Estación de Economía Política

Family Evolution and Contemporary Social Transformations*

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Abstract

In the first place, this paper intends to analyze the kind of relationships existing inside the family. In order to do that, the author makes an effort to reconsider its historical forming process applying the classical anthropological texts. At this stage, the analysis proposes two different types of relationships between human beings, the primal, which arose from the most elementary feelings of love, protection, accompaniment, and the strictly social, risen from the needs of cooperation and collective work. The family is the expression of both kinds of relationships. In the second place, this work analyzes the nuclear family as a result of a historical process associated to the development of capital and the social conditions that make possible its consolidation. And in the third place, the author proposes the discussion on the crisis of the nuclear family under the perspective of the contemporary global transformation of the accumulation of capital. As a conclusion: some reflections on the perspectives that these transformations offer to the role of the family.

Resumen

El trabajo se plantea en primer lugar analizar el tipo de relaciones existentes en la familia, para lo cual se hace un esfuerzo por repensar el proceso de formación histórica de esta, recurriendo a los principales textos antropológicos clásicos. De ese proceso se propone la existencia de dos tipos de relaciones entre los hombres, las primigenias surgidas sobre la base de los sentimientos más elementales de cariño, protección, acompañamiento, y las propiamente sociales, surgidas sobre la base de las necesidades de cooperación y trabajo conjunto. La familia es la expresión de ambas relaciones. En segundo lugar, se analiza la familia nuclear como el resultado de un proceso histórico, asociado al desarrollo del capital y a las condiciones sociales que permiten su consolidación. Y en tercer lugar se propone la discusión,

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desde la perspectiva de las transformaciones contemporáneas de la acumulación de capital en escala global, sus repercusiones sobre la crisis de la familia nuclear. Se concluye descubriendo a la "familia nuclear" como una institución familiar altamente permeable tanto a las relaciones primigenias como a las sociales. Característica que constituye su debilidad en las actuales condiciones sociales.

1. *The family as a means of adapting the needs of reproduction of species to the needs of society.*

In a recent work we pointed out that the relationship between family and society has not always been clearly presented to the social analysis since its usual conception as belonging to the ”private” field has obscured this link. This conception has frequently hidden the relationship between the family and social activity in general and the State’s action in particular. However, these links have been brought in relief as a result of the depth and speed of the ruptures and changes on the economical, social, cultural, and political relations among the nations, during the last fifteen years. It seems that these changes have furthered the existing conflict between social relations as such and familiar relationships, unveiling in a dramatic way the already existing contradictory relations between them. (Reuben, S. 2000, pp. 15-22).

Given these facts, we have thought of the need of reviewing the analysis of these relationships following Marx´s epistemological proposal according to which, notwithstanding having conceived the social categories to express and represent determined social facts, historically concrete, the more abstract “[…]only appear there, where the richest tangible development exists, where an element appears as common to many, as common to all the elements. Then, it is no longer possible to be thought of with a particular meaning.” , (Marx, K., 1982, p.25) Following this conception of the process of knowledge, the “family” conceived as an abstract category, reaches its contemporary particular meaning in response to the conditions and fundamental requirements of the bourgeois society, and since the latter is conceived as the dominant society, the nuclear family (constituted by progenitors and single offspring[2]) presents *developed* circumstances that permit an approach of the relationships that build the familiar institution from a more enriched perspective.[3]

Undoubtedly, one of the *quid pro quo* that has contributed more in the formation of a prejudiced vision of the family has precisely been the assumption of a harmonious connection between society and State on one hand, and the family on the other; and the functional correspondence of family with society and vice versa.[4] But what begins to appear from the analysis we have been performing on the familiar structures, is more a vision of an interested confrontation between society and family, of equilibrium by opposition, whose rupture damages (or transform) both terms of the equation.

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[2]Naturally, with the increase in divorce and conjugal separation, the settlements we consider as “nuclear” include the single sons and daughters of either one of the spouses and their common offspring, see Reuben, S.,1992.

[3] By “development” we will understand in this work, the process by which the elements that constitute a social phenomenon are accumulated and articulately added. For a further discussion on this interpretation we refer the reader to the extraordinary work of Norbert Elias 1994.

[4] In relatively close studies as in Talcott Parsons’, the conjugal family is conceived not only as the more appropriate contemporaneous social structure, but is also conceived as the more appropriate form to answer the needs that a free society presupposes. “Everything seems to indicate that, notwithstanding the pressures and difficulties it implies, our familiar system is more able than the majority of others to develop the temperamental features adequate to such exigencies. It also concedes a degree of freedom for the development of feelings and personal links that is rarely found in the more strictly controlled systems of other societies. In its more perfect forms it seems to constitute, in the private sphere, a very appropriate model for the cult citizens of a free society”. (Parsons, 1978, pp. 64-65).

