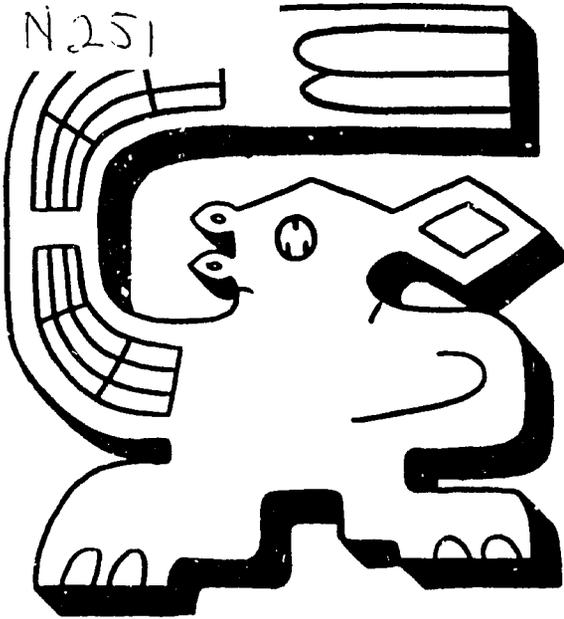


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Women in Development: Dependency and Exploitation

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Women in Development: Dependency and Exploitation

Junc Nash

When we focus on women in development, we are forced to take into account the broader social and political implications of economic change. This stems from a basic assumption about the division of labour that has linked women's biological role in reproduction to the social responsibility of nurturing and socializing the future generations. When this assumption is tied to a development process that places greater emphasis on growth in production than on the development of the society, the implication is that employment of women in the advanced sectors of the economy is uneconomic, since it requires a heavier investment in social services of child care, improved working conditions and more flexible hours than in the case of male workers. Linked to the premise that the end of production is exchange for profit, concern for domestic consumption needs is subordinated to short-range gains for a single enterprise or industry. Subsistence needs provided for by women's work in a domestic economy are often subverted by capital-intensive industrial projects that increase the dependency relationships that perpetuate under-development. Too often modern industrial sectors in the developing economies have failed to take full advantage of the human potential that is the greatest resource of these countries.

The emphasis on production for exchange that has characterized many of the development projects cultivates a sense in the work force of limited control over their work and an underestimation of the contribution they could make to society. For those sectors of the population which are excluded or limited in their participation in the labour market because of sex or ethnic considerations, the individual sense of worthlessness is even more distorted. The exclusion of women, the majority of the population of newly developing areas, from the advanced sectors of commercial production depresses the

wage that workers can command in the marginally productive industries and services. At the same time, this exclusion augments the wages of workers in advanced sectors of industry by narrowing the labour force channelled into such jobs. The differential wage artificially heightened in such sectors stimulates even greater investment in the capital-intensive sector and in turn increases the distortion of the economy, the over-investment in import substitution and the further neglect of local level and subsistence sectors.

The uneven penetration of capital investment in developing countries has been considered in its regional, national, racial and ethnic forms.¹ The sexual dimension of this uneven penetration has only recently been touched. Just as the effects of the unequal involvement of other discriminated sectors (for example, peasants in comparison with townsmen, or poor nations compared with rich) means that they can be controlled more effectively because of their inability to compete, so in the case of women there is a loss of decision-making and self-determination. Most importantly, when there is a shift in the balance of productive roles favouring male employment there often is a corresponding shift in consumption preferences. Radios and bicycles, for example, may have higher priority than nutritional needs of children and social welfare. The failure to set any market value on women's work in the reproduction and maintenance of the labour force means that their contribution to production is consistently undervalued.² This further aggravates the unevenness of capital investment in the development process: the saving on their unpaid labour in domestic production in the home and the underpaid labour of domestic servants accelerates the accumulation of capital for the investment sector.³ The low value placed on women's work may further have the effect of socializing women to dependency on men. When women lose their subsistence base and the family has to depend on a single wage earner, the subordination of workers to control by employers is reinforced because of the pressure on the male breadwinner to remain in the work force.

An even more pervasive effect of the situation of women is the undervaluation of their product, human labour power. Children of the vast populations who have been pushed out of the rural areas by commercial agriculture and who have no hope of being absorbed in the narrow industrial sector in the cities, are born into a world that offers little prospect for the development of their talents in their own nations. Often on reaching productive age, they are forced to migrate to the industrial centres in search of work. The abundant

supplies of cheap labour further accelerate the accumulation of capital and aggravate the regional and international imbalances. The problems of women in development may be seen as intensification of the problems faced by the vast majority of the people of developing countries who are caught up in a process that stresses gains for the individual firm or industry at the same time that it results in the waste of human resources and the decline of social standards. Women emerged after a century of industrial development as triply subordinate: as housewives and mothers, they are the subordinates of men (most of them from middle and lower income groups) on the domestic scene. They are subordinates as females in sex-segregated jobs with discriminatory wages. As workers, women are usually excluded from the higher levels of management in private and governmental enterprises.

