family training programmes conducted by non-governmental and grass-roots organizations and health programmes emphasizing family participation.

iii) Development of intellectual, critical and expressive capacity, and training in operations, logic and mathematics; incentives for aesthetic, technical and ethical creativity; and cultivation of human and political rights and respect for differences. The educational system should play a central role in this process by transmitting new skills, capacities and values.

iv) Sexual and generational division of roles and social equity. Contemporary definitions of masculinity and femininity in childhood, adolescence and adulthood; rights, responsibilities and opportunities

within and outside the family with respect to specific situations and dynamics, linkages with society, and the requirements of the modern world. Non-governmental and social organizations can play a catalytic role in these actions, complementing the role of the educational system.

v) Establishment of conditions and institutions that promote the development of national solidarity and loyalty, based on family, community and ethnic loyalties, so that citizens can develop practical (and not only legal) standards concerning the expression of rights and non-exclusion on the basis of gender, age or ethnic background. The decentralization and de-concentration of the State can further this goal, as can legislative changes to ensure the recognition of diversity.

These five areas require the establishment of plans of action, coordinated between the State and the community, with the assignment of responsibilities, spheres of competence, resources and short-term goals. The emphasis placed on each aspect will depend on conditions in each country, regional diversities within countries and family types.

The aim is not to develop specific policies for the family, but rather to integrate into macroeconomic, social and sectoral policies the material and symbolic requirements for developing the capacities of families and of each of their members.

The actions should combine public policy strategies with mobilization of community organizations and institutions, at the national, regional and micro-regional levels. Since most rural families are integrated into micro-regional societies, it is important to design and execute action strategies at this level.

Plans of action involving immediate social compensation measures should be implemented for the most vulnerable rural families, such as poor families headed by women, itinerant rural families and families whose head of household is constantly involved in itinerant activities.

Special attention should be given to establishing family counselling centres, promoting grass-roots mutual aid organizations and creating reporting and protection centres for members of rural families, mainly women and children. Educational policies, mass campaigns and grass-roots and non-governmental organizations should make local organizations and authorities aware of the need to prevent and combat domestic violence.

Lastly, a number of areas require careful attention and more research, including:

i) The prevalence of civil marriage (regulated by the State) among rural families and the consequences of its observance or non-observance for the partners and children.

ii) The forms of marriage recognized by rural families, and their regulations and prescriptions.

iii) The differences between forms of rural marriage and the prescriptions of State legislation in terms of the age of the spouses, inheritance systems and responsibility for children.

iv) The *models* of marriage prevalent among rural families, and how they establish the rights and duties of spouses and children. The sources of these models: the Church, the State, the customs of the local community, the mass media?

v) The interactions among different models and between them and the living conditions of rural families.

vi) The relationship between productive aspects and personal development, emotional life and security in rural families.

vii) The role of local and national loyalties in rural families, and the mechanisms that guarantee, reinforce or debilitate these loyalties.

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Annex I

CARTAGENA DECLARATION

The representatives of the Governments of Latin America and the Caribbean, meeting at Cartagena, Colombia, on 12 and 13 August 1993 on the occasion of the Latin American and Caribbean Regional Meeting Preparatory to the International Year of the Family,

Considering:

That the General Assembly of the United Nations, by its resolution 44/82 of 8 December 1989, proclaimed 1994 as International Year of the Family, with the theme "Family: resources and responsibilities in a changing world";

The international declarations and treaties on human rights and the rights of children, women and the family, in particular the Declaration of the International Year of the Family in 1983, proclaimed by the Organization of American States;

That, for several decades, the Governments of Latin America and the Caribbean have, in different forums, recognized the family as the basic unit of society and as the core of social organization;

That Governments have recognized the importance of providing the highest degree of protection and respect to the different forms assumed by the family;

That the well-being of family members is the joint responsibility of families, society and the State;

That in the context of the preparation and holding of the forthcoming world meetings on population in 1994, social development in 1995 and women in 1995, and of the agreements signed by Heads of State and Government at the Ibero-American Summit held in Salvador da Bahia, the family has taken on special importance;

