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PEASANT AGRICULTURE IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

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The document issued by the Joint ECLAC/FAO Agriculture Division on the present occasion is the result of the research carried out in recent years in several countries of the region with a view to pinpointing the problems of the Latin American peasantry. This publication represents a revision of other documents which had been previously prepared on the same theme and into which new background data and comments have been incorporated.

The study of peasant agricultures has been possible thanks to the collaboration which the Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands has extended to ECLAC for this purpose, and to the support and contribution of the FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean.

The document was prepared by Mr. Emiliano Ortega, who has been in charge of this field of work in the Joint ECLAC/FAO Agriculture Division. Its object is to stimulate fuller discussion of its content, with a view to eliciting further contributions and suggestions in respect of so heterogeneous and mutable a reality as is the ambience of Latin American peasant agriculture.

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INTRODUCTION

The aim pursued by the Joint ECLAC/FAO Agriculture Division was to establish the social and economic dimensions of peasant agriculture in Latin America; to analyse its characteristics and trends; and, lastly, to examine its functioning and insertion in society as a whole.

The present document sheds light on situations, behaviour patterns or tendencies of the Latin American peasantry. To fulfil the last of the aforesaid aims, i.e., to interpret the reality of peasant life in the region, entailed a systematic and far-reaching effort which has not yet been brought to its conclusion.

The greatest difficulty encountered in carrying out this study has been that of overcoming the weakness of the subregional and regional aggregations. The homogeneous information indispensable for constructing such aggregates has often been lacking, and it has been necessary to resort to a variety of case studies, marred by "localisms" and reflecting partial situations against which might well be set other cases of an opposite character. However, this way of illustrating or substantiating the analysis does not invalidate it, given a situation as complex and diversified as that of the peasantry in Latin America. The geographical, agroecological, cultural or historical differentiations are profound, and possibly those of a structural character proper to the socioeconomic sphere may be even more deep-seated, owing to the widely-varying network of relations that conditions peasant life. Accordingly, any and every generalization on the "peasantry" must be offered and accepted with caution.

In this document a critical position is adopted towards the dichotomic approaches whereby the regional agricultural situation is split between two extremes, to one of which a positive, dynamic or modern behaviour pattern is attributed, and to the other, opposite characteristics. With this definition the minifundio was stigmatized in the past, and today the same thing is happening with what is called peasant agriculture. Our belief is that in order to reinterpret the behaviour of regional agriculture it is advisable to query the significance of certain epithets, attributes or characteristics such as "traditional", "immobile", "marginal", "in decay",1/ "detrimental to the environment", which are imputed to definitely peasant populations. We must admit that this attitude may have led us to infuse some passages in the present document with a certain "pro-peasant" bias.

I. APPROACHES TO AGRICULTURAL EXPERIENCE IN THE REGION AND HANDLING OF PEASANT AGRICULTURE

1. Interpretations and their imbalances

In our judgement, some of the imbalances in the interpretation of Latin American agrarian processes stem from oversimplification of the agricultural situation: the latifundio-minifundio categories are eloquent in this regard. It may be that something similar is happening with the modern-traditional dichotomy, although on some occasions the term modern is identified with agrarian capitalism, and on others with the penetration of technology. Perhaps the most controversial aspect of this formulation is the abandonment to which the other agrarian systems are consigned when they are dismissed en bloc as the "traditional area", which is shown as undergoing a process of decay.

Wolf 2/ maintains that it is inappropriate to describe peasant societies as amorphous aggregates, without structures of their own, or to allude to them as "traditional", labelling them as "tied to tradition", and deeming them the antithesis of "modern".

The assimilation of modernity to technological penetration is not very exact, since the new genetic, chemical or mechanical technologies have found their way into the various agrarian systems in diverse forms and to different degrees, even though in Latin America it is in fact the capitalist agrarian system that has most thoroughly incorporated the technology available in the industrialized countries. To describe all the other agrarian systems as traditional suggests that to a certain extent they are incapable of changing, which is not strictly true.

2. Modernization of agriculture and decline of the peasantry

Some writers postulate that the peasant economy has entered upon a phase of decline as a result of the industrialization of the economy, which would seem to imply a transformation of landowning and technological structures in rural areas.

Gomes and Pérez,3/ analysing regional agriculture over

the last few decades, note that the main characteristic of the period analysed is not agricultural stagnation but the considerable economic expansion experienced by a part of the sector. Thus a modern agricultural sector is apparently being consolidated, in which production and capital are concentrated in a relatively small number of medium-sized or large farms located on the best land. These farms would seem to be to a great extent direct beneficiaries of public investment in infrastructure, as well as of economic incentives and official support services.

The economic and physical yields of the modern sector are, as a general rule, higher than those of traditional agriculture; consequently, the expansion of the former is reflected in a considerable enlargement of its share in total income and production.

It is also commonly asserted that in several countries the production increments recorded in recent years are essentially due to the contribution of modern farms. Thus, the growth of the monetized component of demand will basically be favourable to modern agriculture, which is the structure best adapted to supplying it. The process of expansion of modern agriculture will therefore bring about the concurrent decay of traditional agriculture.

This way of stating the case suggests the existence of a stratum of farms which expands on becoming modernized, while the great majority of production units, including those comprised in peasant agriculture, will be left lagging behind in their traditional ambience.

From the traditionalism of peasant farmers is inferred a sort of immobility in which nowhere does there appear any capacity for adaptation or change, or any motivations other than those implicit in the market, or any contribution to the growth or operation of the economic system, except for the labour force which emigrates in order to take up temporary jobs or find permanent work outside agriculture.

3. Emphases and omissions in analyses of agricultural modernization

In analyses of agricultural development in Latin America since the war attention is constantly being drawn to certain aspects, while no reference is made to others of equal or more significance. The motorization or mechanization of agricultural operations affords an example that may help to substantiate this assertion.

By 1983, according to FAO,4/ the farm tractor park, which in 1950 had consisted of about 146 000 units, had increased to 955 679. This warrants the statement that the number of tractors was more than sextupled over that period and that mechanization was indubitably an outstanding fact; no one could deny it. But to present the fact in such terms is only

an incomplete portrayal, which ultimately overlooks the continuing predominance in Latin America of the use of biological energy, either human or animal, in work on the land. This is obvious, in the first place, if it is taken into consideration that possibly mechanization does not extend to more than one-third of the area under cultivation, since it is not only the number of tractors and items of equipment that has increased, but also the area under cultivation, from 53.1 million hectares in 1950 to about 110 million in 1983. In turn, artificial pastures have been more widely cultivated, covering 75 million hectares by 1983, and every year a by no means negligible area is left lying fallow. However efficient may be the use of the installed capacity of machinery and equipment in Latin American agriculture, in the upshot only a minority of farmers have mechanized their operations, in view of the supply of machinery available.

In Latin America, in 1983, there was one tractor for every 182 hectares of cultivated land, i.e., land under crops or artificial pastures. In order to form a relative idea of the magnitudes involved, this figure may be compared with the data given by FAO 5/ for Europe as a whole, which show that in 1983 there was one tractor for every 11 hectares of arable land, while in Western Europe the number of hectares per tractor was nine only.

At the time of writing (1983) Brazil has about 350 000 tractors.6/ On the optimistic assumption that one tractor will do the yearly work required for 50 hectares, installed capacity with this type of labour would not prove sufficient for tilling and cultivating more than 17 500 000 hectares, an area representing a decidedly low proportion of the 45 million hectares planted to crops every year. If to this were added the land left fallow, plus the planting and management of artificial pastures, the proportion would be still smaller.7/

The fact that increasing mechanization of farm work is carefully noted while the predominant use of biological energy is constantly disregarded may lead to distortions, as happens when, for example, it is not taken into account that some patterns of mechanization are not applicable to the immense majority of production units in Latin American agriculture, or when it is forgotten that appropriate technologies need to be sought in accordance with the available supply of the various factors of production, particularly labour.

4. Predominance of haciendas and entrepreneurial farming

It could hardly be denied that the accumulation of land is a notable feature in the agrarian history of Latin America. This has implications not only for the economic history of the region but also for the social and political life of national societies, which accounts for the attraction that has been and

still is exercised by the subject of the hacienda, the estancia, the plantation or the agricultural enterprise. A study of these, dealing both with their organization and economic activity and with their socio-political projection, would seem to imply, to a large extent, defining the evolution and behaviour of the agrarian sector. Perhaps this explains why less emphasis has been placed on the agricultural activities carried out, in the small remaining spaces, by numbers of peasants or by the new forms of association that have replaced the various latifundio patterns, or on the so-called commercial agriculture, which is none other than a sort of agricultural middle class. The subject of these peasant farmers or stockraisers is generally approached from two angles:

i) The social problem of large rural groups whose straitened means doom them to drag out a miserable existence and incite them to migrate. The notion of the minifundio or smallholding is associated with this socioeconomic situation in which a considerable number of peasants continue to live;

ii) A second perspective, within which the minifundistas are seen, includes not only the shortage of land (the source of many of their ills), but also the abundance of labour which has only limited opportunities of obtaining temporary jobs during tilling or harvesting seasons, or which for these very reasons moves to neighbouring regions or cities.

As a rule, however, little importance is attached to their economic and social role as producers, and generally they are not called farmers, despite the fact that they adopt various decisions relating to their economic activity and, in addition, work directly on the land. Their economic activity is paramountly viewed as not going much farther than the satisfaction of their elementary subsistence needs, and is thus linked more with own-account consumption than with increasing production or supplying the markets. In contrast, according to the prevailing social nomenclature, "farmers" are people who often live in town or villages. Throughout Latin American history the peasantry has been the victim of a deep-rooted disregard and under-estimation of its cultural and socioeconomic significance.

II. SCOPE AND DIMENSIONS OF PEASANT AGRICULTURE

1. Differentiation and limits of peasant agriculture

From a conceptual standpoint, peasant agriculture comprises the segment of agriculture which is based on family labour, and in which the family is the essential nucleus of both production and consumption. The family strategy is aimed at maintaining or reproducing this unit of labour and consumption, i.e., at meeting the needs of the family and the requirements of the agricultural unit, and also seeks to obtain the means of responding to the demands arising out of the social or institutional relations of its particular environment. From the point of view of forms of land tenure in Latin America, peasant agriculture groups small landowners, tenant farmers, sharecroppers, settlers occupying frontier land, squatters, and persons to whom family-type units have been assigned under agrarian reform processes.

It is by no means easy to determine the boundaries of so-called peasant agriculture. The dividing lines between one kind of agricultural activity and another are not clear-cut; nor are the distinctions between peasants extremely short of land and landless rural families. Moreover, the analysis becomes even more complex if the differences existing within family-based agriculture itself are taken into account. In this connection the differentiation processes may relate to some of the following aspects:

a) To the size of agricultural units. Because of the enormous diversity in the fecundity and productivity of land, any distinction based on the physical size of agricultural units must always be a subject of controversy. Nevertheless, given the lack of other background data, it is often necessary to resort to this type of criterion when analysing the situation of peasants;

b) To the capacity of the agricultural unit to provide work for the family labour force. In attempting to capture this type of differentiation, the studies carried out by the Inter-American Committee on Agricultural Development (CIDA)8/ draw a distinction between "family-size" units, which comprise enough land for a family to support itself with the work of its members, and the "sub-family-size" units where there is

not enough land for a family to meet its minimum needs and make productive use of its work capacity throughout the year;

c) To the reproduction of peasant units. There is a somewhat better-off stratum which is in a position to receive support from official institutions and which for that very reason can accumulate resources and expand the economic capacity of its production units. There are also groups, however, which have difficulty in finding opportunities for improving their circumstances, and which because of their very weakness can easily become so much more impoverished as to jeopardize their reproduction itself;

d) To the technological patterns on which productive activity is based. In family agriculture, strata that have adopted technological patterns based on mechanization may be found alongside primitive methods of crop and stock farming;

e) To the form and degree of integration with the markets. There are areas of peasant agriculture in which, particularly as a result of urban development or the establishment of agroindustries, and of economic growth in general, the processes of monetization and of linkage with the markets bring about changes in the most characteristic strategies of peasant life such as the growing of miscellaneous food crops together with stock raising. This leads to the generation of specialization and technification of production and even to the complete monetization of peasant economies;

f) To agroecological differences. In a provisional analysis on the agricultural potential of Latin America,9/ 67 physiographical subregions considered as relatively homogeneous agroecological areas were identified. Accordingly, geographical location is a differentiating factor in peasant agriculture, which finds expression in the most widely varying combinations of crops and livestock and conditions the organization and seasonality of employment of the labour force. It also has significant effects on the monetization of the peasant economy and the nature of its insertion in the markets, depending on the products offered. Some studies10/ have made progress in the formulation of typologies to show the different agroecological categories of peasant agriculture;

g) To the situation of the peasant family. There is nothing new about the distinction between well-to-do peasants or rural petty bourgeoisie and hard-up peasants with very straitened means, who in Lenin's view 11/ formed or were in process of joining the growing ranks of the rural proletariat that springs up with capitalism. The concept of the minifundio, current in Latin America, largely covers the situation of the so-called poor peasants. During the last few years the notion of "semiproletarian peasants" 12/ has been coined with reference to the poorest peasant stratum, with the aim of suggesting that given Latin America's experience of the tension between the development of a bourgeoisie and

proletarianization amid which the peasantry would seem to live, families are often found that are struggling to retain a scrap of land on which to live and grow a few crops while at the same time selling their labour in other activities. Durston 13/ alludes to the semiproletarian peasant families as those that incorporate into their economic strategy income from wage work as a way of supplementing the insufficient production of their own plots of land;

h) To the development potential of the family agricultural economy. This approach to peasant differentiation is of a mainly operational character and is a response to requirements in respect of development plans, programmes or projects. The categories most often used relate to the agricultural viability or non-viability of peasant units.

The Mexico Office of ECLAC 14/ suggests that units should be defined as non-viable from the food standpoint when they are so fragmented that the resources at their command (particularly arable land) are appreciably below the minimum levels required to obtain an output at least equivalent to the basic food needs of the family, even if they were to introduce the best of the available or possible technical options. These are the units that even over a reasonably long period would be unable to achieve food security on the basis of agricultural measures.

How, then, is it possible to establish the boundaries of so complex and differentiated a reality as that of the Latin American peasantry? How can an aggregation be determined which will allow at least a rough estimate to be made of its dimensions and of the processes which affect it? In the preparation of the present study, for methodological purposes, peasant agriculture was taken to comprise those units in which the work on the land is done by the family. It was inevitable to dispense with considerations respecting the differentiation of the peasantry, since the aim pursued is to aggregate a socioeconomic reality so as to obtain a certain empirical approximation whereby some parameters can be established which will at least show the dimensions of this segment of agriculture, the specific situation in which it is evolving and the trends which characterize it.

When information on family work was lacking, a few assumptions were adopted, arbitrarily although not entirely in the dark, respecting the physical size of the productive units.

2. Landowners and peasant economies

When reference is made in this document to peasant agriculture, to its dimensions and its economic importance, the term does not include peasant units existing within large agricultural estates. Later on it will be necessary to carry out research on this aspect of peasant economies. Hence we are

giving some background data on this subject before focussing the study on what might be defined as "independent" peasant agriculture.

Among the forms assumed by the peasant economy in Latin America, mention must be made of those which developed within large properties, where the peasants had no right over the land but only enjoyed the use of it in exchange for their work on the estate farm. This is the situation corresponding to inquilinos, huasipunqueros, colonos and other denominations that grew up in different geographical areas.

According to Baraona,15/ the ways in which many peasant groups are linked with landowners, within the dominant counterpoint of conflict and agreement, are in essence the determinants of the process of transformation or disintegration which is affecting the latifundio pole represented by haciendas, plantations and estancias.

Viewed in this light, the dynamics generated in the past within latifundio-type units allowed a different modality of peasant economy to exist and be inserted in it, giving rise to a form of conflict for land more specific than the ancestral type, in which the production systems of the two groups condition each other. Haciendas, plantations and estancias constitute a sort of agricultural frontier for the minifundistas and landless peasants who, without established rights, use a considerable share of their resources. In its broadest form, this set-up includes anything from a multienterprise in a traditional situation to a single central undertaking in which almost all the accessible resources are used by the landowner (in an employer enterprise) and the relation with the workers is based on payment of wages. Once this relation is reached, the system of multienterprise or of two economies --employer and peasant--, characteristic of the majority of haciendas, is in practice eliminated.

The more the "master" or employer enterprise economy progresses and develops, the stronger is the growth of the landowner's "right of ownership", until there dawns the sense of a real right of a single landowner who succeeds in overriding the set of real rights of the other categories of persons that are linked to him as a traditional landowner, but from whom as an entrepreneur landowner he detaches himself.

In short, it may be said that the present systems of land tenure have sprung up and to some extent evolved from an institutional groundwork, applicable in its essential aspects to haciendas and minifundio areas.

It is difficult to obtain a real grasp of the central features and modus operandi of these systems out of the context of the aforesaid institutional groundwork. Which does not mean that there is no justification for making a separate study and attempting a taxonomy of the various systems of land tenure as such.

The importance of the forms of subtenure is illustrated in the case of Chile, where the inquilino was an active

protagonist on the rural scene in the period preceding the agrarian reform process.

The figures on Chile given by CIDA 16/ reveal that the inquilinos, farm hands and sharecroppers who operated sub-units within larger agricultural estates constituted, together with the members of their families, about 26% of the active population that lived and worked in agriculture, forming a conglomerate of approximately 500 000 persons, i.e., 8% of the population of the country (1955).

In relation to the national total, peasants operating under various systems of subtenure in 1955 managed 37.5% of the area under seed to annual crops and exported 23.7% of the value of production. If the contribution of sub-family-size and family-size agricultural units is added to these figures, the total area controlled by peasant economies would increase to 49% of annual crops, and their share in the value of production would amount to 40.8% (see table 1).

To judge from these data, the peasant economies that developed within the latifundio clearly had, in some countries, a significance that cannot be disregarded. Obviously the conditions in which this type of agricultural unit developed were oppressive for the peasantry, but this did not hinder the creation of an "institutional system which linked up and kept in constant interaction the haciendas and the minifundio areas",17/ so that the possibilities of change were not autonomous either for the latifundistas or for the peasants.

This situation has evolved in Latin America along many different lines; there are only some few areas in which large estates still exist with internal relations similar to those described above.

As a general rule the hacienda has tended to evolve from a multienterprise in a traditional situation to a single central enterprise, i.e., towards the concentration of all resources in the "master" or employer estate on the direct behalf of the landowner, a wage régime being progressively established with the workers.

In some countries, such as Argentina, the factors that unleashed this process made their appearance at a very early date, with the development of the wheat, wool and meat markets. But in general terms, in most countries the radical change began in the 1950s and became apparent in the 1960s, when the social relations proper to the hacienda system underwent a rapid transformation, with its backwash of expulsion of population groups settled on the large estates and weakening of the intricate relations between the surrounding peasant agriculture and the hacienda economy, this being an important factor in the destabilization of certain peasant agricultures suffering from a highly critical shortage of land.

In Ecuador, the landowners handed over to the peasants the land they occupied.18/ In Peru, under the agrarian reform

Table 1

CHILE: ESTIMATE OF RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF SUBHOLDINGS IN AGRICULTURE, 1955

Mode of operation	Agricultural units a/		Area under annual crops		Value of production	
	Thousands	Percentage	Thousands of hectares	Percentage	Millions of escudos/1960	Percentage
Subholdings						
Inquilinos and farm hands	112	38.6	98	7.5	57 b/	9.9
Sharecroppers and inquilinos	27 c/	9.3	390	30.0	80 d/	13.8
Producer units						
Subfamily-/and family-size	116	40.0	150	11.5	99	17.1
Multifamily-size, medium size and large	35	12.1	663	51.0	342	59.2
Total	290 e/	100.0	1 301	100.0	578 b/	100.0

Source: Inter-American Committee on Agricultural Development (CIDA), Land tenure conditions and socio-economic development of the agricultural sector, Washington, D.C., Pan-American Union, 1965 and 1966.

a/ The total number is different from the census figure, since in this table subholdings are taken into account.

b/ Production from plots allotted and orchards round house was tabulated separately in the Census. Here it is added to the national total. Value estimated by CIDA, on the basis of the sources cited.

c/ Agricultural units belong only to sharecroppers pure and simple.

d/ Based on the assumption that sharecroppers produced the same values as inquilinos per hectare under cultivation. The quantity produced by sharecroppers was subtracted from the value for the whole group of producers in proportion to the land handed over to sharecroppers in each subgroup.

e/ This total figure --290 000 agricultural units-- is probably quite close to (perhaps a little higher than) that obtained in the Agricultural Census for 1965, since in accordance with the new census criteria, the great majority of subholdings will be enumerated separately.

process, co-operative enterprises were generated, but were very different from those previously formed by the hacienda or plantation peasants.19/ What has taken place in Chile has been the expulsion of inquilinos by the landowners.20/

The evolution of the labour system is very clearly illustrated in a study --carried out in the course of eleven years of follow-up-- of a group of production units in one of the most fertile areas of the Central Valley of Chile.21/ In 1965, the average number of permanent workers was 42 per hacienda: this average had been appreciably reduced by 1970; and finally in 1976 there were only 5.5 permanent workers per farm. In 1965 almost 88% of the man/days worked in haciendas were accounted for by the permanent staff of inquilinos and full-time volunteers. By 1970, only 78% of the labour employed by the various types of agricultural estates that made up the private sector was provided by their permanent staff; in 1976, when the study ended, only 58% of the man/days worked in the private sector was contributed by permanent workers. There is clearly a notable trend towards reducing dependence on the permanent farm hands for the manpower required.

This sums up the evolution of the peasant economy existing within the hacienda; rather than any general trend throughout the region, there are punctual cases which preclude even a generalization within each individual country.

3. Some dimensions of peasant agriculture

In order to assess the magnitude of the Latin American peasantry, certain dimensions were estimated which shed some light on the scale of peasant agriculture.

As regards the demographic dimension, the population directly connected with peasant agriculture, which is made up of the peasants and their families, numbered approximately 60 to 65 million persons in the mid-1960s, i.e., a little more than half the rural population and roughly one-fifth of the total population of Latin America. In some subregions, such as that formed by the countries of the Andean area,22/ the relative importance of the population linked to peasant agriculture is even greater. Thus, in the mid-1960s, out of a total population of about 63.7 million inhabitants, about 27 million lived in rural areas, and two-thirds of these were peasant farmers and their families.

For the purposes of the present document, the number of production units making up this system of agrarian economy was estimated at 13.5 million. This calculation was based on a criterion relating to total farm size,23/ crossed with information on the source of labour, when it existed.

Recent data provided by the population and/or agricultural censuses show a rising trend in the number of family-type units; these might currently (in 1984) be estimated at about 16 million and the population involved at

75 million, a figure which represents almost two-thirds of Latin America's total rural population.

The total area of the group of productive units belonging to peasant agriculture in the early 1980s, i.e., arable land, land under permanent crops, grasslands and pastures, forests and land unsuitable for agricultural uses, amounted to 159 million hectares; this figure represents one-fifth of the total land area devoted to agriculture in the region.

In Central America the corresponding proportion is somewhat higher; there, according to the censuses taken in the 1970s, peasant agriculture accounts for 25% of the total area covered by productive units.

Out of the 165.5 million hectares suitable for farming 24/ that were already devoted to agriculture in Latin America by the beginning of the 1980s, the peasantry would appear to control 60.5 million hectares, i.e., 38% of the whole. And in relation to the area of 110 million hectares harvested in 1983, approximately 50 million corresponded to family-based agriculture, which also accounted for 24% of the cattle and 78% of the pigs raised.

As can be inferred from the foregoing data, the average peasant farm unit in Latin America covers a total area of 10.0 hectares; 4.7 hectares are arable land or suitable for permanent crops; and about 3.1 hectares are harvested every year. It hardly seems necessary to point out that this average is only illustrative of a regional aggregation.

With reference to the size of units, it is essential to recall that in the mid-1960s nearly 39%, i.e., approximately 4.9 million units, had an area of less than 2 hectares; these figures reflect the semiproletarianization which characterizes peasant life. In some countries, such as Jamaica and El Salvador, agricultural units of this type represented more than 75% of the total number of peasant units, and since these peasants' possibilities of selling their labour are limited, rather than semiproletarians they might simply by regarded as poor peasants.

The chronic shortage of land affecting a high proportion of families is the most outstanding feature of peasant experience in Latin America. This phenomenon has been described as a process of "minifundization", which in turn has a counterpart in the process of semiproletarianization, since it necessitates survival strategies which include, as a decisive element, the sale of family labour.

From these data can be deduced the great social significance of the peasantry, in relation both to the rural population and to the total population of Latin America. Hence high priority must be accorded to any endeavour to obtain a deeper knowledge of peasant life and to seek answers to its problems. Another inference to be drawn concerns the relative importance of the resources the peasantry controls, in consequence of the aggregation of millions of small units which in conjunction represent a by no means negligible share

of the region's agricultural resources. Indubitably, the land in the peasants' hands is not the most productive, so that they have to make more intensive and more strenuous efforts in order to reap its fruits. Rent differentials have constituted a potent short cut to concentration of the best land in Latin America.

III. THE ECONOMIC SIGNIFICANCE OF PEASANT AGRICULTURE

1. Data on peasant production

The contribution of small farmers to total agricultural production is often thought to be of little importance, the capacity of the peasant sector as a producer of food and other goods of agricultural origin being underrated. This belief is implicit in many of the opinions voiced in the discussion on the Latin American peasantry, and forms part of the general failure to give this social sector its due.

In the 1960s, however, CIDA,25/ on the basis of the data provided by the agricultural censuses taken in the 1950s and early 1960s, built up the information required for estimating contributions to production and intensity of land use, by size of farm, in six Latin American countries. This initial quantification made it possible to define the importance of peasant production within regional agriculture as a whole. In Ecuador, in 1954 59% of agricultural output was produced in peasant units. In Guatemala (1980), these were responsible for 43% (see table 2).

Outstanding at a first glance is the contrast existing between, on the one hand, the percentage of production generated by minifundios and family-based units, which is always higher than the percentage of land they possess, and, on the other, the contribution to output of medium-sized and large multifamily farms, which is always lower than the percentage of land at their disposal. This fact is illustrative of the intensity of the productive effort of the two sectors in relation to their resource endowment. It is noteworthy, too, that the proportion of total agricultural production generated by minifundios and family-based units varies between 20% and 66%, while the share of land they control ranges only from 7% to 48%. In contrast, the large multifamily farms control from 37% to 81% of the land and contribute between 15% and 57% of the total agricultural product.

The intensity of the farming effort made by small producers, motivated by the necessity of feeding the family group despite an acute shortage of land, suggests that the loss of production capacity to which certain hillside soils

Table 2

LATIN AMERICA (SIX COUNTRIES): RELATIVE CONTRIBUTION OF DIFFERENT TYPES OF FARM TO AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION a/

Country and type of farm	Percentage of land in each type of farm	Percentage of agricultural production supplied
Argentina (1960)		
Minifundios and family-based units	48	59
Medium-sized and large multifamily farms	52	41
Brazil (1960)		
Minifundios and family-based units	7	21
Medium-sized and large multifamily farms	93	79
Colombia (1960)		
Minifundios and family-based units	30	66
Medium-sized and large multifamily farms	70	34
Chile (1985)		
Minifundios and family-based units	7	20
Medium-sized and large multifamily farms	93	80
Ecuador (1954)		
Minifundios and family-based units	36	59
Medium-sized and large multifamily farms	64	41
Guatemala (1950)		
Minifundios and family-based units	27	43
Medium-sized and large multifamily farms	73	57

Source: CIDA, Land tenure conditions and socio-economic development of the agricultural sector, Washington, D.C., Pan-American Union, 1965 and 1966.

a/ Land received by peasants from haciendas, plantations or estancias under subtenure systems is not included, nor is the production generated on the land in question. In the case of Chile in 1955, independent peasant farmers accounted for 20% of total agricultural production, but with the addition of the amount directly produced by inquilinos and sharecroppers on land conceded by haciendas, total peasant production amounted to 40.8% of national agricultural production.

are subject is high; still more so when it is taken into account that the peasant does not normally have access to "soil substitute" inputs which make it possible to minimize the extractive impact of farming.

This state of affairs, the unequal distribution of land and the difficulty of access to it for a large non-owner productive sector, plus the landowerns' power structure, which tended to perpetuate a situation of poverty for a sector of such social and productive importance as that of small farmers, amply justified the launching of the technical assistance, supervised credit and agrarian reform programmes which were implemented in Latin America during the 1960s.

2. Contribution to the production and supply of food

Peasant agriculture in which the family is the centre of gravity produces mainly food. It is common knowledge that peasant farmers use part of their production for their own consumption, but their important contribution to the general

food supply of the population is not so fully appreciated. The available statistical data show the high participation of peasant agriculture in Latin America's food supply and, in general, in the agricultural sector's different lines of production. In the mid-1970s 41% of agricultural output for domestic consumption was contributed by small producers. Furthermore, they accounted for 32% of exportable agricultural production (see table 3).

A well documented study 26/ shows that in Brazil small farms, representing over 80% of the total number of agricultural units recorded in the 1976 cadaster but occupying less than one-fifth of the area covered by the census (17.5%), account for more than half of the area harvested for staple food products, products for industrial processing and market-garden produce. The same document, in studying the origin of production, adopts as a stratification criterion the type of labour used in production units --an element of immense value for drawing a distinction between peasant agriculture and other systems--, and reaches the conclusion that most of the area harvested for staple food crops, products for industrial processing and fruit and vegetable crops pertains to units with no permanent paid workers. Moreover, it textually asserts that production of basic foods is particularly noteworthy: about 80% of the area harvested is occupied by production units having no permanent paid labour.