In the first case, the plight of the housewife in both developed and developing countries is similar. They are sometimes dismissed without indemnity, often have no control over income and have no regulation on the hours of work performed.

In the second instance male workers may join with employers in supporting the exclusion of women from jobs or in permitting lower pay scales in their own fear of losing the services women provide for them, as well as in competing with them in the job market.

Finally, women must depend on decision-making controlled by male élites who determine the allocation of private and public capital and who often tend to give low priority to social needs.

The fallacy of treating labour as a commodity is dramatized by the presence of women in the labour market. Women's linked rôle in production and reproduction exposes the basic premise that the 'elasticity in supply' when applied to labour means that, in a declining demand situation, wages are depressed to a starvation period or, in the reverse case, when the demand for labour is high, employers must draw on the reserve supply of underemployed women who have been programmed to withdraw to the home in periods of recession.⁴ It is one of the ironies of history that war has brought North American women their greatest economic opportunities and that in every period of national emergency, women have served with distinction in widely varied capacities, but thereafter have been subject to treatment as a marginal group whose skills have been inadequately utilized.⁵ In the Second World War women's participation in the labour force rose from 26 per cent in 1940 to 37.7 per cent in 1945, dropping shortly thereafter to 30.2 per cent.⁶

The second major fallacy in the view of labour as a commodity lies in the dual role of the worker as both producer and consumer. Whatever the management gains in the single firm by depressing wages, the producers lose in sales for their commodities. The tendency towards unequal income distribution in market centres becomes even greater with the export of capital to developing areas. In developing countries, the richest 5 per cent receive 28.7 per cent of Gross National Income compared with 19.9 per cent in developed countries. The peak inequality is found in Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Gabon, Peru and the Republic of South Africa. Lacking income distribution, these countries do not have an internal market to absorb goods manufactured at home. More sectors of the labour force, including women, are relegated to marginal jobs.⁷

Women, as the consumer-control agent in the family, are even more aware of the pinch between rising prices and a stable or negative paycheck than is the 'breadwinner'. The Bolivian miners told me the story of the heroic woman who was the first worker to be killed in the 1942 massacre in the tin mines. Her words as she seized the Bolivian flag and marched up to the administration office when the men fell back as they saw the soldiers aim their rifles, were: 'It is we women who have to face our children and tell them that we have nothing to feed them. It is better that we should die than to work at starvation wages'.

THE EXPORT OF DEPENDENCY ON THE JOB MARKET

The concept of development that took shape in the industrial centres after the Second World War stressed those features that characterized the rise of private industry in the developed countries. Theorists in development applied norms established in the large-scale capital-intensive sectors of the developed world as the logic for the industrial order in the rest of the world. These have been summarized as follows: (a) large-scale organization (b) linked to world-wide economy with (c) urban centres of some size (d) characterized by diverse occupational structures (e) and an educational system to feed this structure (f) with a wage structure that reflects supply and demand of various occupational skills (g) a labour market mechanism to sort out, distribute and redistribute workers (h) managers and managed with rules governing the relationship (i) industrial discipline for

individual and group (j) a State strong enough to govern industrialism (k) and 'acceptance of these imperatives by men who live in the industrial order'.⁸ For the worker, commitment to this industrial order is equated with 'dependence for his security on his employer and on the state, not on the tribe'.⁹ The way in which women's productivity was subverted in the development projects that resulted from such programmes as well as the way in which communities as a whole lost control over their destiny should be clarified. The goal of such development is growth in production for an external market, not the satisfaction of needs in a local economy. Commitment to the labour force requires the systematic encroachment on the subsistence-based industries in horticulture and handicrafts which were the provenance of women in most of Africa, Asia and Latin America. An impressive record of the impact of development on such activities has been compiled in one publication.¹⁰ Industrialization and commercialization of agriculture break down the existing division of labour in developing areas and contribute to the imbalance and tension that derive from the dependency of women on a single wage earner and of the wage earner in a fluctuating labour market. The crises that are endemic in this global market situation of rising unemployment, food shortages and the restriction of energy supplies intensify the problems women have always faced in the impoverished areas.