In order to consistently expose this idea, it is necessary to establish the perspective from which we perceive the society and the development of culture. We conceive society as an association of individuals that integrate themselves to meet challenges and to accomplish joint tasks. Thus, we suppose that the more elementary needs of surviving and reproduction had been attended, before the surging of these larger groups, by smaller groups, such as the progenitor and her children, or the progenitors and offspring, or somewhat larger groups with various adult females and males and their progeny.[5] And that, consequently, other tasks and challenges precisely unreachable for such small groups, are those which are sought after with the voluntary integration of two or more of them in larger communities. Therefore, it can be reasonably supposed that the configuration of such larger entities involved the emergence of new ways of relating and attaching, relationships that implied independence from the feelings of care, tenderness and passion, of the instinctive inclinations associated to the sexual estrus, etc. to give place to relationships founded on convenience and interest, established to meet challenges and reach objectives which went far beyond those which could be reached by the basic groups, on the frame of elementary relationships; by the amplitude of the activity, number of individuals required, degree of specialization and sub division of tasks, etc.[6] The type of relationships these activities demand are to-

[5] For the reader interested in studies in the direction of actual elements available for the reconstruction of the origin of kinship relations, I recommend the work of Kathleen Gough (1973), in which the author analyzes the behavior of primates, the material rests of prehistoric men and in the third place, familiar life of agrarian and hunting groups at present, to elaborate a proposal on this origin. Notwithstanding the author's conclusion related to the formation of familiar and social links, which shows the confusion according to family that precisely we try to demonstrate in this work, her general proposal establishes the central and basic concepts over which we can trust the theories on the origin of family. We illustrate the confusion by transcribing a paragraph that seems typical to us: "The family proportioned the framework to all societies previous to the appearance of state and the source of all creativity. By grouping for the survival of his species and the development of knowledge, human beings learned to control their sexual desire and suppress their individual egotism, their aggressiveness and their rivalry. The other face of this auto control was a growing capacity for love. Not only love of the mother for her child —which already happens among apes— but also love of the male for the female (which establishes enduring relationships) and among members of the same sex until reaching more extended groups of human beings each time. Without this initial auto control manifesting in the prohibition of incest and in the generosity and moral order of the primitive familiar life, civilization would have not been possible." (Ob. Cit., p.150),. What we state, as will be shown farther, is somehow the contrary; undoubtedly, the more primal groups constructed the framework for societies, but once these constituted themselves over utilitarian relationships between individuals, they transformed the primal relationships into the relationships that we nowadays know as properly familiar. The feelings of empathy, affection, love and tenderness, are associated to maternity, to filial dependency, to frequent protection and accompaniment, to mutual recognition when sharing elementary activities and even to the presence itself of *neo tonic features,* all these situations that appear in more elementary ways of existence, including the apes and some mammals. Therefore, to attribute such virtues to culture or civilization is to ideologically invert the terms of reality. Rather, from our point of view, the challenge of civilization is precisely to attain such feelings—to spell it in biblical terms—"… towards our neighbor."

[6] We find another vision of the origin of family in Linton, Sally (1979), where she discusses the "machista" vision of considering hunting as the principal origin of the conditions generating the human features. From the author's perspective, immature birth and dependence of the offspring would have been one of the main factors for the appearance of conditions for social and cultural development; and distribution of nourishment, one of the human features-- although also present in some primates-- would have appeared in the duo mother-son. (p.42 and ff.) Likewise, the relationship male-female in the traditional vision, according to the author, must be redefined giving the sexual estrus of the female a greater importance as to make think that nuclear family could not have been the result of a long historical process: "Long term monogamy is clearly a model quite bizarre, included among modern human beings, and I think it is a bias typical of the occidental male to suppose its existence in proto- human society." (p.41). The model of family we propose is consistent with the broader vision that comes from the feminist critics of the "androcentric" model..

tally different from those originated in the scope of primal needs of mating and accompaniment, of offspring care and their teaching of survival practices; since they involve at least, planning and organization, communication, order, hierarchy, discipline and limits to individual freedom in order to reach collective objectives; all this among adult persons of the same sex, socially undistinguishable and without feelings of empathy among them, as supposed in relationships originated in mating, care and accompaniment.

In this manner, two different types of relationships among individuals coincide with the emergence of *homo sapiens,* those originated in elementary survival needs, reproduction and accompaniment, associated with instinctive and elementary ways of involving (relationships for *primal care),* and those originated in the latest needs of collective, conscientious and calculated appropriation of nature, which provide the foundations for culture.[7] These latter are the properly said, social relationships, that once constituted and consolidated and due to their extraordinary power of transformation and collective appropriation of the environment (and domain of contingency), begin to expand under the shape of *institutions,* and to affect elementary relationships and ways of life as soon as they show efficiency to reach objectives, meet challenges and achieve projected tasks for the individual benefit.