In turn, when production units are stratified without regard to their size in terms of area or to the source of labour, but according to the total value of production, it is found that farms with an annual gross income of less than 12 000 cruzeiros (US$ 500) cultivate over 60% of the area under staple food crops and of market-garden produce, and over 40% of the area harvested in the case of products for industrial processing.

In short, according to the same writers, it may be concluded that in Brazil the greater part of agricultural production has its origin in units that are small either in terms of area, or in terms of the total value of production (gross income).27/

Still in Brazil, in 1980 small peasant producers controlled 33% of the area sown to maize, 61% of that under beans and 64% of that planted with yucca. Their contribution to total production was 52% in the case of maize; 63% in that of beans; and 68% in that of yucca (see table 4).

In Ecuador (1975), too, the peasant sector is of radical importance, since it occupies 54% of the area sown to maize; 67% of that under beans; 56% of that sown to barley; and 55 of the area under oca. It is likewise significant in terms of production (see table 4).

In Mexico peasant agriculture makes a very considerable contribution to production of staple foods. In 1970 it cultivated 74% of the area assigned to maize and 61% of the area under beans. As regards production, peasant farms

Table 3

LATIN AMERICA: PROVISIONAL ESTIMATE OF DIMENSIONS OF ENTREPRENEURIAL AND SMALL-PRODUCER AGRICULTURE AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 1980s

(Percentages)

Indicators	Entrepreneurial agriculture	Small-producer agriculture
Production for domestic consumption	59.0	41.0
Production for export	68.0	32.0
Production of permanent crops	59.0	41.0
Production of short-cycle crops	47.0	53.0
Production of maize	49.0	51.0
Production of beans	23.0	77.0
Production of potatoes	39.0	61.0
Production of rice	68.0	32.0
Production of coffee	59.0	41.0
Production of sugar-cane	79.0	21.0
Number of cattle	76.0	24.0
Number of pigs	22.0	78.0

Source: L. López Cordovez, "Trends and recent changes in the Latin American food and agriculture situation", CEPAL Review No. 16, Santiago, Chile, April 1982.

accounted for 41.4% of national agricultural output (without including livestock production), and units of a transitional nature, some of which can be regarded as peasant holdings, were responsible for another 25.6%, while the remainder represented the share of entrepreneurial units proper.28/

Peasant agriculture in Colombia plays a preponderant role in supplying the country with food. According to the National Planning Department (Departamento Nacional de Planeación),29/ in 1973 small farmers accounted for 67% of the total supply of the agricultural products which take first place in the food consumption of a high proportion of the population, such as maize, rice and wheat; ordinary beans, yam beans (name), potatoes and yucca; plantains, unrefined block sugar; vegetables and fruit (excluding bananas). This sector's contribution to production amounted to 69% of beans, 60% of yucca and 49% of wheat. In respect of plantains, small-scale agriculture produced 85% of the national total (see table 4).

The case of Peru also affords a reliable illustration of the significant share of peasant agriculture in the supply of staple food products for the population. According to the data provided by the National Agricultural Census,30/ 15% of the total area of small production units 31/ accounted for 71% of temporary crops, 60% of permanent crops and 48% of cultivated pastures. Peasant producers generated:

Table 4

LATIN AMERICA (SIX COUNTRIES): SHARE OF SMALL-SCALE AGRICULTURE IN MAIN CROPS, BY AREA

(Percentages)

Crops	Brazil (1980)		Colombia (1970)		Costa Rica (1973)		Chile (1980) a/		Ecuador (1974)		Panama (1984) b/		Venezuela (1971) c/	
	Production	Area	Production	Area	Production	Area	Production	Area	Production	Area	Production	Area	Production	Area
Wheat	30.0	27.0	49.0	70.0	-	-	27.0	32.0	40.0	47.0	-	-	-	-
Maize	52.0	53.0	47.0	85.0	60.0	52.0	44.0	51.0	45.0	54.0	80.0	91.0	44.0	35.0
Beans	63.0	61.0	69.0	81.0	54.0	54.0	77.0	75.0	61.0	67.0	-	-	15.0	14.0
Potatoes	-	-	25.0	67.0	55.0	57.0	73.0	83.0	48.0	49.0	-	-	6.0	6.0
Lentils	-	-	-	-	-	-	47.0	47.0	37.0	44.0	-	-	-	-
Rice	23.0	25.0	13.0	34.0	10.0	24.0	55.0	64.0	34.0	34.0	37.0	67.0	42.0	44.0
Barley	-	-	20.0	30.0	-	-	-	-	54.0	56.0	-	-	-	-
Oca	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	67.0	55.0	-	-	-	-
Yucca	68.0	64.0	60.0	80.0	-	-	-	-	33.0	36.0	-	-	-	-
Plantains	-	-	85.0	90.0	-	-	-	-	17.0	17.0	-	-	-	-
Sugar-cane	9.0	11.0	-	-	28.0	23.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	15.0	18.0
Soya bean	31.0	32.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Source: Prepared by the Joint ECLAC/FAO Agriculture Division on the basis of FAO, "Seguridad alimentaria en países seleccionados de América Latina y el Caribe. La contribución de las agriculturas campesinas" ("Food security in selected Latin American and Caribbean countries. The contribution of peasant agriculture"), Santiago, Chile, CIEPLAN, 1986.

a/ E. Ortega, "El campesinado y las transformaciones agrarias", Santiago, Chile, CIEPLAN, 1986.

b/ Republic of Panama, Statistics and Census Department, "Situación Económica. Superficie sembrada y cosechada de arroz, maíz y frijol de Bejuco: Año Agrícola 1984/85", Section 312, Producción agropecuaria, March 1986.

c/ O. Soto, La empresa y la reforma agraria en la agricultura venezolana, Madrid, Editorial Alco-Artes Gráficas, 1978.

Cereals for human consumption	55.1%
Food cereals, excluding rice	66.0%
Vegetables	78.6%
Fresh legumes	79.6%
Pulses	73.3%
Roots and tubers	73.2%
Short-cycle fruit crops	71.9%
Permanent fruit crops	29.8%

In Chile also,32/ despite its being one of the least "rural" countries in the region, the peasant sector is important, managing significant proportions of the areas under diverse crops: wheat, 32%; maize, 51%; beans, 75%; and potatoes, 83%. In terms of production, too, this sector makes a big contribution (see table 4).

According to a provisional estimate by the Board of the Cartagena Agreement,33/ peasant agriculture in the Andean Area generated between 50% and 60% of agricultural end consumer goods.

As regards Central America, according to estimates based on the production figures given in the agricultural censuses of the 1970s, in Costa Rica 35.6% of production for home consumption originates in peasant units; a breakdown by products shows that the peasant economies of this country generate 60% of production of maize, 54% of that of beans and 55% of that of potatoes (see table 4). In El Salvador, the production stemming from peasant agriculture and oriented towards home consumption amounted to 62.1%, and in Honduras to 63.9%.34/ In Guatemala, units of less than 7 hectares generated approximately 53.2% of products intended for the home markets. In Panama, small producers accounted for 80% and 37% of the production of maize and rice, respectively (see table 4).

While it is difficult to compare the participation and importance of the small-scale farming sectors, a general frame of reference can be constructed on the basis of certain crops which are important in the diet of all countries, such as beans and rice (see table 4), and of which a large proportion is produced by agricultures of this type. In general their share in products for home consumption is considerable, in terms both of area and of production. If production and area are related, it can be seen that the yields of this sector in general are below the average for individual countries. This is strikingly true in the case of Colombia.

In almost all the other countries of the region the situation is similar to that of Brazil, Mexico, Colombia, Peru, Chile, Ecuador and Central America. Small farms using family labour provide a large part of the production that goes to feed the Latin American population.

To sum up, the conclusion may be reached that the peasantry occupies practically half the area under the main crops grown in these countries, and in terms of production

accounts for rather less than half; in other words, it is a category of economic importance within the region, which means that greater attention needs to be paid to this sector of production.

3. Contribution to production of export crops

Although peasant farmers direct their activity mainly towards the production of foodstuffs not only for their own consumption but also to help meet their countries' domestic demand, they also make significant contributions to the production of export crops.

In Costa Rica, 29.7% of production for export comes from peasant units and in Honduras the corresponding proportion is estimated at 25.5%.

In the case of coffee, for example, in Brazil and Colombia, which are the biggest exporters of this commodity, peasants generate about 40% and 30%, respectively, of total production. In those other countries where the value exported is smaller, the share rises considerably, reaching, for example, 53.8% in Mexico, a little over 63% in Venezuela and 75% in Bolivia (see table 5).

Much the same thing happens in the case of cocoa. In Brazil, which takes first place by virtue both of the volume produced and of the value exported, peasants contribute 32% of total production. In Ecuador, which comes next in importance after Brazil, the share of peasants in cocoa production goes up to 65%. In turn, in countries that export less, such as Venezuela and Peru, the peasants' contribution is even higher, and in the countries mentioned reaches a little under 70% (see table 6).

Mexico owes to peasant agriculture 47.6% of its production of cotton, a crop very largely grown for foreign markets.

Of course the proportion of total production of each of these crops contributed by peasant producers is not the same as their share in the volume exported. In some cases, as in that of coffee, it may happen that when international market conditions are difficult, and there is a slump in demand, processors or exporters reduce their purchases from small producers. In favourable conditions they buy more from this stratum, which thus becomes a sort of buffer that enables the medium-sized and large producers to regulate the volumes marketed as suits their interests.

4. Peasant agriculture and livestock production

The part played by peasant agriculture in animal husbandry as a whole is a good deal smaller than its share in crop production. However, while it is true that where cattle

Table 5

LATIN AMERICA (SELECTED COUNTRIES): SHARE OF PEASANT AGRICULTURE IN COFFEE PRODUCTION

Country	Total exports (thousands of dollars)	Total production (thousands of tons)	Peasant production (Percentage)
Brazil	2 564 345	2 117	40.3 a/
Colombia	1 764 000	558	29.5 b/
Mexico	475 419	246	53.8 d/
El Salvador	403 643	180	19.4 c/
Ecuador	174 738	77	70.0 f/
Peru	126 000	60	54.8 e/
Venezuela	24 228	40	63.2 g/
Bolivia	5 500	17	75.0 f/

Source: United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Production Yearbook and Trade Yearbook (1984) and census data from the countries under consideration.

a/ Production of agricultural units with less than 50 hectares of land. 1980 Agricultural Census.

b/ Production of "peasant farms" (producers of less than 120 arrobas). Marco Palacios, El Café en Colombia (1850-1970). Una historia económica, social y política, Bogotá, Editorial Presencia Ltda., 1979, based on the 1970 Coffee Census.

c/ Production of agricultural units with less than 20 hectares of land. Third National Agricultural Census, 1971.

d/ Production of agricultural units with less than 5.1 hectares of land and of ejidos and comunidades. Fifth Agricultural and Ejido Census, 1970.

e/ Production of agricultural units with less than 20 hectares. Second National Agricultural Census, 1972.

f/ Estimates prepared by the Joint ECLAC/FAO Agriculture Division.

g/ Production of agricultural units with less than 20 hectares of land. Ministry of Agriculture, Anuario Estadístico, 1976.

Table 6

LATIN AMERICA (SELECTED COUNTRIES): SHARE OF PEASANT AGRICULTURE IN PRODUCTION OF COCOA

Country	Total exports (thousands of dollars)	Total production (thousands of tons)	Peasant production (Percentage)
Brazil	249 122	353	32.8 a/
Ecuador	95 992	72	65.0 b/
Dominican Republic	70 064	37	n.d.
Venezuela	15 557	17	69.1 c/
Mexico	8 605	33	45.9 d/
Peru	920	5	67.5 e/

Source: United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Production Yearbook and Trade Yearbook (1984) and census data from the countries under consideration.

a/ Production of agricultural units with less than 50 hectares of land. 1980 Agricultural Census.
b/ Estimates prepared by the Joint ECLAC/FAO Agriculture Division.
c/ Production of agricultural units with less than 20 hectares of land. Ministry of Agriculture, Anuario Estadístico, 1976.
d/ Production of agricultural units with less than 5.1 hectares of land and of ejidos and comunidades. Fifth Agricultural and Ejido Census, 1970.
e/ Production of agricultural units with less than 20 hectares. Second National Agricultural Census, 1972.

raising is concerned peasant farming is limited by the lack of space, in respect of other types of livestock its contribution is significant.

If the relation between livestock raised on peasant units and total livestock production is taken as an indicator, it will be seen that this is not a major activity in units of smaller size although there are notable differences between them. Sheep, goats, pigs and poultry represent sizable percentages in peasant units, whereas cattle-raising is carried on mainly in units of larger size. The 1980 census data for Brazil show that the number of head of cattle on units of less than 50 hectares amounted to about 17% of the total. Elsewhere, as in Mexico, the corresponding ratio approaches 33%; in Chile it stands at about 17.6%, and in Venezuela at barely 11%. An exception --in which the influence of land distribution is significant-- is Peru, where cattle-raising on the smaller peasant-type units accounts for over 70% of the total. On such units goat-keeping makes a contribution exceeding 60% in Brazil and 50% in Venezuela. In Brazil the same census assigns 66.9% of the value of small-animal husbandry to small-scale agriculture. Another figure shows that in Peru the number of pigs raised on peasant units approximates to 80% of the total. In Panama the 1980 National Agricultural Census attributes 29% of the total number of cattle to units of under 50 hectares. In some countries where programmes to encourage small dairy farms have been implemented peasant units have been able to make appreciable contributions to milk production. Costa Rica, Chile and Jamaica are good cases in point.35/

With respect to Mexico, it was possible to establish that in 1980 the value of the various livestock products generated by peasant agriculture amounted to 37.4% of livestock production as a whole.36/

In addition to these statistics, there are case studies, diagnoses made for planning purposes and other sources of background data which also point to the role played by livestock in providing animal traction on small farms as well as food for family consumption. Furthermore, it is recognized that peasants consider it important to own animals as a form of savings to protect them against future contingencies, in place of the conventional financial savings.

5. The contribution of peasant agriculture to the total value of agricultural production in various countries

In global terms, the contribution of peasant agriculture to total agricultural production is clearly significant, even if the figures are taken to be an "estimative" approximation to reality. However, it is not a contribution that is homogeneous with that of the other agricultural strata, but corresponds,

as can be inferred from the data given in the preceding tables, to lines of production for mass consumption, i.e., a market with relatively low profitability, which implies an exceptionally strenuous effort to maintain so sizable a share of total production. This to some extent reflects the specific features of peasant agriculture. If six Latin American countries are considered, the minimum contribution of peasant agriculture was approximately 40% or more around 1980 (see table 7).

Table 7

LATIN AMERICA (SIX COUNTRIES): SHARE OF PEASANT AGRICULTURE IN CROP AND LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION

Country		Gross value of crop and livestock production (percentage)
Bolivia a/	(1977)	80.0
Brazil b/	(1980)	39.6
Colombia c/	(1981)	44.1
Chile d/	(1980)	37.8
Mexico e/	(1970)	46.9
Peru f/	(1977)	54.9

Source: Prepared by the Joint ECLAC/FAO Agriculture Division on the basis of the following information:

a/ For Bolivia, the following were taken into account: the agricultural GDP, Ministry of Planning, 1977, quoted by J. Blanes; "La agricultura campesina y los mercados de alimentos: El caso de Bolivia", ECLAC, LC/L.310, Santiago, Chile, 1984.

b/ 1980 Agricultural Census, units with less than 50 hectares.

c/ A. Machado, "El sistema alimentario colombiano: Situación y perspectiva", ECLAC/FAO, Workshop on analysis and design of economic policies in the food and agriculture sector, Lima. 1985.

d/ E. Ortega, "El campesinado y las transformaciones agrarias", provisional text, Santiago, Chile, CIEPLAN, August 1986.

e/ 1970 Agricultural Census. Units with 0-5 hectares were taken into account, plus 10% of those with 5 hectares or over and 75% of ejidos.

f/ F. Guerra, "Perú: Las empresas asociativas agrarias", ECLAC/FAO, 1986. Units with 0-5 hectares were taken into account, plus forms of association and 10% of units with 5 hectares or over.

6. Peasant agriculture and employment

According to the CIDA study on land tenure in Latin America,37/ prepared on the basis of data for the 1950s and 1960s, in the region as a whole 38/ approximately 52.1% of the agricultural active population was concentrated in the strata of sub-family and family holdings, which may be assimilated to the peasant sector of agriculture, whereas the remaining 47.9% were to be found in the medium-sized and large multifamily strata, which can be associated with the modern, commercial or entrepreneurial sector of agriculture.

The most recent census data show that the concentration of most of the agricultural active population in the peasant sector is a widespread phenomenon, i.e., common to the majority of the Latin American countries. In Brazil, for example, according to the 1980 census, peasant agriculture absorbed approximately 70% of the total agricultural labour force. In Ecuador and Panama, in turn, the last census taken at the beginning of the 1970s indicated that 72% and 60%, respectively, of the labour employed in agriculture was concentrated in the peasant stratum. In Mexico the 1970 census revealed that 60.4% of the total number of persons employed in agriculture was to be found in units of less than 5.1 hectares, ejidos and comunidades.

In any case, the economic significance of peasant agriculture from the standpoint of employment is unquestionable, in view of the high percentage of the agricultural active population working in this sector of agriculture.

If attention is focused on whether the manpower employed in the various farm size strata is family or hired labour, the latter is seen to be insignificant in the smaller units, in contrast with the importance of the part played in such units by family labour.

According to the same CIDA study,39/ in the group of countries under consideration 78% of total manpower was family labour in the two lower strata and only 21.2% hired; in the upper strata, in contrast, hired labour represented 69.8% and family manpower only 30.2%.

The most recent census information, relating to the 1970s, underscores the situation in Brazil, where 92.6% of the persons employed in peasant agriculture were members of the producer's family and sharecroppers, while only the remaining 7.4% represented labour hired on a wage-earning basis. In Ecuador, Mexico and Panama, for their part, family labour accounted for over 70% of the workers employed in the peasant sector (see table 8).

The same census data also show the percentage of agricultural units using exclusively family labour and the percentage operating with family and hired labour, either predominantly the former or predominantly the latter (see table 9).

As can be noted in Ecuador and Peru, at the level of peasant agriculture, represented by production units with less than 20 hectares of land, over 60% of such units carry out their operations exclusively with family labour, while in another 30% family labour is predominant. In Panama the importance of family labour is still greater; in the peasant sector almost 90% of the production units use exclusively family labour and only in 4% does hired labour predominate.

Table 8

LATIN AMERICA (SELECTED COUNTRIES): FAMILY AND HIRED LABOUR EMPLOYED IN PEASANT AGRICULTURE AND IN THE REST OF THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR

(Percentage)

Country		Peasant agriculture a/	Rest of agricultural sector	Total
Brazil (1970)	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
	Family	92.6	62.9	85.0
	Hired	7.4	37.1	15.0
Ecuador (1974)	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
	Family	76.2	39.0	66.1
	Hired	23.8	61.0	33.9
Mexico (1970)	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
	Family	72.7	47.1	67.7
	Hired	27.3	52.9	32.2
Panama (1970)	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
	Family	79.8	41.5	65.1
	Hired	20.2	58.5	34.9

Source: Prepared by the Joint ECLAC/FAO Agriculture Division, on the basis of census information from the countries considered.

a/ Represented in Brazil by units with less than 50 hectares, in Ecuador and Panama by those with less than 20 hectares and in Mexico by units with less than 5.1 hectares, plus ejidos and comunidades.

In general, the labour force permanently attached to the farm (i.e., excluding temporary or occasional workers) accounts for over 70% of the total (see table 10). Among the countries considered, the only exception is Costa Rica, where labour hired for short periods represents a high percentage (45%).

The importance of labour that is permanently linked to the farm is greater in the case of peasant agriculture than in the rest of the agricultural sector. This means, in other words, that temporarily hired labour gains in importance as the size of the units increases.

It should be noted that census information on persons employed generally relates to the situation existing at the time when the survey is carried out or in an immediately preceding period (a week or fortnight before). Consequently, the data may not exactly reflect the situation with regard to temporary or permanent employment throughout an agricultural year, given the seasonal changes, which in some countries may be very marked at different times and in different regions, and which a census does not always manage to register. The information offered must therefore be interpreted with caution, although there can be no doubt as to the role played by peasant agriculture in providing employment.

Table 9

LATIN AMERICA (SELECTED COUNTRIES): BREAKDOWN OF AGRICULTURAL UNITS ACCORDING TO HOW FAR AGRICULTURAL WORK IS PERFORMED BY FAMILY OR BY HIRED LABOUR, BY FARM SIZE STRATA

(Percentage)

	Ecuador (1974)			Panama (1970)			Peru (1972)		
	Under 20 hectares	20 hectares or over	Total	Under 20 hectares	20 hectares or over	Total	Under 20 hectares	20 hectares or over	Total
Total number of units	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Using exclusively family labour	61.4	-	52.4	89.0	69.2	84.8	61.3	49.5	60.5
Using family and hired labour	38.6	100.0	47.6	11.0	30.8	15.2	38.7	50.5	39.5
(predominantly family)	(29.2)	(22.7)	(28.3)	(7.1)	(16.3)	(9.0)	(n.d.)	(n.d.)	(n.d.)
(predominantly hired)	(9.4)	(77.3)	(19.3)	(3.9)	(14.5)	(6.2)	(n.d.)	(n.d.)	(n.d.)

Source: Prepared by the Joint ECLAC/FAO Agriculture Division, on the basis of census information from the countries considered.

Table 10

LATIN AMERICA (SELECTED COUNTRIES): PERMANENT AND TEMPORARY LABOUR ENGAGED IN PEASANT AGRICULTURE AND IN THE REST OF THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR

(Percentage)

		Peasant agri-culture	Rest of agricultural sector	Total
Brazil (1970)	Family	92.6	62.9	85.0
	Hired (permanent)	2.1	19.5	6.6
	Subtotal permanent	94.7	82.4	91.5
	Hired (temporary)	5.3	17.6	8.5
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Costa Rica (1960)	Family	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
	Hired (permanent)	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
	Subtotal permanent	58.0	52.6	55.0
	Hired (temporary)	42.0	47.4	45.0
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Ecuador (1974)	Family	76.2	39.0	66.1
	Hired (permanent)	1.4	16.5	5.5
	Subtotal permanent	77.6	55.5	71.6
	Hired (temporary)	22.4	44.5	28.4
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
El Salvador (1970)	Family	90.1	30.4	82.4
	Hired (permanent)	9.9	69.6	17.6
	Subtotal permanent	100.0	100.0	100.0
	Hired (temporary)	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
	Total	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
Mexico (1970)	Family	72.7	47.1	67.7
	Hired (permanent)	3.9	12.0	5.5
	Subtotal permanent	76.6	59.1	73.2
	Hired (temporary)	23.4	40.9	26.8
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Prepared by the Joint ECLAC/FAO Agriculture Division, on the basis of census information from the countries considered. For Argentina, taken from the CIDA report.

IV. PEASANT AGRICULTURE AND THE MARKETS

1. Changes in market dimensions

Agriculture has experienced profound changes in trade relations at the market level.

Domestic monetary demand as reflected in the markets for agricultural products has been stepped up considerably not only by population growth and increases in income but also, above all, by the changes that have taken place in the relative sizes of the agricultural and non-agricultural populations.

The 1900 figure of 65 million Latin Americans has climbed to 405 million at the present day (1985). The urban population, which in 1920 amounted to approximately 12.7 million inhabitants, now numbers 268 million; that is to say, it is 21 times larger, whereas the rural population, which has risen from 76 million in 1920 to 126 million in 1985, has not so much as doubled. From these figures it can be deduced that a radical change has been occurring in the levels of integration of agriculture in the domestic markets. If in Latin America in 1920 there were six inhabitants of rural areas for every town-dweller, there were obviously very limited possibilities for the former to sell foodstuffs or other agricultural products on the domestic markets. Today the situation is different, since there is one rural inhabitant for every two urban inhabitants who need the products of the countryside.40/

It is this rapid reversal of the relative distribution of the population that lies at the root of the recent incorporation of the agricultural population into the markets. A little more than half a century ago a large percentage of the rural population undoubtedly made its living out of agriculture and had difficulty in finding urban customers for its products; today different conditions prevail, although it must be borne in mind that the various strata of producers have not always had the same opportunities of participating in the markets.

Between the years 1950 and 1984, total Latin American income (measured in 1970 dollars) went up by more than 520%, soaring from US$ 54 291 million to US$ 338 017 million; this meant that per capita income more than doubled between the

same years (rising from US$ 329.5 to US$ 832.5).

In addition to its effect on the volume of domestic demand for agricultural products, the increase in income had fundamental repercussions on the composition of demand, encouraging lines of production like vegetables, fruits and so on, whose income-demand elasticity coefficients are high. Urbanization processes, too, bring about changes in eating habits.41/

Although the importance of external markets for the region's agricultural products may be less than in the past,42/ 17% of agricultural production is still destined for export and the export volumes of grains and of tropical and semi-tropical products continue to expand. Thus, for example, average annual exports of cereals, which in the five-year period 1920-1924 amounted to 7.6 million tons, in the triennium 1982-1984 reached approximately 20.0 million tons yearly. Annual exports for raw sugar, which had stood at 3.8 million tons in the quinquennium 1930-1934, rose to 10.9 million in the three-year period 1982-1984.

The constant expansion of demand for agricultural products gradually forged increasingly close and extensive ties between agriculture and the markets, a process which, concurrently with changing the sector and infusing it with dynamism, has been progressively articulating it with the national and international economy.

The present dimensions of Latin America's agricultural economy are a long way from those that characterized it in the early decades of the century. The volumes produced have notably increased. Production of grains, which, according to the available figures, was approximately 24 million tons per annum in 1920-1924, in the three-year period 1982-1984 amounted to about 104.0 million. In the same period output of sugar-cane would seem to have soared from 75 million tons to 432 million yearly.

Although there is a lack of data on long-term trends in livestock production, some idea of its evolution can nevertheless be formed through the changes recorded in the livestock population. Thus, for example, there were about 99.3 million head of cattle in 1920, whereas in 1984 there were 312.2 million.

As regards forestry, in 33 years (between 1950 and 1983) production of sawnwood trebled, and raw material for paper production and wood pulp increased by factors of six or seven and ten, respectively.

2. Peasant agriculture and the markets

The idea that peasant producers have no linkage with the markets, which is based on the notion of own-account consumption, overlooks their true contribution to the supply of agricultural products. The fact that own-account

consumption exists and that peasant farmers produce at least for their own subsistence does not preclude their making a sizable contribution to the market. Let us look at some of the facts.

Cadastral data for the year 1972 in Brazil 43/ show that the production of peasant-type units accounted for a by no means negligible share of the total production sold; approximately 30% of the agricultural output which was taken to the markets was contributed by units of this kind.

If it is taken into consideration that own-account consumption constitutes about 60% of production, even though there is a fairly wide margin of regional variation, depending on the characteristics of the basic infrastructure and proximity to the main urban centres, the participation of peasant producers in the markets, whether as buyers or sellers, is definitely confirmed, despite the modest scale of their operations individually considered.

Another case study, that of Bolivia, is illustrative of a very different situation.44/ Since 1952 the Altiplano and lowland areas have undergone a marked process of agrarian reform and development of a peasant economy, and upward trends both in production and in sales, and even in own-account consumption itself, have been noted in these pre-eminently peasant regions. In the case of maize, for example, about 75% of the crop is sold, whereas before the agrarian reform the corresponding proportion did not exceed 10%. With respect to other products, such as potatoes, a similar comparison shows an evolution from a state of affairs in which hardly any sales were made on the market to one in which sales amount to about 62% of the crop. Wheat is also an eloquent example: the 20% formerly marketed has increased to almost 68%. These increments are encouraged by progressive facilities in respect of transport, extension of markets, and enlargement of rural population centres or the establishment of new ones.

A study prepared on the basis of a sample survey of several thousands of peasant families in Ecuador 45/ shows that the proportion of the production of the smaller units marketed is 62% in the Sierra and 85.7% in the coastal region (see table 11). In the case of the Sierra, the percentage sold gradually increases in proportion to the size of the unit, whereas in the coastal region, on account of the nature of its products, the proportion sold is much the same in all size strata.

Certain statements, such as the assertion that in agriculture "large sectors have remained on the sidelines of the market mechanisms" should, in our opinion, be subjected to searching revision.46/

Table 11

ECUADOR: USES OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, BY SIZE OF PRODUCTION UNITS

(Percentage breakdown)

	Size of agricultural units (Hectares)					
	Up to 1	1 to 2	2 to 5	5 to 10	10 to 20	20 to 50
I. Sierra						
Agricultural production						
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Sold	62.0	60.0	70.5	76.1	83.1	85.9
Not sold	38.0	40.0	29.5	23.9	16.9	14.1
Own-account consumption	30.4	23.8	19.3	15.0	11.4	8.8
Other uses a/	7.6	16.2	10.2	8.9	5.5	5.3
II. Coastal region						
Agricultural production						
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Sold	85.7	86.4	85.8	86.5	83.9	90.4
Not sold	14.3	13.6	14.2	13.5	16.1	9.6
Own-account consumption	12.4	10.9	11.4	10.6	13.1	7.8
Other uses a/	1.9	2.7	2.8	2.9	3.0	1.8

Source: Ministerio de Agricultura y Ganadería, Programa Nacional de Regionalización (U.R.S.T.O.M.), "Diagnóstico socio-económico del medio rural ecuatoriano: Ingresos", Document No. 7, Quito, November 1978. Table prepared by the Joint ECLAC/FAO Agriculture Division.

a/ Other uses: seed, animal feed, payment of factors of production (labour and others).