The ILO casts the issue of women's participation in the labour force in terms of a contrast between developed and developing areas. While the over-all employment rates reflect the difference between developing and developed areas, women's activity rates do not. Women of the working force in the developed areas are experiencing the same insecurity as the first to be laid off (along with other minorities) and the last to be hired that women in developing countries have experienced for decades. The difference between developed centres and developing periphery is in the extremity of unemployment, and the narrow margins of welfare benefits in developing compared with developed economies. While the recorded level of unemployment in the United States is 8.1 per cent for women, 11 per cent for blacks of both sexes and 7.4 per cent for white men,¹¹ unemployment rates for women in other parts of the world show a high in Puerto Rico at 12.5 in 1973 and 18.0 in Trinidad and Tobago, and these figures do not reflect the recent increases in unemployment caused by the recession.¹² Canada and Italy show rates nearly comparable to those of the United States of America.

Another difference between the developed centres and the developing world is that, while women are treated as a reserve labour force in the former, in the developing areas a large segment are excluded from any but the most marginal activities. A study of women vendors in Mexico City explains the growth in their ranks as the diminishing ability of the urban industrial system to absorb the workers released from agricultural employment.¹³ The same explanation might be extended to other large cities of Latin America and Asia. The chronic underemployment of women is referred to as a defect 'not of the structure, but in the organization of society to allow the most important asset of any community, the productive capacity of its members, to go unused'.¹⁴ Comparisons with employment figures in the centrally planned societies suggest that it may be an endemic problem both at the structural as well as at the organizational level in other systems. The incapacity of capital intensive industries to sustain high levels of employment has been shown in developing countries in the past decade; it is now being demonstrated in the developed centres. Management policies in the market countries favour unemployment rates of around 4 per cent in order 'to stem inflation and increase productivity by improving the allocation of labour'.¹⁵ Combined with the reality of a segmented labour force, women's demand for equality becomes a threat as male workers are pitted against female, black against white and youth against older workers in a shrinking job market.

The variation throughout the world in the participation of women in the labour force depends not so much on the question of developed versus developing countries, but the commitment to a full employment policy versus the treatment of labour as a commodity equivalent to other factors of production and subject to the same fluctuations in demand. While there is a difference in the activity rates for developing and developed countries of 26 to 33 per cent, there is an even higher differential between the USSR (51 per cent) and the United States (34 per cent).¹⁶ All of the socialist countries except Yugoslavia have pursued a policy of full employment as a postulate of socialist ethics in their development programmes. The desire of these countries to reconstruct the economy after the First World War in the USSR, and after the Second World War in Poland, Romania and elsewhere in Eastern Europe, gave motivation at a national level to draw all adults into the labour force. The fact that the only source of personal income was one's own labour, motivated the individual worker to participate.¹⁷ Poland showed a female activity rate of

40 per cent in 1972; Romania and the German Democratic Republic, 45 per cent; the USSR, 50 per cent; Bulgaria, 46 per cent at the end of 1971; Czechoslovakia, 47 per cent in 1969; Hungary, 42 per cent in 1971 – an average of 10 per cent over activity rates in the market economies.¹⁸ Nor is the participation of women as restricted to female-segregated jobs, such as secretarial work, nursing and pre-collegiate teaching, as in most of the market economies.

Whatever illusions planners may have of achieving a rational allocation of labour in relation to production by a policy based on marginal productivity assumptions is futile in a global situation where the work force does not reproduce itself in accord with the growth rates of the country. The least developing reproduce the largest numbers of children, and in reverse proportions to the GNP. Whereas the more developed countries produced under 500 million workers and over \$US22,000 million million of GNP, the developing countries provided over 1,000 million workers and \$US500,000 million of GNP. While population increases in the 1960-1970 period have been correlated with employment increases until the recent recession in the developed regions, there has been over a decade of lag in developing regions.¹⁹ Grouping together the more developed regions and comparing them with the developing regions, the ILO data indicated that the number of economically active persons more than doubled in the developed countries during the same period.

Two solutions to the problem in some countries are the migration of workers and the 'runaway shop'. The migration of labour to developed countries solves the immediate problem of meeting labour demands without drawing on reserve labour supplies and providing the necessary social services such as day-care centres and retraining programmes. It leads to further imbalances as the developing countries lose their most productive part of the labour force and continue to bear the burden of support for dependent segments. Without even speaking of the social and emotional stresses implicit in a situation where the active young male labour pool is torn out of the local community, we are already becoming aware of the mounting economic problems caused by such imbalances.

