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GENESYS

Special Studies No. 6

***Women and the Transition to Democracy
in Latin America and the Caribbean***
A Critical Overview

Prepared for the U.S. Agency
for International Development

Office of Women in Development
and Bureau for Latin America and the
Caribbean

December 1992

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**WOMEN AND THE TRANSITION TO DEMOCRACY
IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN:
A CRITICAL OVERVIEW**

The GENESYS Project

December 1992

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GENESYS (Gender in Economic and Social Systems) is an A.I.D.-funded project supporting A.I.D.'s efforts to integrate women into the national economies of developing countries around the world. The project provides assistance to A.I.D. staff worldwide in reviewing, initiating, or expanding gender considerations in development activities for sustainable economic and social development. Project components include technical assistance, training, policy research and evaluation, and information dissemination and communications. The sectoral foci are private enterprise, agriculture, and environment/natural resource management.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper presents a critical overview of the literature on women and the transition to democracy in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) with the purpose of identifying research gaps. The overview focuses on women, rather than on gender, due to the history of sociopolitical hierarchies in LAC in which women have generally been disadvantaged. Women's current political and socioeconomic status relative to men continues to be measurably inferior. With this in mind the overview considers some of the constraints that women face in gaining political and economic parity with men. The final research recommendations, however, are formulated in terms of gender.

Following a brief introduction and a synopsis of LAC women's economic and political status in **Section 1**, **Section 2** discusses three key factors that, when taken together, set the stage for women's participation in the transition to democracy. They are: **history and political culture**, **socioeconomic conditions**, and **government institutions and legislation**. The literature indicates that the central role of the family and the culturally predominant view of women as mothers and wives in Hispanic America and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean historically have overshadowed women's participation in politics and affected the levels and types of positions that women occupy. These perceptions of women continue despite the reported decline in traditional family units and the increase in female-headed households. Although research suggests that Caribbean women have relatively greater autonomy, this has not translated into increased visibility or participation in the political process for them.

With regard to socioeconomic development, the literature finds that women's educational status, while comparable to men's, does not necessarily enhance women's political participation to the same degree that it does for men. Conversely, increased income for women (relative to men) *does* appear to increase women's political participation. Finally, although scant, information on women and government institutions indicates the need for research in two areas in particular: the growth of intermediate-level government institutions, and the implementation of new laws enacted following the UN Decade on Women to address women's legal rights.

Section 3 summarizes the literature reviewed on the role of women in relation to **civil and political liberties**, including freedom of expression and organization, free and fair elections, and access to information and channels of communication. Research indicates that women's participation in **sociopolitical movements** in Latin America and the Caribbean has grown tremendously over the past decade. They frequently have organized in response to economic conditions -- especially declines in social services and increases in the cost of basic goods -- that threaten their families' standard of living. Increasingly, however, women have mobilized in response to gender-specific strategic interests, such as violence against women and the household division of labor. In addition, the literature points out that various discrete sociopolitical movements have joined together in areas of mutual concern to women in order to present a united voice to policy makers.

Studies on **elections and citizen representation** in the region reveal that women in many countries are less politically active than men. Moreover, their interests and voting patterns are sometimes distinct from men's and vary across class, ethnicity, race, and age. The literature on the position and role of women in elections, political parties, and government in Latin America and the Caribbean indicates that cultural stereotypes, socioeconomic conditions, and biases in the administration of laws still keep the majority of women from occupying influential positions in political parties and representative bodies. For example, many political parties create separate "women's branches" that isolate women from

central decision-making within the party; and with the exception of Colombia during the 1980s, very few women occupy cabinet-level positions.

Finally, with regard to **information and communications**, research shows that in general LAC women have been unable to use the media to convey political messages and that, with some progressive exceptions, the mass media continue to portray LAC women through the lens of their traditional roles. National and international women's groups have begun to tap alternative means of communications, however, to disseminate and exchange information, ideas, and experiences.

Section 4 highlights some of the more critical areas where further research on the interaction of gender and the transition to democracy is needed. Generally, these research gaps include a lack of: broad-based, comparative studies; studies on the role of women in day-to-day politics; dynamic studies that examine the role of gender in public policy; sex-disaggregated data on political participation; and coverage of Central America and the Caribbean. **Research recommendations** are summarized below.

- **National and Cross-National Surveys.** These might include studies to address differences in motivation for women's and men's political participation and voting patterns; to identify gender-specific issues or concerns; to measure attitudes as input for improved leadership training programs that acknowledge gender-specific needs; to address informal sector constraints and suggest areas for institutional reform; and to highlight inefficiencies in public administration or the administration of justice.
- **Gender, Political Mobilization, and Democratic Institutions.** The impact of sociopolitical movements that address gender-specific concerns (including women's mobilization around both practical and strategic interests) on political institutions and the transition to democracy needs to be more clearly understood. For example how do different movements affect the political process? Are the effects short- or long term? Studies of the nature and extent of women's and men's participation at the municipal level also are needed, in order to identify mechanisms for increasing local political participation.
- **Gender, Decentralization, and the Provision of Social Services.** Research is needed on distributional issues relating to the decentralization of social services; alternative strategies for coping with cutbacks in public spending and for providing social services; the viability of decentralizing the provision of social services and thus devolving centralized power to the local level, including the assessment of potential linkages between local government and grassroots associations; and ways to overcome some of the negative impacts on the poor (and poor women and women-headed households in particular) that can result from privatization of social services.
- **Gender and Property Rights.** Areas in need of examination in this regard include the proportion of land and property titles held by women and men in the informal sector; the extent to which women and men are recipients of property rights entitlement programs in housing or rural lands; the extent to which property-rights actually translate into increased access to credit and/or increased productivity; the role of customary rules regarding property and how they condition women's status and roles; and effects of property rights on women's roles in society and the structure of power.
- **Gender and Labor Rights.** On the assumption that improved economic well-being enhances the environment for a transition to democracy, research to document women's and men's

participation in labor unions in LAC is needed. Issues include: the benefits and opportunities unions provide working women and men in both the formal and informal sector; the gender-specific opportunities, constraints, benefits, and disadvantages provided through labor laws and regulation, especially those covering homework; the degree to which such laws are enforced; and the impact on women relative to men of current efforts to deregulate the labor market.

- **The Articulation of Gender Interests in the Media.** In this area, research on two topics in particular are recommended: effective forms of media for reaching female/male audiences in a given setting; and approaches to overcoming gender stereotypes in the media.

The period of transition ... to democratic government is not politics as usual; it offers new opportunities and sets different constraints....[S]ocial movements -- including the women's movement -- have an advantage during the transition because they can mobilize followers and bring people into the streets. Transitions are political "openings" in the broadest sense; there is a general willingness to rethink the bases of social consensus and revise the rules of the game. This gives social movements an extraordinary opportunity to raise new issues and to influence popular expectations (Jaquette 1989:13).

1. INTRODUCTION

The history of women's political participation in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) and the role that women have played in the transition to democracy are only recently beginning to be fully documented. Nevertheless, the existing literature provides evidence that the collective actions of women as well as men in LAC have contributed in important ways to the breakdown of autocratic regimes in the region and to the emergence of a democratic opposition.

1.1 Purpose and Orientation of the Study

This GENESYS Special Study constitutes a critical overview of the literature on gender and the democratization process in LAC, with special reference to women. The focus on women, rather than gender, is due to the history of socio political hierarchies in LAC in which women have been generally disadvantaged. Patriarchal forms of society and government continue to present challenges to women's efforts to gain political and economic parity with men. This paper's purpose, then, is to identify research gaps in this arena of that have implications for LAC Bureau programming and the design and implementation of projects, programs, and policies pertaining to A.I.D.'s Democratic Initiative within Missions throughout the region.

Because this assignment was limited to 20 days, the review does not purport to be exhaustive. Rather, it draws mainly on the most recent major works on the subject of women and democracy. For the convenience of readers desiring greater detail on a given topic or country, however, a comprehensive bibliography is included (Annex C).

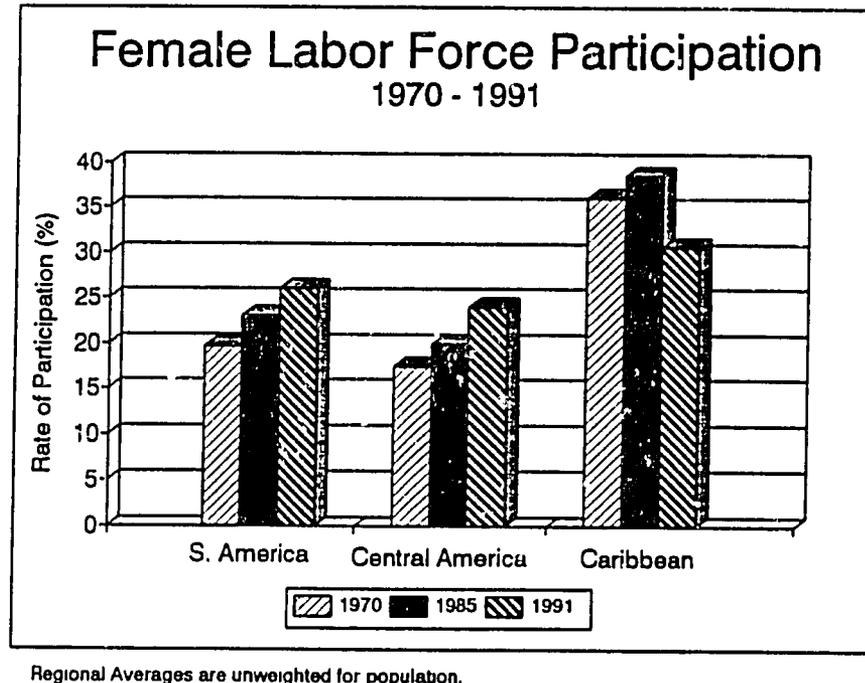
The study was commissioned by the LAC Bureau in conjunction with the A.I.D. Office of Women In Development, under the GENESYS Project. It is one in a series of steps designed to assist A.I.D.'s Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean in refining its understanding of the gender aspects of its Democratic Initiative by focusing on the significance of women for the transition to democracy.