3. Peasant supply and prices of products

As remarked before, the peasant farmers' supply consists mainly of mass-consumption foodstuffs, and this restricts their possibilities of obtaining high prices for their products. In some instances, State policies are deliberately directed towards depressing food prices in order to avoid wage or social pressures or to benefit accumulation processes in the urban sphere. But the weakness of the peasants vis-à-vis the markets for agricultural products has its roots in the fragmented and scattered nature of the supply they offer and in its composition. Since peasants have no socioeconomic or purchasing organizations to protect their income, middle-men or buyers take advantage of the large variety of small lots, sometimes of perishable goods, and purchase them at extremely low prices. The need to sell in a hurry, sometimes even before the harvests are gathered in, and the lack of facilities for the storage of their products compel peasant farmers to adopt a behaviour pattern which in itself tends to bring prices down. Consequently, it is not only deliberate price control

policies that are prejudicial to peasant farmers' income, but the very nature of the conditions in which they participate in the markets, that makes them especially vulnerable and defenceless. When markets are organized in the form of periodical fairs attended by a relatively large number of buyers and even consumers, the peasants retain a measure of bargaining capacity. In so far as markets are gradually becoming differently organized and the presence of wholesalers and/or agroindustries is predominant, monopsonic or oligopsonic conditions are generated which may make things even harder for peasant farmers if they do not have some bargaining power.

Special attention must be paid to the way in which peasant production and supply react to low prices, since it is often expected that there will be a short-term contraction of supply or, if the level of prices remains systematically low, it is suggested that production should be halted. Of course, if peasant farmers have possibilities of modifying their soil use practices, some change in the structure of production may be expected even over the short term. But as a general rule the choices open to them are limited to the habitual components of their own-account farm consumption, and certain products such as fruit or vegetables or export crops (cocoa, coffee, cotton) which they regularly grow in certain areas. In such circumstances, the essence of the peasant farmer's rationale remains operative, i.e., the aim of guaranteeing himself a certain standard of living. To this end, if the satisfaction of his needs demands additional work, he will possibly be prepared to do it, or if a given level of monetary income is required in order to purchase in the market products which he considers indispensable, he will also be prepared to increase its production or to sell a larger quantity of products for that purpose. Accordingly, in face of low prices, peasants are obliged in certain circumstances, to increase the supply on the markets. This does not mean that over the medium term they do not tend to modify their soil use structure and to seek more interesting alternatives, but adjustments of this kind are usually slow for two reasons: a) because that is the field in which competition with commercial or entrepreneurial agriculture is keenest, since the latter are in a better position to control the more profitable markets; b) because know-how and technologies are not channelled towards the peasant environment at the most opportune times or on the most appropriate terms.

4. Peasant production of foodstuffs: analysis of demand and consumption

An analysis of the evolution of expenditure on food by income step reveals that as the level of the population's income rises, expenditure on food grows steadily less in relative

terms. Thus the poorest groups allocate about 50% of their total expenditure to food, while the upper strata assigns about 25% to this purpose. This fact reflects the importance attaching to the price of food in the determination of disposable income.

In the countries for which data are available, it can be seen that relative expenditure on food has increased for the poor and even the middle strata, as in the cases of Chile and Guatemala. In Mexico, however, the pattern is somewhat different (see table 12).

It can also be inferred that the rural sectors devote a higher percentage of their expenditure to food than the urban sectors. This difference amounts, in some cases, to 10 percentage points (see table 13).

As regards foodstuffs produced by peasant agriculture, it happens that as income increases, relative expenditure on products of this type dwindles, losing importance commensurately with the rise in income (see table 14).

It can also be noted that the incidence of these products on expenditure is less in the urban than in the rural sector (see table 14).

Income-expenditure elasticities, in the cases analysed, do not exceed unity; elasticity is in inverse proportion to income, that is, it increases in accordance with the fall in the level of income. Elasticity is less in the case of the products of peasant agriculture than in that of products from other sources, for which reason its impact on total expenditure tends to decline.

The effect on demand for food of demographic, income and urbanization variables is expansive, since they have all followed positive trends in recent years, whereas income distribution and relative price variables have tended to cause a contraction of the demand in question: firstly because income distribution has been regressive, and secondly because non-agricultural prices have increased faster than those of agricultural products.

Table 12

LATIN AMERICA (SELECTED COUNTRIES): EXPENDITURE ON FOOD AS PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL EXPENDITURE

(By strata)

Country	Year	Coverage	Strata		
			I	II	III
Chile	1956-1957	Santiago	53.3	47.4	34.6
Chile	1977-1978	Santiago	57.3	50.1	33.1
Guatemala	1969	National urban	46.6	34.9	21.3
Guatemala	1979-1981	National urban	57.1	51.9	46.8
Mexico	1963	National total	63.8	54.1	33.9
Mexico	1968	National total	63.2	52.0	34.4
Mexico	1977	National total	68.7	54.3	29.3

Source: Joint ECLAC/FAO Agriculture Division, "Producción y consumo de alimentos de origen campesino". ("Production and consumption of foodstuffs produced by peasant farmers"), July 1984, provisional text.

Table 13

LATIN AMERICA (SELECTED COUNTRIES): EXPENDITURE ON FOOD AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL EXPENDITURE, BY SECTOR

(By strata)

Country	Year	Coverage	Strata		
			I	II	III
Guatemala	1979-1981	National urban	57.1	51.9	32.2
Guatemala	1979-1981	National rural	66.9	65.3	58.3
Brazil	1974-1975	National urban	49.2	38.6	24.9
Brazil	1974-1975	National rural	63.6	50.1	36.4
Mexico	1977	National urban	61.9	46.8	27.3
Mexico	1977	National rural	79.6	65.9	36.5

Source: Joint ECLAC/FAO Agriculture Division, "Producción y consumo de alimentos de origen campesino". ("Production and consumption of foodstuffs produced by peasant farmers"), July 1984, provisional text.

Table 14

LATIN AMERICA (SELECTED COUNTRIES): EXPENDITURE ON PRODUCTS OF PEASANT AGRICULTURE AS A PERCENTAGE OF EXPENDITURE ON FOOD

(By strata, and overall average)

Country	Year	Coverage	Strata			Average
			I	II	III	
Peru	1971-1972	Lima	19.2	15.9	11.4	16.4
Honduras	1967-1968	National	35.3	16.2	12.0	20.6
Dominican Rep.	1969	Santo Domingo	15.5	13.5	11.3	13.5
Chile	1956-1957	Santiago	18.7	14.9	13.5	15.5
Chile	1977-1978	Santiago	14.0	11.3	8.5	10.7
Guatemala	1969	National urban	13.9	10.9	9.0	11.0
Guatemala	1979-1981	National urban	14.3	10.2	7.6	10.3
Guatemala	1979-1981	National rural	20.5	17.0	12.9	17.0
Guatemala	1979-1981	National total	18.9	14.1	8.6	13.7
Brazil	1961	Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo	16.9	14.6	9.4	13.5
Brazil	1974-1975	Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo	9.0	5.7	3.6	6.6
Brazil	1974-1975	National urban	18.1	15.6	11.6	12.1
Brazil	1974-1975	National rural	26.2	18.6	15.2	23.2
Brazil	1974-1975	National total	21.9	14.8	11.6	14.5
Mexico	1963	National total	40.6	26.6	16.2	24.7
Mexico	1968	National total	40.9	20.8	11.8	18.9
Mexico	1977	National total	40.5	22.8	12.8	20.6
Mexico	1968	National rural	46.1	29.9	18.4	27.5
Mexico	1977	National rural	47.4	32.9	29.4	33.9
Mexico	1968	National urban	29.1	16.9	11.0	15.9
Mexico	1977	National urban	31.0	18.6	11.8	17.6

Source: Joint ECLAC/FAO Agriculture Division, "Producción y consumo de alimentos de origen campesino" ("Production and consumption of foodstuffs produced by peasant farmers"), July 1984, provisional text.

V. PEASANT AGRICULTURE AND THE STRUCTURE OF FAMILY INCOME

The change in the hacienda system has had significant effects upon the formation and source of peasant income. Under that system family income came basically from production on land which the owner gave to the peasants in usufruct in exchange for the work they did on the estate farm; on the other hand, the segment physically delinked from the hacienda, that is, the minifundio, generated its income from production on its own agricultural units and from the sale of labour on the hacienda.

The transition from the traditional hacienda to the modern enterprise culminated in the agrarian reform and modernization processes which became widespread throughout Latin America during the 1960s. This historical evolution established two major categories of peasants: on the one hand, a group consisting of well-to-do peasants that benefited by the process; and on the other, an essentially poorer group constituted by minifundistas and landless workers. The minifundistas that surrounded the haciendas and used to receive land on the basis of some form of sharecropping, nowadays have practically no access to the land in question. Similarly, with the unification of the use of land in the hands of the enterprise, as noted in chapter II, the colonos, inquilinos or peons became wage workers paid in cash.

This structural change, occurring in a modernizing context, also affected the composition and quality of these peasants' expenditure: a modification which in turn conditioned the "type of income" that they needed in order to guarantee the survival and reproduction of the family unit. Under the old agrarian order, peasant production or income was basically a matter of own-account consumption, whereas subsequently own-account consumption was reduced while consumer trade increased; and therefore the type of product generated today must necessarily be at least partly convertible into money. Hence survival strategies are diversified and radically altered.

As will be seen later, for peasants possessing little land this change in survival strategy has implied the search for outside sources of income: an income which will increase in inverse proportion to the size of the farm. With regard to the characteristics of extra-farm income, most of it comes

from wage work, generally temporary, and given the conditions in which the agricultural market functions in most countries of the region, income from this source is insufficient, either because the level of wages is low or because the time worked is short. Accordingly, this too has proved an unsatisfactory strategy for resolving the problem of the huge pockets of poverty that exist both among smallholders and among agricultural wage workers.

1. Sources and composition of peasant income

The different variables that affect the process of fragmentation and subdivision of peasant property are bringing about a readjustment in the average size of peasant-owned farms, with a trend towards small units of the minifundio type. Where peasant income is concerned, this phenomenon has meant that a progressively increasing proportion of peasant production units are incapable of self-reproduction, while it can be seen that in so far as the area of the farm unit is reduced, the share of outside income in the composition of total family income grows steadily larger (see table 15). Thus, in Chile, on units of less than one hectare --and probably even on others of larger size-- outside income represents over 50% of total income. In Guatemala, in the Altiplano area of Huehueterango and Quinché, on units averaging between one and ten hectares in size, income from the farm itself amounts to only 49% of total income. In the department of Cajamarca in Peru, on units of under 3.5 hectares more than half the income comes from extra-farm sources. In the case of Paraguay, extra-farm income constitutes over 38% of net family income on units of less than 5 hectares;47/ while on units of less than one hectare this percentage rises to 54.3%.48/

In the case of Cajamarca, the survival strategy has even meant that from the standpoint of income the non-agricultural component of farm activity (crafts) is of more importance than the agricultural (see table 15).

In El Salvador 49/ peasant families not affected by the Agrarian Reform represent 80.6% of the total; of these, 63.6% possess an area of land averaging 1 to 2 hectares, which is absolutely insufficient for reproduction of the family unit, with the result that they are compelled to leave their property and help with the coffee crop in order to supplement their income.

For the purpose of obtaining more precise data, the only detailed study available on the general situation of a country relates to Ecuador. It affords evidence of several interesting situations:

i) On units of less than one hectare in the Sierra, only 19% of the family income gained on the property comes from agricultural production. In contrast, in the coastal region

Table 15

LATIN AMERICA (SELECTED COUNTRIES): COMPOSITION OF FAMILY INCOME BY SIZE OF AGRICULTURAL UNITS. SOME CASE STUDIES

(Percentage of income)

Chile 1974-1975 a/	Under 1 hectare	5 to 10 hectares
Agricultural activity on the farm	27.0	79.0
Non-agricultural activity on the farm	3.0	7.0
Work outside the farm	53.0	13.0
Other	17.0	2.0
Total	100.0	100.0

Guatemala 1 - 1978 b/	Under 1 hectare	1 to 10 hectares
Agricultural activity on the farm	19.0	45.0
Non-agricultural activity on the farm	12.0	4.0
Work outside the farm	65.0	46.0
Other	4.0	5.0
Total	100.0	100.0

Guatemala 2 c/	Under 1 hectare	1 to 10 hectares
Agricultural activity on the farm	18.0	40.0
Non-agricultural activity on the farm	6.0	5.0
Work outside the farm	74.0	47.0
Other	2.0	5.0
Total	100.0	100.0

Peru 1974 d/	Under 3.5 hectares	3.5 to 11 hectares
Agricultural activity on the farm	15.8	46.7
Non-agricultural activity on the farm	22.0	23.0
Work outside the farm	58.0	29.0
Other	5.0	5.0
Total	100.0	100.0

Source: Chile: A. Monardes, "Análisis de la oferta y demanda de trabajo en la pequeña agricultura moderna", in Estudios de Economía, No. 14, Santiago, Chile, Universidad de Chile, 1979.
Guatemala: ILESO/USAC, "Estructura agraria del Altiplano Noroccidental", Guatemala City, 1979. In A. Hintermeister, "Modernización de la agricultura y pobreza rural en Guatemala", PREALC/ILO, Santiago, Chile, 1982.
Peru: Ministry of Agriculture, Pilot Project Cajamarca-La Libertad; "Estudio de diagnóstico socioeconómico", in A. Figueroa, El empleo rural en Perú, ILO, draft, Lima, 1975.

a/ Survey of 144 minifundistas, Fourth Region. Chilean pesos (March 1976).

b/ Departamento Noroccidental del Altiplano Huehuetenango.

c/ Departamento Noroccidental del Altiplano Quinché.

d/ Cajamarca. Includes overheads.

such income in units of much the same size represents a bigger proportion, i.e., 39.1% (see table 16);

ii) Both in the Sierra and in the coastal region, over half the family income on units of less than one hectare is derived from the sale of labour, whether in agriculture or in non-agricultural activities;

iii) Only units in the 2-to-5 hectare stratum is the income from the property's agricultural production higher than the income obtained from other sources.

These data suggest that if we are to gain a better knowledge of the peasantry, more attention should be paid to the land-poor peasants, that is, those possessing 1 to 2 hectares, since this would help to give a fuller insight into the situation of "semi-proletarianization" in which almost half the peasant families of the region would seem to be living, and furthermore, useful background material for understanding the depeasantization process would be obtained. For example, from the information afforded by the Ecuador survey, it can be inferred that the survival strategies of peasants with under one hectare of land are not the same in the Sierra as in the coastal belt. The peasants of the Sierra obtain 33.6% of their income from wages earned outside agriculture, whereas in the coastal region only 17.4% of income is derived from wages paid outside the sector. In the Sierra the labour force is more integrated with the urban markets, whereas in the coast, because of the high level of urban unemployment, peasants appear to resort less to the cities.

In similar cases in other countries, involving areas where units are extremely small, it can be seen that heavy demographic pressure may bring about a radical change in soil use and in production techniques.

Another point to note is the proliferation of services ("mini-business", transport, etc.) and other activities complementary to agriculture or sometimes predominant over it. It would therefore seem advisable in the future to go more thoroughly into the analysis of the lower size strata as a means of becoming familiar with the processes that affect the peasantry.

A sample survey of 440 families carried out in Paraguay 50/attributed a different significance to the outside income component, depending on peasant categories.

Landless peasants, thus defined because they live on plots of one hectare or under, obtain 54.3% of their income outside the farm unit. Some peasants, because they lived in nuclei close to urban centres, had gone in for growing market-garden crops which enabled them drastically to reduce their dependence on wages. In contrast, one-third of the landless-peasant category received over 75.1% of their income from outside sources. The commonest practice among these peasants is for the head of household to look for work outside his own plot of land, by himself or with his sons; when the

Table 16

ECUADOR: COMPOSITION OF NET INCOME, BY SIZE OF AGRICULTURAL UNITS

(Percentages)

	Size of agricultural units (in hectares)					
	Up to 1	1 to 2	2 to 5	5 to 10	10 to 20	20 to 50
I. Sierra						
Net agricultural income a/	19.0	43.7	62.5	70.5	71.1	74.9
Sale of crafts	3.5	2.0	0.6	1.1	0.1	1.2
Products received in payment	0.5	1.1	0.6	0.4	1.7	1.0
Commercial activities	5.9	4.1	4.0	5.0	5.9	3.9
Transfers and credits	17.2	3.9	5.9	10.4	11.9	14.1
Wages:						
Agricultural	20.2	22.9	14.3	6.1	3.3	2.0
Non-agricultural	33.6	22.2	12.0	6.4	6.0	2.9
Total income	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
II. Coast						
Net agricultural income a/	31.9	54.8	66.9	75.5	80.5	79.7
Sale of crafts	4.4	0.5	0.5	0.2	0.1	0.5
Products received in payment	0.8	0.4	0.7	0.2	0.2	0.7
Commercial activities	8.4	3.2	3.8	4.1	3.0	1.4
Transfers and credits	1.9	4.8	3.3	4.5	7.3	11.7
Wages:						
Agricultural	35.2	27.3	17.8	8.4	5.2	1.5
Non-agricultural	17.4	9.0	6.9	7.0	3.6	4.5
Total income	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Ministerio de Agricultura y Ganadería, Programa Nacional de Regionalización, O.R.S.T.O., "Diagnóstico socio-económico del medio rural ecuatoriano: Ingresos", Document No. 7, Quito, November 1978. Prepared by the Joint ECLAC/FAO Agriculture Division.

a/ Value of production minus expenditure in money or in kind, without considering the cost of family labour.

whole family goes out to work, however, they do so for more days in the year than when the head of household goes alone.

Sharecroppers, who in practice are also landless peasants, although for the time being they enjoy the use of a plot of land, depend less upon outside income than landless peasants proper. The majority of sharecroppers, i.e., 61%, either do not undertake outside work, or if they do, the income thus obtained does not exceed a quarter of total family income.

Wage-earning peasants --in the middle and lower income strata-- who possess a small property supplement their income with activities outside the farm. For some of these the process of becoming wage-earners seems to be fairly advanced by now, for in fact 15% obtained from such work an income which cannot be considered supplementary, since it represents over half the total family income; nevertheless, among the great majority a combination of productive activity on the farm with occasional work outside it seems to be a widespread strategy. Where the poorest are concerned, it is often the entire family that moves off to take up outside work, mainly during the cotton harvest. Clearly, too, for this group of peasants, especially those that have been defined as "intermediate as regards the level of wage-earning", outside work is not compulsory; they work for fewer days in the year outside their own property.

Amongst the traditional peasants there is a subgroup which does not consider outside work favourable --for very widely differing reasons-- and if they undertake it they do so for very few days. Income from this course in no case exceeded 4% of total family income, suggesting that these "work trips" are more in the nature of a recompense to neighbours, or the exploitation of some occasional advantage that happens to arise, unlike what occurs in the case of the preceding group, who, although socioeconomically and culturally similar to these, "prefer" to obtain outside income.

2. Income and living conditions of the peasant stratum

It must be stressed that the specific conditions prevailing in the different countries preclude generalizations, since although similar processes exist, their intensity varies from one country to another. For example, the distribution of the agricultural EAP in the traditional and modern segments differs widely (see table 17). The fact that the traditional segment/rural poor ratio is generally high suggests that one explanation of a great deal of poverty lies in the probable linkage between this segment and the peasant groups possessing less land, while a second is to be found in the insufficiency of the income earned in the modern sector by agricultural wage-earners, especially temporary workers. With all due regard to the analytical distinction between the traditional

Cuadro 17

AMERICA LATINA: ESTRUCTURA DE LA PEA AGRICOLA a/ Y POBREZA b/; 1980
(En porcentajes)

País	Moderno	Tradicional	Familias bajo la línea de pobreza
Argentina	53	47	-
Bolivia	9	91	86
Brasil	40	60	73
Colombia	46	54	67
Costa Rica	68	32	36 c/
Chile	64	36	56
Ecuador	27	73	46
El Salvador	42	58	-
Guatemala	34	66	-
México	51	49	-
Panamá	34	66	58
Perú	22	78	68 c/
Uruguay	54	46	-
Venezuela	34	66	64

Fuente: a/ N. García y V. Tokman, Acumulación, Empleo y Crisis, OIT/PREALC, Santiago de Chile, 1985.
b/ FAO, Estudio sobre pobreza rural, Santiago de Chile, 1984.
c/ 1970.

sector and temporary wage-workers as two streams accounting for poverty, the level of concentration of poverty in the traditional sector points to its being highly probable that a large proportion of the people concerned fall into both these two categories, in terms of a correspondence between agricultural workers and land-poor rural families.

The determination of wage levels in agriculture is methodologically very imprecise; the estimative variable used is the minimum wage, and this, although it allows comparisons to be made, has at least two drawbacks; firstly, the fact that agricultural income has a significant non-monetary component which varies from one country to another, and secondly, in many cases the minimum wage legislation is not complied with (see table 18). It does, however, make a first approximation possible, since the minimum wage in one way or another is roughly equivalent to subsistence requirements. In some countries the behaviour pattern of this variable is unstable and in others it shows a definitely downward trend (see table 19).

Up to now at least two provisional conclusions can be drawn as regards agricultural income: a) income from wages is not always enough to meet the reproduction requirements of the family unit, and therefore b) taking on wage work in order to supplement income only on some occasions proves to be a way of solving the problem.

When the structure of rural poverty by occupational category is studied (see table 20), the significance it is beginning to assume among agricultural wage-workers becomes apparent, together with its persistence among small independent producers. In Chile, Costa Rica and Brazil, wage-workers constitute a larger proportion of the poor than independent workers, whereas in Venezuela and Colombia the opposite is the case. However, if it is borne in mind that from the standpoint of the peasant family the members of these two categories are basically the same, it may be concluded that if agriculture is to provide a solution for the problem of insufficient income an essential requisite is a minimum of land on which enough can be produced to permit the reproduction of the family unit, at least in present circumstances, since, as the existing information has shown, the supplementary income derived from wage work does not guarantee a real solution.

It should also be noted that this apparently static situation or photographic view of the facts embodies a dynamic element that is still more dramatic: the question of what will be the characteristics of the generations descending from these strata, considering the present conditions in which they grow up.

A study carried out in Panama 51/ shows that the level of malnutrition among children of pre-school age in rural families ranges from 15.5% to 23%, depending upon the occupational group to which they belong, whereas in the urban

Table 18

CHILE: WAGES IN AGRICULTURE, BY AREA, 1983

(December 1982 pesos)

Area	Daily	Monthly a/	Percentage difference from minimum income
Fruit-growing	203.8	6 924.8	+11.3
Multi-crop farming	108.7	3 260.4	-47.6
Silviculture	170.5	5 116.0	-17.8
Cultivation of cereals	200.4	6 028.0	-3.1
Stock-raising	153.4	4 602.3	-26.0
Total	175.7	5 270.3	-15.3

Source: Echeñique, J. Bases de la crisis agroalimentaria chilena, 1968-1983, Santiago, Chile, AGRARIA (mimeo), 1985.

a/ The minimum wage remained fixed at 6 223 pesos monthly from August 1981 to June 1983.

Table 19

LATIN AMERICA: MINIMUM MONTHLY WAGES IN AGRICULTURE

(At 1970 prices in national currency)

Country	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977
Argentina	213	220	200	207	228	259	235	263	302	280	155	141
Brazil	114	119	113	106	107	115	122	146	158	162	155	-
Colombia	315	291	275	287	304	279	295	255	350	370	353	365
Costa Rica	260	251	254	263	259	270	267	258	261	266	306	-
Chile	0.31	0.30	0.29	0.29	0.36	0.49	0.56	0.40	0.39	0.43	0.48	0.50
Ecuador	-	-	503	473	450	415	385	341	437	399	451	408
El Salvador	73	72	70	70	68	66	67	68	68	62	67	63
Guatemala	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	26	23	20	18
Mexico	517	502	568	549	610	579	651	616	676	680	761	754
Panama	42	42	41	40	39	38	61	57	56	55	54	50
Peru	1 064	997	964	1 032	1 055	1 173	1·151	1 183	1 076	1 173	1 072	937
Uruguay	-	-	90.1	96.2	100	106.9	86.8	81.2	87.8	86.0	90.2	70.4

Source: PREALC, "Economía campesina y empleo", PREALC/ILO, Santiago, Chile, 1981.

Table 20

LATIN AMERICA (SELECTED COUNTRIES): WAGE WORKERS AND INDEPENDENT PRODUCERS AS A PROPORTION OF TOTAL RURAL POPULATION AND OF THE POOR

Occupational category	Colombia (1979)		Chile (1980)		Costa Rica (1979)		Venezuela (1979)		Perú (1978)		Brazil (1984)	
	Rural population	Poor	Rural population	Poor	Rural population	Poor	Rural population	Poor	Rural population	Poor	Rural population a/	Poor b/
Wage workers	37.1	32.1	31.0	45.0	88.9	91.2	36.3	33.3	-	20.0	46.0	52.1
Independent producers	62.1	67.8	69.0	54.5	11.1	8.4	63.7	66.7	-	80.0	54.0c/	47.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: R. Urzúa, "Caracterización, dimensiones y evolución de la pobreza rural", in FAO, Estudio sobre pobreza rural, Santiago, Chile, 1984.

a/ Agricultural EAP with income.

b/ Poverty line: minimum wage.

c/ Independent workers plus employers.

area the maximum recorded for this parameter is 13.0%. In the case of rural families the incidence of this situation is greatest among small farmers (see table 21).

From this brief review, plus the information deriving from certain studies,52/ it can be deduced that the income structure prevailing in the region's rural sector results in a concentration of poverty among small peasant farmers and/or temporary agricultural wage-workers, a situation partly explained by the fact that their income is too small for them to find any way out of this dramatic situation.

3. Distribution of rural income

Data on income distribution in rural areas are hard to come by and information is available only for Peru and Brazil.

The Peruvian rural sector 53/ receives 26.7% of total national income. As regards the sources of income, despite the fact that virtually half the national EAP is to be found in the rural area, these workers are capable of appropriating only 18% of national income under the head of remunerations (see table 22).

As regards intra-rural distribution at this income, it can be noted that the poorest category comprises 75% of rural families, which obtain 30% of total income, in contrast with the most affluent stratum, which represents 5% of the families and keeps nearly 20% of rural income in its hands. As is to be expected, for the lowest income strata payment in kind and to a lesser extent independent work and own-account consumption represent a substantial component of income, whereas for the higher income strata greater importance attaches to transfer payments, income from capital and paid work (see table 22); this situation suggests that there is less capitalist penetration in the environment of the poorer strata than in that of the higher income strata.

In Brazil, the figures show a downward trend in income distribution; between 1970 and 1980 the first seven deciles' share in income decreases, whereas the uppermost three deciles improve their position, over the same period. Moreover, this regressive trend is corroborated by all the estimated indexes (see table 23). Within the decade, a cyclical behaviour pattern can be seen, the years of worst distribution being 1972 and 1977. Thus, in 1980 distribution was more equitable than in those critical years, although a high degree of concentration is still apparent.

In short, income distribution in rural areas goes to substantiate the explanations postulated for the poverty in which the vast majority of rural families in the Latin American agricultural sector have to live.

Table 21

PANAMA: RELATION OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES WITH DISTRIBUTION AND CONSUMPTION OF FOOD AND MALNUTRITION

Agricultural occupations	Percentage of children of pre-school age with malnutrition in each occupational group
Small farmers	23.5
Small market-gardeners	22.2
Producers of maize and rice	21.9
Agricultural wage-workers	18.8
Producers of rice only	17.8
Producers of maize only	16.7
Producers of yucca	15.5
Farmers employing workers	18.8

Source: Institute of Nutrition of Central America and Panama (Instituto de Nutrición de Centroamérica y Panamá - INCAP), 1981.

Table 22

PERU: DISTRIBUTION OF RURAL FAMILY INCOME,a/ BY STRATUM AND SOURCE OF INCOME

(Percentage)

Source of income	Income step (soles)		
	0-2.400	2.401-10.400	10.401 and +
Paid work	22.4	62.3	15.3
Independent work	30.0	42.2	27.8
From capital	36.4	45.5	18.1
Transfers	43.6	43.6	12.8
In kind	52.4	39.0	8.6
Own-account consumption	59.8	28.7	11.5
Total	31.8	48.7	19.5

Source: Prepared by the author on the basis of C. Amat, Distribución del Ingreso Familiar en el Perú, CIUP, Lima, 1981.

a/ Distribution of families by income step is as follows: 75% in the poorest stratum; 20% in the middle stratum and 5% in the most affluent.

Table 23

BRAZIL: ESTIMATES OF INCOME DISTRIBUTION IN RURAL HOUSEHOLDS

Year	1970 Langoni a/	1972 PNAD b/	1976 PNAD	1977 PNAD	1980 Census c/
Percentiles					
1 - 10	2.1	0.8	1.5	1.3	1.3
11 - 20	3.2	1.9	2.6	2.1	2.4
21 - 30	4.3	2.7	3.3	2.7	3.2
31 - 40	5.3	3.6	4.1	3.5	4.1
41 - 50	6.3	4.7	5.3	4.9	5.2
51 - 60	7.8	5.8	6.5	6.2	6.7
61 - 70	9.3	7.1	7.8	7.5	8.1
71 - 80	11.2	10.6	11.0	9.9	11.3
81 - 90	15.6	14.6	16.7	14.6	17.5
91 -100	34.9	48.2	41.2	47.3	40.2
Average monthly income (cruzeiros)	187.78	396	1 817	2 757	9 124
Coefficients of:					
Gini	0.43	0.57	0.51	0.55	0.51
Theil	0.14	0.26	0.20	0.25	0.20
Kuznets	0.63	0.87	0.78	0.84	0.78
	0.11	0.22	0.16	0.18	0.17

Source: CELADE, "Antecedentes Estadísticos de la Distribución del Ingreso: Brasil 1960-1983", in Distribución del Ingreso Series, No. 2, Santiago, Chile, 1986.

a/ On the basis of Langoni's estimates.
b/ On the basis of the National Household Survey (Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicilios - PNAD) for each year.
c/ On the basis of the 1980 Population Census.

