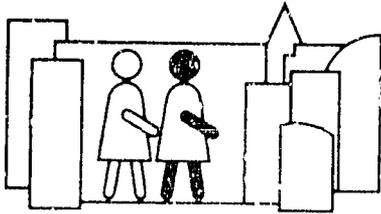


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Women in the Urban Economy in Latin America

Marianne Schmink

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Preface

The author is co-manager of the project and serves as Executive Director of the Amazon Research and Training Program, Center for Latin American Studies, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida. This paper is the first in a series of working papers that will be issued as part of a Population Council project entitled, "Women, Low-Income Households and Urban Services in Latin America and the Caribbean," supported by a cooperative agreement with USAID.

This paper draws on material contained in Schmink (1980), especially chapters 3 and 4, on Schmink (1979), and on the papers and discussions from two Latin American conferences: "Women in the Labor Force in Latin America," sponsored by IUPERJ, Rio de Janeiro, November 23-26, 1982; and "Life Conditions of the Urban Popular Sectors," sponsored by CEDES, Buenos Aires, December 4-7, 1979. A slightly different version was published in Spanish as "La Mujer Pobre en la Economía Urbana de América Latina," in Magdalena Leal (ed.), Debate sobre la Mujer en América Latina y el Caribe, Discusión acerca de la Unidad Producción Reproducción, vol. III, Sociedad, Subordinación y Feminismo (Bogotá: ACEP, 1982). The author is grateful to Judith Bruce for helpful suggestions throughout the development of this paper.

POOR WOMEN IN THE URBAN ECONOMY OF LATIN AMERICA¹

It is difficult and often misleading to generalize about Latin America, given the great cultural, political and economic diversity of the region. Abstract discussions of women's roles and conditions are similarly oversimplistic because of the crucial differences determined by socioeconomic position, family status, age and cohort differences. Despite this diversity, it is nevertheless both useful and possible to seek general patterns in the situation of women in the region.

This paper will present a synthesis of existing information on the position of low-income women in the economy of Latin America's large urban centers. The task is complicated by incomplete and inadequate sources of data on women in the region. Nevertheless, available studies suggest that there are strong similarities in poor women's productive activities and their access to urban resources. The commonalities found among this specific sub-group are largely due to the form of urban industrial development which has taken place in the last three decades, and which has shaped the urban environment in most Latin American countries. The paper thus begins with a summary of those aspects of urban-industrial development which have been most important in determining women's economic roles. The second section outlines how women's work patterns are mediated by the conditions of the domestic groups of which they are members. Low-income women exercise multiple productive activities which include both direct income generation as well as unpaid labor inputs.

The use of collective urban services is one important component of household "full income" whose significance for household and community welfare has not been adequately explored and documented. The paper's third section

reviews available information regarding women's access to, and utilization of, selected types of urban services. Section IV focuses in more detail on the urban transport sector. Findings from a pilot study carried out by the author in Belo Horizonte, Brazil, and from other available data sources, are analyzed to generate a series of hypotheses regarding the impact of transportation difficulties on the productive activities of low-income women. The concluding section suggests the importance of women's potential contribution to integrated urban services delivery programs which recognize their needs and activities within domestic groups and local communities.

I. Industrial Development and Women's Labor Force Patterns

Two general phases of industrial development may be distinguished in the Latin American region. Through the beginning of this century, most Latin American countries supplied their internal markets with manufactured goods through imports which were exchanged for raw materials or semi-processed goods on the world market. With the Great Depression and the second World War, supplies of these goods from abroad were greatly reduced, and Latin America entered a phase of relative isolation from the international market. At this time, national governments, in conformity with new ECLA perspectives, began to formulate conscious economic policies to promote Import-Substitution-Industrialization (ISI) to supply national markets with manufactured goods. Industrial establishments during this first phase of development tended to be small-scale, labor-intensive and nationally controlled. Workers were recruited from the ranks of migrants from rural to urban/metropolitan areas. These economic policies and the resulting importance of the creation of an internal market for manufactured goods were consistent with populist political policies, which

permitted a wider margin for labor union activity to achieve more adequate wage levels, as well as an expanded state role in the provision of collective social services.

Beginning in the post-war period and mainly in the 1950s, the role of Latin American economies in the world economic system entered a new phase. In the developed countries, particularly the U.S., investors facing a situation of falling rates of profit began to seek opportunities for investments overseas. This second phase marked the appearance of an important economic agent, the multinational corporation, on the Latin American industrial scene. Facing the need to expand operations and the increasing costs of labor in developed economies, foreign investors were attracted primarily by the lower wages in overseas economies. Labor policies in Latin America began to shift with these changes in industrial development patterns. Labor's bargaining position was increasingly restricted, in some cases through overt repression of union activities, but also through more institutionalized means of controlling wage increases to provide a "programmed decline" of salaries. As a result, in many Latin American countries, high rates of growth in industry have been associated with a tendency toward increased concentration of income.

The penetration of international investment into the Latin American industrial sector began to change the dominant form of industrial enterprise in the region. New firms were more likely to be large-scale, using more productive technologies and were often controlled by multinational corporations. Because of their more capital-intensive nature, these new establishments were less labor-absorptive. At the same time, their higher productivity made it difficult for smaller firms to compete, so that less productive national firms

were increasingly driven off the industrial market. Only those industries with competitive productive bases and a relatively large scale of operation, particularly those controlled by the state, could effectively compete.

At the same time, rural-urban migration streams were beginning to far surpass the capacity of the industrial sector to absorb new workers. The new form of industry, often based on intermediate and capital goods production, selected its workers from among the "prime" skilled young male laborers.

These more fortunate urban workers were paid relatively higher wages in comparison with those in other urban employment where the capacity to pay was much lower. Thus, while multinational corporations sought investment sites in Latin America because of the lower prevailing wage rates, their impact within the region was to create a kind of worker's "elite" based on salaries relatively higher than those paid in other urban sectors.

With the increasing selectivity of workers absorbed into the industrial sector, the majority of urban workers have swelled the services and commerce sectors, particularly those characterized as the "informal sector." These workers, many of them women, have more erratic earnings and less stable employment patterns. They also lack access to the indirect benefits assured by formal sector employment. Health services, vocational training, workmen's compensation and retirement pensions all provide an important "social wage" which, for those in formal sector jobs, functions as a safety net to underpin family financial security.

Given the diversity of national and regional conditions in Latin America, the changes outlined here are not equally true for all contexts; they correspond to the most consistent trends in the more industrialized metropolitan

areas of the region, linked to consistencies in the pattern of region, linked labor force activity for women in response to these structural conditions.

First, urban industrial development signifies a shift of both male and female labor out of the agricultural sector. This movement is accomplished principally through the mechanism of migration from rural areas and towns into metropolitan industrial centers. Such movement is a result of both "pull" factors related to the growth of urban-industrial employment possibilities and "push" factors associated with complex changes in the country side. In Latin America, in contrast to other developing regions, rural-urban immigration has tended to be female-dominated (Boserup, 1970; ICRW, 1979). The degree of sexually imbalanced immigration streams and the causes of these differential patterns are variable, but in many parts of rural Latin America, female migration is associated with deteriorating opportunities for employment in rural areas. It has been argued that traditionally women's role in agricultural production in the region has been much less important than in the African and Asian regions (Boserup, 1970). Several recent studies suggest that women's agricultural inputs have been under-reported because of the inadequacies of standard data collection procedures (Deere, 1977; Lewin, Pitanguy and Romani, 1977; Wainerman and Recchini de Lattes, 1981). While it still may be true that agricultural employment for women in Latin America is relatively less widespread than in other regions, the magnitude of rural-urban migration streams suggests that women are migrating in response to fundamental changes in agricultural production systems and not merely to the insufficiencies of traditional practices.