Hence, two areas that define a part of social dynamics are delimited; such are, the area of relationships that we could now name as *prim genial* (identified with those known nowadays as "familiar") and the area of relationships of interested cooperation, which we could name as social (or public). [8] The result is a community of individuals in need of relating themselves in an interested "utilitarian" way in search of their welfare by means of association, and on the other hand, in a "natural" uninterested way (affectionate and solidary) in order to fulfill elementary and instinctive needs, which association does not attend nor resolve; although they not only are necessary for individual welfare, but are also fundamental for the reproduction of groups and consequently, of society.[9]

From this sort of opposition between the two kinds of relationships involved in human organization, the anti peristatic relationship among the institutions that rule and constitute both

[7] For the theoretical purists the proposed differentiation probably is not enough as it can always be argued that the mere maternal instinct, or the mere feelings of tenderness engendered by neo-tonic features, present in mammals, could have been originated in the will of conscientious appropriation of nature and hence undistinguishable from the origin of social relationships as such. However, it seems totally reasonable to us to think that while such elementary relationships can be found in the majority of mammals and certainly in all large apes, the other relationships defined by us as social, can only be found in the *zoon politikon*.

[8] Obviously, with the surge and extension of social relationships, even when these are of interested nature, the frequent contact and communication for cooperation among individuals will give place, among some of them, to the appearance of relationships determined by feelings of solidarity and affection similar to those originating primal relationships. But the general keynote guiding public relations will be then, fundamentally different to that guiding private relationships.

[9] The contradiction proposed by psychoanalysis between super-ego and culture (Therese Benedek, 1977, pp.149-176), is the expression, from an individualistic perspective, of this opposition between different types of relationships among individuals, that resolve problems and needs of different nature: the primal ones associated in psychoanalysis with the formation of super-ego and the basic personality of individual, and the social ones associated with repression and frustration. Culture, however, seen as the result of the society of individuals aiming to reach common objectives is the purveyor of the whole of collective commodities for the welfare of individuals. Hence, more than a contradiction as such, what happens here is an opposition in the search for the general objectives of individual welfare. Inconsistency resides in the same human nature, which Plato's term expresses concisely; man as *Zoon Politikon* expresses in the last instance, the opposition between an individual nature by his biological origin and a social nature by his new collective destiny.

areas can be understood. On the one hand, the smaller unities require association with others as a means of growing appropriation of environmental resources; but on the other hand, the appropriation of such resources implicates the integration of members of these smaller unities with other members by means of independent relationships different from those ruling them. Whilst, on its turn, the progress of association requires an adequate functioning of smaller entities in their role of providers of individuals capable of inserting themselves in the social processes of nature appropriation, this association regulates itself by relations different from those of the smaller unities. The result of this link is an entity integrated in a complex and to certain extent contradictory way, which requires the regulation of both areas for its adequate functioning; at which point the need for establishing regulations for *prim genial relationships* appears.[10] The preponderancy and connotation that social relationships begin to acquire in the life of the individual perform a growing influence in the relationships established to fulfill the primal needs and the ways of life defined by them, in such a way that as social relationships increase in daily living, elementary relationships begin to alter and submit to them.[11] The confusion between primal and social relationships and the misunderstanding of their dynamics are the cause for the *quid pro quo* that has hindered a systematic and consistent analysis of the phenomenon of kinship relations and family.

Kinship appears thus as a meta-social arrangement to formalize primal relationships and attend the elementary needs (now transformed and framed by association) of reproduction and survival.[12] And family, then, can be defined as the aggregate of individuals that perform these kindred relationships. Therefore, as an institution, it defines not only who, but what kind of needs must these individuals attend. Thus, family carries through two different types of situations: those originated in elementary and primitive relationships which administer mating and conjugal bonds, paternity and offspring care, transfer of "patrimonial knowledge" for survival, among others; and those situations originated by the *social definition by default* of kinship: precisely which roles and functions must be performed and by whom. From this perspective, family is therefore, the product of relationships of different nature: on one hand,