VI. STRUCTURAL TRENDS IN PEASANT AGRICULTURE

This is an area of analysis which is fraught with serious difficulties for the following reasons:

a) The vagueness of the boundary lines of peasant agriculture, due to the complications of establishing the internal or external social relations which separate the peasant rationale from other types of economic behaviour;

b) The diversity of situations existing in Latin America, which are lost to sight when any regional aggregation or analysis is undertaken.

Nevertheless, with due regard to these limitations, some background data are presented below which are an invitation to postulate certain hypotheses and to continue further analysis of the trends that are prefiguring the future of the Latin American peasantry.

1. Evolution of the peasant population

Latin America's rural population has been increasing in absolute terms, and this process seems likely to continue during the next few decades.54/ Thus, the number of rural inhabitants recorded in 1975 --126 million-- is expected to rise to 134 million by the year 2000. What has been or what will be the activity of this population, and to what type of production relations has it been linked or will it be linked in the future? It is no easy matter to give a reply. Census information for Brazil may illustrate what seems to constitute the trend followed by the population occupied in agricultural activities, according to the data on persons employed in production units. If the agricultural censuses of 1960 and 1980 are compared, the following can be inferred:55/

a) a 35.4% increment in the population employed in agricultural establishments;

b) an increase of 39.4% in the population employed in farms with a total area of under 50 hectares; and

c) a decrease of 14.2% in the population employed in 1960 in units of over 50 hectares in extent.

In order to eliminate the effects on total employment figures produced by the hiring of temporary labour, a separate comparison has been made of the data on persons permanently

linked to the agricultural unit, i.e., the unpaid heads and active members of the family, and permanent workers. This comparison reveals that: a) in the units most representative of peasant agriculture, that is, those of less than 50 hectares, the number of persons permanently employed increased by 92.3% between 1960 and 1980; and b) in larger units, the corresponding numbers dropped by 86.5%.

These data suggest the following points: i) the agricultural population and labour force have gradually become increasingly linked to the smaller agricultural units; ii) the will or capacity to retain them in the medium-sized to large units has declined; and iii) there appears to be growing pressure on the agricultural resources available to such units. These phenomena have been observed not only in Brazil, but also in other agricultural sectors, such as that of Mexico and those of the Andean area: a state of affairs which has been aggravated during the present crisis, since natural drainage by way of rural/urban migration seems to have been drastically reduced.

In Mexico, according to the information provided by the 1960 and 1970 agricultural censuses, about 70% of the agricultural active population is composed of "agricultural producers and their families", a category which is very closely linked to the existence of an extensive peasant agriculture. The census data also show a rapid upswing in the numbers of active population in agriculture, from 4.3 million in 1960 to 7.8 million in 1970; out of this increase of approximately 3.5 million persons, 2.2 million are "agricultural producers and their families", and in this case too it can be deduced that peasant agriculture is harbouring a large and growing share of the active population associated with the sector.

However, this phenomenon, which deserves more thorough study, carries with it at least two hypotheses. The first of these is the possible intensification of the sale of family labour for agricultural and other work outside the boundaries of the farm to supplement the income obtained within it. This might signify an upward trend in the semiproletarianization which is affecting peasant agriculture.

On the Bolivian altiplano 1.2 persons per peasant family, generally including the head of household, temporarily migrate in search of employment.56/

Secondly, the hypothesis may be posited that permanent paid work on capitalist production units has remained at much the same level or perhaps in some cases has tended to be replaced by increased use of mechanized equipment and hiring of temporary labour. In Chile, between the years 1965 and 1976, the number of paid workers hired on a permanent basis decreased by 22.8%, whereas the number of those temporarily hired rose by 35.6%.57/ In the case of El Salvador, although no information is available on trends in employment of temporary labour, the census data showed that in 1970

employment of permanent workers had dropped by 45% in relation to 1960.

Lastly, it would be worth while to study the trends observed among peasant farmers in those countries where the agricultural population is decreasing or in those others where, although in general it is increasing, there are nevertheless areas in which it is declining.

2. The number of production units

If censuses are compared to discover the direction of trends in land distribution structures, a continuation of the upward trend in the number of production units will be noted. In a group of eight countries 58/ for which censuses were taken both in the 1960s and in the 1970s, the number of "units of exploitation" with 20 hectares or less 59/ rose from 4.7 to 6.5 million, i.e., by 38.5%, which suggests that the type of unit most representative of peasant agriculture would seem to be increasing.60/

Colombia figures among the countries in which the number of small farms has decreased, and this has given rise to a controversy, still inconclusive,61/ as to whether peasant agriculture is decaying or is still alive. Moncayo and Rojas 62/ maintain that "in the case of Colombia the numbers of small units and their areas are underestimated in the 1960 and 1970 censuses, since it is clear that taking only the stratum of farms with more than 2 000 hectares, there is a considerable number of small producers, amounting in all to 36 899 tenants and colonos living on the farms in question. If this quantity of small units and the corresponding area were taken into account in comparing the situations in 1960 and 1970, there would certainly be no reason to conclude so definitely that small-scale production is declining".

A longer-term view of the trend in the number of production units confirms that it has been followed for several decades in certain countries; thus, for example, in Brazil the total number of units with less than 50 hectares almost trebled between 1960 and 1980 (see table 24). In the case of Jamaica, the number of units with under 5 hectares increased by 8% between 1954 and 1979, whereas the number of units with 5 to 25 and 25 to 100 hectares was drastically reduced, which would seem to suggest a process of subdivision and "minifundization" on the one hand, and of relative concentration in units of over 100 hectares (see table 25).

How are such processes as the above to be interpreted? Do changes within the hacienda mean that the peasants who used to work on it, or the new contingents of peasant population, have tended to settle in the areas not appropriated by the hacienda or by the new agricultural enterprise?

The number of peasant units usually expands in the following ways:63/

Table 24

BRAZIL: NUMBER OF AGRICULTURAL UNITS, BY SIZE STRATA

Agricultural units	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980
Less than 1 hectare	39 305	50 252	133 477	396 846	469 091
From 1 to less than 10	615 252	660 682	1 361 543	2 122 784	2 128 925
From 10 to less than 20	315 676	345 185	546 079	768 448	771 330
From 20 to less than 50	455 057	488 044	672 675	824 090	854 051
Less than 50 hectares	1 425 290	1 544 163	2 713 774	4 112 168	4 223 400
50 hectares or over	479 299	520 479	623 995	811 851	927 653
Total	1 904 589	2 064 642	3 337 769	4 924 019	5 159 851
Indexes (1940 = 100)					
Less than 1 hectare	100.00	127.85	339.59	1 009.66	1 193.46
From 1 to less than 10	100.00	107.38	221.30	345.03	346.03
From 10 to less than 20	100.00	109.35	172.99	243.43	244.34
From 20 to less than 50	100.00	107.25	147.82	181.10	187.68
Less than 50 hectares	100.00	108.34	190.40	288.52	296.32
50 hectares or over	100.00	108.59	130.19	169.38	193.54
Total	100.00	108.40	175.25	258.54	270.92

Source: 1960 Agricultural Census and 1980 Agricultural and Livestock Census. Prepared by the Joint ECLAC/FAO Agriculture Division.

Table 25

JAMAICA: NUMBER OF AGRICULTURAL UNITS, BY SIZE STRATA

(Thousands)

Strata	1954	1958	1961	1968-1969	1978-1979
0 - 5	139.0	141.2	146.0	151.7	150.6
5 - 25	53.0	53.3	41.0	37.6	29.8
15 - 100	5.6	4.0	3.8	3.0	2.4
100 and over	1.2	0.9	1.2	1.0	1.1
Total	198.9	199.5	192.0	193.4	184.0
Indexes (1954=100)					
0 - 5	100.00	101.58	105.04	109.14	108.34
5 - 25	100.00	100.57	77.36	70.94	56.27
25 - 100	100.00	71.43	67.86	53.57	42.86
100 and over	100.00	75.00	100.00	83.33	91.66
Total	100.00	100.30	96.53	97.23	92.51

Source: M. Witter, "The Food Economy: The Case of Jamaica", in CIDA, Discussion Paper No. 31, Montreal, 1985.

a) The commonest is an increase in the number of units by subdivision, the most universal causes of which include firstly inheritance and secondly partial transfers of properties by sale;

b) Sometimes there is a division of units in hacienda agriculture and in some instances in entrepreneurial agriculture as well, owing to agrarian reform processes of greater or lesser scope. In the Andean Pact countries, during the last three decades, 1 190 000 peasant families have gained access to land ownership by these means;

c) Another highly significant trend in Latin America has been the advancement of the agricultural frontier. The land incorporated through the formation of new agricultural units in frontier areas between the 1950s and the early 1980s is estimated at about 208 million hectares. Accordingly, it seems that approximately one-third of the land area of Latin America is now used for agricultural production. Among the phenomena noted in new agricultural areas is the reproduction of the structural conditions existing in regions where traditional agriculture prevails. The result is the formation of the familiar agrarian heterogeneity in these areas and the reproduction of one of its components: peasant agriculture. This seems to be the most important way in which peasant units are reproduced in latin America.

3. Size of production units

A third structural trend is the progressive decrease in the average size of production units. Data for the same eight countries where agricultural censuses were taken in the 1960s and 1970s show: a) that the average size of agricultural units dropped from 55.8 to 48.7 hectares; b) that units of more than 20 hectares decreased on average from 197.2 to 183.3 hectares in the 1970s; c) that the average extent of units in the strata below 20 hectares contracted from 4.9 to 4.7 hectares (see table 26).

These figures, which do not give a full picture of the seriousness of the problem, because here an average of very broad aggregates is considered, prove a good deal more disquieting in the lower size strata, in which the number of units and their population have multiplied most. Thus, for example, in Brazil between 1960 and 1980 the number of agricultural units increased by a factor of 2.7, while the number of units with less than 1 hectare was multiplied by 12 and in the 1-to-10 hectares category the number was trebled. In Jamaica units of less than 5 hectares increased in number, as has been shown, despite the fact that the total number of units diminished.

Table 26

LATIN AMERICA (EIGHT COUNTRIES): a/ NUMBER OF UNITS, TOTAL AREA USED AND AVERAGE SIZE OF AGRICULTURAL UNITS

Number of agricultural units	Thousands of agricultural units				Variation	
	1960	Percentage	1970	Percentage	Absolute	Percentage
Agricultural units of less than 20 hectares	4 717	73.5	6 516	75.4	1 798	38.1
Agricultural units of 20 hectares or over	1 699	26.5	2 126	24.6	427	25.1
Total	6 416	100.0	8 642	100.0	2 226	34.7

Total area used	Millions of hectares				Variation	
	1960	Percentage	1970	Percentage	Absolute	Percentage
Agricultural units of less than 20 hectares	23.1	6.5	30.8	7.3	7.7	33.3
Agricultural units of 20 hectares or over	335.1	93.5	389.6	92.7	54.5	16.3
Total	358.2	100.0	420.4	100.0	62.2	17.4

Average size	Hectares per agricultural unit		Variation	
	1960	1970	Absolute	Percentage
Agricultural units of less than 20 hectares	4.9	4.7	-0.2	-4.1
Agricultural units of 20 hectares or over	197.2	183.3	-13.9	-7.1
Total	55.8	48.7	-7.1	-12.7

Source: Prepared by the Joint ECLAC/FAO Agriculture Division, on the basis of the corresponding agricultural censuses.

a/ Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Peru and Venezuela.

These trends are occurring within the inequitable land distribution structure that still exists. In the same eight countries, taken as a group, the larger units of over 20 hectares held 93.5% of the total area used for agriculture in 1960, while in 1970 the strata in question occupied only 92.7% (see table 26).

4. Peasantization and depeasantization

Although the general indicators for the region warrant the assertion that the peasantry is expanding from the standpoints of both population and the number of production units, at the same time a depeasantization phenomenon is taking place. There are areas where the peasantry is decreasing, others in which it is increasing and others again in which its resettlement and reproduction are accompanied by the initiation of agricultural activities where formerly there were none. For

example, in the Venezuelan states nearest to Caracas or to Valencia a net decrease in the peasantry is recorded (states of Aragua, Carabobo, Lara, Miranda, Sucre, Yaracuy); in other states in the Llanos small-scale crop-growing and stockraising have been moderately increasing.

Thus the result is a sort of mosaic combining both peasantization and depeasantization. In any event, the hypothesis which postulates the decay or disappearance of peasant production seems disputable, at least as far as the foreseeable future is concerned. The most likely prospect is that for a long time peasant agriculture will continue to form a part of Latin America's agrarian landscape, nor, in view of its social significance, can its existence be ignored.

A look at migratory movements reveals that migration is commonest among the young population; it might therefore be possible to talk of relative depeasantization, if the basic unit taken is the family, since some of its members leave agriculture although a smaller nucleus remains in it, keeping up and working the farm. There is sufficient proof that migration is selective by age and sex, as the highest rates are found among the young population of 15 to 30 years of age, the majority being women migrating to the cities.64/ This gives rise to remittances and mutual exchanges which sometimes help to give peasant agriculture greater permanence and stability.

From the social and spatial standpoints, it is feasible to expect that depeasantization processes will occur more intensively in areas where the agricultural ecosystems are most fertile and profitable and spatial economies of scale are greater, since these are the areas where there is a marked prevalence of capitalist expansion, which normally ousts peasant producers. Thus, for example, in the State of Paraná in Brazil, the expansion of soya bean crops and the development of stockraising stepped up the concentration of land, to such an extent that the value of Gini's coefficient climbed from 0.687 in 1960 to 0.722 in 1975.65/ A similar movement can be traced in the Ecuadorian Sierra, since the restructuration of agriculture that slanted it towards dairy farming.66/ Generally speaking, there is a tendency towards concentration when exogenous forces do not militate against it.

Likewise in connection with the nucleus of capitalist expansion, depeasantization is in evidence in areas where the mass introduction of machinery and equipment displaces manpower; this form of marginalization mainly affects the semi-proletarian peasants, in view of the reduction of demand for labour at the local level.

Another feature that has been noted is the incapacity of these strata to cope with certain production emergencies, which in fact was exemplified in Guatemala,67/ where the lack of technology and financial resources for tackling certain diseases and pests (coffee rust) forced the peasants to give

up the activity.

Generally speaking, the dynamics of expulsion of peasant producers, that is, the reduction of the area farmed by peasants, has run parallel with the evolution of land prices; the more profitable is the activity carried on by the expanding capitalist nucleus, the greater is the pressure on the land resource, and this is reflected in a rise in its value. The outcome is a situation in which the cost alternative becomes a burden too heavy for the level of profitability of peasant agriculture to bear, so that peasant producers are virtually compelled to sell their possessions. Such phenomena as these are found in various areas of the region, as for example in the Centre-South of Brazil, because of the expansion of soya bean and sugar-cane (see table 27).

Table 27

BRAZIL: EVOLUTION OF PRICE INDEX OF AGRICULTURAL LAND, 1967-1977, IN THE STATES OF PARANA AND RIO GRANDE DO SUL, AND BRAZIL

Year	Paraná	Rio Grande do Sul	Brazil
1967	121.5	119.5	116.5
1970	228.5	215.0	181.0
1975	2 513.0	2 027.5	1 973.5
1977	4 777.0	4 705.0	3 984.5

Source: PREALC, Economía campesina y empleo, Santiago, Chile, PREALC/ILO, 1981.

In short, depeasantization can be said to be a direct effect of sectoral modernization, which takes effect through the change in the structure of production and has two connotations: a) proletarianization of peasant producers, through the loss of their land; and b) expulsion of semiproletarian and proletarian peasant manpower, because of the reduction in demand for labour. This is particularly true of areas where stockraising has been introduced and those of technological intensification of short-cycle crops. Where permanent crops are concerned, the most evident effect of modernization is an increase in temporary labour requirements, which may or may not result in intensive depeasantization processes, but is undoubtedly associated with a high degree of proletarianization, either partial or total.68/

Again in terms of "undisturbed" evolution, processes of peasantization may occur as a corollary of the specific conditions of the mode of capitalistic expansion, as in the case of permanent crops. Furthermore, definite peasantization is observable in the areas of extension of the agricultural frontier. Given the dynamics and the form of occupation of the

agricultural frontier by peasant farmers, it is they that show the greatest capacity to carry out this process --not necessarily an encouraging sign, in view of its characteristics-- which is important if it is borne in mind that with the exception of El Salvador, Haiti, Chile and Uruguay, the other countries have open agricultural frontiers, that is, areas suitable for expanding agriculture.

Between 1950 and 1980 the new land occupied amounted to more than 200 million hectares, most of which lay in the humid tropics. Some Central American countries, such as Costa Rica and Panama, doubled their agricultural capacity in that period, while in Brazil the same process resulted in the incorporation of 133 million hectares into farming activities.69/

The process in question is also influenced by a set of exogenous causes, that is, causes other than the economic determinants which particularly condition the occupation and abandonment of agricultural space.

The first and most important has been State action and its repercussions, which either partly inhibited or else catalyzed the peasantization process. The agrarian reforms of the 1960s are a good example of incentives to peasant participation and expansion. Thus, over and above the character of these processes from the standpoint of the structural realignment of relations in Latin American agriculture, they invariably signified, in principle, some progress on the part of the peasantry, at least in terms of area and social significance, since in one way or another this stratum was the target of such programmes (see table 28).

Whereas the Agrarian Reform and other public measures fostered peasantization, there are some cases in which the opposite effect has been produced, especially since the adoption of policies of public investment in infrastructure which affected the relative prices of land. As has been shown with regard to all the countries of Central America and the Caribbean, the peasants do not possess the best land, or if they do, they tend to lose it. Depeasantization is more rapid when the means whereby an increase in the profitability of agriculture is sought is the reactivation of land markets.70/

Similarly, it is common knowledge that irrigated land shows higher levels of concentration and more rapid depeasantization processes. The latter are influenced by official price policies which are designed to push up the profitability of crops which it is of interest to develop but which for their part enjoy the benefits of an enormous concentration of all facilities: support services provided by the public apparatus, incentives to the establishment of agroindustries, subsidies for fertilizers and machinery, large-scale investment in research and concern with providing technical assistance for these higher-productivity areas. That is, if in general the concentration of land concurrently brings about greater concentration of capital, in irrigated

Table 28

LATIN AMERICA (SELECTED COUNTRIES): AREA ALLOTED AND FAMILIES BENEFITED BY AGRARIAN REFORM

(Percentages)

Country	Area alloted	Peasant families benefited
Bolivia	83.4	74.5
Ecuador	9.0	10.4
Chile	10.2	9.2
Peru	39.3	30.4
Venezuela	19.3	30.6
Costa Rica	7.1	5.4
Dominican Republic	14.0	8.5
Panama	21.9	13.3
Mexico	43.4	42.9

Source: E. Ortega, "La opción campesina en las estrategias agrícolas", in Pensamiento Iberoamericano: Revista de Economía Política, No. 8, Madrid, Editorial Artecrom, 1985.

areas this is particularly marked, with all its implications for depeasantization and for the abandonment of the non-irrigated areas (dependent on rainfall).

"The Peruvian coastal belt undoubtedly receives greater official attention than the predominantly peasant agriculture of the Sierra. In Mexico official attention is concentrated more on irrigated agriculture than on the great needs of the areas dependent on rainfall."71/

Secondly, this process has been considerably affected by contextual elements synthesized in the boom and crisis cycles characteristic of regional economies. Agricultural units organized in line with peasant logic display greater stability than capitalist enterprises, and thence derives their persistence; it should be noted that in boom periods capitalist structures benefit to a fuller extent and, as has been shown, at the cost of the peasants, whereas in phases of crisis the latter suffer less and in some cases even expand over the capitalist area. In other words, the greater or lesser significance of peasant farming, given the behaviour of global variables, is relative to the progress or retrogression of the capitalist segments in response to the various conjunctural situations.

5. "Minifundization" and semiproletarianization

When the issues relating to the size of units (39% of which are of less than 2 hectares) and to family income were discussed, something was said of the situation of semiproletarianization in which a sizable proportion of the peasantry lives. It appears that this might well become the prevailing situation in the future, in view of the insufficient absorption of the labour force both within and outside agriculture. This makes peasant agriculture a sort of refuge for the labour force which enters and leaves the labour market according to the conditions existing there. It is for this reason that the question of the semiproletarian peasants is one of those that deserve more attention; another, which has not been tackled either, and which is the exact opposite of proletarianization or semiproletarianization, is the development of a sort of bourgeoisie among the upper strata of the peasantry that has been described, perhaps inadequately, as "the transition from peasant to farmer".72/

Given certain economic conditions, it is worth while to speculate on the nature of agricultural activity when it constitutes only a minimum basis of security for a survival strategy which predominantly resorts to other economic activities as a main source of income. This phenomenon, which some view as a sort of depeasantization, has been studied in depth in the case of the Central Region of Peru (Valle del Mantaro),73/ where "minifundization" is increasing and a comunero will leave his comunidad for some years to go and work in the mines, albeit his economic and social interests are still centred in his place of origin where his family, land and livestock remain.74/ Savings and investments may in some instances be channelled into the comunidades, where tertiary activities or mini-industries are started, so that such communities become a structure parallel to the urban system, and therefore tend to diversify their activities (business, transport, crafts and small manufactures). In other cases, the comuneros' work in the mines enables them to organize a move to the city, but even when they have become urban migrants they do not break their social and economic ties with their comunidad, where at the same time they maintain resources that are managed by family members or peons. In neither instance is there any permanent severance of the bond between the comunero and the land to bring about indefinite "minifundization"; instead, the areas involved become residential centres for population contingents whose economic activity is mainly carried on outside the comunidad. The family becomes a key element in the articulation of the diverse tertiary, peasant and mining activities.

Campaña and Rivera conclude that with regard to certain comunidades the concept of peasantry can hardly be applied to a significant number of landowners, because they use the income they obtain from other activities to accumulate the

capital which they invest partly in land or livestock, but mainly in business and means of transport outside the comunidades.75/

6. Production trends in peasant agriculture

The existing literature on the peasantry often associates this stratum with cultural traditionalism and productive stagnation; but the accuracy of these hypotheses has not yet been demonstrated. Hence the need to show trends in peasant agriculture through time in order to evaluate its own capacity for growth in the light of regional experience. The answer to this inquiry may help to substantiate or disqualify the hypothesis of stagnation and immobility with which the peasant sector is saddled. Of course, only a little material is available, but it may serve as an incentive to a subsequent and more comprehensive compilation of background data.

In the analysis of Ecuador's experience two paths were followed in order to trace the direction of trends in peasant production. In the first place, those crops or types of livestock were chosen which were primarily or in some cases exclusively in the charge of peasants. The value (at constant prices) of the 28 products selected appears to have risen between the triennia 1965-1967 and 1975-1977 by an annual average of 3.4%, whereas the production of the sector as a whole, assessed in the same way, is estimated to have increased by 3.3%. This suggests that the growth rate of typically peasant production was at least similar to that of the production of the sector as a whole.

A complementary procedure was based on the Ecuadorian agricultural censuses of 1954 and 1974 and represented an attempt to separate the production attributed to peasant farmers, no longer with reference to types of crop or livestock, but in relation to the units most representative of this subsector at both dates.76/ The contribution to the sector's total production made by the production units in the peasant areas rose from 56.4% in 1954 to 63.3% in 1974.77/ Limited though they were, the structural changes brought about by agrarian reform laws and the expansion of peasant agriculture in frontier areas, combined with more intensive use of the soil and small increases in yields, were some of the factors that influenced the growth of the peasantry's share in sectoral production.

In Chile's case, recent trends in agricultural production illustrate the dynamics proper to peasant agriculture. The fragmentation of the co-operatives and "settlements" (asentamientos) organized during the agrarian reform process on associative lines (keeping them undivided on the large expropriated units) is leading the peasants that have received individual plots of land to go in for more intensive cultivation of the crops that they traditionally grew when

they were inquilinos. Thus, for example, over the last five years increases can be observed in such crops as potatoes and maize, notwithstanding the low price levels recorded in certain years. Where pulses are concerned (beans, lentils and chickpeas), the increments were considerable, in view of the improvement in the prices obtained for these items. Production of pulses --crops grown primarily by peasants-- almost doubled over a period of five years (1975-1979).

In Bolivia's experience, the Andean region is interesting because of the predominance of peasant agriculture engaged in growing crops proper to a cool temperate climate. Between 1950 and 1974-1976, production of these expanded considerably, at an average annual rate of 4.4%. During the 1950s, after the agrarian reform, this rate was probably even higher, rising to an annual average of 6.3% between 1950 and 1961.78/ These rates would be considered high for any agriculture, and in the conditions in which Andean crop farming is carried on in Bolivia, they appear even better.

An interesting datum worthy of more careful consideration is that relating to the expansion of soya bean cultivation in Brazil, perhaps the most spectacular case of development of a crop and possibly comparable with the cycle of increase in cereal-growing recorded in Argentina at the end of the last century. The area under soya has broadened rapidly. In units of under 50 hectares the area occupied by this crop increased by 75.9% between 1970 and 1980.79/

According to the agricultural census taken in Brazil in 1980, 15.0% of the land used for this purpose and 39.6% of production were located in production units with a total area of less than 50 hectares. In connection with this category of units, the CIDA study on land tenure in Brazil reveals that what are called family and subfamily units even have an average area of over 50 hectares. Some recent data 80/ show that 93.3% of minifundios in Brazil possess a total area of under 50 hectares. On some occasions the development of crops intended for agroindustry, and the nature of the relations established with the latter, bring about radical changes in the operation of peasant units, accentuating the differentiation between them, and sometimes leading to greater concentration of land and to the proletarianization of the poorest segment of the peasantry.

At the regional level, a group of crops very representative of peasant production is that of vegetables. Here the average annual increase was about 5.0% 81/ in the period between the two triennia 1949-1951 and 1983-1985.

Still at regional level, the expansion of two other groups of crops may also serve as an indicator of the trends noted in peasant production; these are roots and tubers, which, according to the same source, show an average annual increment of 2.0% during the period from 1949-1951 to 1983-1985, and dry pulses (beans and others) which expanded at an average annual rate of 3.0% during the same interval.

A recent study shows that in 1981 peasant agriculture in Colombia 82/ contributed between 27.4% and 42.0% to total production of food for direct human consumption, which confirms its importance in respect of this branch of production; as regards production of raw materials for agroindustry, however, its share ranges from 19.3% to 22.8% of the total. A similar situation was also noted in the livestock sector, in which peasant production generates between 34.9% and 43.2%. This confirms the dynamic capacity of the stratum under discussion to supplement different types of production.

In other lines of production, however, especially long-cycle crops, this behaviour pattern is not followed; on the contrary, in areas of expansion and technological innovation peasant agriculture has suffered a definite setback.83/ The modernization of vine-growing has displaced small-scale production. In the case of temperate-climate fruit crops, the change from the miscellaneous orchard to specialized and technified fruit-growing is leaving the peasant units on the sidelines. In some countries where production and technical change in coffee-growing has not been on a significant scale, there has been a strengthening of medium-sized and large enterprises while the share of small units has decreased; a similar process is beginning to take place in cocoa, the cultivation of African palm and sugar-cane.

The following are the main factors that hamper the access of peasant families to this branch of production:84/ a) the large amount of investment and capital required to plant and operate the agricultural unit at profitable levels; b) the long stretch without income from the time when planting is begun to the first harvest; c) the low provision of capitalization credits for this stratum of producers; and d) the insufficiency of State and institutional support for the launching of initiatives with these characteristics.

A more detailed analysis would make it possible to form a better idea of the development of production for which peasant producers are responsible. The data assembled here are intended only to suggest the existence of an effective capacity for expansion of production linked to the peasant economy, which suggests various queries concerning the analyses which confine themselves to noting, under the categories of minifundio or subsistence agriculture, certain negative aspects and deficiencies, or to attributing almost exclusive merit to the modern entrepreneurial-type sector in respect of the development of agricultural production.

The observations outlined so far relate exclusively to the capacity of the peasant economy to become viable in the context of "modern" or capitalist agriculture. Certain areas must be singled out, however, where no comparison is possible, since capitalist agriculture has been incapable of competing with the peasantry for the areas in question. For example, in extremely fragile ecosystems such as those of the high Central

Andes,85/ peasant agriculture has been capable of making integral and sustained use of these resources without their showing any signs of radical degradation, thanks to notable soil conservation methods and irrigation infrastructures as well as systems of minimum tillage.

Peasant agriculture has also been successful in obtaining dividends from resources sometimes written off by entrepreneurial agriculture, such as the management and utilization of semi-arid or hillside areas or of fresh water aquiculture ecosystems, of wild fauna and forest by-products, and of a wide variety of germ plasms, including some unknown to official statistics, which in the end are equally convertible into proteins and calories.

The contribution made to livestock production in terms of meat, wool and milk is considerable because of the raising of camelidae (llamas, vicuñas, alpacas, guanacos), goats and some smaller livestock such as poultry and rodents. The share of peasant agriculture in crop production is also significant in terms of certain species such as quinoa, cañihua, yams, yucca, etc., these being staple items in the diet of many of the region's rural poor.

It must be stressed that this side of the peasant universe, unknown to modernity, has developed with the most absolute lack of technical, financial, administrative and other support. Far from receiving any help, it has suffered severely at the hands of the transnational and national corporations, a situation often viewed with utter indifference by the governments of the countries concerned.