Labour unions in the United States recognize the problem of the 'runaway shop' in the framework of a world labour market where multinational corporations close factory sites in high labour-cost countries and move to Singapore, Hong Kong, Puerto Rico, the Republic of Korea, and similar developing countries. However, the answer so far has been to put pressure on the Government to restrict

imports from those areas, as well as setting limits on the production in foreign branches of the firms with which they hold contracts. In an interview with the research director of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, it was learned that 10 per cent unemployment exists in the garment trades of New York. The unions have not attempted to push organization abroad to level wages in the world labour market. In the face of the global strategies of the multinational corporations, labour leaders are taking a parochial view of the role they play in international trade.

WOMEN IN INDUSTRY IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

The introduction of industry into the developing countries after the Second World War stressed a labour market commitment that demanded flexibility in learning new skills and mobility both geographically and in occupational strata for the working force. Commitment was based on the dependency of workers on the job, contrived by taxation that forced workers into the labour market, by limitations on available land because of the spread of commercial agriculture, by usurping small holdings, and by natural increases in the population, or a combination of all three factors. The net effect in all of the developing areas played a large role. The segregation of the labour force following the patterns developed in the industrialized centres between sex and racial categories, took on a new dimension as the upper echelons of management were filled by foreigners from the developed countries of the western hemisphere.²⁰

An extreme instance of the emerging pattern can be seen in Puerto Rico. Contrary to assumptions about the dependent nature of Latin American females, American-based companies found that women flocked to the factories in the 1930s and 1940s. It was reported that in the 1950s the 'radical change in the economic status of women and their reactions to the opportunities that have appeared' merited a reappraisal of women as a potential in the labour force.²¹ The major resistance to employment was from men, who threatened to and actually withdrew support from the family when their wives went to work. Nonetheless the women continued to work until they were deprived of employment opportunities. Because of their superior control of the political apparatus and trade unions, Puerto Rican men were able to introduce special incentives to industries in which

male employment constituted two-thirds or more of the total employment administered by the Economic Development Administration as well as through private companies. Women's rate of participation declined from the 1930s, partly in response to this direct rivalry between men and women.

The industrial newcomers in the petrochemical industry hired no women in their production lines and had only a few in the infirmary and commissary. The highest managerial job found in one survey of these companies was that of a secretarial assistant to the personnel executive.²² The policy of the multinational corporations is to let local practice prevail with regard to the hiring practices of the host country. However, their non-interventionist policies in effect crystallize the attitudes of discrimination that exist in other countries since they provide a model for less technically advanced firms to follow. If the practices of the most advanced sectors persist in the old pattern, they confirm the choices made at each level.

The assumption of linear change in an upward curve of development that prevailed in the social science literature is especially challenged when one concentrates on women in employment. Similar declines in the employment of women in production found in Puerto Rico can be seen in Mexico. The phenomenal industrial development in the post-war period contributed to the rise of women's activity rates from 4.6 per cent in 1930 to 18.0 per cent in 1960, but in the following decade it was increased by only 1.0 per cent.²³ Of these, 10.8 were in agriculture and connected work, 19.4 were in industry, 60.1 were in services and 9.7 were in non-specified jobs. Owing to male hegemony in upper level occupations, women are limited in the levels to which they can rise in the professions and technical occupations. The only industry in which women's participation is higher than that of men is in clothing work, much of which is done in the home.

A similar pattern of decline or tapering off of participation can be seen in Brazil. In that country, the highest involvement of women in the labour force was 45.5 per cent of the labour force in 1875. It declined to 15.3 per cent by 1920, with the greatest loss in agriculture.²⁴ Similarly, the high proportion in industry — mostly textiles — represented 91.3 per cent of the labour force in 1900, but dropped to 27.9 per cent in 1920. The 1970 census showed a slight upward shift in total participation — 21 per cent — but when one considers the remarkable industrial growth of Brazil in the 50-year period, it represents a proportionate decline in the economic position

in relation to men.

The sexual division of labour characteristic of the plantation appears to prevail in the low capitalized industries in Bahia.²⁶ Male workers received a higher proportion of the income allotted to families because of the assumed greater physical input despite the greater mechanization of tasks in the factory that served to diminish the importance of physical force. Married women in Bahia were excluded from participation in the factory work because of the assumed larger costs in the legal provisions for maternity leave and crèches. In addition, the anticipated conflict in the paternalistic authority over a woman exercised by a husband and a manager makes owners reluctant to hire or continue to employ women who marry. For those who persisted in the work force, the consequences of the ideology were that they had menial jobs compared to men of the same educational background, and they received lower wages.

A similar pattern existed in the mining centre of Bolivia. Women entered as concentrators of minerals in the early period of tin mining from 1880 and in increasing numbers up until the 1940s when new methods of concentrating minerals were introduced.²⁶ They even replaced men inside the mines during the Chaco war in the 1930s. Then, when new methods of concentrating minerals were introduced, hundreds of female workers were replaced by male workers in the sink and float plants. Since 1960, no women have worked in the larger mines as metal concentrators because they have been completely mechanized. The trade union did little to counter management policies with regard to replacing women, although it was a major issue when men were threatened with layoffs in the 1960s.