[10] Undoubtedly, it is this complex link which Levy-Strauss (1976), tries to explain in an already classical article, recurring to the analysis of ethnographic studies. But even though, in our opinion, he succeeds at precisely explaining the terms of the equation, he falls in the ideological temptation of privileging civilization, which makes him express the sibylline idea:" In conclusion, the existence of family is, at the same time, the condition and the negation of society", (p.49). The problem we see in Levy-Strauss' work is not to have identified the distinct nature of the relationships that constitute and govern the two kinds of activities in which *homo sapiens* is involved. The above mentioned author formulates correctly the problem when he states: "Society belongs to the realm of culture, while the family is the effluvium at social level, of those natural requirements without which society could not exist and, consequently, neither human nature." (p.48), but his ideological position does not allow him to invert the terms in the sense of recognizing that those natural requirements, those prim genial relationships are a constituting part of the human being and therefore, of civilization, that can not be sacrificed in the name of social integration for the control of contingency. Thus, family is a social institution, but not the needs of mating, of reproduction, of accompaniment and care. To confuse these terms results in seeing families where there are not, as in many species of mammals; or vice versa, to see in the family the expression of an instinct, or in the most pathetic case, the hand of the Creator.

[11] From the above mentioned, it can be clearly stated that an opposition between both kinds of relationships can be identified, which will appear every time that one or the other demands from the individual more time or effort than what the previous equilibrium demanded; because uses and customs associated to one kind of relationship will stop functioning or become weak, while those, where the other kind concentrates, will become insufficient or become strengthened. This will generate dysfunctional conditions between them and the instability of total organization.

[12] Meta-social because it is a second level of organization as it implicates rules to preserve the association independently from the objectives and goals proposed by it. In the same manner that the first level of organization involves the interest in certain goals and objectives, the second level implicates the interest in associating, independently from its objectives and goals.

those originated in primal basic needs; and on the other hand, those originated in the needs of social organization in order to regulate the "appropriate functioning" of such units for association purposes. In that sense, more than a society in miniature, the family can be conceived as an expanded individual.

Now then, in actual daily activities, and as the proposed challenges and objectives entail expanded social relations, these and social institutions, in their different stages of productive activity (material, cultural, institutional); require from the individual a performance each time more collective, socialized, external, and unbound from primal relationships. This contradiction is the one which *models* kinship relationships, the one which constitutes them in particular and historical forms corresponding to the needs for "familiar care" and the needs for social organization in the prevailing knowledge and technical conditions.[13]

Therefore, as the individual's accomplishment becomes more dependent on society "in general" and consequently less on the basic group, the more the individual, in his daily life, tends to attach to external groups and individuals through interested relationships and less to basic relationships with his relatives. The "history of family", that is to say, as an accumulation process of conditions that would have brought us to the nuclear family prevailing in the majority of societies today, as well as the verification made by ethnologists of different kinds of families prevailing in the different social organizations reported on their studies, have been determined by this opposition.

Furthermore, it is commonsense to think that as this collective and associated life consolidates, survival will begin to depend more on the individual capacity for integrating itself to society (in order to receive its shelter) than in the learning of individual (or familiar) clever elusion of contingency. This learning, adaptation, social integration, begin to make part of transmitted patrimonial knowledge and of the training process for social behavior that will require responsible "relatives". It must be adverted that the members of the broader group will be willing to make the association perdurable, by also formalizing and making regular and normal the behavior that has permitted the social cohesion (or by introducing new practices that are supposed to improve it). Thus, the conditions for the occurrence of family are generated by the groups we could name *primal* as well as by the broader groups.

Finally, it seems reasonable to think that primal relationships affected the process of association. Some inequalities among primal groups probably gave origin to jealousy and confrontation hazarding the perpetuation of association. Probably, the effort on avoiding this kind of conflicts originated, for instance, in preferences between females and males, gave birth to the institution of marriage; a means of formalizing the relations of protection, recognition, care, etc. among particular individuals. The general conditions in which the broader group would develop, such as feracity of land, weather, presence of enemies or even of broader groups of individuals, etc. would have probably determined the form that this mar-

[13] See the works of Bronislaw Malinowsky (1982) and the above mentioned from Carl Levy-Strauss (1976) and Kathleen Gough (1976) carefully describing the different arrangements in kinship relations discovered among people margined and isolated from "civilization". Another interesting source for proving these ideas is found in studies realized in the United States of America around the phenomenon of *hippy* communities during last century's 60"s and part of the 70's. (see Benjamin Zablocki, 1973). The analysis of the process of construction of these *hippy* communities (pp.248-253) with their fundamentally anarchist project of survival with their difficulties related to the learning of means of production and finally their dissolution by the difficulty of articulating individual freedom with the commitments of communal life, (pp 256-262, passim), offer an extraordinary vision that, as the author himself recognizes, can illustrate —with all methodological exceptions, add we— the primitive process of social formation.

riage assumed.[14] Consequently, as long as social relationships did not mean larger commitments for the members of the association in terms of time and attention; it is natural to think that feeding activity, for instance, or others of same nature, would have been carried out individually (of course, with maternal help for siblings) and that solidary behavior would have happened sporadically among the members of primal groups. But as collective tasks extended and compromised individual activities and specialization compelled to seek the help of others for these needs; primal relationships, under such conditions, could have served as the basis for the constitution of such solidary help among the members of the primal group. And at this very moment, as it can be understood, this primal group begins to contribute to the consolidation of a more enduring and efficient association and begins to perform the functions of a family as such.