A.I.D.'s Democracy Initiative (DI) was issued in December 1990 as one of four initiatives to help shape the Agency's programs for the new decade. The initiative defines democracy as fundamentally rooted in the proposition that political authority is anchored in the will of the people. Democratic systems are characterized by meaningful political participation and peaceful competition; protection of basic human rights, lawful governance, and strong democratic values (A.I.D. 1990). Since women represent half of the world's people, their participation is essential for the establishment of representative and enduring democratic systems.

1.2 Women's Economic and Political Status in Latin America and the Caribbean

Women constitute approximately 50% of the population in LAC, and they are major actors in the economy of the region. In 1985 women's labor force participation (LFP) reached 23% in South America, 20% in Central America, and 39% in the Caribbean.¹ These figures represent an increase over 1970 LFP rates of 17.9%, 14.3%, and 7%, respectively. This trend continued during 1985-1991, when the rate of women's LFP increased by 13% and 20% in South and Central America. However, during the same period, the rate for Caribbean women decreased by 21% (Table 1.1). Researchers suggest that the primary factor behind this decline in the rate of LFP of Caribbean women is the economic recession in the subregion.

FIGURE 1.1



On the other hand, women's LFP rates in the informal sector have been estimated at as much as 62% in some Latin American cities (PREALC 1981); and this figure is likely to increase in response to the economic crisis. Nevertheless, detailed and reliable data on informal sector employment continue to be scarce, and are frequently under-represented in national labor force and employment statistics. As a result, "formal" labor force calculations usually severely under-count females' participation and under-represent women's real contributions to GNP (Blumberg 1989).

With regard to women's *political* participation, as the introductory citation points out, transition to a democratic system offers increased opportunity for groups previously excluded from the political process, including women. Yet despite their numbers and economic contributions, women remain marginal to formal political processes in LAC. The literature shows that there are few women in government or other positions of leadership; few occupy positions in political parties; and few participate in labor unions or other traditionally male forms of political organization. Multiple factors such as cultural and institutional barriers, education and poverty, and discriminatory laws and regulations all influence the position and role of women in politics (next section).

2.0 BACKGROUND: HISTORICAL, SOCIOECONOMIC, AND INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS

Historical, cultural, socioeconomic, and institutional factors are key determinants of the prospects for the growth and sustainability of democratic forms of government. Historical experience leaves a legacy of cultural values and attitudes that may favor or constrain democratic systems of government. The level of socioeconomic development, the class structure, and the racial or ethnic cleavages that influence the distribution of power and resources in a given society also affect the legitimacy of democratic governments. Finally, institutions that establish the rules for political participation and determine the degree of competence and effectiveness with which public policies are made and implemented are critical in determining the effectiveness of democracies.

The LAC Bureau's DI strategy deals in great detail with the requisites for democracy and with the different factors that constrain or promote democratization in Latin America and the Caribbean. Below, many of these factors are grouped into three broad categories: history and political culture, socioeconomic development, and government institutions and legislation. These categories are designed to provide a concise overview of the gender aspects of key contextual issues that influence the emergence and course of democracy in the LAC region.

2.1 History and Political Culture

In general, Hispanic American culture presents two historic-cultural traits that have important gender implications for the status and role of women in the political process: the family as a presumably cohesive, central unit in society; and the strict delineation of gender roles within the family into categories often described as "private" and "public."

Much of the literature on gender and polity characterizes the Hispanic American family as a strongly cohesive group. Jelin (1990:2) provides a representative statement of this view.

The patriarchal family is seen as the natural unit around which daily life revolves. The household is the basic unit of reproduction. Within it, the relations between the genders and generations are hierarchical, involving a clear division of labour and areas of activity. Women are in charge of the domestic tasks associated with the private sphere of reproduction and maintenance of the family; men are responsible for tasks relating to the public sphere of social and political life.

Some authors take exception to this view of the contemporary Hispanic-American family in LAC, however. Flora, for example, writes that "in the main, the myth of the strong family remains, but the reality has changed. Thus, the superstructure of female subordination, which makes sense when there is a strong family system, remains intact although the family is much weaker and unable to provide the protection it once gave to women in exchange for their allegiance and service" (1991:n.p.).

The differentiation between "public" and "private" spheres has also received considerable attention.² The private sphere generally refers to domestic concerns that pertain primarily to the family, while the public sphere refers to broader social concerns or interactions that are generally linked to the political arena.

The Perception of Public and Private Spheres

...the normal separation between public and private also tends to demarcate gender universes... it is commonly believed that the public arena is defined in terms of maleness -- intelligence, exteriorized through public eloquence; power, exercised as organizational command; and efficacy, understood instrumentally. The private realm is perceived as essentially feminine, a 'sphere of nonpublic intimacy' organized on the basis of a community of effects in which women play an axial role (Perelli: 1989:103).

Hispanic-American women in LAC are typically characterized in the literature by their traditional roles and their confinement to activities in the private sphere. The central position of the family in Latin American culture and society has had important implications for the status and role of women and men in the political process. Women have generally played a subordinate role in the formal political process; and their efforts at collective action (Section 3.2) often have focused on the defense of their families and family values. For men, on the other hand, the outcome has been dominance of the political process in a manner that relies heavily on paternalism and patron-client relationships (Jelin 1990).

Overall, the central role of the family and the culturally predominant view of women as mothers and wives in Hispanic America historically has overshadowed the participation of women in politics. However, some studies suggest that changing political and economic conditions have started to erode the private/public distinction.

In contrast to the literature on Hispanic America, studies of the Afro-Caribbean subregion stress "kinship" rather than "family" and point to the impact of slavery on the status and role of women. The term Afro-Caribbean encompasses those peoples of African descent in the Commonwealth or English-speaking Caribbean, the Netherlands Antilles, Haiti, the overseas departments of France (Guadeloupe and Martinique) and associated states, and to a lesser extent the Spanish-speaking Antilles. In some cases, the term is also applied to coastal areas of Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, and Venezuela that have large black populations (ibid).

In these areas, the legacy of slavery has often erased the male figure in the family group. Female-headed households therefore frequently rely on kinship relations and networks with other women. The case of the British Caribbean is illustrative.

In the British Caribbean, slavery established the importance of women as workers and providers, which was not seen as incompatible with their reproductive role as wives and mothers, as it was in the Hispanic Caribbean. In addition, poor women are often expected to take on the primary responsibility for providing for their families because of the high percentage of female-headed households which has resulted from high male Caribbean out-migration and the low level of legal marriages, the latter also a legacy of slavery" (Deere et al. 1990:10).

While the separation between public and private spheres is not so clear in the Afro-Caribbean as it is in the Hispanic parts of LAC (Bolles 1988), "the power and authority of [Afro-Caribbean] women in the public sphere is [also] very limited" (Deere et al. 1990:10). Other literature (e.g., Sen et. al)

supports the finding that women's "relative economic autonomy" in this subregion has not translated into increased female visibility and participation in the political process.

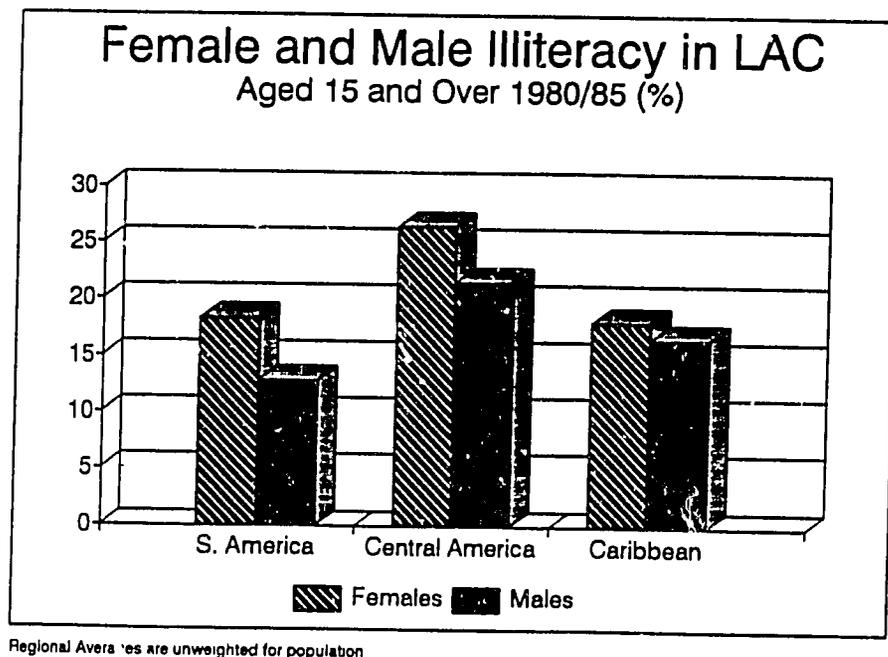
2.2 Socioeconomic Development and the Distribution of Power

Most scholars of democracy recognize the importance of socioeconomic development to the growth and maintenance of democratic systems. They have identified various determinants of the relationship between the two, including disparities in education and the level and distribution of income, and ethnic or racial divisions in society (Campbell 1960, Haggard 1990). When gender is introduced into the analysis, however, it appears that the positive correlation between development and political participation does not always hold for women.

