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The Latin American region—and the rest of the world—is immersed in the process of globalization. Among the main characteristics of this process are: an immense technological advance that is revolutionizing communications, information and transportation; the opening of international markets and commerce; and the spread of production networks that are international in scope. These processes are generating new forms of social organization called «network societies» (Castells, 1998), which, paradoxically, also imply an increase in social inequities.

PROCESSES OF GLOBALIZATION

Globalization is based on an increasing flexibility of economic processes (R. Lagos 1994 and A. Abreu 1995). **A first type of flexibility appears in the production** process through the alteration of the technical and the international division of labor. This has generated new models of specialization and has a strong impact on the labor market, specifically on employment. This technical change allows greater geographic dispersion of the different links in the chain of production, creating more homogeneity in the labor market. It has resulted in a lower growth rate for high productivity positions and fewer jobs in small or medium-sized companies, which are those that absorb the most labor. This change in production promotes a model of economic growth that does not generate employment.

Another form of flexibility is manifested in the organizational structure of companies **that use subcontracting networks and partnerships among firms. A third form is found in the labor market, where increasing deregulation of contracts, customs and practices is reorganizing the market and facilitating the hiring and firing of workers. With increased job vulnerability, an important asymmetry is produced: employers may transfer**

NEW FAMILIES FOR A NEW CENTURY?

their capital and divert their production to foreign markets, but workers do not have this same spatial mobility.

The processes of globalization provoke a series of contradictions. An increase in job vulnerability leads to a greater need for social security, especially among senior citizens, and also makes it harder for governments to provide this social security (Rodrik, 1997). At the same time, this tendency increases social segregation between those included in the system (persons having employment, social security, education and health care, for example) and those who excluded from the labor market and from coverage of basic social services.

In the same manner, changes in communications have produced a paradox. On the one hand, there is greater integration into a homogenous cultural model, and on the other, greater diversity in the satisfaction of needs and the aspirations proposed by this model. In other words, the gulf between symbolic integration and material integration has widened.

MODERNIZATION WITHOUT MODERNITY

The process of globalization has repercussions outside the economic sphere. It is also accompanied by profound social, cultural and labor transformations. The present situation of Latin America can be described as fragile modernization without achieving modernity (Calderón, Hopenhayn and Ottone 1993). Some of the elements driving modernization have developed in a segmented manner, without the accompanying processes of modernity, which allude principally to the cultural dimensions of these changes.

Changes in the basic conditions of life through globalization and modernization (specifically migrations, new patterns of consumption and new forms of labor) have an important influence on the self-perception the families, and on the ways family

¹ The opinions expressed in this document are the exclusive responsibility of the author and do not compromise CEPAL. The statistical processing of household surveys was the responsibility of Ernesto Espindola.

members (wife/husband/children) view each other and their extended families.

From a social and cultural perspective, the relative economic and distributive deterioration that affects families is worrying. The heaviest burdens of the debt crisis and structural adjustment programs applied to the region have fallen disproportionately upon poor families. While the proportion of poor households in Latin America fell from 38% to 36% between 1994 and 1997, the number of poor people increased by 2.5 million in this period (CEPAL 1999). This situation has fuelled greater social inequities.

The productive system has generated inequality in access to consumption of goods and basic services such as education, health care and social security. This stems from an unequal supply of employment and the concentration of income, along with processes of increasing privatization and the rising costs of basic services.

In the majority of Latin American countries, deregulation of the labor market has led to unemployment, instability, longer work hours and lower salaries. This means that more people in each household must do paid work (women, adolescents, and children) to cover their basic needs. This situation has modified the structure of the family nucleus.

Workers ability to organize has been reduced by new labor regulations that make hiring and firing more flexible. The negotiating power of workers has also been reduced because of the growing levels of unemployment and the decreasing job stability.

The market-driven economic system generates new consumption needs, which for the majority of the families are impossible to satisfy since they are accompanied by reduction of average salaries. **In Latin America, the median real urban salary represented by 100 in 1980, had shrunk to 70 in 1997** (OIT, 1998). The increase in unsatisfied consumption needs has generated increasing frustration and promoted the search for illicit alternatives, expressed in growing crime, drug trafficking, corruption and other phenomena of violence and social exclusion.