7. Mobilization and social organization of the peasantry

With the advent of the liberal State as a ruling ideological principle which, as from the end of the last century and the beginning of the present one, served as a juridical framework and offered a political model for the incipient industrialization process in the region. States began to recognize some workers' rights. The peasants, in face of the gradual erosion of power which began to affect the landowning oligarchy, gained political and social spaces, and there were signs of the first mutual and other attempts at organization which gradually shaped agrarian trade-unionism. This formal recognition, however, was exempt neither from pressure on the part of the latifundio, nor from constraints imposed by the State itself, which in practice took pains to underline the subordinate role that agriculture, and peasants in particular, had to play in relation to industry and capital. The surplus transferred from agriculture to industry was rapidly commercialized, while at the same time, by various methods, some of them coercive, organizations were kept within the bounds in which peasants could play a role as social and political actors.

The two best-known forms of organization of the peasant movement have not sufficed to mitigate the process of internal differentiation in the sector. The co-operatives which very quickly took shape as a type of organization for making socio-economic claims on behalf of the medium and upper rural producer groups have been successful mainly among semi-entrepreneurial and entrepreneurial farmers. Nor do the workers trade unions, which primarily represent permanent rural wage workers, include in their sphere of influence the sectors that may be considered to represent the majority of the peasantry, i.e., small-scale independent family producers, occupants of public land, sharecroppers and tenants, landless workers and temporary wage workers. It is these last that have expanded most in recent decades as a result of the capital accumulation model imposed.86/ In short, the traditional organizations can be seen to have become weaker, and the best-known organizations designed for the purpose of putting forward claims have found their representativeness increasingly restricted, in view of the growing diversity of social agents in the agricultural sector.

Generally speaking, peasant organizations based on the essentially peasant character of their members were formed as the result of processes which implied an increasing degree of deterioration of their status, low in itself. These organizations have commonly arisen in communities where the peasants have managed to strike a balance between their survival requirements and their functionality in relation to the local power structure, social order and economic system which guaranteed them --even in conditions of poverty and relative oppression-- possibilities of material and cultural reproduction. If these two situations are modified, that is, when survival is threatened and local power structures are reshaped, the peasantry tends to rally around the most keenly felt demands;87/ the wage workers, the landless peasants, the owners of small or medium-sized plots of land, express themselves through different forms of organization in accordance with the severity of external conditions, with their own internal capacities and with the backing they obtain from allies who support their demands at the national level.

Ordinarily, the movements present an evolutionary cycle characterized by the specificity, localism and urgency of the claim put forward. At first they expand and mobilize their adherents until the goal is attained or definitely lost, from which time onwards the form of organization adopted will survive, disappear or linger on with little mobilizing capacity, depending upon the foothold it has managed to gain within the whole of the broader peasant movement or in other social movements or political parties, or upon the degree of backing it has been able to obtain from State organizations of a political or administrative type.

Likewise as a general rule, expression of the peasant movement in Latin America has been limited. This limitation

has been imposed by several factors: the presence of the landowners, who exert permanent economic and extra-economic coercion on the dependent communities and their organizations, and the political repression of the latter practiced by the State, in view of their key position in respect of obtaining the economic surpluses needed by the hegemonic sectors to consolidate their position within an expansion model based mainly on agricultural activities. The functionality of the peasant contribution had to be maintained by various means. However, factors of a cultural and social order also carry decisive weight in the explanation of the relatively high degree of de-mobilization that characterizes the Latin American peasantry. The pauperization that has been so marked during recent decades has undermined, in many cases irreversibly, the necessary neighbourhood solidarity, and in other instances has induced the peasants to become involved in non-political and de-mobilizing collective practices linked to conservative religious sects. In yet other cases, State action has taken pains to create organizations subordinated to the purposes of the developmentist ideologies which inspired the régimes concerned, or has attempted to co-opt the rank and file of organizations already in existence. This type of interference in an autonomous peasant organization became particularly frequent in the periods which accompanied and succeeded the induced agrarian reforms, as happened in Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, or when, as a result of the militarization of the State, the instrumental political support of the peasantry has been required, as occurred in Brazil. In other situations, particularly those of Mexico and Bolivia, the great initial achievements of the agrarian reform were gradually watered down whenever the consolidation of the political apparatus of the State became subject to the hegemony exercised by foreign capital or by the dominant groups and the alliances they established with the social classes that possessed agrarian-based interests.

The failure of the development models introduced in the region and the recessive crisis to which they gave rise have differentiated and expanded peasant demand.88/ This has kept in step with the increasing heterogeneity of the sector, with the result that since the last decade peasants' organization have begun to grow up which, although they are structured around three central issues (land, wages and production) have been capable of taking more carefully into account the specific nature of claims. Similarly, a trend towards their regionalization and decentralization is observable, an operational consequence to be expected, considering how difficult it is for organizations structured at the national level to represent local demands and undertake their administration. Another emergent feature of the organizations of the rural poor is a change in the way of exerting pressure on the State. Today the organized peasantry takes advantage of the fact that some room exists for collective expression to

modify public policies at the local level, and there are signs of relatively greater technical capacity to articulate demands and the resources necessary to satisfy them. This happens when questions are discussed concerning marketing, rationalization of land distribution processes, supplies of improved seed, types and amounts of credit to be provided, health, education and infrastructure habilitation requirements, and management of water resources. Peasant organizations seem to be displaying a growing talent for turning the incapacity of the local branches of State administrative and technical apparatus to good account in order to modify public proposals in their own favour. This situation is most apparent in those countries of the region which are involved in political redemocratization processes. For the peasantry at large, however, the situation is still, in an overwhelming majority of cases, one of de-mobilization resulting from frustrations, social slighting of the peasantry, few opportunities for real participation and in general the inequity proper to an exclusive model.

The attitude of the rural poor towards their organizations is still one of scepticism and a marked lack of commitment. A long history of individual and collective failures has robbed most peasants of confidence in collective responses as a way out of their situation of declining status. The success of the dissuasive sways of "urban" culture induces peasants to place much more trust in individual devices for upward mobility than in gradual and collective processes of restoration of their dignity as workers and as members of the rural population.

Traditionally, peasants have been organized on community bases centering on ties that represent both a specific cultural order and the satisfaction of collective demands. These forms of organization have been particularly solid in indigenous communities, or when the peasant community kept up ties of an ethnical type.89/ Examples of such organizations abound in Latin America among indigenous-peasant and Andean communities, the Mapuches in Chile or the various indigenous population groups in Brazil. Nevertheless, these organizations based on ethnic and cultural traits have been gradually fading out of the region's agricultural scene, in consequence of the penetration and intensification of commercial and capitalist relations since the end of the last century.

a) Indigenous and peasant communities

In Latin America today there are a number of different ways of exploiting natural resources which have evolved out of systems that have their origin in the pre-Columbian epoch. These systems of "comunidades" are characterized by an interaction of collective and individual ownership; by a form of social organization founded on reciprocity, on

participation and on the family as a basic unit; and by the maintenance of a singular cultural pattern which combines elements of the natural and historical environment and which they have developed. The importance of the indigenous communities in the integral development of the region consists in their being organic social bodies capable of congregating an important sector of rural population and, in a different connection, in the fact that they are the only groups or systems that have successfully exploited certain very fragile ecosystems without the appearance of any notable signs of deterioration in the quality of the resources. This is apparently the essential reason for the reassessment of vernacular techniques and management at present taking place, and even justifies linking this concern to higher levels, since it could ultimately prove a means to the promotion of the rural sectors in question, left marginal today.

In the case of Peru, the peasant community, according to Gonzales de Olarte,90/ is a set of interfamily production and labour relations, determined by the supply of resources available to each family and to the community; and by the technology which exists in view of certain ecological and climatic conditions. These peasant communities are the synthesis of the experience of the "ayllus" (small indigenous producers) and the concept of "comuna" introduced by the Spanish conquistadores.

In recent times a sort of differentiation within the comunidad, by family, has been generated, in terms of the resource endowment in the hands of each, and this has resulted in the creation of a group with insufficient resources, working for wages but belonging to the comunidad. The reproduction of families tends, however, to be based on their own labour, self-employed or sold, or exchanged with that of other members of the community under arrangements not necessarily involving wages. Collective property is farmed on the basis of operations in which each family contributes one member and in general this is a matter of "public services".

In Peru more than 3 230 comunidades of this type are known to exist, with an approximate population of 2.8 million inhabitants and a labour force of nearly a million comuneros. They use 8.6 million hectares, representing 29% of total arable land and natural pasture. Their share in national income ranges from 2% to 4%. This means that they are the lowest in the income pyramid. Most comunidades are located in the Sierra and mainly in the southern Sierra, i.e., in the regions designated "commercial backwaters", whose specificity is largely due to the semi-commercial and non-capitalist character of communal production.

In short, these are very low-productivity Peruvians. They are the poorest and have very limited resources for coping with their development.91/

The indigenous comunidades of Chile (Mapuches), with an estimated population of 400 000 persons, of whom 300 000 (or fewer) could be regarded as peasants,92/ are characteristically a clan of related persons, which was consolidated as such on the basis of a land grant to a head of household, covering the collective land. This fact shows that the comunidad is generated in a different way from others formed by indigenous groups, since what it represents is not the evolution proper to an independent primitive system, but the interaction of exogenous agents.

The communal economic system is not independent of the family farms, but fulfills a supporting role, helping to resolve problems connected with shortage of resources and with the expansion of the family activity.

Another special feature of this system relates to the management of the land. Land for the Mapuches has a utility value and not an exchange value. Thus, access to it is determined not by commercial criteria but by a criterion of resource allocation in accordance with the family's minimum needs. In practice, families that claim rights in comunidades other than their own --whether through the male or through the female line-- are those that possess least land in their place of origin. Moreover, when a comunero addresses a request for land on a sharecropping basis to a relative who is known to possess vacant land, the latter cannot refuse his consent. In these two ways --by recognition of rights or by acceptance of sharecropping-- farms of 5 hectares or less manage to increase their originally tiny endowment of land.

Hence it can be deduced that the role played by the comunidad as an active agent of support to permit the reproduction of peasant family economies is fundamental, and possibly this is the most important function it fulfills.

b) Agricultural co-operatives

Various forms of socioeconomic organization have been adopted in the region, perhaps the most widespread being agricultural co-operatives.

For the purpose of an inter-country comparison of the importance of co-operativism, a parameter of incidence is available which consists in the proportion between the number of persons belonging to families of members of co-operatives and the total rural population (see table 29).

As can be seen, the incidence of co-operativism varies widely in different parts of the region, but what are most noteworthy are the low levels of organization in the region as a whole.

It is interesting to stress the fact that in countries where the rural sector is important, such as Bolivia, Brazil, Peru 93/ and Mexico,94/ levels of organization are lower than in those where the urban component of the population is of

Table 29

LATIN AMERICA (SELECTED COUNTRIES): INCIDENCE OF RURAL CO-OPERATIVE MOVEMENT, 1973

Country	Number of co-operatives	Members of co-operatives and their families/ Total rural population
Bolivia	550	0.03
Brazil	1 632	0.10
Chile	764	0.23
Uruguay	103	0.24
Peru	519	0.09
Costa Rica	69	0.06
Mexico	735	0.01

Source: FAO, Round Table on Factors of Success and Failure in Forms of Peasant Association, Santiago, Chile, FAO/INPROA, 1984.

greater significance, such as Chile and Uruguay. This behaviour pattern is not easy to explain, but the hypothesis might be postulated that in so far as co-operativism is a form of organization that is adopted, not generated within the Latin American rural structure, its degree of diffusion is likely to be more closely correlated with the characteristics of governments or of institutions for the formation and promotion of co-operation than with the real socioeconomic and cultural life of the region's rural sectors. The development of co-operatives receives more encouragement under governments that propose the promotion of the more deprived sectors through participation and organization. A higher degree of organization makes it possible to take advantage of a number of economies of scale and places the peasants in a better position to negotiate with the diverse social and economic agents that participate in the sector. The degree of association given the agricultural structure predominant in Latin America and the public policies, is higher among the farmers possessing units of larger size.

In Costa Rica, in 1973, the level of organization rose commensurately with the increase in the size of agricultural units (see table 30). A breakdown by type of association, however, shows that those of greatest importance are de jure associations; if the hypothesis is accepted that co-operatives and de facto associations are the peasant forms of organization and de jure associations the entrepreneurial type, it follows that the degree of organization of small producers is minimal.

The present situation as regards co-operatives in Brazil, i.e., the degree of association, can be analysed from two standpoints: by type of activity and by farm size stratum. It must be pointed out, however, that only 12.8% of Brazilian farms participated in any form of co-operative in the year 1980 (see table 31).

The degree of association varies substantially from one stratum to another; it increases with the size of the property, a marked change taking place as from the size category of over 10 hectares. Up to that size of property the level of organization ranges from 1.2% to 9.4% in terms of the number of establishments that have joined co-operatives, whereas the range covered by units of more than 10 hectares for the same parameter is 19.9% to 30.1%, the heaviest incidence corresponding to the 100-to-10 000 hectares stratum.

As regards exclusively co-operative organizations, those focusing on marketing are the most widespread, and this is apparent in all strata (see table 32); they represent 80.2% of total membership of co-operatives. Out of the total number of marketing co-operatives, 82.2% is concentrated in the 100-to-1 000-hectares stratum.

Table 30

COSTA RICA: ASSOCIATED AND INDIVIDUAL PRODUCERS, BY SIZE OF AGRICULTURAL UNIT, 1973

(Percentage of total number of agricultural units in the stratum)

Stratum (number of hectares)	Total number of agricultural units	Members of associations				Individual producers	Total
		Co-operatives	Associations de facto	Associations de jure	Others		
Under 1	14 413	0.10	2.10	0.25	0.37	97.23	100.00
1 - 2	7 522	0.05	2.30	0.23	0.23	97.19	100.00
2 - 5	13 308	0.07	3.10	0.48	0.30	96.05	100.00
5 - 10	9 095	0.09	3.41	1.05	0.37	95.09	100.00
10 - 100	27 014	0.08	4.52	1.44	0.31	93.65	100.00
100 - 1 000	5 346	0.30	8.75	8.49	0.66	81.80	100.00
Over 1 000	300	1.33	9.67	50.33	1.00	37.67	100.00

Source: Prepared by the Joint ECLAC/FAO Agriculture Division on the basis of Ministry of Economic Affairs, Industry and Trade, Department of Statistics and Censuses, Censos Nacionales de 1973 and IV Censo Nacional Agropecuario, in Regiones Agrícolas, Vol. 7, San José, Costa Rica, 1975.

Table 31

BRAZIL: MEMBERSHIP OF CO-OPERATIVES, BY SIZE STRATUM, 1980

(Percentages)

Size strata (number of hectares)	Establishments members of co-operatives
Under 1	1.2
From 1 to 2	1.7
From 2 to 3	4.2
From 5 to 10	9.4
From 10 to 100	19.9
From 100 to 1 000	26.0
From 1 000 to 10 000	30.1
Over 10 000	20.5
Non-respondents	2.7
Total	12.8

Source: Prepared by the Joint ECLAC/FAO Agriculture Division on the basis of Instituto Brasileiro de Geografía e Estatística (IBGE), Censo Agropecuario IX Recensamento Geral do Brasil, Vol. 2, Tome 3, No. 1, Rio de Janeiro, 1980.

The degree of association and participation in co-operatives in Brazilian farmers, depending upon their line of production, is very low (see table 33). There are, however, differences by type of producer; whereas the lowest degree of organization is found among growers of typically peasant products --0.1% in the case of beans, 0.1% in that of maize and 0.7% in that of rice--, industrial and export crops surpass peasant products in terms of organization, 3.0% being recorded for producers of cotton and 1.9% for the growers of sugar-cane. Lastly, production of vegetables, which has greatly expanded, presents an organizational set-up similar to that of agroindustrial crops: 2.0% for onions and 5.1% for tomatoes.

Generally speaking, socioeconomic organization in Latin America is low if participation in co-operatives is taken as the yardstick. Secondly, the peasant units which in principle need a supporting framework for their progress and development are less organized than those of larger size which have more resources at their disposal. Thirdly, the functions which motivate a higher degree of co-operative organization are the marketing of products and input requirements.

Table 32

BRAZIL: PRODUCERS MEMBERS OF CO-OPERATIVES BY SIZE STRATUM AND TYPE OF CO-OPERATIVE, 1980

Size stratum (number of hectares)	Total number of establishments	Establishments of producers members of co-operatives					
		Total	Marketing	Credit	Irrigation	Electrification	Other types
Under 1	469 091	5 641	3 427	1 326	42	1 368	435
From 1 to 2	515 515	8 939	5 081	2 326	72	2 264	734
From 2 to 3	903 590	37 597	24 716	9 469	948	8 317	1 666
From 5 to 10	709 823	66 939	50 301	13 424	860	13 657	1 806
From 10 to 100	2 016 774	400 792	329 167	68 574	672	74 623	14 075
From 100 to 1 000	488 521	127 022	105 705	20 824	247	13 813	9 922
From 1 000 to 10 000	45 496	13 694	11 180	2 348	36	1 262	1 326
Over 10 000	2 345	481	298	148	3	21	65
Non-respondents	8 696	235	197	27	1	22	10
Total	5 159 851	661 340	530.072	118 466	2 881	115 347	30 039

Source: Prepared by the Joint ECLAC/FAO Agriculture Division on the basis of Instituto Brasileiro de Geografía e Estatística (IBGE), Censo Agropecuario IX Recensamento Geral do Brasil, Vol. 2, Tome 3, Rio de Janeiro, 1980.

Table 33

BRAZIL: IMPORTANCE OF THE CO-OPERATIVE MOVEMENT IN THE MARKETING OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS IN THE NORTH-EAST REGION OF BRAZIL, 1980

Product	Regional total			Members of marketing co-operatives					
				Total			Percentage of regional total		
	Number of respondents	Volume of output (tons)	Area under cultivation (No. of hectares)	Number of respondents	Volume of output (tons)	Area under cultivation (hectares)	Number of respondents	Volume of output (percentage)	Area under cultivation (percentage)
Cotton	178 919	119 574	406 986	5 443	10 581	35 507	3.0	8.9	8.7
Rice	564 892	1 242 382	997 000	3 780	37 502	20 923	0.7	3.0	2.1
Sugar-cane	55 196	44 336 920	977 575	1 045	494 017	10 049	1.9	1.1	1.0
Maize	1 146 912	849 914	2 026 505	1 246	3 995	7 395	0.1	0.5	0.4
Beans	1 205 869	446 420	1 721 708	2 248	5 217	10 544	0.1	1.2	0.6
Onions	10 300	111 557	17 049	210	3 850	440	2.0	3.5	2.6
Tomatoes	7 454	113 183	9 241	382	20 987	1 306	5.1	18.5	14.1

Source: Prepared by the Joint ECLAC/FAO Agriculture Division on the basis of Instituto Brasilerio de Geografía e Estatística (IBGE), Censo Agropecuario IX Recensamento Geral do Brasil, Vol. 2, Tome 2, No. 1, Rio de Janeiro, 1980.

Lastly, it must be said that the co-operative movement in Latin America represents a valid option for joining in modernization processes and gaining access to the capital, marketing and other requisites which they impose.

The peasant world only marginally participates in the co-operative movement, which does not mean that the most widely varying forms of mutual assistance and informal co-operation do not exist within these groups.

VII. PEASANT AGRICULTURE: ITS DYNAMICS OR CAPACITY FOR CHANGE

In the introduction to the present study something was said of the need to revise those interpretations which, on the grounds of traditionalism, lack of investment incentives or profitability, or dependency relations, assume or conclude that peasant agriculture is suffering from stagnation, and, furthermore, accept the idea that it is to the modern entrepreneurial segment that the economic growth and the central dynamics of agricultural development in Latin America are substantially due.

In the preceding chapter examples have just been given of the processes of peasantization and depeasantization which are constantly altering peasant life in Latin America, and some data were also noted relating to changes in the production in which peasant agriculture takes part. In this section some material is offered which makes it possible to explain the origin of the changes taking place within peasant agriculture, attention being concentrated on markets, needs or aspirations and demographic pressures.

1. Markets and changes in peasant agriculture

The data already given above confirm the view that through the markets peasant agriculture is becoming increasingly articulated with other economic sectors. In this connection, the assumption of its marginality does not appear to be valid. Furthermore, we consider that peasant agriculture is functional to the economic system as a whole in so far as its participation in the markets for agricultural products takes the form of supplying essential foodstuffs at lower prices. Mention has also been made of the part played in the labour markets by peasants working in agriculture and the semi-proletarianization which is progressively affecting this sector.

There are some authors 95/ who rightly continue to postulate a distinction between "wealthy" peasants and "poor" peasants, since the former presumably have possibilities of becoming more closely linked with the markets. Participation in the markets for agricultural products, however, is not

confined to those possessing surpluses in the strict sense of the word, but is prompted by the need to obtain money, a situation which affects a high proportion of peasant families. The structure of production sometimes forces them to sell a major share of the crops; cases in point are vegetables, fruit, coffee, cocoa and other products of which only very limited proportions can be consumed on the farm itself. It may be concluded, then, that notwithstanding the diversity of situations, the influence of the markets extends to peasant agriculture. In turn, the mercantile part of the peasant economy is not independent of its non-mercantile part.

In practice, the demand function fulfilled by peasant economies has increased in recent decades; initially they were self-sufficient in respect of consumer goods, inputs and tools within the sphere of the comarca or municipality. The bulk of production was intended for own-account consumption, and a small fraction was traded on the local markets. Today, in contrast, the degree of participation in markets is notably higher, as is demonstrated by some research on the structure of expenditure in Colombia (see table 34). Out of the total expenditure of an average Colombian peasant family, about 28.9% corresponds to own-account consumption and 71.1% to monetary expenditure. In agricultural areas more closely linked to the markets, such as the locality of Fundación, expenditure in money is even higher.

2. Basic needs and economic behaviour

The relation established between the productive activity of peasant families and the satisfaction of their needs is almost a commonplace. The distinction between the production unit and the consumption unit tends to become blurred in reality. In view of this interdependence of the two phenomena, special attention must be paid to changes in values, aspirations and needs. If peasant populations develop and project these changes into their economic activity, the cultural and social changes that make for a modification of traditional customs and habits also give rise to different behaviour patterns. "The 'cocoon of habit' in which, according to some anthropologists, the peasants were wrapped has almost always turned out to be remarkably weak."96/

For all these reasons, the development of peasant agriculture must be examined both in the light of the effect of demographic pressures and from the standpoint of changes in the level of needs. Hereby we are postulating that the phenomenon of simple reproduction, so often linked to peasant agriculture, is not uniformly or constantly expressed over time. We assume that the thresholds of minimum levels of living keep rising and hence are dynamic: we do not believe, therefore, that they can be understood in a purely biological

Table 34

COLOMBIA: AVERAGE OWN-ACCOUNT CONSUMPTION AND MONETARY EXPENDITURE PER PEASANT UNIT ON PRODUCTION AND FAMILY SUSTENANCE IN SEVEN DISTRICTS COVERED BY THE DRI PROGRAMME

(Thousands of pesos)

District	Own-account consumption				Monetary expenditure				Total monetary expenditure and own-account consumption
	Production	Family sustenance	Total	Percentage of total expenditure	Production	Family sustenance	Total	Percentage of total expenditure	
Sabanalarga	50.1	25.3	75.4	24.7	36.6	193.2	229.8	75.3	305.2
Carmen de Bolívar	34.5	59.1	93.6	33.0	40.4	149.3	189.7	67.0	293.3
Lorica	72.2	71.8	144.0	39.3	41.2	181.1	222.3	60.7	366.3
Fundación	32.1	18.6	50.7	20.5	22.6	174.3	196.9	79.5	247.6
Sincelejo	37.1	46.2	83.3	25.5	50.6	193.1	243.7	74.5	327.0
Barbosa	79.2	45.2	124.4	30.6	54.8	227.3	282.1	69.4	406.5
Valle de Tenza	71.2	31.9	103.1	26.6	103.6	180.9	284.5	73.4	387.6
Duitama	87.5	89.9	177.4	30.8	145.5	252.8	397.3	69.2	574.7
Average	57.3	48.9	106.2	28.9	61.8	199.1	260.9	71.1	367.1

Source: T. Siabato, "Perspectivas de la economía campesina", CEGA (Co-ordinator, A. Machado), Bogotá, Editorial Siglo XXI, 1986.

perspective but rather that they must be viewed from a cultural standpoint.

In this regard, the rural population has experienced the impact of:

a) The extension of educational programmes. Enrolment in primary education in the rural areas of Latin America rose from 8.8 million in 1957 to 19.0 million in 1975, according to UNESCO data,97/ and the number of primary teachers was trebled during the same period. Significant progress has also been made with regard to illiteracy levels, even though they are still quite high;

b) The development of the communication media. It seems almost needless to go into detail in this connection. Suffice it to say that the variety of messages that reach the rural population through the communication media, especially radio, is enormous, and that cultural gaps between information levels have been considerably reduced. A survey carried out among peasant families in the Cochabamba valley in Bolivia98/ showed that 90% of them owned radios;

c) The expansion of the transport infrastructure. The movement of peasant families has been made increasingly easier; this has contributed to an intensification of rural-urban relations and has modified the degree of physical integration of relatively remote rural areas. The length of paved highways increased from 59 000 kilometres in 1959 to 386 000 in 1982, and the total length of highways of all kinds is estimated to have been extended from 964 000 kilometres to 2.4 million kilometres during the same period;99/

d) Urban-rural contacts. In addition to the changes noted above, relations between peasant and urban populations have been gradually growing closer. Urban growth, migration from rural areas, intensified trade relations, the above-mentioned transport facilities and communications, have multiplied the opportunities for contact between the two sectors, thus contributing to a change in the traditional attitudes, values and habits of the rural populations, or, in other words, to a certain trend towards homogenization of the population.

These and many other factors have been working together in a lengthy process whereby the perceived level of basic needs has risen among peasant populations. This phenomenon is going hand in hand with an increase in these populations and is determining the economic behaviour of peasant agriculture.

3. Demographic pressures

Reference has been made to the increment in peasant populations and to the fact that it is mainly to be found on the smaller units; this would seem to be leading to an increasing pressure on the available land, to a decrease in the average size of units and, in general, to greater population density in certain areas.

These phenomena, which have been discussed here under the concept of demographic pressure, would also seem to be interacting with the dynamics of the needs just mentioned and with the progressive articulation of peasant agriculture with the markets.

Vis-à-vis this complex of interwoven phenomena, the Malthusian position is often adopted when the issue is discussed in terms of the inelasticity of the food supply, a factor which is considered to determine the population that these types of agriculture would be in a position to support or their rate of growth. According to Boserup,100/ this new version of the Malthusian doctrine is based on the idea that an increase in population leads to the destruction of the soil. Neo-Malthusians, she says, invoke every example of misuse of the soil and paint a picture of the world as a place in which growing populations are crowded together and exert pressure on a potential food supply which is not only incapable of increasing in quantity, but which is gradually being reduced by the very behaviour of these growing populations.

The role played by population in bringing about changes in farming systems has been evident in the course of history when there have been demographic regressions. Boserup states that when the population density declines as a result of wars or other catastrophes, there often seems to be a return to more extensive cultivation systems. Latin America is the grouping of countries that has suffered the most demographic regressions over the past few centuries. Many parts of the region, she claims, have not yet regained the population density of pre-Columbian times, and the indigenous population has experienced regressions in its agricultural techniques.101/

4. Intensification of land use

According to the author quoted above, demographic pressures cause a change in the use of the available land, which is reflected in the frequency of planting. When population pressure increases, one crop after another may be grown, so that fallow land will tend to disappear.

Some data seem to confirm this form of intensification and development of production. Both in Brazil and in Peru (as was noted before in connection with Ecuador), the proportion of the total farming area actually under cultivation is always higher in peasant agriculture than in large-scale agriculture. In Brazil, units of less than 50 hectares cultivated 39.2% of their area in 1960, while in 1980 the corresponding proportion rose to 41.1% of the total area farmed (see table 35).

In Peru, in the case of units of less than 20 hectares 55.1% of their total areas was cultivated in 1961, and in 1972 the proportion fell to 43.5%, but was still higher than the

Table 35

BRAZIL AND PERU: TOTAL AND CULTIVATED AREA, BY SIZE OF AGRICULTURAL UNITS, 1960 AND 1980

(Thousands of hectares)

Agricultural units	I a/			II b/		
	Total area	Area cultivated	Percentage	Total area	Area cultivated	Percentage
Brazil						
Total	249 862	28 712		364 854	49 104	
Less than 50 hectares	34 455	13 500	39.2	46 140	18 941	41.1
50 hectares or over	215 406	15 211	7.1	318 714	30 163	9.6
Peru a/						
Total	17 722	1 934		23 545	2 271	
Less than 50 hectares	1 923	1 059	55.1	3 596	1 567	43.6
50 hectares or over	15 798	874	5.5	19 948	704	3.5

Source: For Brazil: Instituto Brasileiro de Geografía y Estatística (IBGE), Censo Agrícola de 1960 and Censo Agropecuario de 1980; for Peru, Oficina Nacional de Estadísticas y Censos, Primer Censo Nacional Agropecuario, 1961, and Censo Nacional Agropecuario, 1972. Prepared by the Joint ECLAC/FAO Agriculture Division.

a/ Relates to the year 1960 for Brazil and 1961 for Peru.
b/ Relates to the year 1980 for Brazil and 1972 for Peru.

corresponding percentages in the strata with over 20 hectares.