2.2.1 Education

Superficially, it appears that LAC women have attained rough parity with men in levels of literacy and education (Tables 1 and 2, Appendix A). Nevertheless, gender gaps in educational achievement persist between age groups and rural/urban residents, for example; and in some cases, differences still exist between male- and female-oriented curricula. Additionally, research shows that women continue to lag behind men because of cultural constraints and domestic responsibilities (Collinson 1990:125).

FIGURE 2.1



For instance, young, single women are often pressured by their families either to get married or to go to work rather than to continue their education. Married women may be impeded by their husbands' resistance to letting them go out alone. Or, husbands may hesitate to let their wives enroll in school because they fear that others will think they need to send their wives out to study and earn a living, which reflects poorly on husbands as the primary bread-winners. Motherhood, too, can be an obstacle to school attendance or participation in training programs. Particularly if they are unable to

leave their children with relatives, women with children, have less time to attend classes and study. In Nicaragua, for example, approximately 40% of families are headed by single mothers, a number that underscores the extent of this problem (ibid). Throughout the Caribbean, where the Catholic church has a weaker influence than in Latin America, single-motherhood is even more prevalent.

The importance of education to democracy is undisputed. Citizens with more advanced education are more likely to understand political issues and party positions. Therefore their electoral and other participation is more likely to result in a government that better represents popular opinion. In general, increased education has important, positive consequences for development, and especially for women. First, education enables women to acquire marketable skills and thus achieve economic autonomy. Higher levels of education also are associated with lower fertility and lower infant mortality. From a political perspective, education increases women's awareness of current issues and of their constitutional and legal rights, or lack thereof. In other words, fostering education among women better equips them to pursue improvements for their own and their children's well-being through enhanced economic and political activity.

But even when women attain levels of education comparable to those of men in their society, the literature suggests gender-specific differences in how education relates to democracy. For instance, comparable levels of education and literacy for women and men may not translate equally into heightened political awareness and participation. " [I]n those countries where the percentage of women and men attending university is almost equal, women are not to be found in equal numbers in the most politicized faculties - those of law and social sciences" (Aviel 1981:157). Relatedly, research in the Caribbean has shown that a stigma attaches to women who enter politics (Ellis 1986).

In sum, education does not appear to increase women's political participation to the same degree that it does men's. Some scholars maintain that this is because women are still confined by cultural beliefs that they have no place in the "public" political realm. Consequently, many authors suggest that, in addition to continued improvements in women's education, LAC women need to re-conceptualize their roles themselves and work to change society's perceptions of their roles if they are to realize levels of political participation equal to those of men.

2.2.2 Economic Status and Income Disparities

Overall, LAC women clearly lag behind men in terms of income; and Caribbean women continue to be the "poorest of the poor" (Deere et al. 1990). A number of factors contribute to the persistent income disparities between genders. Among them are women's over-representation in the informal sector, and the effects of development and structural adjustment programs.

According to some estimates, as many as two-thirds of women in Latin America, and a very high proportion in the Caribbean, work primarily in vending activities in the informal sector (Yudelman 1987). Although this type of work frequently provides the flexibility to accommodate women's many other socioeconomic roles (including childcare and other household tasks), it is a marginal and generally unstable form of employment. In general, the large proportion of women employed in the informal sector reflects their limited opportunities, relative to men, in the formal sector.

Many studies of women in the political process in Latin America are sharply critical of prevailing modes of economic development -- which, they argue, have led to ever wider disparities

between rich and poor (Cornea 1987). This issue is critical to the status of women because the majority of the poor are women.

Political and economic modernization brought [Latin American women] few advantages. In fact as research on women and national development shows, dependent capitalist development often resulted in decreased status and increased inequality for poor and working class women in Latin America" (Alvarez 1990:4).

Other studies note that the economic stabilization and structural adjustment programs required to confront public debt crises in much of LAC have reduced social programs (Joekes et. al 1988). In the Caribbean, women have been particularly disadvantaged by cutbacks in health and public housing programs because women comprise a large proportion of the heads of households (Deere et al. 1990). In a recent publication on this subject, women and their dependents were identified as those who bear "the burdens associated with restraint policies" (Mayatech 1991:xiv) The five key causes were stated as:

- Women and members of female-headed households tend to suffer relatively more during the economic contraction associated with the stabilization phase of adjustment. Because women are frequently poorer to start with, reductions in living standards are more critical for them.
- Women act as "shock absorbers" during adjustment, curtailing their own consumption and increasing their work effort to compensate for household income losses.
- Women are often more dependent on public services because of their child-bearing and child-rearing roles. The reduction in social spending that accompany adjustment therefore affects them more directly than men. The shrinkage of government services "off-loads" responsibilities to the private sector -- usually women.
- Education represents one of the most important factors in women's economic and social advancement, and it is often a victim of economic restraint.
- Where there is relatively higher representation of women in the public sector, public expenditure restraint may have a greater impact on women than on men.

Overall, research suggests that increasing women's incomes relative to men's *will* increase women's political participation. Therefore, development efforts that promote greater economic equality between men and women should translate into more equitable levels of political participation. The inverse also appears to hold, insofar as the findings from research on class-based disparities in income are also applicable to gender-based disparities. Many such studies suggest that extreme income inequality, if left unaddressed, will prejudice democratic initiatives by reinforcing class differences.

2.2.3 Gender in Relation to Class, Race, and Ethnicity

As a determinant of political participation, gender is inextricably linked to the class, race, and ethnic group to which women and men belong. Throughout LAC, gender issues have long been subsumed by those of class, race, or ethnicity. In Brazil, for example, "a woman is not Brazilian and black and working-class and female; she is a Brazilian working-class black woman" (Alvarez 1990:26).

Linkages Between Political Participation, Education and Income

A study of two cities in Uruguay and Colombia found that the extent of men's and women's political activity, including voting and campaign work, correlated positively with their education and income (Biles 1983). However, the same study also discovered that, at roughly equal levels of education and income, women are still not so politically active as men. Other studies have supported Biles' findings, including work by Verba, Nie, and Kim, who found that "education and other resources [i.e. income] often do not convert into political activity [on the part of women] at the same rate as for men" (cited in Biles 1983:12).

Scholars increasingly emphasize that these variables must be considered as an integral part of gender identity (ibid.). Women's simultaneous membership in class, race, or ethnic groups raises several important issues vis-à-vis their political standing and activity.

First, the concerns of women in different groups may be conflicting or unrelated. A white, university-educated, middle-class woman may rely on a poor working-class woman for domestic services while she pursues a career. That is, a wealthy woman's economic and political interests may not be shared by a poor woman, since both are influenced by their class status as well as their gender. Alvarez emphasizes that this conflict is particularly strong in Latin America, because class differences are reinforced by occupational segregation (Mulhern 1992).

In sum, so-called "women's interests" are not necessarily identical for all groups of women. All such class, race, or ethnic differences must be considered in any analysis of women in the political process. A few issues such as violence against women and sexual abuse clearly cut across such boundaries. But in general, women's interests, like men's, vary greatly according to socioeconomic status.

2.3 Government Institutions and Legislation

Researchers and development practitioners point out that transitions to democracy in LAC may be hampered by a number of institutional barriers. These include, e.g., serious weaknesses in financial and public sector management and accountability and in the administration of justice and the law. Some of the factors identified as having gender-specific impacts are discussed below.

2.3.1 Intermediate-Level Political Institutions

An emerging concern among gender-and-democracy scholars relates to the lack of effective intermediate (as versus centralized) political institutions and bureaucracies in LAC. These include such entities as state and municipal government offices. In a forthcoming paper on gender and democracy, Hirschmann (1992) points out that women have lost political influence through the movement of power away from the community to the national capital. Another author describes the problems associated with inefficient, centralized bureaucracies as follows.

People at the base [of the political pyramid] appeal directly to the top. [For example, in Argentina] the *Madres de la Plaza del Mayo* picketed the junta directly. Women's groups in Lima march to the presidential palace. If there is a problem with delivery of state services or goods, the office of the minister is the site of the sit-in. Women are mobilizing, but the solution to the very real problems which they identify lies in the "grace" given by those in power, not the systematic application of problem-solution mechanisms or the application of universalistic rules that allows resources to be distributed in a just and efficient manner. Part of the problem of democratization and women lies in the creation of *efficient, decentralized* bureaucracies with access to *resources* and a systematic set of *principles* which can be applied to allocate those resources. It is crucial to include women in establishing those institutions, so that the principles of resource distribution can address women's needs (Flora 1991:n.p., author's emphases).