The large majority of women agriculturalists are employed in small family farming systems, while the proportion employed as wage laborers is relatively

small. With the breakdown and subdivision of smallholdings and sharecropping arrangements, and the expansion of agrarian capitalism in the region, women's employment opportunities may actually decline. "Women's high rates of rural outmigration are attributed to their displacement from subsistence agriculture as land consolidation, agricultural mechanization and the growth of wage employment reduce women's productive role and leave them increasingly dependent on men's insecure income" (ICRW, 1979: 88). Population pressure often contributes to the fragmentation of landholdings, so that the number of smallholdings may actually increase although each productive unit is less capable of supporting all its potential workers. Farm families typically respond by allocating some members to wage labor, either as seasonal day laborers or through temporary urban employment in order to maintain the family's diminishing holdings while generating sufficient income to meet consumption needs (Arizpe, 1978; Dinerman, 1978).

While some women do find wage work in agriculture (Martinez-Alier, 1975), their employment opportunities are much broader in urban areas; rural-urban migration movements are female-dominated, especially in the youngest and oldest age groups (adolescence to early 20's and over 50) (ICRW, 1979). Young women respond to the pull of employment in domestic and informal sector jobs, especially in the largest urban centers. Older women probably migrate when left (through widowhood or separation) as heads of household or alone; in the city they either join their children's household or look for their own employment. The economic necessity of heading a family may be in itself sufficient to induce rural-urban migration for a woman, as may be the status of single motherhood (ICRW, 1979: 73); in this sense, poor women without a male partner

find their way to urban areas and help to make female headship a phenomenon associated with cities rather than the countryside.

Once in the city, women's employment possibilities in the expanding industrial sectors are still limited. Female patterns of employment suggest that the migratory pull is urban rather than industrial in nature (ICRW, 1979:89 -90) in nature. Some women workers are incorporated into factory work, particularly in textile and food processing industries where female labor has traditionally been employed. Many women in these industrial sectors, however, work at home as pieceworkers or are self-employed (Sara-Lafosse, Chira and Fort, 1981:96). With increasing emphasis on the heavier industries associated with the second phase of industrial development described above, women have been progressively excluded from industrial employment. In Brazil, for example, their proportion in manufacturing fell from 18.6% to only 11% during the two decades from 1950 to 1970 (Bruschini, 1978). Industrial workers account for only 10% or 20% of the female urban labor force in most Latin American countries. These patterns apply to both migrant and native women, whose economic characteristics show few significant differences once they are all in the urban setting.

Some women are incorporated into the modern sector, as secretaries, receptionists, store clerks, teachers and nurses. Much has been made of this pattern and its contrast with other developing regions (Boserup, 1970), but over-drawn assumptions about the possibilities for upward mobility for women should also be avoided. These traditionally "female" occupations are usually reserved for younger white single women with the benefit of some education or training (Gonzalez, 1981:8). In part, this selectivity is a result of protective labor legislation which prohibits women from some jobs considered danger-

ous and from the workshifts usually favored by large modern firms (overtime and night work). Firms typically hire only single women and dismiss them when they marry, arguing that maternity leave and daycare requirements make women workers more expensive than men (although in many countries these costs are borne by the state and not the firm) (Brazil, Ministerio do Trabalho, 1976; Cardone, 1975). Even young single women with some education find that their employment options are increasingly limited to the few occupational categories described above; studies in Venezuela and Brazil have shown that after two decades of rapid industrial growth, women were increasingly concentrated in these traditionally female occupations (Bruschini, 1978; Schmink, 1977).

The majority of urban women, whether migrants or native urbanites, are not absorbed directly into the capitalist or modern sector. Most are concentrated in the domestic sector (whether paid or unpaid), which is the female domain par excellence (Saffioti, 1978). Domestic service is consistently the largest category of female urban wage workers in Latin America; furthermore, many women who describe themselves as housewives may in fact be disguised unemployed. Domestic service is itself an occupation linked to skewed income distribution patterns which create both the supply of poor women for employment--however demeaning and low-paying--as well as the demand for personal servants on the part of higher-income groups. Aside from the domestic sector, women also dominate many occupations in the so-called informal sector, where they typically work as street vendors, seamstresses, beauty operators, laundresses and other similar self-employed workers or unpaid family workers (Arizpe, 1977).

This segregation of women into occupations distinct from those occupied by male workers is linked to male/female earnings discrepancies. Even the

highest status female jobs, such as schoolteaching, are extremely low-paying despite the relatively large investment in education they require. In fact, women's earnings rise much less with education than do men's, so that salary differences between the two sexes increase systematically with women's educational levels (Abreu, 1977; Barrera, 1978; Rato, 1978; Saffioti, 1969).

Because of the dual nature of male and female labor markets, salaries in women's occupations do not reflect the higher prestige levels of related but male-defined jobs; wages offered to women need not be competitive on the male market, since men do not directly compete for the same jobs. In short, earnings for women workers do not reflect their human capital investments and are generally little affected by occupational differences. Lower-status female occupations are particularly low-paying, even taking into account the bed-and-board benefits often included in the domestic servant's indirect wage. Informal sector jobs, because they operate in a labor-surplus context in response to financial necessity, are typically underpaid as well.

II. Women's Role in the Domestic Economy.

At the broadest level, women's range of options is determined by the impact of historical changes, such as those outlined above. However, these structural conditions define distinct options and constraints for women in different settings and social contexts. Changing economic conditions at a variety of levels interact to determine the specific set of factors which influence an individual woman's participation in productive activities. Women's work behavior is most directly mediated by the conditions of the domestic groups of which they are members, whose form is in turn largely determined by

their overall social position (Garcia, Munoz and Oliveira, 1979a; 1979b; Souza, 1979).

Given the focus here on economic activities, it is useful to analyze women's roles in relation to the needs of the household, the unit of consumption of most basic needs, especially food and housing. The household, or domestic unit, is the most consistent locus of decision-making for the allocation of labor and resources to meet consumption needs; as such, the unit carries out an evolving strategy for the generation of income, serving as a redistributive unit which mediates between individual income-earners and final consumption. Household "full income" or overall standard of living will be comprised of some combination of collective services (provided by the state and other agencies), monetary income and non-monetary inputs from home production and exchange. This unit may or may not correspond to a kin-based "family."

Whereas adult men tend to specialize in the generation of monetary income, women's roles are typically multiple in both household and community units. Most women balance three roles over their lifetime: childbearing and child-rearing responsibilities; income-generating work; and household management and provisioning. This means that alongside their important role in biological reproduction, women also play an active role in negotiating access to all three components of household full income mentioned above.

The quality of women's economic activities and their relative importance in the overall household strategy are highly variable. They will be determined by the household's relative position in the social structure, and by the history and evolution of the household itself. The interaction of these factors defines the household's absolute and relative standards of living,

which serve as the reference for their economic strategies. In urban settings, dependence on the monetary wage means that the relative success of household strategies, as reflected in their standard of living, will depend on the fit between household composition (available labor and consumption demand) and existing labor market opportunities. Since both household and labor market structures are continually evolving, the fit is necessarily a changing one. Some households may have low incomes based on their internal composition and the ratio of producers to consumers in the household. Households with small children, for example, are generally more subject to financial pressures since the younger generation is as yet unable to contribute to household income, and at the same time adult female labor time must be invested in caring for these dependent household members. Other kinds of households may be vulnerable for structural reasons unrelated to what are generally thought of as phases in the typical family life cycle. Thus, households headed by women tend to be poor no matter what their other characteristics. At a more structural level of analysis, the insertion of a given household in the social hierarchy will to a large extent define that unit's limits for success in generating income. Finally, historical changes may also shape both material conditions and perceptions which together define a population's standard of living. For example, a decline in access to state-provided collective services, combined with rising inflation, may induce households to change their economic strategies in response to a deterioration in living standards.

In short, a complex of factors interacts to determine the precise form taken by the economic strategies of household units. Whatever the cause of material and/or perceptual declines in living standards, households facing deprivation generally follow strategies distinct from those with a better fit

to the labor market. In essence, financial pressures lead households to intensify strategies for generating income, using available labor and resources as fully as possible. Women's multiple economic activities are thus particularly important in resource-poor households where the monetary wage is insufficient. At the same time, poor women face serious constraints in their ability to carry out necessary activities.

