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Poverty and inequality from a gender perspective



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Poverty and inequality from a gender perspective



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POVERTY AND INEQUALITY FROM A GENDER PERSPECTIVE

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INTRODUCTION

Chapter III provides information on developments during the 1990s, following on the analysis begun in an earlier edition of the *Social Panorama of Latin America* (ECLAC, 1995). This chapter attempts to answer the key question of whether poverty affects women and men differently. To this end, it presents a conceptual framework for an analysis of poverty from a gender perspective; analyses the quantitative impact of poverty, which is greater for women; demonstrates inequalities existing within families and households which are associated with the constraints of poverty and time; analyses labour–market inequalities and their effects on women’s economic autonomy; and finally, presents two dimensions of poverty not traditionally examined: inequalities in decision–making autonomy and unequal access to power. The main conclusion is that poverty has more severe effects on women, whose contribution is critical if poverty is to be overcome in the region. Accordingly, gender equality –that is, the elimination of social inequalities between men and women– must be one of the overriding objectives of any policy to overcome poverty.

A. HOUSEHOLDS AND POVERTY: A GENDER ANALYSIS

Gender inequality stems from sociocultural and historical constructs that translate sexual differences into discrimination. Such discrimination is expressed in a division of labour by sex and in differential, hierarchical access to material and symbolic resources and to power in all its manifestations.

The division of labour by sex assigns domestic tasks of a reproductive and caregiving nature almost exclusively to women. In addition to overburdening women with work, this takes time away from training and recreational activity and limits women's options in joining the labour force, obtaining more diversified work and earning sufficient income; it also limits their ability to take part in social and political activity.

An unequal distribution of access to, use and control of productive resources (labour, land, capital, information, new technologies, natural resources, housing) explains the limitations on women's ability to generate income (in particular to undertake entrepreneurial initiatives) and to obtain benefits commensurate with the contributions they make, as well as to join processes of upward mobility.

The unequal distribution of power between men and women—and the difficulties encountered by women in taking an active role in decision-making, both in the home and in local communities and so-

ciety as a whole—have to do with obstacles to their participation in allocating resources and setting objectives for programmes and policies designed to overcome poverty.

Legal and practical barriers to women's exercise of their rights and citizenship leave them vulnerable and insecure, and hinder the development of autonomy. In this sense, the phenomenon of violence against women, and the asymmetrical distribution and allocation of household resources, are paradigmatic.

A gender analysis seeks to identify inequalities faced by women as compared to their male peers. These inequalities stand in the way of women's achieving a better quality of life, becoming more independent and exercising their rights as citizens. Adopting a gender perspective means recognizing that men and women experience poverty differently and that the likelihood of being poor is not randomly distributed throughout the population (Sen, 1998).

This chapter addresses some of those assumptions, based on information compiled through household surveys conducted in the countries of Latin America. Although these sources are not sufficient in themselves in terms of information and coverage to analyse gender inequality and female poverty, the data they provide are eloquent in drawing attention to disparities between men and women in the region. Gaps between individuals and between members of the same household are identified and included in an explanation of unequal resource distribution and power relations in the domestic and public spheres. The findings also point to the need for new sources of quantitative and qualitative information such as surveys on time use, perception and career path studies and panel-type surveys, which will allow for a more effective analysis of poverty.

THE DEBATE ON MEASURING POVERTY FROM A GENDER PERSPECTIVE

It is generally recognized that poverty is a multi-dimensional phenomenon. Still, in measuring it, priority has been given to monetary metrics applied to household income as a proxy for access to resources and satisfactors. The debate about gender-based poverty has led to an evaluation of these metrics and has brought to light crucial aspects that must be examined. On the one hand it is maintained that this kind of measurement is inadequate for capturing gender-based poverty, i.e., comparing the status of men and women and identifying factors that cause each to face different problems in overcoming poverty. In addition, it is clear that most current indicators of poverty are not gender-sensitive, in that they are aggregates based on the household as the unit of analysis rather than individuals; that is, they were not designed to answer the question that inspired this study. Further, under this methodological option it is assumed that there is an equitable distribution of resources among all household members,

that their needs are equivalent and that all decisions are democratic and consensus-based, as if negotiation and conflict, even violence, did not exist.

The failure to assign economic value to unpaid domestic work or to regard it as income in households where one person is devoted exclusively to housekeeping and caregiving also limits the ability of traditional poverty measurements to capture gender inequalities. This is all the more true since this circumstance can make a major difference in household income, especially considering that households headed by men are more likely to benefit from the housework performed free of charge by the spouse or partner and therefore do not have to incur expenses for housekeeping services. Women heads of household shoulder the burden of housework without receiving compensation, generally by increasing the time they spend doing unpaid work and incurring additional expenses to buy services available on the market. This gives them fewer opportunities to improve their position in the labour market, participate in public life or enjoy leisure and recreation, not to mention the effects of this situation on their physical and mental health. This difference demonstrates other dimensions of poverty that are not always taken into consideration. Identifying specific differences between men and women terms of their use of time and their spending patterns is therefore relevant to an analysis of poverty and the different ways in which it may be experienced.

One innovative aspect of poverty analysis is that it considers the situation of individuals who have no income of their own, in both poor and non-poor households. This situation, which is common to most women (especially those living with a spouse or partner), limits economic autonomy and decision-making capacity and leaves women more vulnerable in the event of widowhood or marital or family break-up. This vulnerability must be addressed with adequate policies.

Occupying an increasingly important place in the poverty debate is the consideration of qualitative methods that can pick up subjective perceptions and definitions of poverty. In combination with quantitative methods, this allows poverty to be measured more fully, by identifying other possible causes and proposing solutions more in accordance with the

specific circumstances of each social segment. The relevance of such methods is closely tied to a more comprehensive concept of poverty that encompasses not only material needs but also symbolic factors. Their consequences can be significant in considering poverty from a gender perspective.

B. ARE THERE MORE POOR WOMEN THAN POOR MEN?

About half of the region's women over the age of 15 do not earn their own income, while just 20% of men are in that position. In 2002 the femininity index of the urban poor population (among women aged 20 to 59) was greater than 100 in 17 of the 18 countries analysed in the region.

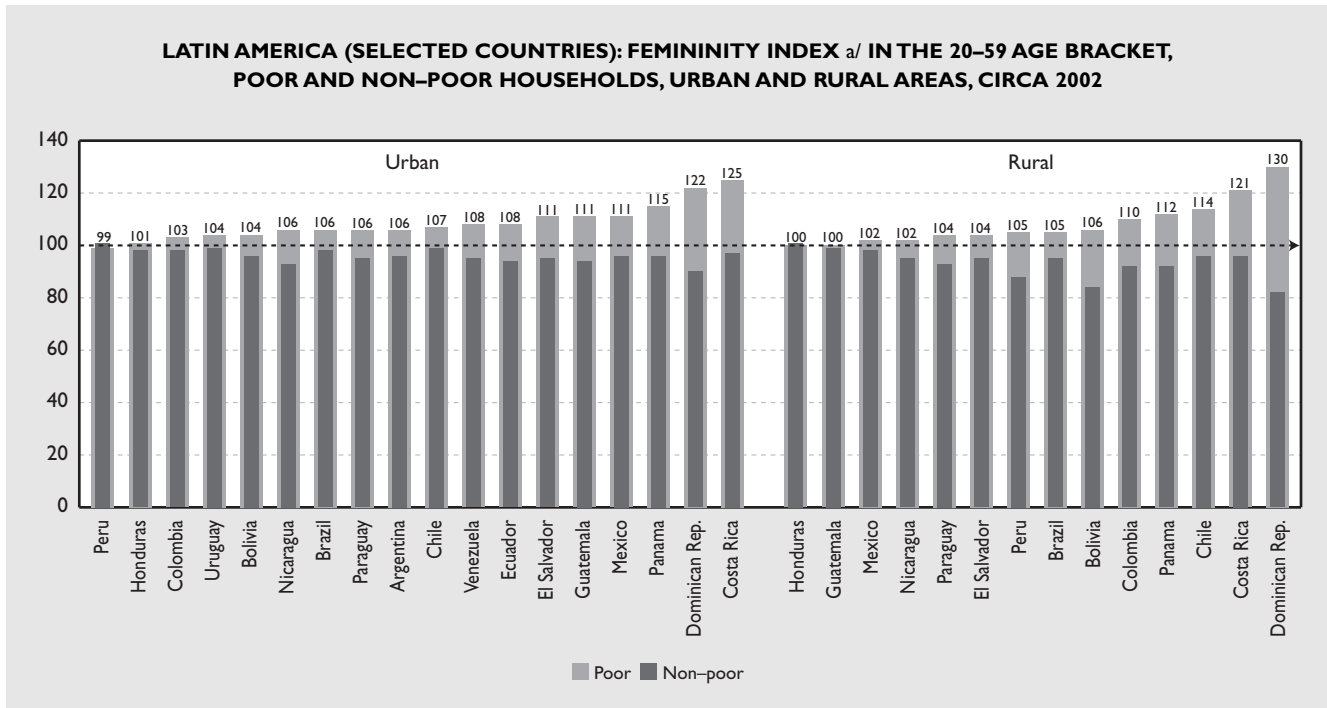
The femininity index is a ratio representing the number of women as compared to the number of men. The index shows that there are more females than males in both poor and non-poor households. This is not an unexpected finding, since there are more women than men in most of the countries in absolute terms, mainly because women have a longer life expectancy than men.

To control for this population effect, an adjusted femininity index was calculated by dividing the femininity index in poor households by the index in all households. This procedure was followed in all five age groups (0–6, 7–12, 13–19, 20–59, 60 and

older) to determine whether certain female populations were more vulnerable to poverty than the male population by reason of age.

As a result of this process, it was observed that in most of the countries studied the index was greater than 100 in both urban and rural areas. This indicates a greater female presence in poor households, especially in the group aged 20 to 59, where the index is greater than 100 in virtually all countries in both urban and rural areas. It can therefore be said that women of active age are more at risk of being poor (see figure III.1 and table III.1).

Figure III.1



Source: ECLAC, Women and Development Unit, on the basis of special tabulations of data from household surveys conducted in the countries.
^{a/} Number of women per 100 men.

Finally, the femininity index reveals a larger number of women living alone, for whom an equivalent male population does not exist among the poor. These are generally separated women, widows and single mothers, including female heads of household and heads of family without a male partner.

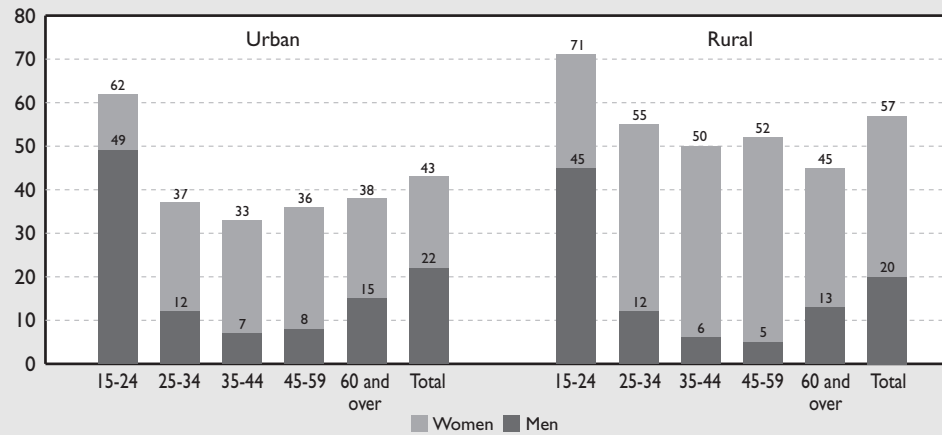
A gender-based analysis of poverty recognizes the importance of economic autonomy—defined as a person's ability to generate income and make spending decisions—in determining who is poor or at risk of becoming poor. Although it is known that resources within households are transferred from income earners to their dependents, household surveys pro-

vide critical information about the status of men and women with respect to their own income, which is a very important indicator of vulnerability to be taken into account in designing policy.

In 2002 it was observed that close to 43% of women over 15 in urban areas lacked their own income, whereas just 22% of men were in that situation (see figure III.2). Rural women were even more economically dependent in all age groups. In the case of men, the opposite was true: the percentage of men without income was slightly higher in urban areas than in rural areas.

Figure III.2

**LATIN AMERICA (SIMPLE AVERAGE OF 16 COUNTRIES IN URBAN AREAS a/, 13 COUNTRIES IN RURAL AREAS b/):
POPULATION WITHOUT OWN INCOME, BY SEX AND AGE BRACKET, CIRCA 2002**
(Percentage of total for each sex)



Source: ECLAC, Women and Development Unit, on the basis of special tabulations of data from household surveys conducted in the countries.

a/ Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Dominican Republic and Uruguay.

b/ Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru and Dominican Republic.

A considerable proportion of women living with a spouse or partner lack their own income in both poor and non-poor households. Between 1994 and 2002, in urban areas, the average percentage of women without income declined from 72% to 61% among poor households and from 48% to 42% among non-poor households (see table III.2). This is consistent with the higher proportion of women in the labour force. However, the indicator reflects the lack of economic autonomy and strong likelihood of being or becoming poor that affect a high proportion of the female population, especially in the event of changes in family or partner relationships. Separation or widowhood raises the likelihood that these women will end up in poor households. The situation is even clearer in urban areas, where in 2002 the percentage of women with no income in

poor households ranged from 45% in Peru to 78% in Costa Rica, while in non-poor households it ranged from 32% in Uruguay to 54% in Mexico.

This information, in addition to underscoring the increase in poverty among women, demonstrates that a lack of economic autonomy, expressed as the ability to generate income, places women in a more vulnerable position and raises the likelihood that large groups of women will become poor if their family or spousal circumstances change. Although it is recognized that distribution processes within families attenuate this risk, attention must be drawn to the link between autonomy and poverty established by the gender perspective and the resulting need for policies to reinforce women's economic autonomy.