The decentralization of government may present interesting political possibilities for women (Hirschmann 1992). This is especially true if decentralization involves not only the transfer of administrative tasks but also the devolution of decision-making power and responsibility to elected local authorities. In such cases, decentralization brings decision-making closer to the community and focuses political action more on community and household interests.

This is advantageous for women in two ways. For one, when politics are focused at a community level, issues of concern to individuals and small groups are not so distant from the political system. Because women's political participation has historically centered on community and household issues, their concerns are more easily heard. Second, decentralized government provides more opportunity for women to participate directly in government and political processes because it solves some of women's practical and logistical problems -- such as time, travel, and absence from home. While the costs associated with travel constitutes a problem for both poor men and women, women's dual economic and domestic responsibilities further constrain their time and make their absence from home particularly burdensome. In short, especially for women, the creation of well-functioning intermediary institutions would substantially increase practical opportunities to participate in political life and democratic process.

2.3.2 Ethics and the Setting of Political Agendas

A related question is the direction of women's potential influence on public policy priorities and effective administration. How would women's participation make a difference in government administration? Preliminary, and as yet speculative, answers suggest that greater female participation may bring more ethical, honest, compassionate, etc. conduct to government institutions and greater equality of opportunity for women and other minorities. Indeed, some scholars see a relationship between gender and ethical policymaking such that "What is good for women is also good for the society at large" (Sivard 1985:xix).

Few studies address this issue in depth, however. And others note that such arguments are historically bound in that, as women's status and roles in given society change, likely so will their behaviors and beliefs. At least two basic questions need to be investigated in this regard.

First, what is the relationship between [women's emphasis on basic needs of the family] and the fact that women are culturally defined as being interested primarily in their children and as being apolitical. If policies are pursued that change this definition, will not women's priorities also change? Secondly, is emphasis on immediate family requirements likely to aid or restrain economic development? (Gastil 1991b:n.p.).

In sum, perceptions about women's probable or potential contribution to political agendas vary, but data on this issue are absent. As women participate more, and more directly, in the political process, these questions should be monitored in order to provide empirical insights into women's impacts upon policy priorities and directions in a variety of cultural and economic settings.

2.3.3 The Law and its Administration

Gender and the law originated as a central institutional issue during the United Nations Decade on Women (1975-1985) because discrimination against women is relatively easy to detect. A recent review of UN accomplishments in the legal arena highlighted UN success in effecting many beneficial, country-specific legislative changes for women. With the enactment of more equitable and gender-sensitive laws, attention to women's legal issues shifted. In 1990 scholars identified the two largest problems as: the lack of administration or implementation of new legislation; and the many contradictions that still exist between the laws as written and the recognition of women's rights in society and in the courts.

There is a large gap between "the equality expressly assigned to women in constitutions and legal codes in respect of political participation," and their minimal representation in political and governing bodies. Moreover, certain types of legislation, especially family laws, often work against the rights of women as individuals (UNECLAC 1988:51).

A worldwide analysis of 55 case studies identifies three major areas of concern relating to women's subordinate legal position (Schuler 1986).

- The laws themselves are often unjust or discriminatory, limiting the rights of women;
- the application of the law -- even when adequate -- is often arbitrary or prejudicial toward women; and
- women tend to be unaware of their own legal status and rights, of the implications for or effects on women of various laws, or even that women are the subjects of injustice.

Another, LAC-specific study provides additional evidence of the large divide between the law as written and as applied. A review of the impact of rules and regulations on women's roles in Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Panama finds that changes in women's legal position have been concentrated in the public realm; however, LAC women still face inequalities under laws governing domestic affairs, such as divorce and guardianship (Leitinger 1985).

2.3.4 Property Rights

A limited but growing literature on gender in relation to the law and economics has focused on the role and impact of "institutions" -- including contracts, contract enforcement, and property rights - in economic development. (For a full review of this literature, consult Painter 1989; for a representative example for LAC, see Hernando de Soto 1989.) Two organizations in particular have tackled such topics for LAC: the Instituto Libertad y Democracia (ILD) in Peru (ibid.) and the Land Tenure Center (LTC) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

The so-far limited research on gender and property rights has examined the extent to which women have access to property and other resources, and the effects that such access (or lack thereof) have on women. A number of LTC and Ford-Foundation-funded case studies on these subjects have been done, focusing primarily on Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua (Lastarria 1991). A study of the informal housing sector in Honduras, for example, found that a large proportion of household heads in low-income urban areas were women (34%) and that women generally outnumbered men in these areas because women are the vast majority of migrants; yet household surveys indicated that property ownership generally rested with men, even though "women were almost as likely as men to have made payments for land and housing." Only 37% of all titles belonged to women, versus 63% for men (Felstehausen et al. n.d.:27-29).

With the exceptions noted above, however, research on gender and property rights and their implications for socioeconomic and political development is scant. A key question that has been little explored is whether property rights translate into increased access to credit and thus facilitate productive activities and income generation, and with this, greater political participation. Studies on gender and development have noted that women's productive activities are more closely tied to their household responsibilities than are men's; also, a potentially greater portion of women's income goes to support the household (Blumberg 1989, Bolles 1988). If property rights do translate into more credit, there may be an economic multiplier effect when women obtain property titles. Gastil (1991b) notes that it would be instructive to investigate land ownership patterns, comparing communities where women hold a significant proportion of the property titles with those where male ownership predominates.

3. WOMEN IN THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS

Women's involvement in the democratic process and the types of issues that LAC women have typically brought to the public sphere largely reflect the impact of cultural values and attitudes. The fairly extensive literature on women's participation in social movements indicates that they have mainly pursued "practical" rather than "strategic" gender-related interests. Practical interests have been defined as concerns deriving from women's traditional, usually domestic roles, while strategic interests challenge ascribed roles and hierarchies in pursuit of personal autonomy and equality.

With regard to women's participation in political processes, practical versus strategic interests often are aligned, respectively, with reactive versus proactive political movements. As Alvarez notes in her book on gender and democracy in Brazil:

Strategic versus Practical Gender Issues

Strategic issues are formulated from the analysis of *women's subordination to men*. They are identified with an alternative, more equal and satisfactory organization of society, in terms of both the structure and nature of relationships between men and women. Examples of strategic issues are violence to women, property rights, access to credit, and political equality.

Practical issues are formulated from the conditions women experience in their *engendered* position within the sexual division of labor and deriving out of their practical gender interests for human survival. Such issues do not challenge prevailing forms of women's subordination. Examples include access to housing and basic services and income-earning opportunities (Molyneux 1985).

... women organize [either] to challenge or to protect their socially ascribed roles. Female gender roles give rise to two basic forms of politicization: one that grows out of and accepts prevailing feminine roles and asserts rights on the basis of those roles; another that seeks to transform the roles society assigns to women, challenges existing gender power arrangements, and claims women's rights to personal autonomy and equality (Alvarez 1990:p24)

In other words, women's political mobilization on behalf of their practical gender interests can be seen as reactive in nature; it builds on their "traditional," socially-accepted roles. Some studies have described how LAC women have internalized and then projected culturally defined values and attitudes into their political participation. Nash and Safa (1985:14), for example, observe that in countries with a history of military government, "Women's entry into political life frequently begins with culturally accepted notions of what they should do as wives and mothers." Similarly, surveys of women active in LAC politics led Chaney (1979) to conclude that women tend to adopt the role of *supermadres* in their official functions, as many believe that their political functions should reflect the gender division of labor in the family. Eva Peron, for example, viewed herself as a "mother" guarding her "home" (i.e. the nation of Argentina) and her "children" (the people of Argentina) (ibid.). Such social and cultural perceptions skew the types of positions women tend to occupy in government. Women are mostly found in social-sector offices that deal with such issues as health, education, welfare, public ethics and corruption (ibid.; also recall section 2.3.2).

With regard to strategic gender interests in LAC, an analysis of women's mobilization in revolutionary Nicaragua observes that they derive:

... deductively from the analysis of women's subordination and from the formulation of an alternative, more satisfactory set of arrangements to those that exist. These ethical and theoretical criteria assist in the formulation of strategic objectives to overcome women's subordination, such as the abolition of the sexual division of labor, the alleviation of the burden of domestic labor and childcare, the removal of institutional forms of discrimination, the attainment of political equality, freedom of choice over childbearing, and the adoption of adequate measures against male violence and control over women (Molyneux 1986:284).

While much of the literature presents women's political participation in terms of the dichotomy between strategic and practical, recent literature has begun to explore the *linkages* between practical and strategic gender interests and between the private and public spheres. To a large extent, these linkages have been attributed to political and economic forces that are eroding the private sphere of the family,

thus encouraging more and more women to enter the public sphere and address strategic issues (Deere et al. 1990, Saña 1990). At the same time, LAC women's groups have recently begun to address issues that, by virtue of their domestic nature, are "private" but that are now becoming "public" as strategic targets of women's political groups. An example is "the increasing legitimacy of women's groups intervening in cases of domestic violence" (Flora 1991:n.p.). Despite the progress that has been made in promoting women's strategic interests, the literature suggests that only a small percentage of women have stepped out of the family-centric, "practical" mode of political participation in defense of "strategic" gender interests.