In order to illustrate the dilemma faced by poor women, it is useful to contrast what are often termed "survival" strategies from what might be called "mobility strategies." The former are associated with marginal populations in extreme poverty, whose day-to-day needs may force all family members of working age to seek paid employment despite losses in future opportunities (education for children) or status (women in low-status jobs), and despite the "double burden" of domestic and paid work poor women face (Duque and Pastrana, 1973; Fausto Neto, 1978; Lomnitz, 1977). More affluent households have the luxury of placing their strategic priorities on long-term mobility through a continuous and complete education for their children, with the wife choosing to work only if she has the skills or training for an acceptable occupation (Bilac, 1978). In such cases, her domestic labor tasks can be allocated to a paid domestic servant.

Strategies in the two types of households differ in the way their components (unpaid labor, extra domestic exchanges, collective services and monetary earnings) are combined and in the relative importance to each type. Goods and services consumed on a collective basis include the nonwage benefits associated with formal labor market employment and the infrastructural advantages available in more affluent neighborhoods. Wealthier households have better access to these collective goods, and also to an adequate wage for the

primary breadwinner. Low-income households, on the other hand, must intensify their strategies using the options open to them in order to stretch and supplement the insufficient principal wage (Deere, Humphries and Leal, 1978). Women play an essential role in this intensification effort.

While both poor and higher-income households use unpaid labor inputs and inputs from exchange networks, the content and relative importance of these activities in overall strategy are different. Poor households seek to reduce their consumption of purchased goods of all kinds, and unpaid labor, the bulk of it women's, provides day-to-day material needs which can substitute for scarce monetary resources. It is in this sense that these activities serve to stretch the insufficient wage. Such domestic activities as child care, home maintenance, clothing manufacture, cultivation of garden crops and care for small animals comprise a large proportion of household labor time even in cities. In contrast, middle-class women may spend more time on domestic tasks such as planning and management of a child's education, which have less immediate returns (Vaneck, 1974). Similarly, extradomestic exchange and cooperation principally among women help to substitute for purchased goods and services in poor populations (Fausto Neto, 1978; GETEC, 1978; Lomnitz, 1977; Oliveira, 1975; Singer, 1977). Extradomestic networks among middle-class households in Latin America contrast with those of poor populations in functioning not to serve immediate material purposes, but primarily to manipulate public and private administrative structures to insure the long-term success of class and kin interests (Leeds, 1964; Lomnitz, 1971; Miller, 1976).

Higher-income households are able to choose when and how household members will enter the labor force and typically maximize the completion of children's education (Bilac, 1978). Furthermore, women in these groups are more

likely to have completed secondary or higher education, giving them access to relatively higher-status jobs, enabling them at the same time to hire domestic servants to take over some of their home responsibilities should they enter the labor force. Still, women in moderate-to-higher income groups tend to have a relatively short working career, consisting of the period between the termination of schooling and marriage or their first child. As a result, in the aggregate female labor force, participation rates rise with income and education and are highly responsive to marital status and childbearing patterns. Most Latin American countries lack the "second peak" of participation typical of many developed countries, wherein women reenter the labor market after their children have grown up.

Poor women, on the other hand, particularly in the older cohorts, have lower educational levels than men; most are either illiterate or have incomplete primary education. Despite the fact that they are often forced to work in order to supplement family income, their labor force opportunities are both limited and low-paying. In households facing the greatest financial pressures, girls are often pulled out of school at an early age while their brothers continue their education; they either enter the labor force or take over the domestic chores which permit other household members (their mothers) to work outside the home (Franco, Leona and Arriaga, 1978; Fausto Neto, 1978; Machado Neto, 1978; Madeira, 1979, Rodrigues, 1978; Sara-Lafosse, Chira and Fort, 1981). A study of female-headed households in Brazil found that girls missed school 30% more than boys, and that 80% of their absences were due to responsibility for domestic chores (Machada Neto, 1978). Similarly, studies of time use in Brazilian, Mexican and Venezuelan households found that wives' labor force participation was in part determined by the age of their eldest

daughter (Cebotarev, 1978). In the absence of other family members or of a hired domestic servant, women needing work must assume the "double burden" of housework and income-generation.

Because of the importance of their supplementary income (however meager), poor women in general have a much more permanent link to the labor market than do higher-income women, despite their greater disadvantages. It is for this reason that some studies of poor populations find their participation rates to be higher than the average, showing a reversal of the aggregate trend for rates to increase with income (Barros, 1979; Bittencourt, 1979; Garcia et al, 1979a, 1979b; Schmink, 1980). If official data collection techniques were better suited to capturing women's irregular work activities, this trend would undoubtedly be more commonly found (Wainerman and Recchini de Lattes, 1981). Yet in addition to being extremely limited poor women's employment options do not provide long-term mobility, security, training, advancement, immediate nonwage benefits or social security rights.

Furthermore, if women's domestic work were considered productive activity, there is no question that poor women's work participation rates would be higher than those of more affluent households (Madeira, 1979). These domestic tasks take up more total work time in low-income households than do income-generating activities. The nonmonetary inputs provided by poor women are essential in underwriting low wages. In their role as household managers women strive to reduce financial stress by limiting consumption of purchased goods, substituting unpaid labor when possible, manipulating extra-domestic networks and patron-client relationships, and negotiating access to collective services for themselves, their families and their community.

Alongside differences in patterns of economic activities of low and higher-income households, contrasts in household composition also emerge. Studies in Belo Horizonte have shown that the poor have both higher fertility rates and greater tendencies to aggregate additional household members to the nuclear core, resulting in higher dependency ratios throughout the life cycle (Sant'Anna, Merrick and Mazumbar, 1976). These patterns may themselves reflect the relatively higher mortality rates among the poor and the need for additional potential earners, even in urban areas. Furthermore, these dependency ratios in poor households come an average of ten years earlier than in more affluent groups, at a time in the life cycle when earnings are likely to be lower. The study concluded that poverty is to a large extent the result of a domestic unit's inability to effectively utilize its stock of potential adult workers. Many poor children are therefore forced into an active economic role from an early age. Finally, a disproportionate number of poor households are female-headed and are especially vulnerable due to their structure (Barroso, 1978; Buvinčić and Youssef, 1978; Merrick and Schmink, forthcoming). Not only are the heads of these households disadvantaged in the labor market; other members are less likely to be prime-age male workers. Because of their family responsibilities, women may be more likely to take on displaced relatives (especially other females) even when their finances are inadequate, whereas young adult males may find it easier to escape the poverty trap of such households (Merrick and Schmink, forthcoming).

In summary, poor women are much more likely than women in higher-income households to be important income-generators over their lifetime, they also contribute significantly to household well-being through their substantial nonmonetary inputs. At the same time, their work participation from an early

age often restricts their economic possibilities by limiting education which would improve the returns on their work and their job mobility training. Their protection in times of disability or old age is not guaranteed. Deprivations of the mother carry forward to affect the future generation, and in many cases conditions are worse for females than for males. Girls in poor families often have lower rates of school attendance than boys, and much lower rates than girls in higher-income families (Franco et al, 1978: 353).

III. Women's Access to Urban Services: Overview

Women balance a multiplicity of roles in household welfare; their economic behavior is to a great extent determined by the requirements of the domestic unit. Their reproductive activities are particularly intense and essential in the poorest households. Whereas a number of recent studies have focused on patterns of women's employment in the region, relatively little is understood about the role played by poor women in a variety of other activities which contribute to full household income. These include unpaid labor inputs, the manipulation of extra-domestic networks, the general day-to-day management of household strategies and the utilization of collective urban services. Almost nothing is known about women's access to essential urban services in particular and the effect these may have on facilitating income generation and improving household welfare, both short and long term.

The principal responsibility for household management and provisioning typically falls not only to women headed households, but also to those who are de facto heads during the time when the head is working and/or traveling to and from work. In urban communities located in peripheral areas far from the workplace, women often function as day-time managers of households whose male

members leave their homes before daybreak and return after dark (Checa, Guzman and Vargas, 1981). As a household's monetary income declines, the relative importance of activities generating other sources of full income increases. It has already been pointed out that the unpaid domestic labor performed by women can be crucial in stretching available household income and helping to insure the welfare of the domestic group. But urban women's socioeconomic roles are far from limited to these housewife functions. They also help to insure household welfare through the activation of social networks which provide an important source of emergency loans and other types of exchanges of goods and services. Furthermore, women in their management function battle to secure for themselves and their families access to urban services such as education, health facilities, child care, housing and infrastructural benefits. In many cases this effort involves the cooperative action of community members in mothers' clubs, housewives' groups and neighborhood associations. It also leads women to activate patron-client relationships with individuals and institutions and to negotiate with government agencies and local financial institutions (Scott, 1979). These activities can provide an essential integrative element within an often unstable and hostile urban environment. Urban women therefore potentially have an important social role not only at the level of household welfare, but in broader concerns of the urban community as well.

