

INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH CONCERNING THE FAMILY AS A RESOURCE FOR THE SOCIETY

**FAMILY CULTURE IN MEXICO AND THE WELL-BEING OF THE
POPULATION**

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Introduction

At the threshold of the XXI century , Mexico is a country with a very important *culture of the family* , since the majority of the homes are integrated by people related by a blood line or family link . Versus the no family link homes –where the population lives alone or with people that are not related to them by family links , which only represented 9.3% of the total in 2010 according to the last Population Census (see graphic 1)



Living as a family is something highly appreciated within Mexican society according with the World Value Poll of 2005-2008 , 94.9% of the Mexicans consider the family highly important in their lives (1) .This situation can be explained with many and diverse reasons .In addition to the ones derived from the deep relationship of married life and from the blood line relationships ,it is important to highlight other types from the basic demographics : for the population the family is the source of trustworthy relations ,of the solidarity to resolve the daily needs, as well as the extraordinary problems that arise

during the course of life, the emotional support, and what is considered the personal success.

The family plays a key role in the attention and development of diverse subjects of public interest in Mexico ,Like health among the population ,the care the families take for the sick members of the family –within home or in a hospital-It is a basic resource for their good care and recovery .For political matters , the family is the most important social space being more important than the friends and work peers .

The family culture which characterized the Mexican society it is not homogenous , as it is not in any other democratic societies , but what is being observed is a mosaic built with the cultures of the family because of its organization structures and operation (or family structures) being more complex and diversified . In the recent historic past , as well as in the present , the cultural pattern most often found has been a family structured by one married couple in first marriage , whom are responsible of their children in a single family home (nuclear families),but also sometimes having other relatives living in the same home (extended families).However what is being observed in the last 50 years is the demographics preeminence ,as well as the development of other social arrangements.

How could this change of family structures panorama be evaluated? Is it for Mexico that this situation represents a progress to the attention and protection of the fundamental rights of the population ,or is it a source of problems which should count with special attention of the government ,major private institutions and the civil society ? Are the different family structures in general terms generating similar positive well-being effects for children and adults , or some could favor the development of scarcity and well-being problems within the population. These are fundamental questions that the present research intends to respond .

This report is a summary of the homonymous research : *The culture of the family in Mexico and the population well-being* . It is presented as a conference in the Research Experts Meeting on the family as a resource for the society ,being celebrated in Rome in the 16th and 17th of march 2012.

The document is classified in five sections : 1) Objectives and methodology of the investigation ;2)Analytic Focus ;3)The importance of the family in the population well-being ;4)The transformation of the family structures; and 5)The family structures and the problems of well-being of the population .In the conclusions a reflection is made about the implication of assuming a perspective of the family in the design of public policies .

I. OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The development of the investigation has two fundamental stages , in its objectives as well as in its methodology .In the first a group of various academic fields researchers and experts related to the subject of the family in Mexico ,integrated by Rafael Aleman Jasso ,Emilio Planas ,Lucrecia Rego Planas ,Veronica Tello ,Jose Luis Villaseñor, Maria Teresa Magallanes ,Maite Lot Goicuria y Fernando Pliego Carrasco . This group was in charge of design and conduct a national poll to a national sample of 2030 adult persons – the general project objective *The family as a resource of the society* ,summoned by the Pontifical Council for the Family :

The intention of the research is to find in which way and measure the family and the day to day life—should be considered already as a fundamental resource for the present and the near future.

The original project considered the analysis of five big themes :the relationships of couples (marriage stability , among other aspects);the relationship amongst parents and children ; the relationship of the family and the world of work ;the internal social capital of the family (the capacity to produce relation based results); the external social capital of the family (the help of external networks).

The second phase of the work required the broadening of the original objectives and restructuring of the research methodology .As a consequence of the results obtained from the poll designed and conducted in Mexico : *The National Urban Poll for the Family as a Society Resource* , and considering that

a good part of the main conclusions were already known via other sources of information in the country –representative polls with larger samples and census type studies - a decision to modify the original research project .

Certainly two factors contributed to such decision .In the first place , the *National Urban Poll for the Family as a Society Resource* confirmed what was already known from previous studies : the family culture in Mexico is very important in Mexico and consequently that there were no social groups or trends that could influence the public opinion that could lead to consider the family as a less relevant institution in the development of society . In the second place ,the results obtained from another research concluded in 2011 and recently published :*The families and the well-being of the democratic societies* .The cultural debate of the XXI century , lead the team responsible to conclude that the ,lost important subject to research was not the family itself , considered in a general way , it was an important resource for society development, but analyzing which type of family structure contributed in a better way to the well-being of the children and adults of Mexico .A subject rarely studied in the country .

The new objective of the research is, analyzing the relationship amongst the structures of the family and well-being of the society , and supervise the original subjects contained in the international project , The family as a resource of society .It is our interest if the different types of families that currently prevail , contribute in a similar way to the well-being of the population or if there are significant differences amongst some family types .Specifically we will compare the families headed by married couples where the children live with their two biological parents versus what occurs with the rest of the family types and couples .Also the five major subjects from the original project will be covered .

In order to develop the new objective , the methodology to be followed was significantly restructured .Now the principal polls results as well as census studies being previously conducted in Mexico about the family –being this subject the central theme or a complementary one –

Considering as well the *National Urban Poll for the Family as a Society Resource* as one of the fundamental sources of information . All the poll results should represent national or multi regional surveys (so the results be meaningful for the Mexican society),contain samples larger than 800 interviews (so that the margin of error shouldn't be larger that 4% , approximately)and whose last round of information should be as from 1995 (so it comprehends the last generation of population, the famous definition of Ortega and Gasset). The studies should be originated and published by institutions and academic sources of well recognized prestige.

From this perspective , the work currently presented is the result of compiling ,analysis and systematizing of a good portion of the sources of information that cover in a central or complementary way diverse subjects related to the situation and dynamics of the transformation of the families in the country .

In exhibit 1 it is shown the results of the last 12 census and polls used in this research (in appendix 1 the detail of the specific sources of each one of them is presented).As could be easily observed , all are recent sources and have samples size with important size or the information has a census origin .