Within the framework of the practical/strategic dichotomy, the following sections discuss women's participation and concerns in three arenas of the democratic process: collective movements; the electoral process, political parties, and government; and the media.

3.1 Organization and Collective Action

Despite a long history of participation in sociopolitical movements, LAC women's motives and modes of action were little documented prior to the 1980s. Even now, the literature on the specific role of LAC women's movements in democratic processes is scant. The most recent, in-depth work has centered on the emerging democracies of the Southern Cone and, to a lesser extent, the Andean subregion (most notably, Alvarez 1990, Jaquette 1989, Jelin 1990). For Central America and the Caribbean, the few gender-sensitive studies of collective movements have examined socioeconomic movements, especially those among grassroots and nongovernmental organizations. Political movements per se have received much less attention, although in the Caribbean there has been some research on women's role in defining alternative paths for development (e.g., Deere et al. 1990). The exceptions are generally studies of women's movements in Cuba or their participation in guerrilla struggles in Central America (e.g., Chinchilla 1977, 1983, and 1990 on Nicaragua).

Three Forces Behind Women's Increased Participation in Socioeconomic Movements

The available research indicates that women's involvement in sociopolitical movements in LAC has grown tremendously over the past decade. This growth has been attributed primarily to three factors:

- the impact of the economic crisis of the 1980's on the livelihood of women and their families;
- political repression brought on women and their relatives by military governments; and
- changes in women's role associated with increases in education and labor force participation, and resulting declines in birth rates.

Women's mobilization for collective action has taken many forms, and their demands, strategies and tactics have varied within and between countries. Nonetheless, much of the literature groups women's movements into three broad categories (Jaquette 1989):

- human rights movements,
- popular/grassroots movements, and
- feminist movements.

These categories are not entirely discrete, however. On the contrary, as discussed below, political and economic forces have led to increased linkages and overlapping goals among them.

Human Rights Movements. By and large, the literature describes women's involvement in human rights movements as practical in nature; i.e., women's role in the public domain is perceived as an extension of women's traditional role within the private domain of the family. Human rights movements in LAC have centered on the protection of relatives, rather than on gender-based or partisan concerns. In many countries, such movements have been closely linked to the Catholic Church, which champions traditional family concerns and women's status within the family circle (Jaquette 1989) or to other religious organizations. In Haiti, for example, the Ecumenical Center for Human Rights has been a leader in the struggle for civil and human rights and democratization (Deere et al. 1990).

Most women-led human rights movements in LAC have arisen in response to the repression of military governments throughout the region. While such movements have played important roles in El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Peru, and other LAC countries, the best known and documented are those in the Southern Cone. However, the political momentum attained by *Las Madres* (see box) has rarely been duplicated by similar organizations elsewhere in LAC.

Las Madres de la Plaza de Mayo

Argentina's well-known *Las Madres de la Plaza de Mayo* typifies the concerns and goals of women in human rights movements. *Las Madres* consisted mostly of a group of older women with little or no political experience who organized to protest the "disappearance" of relatives and the outright violation of human rights by the military government of 1976-1983. Although the military regime sought to discredit them by calling them *locas* (crazies) or subversives, *Las Madres* took their protests to the streets of Argentina and to the international media. The movement came to play a significant role in the ouster of the military regime. Its activities, like those of many other women's human rights movements in LAC, were non-violent; *Las Madres* relied on petitions, demonstrations, and international publicity (Feijoo 1989, Safa 1990:362).

Popular Movements. Popular movements represent the broadest and most encompassing type of LAC women's movements. This category includes a variety of poor, typically urban, grassroots NGOs, neighborhood associations, communal kitchens, and the like that have typically arisen in response to poor economic conditions and social services. The goals of such movements have generally centered on the economic survival of the family; but at times, their aims have expanded to address issues that may be considered strategic and definitely political.

For example, some of the earliest popular movements in which significant numbers of women participated involved organizations with clearly political goals such as the Bolivia's MNR (*Movimiento Nacional Revolucionario*) political party and the miners' trade union in Bolivia. Women began joining

the MNR in 1946; and when organized into Housewives Committees as an arm of the union, they played an important part in the miners' struggle against the Bolivian oligarchy. Both movements attained national attention and provided opportunities for women to participate politically and also to make socioeconomic gains. Nevertheless, their demands were clearly subordinate to those of the MNR and the union (Salinas 1986).

While popular movements are far from new, their mode of operation is changing. "The urban poor have a long history of collective action" in LAC, and "[w]omen have always played a prominent role in these neighborhood forms of collective action" (Safa 1990:357). However, recent efforts to coordinate among groups -- "the formation of 'federations' of groups with similar interests, and the linking of neighborhood groups to the other strands of the women's movement" (Jaquette 1989:6) -- are bringing a new dimension to the scope and possibly the objectives of popular movements. These linkages may allow groups to address broader, popular issues and to speak with a united voice in discussions with government officials.

A recent book on the Caribbean provides an excellent example of the role of grassroots groups, local development organizations, and NGOs in the emergence of social movements in LAC (Deere et al. 1990). The authors point out that such groups initially emerged to address the pressing needs of local communities, women, and the poor. But many have joined forces to tackle broader social, economic and political issues such as the empowerment of women, protection of the environment, preservation of local culture, de-militarization, and formulation of alternative development policies.

Feminist Movements. A key distinction between "feminist" movements and the "feminine" movements described above has been the former's emphasis on strategic, as opposed to practical, gender-related concerns (Alvarez 1990). The agenda of feminist groups challenges the traditional position of women in the private domain of the family and calls for profound changes in the gender division of labor.

Studies of feminist movements in Hispanic America have largely focused on Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Peru, and Uruguay -- countries where feminist movements originated in the late 1970s partially in reaction to the military governments then in command, and partially in response to women's frustration over political parties' rejection of feminist agendas. Such movements were primarily championed by middle-class professionals, many of whom had previously been members of leftist parties. They were later joined by political exiles who returned to their countries espousing the ideas of Western feminism (Deere et al. 1990).

Despite their differences, feminist movements and the broader popular movements in which LAC women have participated have sometimes joined together in opposing the military and furthering the transition to democratic governments. An example is the dynamic coalition of women's movements to help topple the Pinochet regime in Chile; at a time when opposition political parties were divided over a number of strategic issues, Chilean women coalesced into a united front that played a critical role in ousting Pinochet (Chuchryk 1989). In Brazil, women's movements have begun to interlink their personal and political interests; and feminist and feminine movements have worked together to form what is perhaps the most successful women's movement in Hispanic America to date (ibid).

The history and agenda of feminist groups in the Caribbean is somewhat different. There, a number of such groups emerged from the UN Decade on Women with a central concern for the *empowerment* of women. These groups seek "to challenge traditional male-dominated structures and to articulate alternatives which focus on women's strengths, concerns, and perspectives" (Deere et al.

1990:107). Moreover, they are supported by a broad network of openly feminist NGOs seeking to interlink women's practical and strategic interests and to close the gap between the public and private spheres. "[This approach] is perhaps the most comprehensive and compelling of all current attempts to articulate an alternative analysis and agenda for the future" (ibid).

Despite women's sizeable participation in collective movements, many authors are dubious about the sustainability of collective movements focused on practical issues and women's participation in them. They observe that in LAC, such groups have tended to emerge primarily in times of crisis; once the crisis is resolved, they often falter. In Argentina, for example, "despite [women's] substantial contributions to the process of restoring democracy," since the ouster of the military government, women have once again been relegated to traditional roles, and their political participation has been very limited (Feijoo 1989:72). Although conditions vary from country to country, the experience of Argentine women illustrates the powerful constraints -- cultural biases, socioeconomic inequalities, and institutional deficiencies -- that continue to limit women's participation in democratic processes (also see next section).

3.2 Participation in Elections

Even the most economically advanced societies excluded women from voting until the early 20th century. In LAC, not until 1970 were women enfranchised in all 30 of the region's countries -- thanks partly to the UN International Conventions on the Rights of Women (Sivard 1985).³ This figure is significant, however, only insofar as voting is voluntary and represents voter's sincere preference, and insofar as women vote in equal proportion to men. It is difficult to draw meaningful conclusions from voting statistics in countries such as Peru, where voting is compulsory. And elsewhere in LAC, data on women's voting behavior are scant.

The Effectiveness of Democratic Elections

"The meaning of elections also depends upon what those who are elected are empowered to do and the institutions in place to implement their collective political decisions into day-to-day policy. A number of classic studies, beginning with Lipset's *Agrarian Socialism*, suggest the limits of the 'will of the people' with entrenched bureaucracies" (Flora 1991:n.p.).

From a gender perspective, a transition to democracy entails more than simply increasing the numbers of women voting in elections; it also means including gender concerns in the formulation of democratic institutions.