Women who worked were less able to sustain a regular consensual union with men, who felt that their earnings threatened their own masculine image in the community. Women worked out of necessity, since the high accident rate in the interior combined with the incidence of silicosis totally incapacitates most workers after 10 or 15 years. Hundreds of women worked with men panning the waters from every mine and salvaging the better ores from the slag piles of past years when recovery processes were not as effective.²⁷ Others engage in retail sales bringing foodstuffs and consumer items from the lower agricultural and industrial regions to the high altitudes. The almost complete monopoly of consumer food retail sales by women is a tribute to their energy and resourcefulness in surviving and maintaining their families.²⁸ Their activity rates are not even minimally recognized in recent estimates of 13 per cent.

As a consequence of the high level of solidarity in mining communities and the respect with which they are held in legends and myth, Bolivian women have a greater degree of self-determination than women in many parts of the world. They have played an important role in the resistance struggles of workers against oppression. Their involvement in strikes is not only in a supportive role, but in actively organizing food distribution when the company store is shut down to starve the workers into submission.

In contrast to the history of industrialization in dependent economies, China's programme for development has taken a path in which small, labour-intensive industry is encouraged along with large, capital-intensive industry. In Fengsheng neighbourhood, seven factories produce insulating materials, rubber products, clothing, metallurgy and cardboard boxes and springs. Eighty per cent of the staff and workers are women who live 15 minutes away from their work place.²⁹ Starting with hand tools, the women who organized the factories have introduced automatic or semi-automated production techniques in the past 15 years. They show a flexibility in shifting production to new products, going into insulating materials as the demand for such materials rose. Now 30 per cent of the local women are employed in industries close to their homes.

The difference between this pattern and what has been described above is the emphasis on local planning within the capital limits that can be locally sustained along with maximizing the human resources that were abundantly available in the early stages. By staging the introduction of automated processes, they were able to integrate it without creating imbalances in the local economy.

WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE

Women have been the major part of the work force in agriculture throughout the world as far back as the Neolithic Age. It is one of the few employment opportunities which does not seem to restrict their child-bearing functions, since fertility ratios remain high. The impact of commercial agriculture, however, has had a similar impact to that of industrialization in rural developing areas. Many of the programmes introduced in Asia, Latin America and Africa in the 1960s under a variety of development agencies illustrate the influence that programmes emphasizing growth in production but not development of a total resource base, may have. The emphasis on

high capital inputs, sometimes two or three times higher than that of traditional farming, and large-scale operations has had an adverse effect on all small cultivators, but particularly on women and children in subsistence farming.

In assessing the effect of the 'green revolution' on employment it has been speculated that its effects on the overall needs of labour would not be great, but that women and children would be released from some burdens such as pumping water for irrigation.³⁰ It is anticipated that the higher yields might increase labour demand in other fields such as the transportation of crops, but these are notably occupations that employ men. In a careful study of the effects of technological innovation, it was shown that there was a reduction of the labour force to about one-fifth of that involved in traditional farming with the introduction of pump sets for irrigation, wheat threshers, tractors and reapers.³¹ A displacement of not less than 19.5 per cent is projected by 1983-84. While there is cause for some optimism about the positive advantages of this displacement, as workers would spend their time advantageously in education and community pursuits, the women could be forced into dependency relations that limit their involvement in the total development process. Most of the new jobs in transportation and work with agricultural machines are done by men.

In the assistance given government subsidies in India, preference was shown to farmers who already had the basic complements of land, oxen and labour in the family. It was estimated that only those who owned at least two acres could invest in the high yielding seeds, fertilizers and pesticides required in the new agriculture.³² This preference for the richer farmers is based on an emphasis by planners on growth indices in total output, not on concerns with the alleviation of hunger or the wider distribution of gains.³³ Poorer farmers who tend to be oriented to subsistence crops, resisted the introduction of improved grains because they disliked the taste. The net result of the programme has been that the relatively more prosperous farmers were able to take advantage of the programme.

The overall effect of the green revolution has been a vast increase in yields, but at the expense of the displacement of the small farmers, regional inequalities, and the accentuation of income differences. In Luzon, rising land values caused evictions of many small peasants, while in Delhi and Pakistan there was a loss of jobs and in Latin American countries, including Bolivia, Mexico and Venezuela, there were few peasant cultivators aggressive enough to take advantage of

it.³⁴ The displacement of labour from a family-based context limits the ability of women to enter the productive process and thus assume a share of productivity for themselves and their children.