Because of this multiplicity of women's roles, analysis of their access to urban resources must focus not only on productive employment but also on access to more broadly defined urban services. Just as urban labor markets are sex-segregated, it is also likely that access to other urban resources is differentiated by sex. It is therefore essential to direct research to the

analysis of women's utilization of urban services and their potential role in facilitating income generation, improving household and community welfare and furthering the long-term urban integration of poor populations.

Statistics examining sex-differentiated patterns of service use are extremely scarce, making diagnosis difficult at this stage of research. It is essential to know how use patterns differ, what the implications of these differences are for women and their families, what factors lead to differential use patterns and what kinds of policies might best serve to correct problems of essential service delivery. All of the tasks must precede any direct policy intervention aimed at increasing women's access to urban resources. Based on the scattered evidence which does exist from various studies of women in Latin America, the remainder of this paper will present an overview of the state of information on women's access to selected types of urban services. This review is not intended to be definitive or complete but to indicate where further research might be directed.

A. Education

Public education is the exceptional sector for which statistics comparing men and women do exist, and studies in a number of Latin American countries have shown that, in general, female enrollment rates have become similar to males' during the last two decades of educational expansion in the region.² Women's illiteracy has fallen to levels which are not significantly higher, and in some cases are actually lower, than men's in urban areas. The implications of this apparent equality of access are less clear, however. The benefits of educational expansion have gone primarily to the "middle sectors" in Latin America and not to the poor (Urrutia, 1975:1-2). In Colombia, for ex-

ample, women are actually a smaller proportion of illiterates than men, but most still lack a completed primary education, while only 9% had completed middle or higher levels (Nunez, 1977: 88; 109).

Even at higher educational levels, women are uniformly concentrated in a few female categories, notably normal schools. Furthermore, it is doubtful that increased education necessarily pays off in better employment opportunities except at the higher levels of the occupational hierarchy, and here women are limited to those few "female" fields described earlier. They are unlikely to find adequate wage return on their investment in education, and mobility may in general be lacking for women in Latin America. In Peru and Colombia, parents exhibited higher mobility aspirations for their sons than for their daughters (Nunez, 1977: 117; Urrutia, 1975:1-11). Yet some studies show that young women are less likely than young men to be kept out of school in order to work to contribute to household income (Schiefelbein, 1978: 697, 708; Brazil, Ministerio do Trabalho, 1976:46). In families with an income sufficient to maintain non-productive members, young women's schooling may be allocated to poorly paid productive labor in order to support the more realistic mobility project centered on their brothers' educational attainment.

Households headed by women may have, along with lower-income levels, less access to basic services. Survey data from Belo Horizonte, Brazil, showed that households headed by women were much more concentrated in the lowest income group (61%, as opposed to 35% of those headed by men). Moreover, female-headed households within the same low-income group had lower access to urban services than did their male-headed counterparts. While these differences were clearest with regard to health services (see section C), the data also suggest differences in access to education. Households headed by

females in low-income groups were more likely to have no children registered in school, and much more likely to cite financial problems as the reason for their children's absence, than were male-headed households. They were also less likely to have their children in desired schools (Schmink, 1980: Tables 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3). Thus, the need for multiple earners in female-headed households appears to affect the extent to which future generations of workers are able to take advantage of educational services in urban areas, and female children may be particularly affected by these constraints.

The difficulties women face in transferring the benefits of education to labor force opportunities and earnings are even clearer when focusing specifically on vocational training. In the Latin American region, only Cuba and Costa Rica have official policies related to the training of the female labor force (Ducci, 1977: 54). As a result, statistics on female participation in vocational training programs are extremely scarce. Recent studies show that women's participation is generally under 25% but appears to be growing in the post-1970 period (Ducci, 1977: 50-52). As in the general educational system, women tend to be concentrated in "female" fields which parallel their limited occupational options -- commerce and services represent more than half of those enrolled. Within industrial training programs, 60-70% of women are in food and drink, textiles and leather and shoe industries.

B. Child Care

One of the most important components of women's household management role is their function as "primary dispenser of health and nutrition care of the family" (Bittencourt, 1979:1). Women are responsible for virtually all tasks related to the care of children, and financial pressures which force poor

women to work create the serious dilemma of requiring alternate arrangements for the care of pre-school age children. For mothers, access to some form of day care is probably the single most important factor determining participation in income-earning activities. One study in urban Brazil found that over half of the women surveyed were unemployed; the presence of young children was the most frequently cited reason for unemployment. "Although children may create the need for a woman to enter the labor force, they may require her to stay home and thus limit her alternatives for work" (Bittencourt, 1979:1). Neither does home-based employment for women guarantee greater compatibility between work and mother roles. A study of home-based piece workers in Peru found that most rely on help from their children either in their own productive activities or in domestic tasks, leaving less time for children to devote to their schoolwork (Sara-Lafosse, Chira and Fort, 1981: 139-141).

Adequate day care facilities are woefully few in Latin American metropolitan centers, and virtually nonexistent in smaller cities. In Chile, for example, despite a national commitment to the provision of services to children under the age of six, existing programs reached less than 5% of that population in 1972, rising to 12.3% by 1976 (Aragoneses, Fischer, Alarcon and Navarro, 1978). At the level of the national government, Brazil lacks a pre-school educational priority to attend to the approximately 35 million children in this category in 1980 (Egger-Moellwald and Raucci, 1979; Bittencourt, 1979). The only legislation dealing with this population is the Labor Law of 1943, which requires that firms employing at least 30 women provide a day nursery where female employees may keep their children during the nursing period. However, the law permits the contracting of services to facilities distant from the workplace, creating a serious problem of transportation for working

mothers. Furthermore, the law provides for child care only during the first six months of the child's life. Finally, the law is not enforced, and the fine for transgression is so miniscule as to be insignificant (Campos, 17; Egger-Moellwald and Raucchi, 1979). As a result, demand for day care far exceeds supply. In Sao Paulo, for example, out of approximately 150,000 businesses there are only 33 nurseries, while there is an immediate need for 330,000 vacancies for children under six years old (Bittencourt, 1979: 31). One study found that in Sao Paulo day care centers existed for only one out of every 28 children of working mothers.³ A 1975 study in Rio Grande do Sul revealed that only 27% of the state's firms with more than 30 women employees were fulfilling their legal obligations for child care provisions. A survey by the press in 1969 counted "no more than 200 creches in all of Brazil, concentrated in the three principal cities (Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo and Belo Horizonte)" (Campos, 1977:5). Thus, despite the paucity of comprehensive data on child care services, there seems little doubt that their provision is deficient.

Furthermore, since many day care centers are private institutions which may be expensive, they are accessible only to middle and upper-income families, while the majority of working mothers must fight for access to a state-supported center or find individual solutions to their work-home responsibilities. Recent studies of child care arrangements have found that social networks composed of female kin and neighbors provide working women their main assistance in child care and other domestic responsibilities (Bittencourt, 1979; Mota, 1979). A 1970 survey in the state of São Paulo found that only 1% of working mothers left their children in day care institutions; nearly half (46.6%) left them with relatives, while 21.6% left them unattended in the home

(Sao Paulo, Secretaria do Trabalho e Administração, 1970). None of the working women surveyed in poor urban neighborhoods of the Dominican Republic and Brazil in 1979 used day care institutions; by far the most common solution was to leave children with relatives in their own home or in that of the caretaker (Bittencourt, 1979; Mota, 1979). The second most common alternative was to leave young children at home in the care of older siblings, an option which potentially interferes with young women's school or work participation. However, a large proportion (one-third in Brazil; nearly two-thirds in the Dominican Republic) of women surveyed stated that they would prefer to leave their children in a day care center if one acceptable to them were available.