Recognizing:

1. That the Latin American and Caribbean family, as an institution, is undergoing a rapid process of transformation that shows similar tendencies throughout the region, including smaller family size, fewer and later marriages, and increases in teenage pregnancy, consensual unions, broken marriages, single-parent and one-person households and reconstituted families, among others.
2. That the region is characterized by great ethnic diversity and cultural heterogeneity, as well as a wide range of family structures and dynamics.
3. That in most Latin American and Caribbean countries, population dynamics have generated a high proportion of families in the expansive stage of the life cycle, creating

a greater demand for services to support them in their socialization and child-rearing functions.

4. That the region is advancing in democratic and peace processes, providing new opportunities for social participation in which the family is recognized as an important social actor.
5. That in some countries, economic adjustment processes have failed to take social processes into account, affecting certain sectors of the population and influencing in various ways the ability of families to carry out their functions.
6. That women's mass incorporation into the labour market and changes in gender relations are a central factor in the transformation of family life.
7. That in many countries of the region, violence has placed many families in situations of crisis and extreme vulnerability including, *inter alia*, forced fragmentation, displacement and disintegration.
8. That various factors such as an increase in poverty, drug and alcohol abuse, disorders such as human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), domestic violence and violence in the mass media, *inter alia*, are affecting the family's constitution, structure and ability to perform its functions.
9. That most economic and social policies and programmes do not address family issues comprehensively or consider the impact of their actions on the family's structure, functioning and quality of life.
10. That in many countries of the region, the development of public and private institutions for the family is characterized by poor coordination and insufficient installed financial and technical capacity to address family problems adequately.
11. That there is a significant lack of qualitative and statistical information on the situation of families and of valid, relevant indicators for its measurement.
12. That cooperation among the countries of the region and support from international agencies and non-governmental organizations are of particular importance for the advancement of policies, plans and programmes benefiting the family.
13. That sharing a framework of action helps to consolidate the regional integration processes under way in the Caribbean and Latin America.

Agree to:

1. Promote the formulation and consolidation of integrated family-oriented public policies, taking into account the diversity and cultural identity of families.
2. Review, update, promote and implement a legal framework which will contribute to the overall protection of the family, eliminating all forms of discrimination and violation of its rights.
3. Maintain a suitable balance between the fulfilment of the State's functions and the limitations deriving from families' privacy rights.
4. Encourage the development of decentralized institutional structures, of a high technical and political level, with the participation of civil society, in order to integrate actions in the areas of prevention, protection and family development within a framework of proper coordination and linkages.
5. Support policies, plans, actions and services designed to create the necessary conditions for strengthening the family's ability to provide for its own welfare and integrate itself into a network of relationships based on equity, solidarity, affection and respect.

6. Design strategies which will transform the family into a prime agent of programmes aimed at specific population groups, incorporating the dimensions of gender, age, status, ethnic origin and level of vulnerability.
7. Reinforce programmes designed to satisfy the basic needs of families and, in particular, facilitate their access to health services, education, nutrition, environmental sanitation, housing, recreation, employment and income generation.
8. Promote research in the area of the family to support the formulation of policies and assess their impact on the overall development of the family.
9. Improve the production of indicators on the family in national statistical systems and ensure that they are widely disseminated.
10. Promote broader opportunities for participation and coordination among non-governmental organizations working for the family and encourage their participation in the Global Forum to Launch the International Year of the Family, to be held from 28 November to 2 December 1993 at Valletta, Malta.
11. Call on financial organizations and multilateral and bilateral cooperation agencies to provide technical and financial support to government efforts to comply with signed agreements.
12. Place due emphasis on the observance of the International Day of the Family.
13. Pledge our efforts, in the context of regional integration processes and with a view to consolidating a Latin American and Caribbean position on the International Year of the Family, to furthering actions under the Regional Proposal attached to this Declaration.