Commercial agriculture has often discouraged initiative for women's subsistence activities that provided a varied diet and some surplus for cash income. The inroads made on a community of black farmholders on the Colombian coast by the introduction of new cash crops have been described elsewhere.³⁵ Women, who headed many of the households and, even when married, provided cash income as agricultural labourers in addition to crops from their gardens, were driven out of production with the encroachment of cash crops introduced by green revolution technicians. Whereas men saw their interests being improved by wage labour available in the mechanized farming sector, women lost control over the variety of crops that had been the mainstay of their subsistence activities and ensured their children food in case of market failures of monocrop cultivation. Some of their coffee trees were even ruined by the insecticides dusted over tracts outside the commercial crop area by planes used in the commercial enterprises. In the male-dominated society of rural Colombia where an attitude of irresponsible paternity prevails, the women, who had been the main providers for the family, lost the margin of control they had exercised. This suggests an important area of study in the disaggregation of family disbursements of income in order to understand the differential effect of male versus female employment. Research on the Maya of Chiapas, Mexico, shows an important shift in consumption when young men worked in a sawmill for cash rather than on the home plots. Whereas women customarily received the cash for crops and took care of family needs with it, men were reluctant to relinquish their wages. It resulted in greater drinking, and increased purchases of radios.³⁶ A long-term study of the effects is imperative for development planning purposes.

As we explore the specific cases of technical change in agriculture, we become aware of the divergent interests of men and women within a domestic structure of inequality. The need for introducing women into policy-making levels in development projects becomes apparent.

The survival of much of African traditional culture in the twentieth century permits a view of women's role in society that challenges the stereotype of submissive acquiescence to European life. In Ibo country, women retain their own earnings from trade and domestic animals apart from that of their husbands. In 1929 when there was a threat that the British Government was going to tax women as well

as men, the women organized a demonstration against the warrant officer for permitting a census to be taken that they thought would be the basis for the poll tax.³⁷ Despite reassurances that they would not be taxed along with the men, the women converged in a group of 10,000 carrying sticks. They were dispersed after two days of rioting. Later they converged on a district officer, demanding that the Government should not extend the tax base to women and protesting the tax on men as well. They complained about the state of trade and the way in which foreign firms were cutting out their position as retailers and middlemen. As they became more militant, the lieutenant attending the district officer opened fire and killed 32, wounding 31. The riots, which have been called the Aba Riots, continued sporadically in an area of 6,000 square miles. The British were impressed with the vigour and solidarity of the women, acting completely independently of men and prepared to die if they did not succeed. In the commission of investigation that followed, one woman summed up their complaints: 'Our grievance is that the land is changed — we are all dying'.

Yoruba women reveal the same solidarity demonstrated by Ibo women in their dealing with the district commissioner. They still keep separate incomes and have different responsibilities in the maintenance of the family: men provide the house, and women the food and clothing. They co-operate with co-wives in an extended household arrangement that makes possible their trading activities. The fear among Yoruba men of losing control over the women causes them to combine with the missionaries in order to keep women in the village.³⁸ This suggests an important trend noted in the collaboration between the males and European or other colonial administrators with the intrusion of Government and trade. Europeans assisted the men in making a transition from the hunting and warrior life they pursued to the cultivation of cash crops. In the process, men took over the tasks and the land resources that were the women's provenance. This added support meant that the gap between the male and female workers constantly widened in a way that 'enhances the prestige of men and lowers the status of women.' The men represent the modern, the women the old.³⁹ Women's role as the bearers of cultural tradition, which reinforces this view, obscures the fact that women are often the most responsive members of the population to fundamental change.⁴⁰ In the case of the Afikpo Ibo, women were the first to turn from the purchase of titles, which the men were still pursuing, to the acquisition of higher living standards.

Stereotypes about women's resistance to change stems from the unilineal view of modernization that posits all cultural traditions of the developing country as obstacles to development.

China's agricultural programme is one of the outstanding examples of an attempt to integrate women along with men in development. When the land reform act was passed, women received certificates along with men and income was distributed to everyone who worked, not just to the head of the family as before.⁴¹ Women organized themselves into mutual aid teams in addition to working alongside men. Until the Great Leap Forward in the 1950s, women were in a disadvantaged position based on pre-revolutionary assumptions about their ability to produce. The Party has since taken a position in favour of equal pay for equal work, and the prejudices of men are slowly being overcome. By providing women with their own land and return from labour, they make direct participation in the productive process possible. Participating directly in the organization of production at the local level, Chinese women are acquiring the experience and self-confidence to enter into higher levels of leadership.