Table III.2

LATIN AMERICA (17 COUNTRIES): FEMALE SPOUSES OR PARTNERS WITHOUT INCOME OF THEIR OWN a/ IN POOR AND NON-POOR HOUSEHOLDS, BY AREA, CIRCA 1994, 1999 AND 2002 (Percentages)							
Country b/	Year	Urban			Rural		
		Poor	Non-poor	Total	Poor	Non-poor	Total
Argentina c/	1994	84.9	57.2	60.9	...	...	...
	1999	79.3	52.8	57.5	...	...	...
	2002	63.0	46.6	52.9	...	...	...
Bolivia d/	1994	60.7	42.4	51.3	...	...	...
	1999	60.0	36.8	47.2	76.4	51.7	71.3
	2002	51.1	35.3	43.1	83.0	59.1	77.6
Brazil e/	1995	68.9	46.8	52.9	78.6	53.0	66.7
	1999	66.0	43.2	51.3	73.5	45.5	62.2
	2001	65.8	41.4	48.5	67.5	43.1	55.4
Chile f/	1994	83.0	57.9	63.9	87.1	68.7	73.9
	1998	74.0	52.5	56.3	67.0	57.8	60.1
	2000	74.2	51.3	55.2	63.9	57.2	58.6
Colombia	1994	72.9	47.3	58.2	78.4	65.4	73.1
	1999	67.2	43.5	54.6	77.0	60.7	70.2
	2002	64.5	40.9	51.9	...	...	...
Costa Rica	1994	83.6	58.4	62.7	90.8	78.0	80.7
	1999	78.7	55.4	58.3	88.2	71.8	74.7
	2002	77.8	51.4	55.0	84.9	70.1	73.2
Ecuador	1994	74.1	47.5	61.8	...	...	...
	1999	51.0	39.2	46.2	...	...	...
	2002	54.9	39.9	46.6	...	...	...
El Salvador	1995	62.1	36.7	46.8	73.7	57.6	67.4
	1999	59.1	36.7	45.2	74.9	58.6	69.4
	2001	61.6	38.6	46.4	75.5	57.0	68.2
Guatemala	1999	42.9	33.1	37.1	...	...	...
	2002	52.1	34.6	41.8	59.6	45.3	54.0
Honduras	1994	68.0	41.8	60.0	78.7	56.6	73.7
	1999	55.6	31.4	47.5	65.7	42.1	61.8
	2002	67.1	47.4	59.8	82.8	62.1	79.5
Mexico	1994	77.0	64.7	68.6	71.9	66.9	69.4
	1998	71.1	58.2	62.6	63.1	62.2	62.7
	2002	70.1	53.7	58.2	35.7	44.5	40.4
Panama	1994	77.2	45.6	51.5	...	...	...
	1999	75.5	44.0	50.5	...	...	...
	2002	41.7	31.6	33.7	42.5	36.1	38.9
Paraguay	1994	62.2	40.6	49.9	...	...	...
	1999	60.8	36.4	47.4	65.6	45.1	59.2
	2002	54.4	37.5	45.1	54.9	42.5	50.8
Peru	2001	44.9	36.2	39.5	62.0	42.0	57.2
Dominican Republic	2002	69.1	43.3	51.9	76.7	62.2	68.9
Uruguay	1994	62.6	34.8	36.6	...	...	...
	1999	58.6	34.0	35.6	...	...	...
	2002	45.5	32.7	34.1	...	...	...
Venezuela	1994	76.7	56.0	64.5	85.8	72.3	79.5
	1999 g/	70.3	44.6	55.9	...	...	...
	2002 g/	67.4	39.6	51.7	...	...	...

Source: ECLAC, Women and Development Unit, on the basis of special tabulations of data from household surveys conducted in the respective countries.

a/ Female spouses or partners without income * 100

All female spouses or partners

b/ Nicaragua does not identify individual income.

c/ 1994: Greater Buenos Aires and 18 population centres.

1999: Greater Buenos Aires and 26 population centres.

2002: Greater Buenos Aires and 30 population centres.

d/ 1994: 7 departments and the city of Trinidad.

1999: 8 departments and Cobija.

2002: 9 departments.

e/ 1994: 7 metropolitan areas and other urban areas.

1999 and 2002: 10 metropolitan areas and other urban areas.

f/ 1994: Rural area: includes cities with fewer than 2,000 inhabitants, chosen at random and without regard to economic activity.

As of 1998: Rural area: area of concentrated or dispersed housing with 1,000 inhabitants or fewer, or between 1,001 and 2,000 inhabitants with less than 50% of its economically active population working in secondary and/or tertiary activities.

g/ National total.

C. HOUSEHOLDS AND FAMILIES

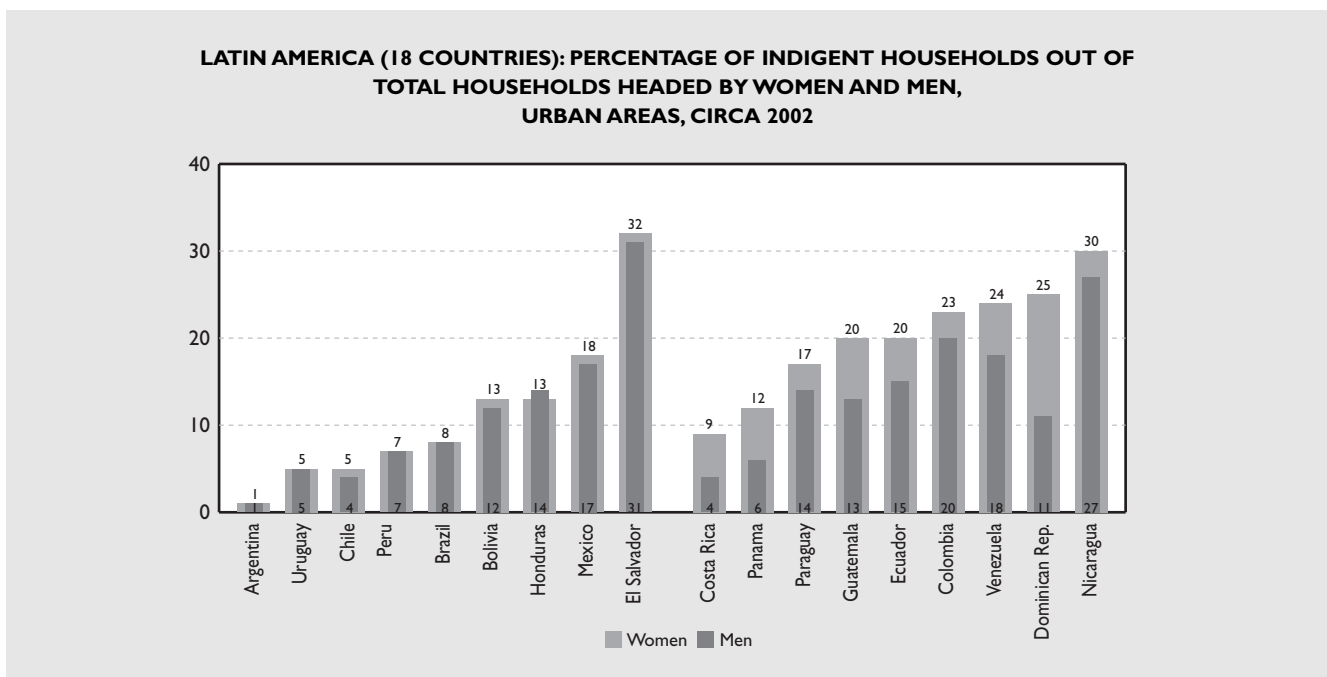
1. POVERTY AND HEADS OF HOUSEHOLD

Over the past decade the number of households headed by women, both poor and non-poor, has continued to grow. These households have enjoyed less monetary income than households headed by men. In 2002 average per capita income among households headed by women stood at 94% of that for households headed by men in 17 countries of the region. Similarly, in 9 out of 18 countries, the proportion of indigence is clearly higher among female heads of household than among their male counterparts. Also, according to data on urban areas, in 2002 close to 90% of households headed by

women lacked a spouse or partner, whereas only 13% of households headed by men were in that situation.

A disaggregation of heads of household by sex gives an initial approximation to the link between gender and poverty. The information available on urban areas in 2002 shows that the proportion of indigence is higher among households headed by women than among those headed by men. Nine of the 18 countries analysed demonstrate this gap, with varying intensity. In Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Panama and Venezuela the gap is greater than five percentage points (see figure III.3).

Figure III.3



Source: ECLAC, Women and Development Unit, on the basis of special tabulations of data from household surveys conducted in the countries.

According to data from 1990 and 2002 (see table 22 in the statistical annex), urban areas saw a steady upturn in the number of female heads of household in both poor and non-poor households. Fifteen out of 16 countries showed an increase in the percentage of female heads of household in non-indigent poor and non-poor households. Among indigent households, this percentage increased in 11 of the 16 countries analysed. In four of them (Costa Rica, Mexico, Panama and Paraguay), it rose by more than 10 percentage points over the value observed in 1990; in contrast, five countries (Argentina, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua and Venezuela) showed a decrease in the percentage of indigent households headed by women. In 2002 female headship was more common among extremely poor households than among non-indigent poor and non-poor households in 11 of the 16 countries.

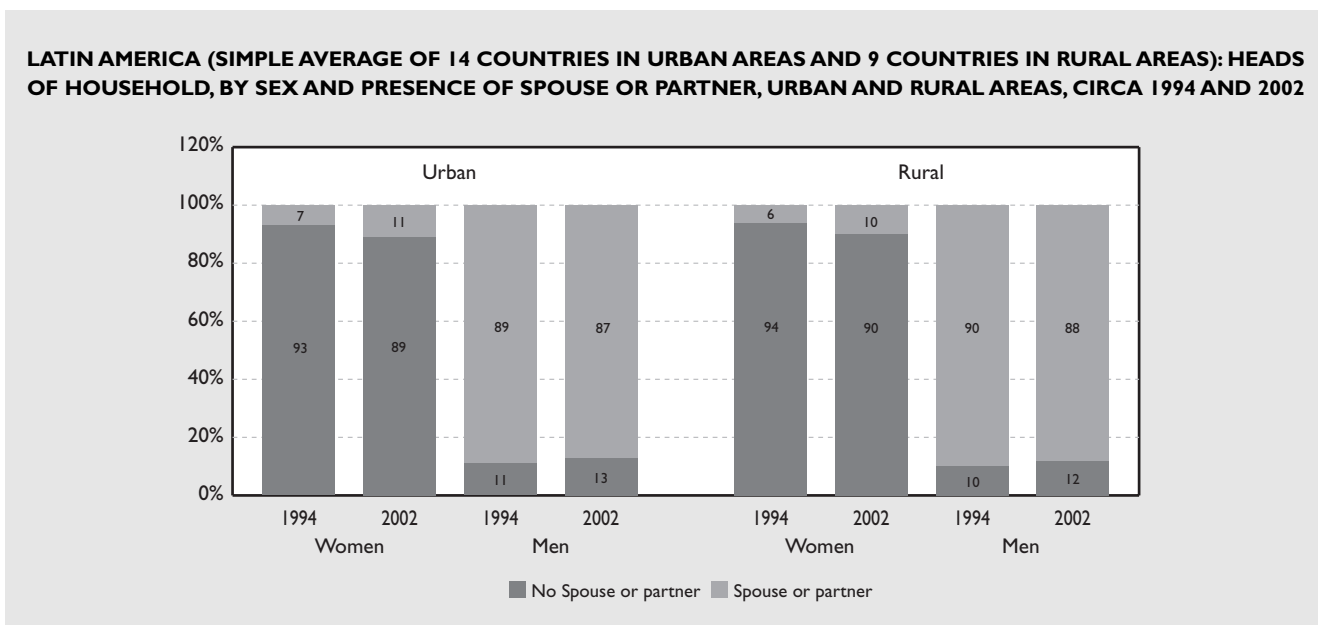
In order to better understand the relationship between heads of household and poverty, it is necessary first to consider the various types of household, their size and structure and the policy framework of each country. In this sense, households headed

by women are not necessarily poorer, although this is frequently the case in the region.

Since the available literature does not contain a consensus-based definition of the term "head of household", the subjective meaning attributed to it by respondents prevails in practice. Given current cultural norms, which are often mirrored in legislation, the notion of a household head has tended to be associated with that of a male provider, as opposed to the notion of a dependent woman. As indicated above, this is now changing thanks to the massive influx of women into the workforce and growing acceptance of the idea that unpaid domestic work is a socially necessary function.

Approximately 90% of the households that identify themselves as being headed by women do not include a spouse or partner, whereas only 13% of those that claim to be headed by men are in that situation (see figure III.4). It is important to take this into account in designing policy, since households headed by women do not have the same opportunities as other households to generate additional income, unless children or other relatives engage in paid work.

Figure III.4

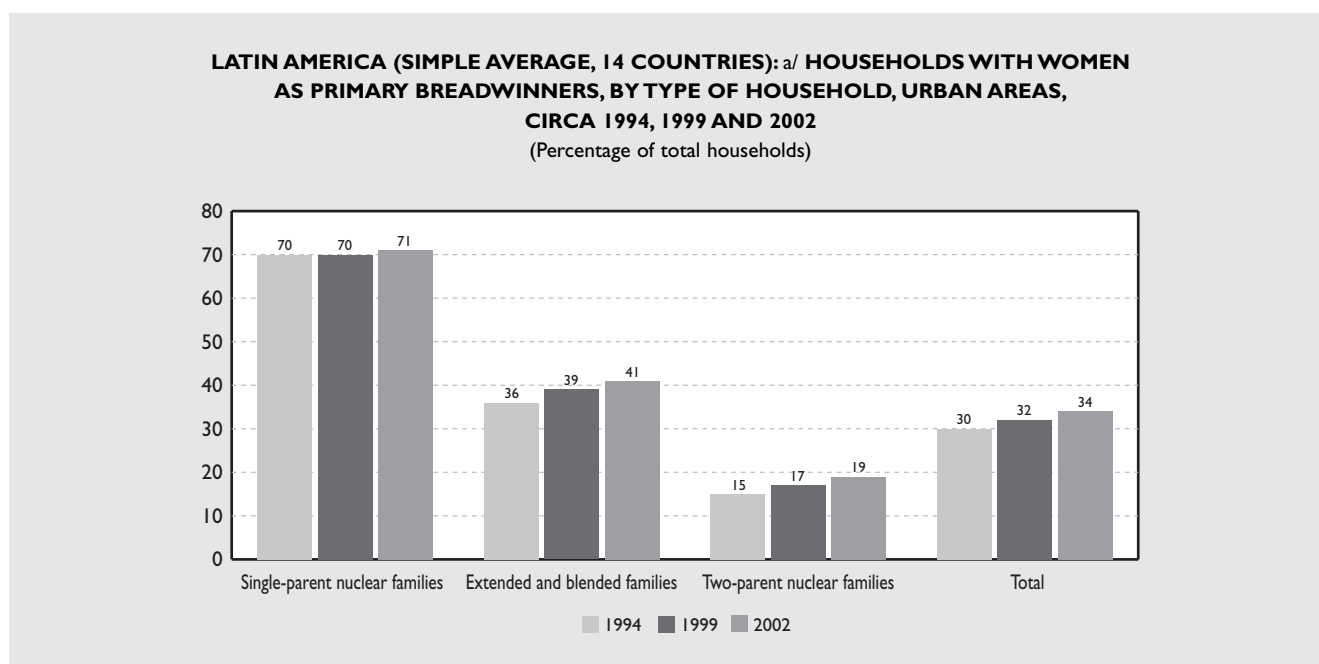


Source: ECLAC, Women and Development Unit, on the basis of special tabulations of data from household surveys conducted in the countries.

According to 2002 data, 26% of urban multi-person households (single-parent, two-parent, extended and blended) were headed by women, but 34% of them had a woman as the main breadwinner (see table III.3 and figure III.5). The fact that many women who are the main breadwinners in their households are not recognized as heads of household can be attributed to cultural factors that tend to identify the adult male, when present, as the head of house-

hold even when he is not the main provider. This phenomenon reflects deeply held values whereby the role of family provider is assigned to the male and is associated with symbolic aspects such as the authority and prestige denoted by the fact of being the "head". The bias built into information collection processes by the surveyors themselves may be just as important.

Figure III.5



Source: ECLAC, Women and Development Unit, on the basis of special tabulations of household surveys conducted in the countries.

a/ Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay and Uruguay.