Tabla 1

MÉXICO: RELACIÓN DE CENSOS Y ENCUESTAS UTILIZADOS EN LA INVESTIGACIÓN

<i>Encuesta o censo</i>	<i>Año</i>	<i>Tamaño de la muestra</i>
Censo de Población y Vivienda	1960-2010	
Conteo de Población y Vivienda	2005	
Encuesta Nacional de Juventud (ENJ)	2005	12,796 casos de 12 a 29 años
	2010	28,005 casos de 12 a 29 años
Encuesta Nacional sobre la Dinámica de las Familias (ENDIFAM)	2005	23,835 adultos de 18 años o más
Encuesta Nacional sobre la Dinámica de las Relaciones en los Hogares (ENDIREH)	2006	83,159 mujeres de 15 años o más
Encuesta de Maltrato Infantil y Factores Asociados (EMIFA)	2006	5,852 niños
Encuesta Nacional de Familia y Vulnerabilidad 2006 (ENFAVU)	2006	4,647 adultos de 20 años o más
Encuesta de Capital Social en el Medio Urbano 2006 (ENCASU)	2006	8,554 niños y adultos
Encuesta Nacional sobre Cultura Política y Prácticas Ciudadanas	2008	4,383 adultos
Encuesta Nacional sobre Niveles de Vida de los Hogares (ENNVIH)	2002 y 2005-2006	35,000 entrevistas
Encuesta Nacional de Valores	2010	15,910 adultos

II The Analytic Focus

The research is based in two fundamental concepts: family structure and well-being .

1. The book *Families and well-being in democratic societies .The cultural debate of the XXI century*, it was found that the *family structure* expressed in the 351 publications analyzed , some of the five aspects of family life described below .

- The authority dynamics . Distinction between one and two parents families.
- The rights and obligations frame : the consideration of the civil status or marital status of the families leading the families .
- The processes of stability or transition : This is the analysis of the prevalence of the marital link of the couple responsible of the families , or the change to other forms of organization as a consequence of the divorce ,separation ,widowing or establishing new marriages or cohabit.
- Two biological parents at home, above all when there are minors or the configuration of other social arrangements.
- Type of homes of the families: the analysis of the relationship of the basic family nucleus with other type of relatives or persons in the home , this is the distinction amongst the nuclear, extended or compounded families .

Considering the five concepts altogether, they always have a relationship with the fundamentals of family life: *the nature of their basic social relations*. Because of this within this research the concept of family structure, we will

understand the *link of the social relationships which defines the dynamics and organization of family life*, this is in its fundamental shape .

As such the principle that explains the influence of the families in the well-being of the members of the family adults and minors as well .

The family structure is the basic form ,how the families organize and develop the daily activities and consequently contribute or not .to the well being of the members in the family. Therefore , *our central hypothesis consists that there is no neutrality in the effects caused by the different family structures* , since the condition of the parents of being married, to cohabit freely in the home , the presence of the two biological parents ,the living with step-parents ;the transition form one type of family to other as a consequence of divorce, separations or new marriages or cohabitation ,the presence of parents that in a sole way take care of the children , without company of any couple and other similar dynamics of family life, lead to well being notably different in the children, but also in the adults responsible of the families since they influence the time organization , the effectiveness and efficiency of the daily activities and the use of the resources including the material and any other kind including the emotional and moral .

2. The dimensions of the well-being of the population

The structures of the family influence the different aspects of the individual and social life of the persons who integrate the most basic nucleus of the societies. In this research we will only highlight the consequences in the well-being of the children and the adults .For this purpose *we will understand for well-being as the access to a better condition of human life* , according to four specific dimensions:1)the availability of the necessary resources to improve exercise 2)the quality of life 3)the satisfaction levels (or subjective well being) ; 4)the acquisition of the necessary skills to actively participate in the development of the own personality and the public general good .(Also known common good) .

In the complete report of the research a detailed explanation of each one of the well being dimensions is presented .En this conference ,suffices to mention that all have a common fundamental element : all refer to sides of the exercise and respect of the human rights ,per definition of the 1948 United Nations Declaration being complementary ones with the others ,remembering the thought of Louis Joseph Lebret ,we will mention that the different dimensions of well being ,are organized in a human development scale that aspires to “be more” ,and not reduced to “have more “ ,which looks for evolving from less favorable human conditions to more human living conditions , where the initial point is the access to a basic quantity and sufficient of quality goods and services , the finish point is the acquisition of ability and capacity to participate actively in the construction of the own social and personal story , including the family to which you belong ,as well as to the communities where the daily life is occurring and to the general good of the society where you are located.

The emphasis given to this research to the well being of the population is not free or secondary in a country like Mexico , and for any democratic society, but, considering that this achievement is the main objective to which should be aimed. The goal of a democracy is not the reproduction of the institutions that characterize them and that make them different to any other type of society dividing the republican powers and the state of law , free competition of the political parties, free and universal elections and of the government officers disposition of public spaces for deliberation ,free market economy and public policies for social development amongst the most important .The goal of these institutions *should be the promotion of the well being of the whole population* this is the protection ,attention and development of their human rights by the four aforementioned dimensions .The goal is to achieve a better development of the human individual and social capacities.

III. The importance of the Family in the Well-Being of the Population

In Mexico the family is very important for the population because of socio-demography obvious motives :it is the space where the individuals are born and with which they insert themselves in the social life (socialization processes) ;this is the privileged space of the connubial links and of the deep relationship between parents and children .It is there where the possibility that the society continues in the mid and long term .In this aspects the importance of the family is such , that just by themselves they should suffice to consider the protection as a subject of public interest.

In this research ,besides of all the above explained , it is not important to highlight other reasons why the family life is very important for the population of Mexico :it is the main source of trustworthy relationships ,of solidarity to take care of the daily needs as well as the extraordinary problems that occur in the lifetime ,of the emotional support and what it is called the personal success.

In graphic 2 it is shown a listing of the different studies conducted in Mexico where the population evaluates the family in a general manner or it evaluates the benefits obtained from the specific family .There are no comparisions amongst the different types of families .The subject to be developed within the following sections .