Nevertheless, there are some indications that women lag behind men in electoral participation. For instance, research in Montevideo, Uruguay found that when voting was not compulsory, significantly fewer women voted than men -- 77% versus 89% (Biles 1983:16). Likewise for Chile, where one study attributed this gender discrepancy both to voter socioeconomic status and cultural factors (Aviel 1981). The Chile research found a positive correlation between women's socioeconomic status and their electoral participation that did not hold true for men: the higher a woman's status, the more likely she was to vote.

Even when women do exercise their right to vote, there is a question as to how much their choice of candidates and stance on political issues may be influenced by their fathers or husbands. An investigation of this question in Costa Rica suggests that women's vote is more dependent on relatives' opinion than that of men: 24% of men compared with 37% of women in secondary school stated that they would vote for the same political party as their parents (Aviel 1981:160). However, many other studies suggest that women's vote is largely independent of male family members. In Mexico and Chile, for example, women were denied suffrage for years because they were considered likely to vote for conservative parties due to women's purported dependency on the Church. Relatedly, Argentine women of all socioeconomic classes have been shown to vote for more conservative candidates. Such findings may imply that a significant proportion of women in fact do make their own voting decisions (Lewis 1971).

3.3 Representation by and Inclusion in Political Parties

Although LAC women tend to trail men in electoral participation, they are even further behind in other modes of political activity. A UN study concluded that LAC political parties have not fully accepted women as active members; nor have women pressed them for acceptance (UNECLAC 1989). Researchers have also found that, while LAC women may be extolled as historical heroines, they are not regarded as competent political decision-makers (ibid). Other studies concur that women's political participation, including involvement in political parties, has been significantly limited when compared to men's (Biles 1983).

As relative newcomers to the political process, LAC women have yet to decide how to best integrate themselves and the issues of concern to them into the political process. Their efforts in this regard fall into two broad categories:

- integration into pre-existing political parties, and
- the establishment of autonomous women's parties.

Women's Participation in Brazil's Multi-Party System

During the first years of the multi-party system in Brazil (1980-1981), women's groups were divided over the best approach for achieving their political agenda. Some pursued their interests by joining political parties, while others sought to establish autonomous organizations (Alvarez 1990). In spite of divisions within the women's movement, the increased presence of women in the political parties won Brazilian women some benefits. With multiple political parties, each had to work to win women's support, which represented half of the "electoral capital." For the first time in Brazil, private sphere concerns such as contraception, sexuality and daycare, were presented as public issues in party platforms.

Research shows that in some cases women are achieving a measure of success in penetrating established political parties and organizing to improve their position. In Jamaica, the Women's Auxiliary of the People's National Party changed its name to the Women's Movement (PNPWM) to reflect its new, more activist stance. Working with the Workers' Party of Jamaica's Committee of Women for Progress, the PNPWM focuses on issues like maternity leave.

However, many women's organizations believe that working through established parties is not an effective way to advance women's concerns. For example, when Caribbean women were first incorporated into political parties, they were relegated to a women's auxiliary with little influence over the main body of the parties. Additionally, the few women who attained positions of leadership tended to toe the party line, sometimes to the detriment of women's agendas; some women even prevented younger, more activist women from advancing within the party ranks (Ellis 1986:13).

Similar experiences have been reported for Hispanic America. A study of the history of the women's movement in Chile found that women were not always able to affect party policy once they became members (Kirkwood, cited in Chuchryk 1989). Political parties' marginalization of women and their agendas typically results either in women's outright rejection of political parties or in the formation of autonomous women's parties. Kirkwood argues that feminist organizations should *not* be folded into political parties that force them to modify their agenda or ideology. Conforming to the party line often means that gender concerns such as daycare and legal protection for mothers and their children will be subordinated to other interests. According to Kirkwood, society needs to define a new, non-sexist conception of the political sphere (*ibid*).

As an alternative to creating whole new political parties, some independent women's NGOs are working with government to increase public awareness of women-and-development issues, improve workers' rights and working conditions, provide a new perspective on development strategies, alleviate poverty, and pursue other social welfare objectives. As one attendee at the tenth WAND (the Women and Development Unit of the University of the West Indies in Barbados) Consultation explained:

Ten years ago we were seeking recognition and integration. Today, we are seeking transformation and emancipation. . . We, the women of the region will continue to work towards a just and human society in which the potential of all our people can be realized. (cited in Deere et al. 1990:117).

Indeed, many Caribbean women's groups have come together and are working towards empowering women and pursuing social progress, both within traditional party structures and outside of them. In Jamaica, for example, the Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action was instrumental in pressuring trade unions and the government to adopt stricter health and safety standards in factories (for this and further examples of highly effective female political mobilization throughout LAC, consult Deere et al. 1990:116).

As noted in the preceding sections on women's movements and women's participation in elections, the literature indicates an historical tendency to political apathy both toward and by LAC women after a political crisis or transition (although this may be changing and is less apparent in the Caribbean). In Brazil, for example, political parties quickly lost interest in their female constituency once they secured power. Such cases suggest that women's concerns are often included in party platforms merely in order to garner votes (Alvarez 1990:177). At the same time, other studies indicate that women themselves often curtail their own political participation after a "surge of activism" (Jaquette 1989:206). For example, after Chilean women were enfranchised in 1949, Chilean women's groups either dissolved or were absorbed into political parties (Kirkwood cited in Chuchryk 1989). Despite such cases, some scholars calculate that current trends toward increased female education, labor force participation, and divorce are likely to lead to sustained political organization and activity among LAC women (Jaquette 1989).

3.4 Positions in Public Office and the Institutionalization of Gender Concerns

Although women have achieved the right to run for public office in most countries in LAC, the literature indicates that governmental institutions with real decision-making power are nearly devoid of women. The vast disparity in numbers of men and women in high-level government positions contrasts sharply with the significantly smaller gap between women's and men's electoral participation. Women are clearly under-represented in national legislatures in LAC (9% of seats) and cabinet level positions (also 9%) although they fare better than many of their counterparts in other developing countries (Table 3 and 4 in Annex A). A notable exception to women's under-representation in government is Colombia during the 1980s, when "women were appointed with men to each cabinet slot" (Flora 1991:n.p.).

A major question concerning women in public office that researchers continue to grapple with is whether women's participation as high-level government representatives is necessary to ensure attention to, and the institutionalization of, women's concerns. In other words, is it important to have equal gender representation in public office?

Sivard's (1985) answer is "yes," because women tend to hold opinions and attitudes that are significantly different from men's, thus implying that their use of power may also differ. Sivard cites the example of the Scandinavian countries, which have by far the largest percentage of women in national legislatures and executive cabinets, at 25%-30% and 18%-25% respectively. She describes these countries as "[n]oteworthy for their emphasis on equality, development, and peace," which she attributes to the large presence of women in power (ibid). However, Gastil observes that the assumption of causality in this relationship could hypothetically be reversed: "emphasis on peace and equality by male dominated governments probably led to transferring power to women rather than the other way around" (Gastil 1991b:n.p.). Clearly, research is required on this "chicken and egg" issue. Colombia appears to provide a ready study site, where the results of some rather radical moves to increase women's participation in government have yet to be properly documented or analyzed (Flora 1991).