Annex II

REGIONAL PROPOSAL FOR THE ELABORATION OF ACTION GUIDELINES FOR THE BENEFIT OF LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN FAMILIES

1. BACKGROUND

The General Assembly of the United Nations, by its resolution 44/82 of 8 December 1989, proclaimed 1994 as International Year of the Family, with the theme "Family: resources and responsibilities in a changing world".

In the region, the American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man, adopted by the Ninth International Conference of American States in 1948 at Bogotá, and the American Convention on Human Rights of 1969, also called the Pact of San José, stress the importance of the family as a natural and basic element of society and the duty of society and the State to protect it.

The Organization of American States, at its eleventh regular session, proclaimed 1983 as Inter-American Year of the Family, at the initiative of the Inter-American Commission of Women. That same body adopted the Inter-American Declaration on the Rights of the Family. The Inter-American Children's Institute called on Governments to implement those rights at its Sixteenth Congress, held in 1984.

In proclaiming the International Year of the Family, the United Nations General Assembly decided that the major activities for the observance of the Year should be concentrated at the local, regional and national levels and assisted by the United Nations system. To that end, it designated the United Nations Commission for Social Development as the preparatory body and the Economic and Social Council as the coordinating body for the Year. ECLAC, the economic commission for the region, was designated as the focal point for promoting the Year in the region.

As part of regional activities, ECLAC held two technical meetings in 1991 and 1992: the first, held in Chile, analysed the situation of the family, and the second, held in Mexico, discussed methodologies for its analysis.

The third regional activity was the Latin American and Caribbean Regional Meeting Preparatory to the International Year of the Family, held from 9 to 13 August 1993 at Cartagena, Colombia.

Bearing in mind this background information and the analytical study of the family in the region prepared by ECLAC,* the following objectives and action guidelines are presented.

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* ECLAC, *Situation and prospects of the family in Latin America and the Caribbean* (LC/L.758(CONF.84/3)), Santiago, Chile, 1993.

2. OBJECTIVES

2.1 General objectives

2.1.1 To promote the overall development of the family at the regional level, strengthening its ties of solidarity and ensuring the means for its welfare through a comprehensive, responsible pooling of efforts between government and society.

2.1.2 To consolidate the necessary political sociocultural and economic conditions for improving the situation of families in Latin America and the Caribbean, with a view to encouraging, sustaining and developing its strength as a basic network of social relations and ensuring respect for the human rights of all its members.

2.2 Specific objectives

2.2.1 To make operational the principles enshrined in the Cartagena Declaration.

2.2.2 To propose action guidelines for the development of national policies, plans and programmes to benefit families.

2.2.3 To promote joint working mechanisms to support regional integration processes in this regard.

3. AREAS OF ACTION

3.1 Family and public policies

3.1.1 To analyse the place of the family in the formulation of public policies.

3.1.2 To evaluate and promote the inclusion of the family as a policy target.

3.1.3 To evaluate the impact of public policies on the family.

3.1.4 To promote the development of policies that consider the family as a unit of action.

3.1.5 To stimulate the inclusion of the family approach in different population and sectoral plans and programmes.

3.1.6 To harmonize economic adjustment processes with social processes that promote stability of the family and the performance of its functions.

3.1.7 To promote mechanisms that ensure the preservation of the origins and roots of each family, consistent with its ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic characteristics.

3.1.8 To incorporate the principles of sustainable development into family-oriented programmes for promoting production and social development, in order to ensure that society as a whole reaps the benefits of development and that these benefits will be shared by future generations.

3.2 Legislation and family rights

3.2.1 To review legislation that has an impact on the family and amend it as necessary, in order to ensure a coherent, flexible legal framework consistent with the relevant international instruments.

3.2.2 To ensure that family legislation incorporates conciliation mechanisms and norms designed to prevent and combat violence and discrimination and the exploitation of members of the family group.

3.2.3 To promote the specialization of judicial bodies in family matters and the specific training of their human resources.

3.2.4 To broaden the coverage and the possibility of access to them by families and their members, of legal and registry services, and to promote a decentralized, interdisciplinary structure adapted to the conditions of the population.

3.2.5 To ensure and promote the proper dissemination and understanding of the rights and duties of individuals, society and the State in relation to family functions.