Tabla 2

MÉXICO: LA IMPORTANCIA DE LA FAMILIA EN DISTINTOS ASPECTOS DE LA VIDA PERSONAL Y SOCIAL DE LA POBLACIÓN

<i>Funciones de las familias</i>	<i>Año</i>	<i>Fuente</i>	<i>Muestra</i>	<i>Valor</i>
Institución que brinda más confianza en la sociedad	2006	ENCASU (1)	2,167	8.8 (calificación)
Principal apoyo de las personas con discapacidad	2006	ENFAVU (2)	4,4647	86.4% de los casos
Principal apoyo para cuidar hijos pequeños	2006	ENFAVU (2)	4,4647	84.2% de los casos
Principal apoyo en problemas económicos	2006	ENFAVU (2)	4,4647	56.6% de los casos
Principal apoyo en problemas laborales	2006	ENFAVU (2)	4,4647	57.2% de los casos
Principal apoyo en accidentes	2011	ENUFAR (3)	2,030	43.4% de los casos
Principal apoyo en catástrofes naturales	2011	ENUFAR (3)	2,030	33% de los casos
Principal apoyo en enfermedades	2011	ENUFAR (3)	2,030	93.3% de los casos
Principal fuente de apoyo emocional para	2011	ENUFAR (3)	2,030	68.2% de los casos

“recibir consejos” y “contar lo que se siente”				
Principal fuente de apoyo emocional por “el cariño que se recibe”	2005	ENDIFAM (4)	23,835	76.2% de los casos
Principal espacio de socialización política	2008	SG (5)	4,383	50.8% de los casos
Principal recurso social de los jóvenes	2005	ENJ (6)	12,796	
• En confianza				9.1 (calificación)
• En problemas económicos				82.5% H / 89.4% M
• En problemas del trabajo				81.7% H / 88.3% M
• En problemas de la escuela				82.2% H / 84.6% M
• En enfermedades graves				86% H / 89% M
• En apoyo emocional				67.6% H / 70.6% M
Es la mejor muestra de “tener éxito” en la vida	2010	ENV (7)	15,910	25% de los casos

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- (1) *Encuesta de Capital Social en el Medio Urbano 2006* (ENCASU-2006).
(2) *Encuesta Nacional de Familia y Vulnerabilidad 2006* (ENFAVU-2006).
(3) *Encuesta Nacional Urbana sobre la Familia como Recurso de la Sociedad 2011*.
(4) *Encuesta Nacional sobre la Dinámicas de las Familias 2005*.
(5) *Encuesta Nacional sobre Cultura Política y Prácticas Ciudadanas de 2008*.
(6) *Encuesta Nacional de Juventud 2005*.
(7) *Encuesta Nacional de Valores 2010*.

As it can be easily observed , in all the studies it emphasizes the importance that the population gives the life in the family . *We couldn't find any study where the family could be criticized ,insulted ,or questioned by a large sector of the society .*

Because of the above ,it can be concluded that the bet in favor of living within a family is a fundamental characteristic of the Mexican culture .The family is a basic reference ,because of the rhetoric of the main political actors , in the design and application of diverse government policies and in the content in a great quantity of series and programs of TV and Radio ,what is important to point out is the need of attending and look after the well being of the families. In Mexico speaking against the family is something politically incorrect .

IV. The transformation of the family structures

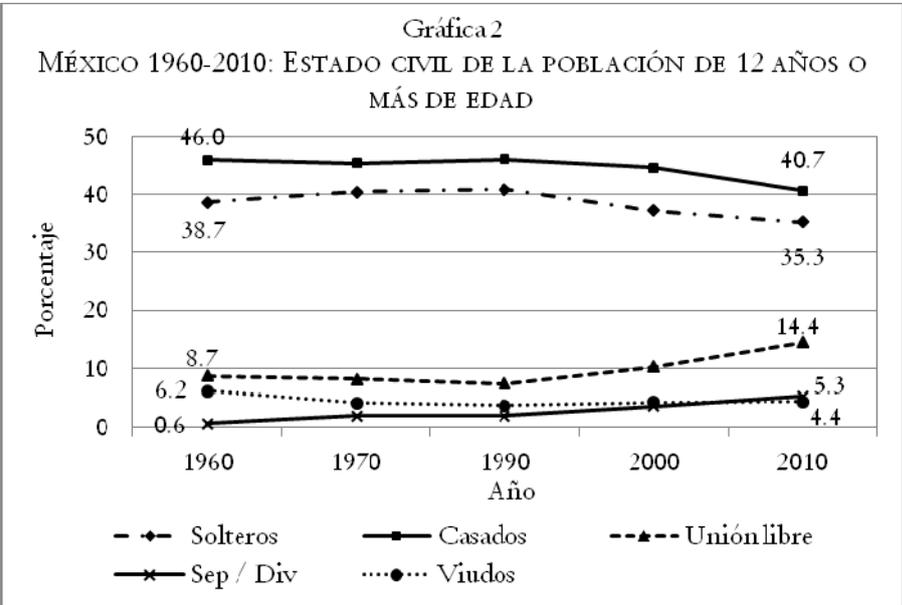
The family culture has a great importance in the Mexican society ,but it is not an homogeneous reality ,what we can see,is rather a culture mosaic of the family because its organizational structure or of functionality (the family structure) are more often complex and diversified. In the last fifty years ,the

cultural pattern has been the family led by married couples where the children live with the two biological parents, being in single homes (mono nucleus family) or in homes where other relatives live (extended families). However, the demographic importance of this type of family has been decreasing in a slow but constant rate during the last decades, while the presence grows for other types of arrangement.

1.The change in the couples relationships between men and women

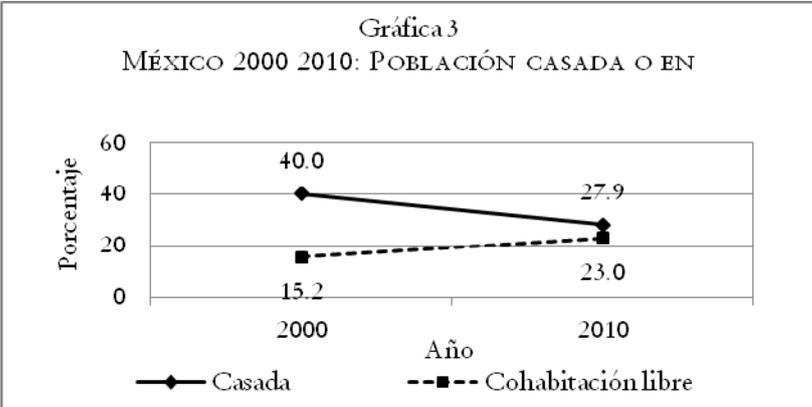
In the graphic 2 it can be observed the evolution of the civil state in the population in Mexico during the last 50 years.