FIGURE 3.1

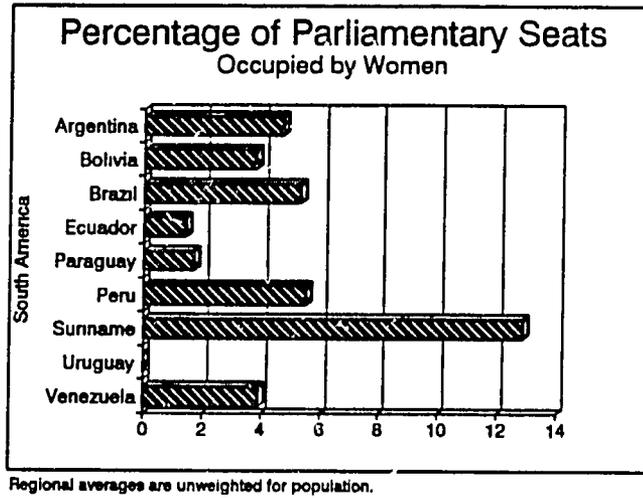


FIGURE 3.2

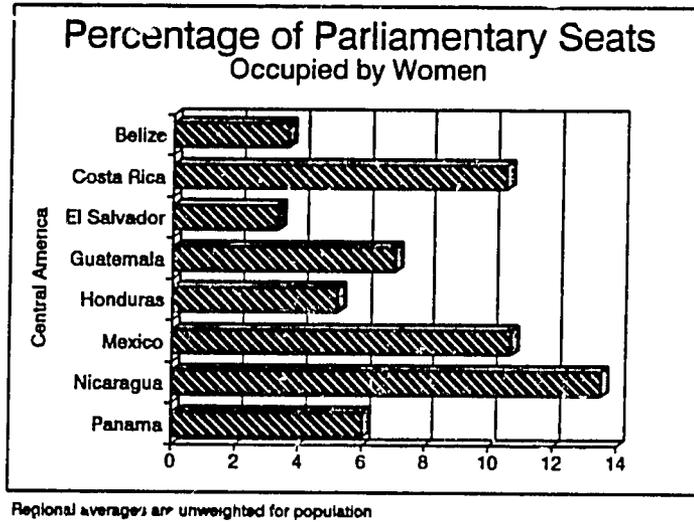
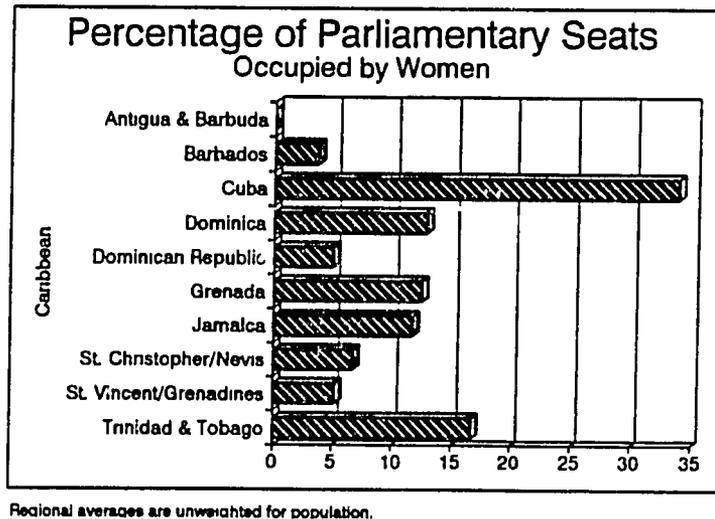


FIGURE 3.3



3.5 Political Awareness and the Media

The literature suggests that the media play an especially important role in democratic forms of government in at least two ways: the dissemination of information on current political thinking, and the presentation of information in ways that influence social and cultural views to change (or, remain the same). The literature postulates that in order to ensure gender-equitable participation in the democratic process, women and men must be exposed equally to current political debates and to information that challenges gender stereotypes.

3.5.1 Links Between Education/Information and Political Participation

Some scholars argue that women's increased education and labor force participation have heightened their awareness of how political decision-making impacts on them, and that this awareness has in turn contributed to the wave of women's social movements in Latin America and the Caribbean (Aviel 1981, Safa 1990). Middle-class women in particular have become more active in women's movements; their higher educational and occupational statuses have made them more aware of their previous restrictions and of their legal and other rights. They have disseminated information about women's concerns and supported women's social services such as maternal and child healthcare or assistance to battery and rape victims. Greater awareness of such issues has prompted poorer women, too, to challenge their traditional roles vis-à-vis the workplace, the household, and the state. Some scholars contend that the biggest increase in women's activism has been not in the workplace but in the domestic sphere, through neighborhood organizing to combat such localized problems as high food prices or lack of sanitation (Flora 1991).

Awareness of women's issues has clearly increased due in large part to less formal channels of communication via, e.g., women's organizations and the workplace. But women's access to conventional formal channels of is still constrained. In general, the media are not considered a serious forum for women's concerns. An important exception is found in Ecuador, where recently, research on violence against women was combined with a documentary on the topic broadcast on national television (Flora 1991). In the Dominican Republic, too, women's wider access to the mass media is credited with successfully increasing awareness of gender concerns in the country (Viezzler 1986:36-39).

3.5.2 Using the Media to Challenge Stereotypes and Change Attitudes

Researchers have criticized LAC media for disseminating distorted information about women's issues and thereby reinforcing barriers to gender equity. In general, LAC women have been unable to use the media to convey political messages. With some progressive exceptions, the mass media continue to portray LAC women through the lens of their traditional roles and private/domestic personae. In the Caribbean, for example, studies have found that the media reflect a culture that is largely "alien and irrelevant" to most women of the subregion; in lieu of recipes and diets, they suggest that the media feature stories of women who have accomplished something commendable in, e.g., the areas of housing and agriculture (Earl cited in Safa 1990:117-118).

Experiences elsewhere in the developing world as well as in developed countries have shown that gender attitudes and perceptions can be influenced by freer communication among women and men, including via mass media. Attitudinal changes are an important part of a multi-pronged approach to improving the status of women.

Latin American women's movements, like women's movements everywhere, have multiple cultural and social goals that cannot be pursued solely through the policy process; they seek attitudinal, behavioral, and normative changes that must be pursued both within and outside the State and political society (Alvarez 1990:28).

In contemporary LAC, women's access to conventional formal channels of information and communication is still limited, thus impeding their ability to disseminate their concerns and opinions widely, to affect how women are depicted, and thus to change gender perceptions. However, a few organizations -- like ISIS International, an international women's information and communication service based in Rome, Italy, and Santiago, Chile -- are working to create an adequate network for women to exchange information, ideas, and experiences; to counter traditional portrayals of women by the media; and to reinforce a new image of LAC women. Further, participants at the 1985 UN Conference for Women in Nairobi found encouraging evidence of numerous alternative channels of communication for LAC women in the form of films, videos, slides, radio programs, and newspapers (Viezzler 1986).

Finally, a review of the literature reveals that class structure is an important barrier to communication among women about their political or other interests. In spite of improvements in communication flows among women in poorer classes, communication *across* classes is still difficult. Indeed, some scholars argue that women's movements in Latin America and the Caribbean have in some sense reinforced class divisions among women by yielding more benefits for middle-class women and thus widening the gap between them and poorer women.

4. RESEARCH PRIORITIES

4.1 Current State of Literature: Principal Research Gaps

Since the beginning of the UN Decade on Women in 1975, great progress has been made in documenting and analyzing the status and role of women in *economic* development in LAC. In contrast, research on women in the *political* process is characterized by vast and persistent gaps. The following section outlines four critical research needs evident in the literature to date and then suggests five principal research priorities relating to gender, women, and the transition to democracy in Latin America and the Caribbean in the context of A.I.D. programming.

■ *The Need for Broader Country Coverage and Comparative Studies*

The current body of literature on women in political processes in LAC is comprised of a large number of micro-level case studies or surveys of individual countries, with very little comparative work. Indeed, "[m]ost of the literature on political participation by women analyzes specific cases. . . [b]roader-based, comparable data which would give a more detailed picture of women's involvement in party politics are virtually non-existent" (UNECLAC 1989:17).

In addition, the most recent, comprehensive, and frequently cited studies of women in the democratization process have focused on the Southern Cone and the Andean subregion. Few studies look at women's role in the political process in Central America, and still fewer at the Caribbean, though unpublished in-country studies are beginning to emerge. Moreover, work on women in Central America and the Caribbean has focused more on the economic dimensions of women's movements or on women's participation in revolutionary struggles.

■ *The Need for Studies of Gender in the Transition to Democracy*

Throughout LAC, work remains to be done on the political dimensions of gender. "[A] review of recent research and debates reveals that little or nothing has been done in this field, due in part to the lack of women's participation and also to the lack of perception on the part of researchers" (Jelin 1990:6). Moreover, the work that has been done has mainly centered on women's political statuses and roles in times of transition and crisis. For example, many scholars have examined women's mobilization to attain suffrage and to oppose military regimes. What is missing is research on gender roles in day-to-day politics and in the administration and implementation of a democracy.

■ *The Need for "Middle-Level" Analysis*

A critical gap in the literature on political participation in LAC identified by Alvarez and others is the need for middle-level analysis. She remarks that much work has been done on micro-political characteristics, (e.g. education, employment, fertility) and macro-analytical concepts and constructs (e.g. public vs. private spheres, the link between capitalism and patriarchy) of gender politics. A large gap exists, however, at the meso-level which looks at the dynamics between macro and micro: i.e., how women's and men's political participation influences public policy and vice versa. "[W]e have little understanding of how the institutional and organizational contexts within which women's political

participation takes place constrain or facilitate the 'representation' of 'women's interests' and even fewer studies of how those contexts help to determine gender-specific policy outcomes" (Alvarez 1990:270).

Staudt (1990) also notes the lack of research on linkages between women's political activities and the policy-making process. She argues that more analysis is needed on institutions that impede the implementation of progressive legislation and on the role and impact of women on these institutions. In this regard, a key area for research is the interplay of gender and intermediary institutions in the democratization process – e.g. the participation of women at the municipal level.

■ *The Need for Sex-Disaggregated Data on Political Participation*

The bulk of available data on LAC women is comprised of economic, education, health, fertility, and marriage statistics. Some major sources of information, including the World Bank and the US Department of Commerce-Bureau of the Census (which formerly housed the Women in Development Database, now incorporated in the International Database) compile no data on women's political participation. The UN has collected data primarily on the number of women in national parliaments and executive cabinets. However, there is a critical need for comparable data on women's and men's participation in autonomous organizations, labor unions, elections, political parties, and public office. Moreover, data are needed on the links between economic status and political participation by gender, in order to test the hypothesis that the full integration of women into the economic growth process depends on their integration in the political arena, where decisions about resource allocation are made.

4.2 Suggested Research Priorities and Illustrative Programmatic Implications

The research priorities outlined here are intended partly to address the gaps in the literature identified above and partly to respond to initiatives in the LAC Bureau's DI strategy, which proposes three primary foci:

- improving government competence through greater emphasis on government accountability and responsiveness;
- promoting a pluralistic, autonomous, and vigorous society; and
- strengthening democratic values and leadership.