3.3 Institution-building

3.3.1 To promote the strengthening of governmental and non-governmental institutions that support the family, improving the quality of their services, expanding their coverage and increasing coordination between the two sectors.

3.3.2 To strengthen and promote the capacity of families to organize and form associations to promote their own interests and meet their own needs as self-managing units.

3.3.3 To evaluate the relationship between the supply of services and the satisfaction of family needs.

3.4 Socialization and cultural identity

3.4.1 To foster conditions that strengthen the family's socializing function, especially in transmitting values and cultural identity emphasizing the importance of affection and promoting a sense of belonging and respect among family members.

3.4.2 To promote policies that emphasize:

a) Recognition of and respect for cultural diversity, and support for and protection of the various forms of family organization;

b) Reconciliation of the family's collective development with the individual development of its members and with social demands;

c) The basing of family relationships on affection, cooperation and respect rather than on relations of production and consumption;

d) Greater flexibility in gender-based roles in the family, in a context of relations of equity, shared responsibility and affection.

3.4.3 To emphasize the responsibility of the mass media in family dynamics and make them aware of the need to encourage, sensitize and mobilize the community to achieve the above-mentioned objectives.

3.5 Family resources and services

3.5.1 To ensure a fair distribution of the benefits of economic growth, reflected in a better quality of life for families, and to promote equitable access to and control over such resources by all members of the family group.

3.5.2 To promote employment and income-generation policies that allow families to meet their basic needs in a dignified and equitable fashion.

3.5.3 To extend the coverage of urban development and housing programmes, incorporating environmental aspects and the aspects relating to the quality of life of families.

3.5.4 To promote and reinforce health and nutrition programmes and services, incorporating the family approach and giving priority to preventive aspects.

3.5.5 To consolidate educational programmes that have an impact on the growth and development of children, giving priority to children during the first year of life, pre-school children, school-age children and adolescents, while reinforcing the transmission of collective values and emphasizing the importance of affection in family relations.

3.5.6 To promote and consolidate programmes of formal and non-formal education, information and services for responsible parenting, family life and sexuality.

3.5.7 To promote and consolidate educational programmes that respect the diversity of cultures and beliefs and promote democratization in family relations.

3.5.8 To promote mechanisms that make it possible to implement social security and social welfare systems targeting the family.

3.5.9 To promote programmes that focus on families in special situations of high-risk and extreme vulnerability.

3.5.10 To ensure that programmes directed at specific target groups are preventive in nature and complement, rather than replace, family functions.

3.5.11 To promote, in coordination with civil society, a system of family support services which makes it possible to reconcile employment obligations with the performance of family functions.

3.5.12 To help families enjoy leisure time and opportunities for sharing activities and interests.

3.6 Research and human resources training

3.6.1 To design and implement a policy of supporting research and human resources training intended to learn more about the situation of the family, its dynamics and the impact of various policies on it.

3.6.2 To include families in national statistical systems as a unit of observation, and to incorporate series of specific, relevant family indicators into statistical bulletins in order to support the formulation of policies and programmes.

3.6.3 To promote specific, interdisciplinary training of professional and technical staff, officials and community workers employed in family-related fields.

3.6.4 To define a set of baseline indicators on the basis of existing national information sources and to ensure the necessary conditions for their processing and dissemination.

3.6.5 To foster the widespread, mass dissemination of information on the family in order to make it accessible to the entire population.

3.7 International cooperation and regional integration

3.7.1 To call on regional and subregional bodies to strengthen their capacity for technical and financial cooperation in areas relating to the protection and development of Latin American and Caribbean families, and to invite the regional offices of international agencies to do likewise.

3.7.2 To promote the creation and development of a Latin American and Caribbean cooperation network among institutions providing services to the family.

3.7.3 To evaluate the impact of regional integration processes on the situation of families.

3.7.4 To identify areas for possible cooperation among the countries of the region and to formulate programmes to promote the sharing of experiences and methodologies, calling on international agencies to support them in these efforts.

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