In both instances it might be supposed that what has actually happened is that there has been a combination of a net increase in the area under cultivation with a change in the size of units, which on being divided up fall into a different size category. This might be particularly true in Peru, where land redistribution through the agrarian reform and settlement of jungle areas have taken place.102/ It must also be borne in mind that any public policy has a powerful impact on the composition and structure of production, given the central role that throughout history has been played in the Latin American countries by the State. An analysis of land use in each size stratum clearly reveals that as the size of the production units decreases an intensification of land use occurs. In Brazil, while units of 2 to 5 hectares cultivate 70.5% of their total area, those of 50 to 100 hectares plant only 21.2% (see table 36).

Table 36

BRAZIL: LAND USE BY SIZE OF AGRICULTURAL UNITS, 1980

(Thousands of hectares)

Strata	Total area	Permanent crops	Short-cycle crops	Area cultivated a/	Percentage b/
Total agricultural units	364 854	10 472	38 632	49 104	13.46
From 0 to less than 1 hectare	280	20	233	253	90.36
From 1 hectare to less than 2	707	57	542	599	84.72
From 2 hectares to less than 5	2 943	357	1 717	2 074	70.47
From 5 hectares to less than 10	5 075	650	2 251	2 901	57.16
From 10 hectares to less than 20	10 751	1 075	3 805	4 880	45.39
From 20 hectares to less than 50	26 385	1 865	6 369	8 234	31.21
From 50 hectares to less than 100	27 358	1 528	4 274	5 802	21.21
100 hectares or over	291 356	4 920	19 441	24 361	8.36

Source: Prepared by the Joint ECLAC/FAO Agriculture Division on the basis of the Censo Agropecuario 1980.

a/ Area cultivated = permanent crops + short-cycle crops.

b/ Refers to the share of the cultivated area in the total area (cultivated area/ total area) x 100.

In commenting on this phenomenon, which was verified by comparison of the cadasters for 1965 and 1972, Graciano da Silva 103/ notes that in Brazil there was a decrease in unused areas among the lowest strata, mainly due to the heavy population pressure that is characteristic of small properties. This pressure leads to fuller utilization of the land for crops and livestock. Forest areas are also put to use again and are accordingly reduced, particularly on units of up to 10 hectares, where they shrink by around 50%. In other words, when a population grows and the possibilities for expanding the agricultural frontier are exhausted, there is a tendency to cultivate the land more intensively, which means that planting is more frequent (for example, two or more crops per year) and lands formerly considered unproductive are utilized (Boserup, 1975). In Brazil, this process was observed in the North-East region as early as the 1950s by Sá Jr. (1975), and by Graciano da Silva (1974) in Brazil as a whole, during the 1960s. Both writers point to an increase in the number of persons employed and in the percentage of area planted on the small farms in an attempt to reduce to a minimum the unused areas of these properties, since the virtual monopoly of land ownership in the country continues.

Analysing this phenomenon from the standpoint of gross income, the same author concludes that its distribution among the production units shows a lower degree of concentration than that of land ownership. The inference is that small properties produce at a more intensive rate, not in most cases as a result of real capitalization of the unit, but rather through an extension of the working day of the producer and his family.104/

In the case of Peru, in addition to the ratio between area cultivated and total area, which shows the same trends as in Brazil (see table 37), the ratio between arable land and area cultivated was also established, with the object of excluding land which is not considered suitable for growing crops. The result confirms the same trend, that is, the smaller the unit the larger the proportion of land that is cultivated.

5. Additional data

In Bolivia, in the areas where agriculture has been practised for centuries past and where agrarian reform gave rise to a predominantly peasant agriculture, the increase in agricultural population (over 35% between 1950 and 1966) went hand in hand with an intensification of planting through a shortening of crop rotation; the land is tilled more frequently and its periods of lying fallow therefore decrease. The area harvested annually in this cool-temperate zone climate expanded by 59% between 1950 and the triennium 1974-1976.105/

Table 37

PERU: LAND USE, BY SIZE OF AGRICULTURAL UNITS, 1972

(Thousands of hectares)

Agricultural units	Total area	Arable land			Permanent crops	Cultivated area	Percentage of arable land under short-cycle crops	Percentage of total area cultivated
		Total	Short-cycle crops	Lying fallow				
Total agricultural units	23 545	3 143	1 978	1 164	292	2 271	62.96	9.65
Less than 1 hectare	185	93	71	21	3	75	77.16	40.65
From 1 hectare to less than 2	349	288	211	76	10	222	73.54	63.69
From 2 hectares to less than 5	1 025	749	506	242	40	546	67.59	53.30
From 5 hectares to less than 10	1 010	584	366	218	51	417	62.67	41.33
From 10 hectares to less than 20	1 025	422	249	173	55	305	58.94	29.74
From 20 hectares to less than 50	1 339	324	177	147	61	238	54.60	17.84
From 50 hectares to less than 100	843	145	80	65	25	105	55.20	12.55
100 hectares or over	17 765	534	315	219	44	359	58.96	2.02

Source: Oficina Nacional de Estadísticas y Censos, II Censo Nacional Agropecuario, 4 al 24 de setiembre de 1972. Resultados definitivos. Nivel Nacional, Lima, April 1975. Table prepared by the Joint ECLAC/FAO Agriculture Division.

A recent study carried out in Mexico 106/ reaches the conclusion that the States in the centre of the country had, on average, a better share of selected crops, greater population density and higher agricultural growth rates.

6. Changes associated with intensification

At least two phenomena should be mentioned which are usually associated with the intensification process. The first is investment, which is sometimes undervalued because each individual investment is quite small. The most important type of investment in peasant agriculture is that which pertains to the transformation and adaptation of the environment in order to make it suitable for cultivation or to intensify agriculture. Changes in the landscape are related to what has just been said on demographic pressures and food and production requirements in general. In the past, gigantic efforts were made to clear forest land for farming in the midst of conflicts for control over the resource in which the peasants or indigenous groups themselves were the losers. The anarchical advance of agriculture created an environment propitious to concentration on the one hand and to the creation of extreme situations on the other. Brazil's present-day experience with regard to the swallowing-up of smaller properties by the bigger ones in frontier areas is well-known. "Large properties are formed, linked in most cases to agricultural and stockraising companies that benefit from the incentives provided by the State and its willingness to 'turn a blind eye', and thus expropriate the small producers; this process is not exempt from the violence that is characteristic of the birth of capitalism." Graciano da Silva 107/ goes on to state that "the result of this expulsion is a form of expansion on the frontier that is fraught with conflict and in which the balance is always favourable to the large properties".

Some forms of non-guaranteed tenure, such as that observable within the hacienda, were frequently designed to take advantage of peasant labour in order to clear forest land or perform other work aimed at making the land suitable for farming.

In certain conditions, the comunidad jointly undertook works in such fields as drainage, flood control in low-lying lands and construction of irrigation infrastructure.

Extreme demographic pressure on hilly land led to one of the most radical changes made in the landscape, i.e., the construction of terraces. The Andean area is full of examples of this development. At the present time, in the central zone of Mexico, which has the highest population density and where the most ancient native cultures have struck their roots, new terracing is still being undertaken.

Alongside the transformation of the environment, sizable investments were also placed in the past in certain crops; a case in point is that of permanent crops in which the peasants had a significant share that has begun to decline as the modernization process has made headway. Well-known examples are coffee, cocoa, vineyards and sugar-cane.

Briefly, Latin American experience is rich in instances of investment of labour in activities intended to make agriculture possible or to intensify it in given conditions. The environmental effects of these efforts cannot be appraised out of the context of conflicts in which they were expended. Nor should the investment capacity of peasant agriculture be underrated, or the possibility of channelling it and collaborating with it in order to avert any possible ill-effects.

It is therefore suggested that the hypothesis according to which peasant agriculture has no capacity for accumulation should be revised; the fact is that the nature of the investment is different. Its components are not acquired outside of agriculture nor do they contain significant proportions of modern technological inputs. Peasant investment is based on familiarity with the environment, and it makes use, fundamentally, of so abundant a resource as labour, which is applied in order to modify the physical environment, to provide drainage, to irrigate, to improve the land. In general, the peasantry builds its own houses and other simple constructions which it needs, although only on a modest scale and with such materials as the environment affords. Peasants also take part in the construction of communal or neighbourhood infrastructure works such as roads, bridges and facilities for social life. Unfortunately, there are no quantitative data to illustrate the significance of this particular type of peasant investment.

7. Technology and peasant agriculture

Since the pre-Hispanic epoch the use of a wide variety of production techniques has been observable in the region; from very simple systems of mere gathering or extraction to sophisticated methods with a high degree of artificialization, which varies in accordance with the qualities of the environment in question. The common denominator, however, was a sense of conservation of these ecosystems and their integral use, since the perception of shortage of resources was paramount. The explanation of this sort of balance lies in a cultural development strongly influenced by those elements upon which dependence was greatest; taking into consideration the high degree of self-sufficiency of these societies and their need for reproduction as such, it is easy to understand the central role played by the productive ecosystems that even

ordered the socio-political structure of these cultures. The discovery and conquest of America implied the confrontation of two cultures and therefore two perceptions of the environment, of their objectives and of its management.

Today technology is mainly exogenous, normally capital-intensive and marked by a strong element of complementarity (technological packages). Thus it has become progressively divorced from the ecosystemic conditioning factors, and this is one of the reasons why the peasants have difficulty in adapting these new technologies.

While in some countries, such as Mexico (see table 38), the degree of adoption of modern technology may appear high, the difficulties encountered in trying to incorporate these technologies in peasant environments are well-known, particularly among agronomists.108/ Some experiences with agricultural extension programmes are enlightening in this regard. This situation has provided an incentive to reflect upon the universal character of these technologies and upon their economic, social and even environmental viability.

Clearly one of the most obvious attempts to modernize peasant agriculture relates to sources of energy, i.e., those designed for larger-scale production. Figueroa 109/ points out that in Peru, the virtual non-existence of mechanization and quasi-mechanization in the Sierra region may be partly explained by three factors. In the first place the topography of the Sierra, contrary to that of the coast, is very irregular and has few flat areas; this physical fact, due to the presence of the Andes, makes it very difficult, of course, to use agricultural machinery. Secondly, the great majority of production units are small: 36% of them have less than one hectare and 81% consist of less than 5 hectares. To this must be added the considerable fragmentation of these small units. The units of less than 5 hectares comprise, on average, six plots; to move a tractor among six plots located at different ecological levels, with no road infrastructure, is almost impossible. Mechanized technologies can only be used on units that exceed a certain minimum size. Thirdly, the large units, which have the biggest flat spaces in the Sierra, are used mainly for stockraising, an activity which does not have much need for mechanization.

The above-mentioned factors should provide an indication of how, from the standpoint of energy sources, modern technologies are paradoxically inadequate in certain specific ecosystems in comparison with traditional methods. In other words, the problem of mechanization in the Sierra is not only one of relative prices and capacity for accumulation, but also one in which physical factors, ownership structure and the structure of production (a mixture of agriculture and stockraising) play an important part.

As regards the type of energy used in farming, the information available for Costa Rica and Brazil shows two

Table 38

MEXICO: USE OF INPUTS AND LEVEL OF MODERNIZATION, BY TYPE OF PRODUCER

(Percentage of total number of producers in each stratum)

Type of producer	Improved seed	Use of fertilizers	Pesticides	Use of tractors	Use of animal traction	Mechanization
Peasant producer	12.0	25.0	11.0	21.0	66.0	14.0
Transitional producer	29.0	48.0	34.0	51.0	59.0	35.0
Small-scale entrepreneur	44.0	66.0	56.0	75.0	50.0	63.0
Medium-scale entrepreneur	51.0	73.0	66.0	85.0	45.0	80.0
Large-scale entrepreneur	59.0	83.0	77.0	91.0	42.0	90.0

Source: CEPAL, Economía campesina y agricultura empresarial: Tipología de productores del agro mexicano, Mexico City, Editorial Siglo XXI, 1982, p. 187.

different situations. In Costa Rica, the peasants have reduced the use of animal and mechanical energy, and have exaggeratedly increased the use of human energy (see table 39). This is an instance of a change that may be unfavourable for peasant agriculture.110/ Brazil, on the other hand, has stepped up the use of mechanical and animal energy, largely displacing human energy from the farms.

Alongside the non-viability of the "technological package" as the sole instrument of progress, and the changes in the type of energy used, another moot point is how far the basic assumptions on which technological innovation rests can be generalized, in view of the conditions in which peasant agriculture operates from the socioeconomic standpoint. On some occasions, when it is felt that certain technologies make it possible to increase physical production, programmes are formulated which are designed to bring about such changes. In other instances, arguments pertaining to the profitability of these innovations are thought to provide sufficient justification. Thus, there ensues a certain dialogue of the deaf, since the two rationales are different: on the one hand there is the logic of basic needs and reproduction and on the other, the logic of profitability. To adopt technologies that involve the incorporation of inputs available on the market may be from the peasant's point of view a de-stabilizing element, as they require him to monetize his economy still further and increase his dependence on the market. For the peasant, it is really not enough to be presented with technologies that are only justified in terms of their potential for raising yields or ensuring a positive cost-benefit ratio.111/

Unfortunately, enough is not yet known about the factors that lead peasants to introduce certain innovations, but it seems that they draw up a kind of balance-sheet as regards the relative availability of resources before introducing any new developments which might make them lose control over their own fate. The relative abundance of labour may induce them to accept certain changes which, though requiring greater effort, will also increase their harvests. The extreme shortage of land and the need for expanding production may encourage them to use improved seed or fertilizers.

Urioste,112/ referring to the Bolivian Altiplano, holds that surveys confirm the general theoretical postulates: i.e., that the smaller the area the more intensive is cultivation, whereas as area increases, the participation of capital (chemical-biological technology) and of labour in production per hectare decreases. This phenomenon of "minifundization" takes place simultaneously with the incorporation of production techniques (chemical fertilizers, improved seed) which to some extent offset the shortage of land. Urioste summarizes the conclusions of his research in the Bolivian Altiplano as follows: "The peasantry adopt technology

Table 39

BRAZIL AND COSTA RICA: EVOLUTION OF THE USE OF TYPES OF ENERGY

(Percentages)

Type of energy	Costa Rica		Brazil	
	1965	1973	1970	1980
Mechanical	6.6	4.1	1.3	15.7
Animal	16.2	1.0	20.0	24.6
Human	75.6	91.9	77.6	-
Mechanical and animal	1.6	3.1	1.1	-
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Prepared by the Joint ECLAC/FAO Agriculture Division on the basis of national agricultural censuses: Brazil, 1970 and 1980; Costa Rica, 1965 and 1973.

(improved seed, chemical fertilizers ...) not to increase their monetary income, but mainly to compensate for the resource that is in short supply --land--, improve their yields and thus ensure for themselves a 'normal' level of subsistence".113/

Moncayo and Rojas 114/ put forward a similar thesis in relation to Colombian experience: "It is the very nature of the form of production that makes the producer refuse to use any kind of cost accounting. Thus, in his anxiety to guarantee his subsistence, not only is he not displaced by falling prices for agricultural goods, but he even manages to intensify his production in order to make up, by increasing supply, the income deficiencies caused by low prices, or he introduces more advanced techniques aimed at producing the same results. The variation in productivity that is imposed by the need to maintain a minimum level of subsistence closely links the producer with the market for products of industrial origin which are used as inputs for more technified production, and the prices of which, being based on the logic of rates of profit, also amputate the peasant's income although in a different way. The prices of industrial inputs thus play a central role in limiting the peasant producer's income, independently of the prices of agricultural goods offered by peasant production. They likewise operate as mechanisms which prevent the process of decay of the peasantry and the parallel establishment of new capitalist entrepreneurs". It is here, however, in connection with the phenomenon of technology, that the greatest care must be taken with respect to generalizations. Where inputs are concerned, the type of fertilizer used has undergone changes through time. Peasants in Chile, in the period 1965-1975, intensified the use of inorganic fertilizers and reduced their use of traditional organic products, a trend which was also observable in Brazil, although there it was less marked. The initial situation in the two countries was different, the fertilizers most commonly used having been inorganic in Chile and organic in Brazil. In both cases, the trend was towards an increase in the use of chemical fertilizers by peasant agriculture (see table 40).

In three countries, Colombia, El Salvador and Mexico (see table 41), in the case of maize the use of improved seed is lower than in other size strata in the small-producer sector; in absolute terms, however, it represents a considerable percentage of the total, particularly in El Salvador.

Many case studies confirm that some changes are taking place: for example, the use of improved seed (particularly potatoes, maize, rice) is gradually spreading; certain cultivation practices are being changed as regards density of planting in the case of potatoes, yucca, maize and sugar-cane for unrefined block sugar; and some pesticides are being used for vegetables (onions and tomatoes). Of all these changes perhaps the most remarkable may be the revolution in

Table 40

BRAZIL AND CHILE: EVOLUTION OF USE OF FERTILIZERS, BY TYPE

(Percentages)

Type of fertilizer	Chile a/		Brazil b/	
	1965	1975	1970	1980
Organic	29.9	9.1	47.1	43.7
Inorganic	58.4	84.4	37.3	56.3
Both	11.7	6.5	15.6	s/i
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Prepared by the Joint ECLAC/FAO Agriculture Division on the basis of national agricultural censuses: Chile, 1965 and 1975; Brazil, 1970 and 1980.

Table 41

LATIN AMERICA (SELECTED COUNTRIES): PERCENTAGE OF ADOPTION OF NEW VARIETIES OF MAIZE

Country	Topography	Size of agricultural unit		
		Small	Medium-sized	Large
Colombia	Low valley	19.0	-	65.0
	Hillside	0.0	-	15.0
	Medium valley	19.0	-	30.0
	Hillside	10.0	-	15.0
	High valley	5.0	-	12.0
	Hillside	4.0	-	4.0
El Salvador	Valley	34.0	46.0	71.0
	Hillside	28.0	13.0	36.0
Mexico	Valley	27.0	37.0	55.0
	Hillside	18.0	32.0	36.0

Source: R. Perrin and D. Winkelman, "Impediments to technical progress on small versus large farms", American Journal of Agricultural Economics, Vol. 28, No. 5, December 1976, p. 893.

potato-growing in the Andean area, where, in view of the traditional custom of "changing seed" it has been easier to introduce genetically improved seed, while at the same time, because of the habit of using organic manures, the use of chemical fertilizers of industrial origin has gradually been extended. The Instituto Colombiano Agropecuario (ICA) even observed in some areas of the State of Santander that excessive doses of fertilizers were being used, to the detriment of yields.

Some research centres have recently embarked upon the study of the production systems created through the accumulated experience of many years, when, by trial and error, peasant farming methods were gradually adjusted to the enormous variety of environmental situations that is characteristic of Latin America. This has made it possible to reorient agricultural research and experimentation to some (albeit limited) extent, bringing them out of their socioeconomic and cultural isolation so that peasant farming can be looked at from a systemic point of view. Though it may seem a truism to say so, the value of knowledge as a vital element for development, beginning with the peasant experience itself, is being appreciated anew. In this way it has been shown how much progress can be made by enriching that experience with new knowledge. Thus, the prejudices based on disparagement of the "traditional" simply because it lacks the features that tend to be associated with the "modern" have been abandoned, at least to some extent. There is a touch of irony in the fact that it has taken experience itself to show the scientists that research must begin with objective knowledge of the reality they seek to change.

A second positive consequence of this new approach in agricultural research is a growing appreciation of farming methods which are now seen to have virtues that had previously been ignored or even looked down upon.

It has been shown that the practice of leaving land fallow in certain areas of the Central Valley of Chile, often considered to be poor use of the soil, actually not only enables it to recover its fertility but also has the positive effect of preserving moisture and preventing attacks by disease or pests.

The traditional fertilizing techniques which consist in turning under legumes in crop rotation, and which are so frequently used in the Andean area, are complemented with the incorporation into the soil of organic material from the dung of animals or poultry.

Another well-known method is that used in hillside cultivation by peasants who guarantee the success of their crops or ensure that they ripen in succession by planting at different levels of altitude, with a wide variety of germ plasms.115/

The advantages of production systems such as intermixed or associated planting ("relay"), as for example between maize or beans and yucca, have been established, both from the

viewpoint of reducing vulnerability to certain diseases or pests and from that of total production, in comparison with separate cultivation of each species.

The Instituto Colombiano Agropecuario (ICA), in studying the effect of modifying the density of planting in potato-growing, has found that peasant farmers vary the quantity of seed used according to the date of planting, in order to provide ground cover that will allow of optimum use of the moisture in the soil. These subtle ways of adjusting to environmental conditions are a good example of the contribution that the experience of the peasantry can make to agricultural development.

Dubly 116/ maintains that although peasant practices tend to be considered as contrary to agronomic techniques, in actual fact the two things are not mutually exclusive. The peasant rationale is based on observation and experimentation, and these are the fundamental scientific approaches of the biological sciences (including their physical and chemical components) from which agricultural technology is derived. The difference is not so much one of nature as of degree of systematization. An analysis of peasant practices reveals that behind most of them lies a real technical rationale; only after this effort to understand peasant practices is made can one think of technology as being the expansion, intensification or complementation of the rationale underlying them. Thus, technology should not be the application from outside of a substitute practice which will consequently be rejected, but something which is grafted into the heart of reality and of rational practice.

Morandi 117/ suggests that in the underdeveloped countries there is a lack of articulation between the agricultural production sector (demand) and the public or private generating agencies (supply) and reaches the conclusion that "in the specific case under consideration-- i.e., the peasant economies, particularly in the Sierra zone of Ecuador-- there is no supply that matches the type of demand originating in small farms with the characteristics mentioned above. Indeed, it might even be said that the technology offered on the market represents indifference to the technological needs of peasant economies. This lack of correspondence between demand and supply reflects a direct relationship between the type of technology offered and the State action promoted by the power structure of classes within society, while at the same time it provides one more argument to support the view that technology is an endogenous factor of the economic system".

Another writer,118/ also referring to Ecuadorian experience, holds that the agricultural research centres where technology is generated, whether private or public, channel their activities towards generating innovations designed for application in the "modern" sector of agriculture, that is, in those enterprises that are integrated into the capital

accumulation circuits, with some development of productive forces.

In short, as regards the incorporation of modern technology into the peasant environment, the following points should be noted: a) the difficulties of securing compatibility between peasants' needs and the existing supply of technology; b) the selective penetration of some of these technologies which do actually respond to the peasantry's needs and responsibilities; and c) the lack of interest in creating or adapting technologies for this large group of producers.

8. Credit and small-scale agriculture

Access to financing is a vital factor among those that might ultimately facilitate greater economic development and modernization of agriculture. At the level of the peasant strata this fact acquires particular significance, inasmuch as this group's capacity for monetary saving is minimal and it is obviously essential not only that this sector should have sources of financing at its disposal, but also that the cost burden should be realistic from the standpoint of the small producer. In view of this, it is important that the State should participate as an equilibrating element in this situation. A second reason relates to the incompatibility between the flows of income and of expenditure, through time, a fact which reinforces the need for adequate sources of financing to be available.

The peasant stratum's access to agricultural credit has not followed a homogeneous behaviour pattern. For example, if the case of Bolivia is analysed, it will be seen that between the years 1971 and 1976 the average annual percentage of credits granted to small peasant farmers did not amount to as much as 5%, but in recent years credit assistance has been rechanneled towards the peasant segment (see table 42) concomintantly with the assistance received through USAID/Bolivia,119/ and under the Programa de Crédito al Pequeño Agricultor (P.C.P.A.). At the other extreme stands Colombia, where during the period 1971-1982 the number of credits received by peasants was reduced by 25.5% (see table 43); this trend was maintained in the subsequent.120/ There was a considerable increase in Integral Rural Development (Desarrollo Rural Integrado - DRI) credit up to 1980, after which it dropped to its lowest level. Apparently the reason for this was the incapacity of a sizeable number of small producers to meet their obligations; in fact, between 1975 and 1982, 138 618 peasant units ceased to be clients of the Caja Agraria (Agricultural Credit Bank).121/

With regard to the coverage of agricultural credit, the peasant sector has been the one to receive the least positive dividends from these loans. In Bolivia's case, this thesis is confirmed both by the number of beneficiaries and by the

Table 42

BOLIVIA: NUMBER OF LOANS GRANTED, BY TYPE OF BORROWER, 1971-1984

Year	Small peasant farmers	OTHERS				Total loans
		Farms	Associations	Groupings	Co-operatives	
1971	105	219	-	87	-	411
1972	348	245	-	61	-	654
1973	414	618	-	139	-	1 171
1974	539	1 146	-	376	-	2 061
1975	628	841	-	171	-	1 640
1976	1 039	777	-	386	-	2 202
1977	1 264	872	14	247	14	2 411
1978	2 071	908	28	309	22	3 338
1979	2 837	792	8	259	22	3 918
1980	2 343	1 449	7	252	48	4 099
1981	1 871	1 639	3	72	12	3 597
1982	1 472	649	5	63	33	2 222
1983	6 413	2 355	27	222	65	9 082
1984	13 167	4 869	10	196	68	18 310
Totals	34 511	17 379	102	2 840	284	55 116

Source: Banco Agrícola de Bolivia.

Note: 1971 to 1976: no data for associations and co-operatives.

Table 43

COLOMBIA: TRENDS IN NUMBER OF CREDITS GRANTED BY THE CAJA AGRARIA (REGULAR RESOURCES AND DRI), 1975-1982

Year	Regular resources	DRI	Total	
			Number	Percentage
1975	437 551	-	437 551	100.0
1976	404 107	7 088	411 195	94.0
1977	394 825	12 083	406 908	93.0
1978	300 881	23 389	324 270	74.1
1979	326 499	33 622	360 121	82.3
1980	298 211	41 367	339 578	77.6
1981	290 897	39 777	330 674	75.6
1982	285 633	40 219	325 852	74.5
Variation 1982-1975	-151 918	40 219	-111 699	-25.5

Source: Report of the Caja Agraria, DRI and CEGA adjustments.
CEGA (1984): Credit for agriculture and areas financed, 1975-1982.

amount committed (see table 44); while the number of loans to which the peasantry had access is relatively high, this becomes less meaningful in face of the behaviour of the other parameters as described above. Another point of interest is reflected in the fact the co-operatives received a high percentage of the total amount and comprised half of the total number of beneficiaries, despite their having obtained only 6% of the number of loans; i.e., they present a profile diametrically opposite to that of the peasants.

It can be concluded, therefore, that the greater the degree of organization --co-operatives in this case-- the stronger the bargaining position for obtaining access to better sources of financing and at the same time benefiting a considerable number of producers.

From recent data for Brazil (see table 45) it can be inferred that the situation of small farmers is precarious as regards their share in credit and therefore their access to it.

This situation (see tables 44 and 45) definitively corroborates the initial asseveration of the region's imperious need for improvement of the financing position of small producers, both through organization and through promotion, a process in which both the State and civic society will have to play an important role if the aim pursued is integrated and rapid agricultural development.

9. Response of peasant economies to official and non-official programmes

A considerable stock of experience has been gathered with respect to the heterogeneity of the response of peasant economies to State action. Perhaps the clearest expression of this lack of uniformity is the picture presented by Latin American agriculture since the agrarian reform process; a sort of disillusionment seems to have set in as regards the aspirations and hopes pinned to such projects of change and definitive incorporation of the peasantry in development and progress.

Probably the essential reason for this behaviour, which seems even "random" in terms of response to official propositions and programmes, has generally been the lack of capacity to internalize the prevailing heterogeneity and of knowledge and understanding of what the "peasant system" really means: a picture which is completed by the virtually total non-representation of the peasantry when such programmes are being formulated and constructed, albeit their participation appears increasingly necessary so that they can express their requirements and describe the potential contributions which the system in question can offer to an integrated development process at the national level.

Gradually governments have begun to study the peasant

Table 44

BOLIVIA: VALUE, NUMBER AND BENEFICIARIES OF LOANS TO AGRICULTURE, 1960-1971

(Percentages)

Category	Number of loans	Beneficiaries	Amount
Peasants	38.0	3.0	4.0
Farmers	45.0	4.0	35.0
Co-operatives	6.0	58.0	32.0
Pre-co-operatives	7.0	12.0	4.0
Associations	2.0	22.0	12.0
Small entrepreneurs	2.0	1.0	3.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Prepared by the Joint ECLAC/FAO Agriculture Division on the basis of AID, "Small Farmer Credit in South America", Vol. III, February 1973.

Table 45

BRAZIL: STRUCTURE OF CREDIT EXTENDED TO FARMERS, BY SIZE STRATUM AND BY PURPOSE, 1980

(Percentage)

Area (hectares)	Number of properties	Investment	Marketing	Other
0-10	50.4	6.0	8.0	2.0
Over 10	49.6	94.0	92.0	90.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Prepared by the Joint ECLAC/FAO Agriculture Division on the basis of Instituto Brasileiro de Geografía y Estatística (IBGE), Censo Agropecuario IX Recensamento Geral do Brasil, Vol. 2, Tome 3, No. 1, Rio de Janeiro, 1980.

stratum and its behaviour more seriously and in greater depth, in order to put forward a set of realistic possibilities and alternatives for the insertion of this stratum into the national economy. In this change of attitude a central role has indubitably been played by international agencies such as FAO, ECLAC, IICA, among others, and at the national level by the Non-governmental Organizations (NGO's), which have succeeded in approaching the peasant sector directly, thus avoiding many of the bureaucratic stumbling-blocks and paralysing conflicts proper to the operation of government machinery.

In this way, although it is not yet possible even to glimpse the role that will ultimately be played by the peasantry on the national stage, some well-founded alternatives are already being mooted. Among these, the most widespread is that assigning a key role to the peasantry in the production of foodstuffs; it is even said that one phase in the designing of any food and agriculture policy is consideration of the peasant stratum as a central agent of this strategy.