Institutional facilities for day care might also be a means of improving children's nutritional level. The Brazilian study found children of working mothers more likely to be malnourished, apparently not because of the time spent away from the child, but because of the low economic level of the family which forced the mother to work in the first place (Bittencourt, 1979:44). In the majority of households whose incomes are insufficient to purchase necessary foods, low-income mothers reserve larger rations for working household members, thus depriving growing children of necessary nutrition (Escola Paulista de Medicina, 1975, cited in Bittencourt, 1979; see also Gross and Underwood, 1971).

Because of the severity of the problem of day care availability and the stimulus provided by the International Year of the Child, several institutions have directed their efforts to outlining the elements needed for appropriate and effective day care programs.⁴ Appropriate child care may be defined as "an integrated system of services for preschool age children including health, nutrition and education and custodial care, which is responsive to the child's

social, economic and cultural context" and which is usually provided in the absence of the mother, who is involved in income-generating activities (for cash or kind, inside or outside the home) (Bittencourt, 1979:ii). Perhaps the highest priority target group for the provision of these services is the urban poor with children under the age of seven.

One of the most important characteristics of a successful child care program is its community basis, both in terms of location and participation. In the Dominican Republic, the overwhelming majority (90%) of women preferred neighborhood locations for day care centers in order to avoid transportation problems. The location of day care centers in low-income urban neighborhoods permits their integration into multisectoral efforts of combined services (such as training, education, health and nutrition) which can have a far greater impact on the community's basic necessities. Furthermore, they permit a higher degree of local participation and authority, an essential element for the continuing success of the endeavor. Day care centers may be based on already-existing reciprocity networks, such as the "spontaneous" creche: women who take children of working neighbors in to their own homes for monetary or other forms of reciprocal payment. In particular, community-oriented day care and other services can provide needed involvement of women at the community level in positions of authority, and furnish sources of training and direct employment close to home.

C. Health

While data on women's demand for, and use of, health services is fragmentary, women incontestably predominate over men as clients due to their role in biological reproduction along with caring for the health of other family mem-

bers. A study in Colombia, for example, found women's demand for outpatient services to be twice that of men's, a proportion which was even higher in urban areas. In addition, women in childbearing ages (15-44) were three times more common in hospitals than were men (Tellez, 1977). At the same time, women's direct access to government-subsidized health services is much less than that of men because of the link between social security health programs and employment in the formal sector. In Lima, 37.8% of manual workers eligible for social security benefits are men, and 61.8% of eligible white collar workers are men (Urrutia, 1975: 111-112). Similarly, 80% of Colombian women are not directly affiliated with social security benefits, compared with 61% of men (Tellez, 1977: 176). While many women have access to health benefits indirectly through their working husbands, this lack of direct access is critical for the many women whose husbands are also ineligible, or for women who temporarily or permanently find themselves without the protection of a male partner.

Analysis of Belo Horizonte survey data comparing households headed by males and females showed striking differences in access to health services. Households headed by women in all income groups were much less likely to have access to the main government-sponsored social security program (INPS); in the lowest category, male-headed households were more than four times as likely to have access. This striking difference is clearly a reflection of employment patterns which relegate poor women to informal sector jobs. As a consequence, male-headed households were about twice as likely to use INPS medical, laboratory and hospitalization services, whereas those headed by women were twice as likely to use services provided by religious and charitable organizations or government health posts (Schmink, 1980: Tables 3.4, 3.5, 3.6 and 3.7).

Furthermore, aside from institutional access, households headed by women showed distinct patterns of use of other types of health services: they were less likely to turn to a pharmacist and more likely to resort to a friend or relative, or ritual curer (Schmink, 1980: Table 3.8). This pattern probably reflects the differential cost of services for poor households. It may also suggest a preference for community-based health specialists. Studies in Brazil and Peru suggest that low-income women feel alienated from doctors and hospitals. Instead, they prefer to visit the neighborhood pharmacist or community healer, who offer credit, are familiar with the medical history of family members and are more integrated into the local community (Checa, Guzman and Vargas, 1981: 328; Harrison, 1979).

Evidence therefore suggests that health services, like day care, can more effectively reach those who need them if offered on a community basis. The decentralization of some health services could provide many of the advantages of local control and participation described above, including the potential recruitment of local women as non-professional and para-professional personnel. These measures could improve both the cost and the appropriateness of health services used by poor women and their families.

D. Housing

Assessment of women's access to basic infrastructural services in urban areas is particularly difficult on two counts. First, whereas women's special needs with regard to services such as health and child care are readily perceptible, women's issues in housing and transport are much less obvious. Secondly, almost no studies exist which have focused on sex differences in demand for, and use of, such services. For many services sectors, exploratory

research is needed before the relevance of specific service provisions to women as a subgroup can be evaluated.

Urban housing is a crucial element in the welfare of poor families, and one which is provided directly to families or households within target communities. Studies of how women fare in housing programs in comparison to men are scarce, but a few sources exist which can suggest some important considerations for planners seeking to reach poor populations.⁵ Both the need for, and access to, sites and services projects may be differentiated by sex. In general, in evaluating socioeconomic characteristics of poor target populations, attention should also be directed to the extent of female domination in migrant streams, the proportion of female-headed households and the existing sex differentiation of access to service and employment in the local or national context. Particularly with regard to housing, life cycle characteristics can be an important variable affecting demand, determining both the motivation for moving within the urban system and the capacity to pay for housing and infrastructural services (Schmink, 1979: Chapter 6). Whereas more mature families are likelier to have income sufficient to afford their own housing, adequate facilities for families with young children may be beyond their means; these families might therefore receive special attention in housing projects. Similarly, households headed by women may require special consideration in making accessible sites and services programs, such as more flexible construction scheduling in self-help programs, and equitable credit arrangements. The latter would be based on an analysis of the requirements imposed by official institutions in relation to collateral, the need for a marital guarantor and the impact of marital status on property rights and

access to credit, as well as the possibility of reinforcing alternate sources of credit such as informal savings associations.

There are, moreover, good reasons for considering women's special roles and needs at the design stage of sites and services programs. The location of such projects should take into consideration residents' access to employment sources (for women as well as men), to marketing and to such necessities as water and domestic fuels. In designing the layout of planned communities, women's patterns of utilizing household and community space should be crucial considerations. These may dictate, for example, the need for locally-based cottage industries, for culturally-appropriate public gathering places for women, for sufficient privacy from neighbors and within the household itself and particularly for attention to the needs of women's domestic activities which might be facilitated by modifying the design of housing layouts. Women as household managers should be consulted about how housing designs can improve the ease of supervision and care of children, the amount of upkeep which differently-designed houses require, the size and placement of kitchens, the placement of water and bathing facilities and the space available for kitchen gardens and care of small domestic animals.

IV. Women and Urban Transport: Case Study

Despite the importance of transport services from the point of view of both planners and low-income populations, this sector is relatively unexplored with respect to women's special needs. Indeed, research on women and transport is extremely rare, and limited to developed countries (Coutras and Fagnani, 1978; Lopata, 1980; Skinner, 1974; Skinner and Borlaug, 1978). Distinct spatial and socioeconomic patterns create unique settings for urban

transport in the large cities of developing countries, and it is here that the potential impact of transport improvement on welfare is greatest. In many large cities of the world, data on transport behavior is routinely collected in "origin-destination" surveys carried out at the user residence. In most cases, information on urban movements by household members is differentiated by the sex of the traveler, but rarely tabulated separately for men and women. Special tabulations from such a study in Belo Horizonte, Brazil were obtained by the author, and together with original survey data were used to carry out a pilot study of urban transport for low-income women and their families. The results were reported in Schmink (1980, Chapter 4) and Schmink (1981a), and are summarized below.

A. Transport and the Urban Poor

It is beyond the purposes of this analysis to present a detailed description of urban transport planning in Latin America. Only the principal characteristics relevant to understanding the situation of low-income women will be mentioned here. The most prominent feature of Latin American urban transport planning, especially after 1950, is the reliance on gasoline-powered vehicles. The decision to stimulate bus transport as the principal public mode and the automobile as the private mode, supplanting streetcar and commuter train systems, has virtually eliminated these cheaper transportation alternatives for low-income users. Furthermore, the added congestion of private vehicles owned by the affluent tends to slow bus service to poorer populations (Barat, 1978:308; Thompson, 1979:64). The priority placed on motorized vehicles has consequently been criticized for its potentially negative impact on the distribution of income within urban areas.