2. The nuclear family as a kinship relation in the accumulation of capital.

The question on the relationship among the nuclear family and the characteristics of the social organization that takes care of it, emerges from the former discussion on the origin of family. Such matter can also be expressed under the general terms corresponding to the historical moment, as a result of the opposition between the needs for primal care (bearing of siblings, coupling and accompaniments of adults, etc.) and the needs of society for assuring the accomplishment of such objectives, in the frame of a social labor division highly extended and determined by the rules of trade and accumulation of capital.

The conceptual development of this relationship originates in the XVIII century, when the systematic discussion on the origin and function of family is fundamentally stated in the frame of societies already structured by capitalist relationships. From the bourgeois perspective, occidental societies emerge as the perfect result of civilization; the nuclear family (associated to monogamist marriage) appeared, consequently, as the most developed and finished form. With the critics of bourgeois society initiated a the end of XIX century, the fundamental characteristics of this kind of social organization begin to be placed under historical perspective and its limitations, contradictions and deficiencies regarding its inspiring ideals begin to be denounced. The nuclear family appears thus, historically determined; that is, as a historical product of determined antagonistic social relationships immersed in a social dynamic whole. It carries, therefore, the contradictions implicit in society. For this reason Marx considers that nuclear family contains "[…]in germen, not only slavery *(servitus*), but also servileness, and from the very beginning keeps relationship with loads in agriculture. It enclosed *in miniature*, all the antagonisms which later develop in society and its State.", (cf. Engels, 1970, p.247). The synthesis of the confrontation between the bourgeois point of view and its critics, however, does not appear on the XX century, but indeed, two perspectives of society do surge containing, as we understand, elements of this synthesis.[15] We refer to micro-interactive perspectives which privilege interpersonal over structural relationships to explain social behavior; and the perspective originated in semiotic studies, which privileges communication over productive relationships as the basis for social organization. Thus, these elements added, the family acquires a new dimension. It is no longer

[14] Naturally, once the relation between mating and reproduction was established, incest generated new conditions over which marriage could be regulated. The reader interested in the classical discussion on the origin of this institution, may consult both texts from Kathleen Gough 1976A and 1976B.

[15] In the frame of this general vision, the XXth Century appears to us as the historical moment in which both perspectives are confronted but do not reach a resolution. The general conditions of societies are not mature enough as to give birth to a solution that implicates the abolition of capital and naturally of market as means of generating wealth and general welfare, notwithstanding the presence of flagrant failures in the fulfillment of such objectives.

the natural form or divine purpose, neither the result of the structural strength and interest of social production, or reproduction of labor force, but in the family are carried out personal relationships that deal with communication, with the individual's psycho-social needs; such as recognition, personal identification, the social formation and integration that are to be fundamentally taken into account in the explanation of social behavior and the role of this group in the social ordinance.

Based on this proposal of involvement between family and capital, a first conclusion that inevitably surges is the one we made to point out the "historical" nature of nuclear family, calling attention to the fact that it responds to the social, economic and political conditions of the bourgeois society:
"Undoubtedly, the family as we know it today has not always existed, that figure, *nuclear family*, typical of our society had already been signaled in its historical character by Marx and Engels, […] Its origin should be searched in the social and economic conditions that slowly consolidate the social relationships (or the aggregate of relationships) that allow the social recognition and legitimacy of the exchange value of products and its individual accumulation." (Reuben, S., 2000, p.15),
we signaled that the historical development of this principle of associating an exchange value to each product for its interchange is a principle we could name as *rationalizing*, which marks a good extent of history of civilization and acquires different forms according to the historical conditions of the societies. In one of his fundamental works, Norbert Elias associates the search for this principle with a process of "emotional control" (Elias, N., 1994, Introduction) which is not pertaining to develop here, but whose reference is necessary due to the close link this idea has with the discussion on primal relationships and the origin of family. But what seems appropriate to make clear herewith, is that such process is a slow one that culminates, according to our theoretical foundation, with the appearance and later consolidation of capital in its present form. That is why we also see the origin and posterior consolidation of the bourgeois family, the "nuclear" family, as a transformation of habits, uses and behaviors, associated to the social and economic conditions that give place to the emergence of capital, and therefore, as slow as such process.