It is in this direction that many projects emanating from the government apparatus have begun to bear really promising fruit.

In Panama, the government has worked out an agroaquicultural programme, as an option for marginal rural sectors that need to diversify their production. It is a low-cost activity, and a start has been made on developing a new way of exploiting the entire ecosystem. The programme has been defined as an activity of social interest, inasmuch as it is directed towards small communities. Experimental stations are built and managed, the supporting infrastructure is constructed, technical backing is provided and nurseries for aquatic organisms are established.

The main objective of this policy was "to supply peasants and their families with cheap and good-quality protein by means of breeding fish and other aquatic organisms feeding on natural resources that are not used for human food and on diets based on by-products from within the region". Under this programme, which was launched in 1971, artificial ponds totalling 1 100 hectares had been constructed in 1983, and in that year produced 98 tons of fish.

Official efforts on the part of the Jamaican Government in the years 1972-1973 led to the formation of a network of small milk producers and an entire peasant economy based on dairy farming. It is true, however, that the dairy farming policy of the European Economic Community makes it very difficult for such projects to prove profitable throughout Latin America.

In Ecuador a Secretaría de Desarrollo Rural Integral (SEDRI) has been set up under the Office of the President, definitely geared to the service of the country's poor peasantry. In 1984 SEDRI had 17 projects, five of which

provided for improvements in irrigation. The projects are largely financed with resources from external institutions, AID, the Swiss Government, etc., by which means 14 km of irrigation channels and 3 km of irrigation ditches have already been constructed; this is radically changing soil conditions, improving existing irrigation facilities and increasing the total irrigated area. Furthermore, 2 000 hectares that had been abandoned on account of their low productivity were brought into use and by now have been planted with fruit trees; 1 900 hectares affected by extreme aridity are being irrigated and used for production of bananas, papayas, tobacco and cotton.

In other words, this proves that when there is a will to carry out coherent rural development projects highly positive results can be obtained; but this is not the position prevalent in Latin America, nor is there any sign of its becoming so in the medium term, not only because of a problem of political will, but also owing to the constraints imposed by objective facts arising out of the present crisis. This situation has refocused the conflicting issues as well as State measures and policies.

Concurrently with this sort of shelving or "passing over" by the State of what in the 1960s was called the "agrarian problem", the presence of NGO's in the regional agrarian scenario has assumed greater importance. This phenomenon is significant because it may be a way of complementing State action, but also because it embodies a different conception of development, of the way to encourage it and how a rapprochement and linkage with the peasant sector should be brought about in order to stimulate its dynamic forces.

Hence it was felt important to include a brief résumé of the performance of the NGO's as a new actor on the real agrarian scene in Latin America. About two decades ago the NGO's began to play what has become an increasingly active part in the promotion of a type of development closely linked to the satisfaction of the needs of the most deprived sectors. A large number of them have devoted their efforts to working with peasants. The characteristics of their constitution and functioning have determined a certain type of approach to the collective problems of the rural poor, as well as a method of work which differentiates them from the classic models designed to achieve rural development.

As a general rule the NGO's are made up of people with heterogeneous training in several professions and occupations. Their function is to "serve", and, depending upon their efficacy, they can attain a considerable degree of legitimization in the eyes of peasants and other social actors. Furthermore, they handle large sums of money but are non-profit-making, operate on the basis of the voluntary support they can mobilize, and provide their services free of charge or "at cost price". From the political standpoint they are mainly heterodox, maintaining certain ties with the

political parties and a discreet distance from the State. They promote development, although they do not usually place emphasis on production or productivity. They carry out studies and research without claiming to set themselves up as academic institutions. They defend the autonomism of the social movement, although because of their number and heterogeneity they suffer from a measure of experimentalism and en bloc have not been capable of formulating a longer-term strategic proposition. This is partly due to the complexity of their broader orientations, one of which is the shift in areas of central interest. For most of the NGO's, power is no longer one of these, and they have switched their concern to the powers that are to be found at the grass roots of society. Consequently, they bear a message of equality which legitimizes them in the eyes of marginal leaders and groups, and aims at encouraging their initiatives and above all at making them more independent of the power of the State.

By virtue of their constitutive and guiding principles, the NGO's, without claiming to take the place of existing institutions, have become entities that give cohesion to initiatives at the local level and whose existence cannot be disregarded in the task of finding formulas for social development.

As regards the characteristics of their functioning and method of work, the NGO's operate on the basis of a set of objectives attainable within given lengths of time through the use of efficacious means. Their proposals for social change use the pragmatic and conventional language of projects, one of which would be sufficient to generate an NGO; all are quantified in such a way as to require budgetary funds, although they are enunciated in qualitative terms, which is the reason why in their formulation and evaluation a monetary return on investment is not sought. Ordinarily they are interrelated short-term projects. Although the NGO's waver between their interest in promoting participation at the base and the need for a minimal bureaucratic organization of their functions, they end by adopting a hierarchical management model.

In their contacts with peasants, the impact of the NGO's is qualitatively different from that of the other three agencies with which the peasants have traditionally operated. Unlike the State and its technical agencies, the NGO's carry out lower-cost projects, with fewer administrative formalities, in which a considerably larger share of the project budget is directly used by the beneficiaries and in which the imposition of established technological and organizational patterns is systematically avoided, or at least is subjected to evaluation. Unlike the churches and their lay organizations, the NGO's seek to dignify persons as workers and social actors in a concrete historical reality, promoting community practices and the development of a social consciousness from a standpoint that is anthropological rather

than spiritual, economist or sociological.122/ Unlike the peasant-based political parties, the NGO's mobilize the rural poor without trying to manipulate them, and endeavour to work out along with them development proposals which will benefit them directly, rather than redound to the benefit of the supporting external agency.

In short, the working method of the NGO's, even admitting their great heterogeneity, is based on popular education as a means to direct encouragement of peasant organization initiatives at the local level, and thereby to the development of a critical awareness of reality, while at the same time the "entrepreneurial spirit" is also fostered through community projects in which part of the factors of production are socialized. Great emphasis is placed on setting a proper value of the peasant's own experience, with the result that the NGO itself often embarks upon a learning process in the course of which it tries to realize the potential of peasant life in such a way that this social group can reconstruct a part of its cultural identity and the NGO can enrich its stock of the ancestral techniques of the communities with which it is working.

The most important effect on rural collectivities produced by the social intervention of the NGO's is usually its long-term impact, consisting in raising levels of collective consciousness, although over the short term the goals of greater well-being stated as the objectives of their projects are generally attained. They also succeed in promoting fuller self-development of peasant agriculture and consolidate --when their intervention lasts sufficiently long-- decision-making and microsocial participation practices.

This form of intervention contains enough elements to provide the bases for the formulation of new and comprehensive policies aimed at securing rural development on a national scale. However, participation and achievements in respect of self-help production and social awareness are not sufficient unless these initiatives are effectively integrated with those of other public and private local organizations, so as to form a supporting national system or model which will plan, back up and define broad objectives with the contribution of the independent local initiatives in question, their work runs the risk of isolationism.

Manifold, too, are the limitations that may be noted with respect to the efficacy of the NGO's action. The welfare-oriented approach originally characteristic of national institutions for popular education tends to surface again in face of the pressing urgency of needs. The heterogeneity of educators, technical personnel and promoters as regards education, social background and politico-ideological leanings are often a source of inter- and intra-institutional divergences sapping the vigour of a consensual undertaking. The above-mentioned lack of strategic

formulations which hampers the working-out of a medium and long-term policy is the most serious hindrance preventing the NGO's and the peasant organizations they support from beginning to acquire importance at the national level and become efficaciously integrated with other organized sectors of society. This deficiency normally finds expression in a lack of clarity as regards objectives which waters down the effectiveness of their work and weakens efforts to increase interchange between NGO's so that joint activities can be formulated on better foundations.

VIII. REFLECTIONS ON THE PEASANT CHALLENGE

1. The point of departure

The point of departure for an analysis of the future of this important social group is a substantive fact: the peasantry is a reality whose essential characteristic lies in its collective form of social existence.123/ From a world standpoint, passing over in silence the challenge represented by the peasantry would constitute an omission that would affect about two-thirds of the human race. In its analysis of world agriculture up to the year 2000, FAO 124/ states that the productivity of poor peasants, small farmers and landless labourers must be raised, and that "... if they are to contribute substantially to increased agricultural production to meet their own needs and those of coming generations, they must have greater access to suitable land and water ... to all the other inputs without which the crops will not grow or yield sufficiently, to the services without which they cannot obtain these inputs, and to a distribution system that will give them a fair return on their own labour". It notes that in the year 2000 population trends, in combination with the present systems of land distribution, will mean that there are about 220 million small farmers and landless families as against the 1980 estimate of 167 million.

From the Latin American standpoint, the relative significance of this is apparently less, since the peasantry represents only a little over one-fourth of the regional population, even though as happens in the Andean countries, in many national societies its presence is predominant.125/

As Astori points out,126/ the persistence of peasant agriculture has been one of the peculiar and at the same time essential connotations attaching to the expansion of agrarian capitalism in Latin America. This persistence is something more than an aftertaste of the past, of the kind that is of interest only to certain schools of anthropology.127/ We therefore share the position of Shanin,128/ who proposes that the peasantry should be understood as a process, as a historical entity in the broader framework of society, although with a structure, consistency and episodes of its own.

Esteva,129/ discussing the prospects of a peasant option,

suggests that it is a matter of "first and foremost discovering ways of mastering survival and development possibilities for the peasants".

It is to this line of thought that the present chapter belongs. Like Thiesenhusen,130/ we believe that "there are fewer and fewer excuses for the less developed countries to exclude small farmers from their development strategies". The same writer adds that "several centuries of history in the developed countries are on the side of the peasants in the less developed countries of our own time".

2. The difficulties of the subject

The first difficulty arises in connection with generalizations about countries with common or similar features, but also with marked differences in their agrarian experience. The greatest difficulties, however, loom up in the ideological sphere in relation to the value set on the peasant, on his socio-political behaviour, on the direction in which his interests and his possible alliances move. In this same sphere, predictions are hazarded as to the lot of the peasantry and its imminent proletarianization or disappearance. Feder 131/ carries this debate to the extreme in his assumption of the irremissible "doom" of the peasantry.

Many initial studies refer to the alternatives facing the peasantry, and there is a tendency to suppose that in presence of the dominant capitalism most of the efforts made, given the articulation and subordination of the peasantry, will end by reintegrating it with and making it functional to the dominant capitalist accumulation process.

Consequently, tackling the subject of strategies for the peasantry is no easy matter. It is more convenient to confine analysis of the peasantry to the academic sphere. There are some who maintain that "the recent spate of small-farmer policies fit an identifiable historical pattern and that they are concerned with restructuring the 'traditional' agricultural sector in order to achieve the necessary food production and political stability for accumulation to continue more or less unabated". These policies would appear to be based "on the old philosophy that a peasant with his small plot of land and his basic means of subsistence is likely in general to prove a conservative force, to serve the interests of the major capitalist groups, and to constitute an important element in the foreign policy considerations of both the poor and the more advanced capitalist countries".132/

There can be no doubt that some policies or programmes may end by aggravating the problems that affect the poorer peasants. It is true that policies and instruments do exist of too limited a scope for great hopes to be pinned on them, lest the seeds of frustration be sown. But in all this there is nothing to prevent the search for ways of effectively

responding to the aspirations and requirements of the peasantry.

3. The peasant challenge

The peasant challenge is born of reality; it is not an invention. It is born of that collective form of social existence known as "the peasantry", which is a concrete reality in every national society. In this sense it is simply part of a global development challenge, with styles, structures and strategies corresponding to the peasants' own demands and their trends. In general, current styles of development 133/ have clearly had serious difficulties in taking up what we generically term the "peasant challenge". Possibly their strategies may have excluded the discussion of roles or options for the peasantry, or they may have trusted that rural populations would benefit by the trickle-down effects of the strategies in question. Seldom, moreover, have the aforesaid overall policies which have an incidence upon the rural environment, agriculture and the peasantry been evaluated. Reliance seems to have been placed on the continuance of the proclaimed process of extinction of the peasantry as a way out of the agrarian problem. It may have been hoped that the agrarian question would peter out in the expansion of the industrial urban environment. Nevertheless, urban growth has been speeded up and has become congested with all sorts of problems and conflicts. Agriculture has been technified and modernized, and harbours an enormous number of poor peasants, despite expelling from 1.5 to 2 million persons every year. Yet still the rural population increases, and there are many who are wondering what its destiny will be. The subject of the peasantry is becoming unavoidable.

Barraclough maintains that the peasantry "may continue decreasing relatively in importance, but not in absolute terms. There is no longer anywhere for the peasants to go. There are no new sources of urban employment on any large scale, there is little land available for settlement, there are no possibilities for mass migration ... like those open to the peasantry in western Europe".134/

For Esteva, "the peasants are there. They do not vanish from the new social map. There are more of them every day and they show increasing vigour in resisting the attempts at their extinction. One might say that to keep themselves going as peasants is the only viable way of averting the physical extinction of which they are on the verge. Somehow or other they perceive that a transformation which economically and politically alters the rural situation no longer leads to another promised land; it is not an upward economic and social path that offers fairer prospects of justice and welfare".135/

Religious bodies have underlined the phenomenon of the massive flight from the countryside to the town,

"unfortunately to still more dehumanizing living conditions".136/

4. Two points of view

Astori 137/ very rightly draws an extremely important distinction: "In general terms it may be asserted that those writers who in theory most closely assimilate the Latin American process to that of mature or classic capitalism are those who consider that over the long term the decay or extinction of peasant agriculture is irreversible. On the contrary, those who attach importance to the peculiarities of the periphery --and particularly those of the Latin American region as a whole as well as the specific situations they note-- have been insisting that peasant resistance to dissolution not only explains their persistent survival throughout a long period, but also seriously calls in question the inevitability of that dissolution. Naturally, this discussion largely reproduces the debate on peasant differentiation and proletarianization".

In line with the second position is the concern that the present document and the discussion of the peasant challenge have sought to express.

5. Recognition of the existence of the peasantry

In essence, the form taken by the peasant challenge in the cultural sphere is that of recognition of the existence of the peasantry.

Warman 138/ relates, "I don't know when I discovered --it was a long time ago-- that most Mexicans were peasants. It really was a discovery because there is a veritable conspiracy to hush up this obvious and patent truth, as great as the country itself. I realized that a Mexican may go on as if he were living in a country that does not exist, that is a mere fiction, if he does not learn the same lesson". Something similar may be said to have happened throughout Latin America; this process of discovering the peasantry is taking place, putting an end to the fiction of a continent without peasants or societies without peasants even in countries where they are numerically in the majority. The theme of the peasant, notwithstanding its almost primitive aspect, has rapidly taken the floor in recent years.

This recognition, however, is not always objective. Some of the imbalances in the interpretation of agrarian processes have their origin in oversimplification or in prejudices. It is true that peasant farmers are in a subordinate position within a network of exploitation relations. But it is no less true that they are resisting the so-called decay, or in other words, are struggling for survival and reproduction. This is

not a sign of passivity; at worst it is a sign of prudence. A feature of this subordinate existence is said to be what is called self-exploitation of the family labour force, in which estimates of the value of the work done by the peasant, his wife and children would give figures that were insignificant in terms of average daily wages. But it is also important to see the other side of the coin and give its true name to this will to survive, recognizing it as a capacity for work which, geared to collective achievement as a local or national social group, may make enormous advances and contributions.

Emphasis is placed on the traditional and conservative behaviour of the peasantry. There is a superfluity of allegations of this kind. It is not worth while to add any further data. but the question that should be asked is what modernity offers to lighten the daily task, or what it contributes towards raising the peasants' production and income.

It is not a matter of changing the negative sign of the aforesaid attributes but of discussing them, explaining them and in particular reducing speculation and increasing objectivity; perhaps alongside the deficiencies some capacities may appear. Otherwise it will not be possible to visualize the peasantry as a social subject.

Discussion also focuses on the future path of the peasantry: whether the road followed will be that of the kulak, of the junker, of the farmer, etc. Perhaps a more intensive effort could be made to identify in each national or local situation the processes that affect the peasantry and their future repercussions, as a sound basis on which to respond to the peasant challenges --in the plural-- in ways of their own that above all are effective.

6. An area for negotiation

The subordinate character of peasant life, irrespective of political régimes, would seem to be universal. The most serious problem for the peasantry is to have at their disposal a certain cultural, socioeconomic and political area in which they are afforded some degree of presence, participation and above all negotiation within society. The peasantry is the weakest link in any social structuration. The creation of this area for participation is no easy task. It covers a variety of options for organization, representation and mobilization, and for some articulation of peasants' claims or requirements.

Generally speaking, definitions of the peasantry agree in underlining its situation of subordination. Shanin's definition 139/ notes "subordination to the directives of powerful external agents". The same idea is expressed by Wolf,140/ in his turn, when he says that the "(peasants') surpluses are transferred to a dominant group ..." This weakness calls for action in two directions:

a) The first need is to strengthen the integrating components of the peasantry's community relations and the entities through which its family or general societal concerns and characteristics are expressed. Organized mobilization should be encouraged as a means of voicing its demands and channeling its capacity for participation and bargaining;

b) The second line of action, if conditions so permit, must be taken in the sphere of power, that is, by the State, in respect both of its strategies, programmes or policies and of its key role of determining resource allocation. In their turn, the public services as the instruments of State action do not seem easily adaptable to meeting the demands of the peasantry.

Several national societies in Andean countries are of a markedly peasant type, with high proportions of rural population. As Esteva points out in the case of Mexico, it might be said that "no social consensus is possible on the basis of the exclusion or subordination of a group that represents almost half the population. Admission or exclusion of the peasants from the State and from its public power inevitably represents a serious split".141/

7. Some components of a strategy

At a very modest level, it is considered that among the components that might form a strategy visualizing peasant realities and demands, mention might be made of three: a) raising the levels of security at which peasants live; b) adjusting the structural conditions in which peasant communities are reproduced; c) strengthening peasant economies. The responsibility for these components may be assumed by the peasant grass roots proper; by the organizations representative of the peasantry; by supporting institutions and by the State.

a) Raising the levels of security at which peasants live

The development of the peasantry begins with self-defence. Its frailty exposes it to the most diverse risks. Co-operation in its constant struggle to elude them or reduce them is an angle of approach which corresponds to the most pressing peasant demands. Of the very widely varying spheres in which some of the threats are manifested mention will be made of only a few:

i) Insecurity of tenure. Some estimates show that in several countries between 45% and 60% of peasant units are in a situation of unguaranteed tenure which limits the possibilities of improving them. For peasants land is the very basis of their existence. Legal recognition of peasant ownership is of fundamental importance for giving the family greater security;

ii) Climatic risks. A striking feature of peasant survival strategies is the complexity and sometimes the subtlety of the precautions taken to avert the consequences of extremes of weather or climate, such as droughts, severe frosts and so forth. Thus, for example, in most of the Andean Sierra, where semi-arid conditions prevail, few elements can be of greater importance than the management and provision of water and, in areas where it already exists, the improvement of "irrigation security". Conflicts over water in times of scarcity are a source of discord and violence. In brief, the peasantry should enjoy basic facilities technologically adequate to mitigate these risks at least in part;

iii) Protection of crops and livestock. In their productive efforts peasant families and communities take part in a stiff biological contest with plants and animals. There are genetic, biological, mechanical and chemical possibilities of assisting them in this struggle. To prevent the loss of their crops or livestock is essential for their survival. Possibly for the peasant it is more important to take protective measures against diseases and pests than to change his crops or his production systems;

iv) The risk of illness. Among the poor, illness is a misfortune which may distort the whole of their activities and their precarious economy. It compels them to abandon their production units and often to liquidate their scanty reserves or their livestock, and on many occasions they cannot avoid getting into debt. The development of primary forms of public health care of medical attention is still too limited in rural areas. In many of these the poor fall ill and recover by themselves, if they do not die, while health specialists cannot find jobs in the cities. In some degree the unsatisfactoriness of health services may extend to all the social services, which have always been conceived in accordance with urban criteria;

v) The risk of human degradation. There are ways of degradation which may be envisaged in a purely moral light. But they also have a broad social significance. Intensive exploitation, let us say draining dry, takes place through ceremonial practices or forms of recreation in which peasants saddle themselves with debt or sink their scanty income, with all the train of consequences for family and community life. In the rural environment there is a vicious circle of debasement and exploitation that cannot be ignored.

It must be difficult for peasant families to understand why they are being offered chances to improve their economy, to become technified, to increase their income, in short to make progress, before they are given any opportunity for self-defence in what to them constitutes their daily struggle. In this direction the field of action is enormous and so likewise are the possibilities for peasant organization and mobilization.

b) Adjustment of the structural conditions in which peasant units are reproduced

Peasant economies suffer from well-known structural imbalances and in some areas there are trends towards the aggravation of these disequilibria. If agrarian policies aim at seeking forms of reproduction of peasant units in economically more adequate and socially more equitable conditions, it may help to ward off greater evils and perhaps to remedy those that exist.

i) Unequal distribution of resources. This situation lies at the root of the constriction and weakness of peasant economies. Structural changes in agriculture have not always been oriented towards correcting these imbalances, but have been confined to granting access to land to those who live and work permanently on the large farms;

ii) The disorganized occupation of new land. The repetition in frontier areas of the imbalances proper to traditional agrarian structures means that in these new areas the constraints that basically affect peasant economies are reproduced;

iii) The precarious legal situation of peasant units. The frequent absence of title-deeds is not only an element of insecurity, but also a factor preventing more rational restructuration of peasant units. Any agreement or negotiation is made difficult, and the same is true of the elementary conditions for a certain primary accumulation; in other words, this situation rules out all possibilities of investment;

iv) Concentration of the benefits of public investment. Public investment, or private investment with State financing, which make a significant difference to the normally very limited production capacity of the land (irrigation, drainage, conservation in general), can provide a good opportunity for some reorganization in favour of the peasantry --an opportunity of which insufficient advantage is taken. Once the projected works have been executed the former distribution of resources usually remains intact, and sometimes there is even a trend towards increased concentration;

v) Deterioration of resources. Generally speaking the land available to the peasants is that which is the most fragile from the standpoint of the ecosystem, that in which the risks are highest and the productivity per unit of area lowest. That is, it is land in which the frontier of declining yields on labour is closest.142/ Protection of land and its fecundity is therefore an indispensable condition for the reproduction of the production unit;

vi) The supply of technology. Its inappropriateness in relation to the requirements of peasant units is limiting the chances that minifundios might have of changing their economic dimensions by this means. Undervaluation of peasant experience is the source of this failure to match supply and demand;

vii) Background training. Much the same thing happens because of the virtually total absence of instruments for co-operating in the training of young men who remain in the rural environment and preparing them for real participation.

c) Strengthening peasant economies

Peasant units pursue mainly family objectives with respect both to the orientation of their production activities and to consumption. Productive effort is closely linked to the sustenance of the family, to the preservation or improvement of its housing and to the maintenance of its productive unit, the seat of family life. There are also objectives at the community level.

Economic activity geared to family needs produces for consumption in the home and also for the market. A progressively increasing proportion both of inputs and of consumer goods is bought in the market, so that the economic activity which generates income in one way or another becomes linked to the market for products or for labour. In brief, the family objective of the peasant unit is also attained through the intermediation of the market.143/ The extensive discussion of the nature of peasant economies' insertion in the market has not reached clear-cut conclusions. Empirical material is lacking. For some it takes place on the basis of their position as producers of use value and for others on their position as producers of goods. What really matters for the purposes of discussing strategy components is the twofold connotation which may attach to the proposal that peasant economies should be strengthened by supporting or promoting their economic activity. On the one hand this may help to raise the standard of living of peasant populations; on the other, it may at the same time help to increase the supply of products on agricultural markets.

The strengthening of the peasant economy is not unconnected with the other components of protection or restructuration mentioned above. Placing the accent on a strategy of strengthening the sector calls for a clear identification of the agents that extract surpluses as well as of the factors that might contribute to the growth of the peasant economy.

The analysis of this component of strategy affords excellent opportunities for harmonizing the needs of peasants with those of society as a whole. For example, in a greater food security strategy.

8. Challenges and conflicts

The argument that the poor are poor because the development process has passed them by does not get us very far. Nor has

the idea that the "backward" sector is a normal predecessor of the "advanced" sector. If this were so, a solution could be relatively easily reached through the extension of the options and benefits of development in a sort of linear perspective which shows "the" road along which some pass first and the rest will follow after. There are objective realities which are exclusive because they make for concentration, because they lead to accumulation on the one hand and pauperization on the other, because they imply domination as the only way of maintaining or continuing the said concentration or accumulation and the income distribution pattern that underlies it.

The peasant challenge, from whatever side it is approached, creates difficulties, friction, conflicts, because in one way or another it affects interests. FAO,144/ echoing the Declaration of Key Principles for Operational Guidelines in the Implementation of the Programme of Action of the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (WCARRD), postulates that "a national strategy for eradicating rural poverty requires the following:

a) the promotion of rural institution and people's organizations;

b) structural reforms; and

c) increased commitment of resources".

None of these requirements is neutral, painless, they all have a marked political connotation. If we consider the policy goals formulated by the above-mentioned World Conference much the same thing is apparent:

a) ensure equitable access especially for the small farmers and landless agricultural population to land, water and other natural resources;

b) expand employment opportunities with fair wages, especially for the landless who cannot acquire land;

c) improve productivity levels of small farmers, forest workers, fishermen, artisans and other self-employed groups;

d) speedy elimination of conditions of severe undernutrition;

e) achieve food security for the poor...;

f) meet the needs of the rural poor for housing, wood and fuel by means which are compatible with resource conservation and renewal;

g) provide, in rural areas, at least a minimum level of public utilities and services ...;

h) support the ... participation of women ...;

i) reduce income disparity between rural and urban population and between the regions within rural areas.

Over and above the coherence of each of these objectives, their attainment implies decisions affecting groups, urban interests, structures, budgets, attitudes of mind.

9. Complexity of the challenge

There can be no doubt that accepting the peasant challenge means plunging into the midst of the fray. By way of demonstration, it would be enough to imagine what would happen to the agricultural research institutes if their main orientation were towards providing technologies to the peasant producers. More than one of them, perhaps, would feel it wounding to its scientific prestige. This supposition will be dismissed as a prejudice, but the truth is that there is an enormous technological gap which is not being filled, and which sometimes affects half the population of a country and vast geographical areas.

Some thought might also be given to what it would mean if agricultural public services worked in the countryside and not in the towns, if they left the capital cities and identified themselves more closely with peasant claims.

What would happen if agricultural policies were evaluated from the standpoint of their effects on employment of peasant labour? Would it be worth while to defend it against external competition, or rather to subsidize investment or offer all sorts of incentives to "turn over to stock-raising" the most fertile land and the most suitable for growing highly labour-intensive crops? In other words, what would happen if the real participation of the peasantry were encouraged?

In peasant life no factor is so powerful a determinant as land. It is the cornerstone of the peasant's very existence. This has traditionally been the breeding-ground of the most intensive conflicts that have the most relevant a bearing on agrarian structuration, and in which for centuries the peasants have been the losers. A landless or land-poor peasantry is synonymous with rural penury. Access to the land is an indispensable requisite for turning to good account the peasant populations' own capacity and skill and a means of expanding productive employment and reducing redundancy. Fundamental though it is, however, it is not the only factor. Accepting the peasant challenge involves driving a wedge not only into economic interests but also into cultural patterns. It implies seeking new styles of development in which the peasantry enacts a role and has a place to fill.

10. Peasantry, production and food markets

In the strictly productive sphere, development strategies cannot fail to take into consideration the structural heterogeneity in agriculture. Generally speaking, the promotion of production and the growth of agriculture are primarily entrusted in one way or another to non-peasant agents, whether they be owners of haciendas, entrepreneurs or farmers. The peasantry is expected to go on in its rut, delivering the products that it traditionally offers on the

markets. Latin America has repeatedly opted for an entrepreneurial type of agricultural growth.

What would happen if a strategy were tried out which more openly relied upon the peasantry or on their support in order to attain a high level of food self-sufficiency? It would not be a crazy fantasy, since there are agrarian economies in which the peasantry contributes a large proportion of the food supply. An option of this kind has all sorts of implications. Perhaps the most important is related with the room that there is in the market for the supply that peasant agriculture can offer. The market sphere is the scene of one of the most arduous struggles for peasant survival at present-day levels of aspiration, which, as has been pointed out, are higher than in the past. The constraints on the sale of the peasants' production indubitably affect their monetary income. A striking contradiction in this connection is the sensitiveness with which urban demands for cheap food are listened to or met, and the want of enough common sense to assess the depressive repercussions on the peasants' income of policies that limit the market for their basic products and tend to bring down prices.

Figueroa,145/ seeking to shed light on "the rural-urban conflict, one of the most dramatic in the developed countries", has made a major contribution to the analysis of the prospects of peasant agriculture in Latin America. After a complex and minutely detailed study on Peru, he concludes: "Obviously, there is a rural-urban conflict arising out of food consumption. The degree of this conflict, however, does not seem to be of any great significance. The 'cost in rural factors of production' for food output represents only between 13% and 18% of the urban family budget, depending upon income strata. In static terms, the value of this coefficient leaves room for substantial improvements in rural income. Thus, agricultural income could be raised to twice its present level, by doubling food prices paid to the producer while thereby reducing urban real income only by 18%, and that in the poorest group in the cities. Accordingly, food prices, rural income and urban income are not equivalent, in the sense that changes in one do not imply proportional changes in the other."