- The married couples have been decreasing since it changed from 46% in 1960 to 40.7% in 2010
- The people living in free union has increased from 8.7% to 14.4% of the total within the same time frame
- The separated and divorced increased from 0.6% in 1960 to 5.3% in 2010 a notable increase of almost nine times

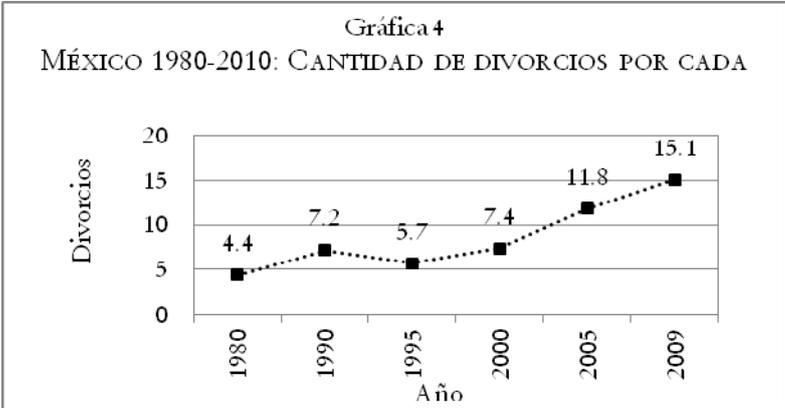


Changes have been slow but constant, however during the last ten years, Mexico suffered an accelerated process of change in the structures of the

couples ,specifically within the young adult population and in the amount of divorces. In the case of the younger adult population it can be observed a change process that speaks of an un precedent cultural mutation .See graphic 3 in the years of 2000 thru 2010 , the married population for 20-29 years decreased notoriously from the 40% to 27.9% ,but the one that cohabits in free union increased form 15.2% to 23% in the same period.



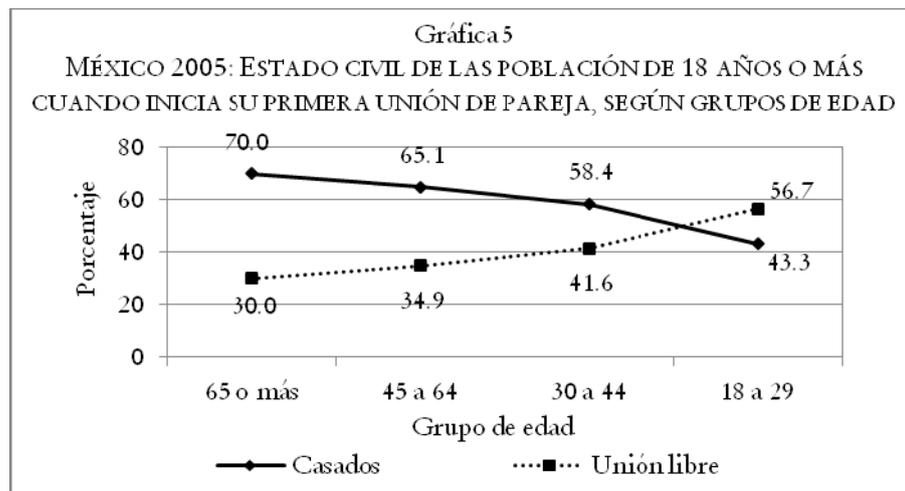
In relationship with divorce ,it can also be observed a notorious increase in the last ten years (see graphic 4) it duplicated its number from 7.4 cases per 100 marriages in 2000 to 15.1 cases in 2009 .



The numerical relation of marriage v s free union it is not static ,for a large number of persons but many people starts their life as a couple in fre union and later on transits to marriage .This is a statistic that could be obtained form the *National Poll about the Dynamics of Families 2005* (ENDIFAM-2005)

With the information contained in the data base of the ENDIFAM 2005 poll the interviewees could be decided in four groups of age 18 to 29,30 to 44,45 to 64 and 65 or more and analyze the civil status that they had when they stated their married life .Results obtained are the following (see graphic 5)

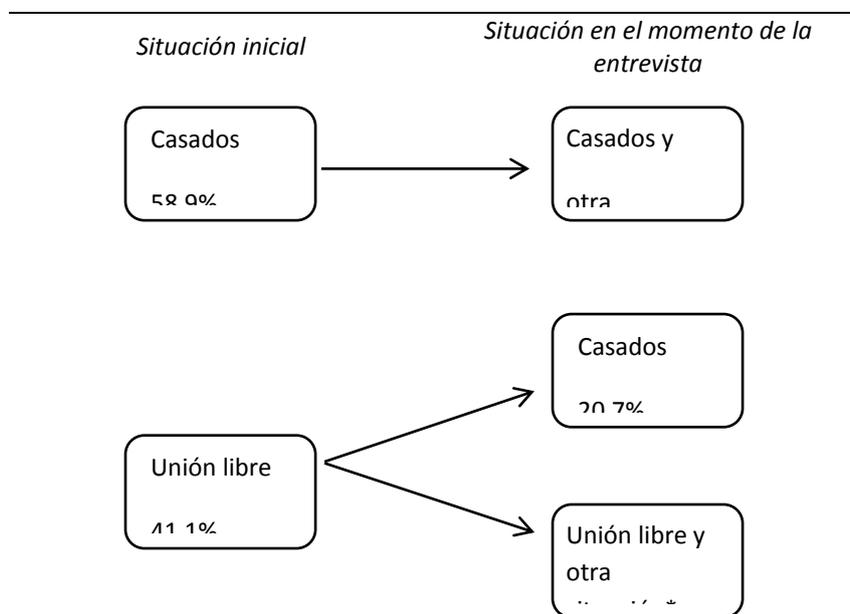
- In all the age groups there is a great quantity of persons that cohabited infer union at the beginning of their couple life ;a larger number than the static number presented by the Population and Housing Census .The trend observed is a growing one as the age group tends to be younger :30% had 65 years of age at the time of the interview, 34.9% in the group of 45 to 64 years of age ,41.6% in the group of 30 to 44 years and 56.7% if they had 18 to 20 years of age .
- The contrary occurs with the population that was married at the moment of initiating their life as a couple ,since the relative importance decreased as the age was younger :
70% if they had 65 year or more at the moment of the interview 65.1%in the group of 45 to 64 years ,58.4% in the group of 30 to 44 years of age and 43% if they had 18 to 29 years of age .