Family assumes, then, different forms in the fulfillment of these functions according to the existing social, economic and political conditions. The *nuclear family* (father, mother and offspring) which we associate today with the concept of family, would have been formed around *individual private property* (not *estately* or *familiar* from the lordship organization) which would have made possible to "any individual" to forge enough fortune as to settle down a family; this is, to constitute an elementary group that could perform the functions that other more complex or extended groups had been performing in the fulfillment of needs of social reproduction and primal care. And such an "individual family" presents itself as a nuclear family. The fact that this form respond to certain social and historical conditions does not hinder that its core relationships be of a different nature, according to the opposition proposed in the former paragraph, to those dominating in society.[16]

[16] On this "counterpoint", not to put it in terms of "contradiction", between the rationality of the relationships of "competence" and those surged from love and "emotional attraction", see T. Parsons: "If the kind of familiar system resulting compatible with our particular type of *occupational system* is subject to functional exigencies clearly defined, the opposite can also be stated, that among the broad structural model of kinship system there are a series of functional exigencies for the preservation of solidarity of its essential unity: the conjugal family." and continues ahead: "[The conjugal family] Constitutes a relationship without any structural support and without any other bases, practically, than emotional attraction: therefore it must be protected against tensions provoked by competence for prestige among its members.", Parsons, 1978.p.54. More recently, on an interesting work, Eva Illouz (Introduction and Chap. I) analyses a series of facts present in North American families which she associates with a process of capitalist

Now then, this family, according to our theoretical proposal, could be conceived as the closest form, of those experimented until now, to the original ones that conformed the primal group. This could have been reached due to the high degree of *individual productivity* obtained with capitalism, as explained before; and at the same time, to the *individualization* that capitalist relationships impose over the individual. But the particularities stated by this assimilation, as can be simply deduced, are, on the one hand, that the institution will be directly affected by primal relationships: variations in those relationships associated to preferences, likes, feelings among the members of the primal group have a direct and immediate effect on the family and its functioning; issues that in other organized forms, due to the size and complexity of their structure, became mediated. Thus, never before, the relationships between female and male, wife and husband, mother and children, father and children and vice versa, will affect in such a direct and determining manner the formation, socialization, culturization and other actions performed by kinship relations among individuals. And on the other hand, according to the above defined anti peristatic relationship, never before, neither culture, production relationships, or social organization in general, will exert such an active and effective influence on prim genial relationships and primal care.

The fetish of merchandise and exploitation that Marx discovers and unveils in the basis of bourgeois social relationships are responsible for the *individualistic vision* generated in the individual and his incapability of understanding himself as a subject of social relationships in these societies. The first one, because the independence from the lordship determination (from servileness), that the individual producer reaches by means of the interchange of his product-merchandise in the market, makes him think about his individual activity as if it were enough in order to produce by himself everything society demands to possess for achieving his due integration to it. Since his product is worth as much as the necessary products (and in the required amounts) to assure such supply, the individual sees himself as independent from the rest of the members of society.[17] Every link of cooperation remains erased thus, from a reality that on the contrary, interchange and market have transformed into a very complex system of economic relations, of productive relations, of technical relations that precisely, make possible, the high levels of *individual productivity* that paradoxically permit, such *individualistic vision*.

And the second one, because those same relationships hinder him from perceiving and controlling the real amount of value from his work that he contributes to the accumulation of social capital; and disable him of administering that surplus, granting it practically complete to the initiative of the owners of the means of production.

These conditions will perform a noticeable influence on the primal group that will find itself not only at the expense of primal relationships, as above mentioned, but also unconsciously, at the expense of the determinations that “market and capital” establish in relation to the distribution of the social product and to the time assigned by its members to collective activity (and by opposition, to familiar activity).

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domination (appropriation and private accumulation of goods) of familiar relationships, that, as we had pointed out, have remained untouched by the rationality of accumulation of capital.

[17] “To these (the producers) therefore, social relationships among private works *manifest* themselves as what they are, that is to say, not as directly social relationships bound among the persons themselves, in their works, but on the contrary as *relations characteristical of things* among the persons and *social relations among the things*” Marx, K., (19767, p.89). Italics from the original.

3. The contemporary transformation of accumulation of capital and its effects on family.

Under the perspective of this dual reality of family, transformations in contemporary social, economic and political relationships affect it in a complex way. Not in the way of a direct determination, but in the way of oppositions between its actual behavior and its expected behavior. Oppositions that in limit moments are expressed as crisis, this is as the climax of a continuity and its rupture. At the present situation of family, elements such as its difficulty to fulfill some of its fundamental functions, the new ways of internal organization, the transformation of the roles of its members, the reduction and simplification of its structure and the 'heterogenization' of its forms, are the expression of this rupture.

Let us try, then to construct, by means of the instruments that the contemporary social analysis offers, the process through which the determination of the above mentioned social relationships over the familiar relationships is carried out.