Table III.3

LATIN AMERICA (18 COUNTRIES): FEMALE HEADSHIP, BY TYPE OF HOUSEHOLD, URBAN AND RURAL AREAS, CIRCA 1994, 1999 AND 2002 (Percentages of all households)											
Country	Year	Urban households					Rural households				
		Total	One-person	Two-parent nuclear	Single-parent nuclear	Extended or composite	Total	One-person	Two-parent nuclear	Single-parent nuclear	Extended or composite
Argentina a/	1994	23.8	66.2	1.6	84.3	32.1	...	...	...	...	...
	1999	27.6	62.3	3.2	83.7	39.9	...	...	...	...	...
	2002	28.6	64.9	3.4	81.3	38.2	...	...	...	...	...
Bolivia b/	1994	18.2	38.8	*	84.2	30.5	...	...	...	...	...
	1999	20.4	42.2	2.0	84.3	38.1	15.8	40.7	0.3	76.5	23.1
	2002	23.5	47.4	2.5	84.4	34.6	13.8	39.1	*	74.8	18.6
Brazil c/	1995	22.1	55.8	0.9	89.8	35.8	12.9	34.8	0.2	79.6	21.9
	1999	25.4	54.9	3.5	89.0	38.8	13.4	32.6	0.6	78.3	24.7
	2001	26.3	53.5	3.6	88.8	40.7	13.5	32.0	0.9	78.8	24.1
Chile d/	1994	22.4	55.9	1.8	86.2	33.4	15.6	35.2	1.1	80.4	24.3
	1998	24.0	57.6	3.2	87.9	35.4	15.3	32.8	1.3	77.9	23.5
	2000	24.3	54.8	4.2	85.0	37.0	16.0	32.0	2.1	76.9	24.5
Colombia	1994	24.2	54.3	1.6	89.5	36.0	18.7	32.7	1.4	85.2	27.4
	1999	28.8	46.8	2.8	87.7	40.0	18.7	37.8	1.6	78.7	25.7
	2002	30.3	49.3	4.5	87.6	41.1	19.7	35.1	2.6	80.4	29.3
Costa Rica	1994	24.0	54.4	1.4	87.3	37.3	16.0	38.6	1.0	82.5	27.8
	1999	27.9	51.9	3.8	90.8	41.4	18.6	36.4	2.5	86.9	29.5
	2002	28.4	50.2	4.1	91.7	45.1	19.7	29.9	2.7	89.3	31.7
Ecuador	1994	18.7	42.9	1.4	83.4	25.7	...	...	...	...	...
	1999	20.1	34.2	2.3	83.1	29.1	...	...	...	...	...
	2002	21.4	34.9	2.6	76.9	29.0	...	...	...	...	...
El Salvador	1995	30.8	52.9	1.9	89.3	42.5	23.4	38.5	*	85.1	33.7
	1999	31.4	44.6	4.2	88.1	44.3	24.5	37.9	3.6	82.4	34.6
	2001	35.3	46.4	5.9	89.5	47.1	27.3	34.2	3.7	85.3	40.2
Guatemala	1998	24.3	51.8	1.2	88.7	34.1	17.7	35.9	0.3	89.2	22.6
Honduras	1994	25.0	43.3	1.6	88.0	36.6	18.7	37.8	0.8	90.6	28.9
	1999	30.3	37.5	2.5	91.1	40.8	20.7	47.7	1.2	86.0	29.6
	2002	31.4	45.3	3.5	87.7	42.8	19.2	30.2	1.6	82.8	29.3
Mexico	1994	17.0	50.5	0.2	90.3	27.9	11.2	39.9	0.5	72.6	17.1
	1998	19.4	42.8	0.9	90.0	32.4	15.8	42.0	0.6	83.6	24.1
	2002	21.4	47.8	1.9	86.5	34.2	17.6	56.8	*	84.4	26.5
Nicaragua	1993	34.9	42.7	8.4	87.3	48.3	18.9	27.8	3.1	79.2	28.6
	1998	34.5	44.6	4.8	90.2	46.5	18.5	32.2	1.9	81.0	27.0
	2001	34.2	44.0	5.9	90.3	46.0	18.9	29.6	*	79.2	30.1
Panama	1994	27.0	36.6	3.8	85.0	38.1	...	...	...	...	...
	1999	27.4	34.0	5.0	85.8	36.4	...	...	...	...	...
	2002	28.9	37.0	4.7	87.3	39.6	15.9	18.7	2.2	71.9	20.7
Paraguay	1994	23.7	42.0	3.3	89.9	30.8	...	...	...	...	...
	1999	27.3	51.9	3.9	89.0	36.6	20.1	38.3	4.0	85.0	25.6
	2002	29.6	42.1	8.2	85.8	39.4	19.6	26.3	3.5	74.8	31.3
Peru	2001	22.1	35.5	2.0	79.2	30.4	17.1	39.9	1.1	77.6	25.4
Dominican Republic	2002	34.2	44.8	6.2	88.3	46.8	23.3	24.8	2.7	76.3	38.5
Uruguay	1994	27.1	72.2	1.8	86.4	34.6	...	...	...	...	...
	1999	30.5	65.7	6.0	85.8	37.9	...	...	...	...	...
	2002	32.3	63.5	7.0	84.6	42.1	...	...	...	...	...
Venezuela	1994	24.6	36.8	1.5	88.1	35.3	17.6	20.3	*	78.0	26.9
	1999 e/	27.2	35.6	4.5	87.4	37.8	...	...	...	...	...
	2002 e/	28.8	29.3	6.1	87.9	40.2	...	...	...	...	...

Source: ECLAC, Women and Development Unit, on the basis of special tabulations of data from household surveys conducted in the respective countries.

* Insufficient sample size.

a/ 1994: Greater Buenos Aires and 18 population centres. 1999: Greater Buenos Aires and 26 population centres. 2002: Greater Buenos Aires and 30 population centres.

b/ 1994: 7 departments and the city of Trinidad. 1999: 8 departments and Cobija. 2002: 9 departments.

c/ 1994: 7 metropolitan areas and other urban areas. 1999 and 2002: 10 metropolitan areas and other urban areas.

d/ 1994: Rural area: includes cities with fewer than 2,000 inhabitants, chosen at random without regard to economic activity. As of 1998: Rural area: area of concentrated or dispersed housing with 1,000 inhabitants or fewer, or between 1,001 and 2,000 inhabitants with less than 50% of its economically active population working in secondary and/or tertiary activities.

e/ National total.

Head of household: "Head of household" is defined as a person who designates himself/herself as head or who is designated and recognized as such by other members of the household.

One-person household: A household consisting of just one person.

Two-parent nuclear: A household formed by a cohabiting or legally married couple with or without children.

Single-parent nuclear: A household consisting of one parent and one or more children.

Extended or composite: A household that is any of the types mentioned above, with the addition of one or more relatives or non-relatives of the head of household.

The foregoing is observable, for example, when two-parent nuclear family households are analysed; about 95% of such households are headed by men in most countries. If these data are compared to data on the sex of the person contributing the bulk of the family's income, it becomes apparent that women account for an average of 19%.

An analysis of women's income circa 1999 shows that, individually, female heads of household had less monetary income than male heads of household in both poor and non-poor households (see figure III.6).

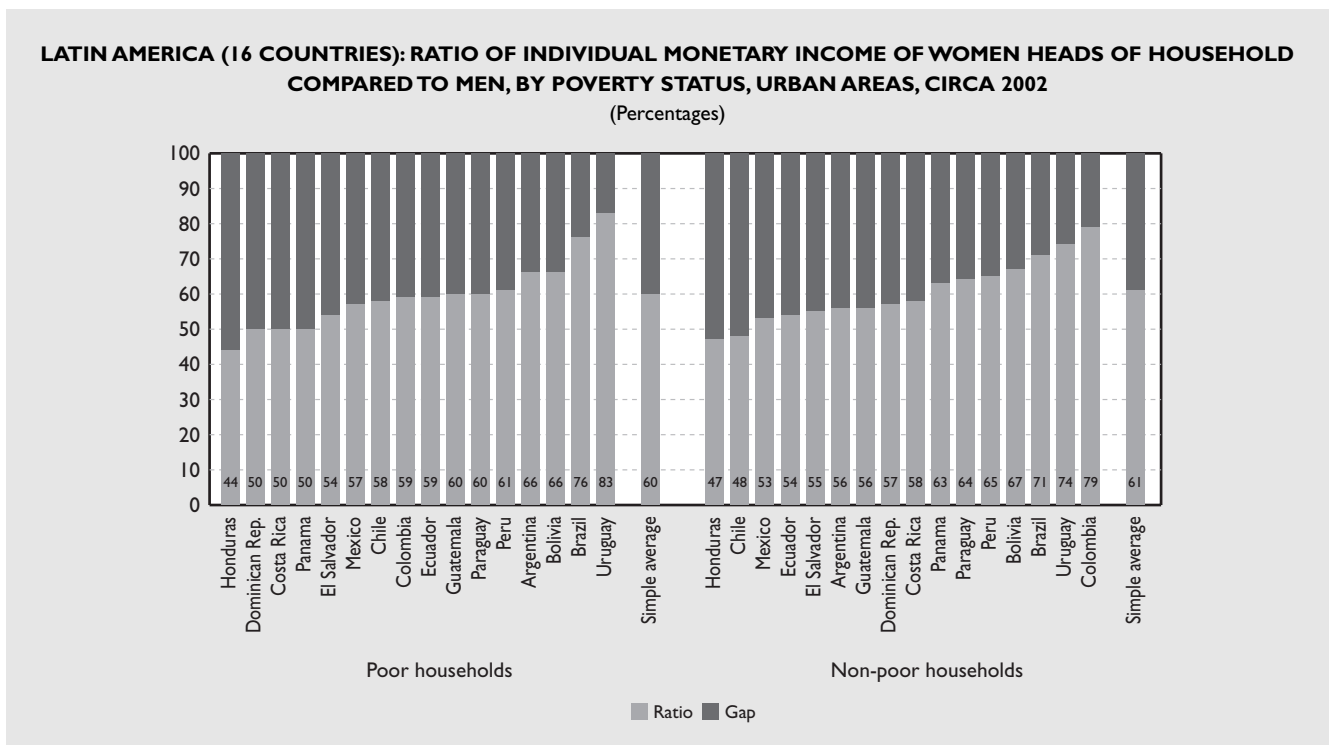
With respect to household size, households headed by women or partners are generally smaller than those headed by men. This is attributable mainly to the presence of spouses or partners in the latter. At the same time, female spouses or partners show a high rate of unpaid domestic activity, which, since it is not recognized as a contribution, places them in a

position of dependency with respect to the head of household and generates an increase in the dependency rate of households headed by men as compared to those headed by women (see table III.4).

A comparison of per capita income in households headed by women and those headed by men shows that the gap between them is significantly smaller than the gap between the two sexes in terms of individual income, since total income in female-headed households is divided among a smaller number of members.

In most countries households headed by women are at a disadvantage compared to those headed by men in terms of per capita income, in both poor and non-poor households. This is true in 10 out of 17 countries, where per capita income in households headed by women ranges from 80% to 95% of per capita income in households headed by men.

Figure III.6



Source: ECLAC, Women and Development Unit, on the basis of special tabulations of data from household surveys conducted in the countries.

Table III.4

LATIN AMERICA (18 COUNTRIES): AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE AND DEPENDENCY RATE ^{a/} IN FEMALE- AND MALE-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS, BY PRESENCE OF SPOUSE OR PARTNER, URBAN AND RURAL AREAS, CIRCA 2002																	
Country	Presence of spouse or partner	Urban								Rural							
		Poor				Non-poor				Poor				Non-poor			
		Average number of persons in the household		Dependency rate		Average number of persons in the household		Dependency rate		Average number of persons in the household		Dependency rate		Average number of persons in the household		Dependency rate	
Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Argentina	Without	3.2	3.6	2.7	3.4	1.8	2.0	1.5	1.9	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	With	4.9	4.9	4.1	3.6	3.6	3.3	2.4	2.1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	All households	4.8	3.7	4.0	3.4	3.2	2.1	2.3	1.9	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Bolivia	Without	3.1	3.9	2.7	3.0	1.9	2.9	1.6	2.2	2.7	3.1	1.4	1.8	1.6	2.6	1.2	1.6
	With	5.5	5.2	3.4	2.8	4.5	4.3	2.5	2.4	5.3	3.0	2.3	1.4	4.3	2.9	2.3	1.4
	All households	5.3	4.0	3.4	3.0	4.0	3.0	2.3	2.2	5.0	3.1	2.2	1.8	3.6	2.6	2.0	1.6
Brazil	Without	2.7	4.0	2.5	3.2	1.8	2.6	1.4	2.0	2.6	4.5	1.7	2.7	1.6	2.5	1.2	1.8
	With	4.7	4.9	3.5	3.4	3.7	3.7	2.2	2.1	5.0	5.3	2.6	2.7	3.7	3.6	1.8	1.8
	All households	4.6	4.0	3.4	3.2	3.4	2.7	2.1	2.0	4.9	4.5	2.6	2.7	3.3	2.6	1.7	1.8
Chile	Without	3.4	4.4	3.4	3.9	2.2	2.9	1.7	2.3	3.4	4.3	2.9	3.9	2.1	3.0	1.7	2.6
	With	4.9	5.4	4.2	4.2	4.1	4.0	2.8	2.5	5.0	5.5	4.3	4.4	4.1	4.4	3.0	2.8
	All households	4.9	4.5	4.2	4.0	3.9	3.0	2.7	2.3	4.9	4.5	4.2	4.0	3.8	3.2	2.8	2.6
Colombia	Without	3.1	3.9	2.5	3.0	2.2	3.0	1.6	2.1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	With	4.8	5.2	3.4	3.1	4.0	4.2	2.3	2.2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	All households	4.7	4.0	3.4	3.0	3.7	3.1	2.2	2.1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Costa Rica	Without	2.5	3.7	2.6	4.0	2.2	3.2	1.6	2.2	2.1	3.6	2.1	3.6	1.9	3.6	1.4	2.5
	With	4.8	4.3	4.2	3.3	4.1	4.3	2.6	1.9	4.8	5.2	4.1	4.5	4.3	5.1	2.9	2.7
	All households	4.6	3.8	4.2	3.9	3.9	3.4	2.5	2.2	4.5	3.7	4.0	3.7	4.0	3.8	2.7	2.5
Ecuador	Without	3.7	4.1	2.9	2.9	2.2	2.8	1.6	2.1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	With	4.9	5.0	3.5	3.3	4.2	4.0	2.4	2.1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	All households	4.8	4.2	3.5	2.9	3.8	3.0	2.2	2.1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
El Salvador	Without	3.1	4.2	2.9	3.3	2.2	3.3	1.7	2.2	3.0	4.7	2.4	3.3	2.4	3.8	1.6	2.5
	With	5.0	5.6	3.5	3.4	4.3	4.4	2.4	2.3	5.7	6.0	3.8	3.7	4.7	5.1	2.7	2.4
	All households	4.8	4.3	3.5	3.3	4.0	3.4	2.3	2.2	5.5	4.8	3.7	3.4	4.3	4.0	2.5	2.4
Guatemala	Without	3.6	4.1	2.9	2.8	2.2	3.2	1.7	2.0	5.1	5.0	3.2	2.9	2.9	3.3	2.1	1.9
	With	5.2	5.4	3.3	3.2	4.4	5.0	2.3	1.8	6.3	6.5	3.4	2.7	5.0	3.1	2.6	1.7
	All households	5.1	4.1	3.3	2.8	4.1	3.3	2.2	2.0	6.2	5.1	3.4	2.9	4.8	3.3	2.5	1.9
Honduras	Without	3.9	4.7	2.7	3.3	2.4	3.5	1.6	2.4	4.0	5.0	2.5	3.3	2.1	3.6	1.5	2.5
	With	5.4	5.6	3.5	3.0	4.4	4.4	2.6	2.2	6.0	6.1	3.8	3.2	4.5	4.5	2.7	2.6
	All households	5.3	4.8	3.5	3.2	4.1	3.6	2.4	2.4	5.9	5.1	3.7	3.3	4.1	3.7	2.5	2.6
Mexico	Without	4.4	4.5	2.7	3.0	2.1	2.9	1.5	2.0	3.6	4.4	2.4	3.0	1.9	2.6	1.5	1.9
	With	5.1	5.0	3.6	3.0	4.1	4.4	2.5	2.4	5.4	6.0	3.5	3.2	4.1	4.7	2.6	2.1
	All households	5.1	4.5	3.6	3.0	3.9	3.0	2.4	2.1	5.3	4.5	3.4	3.0	3.9	2.6	2.4	1.9
Nicaragua	Without	3.9	5.2	2.6	3.4	2.5	4.2	1.5	2.2	5.1	5.5	2.7	3.4	2.2	4.6	1.4	2.2
	With	5.9	6.7	3.5	3.2	4.6	4.9	2.4	2.5	6.4	7.5	3.5	3.5	5.1	6.9	2.5	2.8
	All households	5.7	5.4	3.4	3.4	4.3	4.3	2.3	2.2	6.3	5.8	3.5	3.4	4.5	4.7	2.3	2.2
Panama	Without	3.0	3.9	3.2	3.8	2.2	3.3	1.7	2.4	2.5	4.1	1.9	3.3	1.9	3.1	1.4	2.4
	With	5.2	5.8	4.3	4.7	4.2	4.3	2.6	2.4	5.8	6.3	3.9	3.6	4.5	4.7	2.9	2.6
	All households	4.9	4.1	4.2	4.0	3.8	3.4	2.4	2.4	5.3	4.3	3.6	3.4	3.9	3.3	2.5	2.5
Paraguay	Without	3.5	4.7	2.7	3.0	2.0	3.3	1.4	2.2	3.4	4.6	2.2	3.7	1.9	3.2	1.4	2.0
	With	5.5	5.4	3.4	3.2	4.4	4.2	2.4	2.3	6.1	6.3	3.2	3.6	4.3	4.6	2.5	2.6
	All households	5.4	4.8	3.4	3.1	4.0	3.5	2.2	2.2	5.8	5.1	3.1	3.7	3.8	3.4	2.2	2.1
Peru	Without	4.5	5.0	2.7	3.0	2.2	3.3	1.6	2.2	3.3	3.6	1.9	2.2	1.6	2.5	1.2	1.6
	With	5.8	5.8	3.2	2.7	4.5	5.0	2.6	2.7	5.5	5.7	2.7	2.3	4.2	4.9	2.1	2.1
	All households	5.7	5.1	3.2	3.0	4.1	3.4	2.4	2.3	5.3	3.7	2.7	2.2	3.5	2.6	1.9	1.7
Dominican Republic	Without	2.9	3.6	3.1	3.5	2.1	3.2	1.6	2.3	2.1	3.4	2.3	3.5	1.9	3.3	1.4	2.2
	With	4.8	5.2	3.8	4.1	4.1	3.8	2.5	2.3	5.0	4.5	4.3	3.6	4.1	3.7	2.7	2.4
	All households	4.5	3.8	3.8	3.6	3.8	3.3	2.4	2.3	4.7	3.5	4.2	3.5	3.6	3.4	2.4	2.3
Uruguay	Without	4.1	4.8	3.2	3.7	1.7	2.1	1.6	2.0	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	With	5.3	5.2	4.1	3.8	3.5	3.4	2.4	2.2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	All households	5.2	4.9	4.1	3.7	3.2	2.3	2.3	2.1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Venezuela ^{b/}	Without	3.2	4.5	2.7	3.5	2.2	3.7	1.4	2.1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	With	5.3	5.8	3.9	3.8	4.4	4.9	2.4	2.2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	All households	5.1	4.7	3.8	3.6	4.1	3.9	2.2	2.1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...