Many people that initiated their lives as a couple in free union marry later on, specially when the children are born, This occurs in half of the cases as can be observed in graphic 6. Other cases continue their original civil status or some conclude their relationship. This last situation as we will review in other sections of this research is very common for couples living in free union at the beginning of their relationship.

Gráfica 6

MÉXICO 2005: TRAYECTORIA DEL ESTADO CIVIL DE LA POBLACIÓN
DE 18 AÑOS O MÁS DE EDAD EN SU PRIMER VÍNCULO DE PAREJA



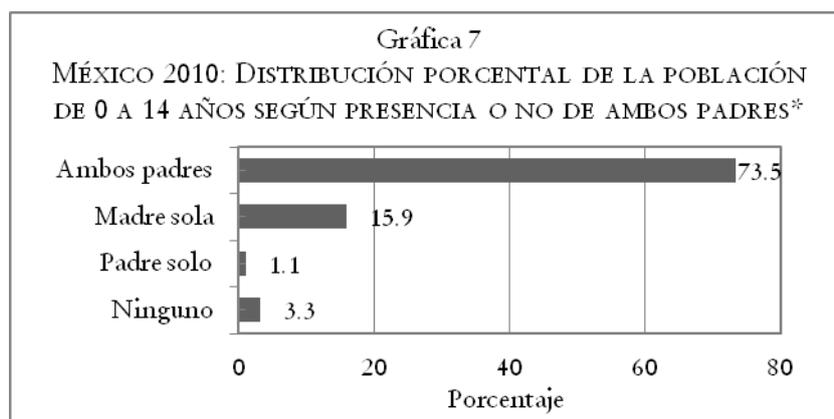
* Por ejemplo, separación, divorcio, viudez, nuevas nupcias, etc.

FUENTE: Encuesta Nacional sobre la Dinámica de las Familias 2005. Elaboración propia.

2.The change of the relationships between parents and children

One of the most important consequences of the change process that has been occurring within couples relationships in Mexico , especially as a consequence of the increase of free union cohabiting and the divorce indexes and separation, is the largest number of young children and young minors that live with one of the biological parents the mother by herself besides the residence in other types of social arrangements.

According to the document: Main results of the Population and Housing Census 2010 of the National Institute of Statistic and Geography , the types of family of the children from 1 to 14 year of age are the following (see graphic 7) : 73.5% lived with both parents ,15.9%lived with their mother ,1.1 lived with their father and 3.3% with none of the parents.



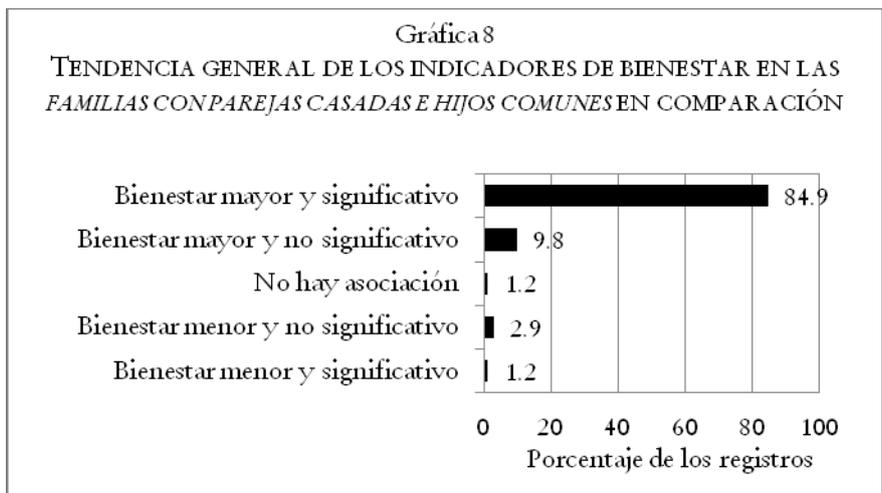
* El porcentaje restante: 6.2, no contiene información en el Censo.

FUENTE: Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía (2011). *Principales resultados del Censo de Población y Vivienda 2010*. México, INEGI.

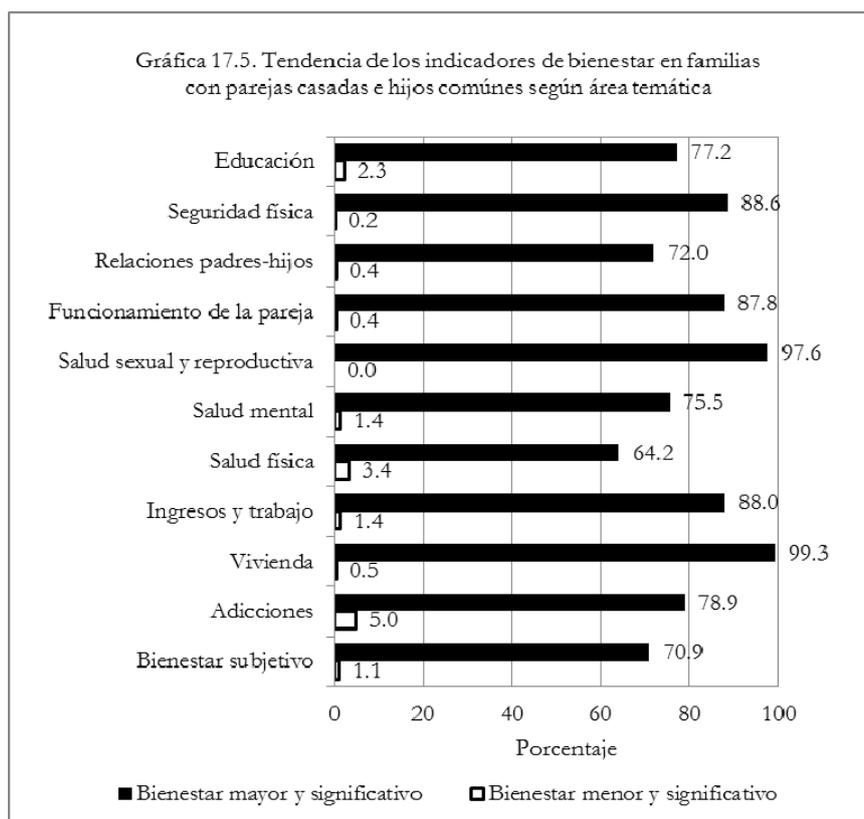
V. The structures of the family and the problems of population well being