The loss of community and family spirit is eroding the relationships of many Latin Americans, who are confronted with high-risk, vulnerable situations (Arriagada and Godoy 1999).

PROFOUND CHANGES IN FAMILIES

One of the most important changes in the last decades is the decline of the patriarchal family model, characterized by the authority exercised by the father over the wife and children. This decline is related to the following facts:

- The massive entry of women into the workforce. This has modified the traditional patterns of household functions, and produced a new distribution of time, power and work inside the family. Women are affected most because they are overloaded with work.
- The value placed on new economic contributors (women, adolescents and children) has changed. New family

arrangements have arisen. Households led by women grew in every country from 1990 to 1997 and from one-quarter to one-third of all households depending on the country (in 1997 they were 18% in Mexico and 37% in Nicaragua). Despite a slight reduction from 1986 to 1997, nuclear families are still most common in Latin America and range from 53% (Dominican Republic) to 71% (Mexico) of total families (See fig. 1). These nuclear families are also very diverse, as can be observed from the number of reconstructed families, families that declare a female head of household, and families without children. From 1986 to 1997, single-person households grew, partly reflecting the aging of the population in some countries. The number of extended and compound families has decreased as a result of the process of urbanization.

- Important demographic changes are occurring within families, especially because of the drop in birth rates in the sixties. The number of families whose oldest child is older than 13 has greatly increased, and families whose oldest child is younger than 13 have decreased (See fig. 2). The largest proportion of families in Latin America has an oldest child of 19 or older. This change may affect the reduction of poverty in these households, since many children over age 15 are already incorporated into the labor market.
- From another perspective, family functions have changed and become more complex because, unlike in the past, they are not performed exclusively inside the family, *i.e.*, the family no longer monopolizes these functions. Today, many births take place out of wedlock. The increase in teenage pregnancies as a cultural phenomenon is not only linked to extreme poverty. Conjugal functions are also often performed out of wedlock and care and early socialization of children are shared more often with other social agents: schools, kindergarten or pre-school, and other family members or non-family members, depending on the economic possibility and the presence or absence of an extended family. Finally, patterns of leisure and recreation tend to be individual rather than family-oriented.

Social, economic and cultural changes affect the internal relationships of the family profoundly. Domestic violence is an ancient phenomenon that acquired tremendous importance and entered the public arena in the decade of the nineties. In some cases, this violence increased because of opposition to women exercising the new economic roles required by the family itself. This opposition is reflected in conflicts over women's right to work.

Although the foundations of the patriarchal model have been modified, the dominant forms of representation and cultural images still persist. This may explain the distance between discourse and practice. There has been a redefinition of conjugal roles, in which the principle of equality is slowly being manifested. This redefinition is related to the economic contribution that women and children make to the household. New parent-child relationships have developed, with an increase in children's rights and a decline in the importance of hierarchical and submissive relationships (as a result of the drop in fertility, the tendency toward the single child carries the risk of an absence of sibling relationships in the future). Still at an incipient level are processes

of individualization, with the affirmation of individual rights and emphasis on personal achievement over family interests.

In conclusion, changes in the distribution of power and work inside the family are *gradual* despite the *rapid* changes in labor practices of women who have to divide themselves between domestic responsibility and paid work. Few men are willing to assume their domestic and family responsibilities.

FIGURE 1.