China's programmes in agriculture differ from rural development along commercial lines because of its attempt to integrate advances in the rural and industrial sectors. Trained medical and technical experts work in the agricultural areas as well as in the urban centres. The 'barefoot doctors' and 'shock teams' introduce advanced knowledge in special fields throughout the country as they attempt to overcome the elitism that characterized professional work in the past.⁴²

EXCLUSION FROM DECISION-MAKING

The discrimination against women in high-level positions in Government, industry and trade unions as well as agricultural co-operatives confirms women's restriction from decision-making in all countries of the world. As yet development agents have not dealt with the problem directly. In fact, a recent report by the United Nations indicates that community development officers often defeat the interest and enthusiasm women have shown by casting them in stereotyped roles transferred from the developed countries. Many programmes, such as the 'Better Family Living' projects sponsored by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations have as their objective 'the maintenance of values and functions of

home and family living and planning of a happy family life', but there is no attempt to encourage male participation in such basic activities nor to change the division of labour. Even when let out of the home, women are directed into stereotyped roles, such as stenographers and typists in urban African development projects, nursing and midwives in New Zealand, or 'mothercraft' and 'homecraft'.⁴³ Thus, while an earlier United Nations report pointed to obstacles to women's participation: lack of educational training, vocational guidance and counselling, traditional attitudes of both men and women and the division of labour in the market, the existing projects often reinforce rather than do away with the inequality.⁴⁴

The agents of change not only influence what is introduced, but also who will use it. Institutions that are the bases for cultivating change are usually exclusively male organizations such as the army, the priesthood or religious missionaries, trade unions or even the boy scouts. In Mexico the culture brokers in Indian communities are often men who learn to read and write in the army, and who become leaders in political and religious life when they return to their villages.⁴⁵ The increase of development projects guided by military régimes means that military agents, almost exclusively male, are taking a direct hand in development.

In many cases, feminine participation in development projects is excluded both at the point of contact as well as at the point of entry by the fact that the intermediary is a man. There are few female institutions where women acquire the leverage to learn the skills of the dominant culture and rise within their own communities. Women usually enter into occupations that are socially isolating, such as street vendors or servants, and do not have the opportunity to foster a sense of solidarity in trade union organizations. Except for occupations that are predominantly female, there is no female leadership in the trade unions.

Even in co-operatives, whose stated aim is to improve the general human welfare, women have often met with defeat. In East Africa, co-operatives run by men defeated an economically successful production of pyrethrum, which was a women's crop, because only the men were entitled to run a financial account in the co-operative. This had the effect of reducing the labour input, since women were alienated and were no longer as eager to produce as before.⁴⁶ In a review of co-operatives throughout the world it is shown that subsistence crops, which are in the main women's work, are rarely included in the development of co-operatives.⁴⁷ When women are

included in decision-making positions in co-operatives, their participation is often contingent on their marital status. In some co-operatives (for example, in Peru) a married woman may occupy a position of importance.⁴⁸

The most crucial institution is that of the trade union. In developed countries, particularly in the United States where they grew out of the skilled trades, union leaders succeeded in excluding women from skilled and professional occupations licence requirements, entrance fees and prolonged apprenticeships. The tactic was direct negotiation with employers in setting up job requirements that effectively excluded women by rulings against part-time work. Or, trade union officials supported demands for equal pay when the only chance for entry was at a discriminatory wage. There are even requirements such as maximum weights that can be lifted.

Trade unions in developing countries have negotiated protective laws that reduce women's competitive position with regard to men especially in extending maternity leaves (36 days before and 36 days after birth in Peru is typical) or requirements that factories pay for day-care facilities, as in Buenos Aires.⁴⁹ If these provisions were extended to male workers with the assumption that paternity should be recognized and made a collective responsibility, the sting would be removed.

The demand for equality has often been coupled with a 'me too' philosophy in which women strive to enter higher posts in the hierarchy of occupational positions accepting the structure as given. Instead of questioning the irrational and burdensome career lines, where responsibility and the cultivation of personal potential is concentrated in top positions while monotony and lack of mobility characterizes the bottom lines, many talented women strive to enter the elite status positions. The entry of token women in the high level posts only serves to stabilize a structure of inequality that is, from the point of view of leadership functions, less than optimal organization. This situation, which is most marked in highly developed western industrial States, prevails in the Eastern European nations as well, where many occupational barriers have been broken, but where entry into the top levels is not possible. The factors of household responsibilities, broken career lines, psychological and social forces as well as ordinary prejudice that inhibit the creative levels of performance and restrict women's entry into jobs at middle levels of responsibility in the professions become absolutely prohibitive at the topmost level.