In a contrary way to the one commented by many very influential leaders of opinion in the most important communication channels, the different structures of the families they have an influence in different and significant in the wellbeing

of the population as well as with children or adults. The scientific evidence is widely recognized and consistent. In a research recently published in 2012: *Families and well being in democratic societies. The cultural debate of the XXI century* in which 351 studies were conducted in 13 democratic countries (Australia; Brasil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Spain, United States, Holland, Japan, Mexico, Norway, Peru, Great Britain), it was concluded that 84.9% of the statistical records contained in the various research, showed in a systematic way that in the families headed by married parents, where the children lived with their two biological parents there were better well being levels see graphic 8. In contrast with only 1.2 % of the records of statistical information showed a contrary result, that the population in other family situation had better levels of well being (the remaining percentages were not statistically significant).



The difference is maintained in the eleven indicators of well being considered in the graphic education, physical security ,relationship amongst parents and children ,functioning of the couple, sexual and reproductive health, mental health ,physical health , income, work, addictions and subjective well being .



In the research report we were also able to appreciate that there is a difference, in a very distinctive way, when bivariate and multivariate investigation methods are used.

What do we know in Mexico about the relation between family structures and the population welfare? There are not many studies in Mexico about it, but the available ones shown the same tendencies observed in other countries: Married people and children who live with their biological parents have a better well-being than those who live a different situation. We shall now summarize five investigations.

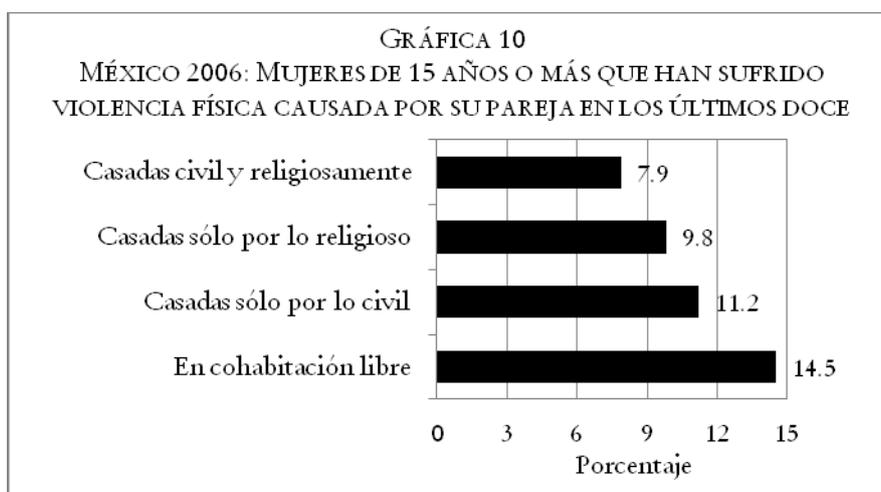
1. Physical violence against women partner

In order to study this serious problem, the National Institute for Women – entity of the Mexican government in charge of promoting “ a culture free from violence and discrimination able to promote the integral development of all Mexican women- carried out in 2006, with the technical and logistic support of the National Institute of Statistics and Geography, *National Poll on the Dynamic*

of relationships at home 2006 (ENDIREH-2006). The first round had taken place three years before, in 2003.

The research proved that violence was a serious problem which affected all kinds of couples, but aggravated when women were living with their partner without being married (check graphic 10):

- Women who are married civilly and by the church reported lower physical violence infringed by their husband in the last 12 months. 7.9% of the cases, as oppose to the women who were only married by the church or civilly and, above all, in respect to the women who are cohabiting, it is a very serious problem for many women.
- In the case of women married only by the church, 9.8% reported to have suffered physical violence as a couple. And women married only civilly, the percentage was 11.2.
- The highest level of violence in couples was infringed on women who are cohabiting, the indicator was that of 14.5%, a significantly higher level than the rest of the women.



2. Cohabiting and fragility in a couple's life.

If we analyze another important topic in a couple's life: the one related to stability, we will also find significant differences between marriages and people cohabiting. The latter situation, there is a percentage of cases much higher who end up by splitting up: if we analyze people who cohabit from the beginning of their life as a couple, we noticed that 22.7% did not continue their relationship and ended it. However, people who married from the beginning of their life as a couple, only registered 11.9% of cases of separations or divorces. (check table 5.2).

Tabla 3

MÉXICO 2005: ESTABILIDAD DEL VÍNCULO DE PAREJA SEGÚN LA CONDICIÓN INICIAL DE CASADO O EN UNIÓN LIBRE. POBLACIÓN DE 18 AÑOS O MÁS

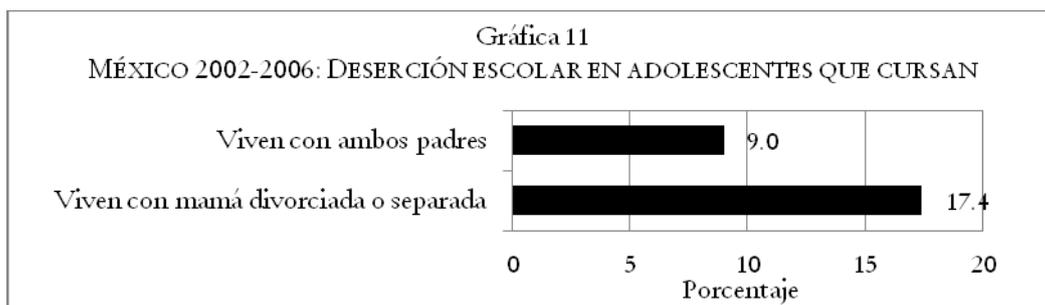
	<i>Casados</i>	<i>Unión libre</i>
Permanece unida	1	3
Separación o divorcio	9	7
Total	10	10

FUENTE: *Encuesta Nacional sobre la Dinámica de las Familias 2005*. Elaboración propia.