Source: ECLAC, Women and Development Unit, on the basis of special tabulations of data from household surveys conducted in the respective countries.

a/ The dependency rate is calculated by dividing the number of persons in the household by the number of employed persons in the household.

b/ National total.

From a gender perspective, one of the failings of current measurement methods –particularly per capita income calculations– is that they do not reveal the gap in income between male and female heads of household, since the division of total household income by the number of members minimizes income differences, considering that households headed by women are smaller. A second problem with these methods is the assumption that resources are distributed equitably within households, since available data indicate that women have less bargaining power, less free time and less mobility than men, all of which implies that resource distribution is not in fact equal. However, household surveys in their current form do not afford any possibility of testing this hypothesis.

2. WOMEN AND THE CARING ECONOMY

Unpaid domestic work, which is crucial to household survival, is performed almost exclusively by women. In 2002 housework was the principal activity of close to 45% of women living with a spouse or partner. This is an obstacle to reconciling paid work with reproductive work, a particularly thorny problem for women heads of household.

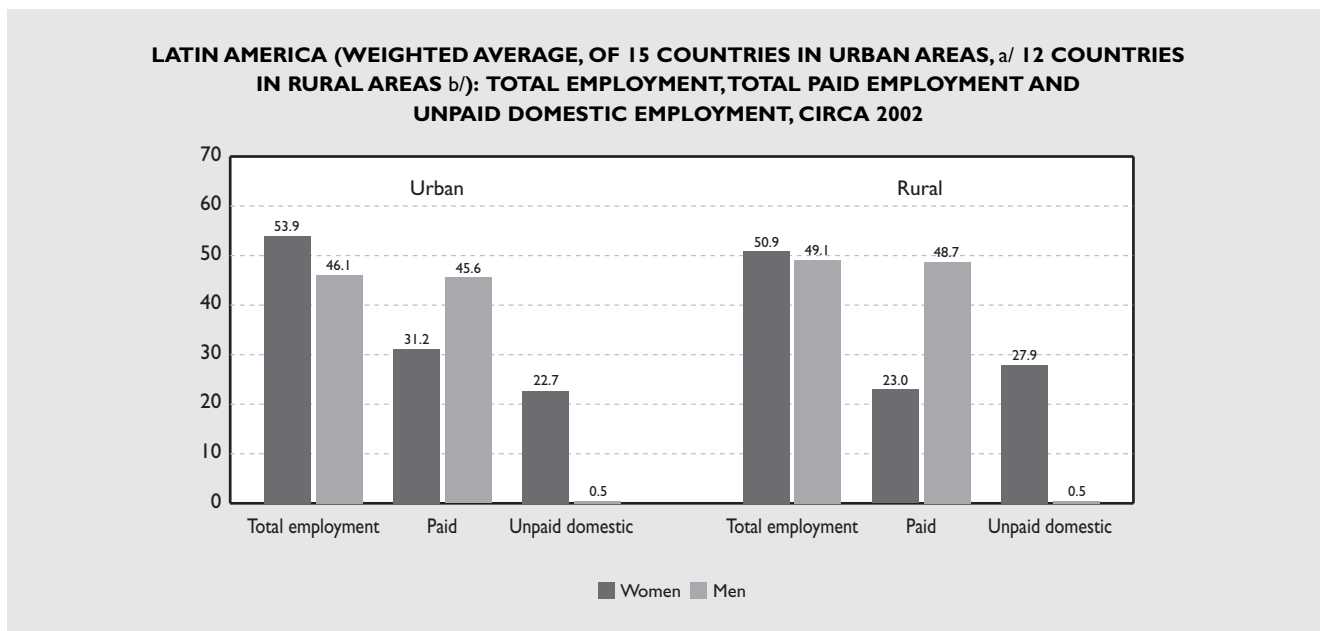
Changes in Latin American families have been caused largely by the accelerated entry of women into the workforce. This process has not been accompanied by an equivalent increase in men's participation in unpaid domestic activity associated with daily housekeeping, family health care and child and elder care. Consequently, despite the diversity of family structures that have emerged in

recent decades, together with demographic changes and changes in men's and women's career paths, the proportion of men who handle family responsibilities continues to be minimal.

Information available for Latin America shows that unpaid domestic work is almost exclusively the responsibility of women, in both rural and urban areas (see figure III.7). This makes it hard to reconcile with paid work, particularly for women heads of household, most of whom live in single-parent households without a spouse or partner to perform the work habitually assigned to women in two-parent households headed by men. Conversely, men are more likely to be able to rely on another unpaid adult to look after the home. In 2002 household chores were the principal activity for close to 44% of women living with a spouse or partner (see figure III.8), which implies that these households allocated fewer resources to purchasing such goods and services in the market. It may also be inferred that, in these cases, the head of household invests less time in unpaid work within the home and therefore, as an individual, has more time to look for better job opportunities, enjoy leisure and participate in social and political activity.

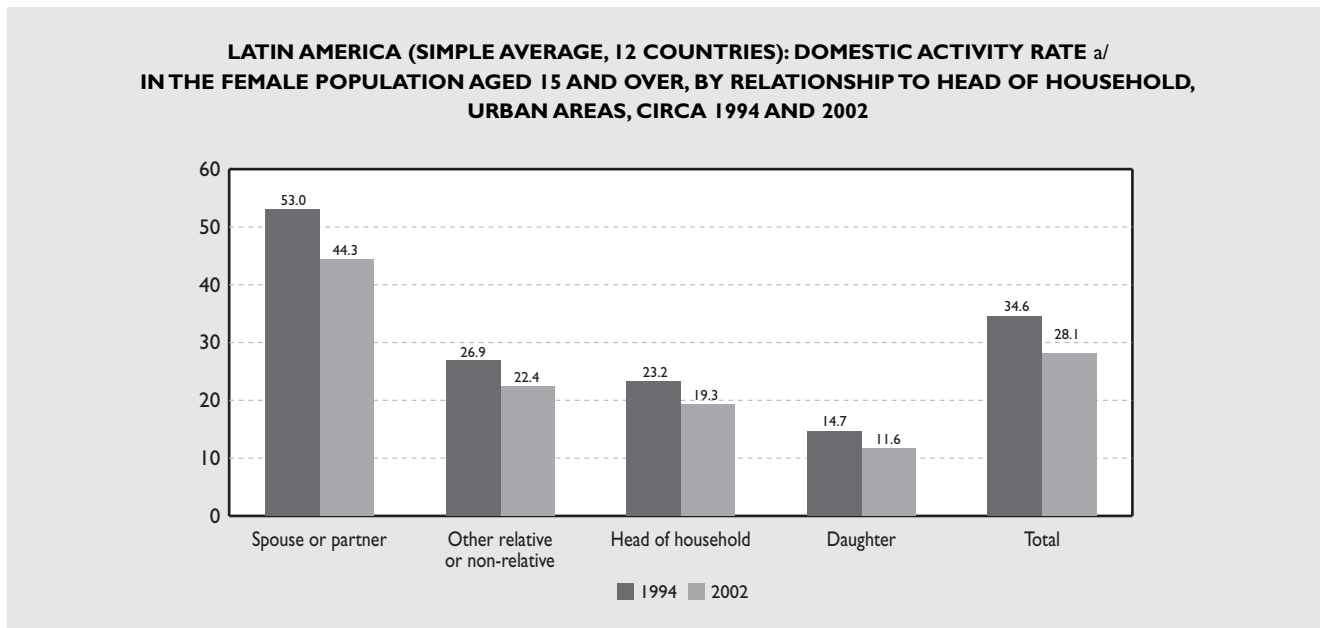
Female heads of household generally cannot rely on another person in this way, and are more likely to allocate a larger proportion of their monetary resources to obtaining such services on the market. This obliges them to work harder in both paid and unpaid activities. When this is not possible, they must rely on other household members, principally young women and girls; finally, they may seek family and community solutions, generally involving unpaid work by women as well.

Figure III.7



Source: ECLAC, Women and Development Unit, on the basis of special tabulations of data from household surveys conducted in the countries.
 a/ Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Dominican Republic and Uruguay.
 b/ Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay and Dominican Republic.

Figure III.8



Source: ECLAC, Women and Development Unit, on the basis of special tabulations of data from household surveys conducted in the countries.
 a/ Percentage of female population performing domestic work as principal activity.

The fact that reproductive work is outside the system of commercial exchanges not only renders this fundamental contribution to social wealth invisible, but also conceals a significant share of the cost of production; in this connection, domestic work must be rescued from the limbo of the "non-economic". An analysis of available information shows that in order to measure poverty from a gender perspective it is necessary to assign a value to unpaid domestic work, either as income or as an expense, principally in households where one person's main activity is reproductive work. This valuation is compatible with the poverty line measurement procedure and would adjust per capita household income, making the intensity of poverty easier to gauge. It can be inferred that, although the household never receives the value of unpaid work, the fact of not having to pay for it implies an increase in purchasing power that can be used for other purposes. This perspective would, in turn, make it possible to reflect poverty of time, which is not reflected in data on income.

In any case, the average rate of domestic activity by women, understood as the percentage of the female population whose main activity consists of performing household chores, declined between 1994 and 2002 in all the countries, regardless of the role women played in the family structure (spouse, partner, head of household, daughter or other unpaid relative) (see figure III.8). This situation is attributable principally to the increase in women's economic participation and, to a lesser extent, to the increase in the supply of household services offered by the market and the State.

Between 1994 and 2002, in all the countries analysed, more than 48% of young women between the ages of 20 and 24 and classified as "inactive" (i.e. unemployed and not looking for work) declared domestic work as their principal activity. Among young men, nearly 80% cite the pursuit of education as the reason for economic inactivity, while only 2% cite domestic work.

The labour market, as currently conceived, relies on household labour to reproduce the workforce and

set the stage for daily life. Examining the relationship between commercial production, human reproduction and the public sphere, as well as the specific situation of women in this process, offers a more effective way of addressing the complexity of the existing inequality between men and women, as well as their distinct experiences of poverty.

3. REPRODUCTIVE WORK AND TIME DISTRIBUTION

An analysis of households shows that work is unequally distributed within the family. Case studies of time distribution confirm that women invest more time in unpaid activities than men. This indicates that their workday is longer, to the detriment of their health, nutrition, civic participation and recreation.

Determining the quality of life of the various members of society is a fundamental step in setting appropriate public policy to promote social equity and overcome poverty. The fact that domestic work is invisible in official statistics means that the concept of production is indistinguishable from that of market production and the concept of work, from that of employment. Accordingly, the production of goods and services within the family environment is not considered work. As a result, traditional analytical models focus exclusively on paid work outside the home, disregarding unpaid domestic work done by women in the home. Labour surveys do not customarily take into account the important interrelation between employment and unpaid domestic work—a bias that gives rise to the fallacy that men and women participate in the paid labour market on a level playing field. "Family constraints" such as caring for children and elders and the gender-based division of labour are dismissed as non-economic issues. Nevertheless, it would be more appropriate to state that the way market production is organized today constitutes a constraint on family care (Carrasco, 2001).

An analysis of daily time use in households shows how work is distributed unequally within the family. Since 1995, data have been compiled on the use of time in 46 countries (in Latin America and the Caribbean, studies of this nature have been conducted in Cuba, Mexico and Nicaragua) (ONE, 2002a and 2002b; INEGI, 2002). They confirm that women invest more time than men in unpaid work and that their workday is longer, to the detriment of their health, nutrition and recreation.

The national household survey on living standards in Nicaragua conducted between April and August 1998 included a module for measuring the amount of time the population over the age of six spent on each activity in the 24 hours prior to the survey. Activities were classified into eight types: paid work, unpaid housework or household maintenance, studies, personal activity, social and community activity, and other. Time spent on more than one activity concurrently was identified as well.