The problem is compounded by the spatial distribution of Latin American cities, where the poor are typically relegated to distant peripheral areas (Barat, 1978:314; Thompson, 1979:64-75). Studies in 1970 of the average income of the economically-active population found a 30% to 50% difference between the nuclei and peripheral zones of four major Brazilian cities--Rio de Janeiro, Porto Alegre, Belo Horizonte and São Paulo. Access to urban infrastructural services was also less in peripheral areas (Tolosa, 1978:146, cited in BRAP, 1981a:50). Urban transport systems in Brazil generally have a radial layout in which the urban center holds a polarized position; there is a relative lack of articulation of outlying neighborhoods with main thoroughfares and with one another (BRAP, 1981a:73).

In most cities, bus tariffs based on distance travelled mean higher prices for the poor who live in distant areas (and often have to transfer buses to reach their destination). Some Brazilian poor families pay 20-25% of their income for urban transport (BRAP, 1981b:42; Thompson, 1979:84-5). Similarly, studies of time expenditures in urban transport show that these tend to be higher for lower-income populations. In São Paulo, one study found that average travelling time increased more than 30% from 1970 to 1976, and workers commonly spent three to four hours per day travelling to and from work (Archdiocese of São Paulo, 1978:35-6). Another study found that about half the workers in the poor neighborhoods of São Paulo and Recife spent over two hours daily travelling between home and the workplace.⁶

Despite the fact that transport costs are heavier for poor populations in both absolute and relative terms, low-income urban residents are not able to adjust their transport expenditures by moving elsewhere in the urban system. The primary consideration for such groups in choosing a place of residence is

the cost, not of transport, but of housing, a much more significant factor in the family budget. For low-income workers, employment decisions are often taken only after the decision to move, so that access to collective services is traded off for access to affordable housing. Thus, as urban neighborhoods become more well-served and developed, residential stability is sacrificed by those inhabitants whose income levels have not risen along with urban land values (BRAP, 1981b: 120; see also Schmink, 1979).

Unlike other public policy sectors in Brazil, transport planning did not adopt a redistributive character in response to the persistent urban poverty which became evident in the decade of the 1970's. While legally a public service, urban transport has been virtually run by the private sector, with minimal interference by the state, except in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, where it is in the hands of state firms (BRAP, 1981a: 127). Transport policy has concentrated on improvements to trunk lines; in moving equipment, little attention has been given to user access to the main lines or to the operation, maintenance and administration of existing services. Relatively few resources have been allocated to the local institutions responsible for these aspects of transport policy, which are most relevant to the needs of low-income users (BRAP, 1981b: 230). Private transport firms are naturally guided by profit goals, and the rising costs of public transport have been passed on to the user. Despite government investments in supportive infrastructure, the general costs of transport have therefore gradually increased for low-income populations (which can least afford them), while the level of service available has not increased significantly (BRAP, 1981a: 127).

B. Women and Transport in Belo Horizonte

Urban transport in Belo Horizonte, the site of the study presented here, has undergone a similar evolution to that outlined above, moving from street-car and commuter train service to a reliance on motor-driven vehicles. By 1975, 70% of all movements within the metropolitan area were by motorized bus. In the commercial center, while only 17% of movements were by private car, planning documents noted the disproportional problems they caused in traffic, the distancing of downtown bus stops, parking availability, noise, pollution and danger to pedestrians (Minas Gerais, 1975). Since 1975, one of the thrusts of transport planning has been to encourage the promotion of industrial and residential expansion in sub-centers to the west of the city's commercial center and closer to the industrial district. This approach aims to reduce the saturation of the metropolitan center, and relies on the development of an efficient transport system linking the new growth poles with the old center.

A pilot study of transport used by low-income women and their families, supported by the Population Council, was carried out by the author in 1979 in three neighborhoods located along the corridors identified for expansion in the city's planning document.⁷ The communities are residential centers for working populations attracted by the possibility of industrial employment and the availability of relatively inexpensive lots and housing, compared to more central locations. The analysis presented here is based on information from this survey as well as on special tabulations for the city as a whole from the Origin-Destination Study carried out in 1972 by PLAMBEL, the metropolitan planning agency.⁸

Travel to work accounts for the largest proportion of trips carried out by both men and women in low-income households. Transport planning has focused almost exclusively on the home-work trajectory which accounts for the bulk of urban travel during compressed periods of the day. Because of women's lower employment rates, their trips to work account for only one-third of total work-related travel. For the same reason, findings in Belo Horizonte and other cities consistently show women to be less frequent travelers overall than are men. In the Belo Horizonte neighborhoods surveyed, 37% of 195 women

Table 1

Distribution of Trips Taken by Low-Income¹
Male and Female Travellers on Previous Weekday,
Belo Horizonte, 1972

Trip Purpose	Males	Females	% Female of All Trips
Work in Industry	14.6	7.1	21.5
Work in Commerce	17.4	15.1	32.9
Other Work	48.3	48.7	36.3
Sub-total (Trips to Work)	80.3	70.9	33.3
Business	5.6	5.8	11.7
School	5.4	8.7	47.6
Medical	1.8	3.3	50.1
Shopping	2.0	3.8	51.7
Recreation	4.5	6.9	46.5
Passengers	0.4	0.6	49.0
TOTAL (N)	100.0 (353,626)	100.0 (121,670)	36.1

1--Includes those travellers in households with incomes of up to Cr\$299, or slightly more than one minimum salary in 1972.

SOURCE: PLAMBEL 1972 Origin-Destination Survey, Belo Horizonte.

respondents (wives or heads of household) had not left their neighborhood during the previous week and an additional 43% had traveled only one or two days during the previous seven.

While their lower probability of outside employment means that low-income women overall travel less than do men, they are nevertheless responsible for about half the trips carried out for non-work purposes, as shown in Table 1. Due to their multiple functions in low-income families, women take a fairly equal share in carrying out errands which are essential to the household. Women in the 1979 survey were asked to recall the reason for their last trip out of the neighborhood, whether during the past week or not. The results of this more detailed probing (Table 2) indicate that women travel most for health-related errands (41%) and for provisioning and leisure (19%). Despite its potential importance for both immediate and long range welfare of low-

Table 2

Purpose ¹ of Woman's Last Trip Out of Neighborhood, Low-Income Belo Horizonte Neighborhoods, 1979	
Employment-related	9.1%
Health	41.3
Household provisioning	18.8
Bureaucratic errands	7.6
Help relatives	1.8
Education	1.3
Leisure	18.8
Others	1.3
TOTAL	100.0%
(N)	(223)

1--Includes multiple answers.

SOURCE: Original survey data.

income families, travel for non-work purposes is not taken into account in the planning process. After the rush hour, transport firms typically withdraw many vehicles from circulation, so that time investments by travelers in non-work trips are increased. If more attention were given to essential non-work travel such as medical errands and household provisioning, improvements in transport systems might significantly improve access to a range of other urban services.

The impact of transport conditions on low-income populations is most directly felt in travel to the workplace: transport accessibility serves to spatially delimit the available labor market, and operational conditions of transport influence the work schedule as well. When buses are delayed, workers late for work typically suffer deductions in their salaries or are dismissed; some firms refuse to hire workers whose homes are distant from the workplace (BRAP 1981b:107-111). These risks combined with the relatively long time spent waiting for buses force low-income workers to leave early for work, allowing "contingency time" for transport delays. An already excessive allocation of time is thus added to work and travel (BRAP 1981b:101). Difficulty of access to transport lines for workers in peripheral neighborhoods is not limited to extended travel time on the buses themselves; it includes walking to the bus stop, which accounted for about 25% of total travel time for low-income populations studied in Recife and São Paulo (BRAP 1981b:98).