If we convert the above data into odds, that is to say, the probability of a cohabitation dissolving as oppose to the probability of a marriage dissolving, we will notice that the risk is higher by 2.27 in the case of cohabitation.

3. Drop out in adolescents.

According to the second round of *The National Poll on living Standards in Households* (ENNVIH), which was tested in 2005-2006 in 8 440 homes, adolescents who lived with both parents dropped out of middle school in 9% of the cases. However, those who lived with families where the head is a divorced or separated mother, doubled the case to 17.4% (check graphic 11). It is a statistical difference which does not change even when controlling multivariate models.



4. Multi-regional study on physical and sexual abuse against the young.

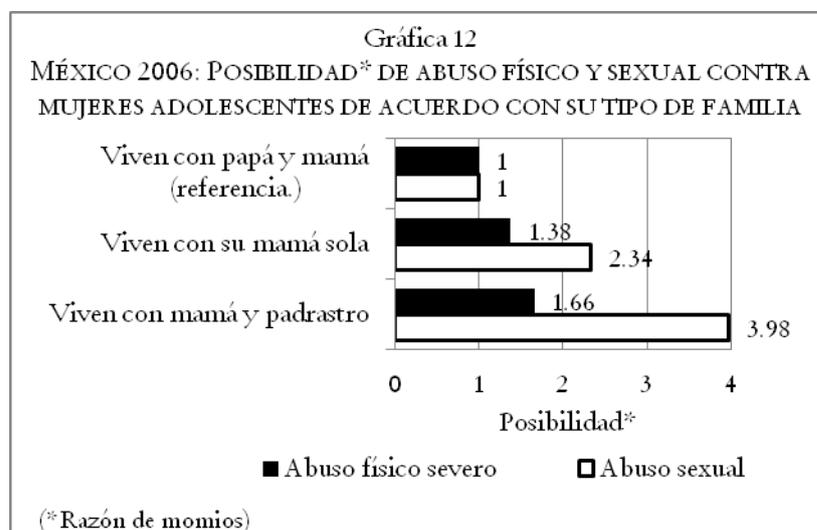
The National Institute for Women and the National Institute of Psychiatry (14) – both Mexican Government entities- carried out in 2006 *A Survey of Child Abuse and Associated Factors (EMIFA – 2006)* (15). It is about a regional study that comprises four states out of the 32 that integrate the country: Baja California, Sonora, Tlaxcala and Yucatán. The survey took place with middle school teenagers from private and public schools, taking as a sample 5852 interviewed (2 915 men and 2937 women).

The research analyzes the prevalence in the different kinds of abuse against minors: physical (which is divided in physical and severe physical), emotional, negligence and sexual. In this summary we will concentrate on the severe physical (which include situations which are so serious such as beatings which leave bruises or bleeding, beatings which have to be attended at a hospital or a doctor’s office, burns and the use of knives and sticks), as well as sexual abuse (groping or sexual relations).

Graphic 12 contains the most relevant results about the kind of family young girls had at the time of the interview and the relation with the identified abuse.

- Teenagers who live with their single mother as the head of family have a 38% higher of suffering *severe physical abuse* as oppose to those who live with both biological parents.
- Likewise, teenagers who live with their mother and step-father have a 66% higher of suffering *severe physical abuse* as oppose to those who live with both biological parents.

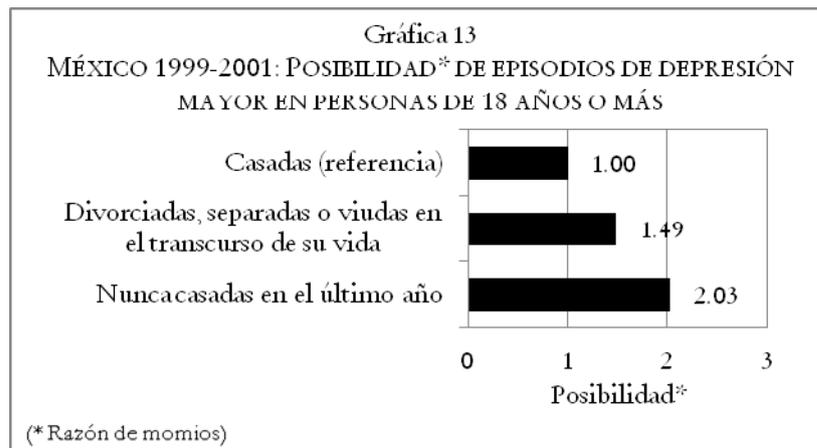
- Teenagers who live with their single mother as head of family have a 134% higher of suffering *sexual abuse* as oppose to those who live with both biological parents.
- Teenagers who live with their mother and step-father have a 298% higher of suffering *sexual abuse* as oppose to those who live with both biological parents.



5. Multi-regional study on depression on adults.

Laurie B. Slone, Fran H. Norris, Arthur D. Murphy, and a wider team of colleagues, published in 2006 the article: “*Epidemiology of Major Depression in four Cities in Mexico*”. The cities considered were: Oaxaca, Guadalajara, Monterrey and Mérida, with a sample of 2 509 interviewed people of 18 years of age and up. The information about Oaxaca and Guadalajara was taken in 1999 and Monterrey and Mérida 2001.

When compared married people to those who had different civil status, the following was found: (graphic 13)



- During their lifetime, divorced, separated or widow women reported to have suffered 49% higher episodes of depression as oppose to those who are married.
- In the last 12 months single women reported 103% higher episodes of depression as oppose to those who are married.

CONCLUSION: TO A FAMILY PERSPECTIVE IN PUBLIC POLICIES IN MEXICO.

In this research we have studied the relationship between family structure and the welfare of the population in Mexico, and have found what happens in other countries: Married adults and children who live with their biological parents recorded higher levels of well being, as oppose to people who had a different family situation.

It is very important to specify: families where the head are the married couple, it is not unusual to find problems of different kinds. In different cases there is violence, authoritarianism, carelessness, and great difficulties that make the family room into an experience of human suffering; therefore, it is not unusual divorce and separation processes. Besides, many children who live with both biological parents are physically abused, as well as being emotionally and educationally neglected. However, *in the other types of family the situation is*

always more critical in general terms, as it is more difficult to achieve well being and lessen the problems that often occur. We are not talking about individual cases but on general trends. There can be many individual exceptions, but we are referring to the average families or a higher proportion of cases.