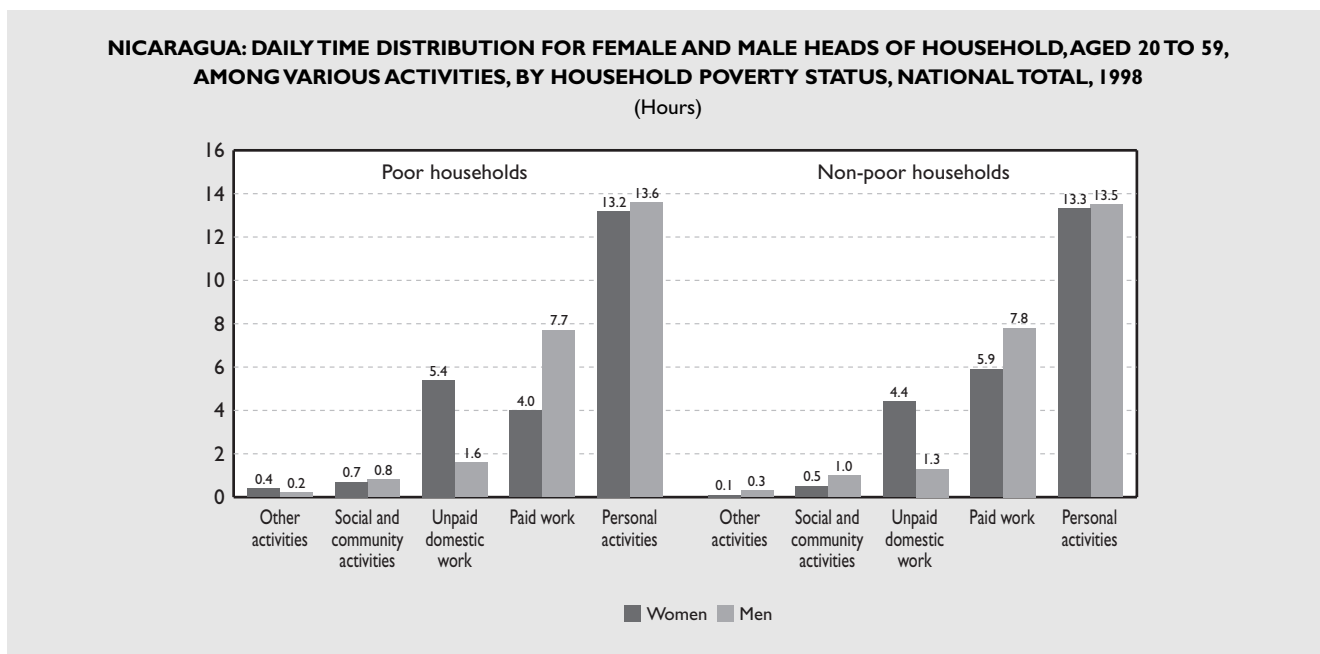
Figure III.9 presents the number of hours per day spent on various activities by female and male heads

of household between the ages of 15 and 60. Wide differences between men and women can be identified, especially with respect to work. Men in poor and non-poor households spent a very similar average number of hours on paid work, at 7.8 and 7.7 hours respectively. Women in both poor and non-poor households spent much less time than men on paid work, at 4 and 5.9 hours respectively.

Female heads of poor households spent an average of 5.4 hours on unpaid domestic work, while those in non-poor households spent 4.4 hours on such activities. By contrast, male heads of household spent just 1.3 hours on unpaid domestic work in poor households and 1.6 hours in non-poor households.

The main activities performed by men are home repairs, followed by childcare. The third-ranked task for male heads of poor households is gathering firewood, while for male heads of non-poor households it is shopping.

Figure III.9



Source: ECLAC, Women and Development Unit, special tabulation of data from the national household survey on living standards, Nicaragua, 1998.

Women, however, spent more than 50% of their time on two types of domestic work: cooking and housework, in both poor and non-poor households.

This information, despite its limitations, confirms that considering the problem of reconciling family work with paid work as a women's time management issue perpetuates the view, on the one hand, that this is a personal and private issue specific to women, and, on the other, that most women cannot

expect to join the labour market in the same manner as men, given the prevailing division of labour by gender (Carrasco and Mayordomo, 2001). In this regard, bringing women into the labour market and ensuring their equitable access to better and more income calls for a simultaneous social reorganization of time. This is a social and political issue that calls for collective, public solutions which cannot be divorced from economic and poverty reduction policy.

Box III.1

EXPERIENCES WITH TIME USE SURVEYS IN LATIN AMERICA

Time use surveys were designed to analyse how people divide their time between work and leisure inside and outside the family home. They are especially important for measuring and placing a value on domestic work and for evaluating men's and women's quality of life. The three methods most often used to compile this information are direct observation, interviews relying on respondents' memories and records kept by the respondents themselves.

These surveys reveal how much time is spent proportionally on each activity by population groups that share characteristics such as sex, ethnicity, socio-economic status and religion. They can also show why, for whom, with whom and when each activity is performed.

In Latin America national time use surveys have been conducted in Cuba, Mexico and Nicaragua. In Mexico a module was added to national household income and expenditure surveys in 1986 and 1998. The 1986 survey contained a questionnaire based on yes-or-no questions and pre-codified activities. The results point to gender differences in terms of contributions to the household and time use by sociodemographic characteristics and types of activity. In 1998 respondents were asked to keep a daily record of all activities performed during the day, with the amount of time allotted to each. The Nicaragua survey, conducted in 1998, recorded activities performed in a single day, keeping track of the number of minutes spent on employment/work, studying, housekeeping, personal and community activities, and other activities. The Cuban survey took place in 2002 and collected data through self-administered questionnaires in which family members were asked to record all activities performed during all 24 hours of two specified weekdays, at 10-minute intervals.

One of the main drawbacks of these kinds of surveys is the cost of formulating, applying and processing them, especially the cost of training interviewers and respondents in the case of self-administered surveys. Also, the potential for self-administered questionnaires is limited in Latin America, particularly in rural areas, given the high rates of illiteracy in rural populations and among women.

Another methodological difficulty is the codification of activities, which can be extremely complex. In open questionnaires, each activity mentioned by respondents must be codified, with a risk of compiling unnecessary information. Another methodological challenge is how to deal with the performance of more than one activity at the same time, which is quite common among women.

Finally, there is the question of the units employed to measure time. For the respondent, it may be difficult to answer questions on activities performed during the past week in "hours per week". Also, in some rural areas time is not experienced in units such as hours or minutes.

In view of the constraints mentioned, it is suggested that special modules be included in household surveys that take the household as the unit of analysis and account for all pre-codified activities by household members in half-hour units. This method, which has already been tested in surveys in developed countries, makes it possible to account for all the work done by all individuals, regardless of whether they are active or inactive; to classify the population by activity (paid work, family assistance, domestic work, studies, volunteer work); to place a value on the domestic work performed by various household members; and, in short, to measure quality of life.

Source: María José Araya, "Un acercamiento a las encuestas sobre el uso del tiempo con orientación de género", Informe final de práctica profesional en la CEPAL, Santiago, Chile, 2002, unpublished; Cristina Carrasco and others, "Hacia una nueva metodología para el estudio del trabajo: propuesta para una EPA alternativa", *Tiempos, trabajos y género*, Cristina Carrasco (ed.), Barcelona, Publicaciones Universitat; National Statistical Office (ONE)/United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)/United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), *Relatoria final del Taller internacional sobre encuestas de uso del tiempo* (La Habana, 10 al 12 de abril de 2002), 2002; Ruth Dixon-Mueller and Richard Anker, *Assessing women's economic contribution to development*, Basic studies for training in population, human resources and development planning, N° 6, Geneva, International Labour Organization (ILO), 1989.

D. LABOUR MARKET INEQUALITY AND POVERTY

Women's participation in the labour market has long been a subject of study, and numerous analyses have been prepared on this topic. More information is available on this subject than on others of equal importance for understanding poverty. Although there are abundant data and analyses in this area, significant gaps persist. Among the main contributions to the study of employment from a gender perspective is the analysis of women's participation in the labour market in the light of their dominant role in the reproductive sphere, in what is called the caring economy. Attempts to promote the recognition of unpaid domestic work have helped to reformulate the concept of labour as an activity that includes but is not limited to paid work. Another key concept that has been called into question is the distinction between activity and inactivity. From a gender perspective, those persons considered to be inactive are, generally speaking, unpaid and are represented by data on the domestic activity rate included in this chapter (see figure III.8.)

The massive and rapid influx of women into the workforce and changes in its composition over the past three decades are part of a process that includes demographic, economic, educational, technological and cultural factors which –though common to all the countries– have had varying degrees of influence, for varying lengths of time, on the transformation of prior patterns of participation. These factors explain why women's incorporation into the workforce in emerging economic models differs in terms of its structure and development trajectory and the level of participation attained (León, 2000).

This trend remained virtually unchanged during the period analysed. It has withstood the impact of

increasing economic globalization, persistent poverty and the need to generate income to overcome it, together with significant changes in social perceptions of women's role and a widespread recognition of women's rights. Latin American women today look for paid work because they need to, but also because they wish to, which explains why women prefer to stay in the workforce to leverage their economic independence, despite their tendency to have less job security. Interestingly, the increase in the number of economically active women exhibits similar features regardless of economic growth rates. Indeed, countries such as Chile, where economic growth has been relatively robust, still have the smallest population of economically active women.

In the 1990s the labour participation rate grew faster among women than among men. However, it is more difficult for women to enter the workforce, and their unemployment rates are higher even though, on average, economically active Latin American women have more years of schooling than men. Participation rates among women living in poor households, which are much lower than those of women in non-poor households, are increasing, and it may be observed that the fact of being poor is more relevant for them than for men with respect to access to the labour market.

Between 1990 and 2002 occupational segmentation continued to prevail among workers in different branches of economic activity, although developments within each branch have varied somewhat. Women's employment fell slightly in the area of personal services and rose systematically in agriculture and commerce. Domestic service, which had followed a downward trend over the last decade, spiked in 2002. Although the panorama is varied, women also predominate among unpaid family workers. During the reference period, the gender gap narrowed in low-productivity sectors, mainly as a result of fewer men entering the workforce.

In 2002 women in the labour market earned 68% as much as men. It may therefore be concluded that women's higher average level of schooling does not

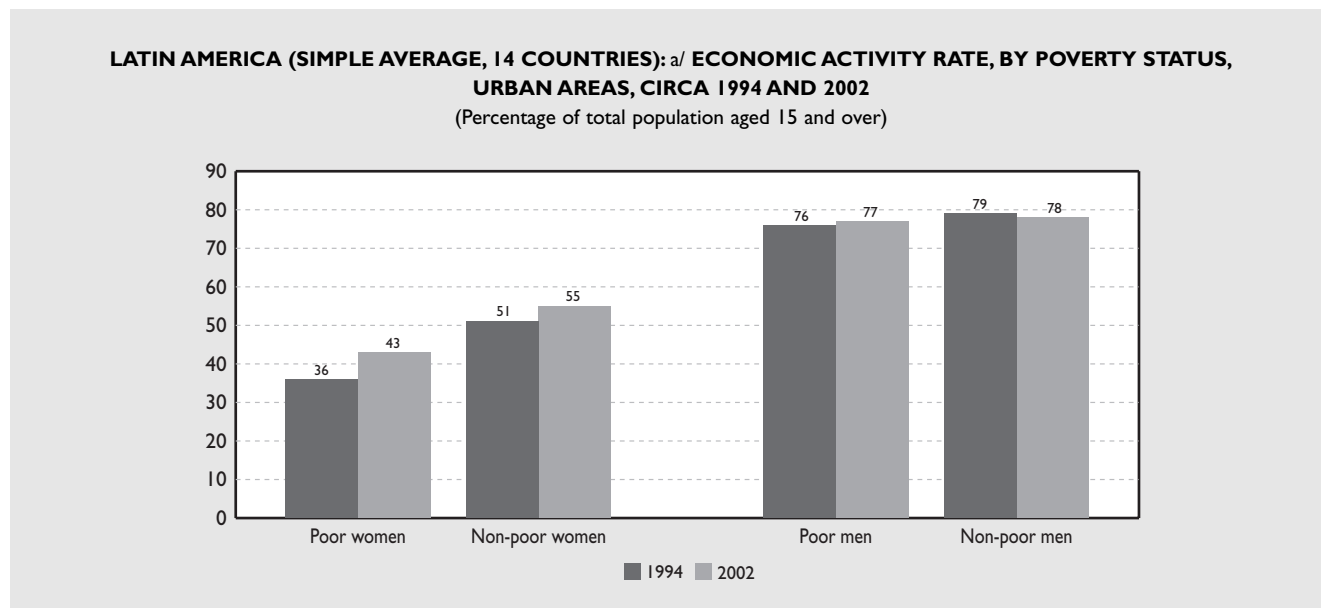
yield the same returns as it does for men; that is, the same number of years invested in education does not result in equality of income. This gap has been narrowing, albeit slowly.

In the 1990s the labour participation rate grew among women but fell slightly among men. Nonetheless, men continue to account for the majority of the population considered economically active in the region (see table III.5).

The participation rate among women living in poor households has risen, although it is still much lower than that of women in non-poor households. While the participation rate of women in poor households in urban areas ranges from 28% to 53% (according to 2002 data), for an average in all the countries of 43%, in non-poor households the range is 44% to 61%, for an average of 55%. Similarly, in all the countries except Uruguay the participation rate is lowest among women in poor households.

Poor women's participation rate increased between 1994 and 2002 in all 15 countries for which information is available. While this increase averages 7 percentage points in the countries overall, it was 4 percentage points for non-poor women. The rate for poor men, on the other hand, rose by a single percentage point, while that of non-poor men fell by one point (see figure III.10).

Figure III.10



Source: ECLAC, Women and Development Unit, on the basis of special tabulations of data from household surveys conducted in the countries.
a/ Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay and Uruguay.

Available information on female employment by age bracket between 1990 and 2002 shows that the most significant increase was 10 percentage points in the 45–to–59 age group, followed by 9 percentage points for women aged 60 or over, 6 points for women aged 25 to 44, and 5 points for those between the ages of 15 and 24 (see table III.5). This could be explained by the fact that unemployment affects young women most and by the significant increase in the proportion of women enrolled in secondary and post-secondary studies.

In this connection, it may be pointed out that in most of the region's countries young women are now enrolling in higher education in larger numbers than their male counterparts and that economically active women have a higher average level of education than men. In most countries the average number of years of schooling is higher for women than for men in both urban and rural areas. This means that Latin America and the Caribbean is the only region in the developing world that is in a position to achieve the third Millennium Goal, which calls for gender equa-

lity in education. In urban areas women have an average of 9.4 years of schooling, while men have 9 years. The average in rural areas is 4.9 years for men and 5.3 years for women, although there is greater variability among women as well. The countries where women still have lower average levels of education than men are Bolivia, El Salvador, Guatemala and Peru (urban areas) and Bolivia, Guatemala and Peru (rural areas). In Paraguay there is practically no difference between men and women in this regard (see table 34 in the statistical annex).

The workforce continues to be highly segmented, with women in less stable and more poorly paid jobs and in those that perpetuate gender stereotypes, such as domestic service. Moreover, women are excluded from jobs such as construction which, though unstable, are not associated with feminine qualities. Notwithstanding these circumstances, women's participation helps to reduce poverty, as shown by the fact that households are less likely to be poor when both spouses or partners contribute income (see figure III.11).