LATIN AMERICA (15 COUNTRIES): TYPES OF HOUSEHOLDS & FAMILIES, URBAN AREAS Percentages around 1986-1994-1997						
Countries		Types of households and families				Total
		Unipers.	Nuclear	Extendes & Compound	Household w/o núcleo	
Argentina	1986	11.3	71.9	12.7	4.1	100.0
	1997	15.8	65.9	13.7	4.7	100.0
Bolivia	1994	7.6	71.2	16.4	3.8	100.0
	1997	9.2	69.2	17.4	4.1	100.0
Brazil	1987	6.9	76.8	12.3	4.0	100.0
	1997	8.0	64.7	23.2	4.0	100.0
Chile	1987	6.4	61.6	27.6	4.5	100.0
	1996	6.8	66.0	23.3	3.8	100.0
Colombia	1994	5.0	64.2	23.3	5.5	100.0
	1997	6.1	61.9	26.4	5.4	100.0
Costa Rica	1988	4.4	68.2	22.5	4.9	100.0
	1997	6.5	68.8	20.5	4.2	100.0
Ecuador	1997	5.5	63.7	26.4	4.4	100.0
Honduras	1994	3.4	58.2	33.8	4.7	100.0
	1997	5.6	54.3	34.2	5.8	100.0
Mexico	1984	5.2	70.3	19.9	4.6	100.0
	1997	6.1	71.0	19.3	3.6	100.0
Nicaragua	1997	4.5	57.0	33.7	4.9	100.0
Panama	1986	12.0	61.0	20.1	6.9	100.0
	1997	8.1	61.2	25.5	5.2	100.0
Paraguay	1994	7.8	54.9	32.6	4.8	100.0
	1997	7.6	58.1	30.3	4.1	100.0
Dominican Rep.	1997	8.3	52.8	31.4	7.3	100.0
Uruguay	1986	11.9	63.3	18.6	6.2	100.0
	1997	15.9	60.9	17.3	5.7	100.0
Venezuela ●	1986	4.5	56.4	33.8	5.3	100.0
	1997	5.2	58.5	31.8	4.5	100.0

Source: CEPAL, special tabulations of household surveys of the respective countries.
● Venezuela 1997 corresponds to the total of the country.

FIGURE 2.

LATIN AMERICA (12 COUNTRIES): FAMILY LIFE CYCLE ¹ , URBAN AREAS 1986-1994-1997							
Country		Lyfe Cycle					Total
		Young couple w/o child. ²	Oldest child 0-12 years old	Oldest child 13-18 years old	Oldest child older than 19	Adult couple w/o child.	
Argentina	1986	3.7	45.2	13.2	20.8	17.1	100.0
	1997	4.4	24.8	15.3	38.3	17.2	100.0
Bolivia	1994	3.3	40.3	22.6	29.7	4.2	100.0
	1997	2.3	33.1	25.3	33.6	5.8	100.0
Brazil	1987	5.9	62.2	10.9	13.2	7.9	100.0
	1997	4.7	33.9	21.9	31.7	7.8	100.0
Chile	1987	2.6	48.8	15.8	24.6	8.1	100.0
	1996	2.7	30.4	18.8	39.1	8.8	100.0
Colombia	1994	3.9	35.0	20.8	32.4	7.9	100.0
	1997	3.8	31.8	20.7	38.5	5.1	100.0
Costa Rica	1988	3.4	44.7	18.7	27.1	6.1	100.0
	1997	3.6	29.0	19.5	40.5	7.5	100.0
Ecuador	1997	3.6	32.6	20.5	37.1	6.2	100.0
El Salvador	1997	2.7	31.2	19.8	39.2	7.1	100.0
Honduras	1994	2.9	35.9	23.7	34.3	3.2	100.0
	1997	3.2	35.0	21.7	35.7	4.4	100.0
Mexico	1984	3.1	68.5	9.9	13.2	5.1	100.0
	1997	3.7	36.1	19.9	34.3	5.5	100.0
Panama	1994	3.5	31.7	20.2	37.6	7.1	100.0
	1997	3.5	30.6	18.8	39.4	7.6	100.0
Paraguay	1994	5.8	38.3	19.9	28.8	7.2	100.0
	1997	5.2	36.1	17.9	34.4	6.3	100.0
Dominican Rep.	1997	6.2	35.2	18.8	33.6	5.9	100.0
Uruguay	1986	3.7	42.1	11.7	22.2	20.2	100.0
	1997	3.3	20.4	16.2	39.6	20.3	100.0
Venezuela ³	1986	3.0	61.3	14.4	17.2	4.0	100.0
	1997	2.3	30.1	22.4	41.2	5.0	100.0

Source: CEPAL, special tabulations of household surveys of the respective countries.
1. Excludes single person households and households with no family nucleus.
2. The female head of household or spouse is 35 years old or less. In the adult couple, the woman is older.
3. Venezuela 1997 corresponds to the total of the country.

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