These general factors affect both male and female workers in poor neighborhoods similarly; employed women's travel patterns are more similar to men's than are those of non-working women.⁹ However, differences between men and women in their types of employment, and consequently in their trips to work, also emerged from the Belo Horizonte pilot study. Despite their residential

proximity to the industrial district of the Belo Horizonte metropolitan area ("dormitory communities"), women in the sample were half as likely as men to be employed in industry. Low-income women in Belo Horizonte are predominantly domestic servants, seamstresses, laundresses or sales clerks, or are involved in informal activities. Compared to one-third of working men, nearly one-half of working women have jobs at some distance from where they live. The remainder of women workers work either in their own home or within the neighborhood (Table 3). Twice as many women as men work in their residential areas.

Table 3

Location of Employment for Men and Women in Low-Income
Belo Horizonte Sample, 1979

	Men	Women	Total
In home/neighborhood	2.0	18.7	5.3
In residential area	12.6	17.2	13.5
Industrial area	40.1	17.2	35.5
Other Belo Horizonte	35.4	46.9	37.7
Others	1.2	-----	0.9
No fixed location	8.7	-----	6.9
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	99.8
(N)	(254)	(64)	(318)

SOURCE: Original Survey Data.

Linked to these locational differences were contrasting patterns in the mode of transport used. Women traveled much less by private car than did men, and were more likely to travel on foot or by bus, especially in their trips to work (Table 4). Furthermore, those women traveling by bus to the workplace

Table 4

Distribution of Trips¹ by Sex and Selected Transport Modes, Belo Horizonte, 1972

	Automobile		Bus		On Foot		Others ²		Total	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Work in Industry	18.6%	5.0%	50.8%	61.3%	23.8%	25.8%	6.8%	7.9%	100.0%	100.0%
Work in Commerce	25.2	2.7	53.3	72.6	15.2	16.8	6.3	7.9	100.0	100.0
Other Work	22.5	7.2	52.6	60.5	16.7	22.0	8.2	10.3	100.0	100.0
Sub-Total (Trips to Work)	22.5	6.1	52.5	63.0	17.5	21.4	7.5	9.5	100.0	100.0
Business	34.2	8.0	50.7	70.0	1.2	2.1	13.9	19.9	100.0	100.0
School	9.0	3.8	67.1	68.0	1.5	1.1	22.4	27.1	100.0	100.0
Medical	11.4	2.5	70.6	73.7	0.5	0.1	17.5	23.7	100.0	100.0
Shopping	18.2	10.6	68.6	70.4	1.6	1.7	11.6	17.3	100.0	100.0
Recreation	3.0	9.5	46.9	49.1	0.8	0.5	49.3	40.9	100.0	100.0
Passengers	83.3	76.4	9.4	15.9	1.8	0.2	5.5	7.5	100.0	100.0
(N)									(353,626)	(121,670)
TOTAL M+F	16.2%		58.8%		11.3%		13.7%		100.0%	
(N)									(1,597,655)	

1--On previous working day

2--Includes train; taxi; bicycle; motorcycle; private bus; others

SOURCE: PLAMBEL 1972--Origin-Destination Survey, Belo Horizonte.

Table 5

Characteristics of Trip to Work for Men and Women in
Low-Income Belo Horizonte Sub-Sample, 1979

	Men	Women	T-test	Significance Level
Average Number of Public Buses Taken (N) ¹	1.3846 (78)	1.8000 (10)	.1880279	.05
Mean Number Stages ² in Trip (N)	3.7091 (110)	4.8462 (13)	.5192136	.05
Mean Number Minutes Spent on Public Buses (N)	42.7342 (79)	61.6667 (9)	7.821954	.02
Average Cost in Cr\$ ³ (N)	6.4390 (82)	7.7600 (10)	.8514959	.20
Mean Number Minutes Spent Waiting for Bus (N)	24.0123 (81)	33.5000 (10)	5.305682	.10

1--Varying sample sizes are due to non-applicability of some questions for some respondents.

2--Stages include walking to and from bus stops, waiting for buses, and riding buses.

3--US\$1=approximately Cr\$20.

SOURCE: Original survey data.

were subject to more prolonged, complex and costly trips than were men, because of the location of their employment.¹⁰ All bus lines in the study area passed first through the industrial district and then proceeded to the city center, from which point workers bound for other parts of the city transferred to a second bus. Women on average took two buses to work, whereas men averaged closer to one (Table 5). The total number of stages in their trip to work (including walking, waiting and riding buses) was also higher than men's. On average women traveled a full hour on buses during their work-related travel, whereas men averaged closer to 45 minutes. Average monetary cost of the trip and amount of time spent waiting for buses were also higher for women than for men.¹¹

C. Policy Implications

Given the extremely small sample used in the pilot study, these findings should be interpreted as hypotheses, to be tested elsewhere. The study suggests that the link between transport availability and access to urban services deserves greater attention by planners. Women's travel for essential non-work purposes such as medical errands and household provisioning can provide crucial inputs to full household income. Yet women in charge of household provisioning may be restricted to more expensive local shops because of transport difficulties. Access to health care, either for themselves or accompanying children, may also be impeded by inadequate transport facilities: the most dramatic symbol of the transport problem faced by poor women is that of the mother who gives birth inside the bus, a story common to many poor urban neighborhoods in Brazil (CEAS, 1979). Furthermore, the overcrowding of existing bus systems may make urban travel extremely difficult for women who

have few child-care alternatives and thus must take their young children with them on their errands. These observations reinforce the importance of designing service programs which are based within low-income communities.

Women who work outside the home are more likely than men to rely on public buses to get to the workplace. Yet the findings reported here suggest that urban transport systems are not designed with the two-earner or female-headed household in mind, resulting in higher costs in time and money to these households. Greater difficulty in getting to sites of employment may restrict the range of possible job options for women to areas close to home. Women may, in fact, travel less because the facilities for urban movement are not appropriate to their multiple productive activities: household provisioning, negotiation of urban services, management of household needs and family health problems, in addition to income generation.

Women could also benefit from improvements in existing service for the traveling population as a whole. The problem most frequently cited by respondents in the Belo Horizonte survey was the insufficient number of vehicles running, both during rush hours and other periods. This problem is manifested in delays, crowding and long and undisciplined lines for the bus. The gravity of the situation was demonstrated by the death in 1979 of a man at a Belo Horizonte downtown bus stop. After stepping back to allow a pregnant woman to board the bus out-of-turn, he was shot by another passenger behind him in line. Numerous other violent incidents have occurred in Brazilian cities due to breakdowns and delays in transport for urban workers (Moises and Martinez-Alier, 1977). A stronger role by public agencies in regulating local operation, maintenance and administration could considerably improve the effectiveness of bus services for low-income populations.

High fares were also a principal complaint of respondents. Fares rose more than 100% in Belo Horizonte in 1979, and households sampled spent an average of Cr\$600 per month on transport, or about 20% of the prevailing minimum wage. Transport expenditures were under 10% of the domestic budgets in most low-income households studied in Recife and São Paulo; nevertheless, in São Paulo nearly one in five families spent 20% or more of their monthly budget on transport (BRAP 1981b: 41). The adjustment of differential tariffs for distinct zones of the city could help shift higher costs away from lower-income groups. Subsidized coupons or free transfers for qualifying citizens could especially benefit working women.

Discontent with existing transport services was also reflected in the responses to questions about preferences for alternative transport modes, if these were available. Nearly half of those surveyed predicted they would use microbuses if they were available, despite the higher cost to the user. More than three-quarters favored commuter trains as an alternative. These findings and those of other studies (BRAP 1981b: 125) suggest a great potential for diversification of alternative modes in poor neighborhoods.

V. Women's Role in Integrated Urban Service Programs: Epilogue

In recent years, programs of service provision have frequently stressed the importance of community participation in the planning process in order to insure the program's success. This trend is in part a reflection of the frequent failure of even the best intentioned "top-down" approaches to developmental problems. This failure in turn has led to increased concern over the persistent and often increasing social and economic problems faced by poor urban populations, and the social tensions to which these problems give rise.

Programs stressing community participation also seek to spread potential benefits more widely by reducing the costs of individual programs through the increased utilization of resources, infrastructure, labor, and skills available within local communities.