Furthermore, apprehension must be felt on behalf of the peasant economies in phases of favourable fiscal income and balance-of-payment positions. It is not unusual for the doors to be opened to imports subsidized by the exporter countries and for subsidies to be established in addition on domestic consumption of certain products. Thus all sorts of distortions are brought about in relative prices, consumption of imported products being stepped up and, undoubtedly, less room being left for local lines of production. Not only the domestic market corresponding to the imported product is affected, but also a whole range of complementary products or substitutes.

In Bolivia, in 20 years the contribution of wheat to per capita daily consumption of calories rose from 20% in 1960 to 33% in 1980. One-third of the calories consumed is provided by a cereal of which cultivation is being reduced and most of which is imported.

These policies may result in radical changes in consumer habits, whereby non-traditional foods are incorporated in the people's shopping-basket, and permanent behaviour patterns are thus created that structurally alter the operation of the markets for staple foods, many of which become inferior goods. In some countries these changes increase external dependence in respect of food, since they introduce the consumption of products in whose case resource constraints limit the development of domestic production. In short, linkages are created which are difficult to break not only in consideration of the consumer populations, but because of the vested interests both of the exporter countries and of the exporter agents, as well as of the importers and of the whole network which in one way or another benefits from these trade flows.

A seminar 146/ on food and agriculture in Peru reached the following conclusions: "At the root of the ongoing food problem is the market mechanism and its international scale. Thus it is that we consume mainly food products offered by the transnational corporations, which dominate the world food system. Moreover, this situation, which first and foremost benefits the corporations in question, is supported by State economic policy through exchange and credit measures and direct subsidies.

"The technology of these corporations has specialized in cereals, products which the country is not too well fitted to produce. The massive quantities of these foods available, particularly in the cities, has helped to foster certain consumer habits which tend to perpetuate this situation and discourage the development of national agriculture. In this way an average diet with a high content of imported raw materials has been gradually established.

"The fact that food policy is reduced to an urban supply policy and the development of national agriculture shelved leads in the long run not only to the deterioration of agricultural production and of the real income of peasants but also to an aggravation of the problem of supply itself, since this is left entirely dependent upon price fluctuations in the world market."

11. Final comments

In Latin America, western forms of penetration and settlement gave rise to a very special mode of appropriation of land which has been documented by several authors. The existing structural characteristics are not unrelated to that initial appropriation, although they are also the result of a lengthy

process of change. In this regard, the core of any coherent analysis of the region's agrarian experience lies in the concept of the heterogeneity of the forms or systems of agriculture that coexist in the agricultural and rural environment. Only if this diversity is recognized can the behaviour of the various economic agents participating in agricultural activities, including peasants, be understood.

These structural characteristics continue to play a very decisive role in the ways in which the land is used, in the systems of cultivation or production, in the implements and technologies applied, in the organization of the habitat and in the population dynamics.

Agrarian heterogeneity did not come about by chance. It is the counterpart, in the agrarian sphere, of broader phenomena which have already been analysed at the regional level and which are related to the functioning of the world economic system, studied by ECLAC in terms of the centre-periphery relationship, as well as in its criticism of the classic scheme of international division of labour.147/

In those Latin American countries whose agriculture was developed to produce food and raw materials for the central economies, this has left its mark on the sector, being one of the elements that have decisively helped it to shape its own differentiation or heterogeneity. As an agrarian economic system, the plantation was a good example of the effects, in agriculture, of the differentiating influence of relations with the centres. Subsequently, agricultural capitalism has often been founded on the production, sometimes by capital-intensive methods, of crops or livestock products for export. The very scale of export-oriented activities provides a good opportunity for the concentration of land ownership.148/

Peasant agriculture was generated mainly in the most populated areas in the past, where in the social order there was more marked structuration and diversification and in production greater development, which made it possible for the colonial régime to extract surpluses in terms of products or of labour without completely destroying the productive base of pre-Columbian agriculture. In its subsequent development various current converged, noteworthy among which are the process of expansion of the agricultural frontier and changes in the hacienda or in entrepreneurial agriculture through revolution or reform; both influences permitted the expansion of peasant agriculture.

The various agrarian systems that coexist in the broad rural context of Latin America may be distinguished by certain specific characteristics. In this connection, the following systems at least should be borne in mind: hacienda agriculture; plantation agriculture; entrepreneurial or capitalist agriculture; and peasant agriculture.

Although each of these systems may be dealt with separately for analytical purposes and quantified as regards

resources, production and income, it is necessary to point out in addition certain interrelations and conflicts among them. For the purposes of the present paper, we have sought to single out one of the systems --peasant agriculture-- because in our view it suffers from seriously unbalanced treatment, which, by a process of elimination, ultimately leads to the design or choice of strategies or policies that are prejudicial to a large social group. The predominance of the hacienda or of the capitalist-type enterprise in past analyses relating to agriculture has been obvious.

Historically, one of the most important aspects of the formation and evolution of Latin American agriculture has been the occupation of terrains suitable for agriculture. The hacienda and plantation systems were established on the basis of the granting or occupation of extensive tracts of land frequently located in the most fertile zones or those closest to cities or ports. In the later hacienda formations observed in some countries, the appropriation of land came about as a result of official intervention or expansion of the areas devoted to agriculture.

This process of formation and extension of the hacienda created the conditions that made it possible to relegate the autochthonous populations or the incipient groups of independent peasant producers to a subsidiary position. The conflict concerning the availability or ownership of land, characteristic of heterogeneous social formations, has made itself felt with different degrees of intensity throughout the socioeconomic history of the region.

In more recent periods, this conflict has broken out again with the penetration of capitalist or entrepreneurial agriculture, which gradually took over the place of the hacienda or some of the territories obtained as a result of the extension of the agricultural frontier. Similar phenomena have been studied and documented in different agricultural settings, with concentration tending to take place in the areas having the greatest advantages, usually as a result of heavy public investment in infrastructure, and particularly in irrigation. The cases observed in irrigated areas of Mexico or in the Central Valley of Chile are good examples of this situation. Much the same thing has happened in extensive pastureland in eastern Bolivia and in certain regions of Brazil, Colombia, Central America and Mexico.

The behaviour of agricultural activity clearly falls within the framework of this structural situation, which allows for the co-existence of different forms of agriculture. In the wave of modernization since the war, peasant agriculture is a social and economic fact but is often viewed as something left over from the past, as an area that is stagnant, deteriorating, impervious to technology, and undergoing a process of decay. If, however, the aim pursued is to seek a new style of development, the plurality of experiences that each agrarian system presents must be taken

into account in an effort to make analysis more objective and the formulation of strategies and policies more balanced. We must recognize agrarian heterogeneity in order to understand each of its elements and become familiar with its particular dynamics and contributions, as well as with its inefficient aspects, its pressures and its sometimes environmentally harmful activities nor must the conflicts inside and outside the sector be neglected.

The omissions and particularly the generalizations designed to disparage peasant agriculture may be creating or helping to create a highly unrealistic view of its significance for the production of food, raw materials and export crops; for the employment of labour; or for cultural aspects that have not been dealt with in this paper.

At the present time, when new impetus is being given to the notion of development styles which will allow basic needs to be met, peasant agriculture may be particularly important because of the relationship it establishes between economic activity and the satisfaction of fundamental needs.

Likewise, at a time when the unemployment and poverty that accompany urbanization processes are recognized to be phenomena that call for profound social changes, peasant agriculture invites one to reflect upon the role it could play if existing agrarian structures were changed in such a way as to afford an opportunity to the numerous contingents that tend to be proletarianized or semi-proletarianized by the unremitting process of concentration of land in the past and concentration of both land and capital in the present. Finally, if more attention were devoted to peasant life, it might be possible to appreciate from a new point of view the contribution that it would be capable of making to development forms that respect the environment and its resources over the long term.

The way to rural development can hardly be found by excluding from consideration the main agent of that development: the peasant.

Notes

1/ The notion of "decay" relates to certain processes of change which are supposed to be leading to the disappearance of the peasantry.

2/ Eric Wolf, Peasants, Engelwood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice-Hall Inc., 1966.

3/ Gerson Gomes and Antonio Pérez, "The process of modernization in Latin American agriculture", in CEPAL Review, No. 8, August 1979, Santiago, Chile, pp. 55-74.

4/ FAO, Production Yearbook, Vol. XXXVIII, Rome, 1984.

5/ Ibid.

6/ Ibid.

7/ According to the 1980 Agricultural Census, the area under cultivation as grazing land (artificial pastures) amounted to 60 602 284 hectares.

8/ Solon Barraclough and Juan C. Collarte, El hombre y la tierra en América Latina (summary of the CIDA reports on land tenure in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Peru), Instituto de Capacitación e Investigación en Reforma Agraria, Santiago, Chile, Editorial Universitaria, 1971.

9/ Report by Klaas J. Beek, Consultant to the Joint ECLAC/FAO Agriculture Division, entitled "Algunas notas sobre el potencial agrícola de América Latina", December 1978 (unpublished).

10/ See Neftalí Téllez and José I. Uribe, "Hacia una tipología regional de economías campesinas con referencia a Colombia", in Estudios Rurales Latinoamericanos, Vol. 13, No. 3, September-December 1980, Bogotá. Téllez and Uribe distinguish between production systems by identifying the predominant crop or type of livestock, the socio-geographical region where the production unit is located and the social implications of the organization of work around each particular production system. Among others, they list cold-climate zones with short-cycle crops, temperate-climate zones with short-cycle and permanent crops; banana and African palm zones; plantain and yucca zones; fruit zones; dairy zones; tobacco zones; coffee zones; coffee, plantain, yucca and pineapple zones; onion zones, etc. See also José Franco Mesa, "El campesino, las estructuras socioeconómicas y la economía campesina", in La economía campesina chilena, Santiago, Chile, Editorial Aconcagua, 1980.

11/ V.I. Lenin, The development of Capitalism in Russia, Moscow, Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1950.

12/ See Luisa Paré, El proletariado agrícola en México. ¿Campesinos sin tierra o proletarios agrícolas?, Mexico City, Siglo XXI Editores, 1977. The author defines semiproletarians as follows: "Agricultural workers who possess land but who increasingly rely on wage work for the major share of their income. This period of transition may become practically

permanent because of the symbiotic relationship between wage work and the family production unit, which on the one hand makes it possible to subsidize and keep up a dying family enterprise and, on the other, prevents its complete and final proletarianization and depeasantization" (pp. 56 and 57).

13/ John Durston, "La inserción social del campesinado latinoamericano en el crecimiento económico", CEPAL/R.232, 1 July 1980 (mimeographed).

14/ ECLAC, Economía campesina y agricultura empresarial: Tipología de productores del agro mexicano, Mexico City, Siglo XXI Editores, 1982.

15/ R. Baraona, "Una tipología de haciendas en la sierra ecuatoriana", in O. Delgado (ed.), Reformas agrarias en América Latina, Mexico City, Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1965.

16/ Inter-American Committee on Agricultural Development (Comité Interamericano de Desarrollo Agrícola - CIDA), Tenencia de la tierra y desarrollo socioeconómico del sector agrícola, Santiago, Chile, 1966.

17/ R. Baraona, op.cit.

18/ In this connection see G. Maldonado, "La reforma agraria en el Ecuador", in Nueva Sociedad, No. 41, March/April 1979; and L. Martínez, De campesinos a proletarios: cambios en la mano de obra rural en la Sierra Central del Ecuador, Quito, Editorial El Conejo, 1984.

19/ J. Matos Mar, "Hacienda, comunidad y campesinado en el Perú", Colección Perú Problema, No. 3, Instituto de Estudios Peruanos (IEP), 1976.

20/ PREALC-ILO, "Empleo de mano de obra en las haciendas del Valle Central de Chile. VI Región, 1965, 1970, 1976", Santiago, Chile, PREALC/199, April 1981.

21/ Ibid.

22/ Excluding Chile.

23/ The estimate was based on information provided by national censuses and agricultural cadasters carried out during the 1970s, except in the case of Argentina, the data for which were obtained in 1969.

24/ Including arable land plus areas under permanent crops.

25/ CIDA, Land tenure conditions and socio-economic development of the agricultural sector, volumes relating to Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala and Peru, Washington, D.C., Pan-American Union, 1965 and 1966.

26/ J. F. Graciano da Silva et al., Estrutura agraria e produçao de subsistencia na agricultura brasileira, Sao Paulo, Editorial Hucitec, 1978, pp. 160-167.

27/ Ibid., p. 165.

28/ ECLAC, Economía campesina y agricultura empresarial, Mexico City, Siglo XXI Editores, 1982.

29/ Departamento Nacional de Planeación, Integral Rural Development Programme (Programa de Desarrollo Rural Integrado - DRI), "El subsector de pequeña producción y el programa DRI", Working Paper, Bogotá, July 1979, pp. 15 et seq.

30/ Oficina Nacional de Estadísticas y Censos del Perú, Segundo Censo Nacional, 4 al 14 de septiembre de 1972. Resultados definitivos. Nivel Nacional, Lima, April 1975.

31/ The agricultural units taken into consideration were those with a total area of less than 20 hectares.

32/ E. Ortega et al., "El campesino y las transformaciones agrarias", Santiago, Chile, Corporación de Investigaciones Económicas para Latinoamérica (CIEPLAN), August 1976.

33/ Junta del Acuerdo de Cartagena (JUNAC), Programa andino de desarrollo tecnológico para el medio rural, J/GT/79/Rev.3, Lima, 11 June 1980, p. 1.

34/ Peasant units were considered to be those with an area of less than 20 hectares.

35/ See, for example, T. Craig, "Jamaica's attempt to develop its dairy industry", in Agribusiness Worldwide, Connecticut, 1982.

36/ R. Zapata, "Situación de la agricultura campesina en México", Joint ECLAC/FAO Agriculture Division, draft, 1979.

37/ S. Barraclough and J. C. Collarte, op.cit.

38/ Relates to the group of countries selected for the study in question: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala and Peru.

39/ S. Barraclough and J. C. Collarte, op.cit., table 4 and table A6 in the statistical appendix.

40/ Although the rural population should not be confused with the population linked to agriculture, it is estimated that the relation between rural and urban population reflects the trend in respect of agricultural and non-agricultural population.

41/ Sometimes, for reasons of social prestige, certain foods which are habitually consumed in rural areas are not eaten in the cities and in the long run become "inferior goods" from the standpoint of demand.

42/ In the sense that other markets of importance, such as the domestic market, have been generated.

43/ J.F. Graciano da Silva et al., op.cit., pp. 161, 168, 235 and 236.

44/ Joint ECLAC/FAO Agriculture Division, "La agricultura y las relaciones intersectoriales: El caso de Bolivia", E/CEPAL/R.205, Santiago, Chile, September 1979, chapter VIII.

45/ Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Production, Programa Nacional de Regionalización O.R.S.T.O.M., "Diagnóstico socioeconómico del medio rural ecuatoriano: Ingresos", document No. 8, Quito, November 1978.

46/ Joint ECLAC/FAO Agriculture Division, "25 años en la agricultura de América Latina: Rasgos principales, 1950-1975", Cuadernos de la CEPAL Series, No. 21, Santiago, Chile, 1978, p. 4.

47/ Santos Pérez, "Información acerca de los beneficiarios y sistema rural de extensión en Paraguay", FAO, RLA 670/037, Santiago, Chile, May-June 1980, p. 4.

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52/ R. Urzúa, "Características, dinámica y evolución de la pobreza rural", in FAO, Estudio sobre pobreza rural, Santiago, Chile, 1984.

53/ C. Amat, Distribución del ingreso familiar en el Perú, CIUP, Lima, 1981.

54/ CELADE, Boletín Demográfico, No. 34, Santiago, Chile, July 1984.

55/ On the basis of the Censo Agrícola de 1960 and Censo Agropecuario de 1980.

56/ M. Urioste, "La economía del campesino altiplánico en 1976", Working Paper No. 02/77, Universidad Católica Boliviana, La Paz, 1977.

57/ Departamento de Economía Agraria (Department of Agroeconomics), Universidad Católica de Chile, Panorama Económico de la Agricultura, No. 10, May 1984, p. 4. Data refer to the region between Coquimbo and Llanquihue.

58/ Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Peru and Venezuela.

59/ It should be noted that the analysis according to size categories falls into a good deal of over-simplification, as it considers together units that are entirely different as regards the scale of production and the very nature of the productive process; nevertheless, according to Graciano da Silva et al., op cit., p. 72, the distribution of production units by value strata in Brazil reflects, grosso modo, the distribution by total area.

60/ These figures should be viewed with caution, as they raise certain problems that are difficult to clarify with respect to the definition and use of the concept of "farm", which in some cases may not be the same as "unit of production".

61/ See, for example, S. Klamanovitz, Desarrollo de la agricultura en Colombia, Editorial La Carreta, 1978.

62/ See V. Moncayo and R. Rojas, Producción y capitalismo, Centro de Investigación y Educación Popular (CINEP), Bogotá, 1979, pp. 146 and 147.

63/ It should be borne in mind that Brazil is a typical case of an open agricultural frontier, whereas in Jamaica the agricultural frontier has been completely used up.

64/ R. Urzúa, "Estructura agraria y dinámica poblacional", CELADE, Working Paper No. 7, Santiago, Chile, May 1978, p. 49.

65/ M. Bastos, "Expulsión de pequeños productores y proletarización en el Estado de Paraná", in Economía Campesina y Empleo, PREALC/ILO, Santiago, Chile, 1981.

66/ O. Barsky et al., Tecnología y cambio social: Las haciendas lecheras del Ecuador, FLACSO, Quito, Editorial Praga, 1981.

67/ R. Cheetham, "Una alternativa de solución: Las cooperativas agrarias en Guatemala", Joint ECLAC/FAO Agriculture Division, Santiago, Chile, 1986.

68/ W. Benjamin, "Cambios productivos en los cultivos permanentes y sus derivaciones sociales", Joint ECLAC/FAO Agriculture Division, Santiago, Chile, 1985.

69/ E. Ortega, "La opción campesina en las estrategias agrícolas", in Pensamiento Iberoamericano, Revista de Economía Política, No. 8, Madrid, Editorial Artecrom, 1985.

70/ A. Warman, "La política de irrigación: Estudio de un proceso de concentración en México", ECLAC/FAO Workshop on Agricultural Policy and Rural Development, Santiago, Chile, 1985.

71/ Ibid.

72/ This expression is not felt to be really adequate, since in our view a Latin American peasant accumulates by acquiring more land and using more labour rather than by seeking capital as the farmer does.

73/ P. Campaña and R. Rivera, "El proceso de descampesinización en la Sierra Central del Perú", in Estudios Rurales Latinoamericanos, Vol. I, No. 2, May-August 1978, pp. 78-80.

74/ B. Robert calls this process manpower migration to distinguish it from temporary migration or urban migration. In Ethnica, No. 6, Barcelona, 1973.

75/ P. Campaña and R. Rivera, op.cit., p. 83.

76/ The units considered to be representative of peasant agriculture were those of less than 10 hectares in the Sierra and less than 50 hectares in the coastal region.

77/ These data should be viewed with caution, since in the 1954 census the margin of omission may possibly have been greater than in that of 1974, precisely among the smallest units.

78/ Joint ECLAC/FAO Agriculture Division, "La agricultura y ...", op.cit.

79/ Agricultural censuses taken in Brazil in 1970 and 1980.

80/ J.F. Graciano da Silva et al., op cit., p. 160.

81/ Data base from the Joint ECLAC/FAO Agriculture Division.

82/ A. Machado, "El sistema alimentario colombiano: Situación y perspectivas", Seminar on Analysis and Design of Economic Policy in the Food Sector, Joint ECLAC/FAO

Agriculture Division, Lima, 1985.

83/ E. Ortega, "Políticas agrícolas, crecimiento productivo y desarrollo rural", Joint ECLAC/FAO Agriculture Division, Santiago, Chile, 1985.

84/ Ibid.

85/ ECLAC/UNEP, Sobrevivencia campesina en ecosistemas de altura, Vols. I and II, Santiago, Chile, 1983.

86/ Joint ECLAC/FAO Agriculture Division, "The agriculture of Latin America: changes, trends and outlines of strategies" in CEPAL Review, No. 27, Santiago, Chile, December 1985; P. Tejo, "Aspectos cuantitativos relativos al trabajo temporal en la agricultura", Joint ECLAC/FAO Agriculture Division, draft, Santiago, Chile, March 1985.

87/ G. Alberti and R. Sánchez, Poder y conflicto social en el Valle de Mantoso, Instituto de Estudios Peruanos (IEP), Lima, 1974.

88/ M.M. Errázuriz, "Desarrollo rural, crisis por la deuda externa de la región: Una primera aproximación al tema y sugerencias para tareas futuras", Joint ECLAC/FAO Agriculture Division, Santiago, Chile, January 1986; E. Ortega, "Políticas agrícolas, crecimiento ...", op.cit.

89/ H. Landsberger, Rebelión campesina y cambio social, Barcelona, Editorial Crítica, 1978; E. Wolf, Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century, New York, Harper and Row, 1970.

90/ E. Gonzales de Olarte, Economía de la comunidad campesina, Instituto de Estudios Peruanos (IEP), 1984.

91/ Ibid.

92/ J. Bengoa and E. Valenzuela, Economía mapuche. Pobreza y subsistencia en la sociedad mapuche contemporánea, Santiago, Chile, Editorial PAS, no date.

93/ In Peru there are other important forms of organization such as comunidades.

94/ In the case of Mexico it is important to take the ejidos into account as another form of association.

95/ See, for example, P. Vilar, "La economía campesina", in Historia y sociedad, No. 15, Mexico City, Editorial Segunda Epoca, 1975.

96/ W. Thiesenhusen, "Los años ochenta, ¿década del campesino?", in Estudios Rurales Latinoamericanos, Vol. 2, No. 2, Bogotá, May-August 1979, p. 224.

97/ UNESCO, Regional Education Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, Informaciones estadísticas, Santiago, Chile, October 1976.

98/ F.J. Dorsey, A case study of the Lower Cochabamba Valley, Land Tenure Center, University of Wisconsin, Madison, June 1970, p. 68.

99/ ECLAC, Statistical Yearbook for Latin America, Santiago, Chile, United Nations, 1985.

100/ Ester Boserup, Las condiciones del desarrollo en la agricultura, Madrid, Editorial Tecnos, 1967, p. 35.

101/ Ibid., pp. 104 and 105.

102/ Turning the jungle into land fit for cultivation is a slow process and the first step is to cultivate a minimal proportion of the unit of land allocated, which partly explains why in Peru between 1961 and 1972 the total area increased by 47% in the 0 to 20 hectare stratum while the area under cultivation expanded by 32%.

103/ J.F. Graciano da Silva et al., op.cit., pp. 88 and 89.

104/ Ibid., p. 242.

105/ Joint ECIAC/FAO Agriculture Division, "La agricultura y las relaciones intersectoriales ...", op.cit.

106/ D.T. Nguyen and M.L. Martínez Saldívar, "Pattern of Agricultural Growth in Mexican States, 1960-1971: A Shift and Share Analysis", Department of Economics, University of Lancaster, in Regional Studies, Vol. 13, Pergamon Press Ltd., 1979, pp. 161-179.

107/ J.F. Graciano da Silva et al., op.cit., pp. 91 and 94.

108/ See the interesting article fy J. Boltvinik, "Estrategias del desarrollo rural, economía campesina e innovación tecnológica en México", in Revista Comercio Exterior, Vol. 27, No. 7, Mexico City, July 1967, pp. 813-827.

109/ A. Figueroa, "La economía rural de la Sierra Peruana", in Economía, Vol. I, Department of Economics, Universidad Católica del Perú, Lima, December 1977.

110/ Which, from the ethical standpoint, is a manifest sign of regression.

111/ Cases have been observed in which peasant units have gone bankrupt because of having introduced technology, since this measure has meant that the costs of the production process have increased proportionally more than its benefits.

112/ M. Urioste, "Conducta económica del campesino e incorporación de tecnología moderna en el proceso productivo: El cultivo de la papa en el Altiplano paceño", Working Paper No. 96/75, Universidad Católica Boliviana, La Paz, 1975, pp. 62 to 65.

113/ Ibid., p. 75.

114/ V. Moncayo and F. Rojas, op.cit., pp. 94 and 95.

115/ See, for example, W.R. Werge, "The Agricultural Strategy of Rural Households in Three Ecological Zones of the Central Andes", International Potato Center, Social Science Unit, Working Paper, Series No. 1979-4, Lima.

116/ A. Dubly, "Condiciones de la tecnificación para la agricultura campesina", in Ecuador: Tecnologías agropecuarias y economías campesinas, Quito, Editorial Fundación Brethren-Unida-Ceplaces, 1978, p. 42.

117/ J.L. Morandi, "Interrelaciones entre los componentes del progreso tecnológico y algunos elementos estructurales de economías campesinas", in Ecuador: Tecnologías agropecuarias ..., op.cit., pp. 90 and 95.

118/ C. Furche, "Incorporación de tecnologías y economías campesinas, in Ecuador: Tecnologías agropecuarias ..., op.cit., p. 122.

119/ M. Bertero, "El crédito agrícola en Bolivia", in Debate Agrario No. 4, La Paz, Instituto Latinoamericano de Investigaciones Sociales (ILDIS), 1968.

120/ T. Siabato, "Perspectivas de la economía campesina", in Problemas Agrarios, CEGA, co-ordinator A. Machado, Bogotá, Editorial Siglo XXI, 1986.

121/ Ibid.

122/ The activities of these two bodies, however, are a good deal alike; it should be recalled that many of the NGOs have their origins in the Church or work under its aegis.

123/ T. Shanin, Naturaleza y lógica de la economía campesina, Barcelona, Editorial Anagrama, 1976, pp. 8 and 9.

124/ FAO, Agriculture: Towards 2000, Rome, 1981.

125/ E. Ortega, "Peasant agriculture in Latin America. Situations and trends", in CEPAL Review, No. 16, op.cit.

126/ D. Astori, "Campesinado y expansión capitalista en la agricultura latinoamericana", in Comercio Exterior, Vol. 31, No. 12, Mexico City, December 1981, p. 1358.

127/ K. Heynig, "The principal schools of thought on the peasant economy", in CEPAL Review, No. 16, op.cit.

128/ T. Shanin, op.cit., p. 23.

129/ G. Esteva, "¿Y si los campesinos existen?", in Comercio Exterior, Vol. 28, No. 6, Mexico City, June 1978, p. 713.

130/ W. Thiesenhusen, op.cit.

131/ E. Feder, "Campesinistas y descampesinistas", Part One, in Comercio Exterior, Vol. 27, No. 12, Mexico City, December 1978, pp. 1438-1446; Part Two, in Comercio Exterior, Vol. 28, No. 1, Mexico City, January 1979, pp. 42-51.

132/ D. Dunham, "On the history and political economy of small farmer policies", in CEPAL Review, No. 18, Santiago, Chile, December 1982.

133/ We interpret the term "styles of development" in the sense proposed by Aníbal Pinto: A style is the specific and dynamic modality of development of a society adopted at a particular moment in history, within the context established by the system and the existing structure and in keeping with the interests and decisions of the prevailing social forces. From a strictly economic angle, the term "style of development" may be taken to be the way in which human and material resources are organized and assigned within a particular system with the object of solving such questions as what goods and services to produce, how and for whom.

134/ S. Barraclough, "Perspectivas de la crisis agrícola en América Latina", in Narxhi Nandhá, Revista de Economía Campesina, No. 1, Mexico City, March 1977, p. 24.

135/ G. Esteva, op.cit., p. 700.

136/ John Paul II, Carta Encíclica Laborem Exercens, Castelgandolfo, 14 September 1981, p. 83.

137/ D. Astori, op.cit., pp. 1364-1365.

138/ A. Warman, Ensayos sobre el campesinado en México, Mexico City, Editorial Nueva Imagen, 1980, p. 216.

139/ T. Shanin, op.cit., p. 8.

140/ E. Wolf, Peasants, op.cit.

141/ G. Esteva, "¿Qué hay detrás de la crisis rural?", in Comercio Exterior, Vol. 30, No. 7, Mexico City, June 1980, p. 677.

142/ A. Warman, "¿Política agraria o política agrícola?", in Comercio Exterior, Vol. 28, No. 6, Mexico City, June 1978, p. 686.

143/ For Bolivia, see M. Urioste, "Conducta económica del ...", op.cit.; M. Urioste, "La economía del campesino altiplánico en 1976", Working Paper, No. 02/66, La Paz, Universidad Católica Boliviana, 1977; R. Clark, "Agrarian Reform and peasant integration in the Bolivian economy", Land Tenure Center, Reprint No. 197, University of Wisconsin, Madison, November 1973; F.J. Dorsey, "A case study of ex-Hacienda Toralapa in the Tiraque Region of the Upper Valley", Land Tenure Center, Research Paper No. 64, University of Wisconsin, Madison, June 1975.

144/ FAO, Key principles for operational guidelines in the implementation of the WCARRD Programme of Action, Rome, 11 December 1980, p. 1.

145/ A. Figueroa, "Política de precios agropecuarios e ingresos rurales en el Perú", in Allpanchis, Vol. XIII, No. 14, Cuzco, Instituto de Pastoral Andina, 1979, pp. 25 and 47.

146/ Conclusions of the First Seminar on Food and Agriculture, held between 10 and 13 October 1979 in Chancayo, and sponsored by the Fundación Friedrich Ebert and the Fundación para el Desarrollo Nacional (Proyecto SINEA), Programa Académico de Ciencias de la Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú. Published in Allpanchis, Vol. XIII, No. 14, op.cit.

147/ ECLAC, "La agricultura en la óptica de la CEPAL", LC/L.385, Joint ECLAC/FAO Agriculture Division, Santiago, Chile, 13 June 1986.

148/ It should not be forgotten, however, that peasant agriculture also makes a significant contribution to the production of certain agricultural export commodities. In some countries, cocoa, coffee, cotton and soya bean are grown mainly by peasants.