Table III.5a

LATIN AMERICA: PARTICIPATION AND UNEMPLOYMENT RATES a/															
(Percentages)															
	National total					Urban areas					Rural areas				
	1990	1994	1997	1999	2002	1990	1994	1997	1999	2002	1990	1994	1997	1999	2002
Participation rate b/	61.0	61.6	62.0	62.4	65.0	59.6	60.5	61.2	61.6	64.3	64.8	64.9	64.9	64.9	67.3
Men	84.9	84.3	83.8	83.6	81.0	81.4	81.2	81.1	81.0	78.9	93.7	92.8	92.0	91.5	87.7
Women	37.9	39.7	41.1	42.0	49.7	39.5	41.4	42.8	43.7	50.9	33.1	34.3	35.2	35.8	44.9
Unemployment rate	4.6	5.8	6.7	8.6	9.0	5.5	7.3	8.5	10.8	10.7	2.2	1.5	1.5	1.3	3.9
Men	4.3	5.1	5.7	7.2	7.7	5.4	6.5	7.4	9.4	9.3	2.0	1.7	1.4	1.2	3.2
Women	5.1	7.2	8.7	11.2	11.1	5.7	8.7	10.3	13.3	12.7	2.9	0.8	1.6	1.6	5.2

Table III.5b

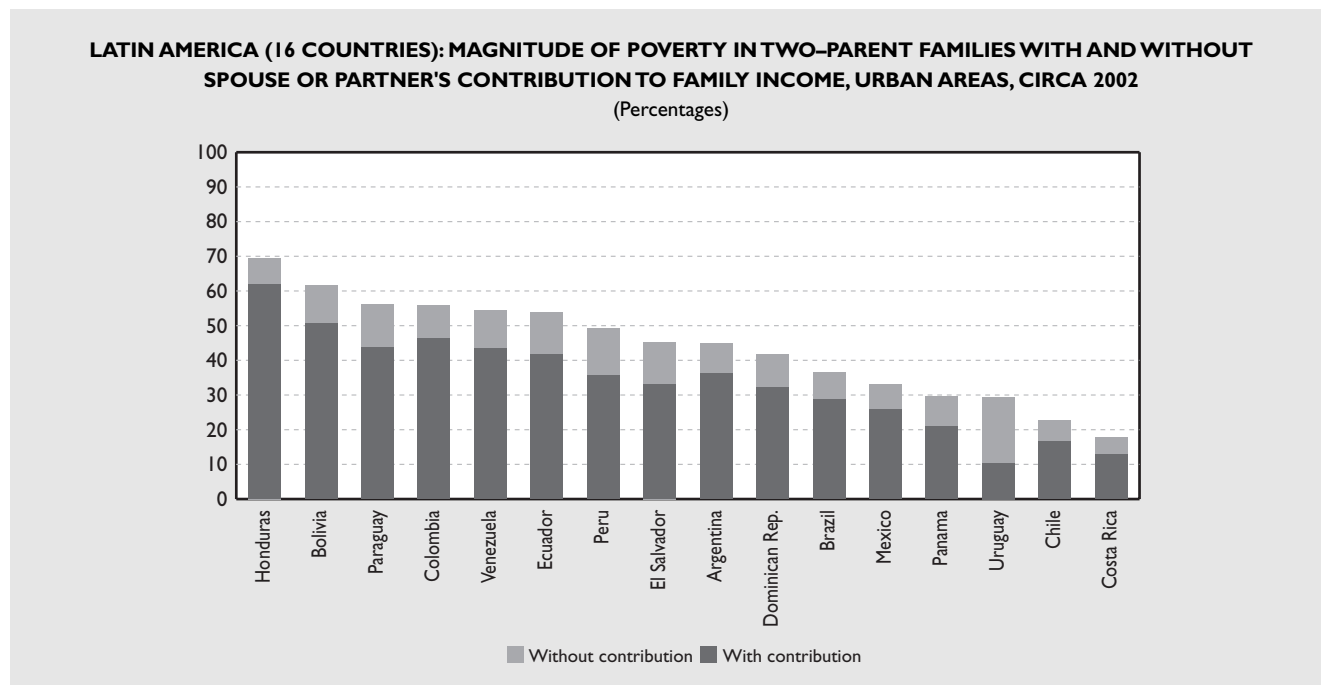
LATIN AMERICA: FEMALE EMPLOYMENT a/															
(Percentages of total employed)															
Employed	National total					Urban areas					Rural areas				
	Age (in years)	1990	1994	1997	1999	2002	1990	1994	1997	1999	2002	1990	1994	1997	1999	2002
Total	31.5	32.4	33.1	33.4	36.7	34.4	35.0	35.6	35.9	39.9	24.2	25.4	25.8	26.2	28.4
15 – 24	31.9	31.8	32.1	32.3	40.3	36.3	35.0	35.6	35.9	41.8	24.2	25.4	25.8	26.2	34.9
25 – 44	33.6	34.2	35.0	35.1	38.3	35.9	35.6	35.5	35.9	39.7	23.4	24.0	24.6	24.4	33.8
45 – 59	28.1	31.0	31.9	33.1	31.3	30.4	36.3	37.0	37.1	32.0	26.6	26.9	27.8	27.7	29.6
60 and over	21.6	25.6	25.8	26.3	38.4	23.8	32.7	34.2	34.8	40.4	22.1	26.1	24.7	27.3	32.4
Years of education															
Total	31.5	32.4	33.1	33.4	35.8	34.4	35.0	35.6	35.9	37.6	24.2	25.4	25.8	26.2	32.8
0 to 5	28.0	29.8	30.1	30.3	35.1	31.6	33.1	33.6	33.6	36.7	23.7	25.5	25.6	26.1	29.6
6 to 9	30.3	30.6	31.1	31.0	41.3	32.6	32.9	32.8	32.8	42.5	22.4	22.8	24.5	24.6	33.3
10 to 12	39.8	38.9	38.0	38.1	45.5	40.3	39.4	38.6	38.8	46.1	35.0	33.4	31.1	31.0	39.8
13 and over	36.7	37.0	40.8	41.1	38.4	36.9	37.2	41.2	41.6	40.4	32.2	31.4	32.4	31.9	32.4
Area of activity															
Total	31.5	32.4	33.1	33.4	38.1	34.4	35.0	35.6	35.9	40.1	24.2	25.4	25.8	26.2	31.4
Agriculture	14.1	20.5	19.2	19.9	25.0	10.2	22.5	19.1	19.2	23.9	15.1	20.0	19.2	20.1	24.3
Industry	28.1	27.1	28.3	28.9	36.3	26.6	26.4	27.2	28.2	34.4	37.3	31.1	35.2	33.0	44.1
Construction	2.8	2.8	2.4	3.2	2.8	3.1	3.0	2.8	3.3	3.1	1.4	2.2	1.0	2.7	1.1
Transport and communications	8.0	7.6	8.2	8.8	10.4	8.5	7.9	8.7	9.0	11.0	4.9	5.1	4.4	6.3	6.6
Commerce	38.3	38.5	40.9	41.2	46.5	37.0	38.1	40.3	40.8	45.6	46.5	40.8	45.2	44.6	53.5
Finance	34.2	33.1	32.5	32.6	37.5	34.8	33.6	32.8	33.0	38.2	21.7	19.5	24.9	21.7	28.3
Social services	47.6	48.5	48.3	46.9	56.3	47.2	48.6	48.5	47.2	57.3	50.2	48.0	46.6	44.6	49.8
Personal services	42.1	41.0	39.8	39.6	37.2	39.7	39.1	38.6	38.4	37.5	60.4	60.5	53.6	51.9	36.4
Domestic service	82.9	81.5	79.4	79.0	83.5	83.4	81.8	79.7	79.6	83.3	79.4	79.5	76.3	72.9	85.2
Not known	21.3	23.3	28.0	26.0	25.0	23.3	27.4	28.4	27.9	26.1	10.0	5.1	23.7	9.5	14.7

Source: ECLAC, Women and Development Unit, on the basis of special tabulations of data from household surveys conducted in the respective countries.

a/ Persons aged 15 years and over.

b/ Ratio of the economically active population to the working-age population.

Figure III.11



Source: ECLAC, Women and Development Unit, on the basis of special tabulations of data from household surveys conducted in the countries.

The discrimination that most women continue to experience can be seen both in occupational categories and in branches of economic activity. Between 1990 and 2002 women's participation rose steadily in agriculture and commerce and fell in personal services. Participation in industry, finance and social services, which had remained constant over the past decade, showed a considerable increase in 2002. Domestic service, which had been declining, showed an increase, perhaps as a result of economic crisis (see figure III.12).

In 2002 over 90% of domestic employees in most countries were women. Conversely, women accounted for less than 50% of wage or salary earners in all the countries (see table III.6). Although the overall picture is mixed, women predominated among unpaid family workers in urban areas in 13 of the 15 countries. Gaps greater than 5 percentage points were observable in Bolivia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico and Peru. In rural areas, 10 out of 14 coun-

tries for which information is available had a larger percentage of women employed in that category. In five of them (Dominican Republic, Honduras, Panama, Paraguay and Peru) the gap was greater than 10 percentage points, while in Costa Rica, Colombia and Guatemala the percentage of men among unpaid rural family workers was higher than the percentage of women (see table III.7).

Between 1990 and 2002 the gender gap in low-productivity sectors narrowed by just 3 percentage points, owing mainly to a decline in the rate of employment for men, from 46% to 43%, while the rate for women remained unchanged. Around 2002 in urban areas in 13 out of 17 countries, a higher percentage of women were employed in low-productivity sectors. The gap between women and men ranged from 1.4 percentage points in Panama to 18 in Bolivia (see figures III.13 and tables 11.1 and 11.2 in the statistical annex).

Table III.6

LATIN AMERICA (18 COUNTRIES): PROPORTION OF WOMEN EMPLOYED, BY OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORY, a/ CIRCA 1994, 1999 AND 2002 (Percentages)													
Country	Year	Urban employed						Rural employed					
		Employers	Employees	Own-account	Unpaid workers	Domestic service	Total	Employers	Employees	Own-account	Unpaid workers	Domestic service	Total
Argentina c/	1994	18.7	38.7 b/	34.4	63.7	...	37.1	...	...	...	...	...	...
	1999	22.2	42.0 b/	35.9	55.6	...	40.0	...	...	...	...	...	...
	2002	24.6	46.4 b/	31.3	60.0	...	42.2	...	...	...	...	...	...
Bolivia d/	1994	20.2	29.1	57.9	71.8	93.9	43.3	...	...	...	...	...	...
	1999	22.8	30.3	53.6	61.5	95.1	43.9	15.8	25.6	29.3	63.3	95.4	46.2
	2002	23.3	31.7	54.3	63.2	97.4	45.1	15.9	19.9	21.2	68.5	97.3	41.4
Brazil e/	1995	21.3	34.7	36.8	60.0	94.4	40.5	8.2	21.5	39.3	59.1	84.3	39.1
	1999	23.2	36.3	34.1	55.9	94.4	40.9	10.4	23.5	37.8	51.6	83.6	38.2
	2001	25.0	36.8	34.9	62.0	94.8	41.6	11.0	22.7	36.3	58.6	83.1	37.6
Chile f/	1994	24.6	31.5	31.1	74.0	98.5	35.8	11.6	16.0	13.5	35.2	96.3	18.3
	1998	27.1	34.5	32.6	73.1	98.4	38.0	13.8	18.3	15.8	30.9	97.7	20.5
	2000	22.4	34.4	34.7	68.9	98.8	38.3	13.2	18.8	16.2	40.0	96.6	21.4
Colombia	1994	22.7	38.7	36.1	75.4	97.7	40.8	15.8	19.2	30.3	44.6	94.1	27.1
	1999	27.4	41.4	38.8	63.0	95.0	43.1	17.1	20.1	29.1	41.0	92.5	27.7
	2002	25.4	41.7	40.8	70.9	96.0	44.7	17.8	20.4	30.4	55.3	92.0	30.4
Costa Rica	1994	21.7	34.8	33.0	50.4	97.5	36.2	11.5	20.6	22.3	30.4	94.1	24.0
	1999	21.2	35.6	38.3	64.8	94.7	38.5	14.4	22.3	22.5	37.3	94.0	26.4
	2002	23.1	36.9	41.2	68.3	96.0	39.5	15.3	23.1	24.5	43.9	92.8	27.1
Ecuador	1994	24.2	31.6	39.7	70.7	95.4	38.3	...	...	...	...	...	...
	1999	22.1	41.4	41.1	67.4	93.2	38.7	...	...	...	...	...	...
	2002	24.9	31.7	41.5	68.0	91.7	38.4	...	...	...	...	...	...
El Salvador	1995	24.2	35.2	61.1	65.7	94.6	45.5	8.3	19.7	38.3	21.8	85.7	27.3
	1999	28.5	37.6	62.5	62.7	93.2	47.1	14.0	19.7	37.2	26.7	87.2	29.9
	2001	32.2	36.9	62.6	62.3	94.1	47.1	11.3	18.4	38.5	28.5	88.7	30.2
Guatemala	1998	25.7	33.4	55.0	51.6	87.3	44.0	5.1	19.6	40.3	31.1	74.2	30.6
	2002	20.9	34.3	55.5	57.4	97.8	43.1	*	19.2	38.3	49.3	98.6	32.6
Honduras	1994	17.1	33.2	43.7	48.7	100.0	39.4	*	20.9	24.2	14.7	100.0	23.2
	1999	26.3	38.0	52.5	57.3	92.6	45.1	18.8	20.2	30.1	26.4	95.0	27.6
	2002	28.8	38.0	45.3	54.5	94.7	43.0	19.5	16.8	25.4	21.8	86.1	22.6
Mexico	1994	13.8	34.4 b/	38.6	55.6	...	35.2	10.1	21.1 b/	37.9	39.2	...	28.5
	1998	16.9	35.3 b/	42.9	59.3	...	37.1	11.8	24.8 b/	40.7	44.7	...	32.9
	2002	17.5	37.3 b/	41.6	67.4	...	38.8	14.3	27.6 b/	44.5	43.7	...	34.4
Nicaragua	1993	*	33.2	48.2	50.7	97.7	43.1	...	17.0	18.6	21.8	94.3	22.2
	1998	15.1	39.5 b/	50.3	51.5	...	42.7	9.1	24.9 b/	24.4	19.2	...	22.8
	2001	22.5	37.0 b/	54.8	55.3	...	42.6	*	24.5 b/	27.7	25.9	...	24.9
Panama	1994	20.9	38.4	22.5	44.9	92.0	39.3	...	...	...	...	...	...
	1999	21.2	37.1	27.6	42.5	90.2	37.9	...	...	...	...	...	...
	2002	20.7	38.9	29.7	71.6	90.8	40.1	15.0	20.6	17.6	38.6	77.9	23.0
Paraguay	1994	23.9	30.3	49.5	66.2	92.6	41.8	...	...	...	...	...	...
	1999	21.4	31.0	49.9	50.0	94.6	42.1	10.9	16.7	34.7	22.9	95.5	29.5
	2002	24.7	33.9	50.0	57.0	91.7	44.5	7.2	12.4	38.8	27.2	91.5	31.6
Peru	2001	22.0	32.9	50.8	65.0	95.2	44.0	19.3	22.0	32.2	74.0	96.0	42.7
Dominican Republic	2002	24.2	41.4	28.7	60.2	89.1	38.7	*	28.8	15.5	*	89.3	23.2
Uruguay	1994	24.0	42.7 b/	38.0	72.8	...	41.5	...	...	...	...	...	...
	1999	24.0	44.9 b/	35.2	71.5	...	42.4	...	...	...	...	...	...
	2002	23.6	46.1 b/	33.4	67.8	...	42.4	...	...	...	...	...	...
Venezuela	1994	9.2	37.5 b/	29.3	41.2	...	33.4	*	24.4 b/	18.3	12.3	...	20.1
	1999 g/	13.4	36.2 b/	37.8	37.8	...	35.6	...	...	...	...	...	...
	2002 g/	17.2	38.5 b/	40.1	55.8	...	38.4	...	...	...	...	...	...