In order to do this, we will begin with the confirmation that the aspirations of material welfare associated to the accumulation of capital (and the production of merchandise) in the new global conditions—with all the implications of this particular way of production, in terms of exploitation of natural and human resources and of unequal distribution of social income—, have begun to make socially significant the effects on familiar relationships that these aspirations impose: effects that, until then, were merely episodic or characteristical of some small social sectors. Even more, many of such named "aspirations", through typical social processes, have been converted into "necessities", required by the same construction of citizenship: In order to be considered a citizen and be able to act as such, a minimum of commodities is required, whose possession becomes, thus, socially necessary.

The implications on labor that these aspirations impose, the relationships between the worker and the means of production and between him and the product, have important consequences in familiar characteristics and functions. The need for accumulation of wealth associated to these aspirations require a growing income that only the increase in productivity and the growing transfer of surplus value to the salary can satisfy without dragging the need of incorporating other members of the familiar unity to the remunerated labor or to submitting them to extenuating work days and intensities, normally out of home (of familiar space). We know that the first process of redistribution requires a total of economic and political conditions that are not always present in a society or region and certainly, if we pay attention to the statements of some scholars on the economic cycle, these have rapidly begun to diminish for world capitalism since late 70's. [18]And, certainly the increase in salary by transferring a part of the surplus value to the waged worker is not a normal situation in capitalism, either. Thus, our presumption is that such aspirations and needs have been being attended by incorporating other members of the family to remunerated work, lengthening the work days and intensifying work.[19] All situations that, as the reader can guess, confabulate against the proper performance of nuclear family as a familiar institution.

On the other hand, the way of accumulation of capital at world scale has followed a path of reduction of the institutional apparatus developed by national societies to strengthen the

[18] And what will not we be able to tell about our Latin American region that has not reached yet growing rates of *per capita* wealth in the last 20 or 25 years?

[19] The reader must not oversee that, in certain way, in this give and take between capital and work, even the individuals and familiar groups less favored by the economy (and therefore whose aspirations are diminished) be it because their salaries are lower or because they do not even have stable incomes, will become forced, by the imposition of needs in order to participate in society, to double their efforts as to complete the minimum income that will make them "citizens".

conditions of social cohesion, that has substantially reduced the provision of social assignations and services assumed by the National State, in order that in countries with low levels of accumulation of capital, the families could liberate themselves from certain traditional functions that hindered or limited their incorporation to modernity; or also in countries with high levels of accumulation in order to attend the effects that the "hiring process" of labor force and the social needs of consuming had been exerting on the familiar functions of the nuclear family.

This is the contradiction that has been surging; on one hand the need of "hiring-.informalizing" the great majority of population with the consequences this process brings to families, precisely hindering the performance of its role of forming-socializing the individual; and jointly and paradoxically, the impoverishment of its members by their exclusion from hired work or by their "informalization".[20] And on the other hand, besides, it has meant the elimination of conditions created by the State to cover the functions that the nuclear family, disabled by the "proletarization" of its members, could no longer perform, but which were considered necessary for the creation of citizenship and therefore, for the social cohesion of the State.

Another element that has come forth as a product of world capitalist integration is the spreading of the movement of feminine liberation and that also has important implications on the familiar characteristics, but which we will not develop hereto due to the enormous discussion of this issue and its obvious effects on the behavior of nuclear family and kindred relationships.

For this reason, the ruptures we observe nowadays on the social continuities to which we were used, have multiple consequences in many spheres of social affairs since they compromise fundamental ordaining institutions: institutions that had been performing mutely (privately or, as it became to be said "naturally") the basic functions of reproduction of social order. In this way, the weakening of the socializing actions of the state, such as public education, institutions of cultural, sports, patriotic promotion, care centers for children and the aged, etc. and even more the deterioration of the services supplied by public institutions in general, the impoverishment of retirement and health funds have a deleterious effect on citizen conscience and participation by coinciding with the intensification of the rupture of nuclear family and its failing to fulfill the assigned roles.