Children who belong to families different from those who are with their biological parents, can they overcome the major disadvantage condition marked by so many different investigations? The possibility of doing so is more difficult, the obstacles are greater; however, a deep solidarity of life from the mother or father's side, who without the help of a spouse, has taken the responsibility of the children, or the new partner who becomes responsible for them (including step-mothers and step-fathers), can contribute in a very important way in overcoming the disadvantages. There are many examples of this, for the sake of the children and society. In a great number of cases, families are able to overcome their problems and learn to cope with them. However, the empirical situation is clear: such situation takes place in a significantly smaller quantity than those families with married parents and same children.

What is the magnitude for this difference? It depends on the analyzed problem. In some cases, the differences are important in percentage terms; in others, it was observed a higher incidence of certain serious problems. In any case, the risk of the problems presented and analyzed in this research, is related with the structure of families, and is usually very significant in statistical terms.

However, it is important to recognize that welfare of children and adults is also related to factors and processes beyond the direct control of what happens in families. It largely has to do with the economical, social and political situation in wider society. It is related to the competitive labor markets that offer stable and well paid jobs. It has to do with the quality of the public and political institutions of the country; the rule of law, the protection of individual rights, the efficiency and effectiveness of governmental activities, the population educational level, and the process of community and civic participation, among others.

To pretend to reduce the population welfare in the family dynamics, to the different structures of family, is *a huge absurdity*. But the opposite is also very inadequate: to analyze the population welfare without taking into account the different dynamics that take place in each type of family. We therefore propose –in the form of a hypothesis- that the population welfare, which is the final objective of all democracies, should be attended by the conjugation of the following three strategies:

- A micro-organizational strategy, related especially with the dynamics of the different types of family.
- A meso-organizational strategy, or intermediate, related to the basic spaces for socialization (schools, religious groups, areas of residence, etc.) and with the processes of community and civic participation of the population.(residents association, non-governmental organizations, scientific and cultural associations, etc.)
- And a macro-organizational strategy, where the functioning of labor markets, the private and public educational national system, the media, governmental institutions, political parties, public politics, besides other aspects, are determining factors for the population welfare.

The theoretical and conceptual process, methodological, technical and operational, which links the theme of family structures in the promotion of population welfare, will be called *family perspective*. It is the process of bringing the issue of different types of family to central design and operation of public policies of the democratic governments, as well as the development programs driven by private and social sectors, including companies, schools, universities, the media, civic organizations, religious organizations, etc. This is because it is a theme with profound social implications, as we have settled throughout the investigation.

The term “family perspective” is not recent, as the available information allows to locate its emergence, at least, in the 60’s from last century, specifically in the professional field in the social work developed in the United States of America.

In an article published in 1967 called “The family perspective and family interaction”, Barbara Gray Elis introduced it as an analytical category in social work.

Other pioneer authors were G.W. Krieger and L.O. Bascue, and above all, Theodora Ooms with her work: “The necessity of a family perspective”, published in 1984 as it is the first one to cover systematically what it implies to boost a *family perspective* in the public policies scope.

In the full investigation report many other investigations are mentioned where the term *family perspective* is also used. It is not the moment to refer to them. Suffices to note that, to evaluate the set of available information, when a family perspective is assumed, it should be conducive design and application of two grand strategies of work in the public scope in the democratic societies, and in the private and social scope: one of welfare, and the other of preventive and educational kind.

Welfare strategy. Every family, whichever its organizational type, have a right to be protected in their fundamental needs by the public institutions of society, of course, in a context of broad participation by the economic agents and civil society. No family should be discriminated as it is a human right to have protection in aspects such as education, food and health, dwelling, legal protection and all the corresponding basic needs. In particular, the more fragile families, those whose head of the family is a single mother, must be supported by aid programs, provided by government organizations, private and civil society.

Education and prevention strategy. Democratic societies do not only need to interfere in the solution and the moderation of problems once present. It is also required, an equally important, to increase the options for the future, that is, new generations have the chance for better experiences as a couple and as a family, in such a way that the probability of problems of violence are lessened, and may prosper physically and mentally, school performance, lower prevalence of addiction, subjective well-being, availability to economic income, and important every day aspects. As has been stated previously, these

experiences are more often presented among adults who have stable marriages, and minors who live with their biological parents.

This double strategy: care and preventive, requires in the *family perspective*, that the democratic states are supportive without discrimination to all types of family in their needs and basic rights. Moreover, it is necessary that the democratic states promote the structuring of stable couples relations, as the normative ideal of a marriage based in equal rights between men and women, and the couple's commitment in favor of a solidarity life; hence, children are cared by their biological parents.

It is a care strategy, and a preventive strategy. If the democratic state does not provide support to all the different types of family when they have problems, it would violate the principal of universal equality who should guide their work. And if the democratic state does not promote a public policy in favor of stability, equal rights and couple solidarity life between men and women, normatively constructed in the shape of wedlock legal and cultural, it wouldn't promote a growing number of minors to live with both biological parents, it would then contribute to a prevention and decrease of problems in the near and distant future because all the available empirical research clearly shows that the different types of family are not alike in the contribution of the welfare and the promotion of human rights.

The design and operation of public welfare policies in regard to family problems, is a solidarity commitment of the democratic societies with the present parents generation, and of course, their children. But, the design and operation of public educational and preventive policies is, above all, the best way for solidarity in the future of the new generations.

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¹ Los cuestionarios y las bases de datos, así como todos los informes académicos y técnicos, se encuentran en la siguiente página del Instituto Mexicano de la Juventud: <http://cendoc.imjuventud.gob.mx/investigacion/encuesta.html>

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³ La base de datos y los informes técnicos pueden consultarse en BDSocial. Bases de datos para el análisis social / México (<http://www.bdsocial.org>).

⁴ La base de datos y los informes técnicos pueden consultarse en BDSocial. Bases de datos para el análisis social / México (<http://www.bdsocial.org>).

⁵ Página oficial: http://www.encup.gob.mx/es/Encup/Cuarta_ENCUP_2008. Acceso libre a los documentos técnicos y a la base de datos.

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