Source: ECLAC, Women and Development Unit, on the basis of special tabulations of data from household surveys conducted in the respective countries.

* Insufficient sample size.

a/ Calculated as the number of employed women aged 15 years or more divided by the total of employed persons aged 15 years or more in each occupational category, multiplied by 100.

b/ The employees category includes domestic service.

c/ 1994: Greater Buenos Aires and 18 population centres. 1999: Greater Buenos Aires and 26 population centres. 2002: Greater Buenos Aires and 30 population centres.

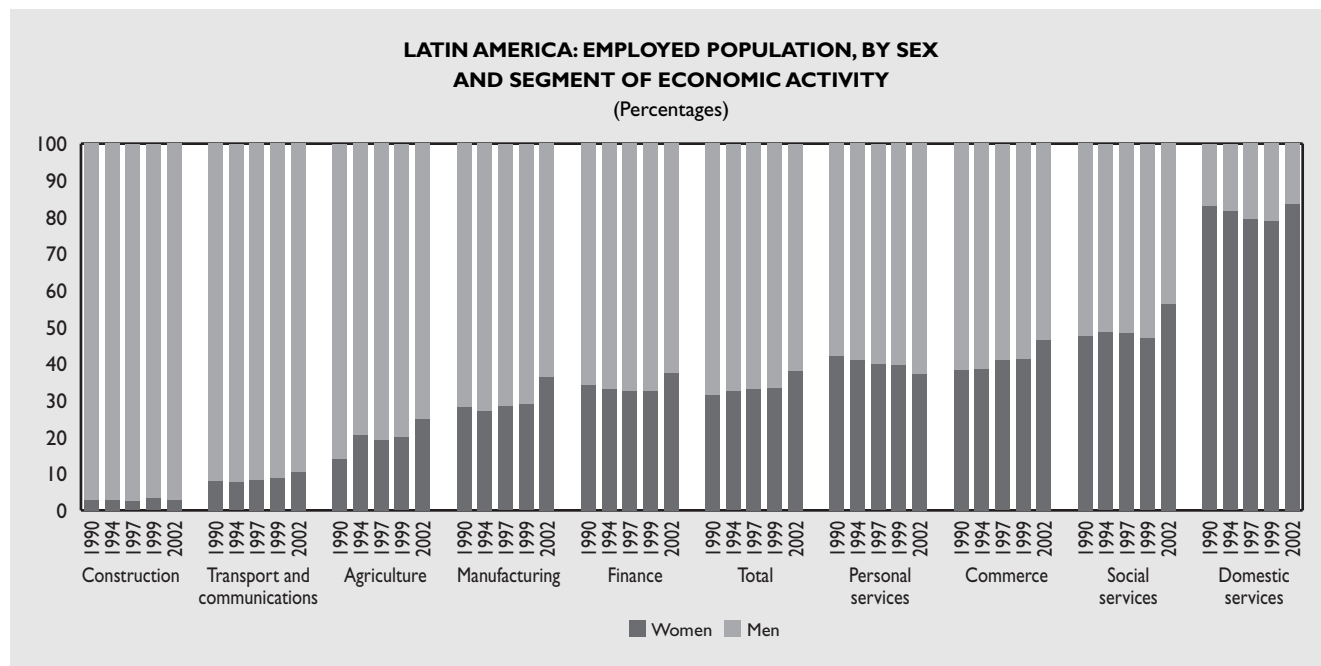
d/ 1994: 7 departments and the city of Trinidad. 1999: 8 departments and Cobija. 2002: 9 departments.

e/ 1994: 7 metropolitan areas and other urban areas. 1999 and 2002: 10 metropolitan areas and other urban areas.

f/ 1994: Rural area: includes cities with fewer than 2,000 inhabitants, chosen at random without regard to economic activity. As of 1998: Rural area: area of concentrated or dispersed housing with 1,000 inhabitants or fewer, or between 1,001 and 2,000 inhabitants with less than 50% of its economically active population working in secondary and/or tertiary activities.

g/ National total.

Figure III.12



Source: ECLAC, on the basis of estimates prepared by the Population Division of ECLAC – Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre (CELADE) and special tabulations of data from household surveys conducted in the respective countries.

Table III.7

**LATIN AMERICA (18 COUNTRIES): UNPAID FAMILY WORKERS AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL EMPLOYED WORKERS,
BY SEX, URBAN AREAS, CIRCA 2002**

Country	Year	Urban employed		Rural employed	
		Females	Males	Females	Males
Argentina	2002	1.4	0.7	...	...
Bolivia	2002	11.5	5.5	2.3	2.2
Brazil	2001	4.4	1.9	6.8	2.8
Chile	2000	2.1	0.6	7.3	3.5
Colombia	2002	5.5	1.8	11.5	12.5
Costa Rica	2002	2.9	0.9	12.6	13.2
Ecuador	2002	8.0	2.3	...	...
El Salvador	2001	7.6	4.1	12.8	8.6
Guatemala	2002	11.6	6.5	14.4	17.8
Honduras	2002	6.9	4.3	15.6	5.5
Mexico	2002	9.3	2.8	17.8	8.5
Nicaragua	2001	9.5	5.7	21.6	20.5
Panama	2002	1.4	0.4	27.2	13.5
Paraguay	2002	5.3	3.2	31.7	13.5
Peru	2001	9.8	4.1	52.2	13.6
Dominican Republic	2002	1.5	0.6	71.1	23.0
Uruguay	2002	2.4	0.8	...	...
Venezuela a/	2002	3.8	1.9	...	...

Source: ECLAC, Women and Development Unit, on the basis of special tabulations of data from household surveys conducted in the respective countries.
a/ National total.

Figure III.13



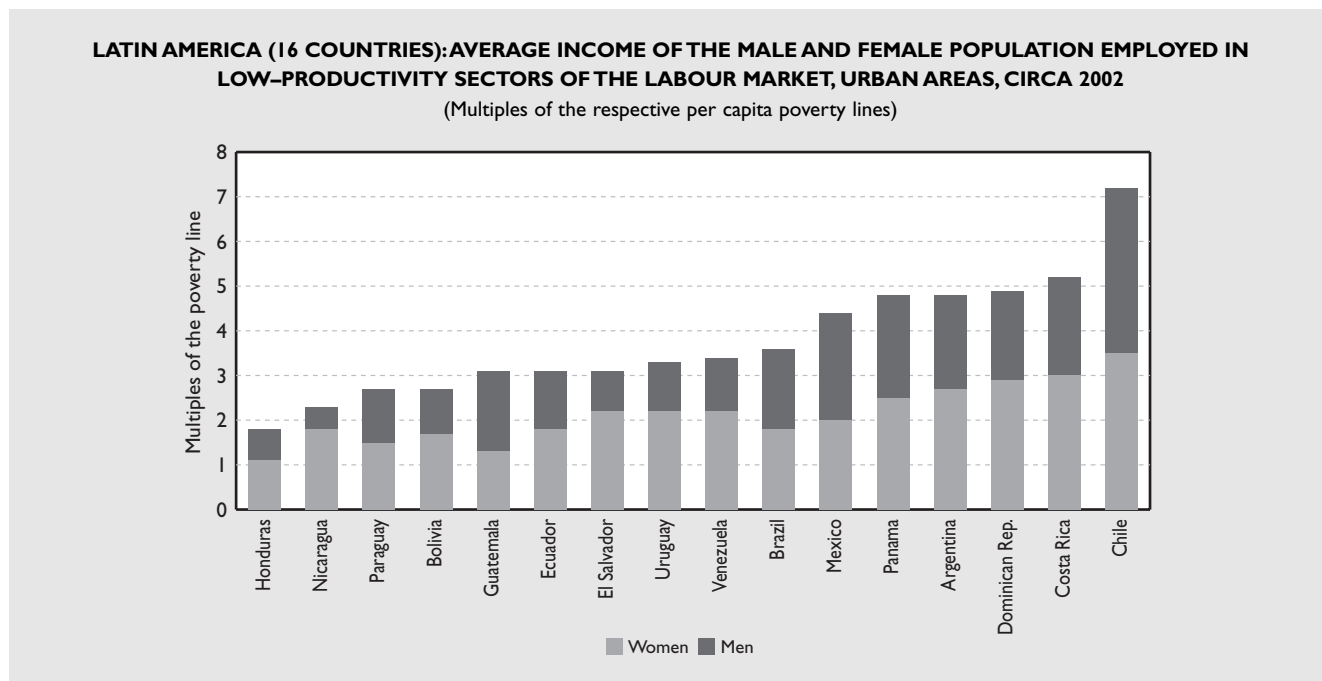
Source: ECLAC, on the basis of special tabulations of data from household surveys conducted in the respective countries.

a/ Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Panama, Paraguay and Uruguay.

An analysis of urban areas in 14 countries in 2002 showed that women employed in low-productivity sectors earned significantly less than men. The gap between the sexes ranged from 0.5 to nearly 4 ti-

mes the poverty line, with an average of 1.5 times the poverty line for the countries as a whole (see figure III.14).

Figure III.14



Source: ECLAC, on the basis of special tabulations of data from household surveys conducted in the respective countries.

The number of children is considered to be one of the factors affecting women’s labour participation. Information for 2002 shows that women work regardless of the number of children under 15 living in the household. This is true of women in both poor and non-poor households. On the other hand, men’s participation rises significantly with the rate of dependency in the household. This may suggest that men’s role as providers continues to prevail (see figure III.15).

Despite the progress made in terms of women’s economic participation, problems such as workforce segmentation, the income gap and higher unemployment rates persist, regardless of educational level.

Women’s contribution to total household income is particularly significant in reducing poverty, above all in poor households. This is evident when the income contributed by female spouses or partners is subtracted from total income in two-parent households (see figure III.11).

Households are an important decision-making sphere. Accordingly, it is vital to identify the opportunities open to adult household members to take part in decisions and, in particular, the degree of autonomy they enjoy in so doing. This is especially relevant because it may be supposed that poverty is also perpetuated by unequal distributive practices within the family. It is important to identify the internal allocation and distribution of household resources. With respect to spending patterns, there is evidence that women in various contexts spend a higher proportion of their income on the home and family, to the detriment of their personal needs. Men, on the other hand, tend to reserve a large proportion of their income for personal consumption; there are even data indicating that the proportion of income contributed by men for household spending declines with drops in their effective intake, meaning that men give priority to maintaining their personal consumption levels (Baden and Milward, 1997).

Figure III.15



Source: ECLAC, Women and Development Unit, on the basis of special tabulations of data from household surveys conducted in the respective countries. a/ Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay and Uruguay.

In addition to having a positive effect on income, women's economic autonomy helps to empower them by boosting their ability to make choices and take action and by strengthening certain subjective dimensions that make them feel less vulnerable (Chant, 2003). This, together with the positive effects of women's education in promoting child health and reducing maternal mortality, makes it clear that investing in women's empowerment is crucial if the Millennium Development Goals are to be met.

When women enter the workforce, they generally earn about 65% as much as men. The gap persists even when adjustments are made for the number of hours worked and the level of education. The biggest differences are found at the higher levels of education; according to the regional average, women's hourly pay is equivalent to 72% of men's hourly pay (see figure III.16). It can be concluded that education does not provide the same returns for women as it does for men; that is, it does not translate into equal income for all individuals having invested the same number of years in education. This is particularly true for the population with the highest levels of education.

Women over the age of 65 face a number of inequities in the labour market and a socially imposed obligation to perform unpaid domestic work. Available data for 13 countries show fewer female than male income earners in all of them, with an income gap of between 60% and 90%, averaging 77% for the countries taken as a whole (see tables III.8 and III.9).

In short, available data show that although Latin American women make a significant contribution to reducing poverty, they suffer its effects more severely and therefore have an incentive to enter the workforce. More women are employed in paid jobs than in the past, but unemployment rates are much higher for women than for men regardless of education. Also, women are paid less than men and enjoy less social protection. Unemployment rose for both men and women in the 1990s and up to 2002. Nevertheless, there is a large difference between the two groups. Unemployment rose by 3.4 percentage points among men between 1990 and 2002, but by 6 points among women (see table III.5).

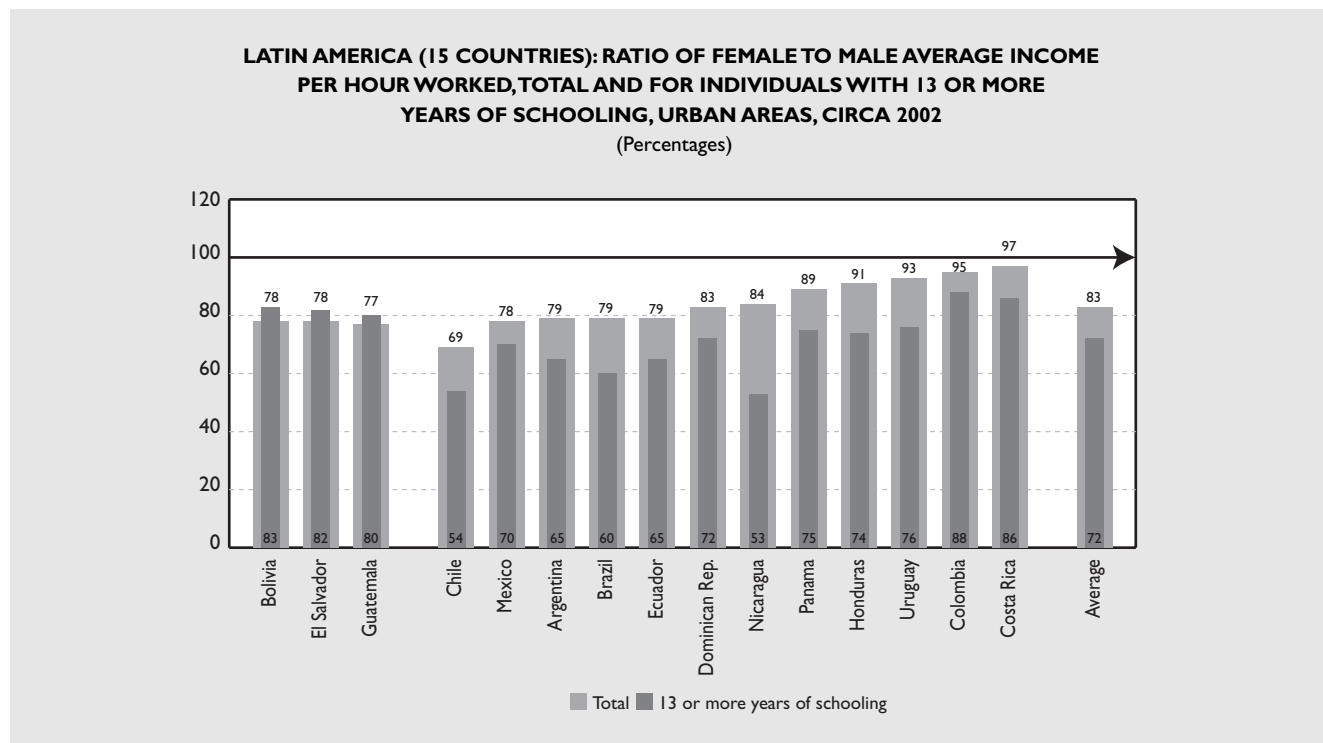
The foregoing indicates that women are interested in entering the labour market but face greater obstacles in both entering and staying in the workforce.