The 'zero sum game'⁵⁰ that women often play limits the

constructive force that protest could have if women brought into question the assumptions that perpetuate a systematic concentration of power and control that affect men as well as women by limiting self-determination and creativity. The Chinese experience is instructive in its search for new principles for allocating responsibilities at the local level. The attempt to decentralize planning, and to build on local self-governing units provides a context amenable to women's entry into decision-making. But the most striking innovation is part of the overall strategy of direct representation of workers' interests. The mix of women from lower and upper income levels in the Fourth National People's Congress indicates the striving for egalitarian principles within the leadership channels that characterizes the women's movement at the grass-roots level.

United Nations General Assembly resolution 2626 (XXV) and 2716 (XXV) of 1970, which called for legislation to eliminate discrimination along with educational programmes and other measures to overcome prejudice, have raised the consciousness of the separate Member States to the problem of integrating women in development. Responses such as those of the Seminar on the Participation of Women in Economic Life held in Libreville, Gabon in 1972 (ST/TAO/HR/42) will, hopefully, lay the basis for specific steps to be taken to overcome the obstacles to women's involvement and release their energies and creative abilities.

CONCLUSION

The position of women has worsened despite development activities in many parts of the world. Production for profit rather than for the welfare of the population has narrowed the scope of many development programmes. When the goals of productivity are stated in micro-economic terms, marginal productivity becomes the rationalization for increasing technological substitutes for human labour. As a consequence, development agencies of both a public and private nature fail to invest adequately in subsistence-based rural production primarily sustained by women in Africa, Asia and some parts of Latin America. In the manufacturing industry, the substitution of capital-intensive industry for labour-intensive industry has meant a constantly increasing pool of unemployed as well as an intensification of the competition between sex and ethnic-defined occupations. Even in countries that have provided the infrastructure for women's

participation in the labour force, equality of access in occupations has often resulted in women bearing the double burden of home care and family responsibilities.

If planning is defined in relation to macro-social planning, we take into consideration the manifold conditions of life, the social and expressive aspects of work as well as the needs of the total human group, including the young and the aged. Whereas in micro-economic terms, worker productivity increases with the reduction of employment, in macro-social planning productivity increases with the expansion of employment.

A changing perspective in which women are demanding an active part in development at all levels is beginning to challenge accepted views. The organization and co-operation of women throughout the world is needed to overcome the normative aspects of development programmes which, by stressing non-political involvement, served to reinforce a structure of inequality. It would be tragic if, in this revision of received precepts, women were to seek equality in the same structures of inequality and oppression. In the crisis of growing populations and shrinking resources, we must consider not only how women can gain entry into development, but how to reformulate the structures and programmes in which development has been cast.

NOTES

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3. Elizabeth Jelin: 'The Bahiana in the Labour Force: domestic activity, handicraft production and salaried work in Salvador Bahi' in J. Nash and H. Safa: *Sex and Class in Latin America*; Heleith Saffioti: *A mulher na sociedade de classe: mito e realidade* (São Paulo, Quatro Artes, 1969).

4. As Joan Robinson states this proposition, in *Essays in the Theory of Employment* (New York, MacMillan Co., 1947), p.12, the supply of labour has zero elasticity so long as real wages stand above the level at which physical efficiency is impaired.

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8. Clark Kerr: 'Changing Social Structures', in Wilbert Moore and Arnold Feldman: *Labor Commitment and Social Change in Developing Areas* (New York, Social Science Research Council, 1960), 340.

9. Ester Boserup: *Woman's Role in Economic Development* (New York, St. Martin's Press, 1970).

10. *Ibidem*. See also United States Agency for International Development: 'Women and Development' (Office of Education and Human Resources, Technical Assistance Bureau, Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1971).

11. *The New York Times* (9 March 1975), *Sunday News of the Week*, p.1.

12. International Labour Organization: *Equality of Opportunity and Treatment for Women Workers*, Report VIII, 60th Session (Geneva, I.L.O., 1975), table 7, p.17.

13. Lourdes Arizpe: *Indígenas en la Ciudad de México, El Caso de las Marías* (Sep-Setentas Mexico, DF, 1975).

14. Alva Myrdal and Viola Klein: *Women's Two Roles: Home and Work* (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968), 185.

15. Victor Salera: *Multinational Business* (Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1969), 341.

16. James Ypsilantes: 'World and Regional Labour Force Trends and Prospects', *International Labour Review*, 109, 5 and 6 (1974), 413-442, esp.427.

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22. I. Pico: 'The Quest for Race, Sex and Ethnic Equality in Puerto Rico'.

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