4. Some Conclusions.

The role the nuclear family had been performing, even in the frame of national capitalist relations, was albeit its contradiction with the fate of capital, that of constituting certain conditions of reproduction of labor power outside capitalist relationships; in the set of not remunerated working relationships, of relationships founded on *sympathetic* and solidary values or principles. The reason why the "accumulation of capital at national level", even in countries where it obtained the highest degrees, did not "reach" the sphere of *reproduction of la-*

[20] Naturally, it would always be the possibility of "capitalizing" instead of "hiring" the population, which has been the dream and meta discourse of international social democracy, were it not because such project is essentially contradictory with the excluding nature of accumulation of capital, as has been demonstrated during these days of revelations with the tragedy in which became the process of "informalization" of work —and "free lancing"— in Latin America (that according to the de Soto of the 80's, appeared as a mechanism of "disproletarization" of labor relationships and of new social development).

bour power[21] in the familiar space as such, will not be discussed hereto. Be it enough to think that such phenomenon would be conceived by Marxism in the most general dimension of the *industrial reserve army* and its relation to the dynamics of accumulation. [22] But the international extension of accumulation, and particularly its integration not any more as national capitals that marginally liquidate their domestic necessities of accumulation —their surplus— in international market, but as capitals that are realized and accumulated at international scale, has meant a new impulse in the domination of social relationships by capitalistic logic. Not any more in terms only of its geographical extension in the national map, but also in the *mapamundi*, and deepening into the sphere of intimate relationships.

This capitalist integration is spreading then, capitalist relationships in amplitude and depth, and in such a manner that they are exerting a growing influence in social relationships that had so far maintained themselves unpolluted, such as those ruling normal familiar life.

Another conclusion of this work is that with the progress of social transformations originated in the regionalization and world integration of capitalist relationships, plus all facts associated and correlated with these movements (such as the incorporation of women to remunerated work and their struggle for equality, the integration of communications and spreading of transports with the corresponding *divulgation* of "cultures" and commodities), some social, political and economic situations, which openly confront with the structure and roles that the family had been performing, have been consolidating themselves. These situations are seen by some as a phenomenon of "relief of functions" for the family, assumed by different public institutions, associated to Welfare State at first, and then, in the frame of the recent privatization and reduction of state apparatus, by private institutions, certainly independent from the families. (de la Paz, 1996, p.27). Such functions however, state we, can not be reassume by the family in the new social conditions, when the state diminishment and private ineffectiveness in this type of activities can not accomplish them, creating thus a substantive functional vacuity in contemporaneous societies (Reuben S.,2000,p.16). We considered thus, the structural transformations in society as the elements that explained the crisis of the family.

The problem presented finally, at this point of the reasoning, is that "modernization" of society, namely, the liberation of the human being from the limits imposed by his ignorance and weakness, is carried out nowadays in the frame of capitalist relationships, of private property, of relations of exploitation and domination characteristic of bourgeois society. And until that path of progress and liberation does not happen to be closed or narrowed by the development of such relations, there will not be historical conditions for its transformation. The fundamental contradiction of capital formulated by Marx, that which surges between the private character of accumulation and the collective character of production and demand, which would precisely be the same to unchain the internal contradictions in capitalism, weakens or strengthens in the frame of a technical progress, that gives and takes from private accumulation the means for its conservation.

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[21] Reproduction of labour/power as a process of general socialization, of apprenticeship of the physical, intellectual and psychological dexterities and abilities required for the whole integration of individual to society.

[22] Implicit in this statement is the hypothesis that the degree of accumulation of capital reached by national capitalism (in the frame of a nation) was not sufficient enough as to "reach" all the population in that nation, because the limits imposed by the relationships of exploitation in that national frame impeded its extension until eliminating the Industrial Reserve Army, from which the nuclear family is a part; and that it is not until that accumulation extends *urbi et orbi* that such relationship can reach the family…

But inside a process of "accumulation" of historical conditions, the natural trend towards equality and equity, must conduct to the gathering of favorable conditions for social integration, to the conscientious and committed incorporation of more individuals in the processes of social production and administration of power, among others; which makes us think in more rational or efficient procedures, more democratic and participating than those conceived in the frame of free market and capital. The improvement of the institutionalism of the mechanisms and instruments at the disposition of public institutions, as expressions of the State, the accumulation of means and knowledge among them, generates favorable conditions so that their management can be more effective and even compete with the results obtained by free market and distribution of capital. We see then, that it is totally reasonable to think that public management of national resources can be more efficient (increased by the earnings in accumulation of means at its disposition and by the level of citizen consciousness) than the management of such resources by institutions of a social organization historically determined by chance and exploitation.

Enclosed in these transformations, the nuclear family is in a crossway that we described in the following manner in a recently published work:
"Thus, the family, as one of the main elements of that environment, is submitted to strong pressures by these transformations, and it can not be predicted if this institution will exert influence over them in order to transform or diminish them as to be able to preserve its structure and present roles, or if it will modify itself adapting to the new social conditions. Or then, it is finally to be seen if the new conditions over which rises what is known today as "society of information", or as the "individualized society", or the growing hegemony of the logics of "accumulation of capital" in the social sphere, will end up by making it disappear, in a paradoxical movement by which, its defender against communism, "number one" enemy of family in the cold war days, would stab it on the back once getting rid of the uncomfortable companion." Ob. .Cit., p.15.

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