In addition to these serious practical considerations, many community-oriented programs are also motivated by more fundamental concerns with designing projects which will serve both to provide basic necessities to poor populations, and to strengthen and build the self-help capacity of low-income communities. Central to this perspective is the view of change as a social process in which individuals and communities are mobilized and stimulated in ways that guarantee the continuation of activities beyond the confines of the initiating project. The community mobilization and self-help accentuation thus also implicitly highlights the need for an integrated, multisectoral approach to service provision and problem-solving.

An example of this approach is found in the programs supported by the Inter-American Foundation (IAF), which stresses "enablement" ("habilitar" in Spanish; "capacitar" in Portuguese) -- giving persons the necessary elements in order to be able to negotiate for themselves (Inter-American Federation, 1977). The community capacity-building approach emphasizes projects as entry points into a longer-term process of changing how a community conceives of itself and behaves. The focus is on joint accomplishment of commonly-defined goals, rather than on the material results of a concrete project. The underlying premise is that given a minimum of support and skill development, poor populations can organize, strive for appropriate goals and help themselves and one another, (Hollensteiner, 1978: 25).

The IAF funded eighteen small community projects in São Paulo which were evaluated in 1977.¹² Evaluators described a complex of problems faced by the poor women who comprised the principal clientele of the projects. The rising cost of living combined with a high rate of abandonment by their spouses caused these women to assume increasingly important income-generating responsibility even while isolated from employment opportunities, lacking appropriate skills and in need of day care facilities. Women also lacked access to educational and health services, including necessary information. This profile parallels the findings of the present report. In addition, the Inter-American Foundation reports point to few recreational opportunities, a negative self-image, few organized group activities and a lack of community leadership exposure. Women not only faced serious material needs but lacked the information, confidence and experience which might enable them to more effectively help themselves overcome these deficiencies. The evaluating team found that the most important feature of successful projects was the stimulation of spontaneous "change energy" in the community. This energy was not the result of fulfillment of specific material needs but of a status-fulfillment distinct from individualistic self-images (which are frustrated by the poor's life experiences) and from the status assigned to poor populations by the society as a whole.

There are compelling arguments to suggest that women are the ideal target group for programs which seek to build this "change energy." They face problems and disadvantages which defy easy solution. They play an important role in the immediate and long-range welfare of their families; but, in doing so, are unable to optimally utilize their own skills and resources. Preceding sections of this paper have demonstrated how poor women's activities are often

virtually restricted to the geographic limits of their community due to of their primary responsibilities there and impediments to their access to employment and services outside this restricted arena.

Women's sphere of action is the community. Here they have shown themselves to be adept at building informal reciprocal networks of support and exchange, although more formal community organizations are often male-dominated, with women lending support to, but not participating in leadership (Bittencourt, 1979). More recently, women in Brazil's metropolitan periphery have also begun to strengthen their own formal organizations, such as housewives' associations and mothers' clubs, which tackle a wide variety of problems (Centro de Estudos e Ação Social [CEAS], 1978; Schmink, 1981a). One outstanding example is the Cost of Living Movement, which began as a mother's club and grew to a national movement demanding a series of economic measures to curb cost of living increases.

Because of the importance of women's roles in household and community management and in the negotiation of service provision with urban agencies, it seems logical that programs seeking to foster community participation should focus on strengthening this demonstrated capacity for both formal and informal organization. Community programs might also seek to involve women directly as project practitioners, providing them with local sources of employment and skill development. However, few programs explicitly emphasize women's participation, even when the beneficiaries are themselves mainly women. Women are included the sense that projects are open to participation by the whole community. In the immediate future, however, it may be necessary to develop programs specifically geared to women or which include components to directly

assess women's strengths, economic roles, potential contributions and specific needs (AID, 1977:4).

While multi-sectorial, community-oriented and women-oriented service programs should not be regarded as a panacea for the complex problems plaguing poor urban women in Latin America, they provide a convenient entry point in addressing the difficulties outlined in this paper. Rather than being based on unrealistic conceptions of women's economic roles, such programs depart from an analysis of women's essential and multiple roles in household and community. They can seek to alleviate, if only partially, the great obstacles women face in the search for acceptable employment opportunities, and work towards improving access to a variety of urban services which can potentially enhance the prospects of poor women and their families. Service programs thereby respond indirectly to the problem of transport inadequacies by reducing women's need to leave the community while at the same time building their capacity and confidence to operate outside the restricted domestic sphere, enhancing the potential for activities outside the community. Finally, they can help to build a more adequate base of information about poor women's needs and capabilities and enhance the overall understanding of appropriate policy directions which treat women as contributing members of a developing society.

Notes

1. One study counted as disguised unemployed all those housewives of appropriate age and educational categories in households where other persons were available to take over domestic chores. Those who fell into this category made up 7% of all women, and their addition to the total unemployment rate for women made it higher than that for men (Madeira, 1979).

2. This discussion is based on the following sources: Bonet, 1972; Brazil, Ministerio do Trabalho, 1976; Campiglia, 1975; Ducci, 1977; Nunez, 1977; Schiefelbein, 1978; Silva, 1977; Urrutia, 1975.

3. Study by the São Paulo Social Welfare Secretariat, cited in *Nós Mulheres* 2: 10, 1976.

4. This discussion is based on the following sources: Bittencourt, 1979; Egger-Moellwald and Raucci, 1979; Hollensteiner, 1978; Massel, 19; Mota, 1979; "The urban child in IYC," The Urban Edge 3: 9 (November 1979); 1-5.

5. The following discussion is based on Furst, 1979, and Conger, 1979.

6. (BRAP 1981b: 97). The author worked as a consultant on the design phase of this project which included field work in Recife and São Paulo. A user-oriented survey approach, similar to that used in the author's Belo Horizonte pilot study, was used. However, the analysis of transport behavior did not differentiate by gender.

7. The three neighborhoods have similar socioeconomic conditions and locations but different histories of access to urban transport data from the three sites are analyzed together in this paper. A multi-stage cluster sampling approach was used to select 70-75 cases from each neighborhood for a total of 218 sample households (about 10% of the survey universe). Findings

of the study are described in more detail in Schmink (1980, Chapter 4). The survey methodology is described in Appendix II of the same source.

8. Detailed special tabulations were obtained from the PLAMBEL study, which included three types of questionnaires applied to a random sample of 5% of the city's households. One collected data on housing and vehicle ownership for the household, a second on socioeconomic characteristics of household members, and a third on travel by individuals on the last normal weekday before the survey. Data on individual travel are analyzed in this paper.

9. Data from the Bogotá Urban Development Study Phase II household survey (1972) analyzed in Schmink (1980) demonstrate that travel frequency for housewives is significantly lower than for employed men and women. Housewives similarly stood out from other groups in response to questions regarding how much travelers were willing to pay for travel (lowest for housewives) and how long travelers were willing to wait for transport (longest for housewives). These findings are consistent with the economic role of nonworking housewives in low-income families, who commonly substitute their own time for monetary expenditures as one method of stretching household income.

10. The pilot study included a detailed analysis of trips between home and workplace in order to disaggregate the various components of these trips. Interviews were carried out with up to three employed household members present during the interview, regarding their travel during the last working day (most interviews were carried out on week-ends or in the evening). Respondents were asked to report on their trip to and from work taking each stage of the journey separately and indicating mode of transport, waiting periods, and time and monetary expenditures. Coding these data revealed that some interviewers failed to question respondents about waiting periods or stages which

entailed walking from one point to another. The more detailed analysis of travel to and from work was therefore restricted to questionnaires applied by the remaining interviewers, or about 57% of the total. This further restricted an already small sample and introduced an unknown degree of bias in the sub-sample. However, each interviewer carried out equal numbers of interviews in each of the three neighborhoods, so that inter-neighborhood bias should not be a factor.

11. Differences between men and women in monetary costs and time spent waiting were not significant at the .05 level. However, given the clear findings about numbers of buses taken by each sex, it logically follows that costs in money and time are also higher for women. Lower levels of significance in the two variables in question can in all likelihood be attributed to the extremely low sample sizes, a factor which makes the strength of the findings all the more impressive.

12. These remarks are based on internal evaluation documents provided by the Inter-American Foundation and authored by Heather Clark, Rusty Lawrence, Maria Fletcher and Jim Cotter.

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