Table III.8

LATIN AMERICA (11 COUNTRIES): RETIREMENT AND PENSION INCOME OF THE POPULATION AGED 60 YEARS AND OVER, BY AGE GROUP AND SEX, URBAN AREAS, CIRCA 2002 (Percentage of recipients)										
Country	Age group of older adults									
	60-64		65-69		60 and above		65 and above		70 and above	
	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males
Argentina	25.5	21.3	56.2	51.7	56.7	56.8	66.8	73.0	71.5	82.7
Bolivia	21.6	31.4	16.1	27.4	22.0	32.8	22.1	33.6	25.0	36.9
Brazil	57.6	57.8	72.6	78.9	74.0	78.3	80.9	88.4	85.5	94.4
Chile	35.0	37.1	50.1	66.5	52.0	62.8	58.8	73.5	63.3	77.9
Colombia	15.4	26.3	16.2	32.8	19.6	31.5	21.5	34.0	24.1	34.7
Ecuador	12.4	14.5	16.5	23.7	17.2	25.8	19.5	30.8	20.9	34.6
El Salvador	11.6	27.1	16.7	26.5	14.1	28.7	15.0	29.3	14.2	30.7
Mexico	11.8	28.7	17.6	43.6	15.9	37.2	17.7	41.7	17.7	40.6
Panama	42.7	43.4	48.8	74.6	46.8	63.4	48.5	72.5	48.4	71.4
Paraguay	13.1	18.9	18.6	24.3	20.0	26.3	23.0	29.6	25.1	32.7
Uruguay	57.0	45.9	75.0	77.0	79.4	78.0	86.3	89.6	90.7	95.5

Source: ECLAC, Women and Development Unit, on the basis of special tabulations of data from household surveys conducted in the respective countries.

Figure III.16



Source: ECLAC, Women and Development Unit, on the basis of special tabulations of data from household surveys conducted in the respective countries.

Table III.9

LATIN AMERICA (11 COUNTRIES): AVERAGE RETIREMENT AND PENSION INCOME ^{a/} OF WOMEN AS A PERCENTAGE OF THAT OF MEN, URBAN AREAS, CIRCA 2002
(Percentages)

Country	Age group of older adults				
	60–64	65–69	60 and above	65 and above	70 and above
Argentina	77.9	71.1	72.0	71.2	71.0
Bolivia	77.5	92.2	75.8	74.9	69.7
Brazil	62.9	62.8	69.9	72.9	79.2
Chile	60.3	67.0	66.2	67.6	68.1
Colombia	71.5	76.2	81.4	86.3	93.2
Ecuador	63.4	94.4	84.1	90.2	88.6
El Salvador	65.1	78.0	73.0	76.8	75.8
Mexico	91.3	85.9	79.9	76.8	70.6
Panama	100.3	85.3	81.4	74.9	70.0
Paraguay	47.7	81.7	60.9	64.3	58.6
Uruguay	56.2	74.1	71.1	74.3	74.4

Source: ECLAC, Women and Development Unit, on the basis of special tabulations of data from household.

a/ Calculated by dividing women's average income by men's average income and multiplying the result by 100.

E. PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING

Women's autonomy and participation in private and public decision-making are a key indicator for measuring the inequalities affecting them.

The distribution of power in the family, the community and society as a whole indicates the degree to which women's right to exercise citizenship, take autonomous decisions and participate in building a democratic society is recognized. Constraints in these areas are greater in situations of poverty. Autonomy and participation in private and public decision-making are assets that help women overcome this condition, especially with respect to resource allocation and other decisions that affect women personally or their families, their communities and society as a whole.

If poverty is regarded as a lack of freedom to do things to which value is attached, the bargaining processes whereby women and men gain a greater or lesser degree of control over their lives must be analysed in order to yield an understanding of the gender dynamic of poverty.

1. PARTICIPATION IN SOCIETY'S DECISIONS

Women's progress in terms of participation in political life has been slow and uneven, especially with regard to government positions. The countries that have made significant progress over the past decade are the ones that have passed legislation establishing

quotas and other mechanisms to promote women's integration.

The mechanisms established to improve women's political representation vary by country and by level (national or municipal government, national legislation or party regulations). The most common approach has been to establish mandatory affirmative-action measures stipulating a minimum number of positions or parliamentary seats that must be occupied by women. Another approach is to establish obligations or incentives for political actors to raise the number of women participants. For example, a portion of State subsidies may be directed to political parties to enable them to take such action, or subsidy amounts may increase with the number of positions filled by women.

The pioneer in this field is Argentina (Barreiro and others, undated). By law, a minimum of 30% of candidates for elective office must be women (article 60 of the National Electoral Code, as amended by Law N° 24012). Political parties are required to establish in their charters a minimum quota for women in their internal lists of candidates. These mechanisms are mandatory, and electoral bodies may not endorse lists of candidates that fail to comply. In addition, any citizen may challenge lists of candidates that do not meet this requirement.

Several countries have adopted similar models. Brazil, for example, established a minimum of 30% and a maximum of 70% for candidates of either sex for any party or coalition (article 10, paragraph 3 of Law N° 9504). Colombia passed a gender quota law stipulating that at least 30% of senior public positions must be occupied by women, and adopted provisions for promoting the participation and representation of people of indigenous or African descent, establishing special constituencies to guarantee their representation in the Congress.

This concept of inclusion also prevails in Panama, where the Electoral Code prohibits political parties from discriminating among their members on the grounds of race, sex, religious belief, culture or social status. In internal elections, political parties must guarantee that at least 30% of the candidates for party positions or elective office are women, although no penalties are provided for in the event of non-compliance.

Panama has four indigenous regions whose boundaries coincide with those of the country's electoral districts. This has functioned as an affirmative-action mechanism for indigenous peoples, in particular the Kuna, Emberá and Ngobe.

Bolivia's Electoral Code establishes different measures for each type of elective office, such as:

- Senators: In the candidate lists for each department, at least one out of every four candidates must be a woman (article 112a, paragraph b);
- Deputies of multi-member districts: For each department, at least one out of every three candidates must be a woman (article 112, paragraph 1(c));
- Municipal council members: Candidate lists must be drawn up so that the first council member has an alternate of the opposite sex. Second and third council members must be assigned alternately (man/woman, woman/man). The complete list must include at least 30% women (article 112, paragraphs 2(a), (b) and (c)).

These provisions are mandatory; in the event of non-compliance, the National Electoral Court rejects the list and so notifies the party or alliance, which has 72 hours to make the necessary adjustments (article 112, paragraph 1(c)).

Under the formula in force in Mexico, neither sex may account for more than 70% of the candidates presented by political parties for the offices of senator and deputy (article 75–A, Federal Code of Electoral Institutions and Procedures). In the event of non-compliance, the Federal Electoral Institute issues a warning and sets a deadline for correcting the anomaly. In the event of a second violation, registration of the candidates is denied (article 75–C).

In Costa Rica electoral legislation promotes the inclusion of women by various means:

- Party by-laws must provide for a mechanism for ensuring women's participation in the proportion stipulated in article 60 of the Electoral Code, both in the party structure and among the candidates for elective office (article 58 (n)).
- Concerning regional party structure, the Electoral Code provides that at least 40% of the representatives in assemblies at the district, canton and provincial levels must be women (article 60).

Also, the "Real Equality Act" of 1990 includes a very innovative measure whereby a portion of political parties' funds must be earmarked for women's political training.

Of special interest is Ecuador's legislation, which stipulates a minimum mandatory quota of 30% including alternates, to be increased by 5% in each election until it reaches 50%.

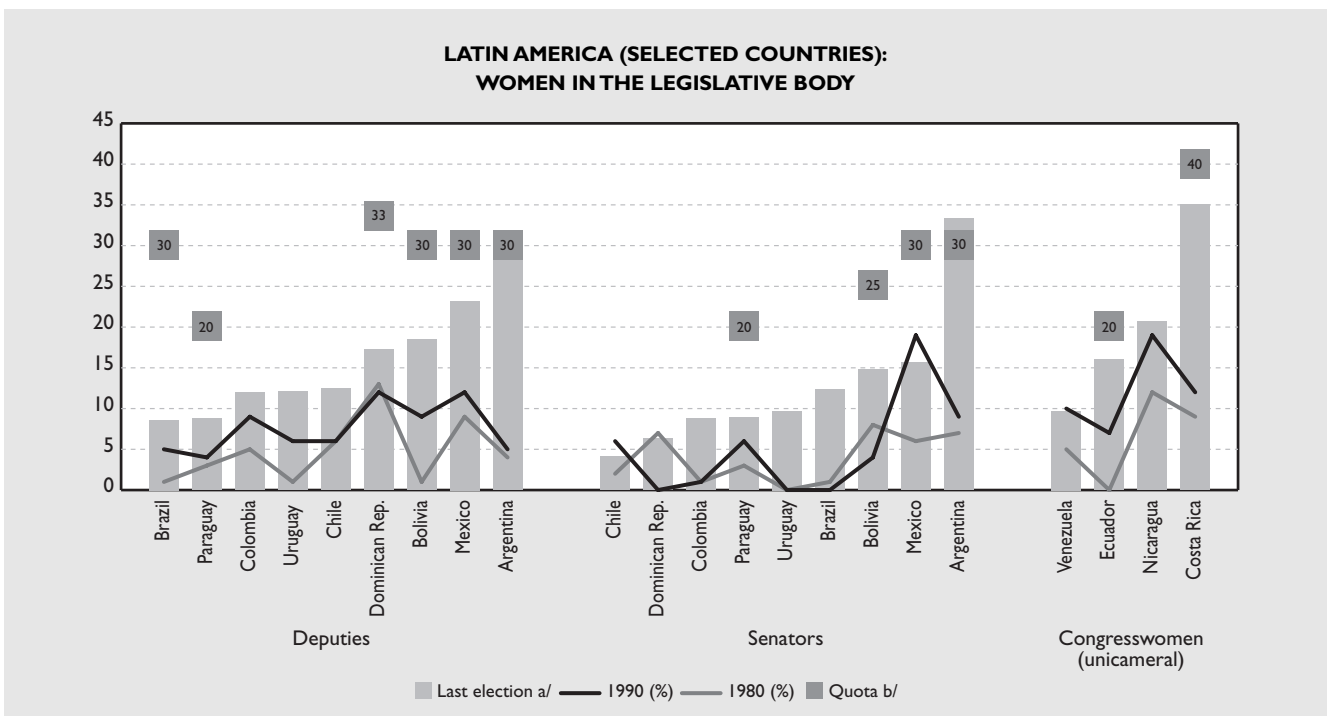
In Peru the minimum percentage allocated to women is 25%. Neither sex may account for more than 75% of the candidates for Congress from each district. In constituencies where the slate consists of three candidates, not more than two of them may be of the same sex (article 116 of the Electoral Act). Lists of candidates for regional councils must comprise one candidate from each province in the order in which the political party or movement decides, including a quota in each case of not less than 30% and not more than 70% of either sex. Other measu-

res promote the participation of representatives of indigenous peoples, but are not part of the Electoral Act.

Very low quotas have been set in Paraguay. The Electoral Code requires political parties and movements to ensure that at least 20% of the individuals competing in internal elections to select candidates for office are women. Accordingly, the percentage of women on the lists presented for national elections is much lower. Although all the parties have amended their by-laws to reflect this requirement, there are no specific penalties in place for non-compliance. The countries of the region that have no affirmative-action measures in place to improve women's representation are Chile, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Uruguay and Venezuela.

Only three countries in the region have seen a significant increase in the number of women in legislative bodies: Argentina, Costa Rica and Mexico

Figure III.17



Source: ECLAC, prepared by the Women and Development Unit using data obtained from *Women and Power in the Americas* (www.thedialogue.org), the Inter-Parliamentary Union (www.ipu.org) and the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (www.idea.int).
 a/ Uruguay (1999), Venezuela (2000), Argentina (2001), Chile (2001), Nicaragua (2001), Bolivia (2002), Brazil (2002), Colombia (2002), Costa Rica (2002), Dominican Republic (2002), Paraguay (2003).
 b/ Chile, Colombia, Nicaragua, Uruguay and Venezuela do not have quota laws.

(see figure III.17 and table III.10). The figure shows the situation in the period 2000–2003, when women's representation ranged in most countries from 10% to 20%. Women's presence in legislative bodies has increased since the adoption of quota laws, generally after 1995, the year of the Fourth World Con-

ference on Women. Prior to the enactment of affirmative-action legislation, women's representation was very volatile. These more erratic trends are illustrated in figure III.17, which is based on data for 1980 and 1990.

Table III.10

LATIN AMERICA (SELECTED COUNTRIES): PRESENCE OF WOMEN IN THE LEGISLATURE, CIRCA 1980, 1990, 2000 AND 2002								
Country	Legislative body	Last election (%)	2000 (%)	1990 (%)	1980 (%)	Year of affirmative-action law	Percentage quota	Where applied
Argentina	Chamber of Deputies	2001 30.7	27	5	(1983) 4	1991	30%	Both chambers
	Senate	33.3	3	9	(1983) 7			
Bolivia	Chamber of Deputies	2002 18.5	12	9	1	1997	30%	Lower chamber
	Senate	14.8	4	4	8			
Brazil	Chamber of Deputies	2002 8.6	6	5	1	1997	30%	Lower chamber
	Senate	12.3	7	0	1			
Chile	Chamber of Deputies	2001 12.5	11	6	(1970) 6	No law		
	Senate	4.1	4	6	(1970) 2			
Colombia	Chamber of Deputies	2002 12	12	9	5	2000 No law	30% a/	Executive branch
	Senate	8.8	13	1	1			
Costa Rica	Congress	2002 35.1	19	12	9	1997/2000	40%	Unicameral
Dominican Republic	Chamber of Deputies	2002 17.3	16	12	13	1997	33%	Lower chamber
	Senate	6.3	7	0	7			
Ecuador	Congress	2002 16	15	7	0	1997	20%	Unicameral
Mexico	Chamber of Deputies	2003 23.2	16	12	9	1996/2000	30%	Both chambers
	Senate	(2000)15.6	16	19	6			
Nicaragua	Congress	2001 20.7	10	19	12	No law		Unicameral
Paraguay	Chamber of Deputies	2003 8.8	3	4	3	1996	20%	Both chambers
	Senate	8.9	18	6	3			
Uruguay	Chamber of Deputies	1999 12.1	12	6	(1972) 1	No law		
	Senate	9.7	10	0	(1972) 0			
Venezuela	Congress	2000 9.7	10	10	5	1998	30% b/	Unicameral

Source: ECLAC, Women and Development Unit, on the basis of data obtained from *Women and Power in the Americas* (www.thedialogue.org), the Inter-Parliamentary Union (www.ipu.org) and the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (www.idea.int).

a/ Refers to administrative posts in the executive branch.

b/ The quota law was recently repealed.