The topics listed below address important aspects of each of these initiatives. These topics are not meant to be exhaustive, but rather illustrative of the kinds of research that are needed and that would yield meaningful returns to A.I.D. Given the research needs outlined above, the proposed topics emphasize surveys and studies to facilitate:

- cross-national comparative analyses;
- dynamic studies that examine the linkages between women's political and economic participation and the formulation of public policy at both local and national levels; and
- integration of women's concerns into mainstream issues relevant to democratic processes such as provision of public services, decentralization of government, and property rights.

In pursuing the topics described below, priority should be given to research on Central America and the Caribbean, in light of the paucity of information on these subregions. Research on the Southern Cone, and to a lesser extent the Andean subregion, appears to have acquired a momentum of its own within the academic and international communities and should continue to be drawn upon for new lessons and for comparative purposes.

1. *National and Cross-National Surveys*

Purpose and Justification. Attitude surveys at the national and regional levels can be used to establish benchmarks for assessing changes in attitudes and values by and toward women vis-à-vis their role in the political process. Although some important survey research was carried out in Chile and Peru prior to 1980, little has been done since then to evaluate attitudes towards female political participation in Latin America and the Caribbean (Jaquette 1986:244). Yet, this kind of research can provide valuable information on the modes, motivations, and obstacles to female political participation, thus yielding insights into the role of gender in the transition to democracy. To be useful, however, attitude surveys must be paired with some "concrete behavioral measures of participation" (Flora 1991) in order to compare reported attitudes with actual behavior patterns.

Illustrative Programmatic Implications. The present study has emphasized the prominence of certain contextual factors, such as cultural values and attitudes, in influencing the status and role of participants, especially women, in political and economic development. Aspects of the LAC political culture that stress centralization and clientelism have often been seen as antithetical to the growth of democracy in the region. Ethnic and regional cleavages also divert attention from the larger task of promoting economic development and increasing broader-based participation in democratic processes. The LAC Bureau's DI strategy recognizes the need to strengthen democratic values and leadership, and proposes leadership training programs, civic education, and activities to promote ethnic tolerance, more effective leadership, and a democratic political culture.

National and cross-national survey research would: establish a benchmark against which to measure progress toward such DI goals; provide ongoing input into A.I.D programmatic initiatives; and improve understanding of obstacles and opportunities for a successful transition to stable democratic governments. For example, this kind of research could describe the attitudes of female leaders, in order to better tailor leadership training programs for women. Surveys of the informal sector, which is comprised of a large proportion of women, might also suggest institutional reform priorities that require special emphasis during policy dialogue. They might also pinpoint inefficiencies in public administration or in the administration of justice that could then be followed-up with specific interventions.

Outputs. To illustrate, surveys could include an investigation of motivation and influence on cross-national voting. Open-ended questionnaires and polls could pinpoint strategic issues of specific concern to women. Open-ended surveys of the informal sector, for example, would be very useful for understanding institutional impediments to participation in the formal sector, and for identifying key issues of special concern to women in that sector. Such surveys might also identify potential constituencies for specific policy or legal reforms, as the ILD has done in Peru.

Value and attitude surveys will also serve to gauge possible changes in political culture that might signal opportunities for, or constraints to, a transition to democracy. Attitude surveys of women in government

and leadership positions, for example, would shed light on women's political behavior and on how public policy priorities might differ if women played a larger role in government. This type of information can inform the case for the "gender variable" in development.

2. *Mobilization and Democratic Institutions*

Purpose and Justification. Women's participation in government institutions, at both the national and local level, should be clearly documented, in order to understand how their increased participation may influence public policy and the democratic process. Further research is also needed to document the impact of sociopolitical movements that address gender-specific concerns (including women's mobilization around both practical and strategic interests) on political institutions and the democratic process, and to delineate trends and future directions in such movements.

Illustrative Programmatic Implications. Given current efforts to decentralize governments and bureaucracies in LAC, the municipal level will become a critical focus for democracy efforts, as it offers direct contact between the government and the people. How gender and other socioeconomic factors affect this contact will be important in measuring its efficacy. Additionally, in order to foster local support for democracy in a given setting and gain an understanding of how effective existing structures are for mobilizing support of the role of popular movements will need to be examined. Women's groups and movements potentially can play a critical role in this process.

Outputs. Flora (1991:n.p.) suggests three lines of investigation in this regard.

- "The impact of various types of women's mobilization on state policy, local implementation of existing policy, and the structure of local government: Have these mobilizations changed structures or only served to momentarily divert resources to a 'squeaky wheel'? When changes can be documented, in depth case studies of the key factors in bringing about such changes should be undertaken.
- "Comparative case studies of governments which have included a large number of women relative to men (including Colombia under Belasario Betancur): These studies would measure what was concretely achieved related to 1) increased participation at lower levels of government, and 2) structures and policies which further women's practical and strategic agendas."
- "Intermediary institutions, which are key for successful democratic processes: Studies looking at the participation of women and men at the municipal level would be extremely important as well. Surveys of women participants would be particularly important in determining mechanisms for increased participation and utilizing democratic processes to address the particular needs of women."

A further area for research is suggested by Gastil (1991b:n.p.), who points out the relatively high numbers of women in political office in Dominica and the Bahamas compared to other LAC countries. A comparative study seeking to understand "why these two countries vary from the norm and what difference it has made for the societies as a whole and for women" might improve our understanding of gender and the formulation of public policy.

3. *Gender, Decentralization, and the Provision of Social Services*

Purpose and Justification. As the role of the public sector in Latin America and the Caribbean is curtailed in the process of economic stabilization and structural adjustment, important questions arise regarding social services traditionally provided or subsidized by the state. Development efforts need to take into account the effects of these adjustment programs on the socioeconomic status of the population, especially poor women and children. For example, one impact of the economic crisis and the curtailment of public services that has been frequently noted in the literature, is *la triple jornada* or triple work day. This has emerged as women, who often have full responsibility for domestic chores, also must become wage-earners or vendors of goods and services in the informal sector, while at the same time providing services that were formerly the responsibility of the public sector (e.g., garbage collection, community infrastructure, health care).

Illustrative Programmatic Implications. Beginning with A.I.D.'s Private Enterprise Initiative of 1981, the Agency has emphasized the need to shrink the roles of government and to support privatization. Yet, very little research has been undertaken to assess the impact of the privatization of social services on the poor. Flora (1991:n.p.) writes: "The localization of services *in a manner to include the needs of women* is one of the keys for successful democracies in Latin America and the Caribbean. Such decentralization can allow for the tailoring and implementation of social services specific to local needs. *Or* it can lead to a re-emergence of clientelism if good local institutions are not formed. Comparative research on decentralization looking at its impact on and inclusion of women and men would be crucial as part of this initiative. This includes mechanisms of raising revenue as well as mechanisms of distributing it."

In its DI strategy, the LAC Bureau has stressed the need for more serious attention to distributional issues, for improved public administration, and for strengthened local and municipal government. Research on decentralization and social service delivery could address such distributional questions and explore alternative strategies for coping with cutbacks in public spending and for provision of social services. Additionally, it could explore potential linkages between local government and grassroots associations, along with the viability of decentralizing the provision of social services, thus shifting power from the national to the local level. Research could also yield strategies for reducing the negative impacts on the poor that often result from the privatization of social services.

Outputs. Answers to the following three questions.

- To what extent should the private sector be involved in the provision of social services, such as health, housing, education, transportation, community infrastructure, etc.?
- Will private provision of these services limit access by the groups that most need them and are least able to pay for them, especially poor women and children?
- What are alternative ways to provide these services, such as decentralization and increased linkages between grassroots organizations and local governments?

These questions are relevant not only to Latin America, the Caribbean, and other developing regions, but are also increasingly being raised in East and Central Europe as the socialist state is dismantled, and in developed countries as they encounter a deterioration in education and healthcare. Yet very little research has been done on the gender aspects of these important questions. The current literature on women is often highly critical of the negative impacts of stabilization and adjustment programs on women. Indeed,

the literature explains the recent growth of women's grassroots movements largely as a response to deteriorating economic conditions and public cutbacks in subsidies for basic goods and services.

4. *The "Rule of Law" in the Informal Sector and its Impact on Women*

Purpose and Justification. Although the UN Decade on Women brought considerable attention to bear on issues of women and the law, most research to date has focused on formal aspects of the law and on the gap between formal legislation and its implementation. While there is still considerable room for research on the latter topic, there is an even larger gap with regard to informal aspects of the law and their impact on women relative to men. The work of Hernando de Soto and the ILD has provided valuable information in this area for Peru, but similar research is needed in other countries to build a body of comparative data. Two important subtopics within this broad area are discussed here as possible research foci: property and labor rights.

Illustrative Programmatic Implications. With regard to property rights, efforts to increase women's socioeconomic status and thus their level of political participation and power need to consider possible gender biases of government policies concerning property rights and credit. For example, if research on property rights and credit is able to show a direct correlation between the right to own property and access to credit, donor emphasis may be better placed on strengthening laws and administration regarding these rights.

As for labor rights, the LAC Bureau has provided assistance to the American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD) which in turn offers training and educational programs to labor movements in Latin America and the Caribbean. Research on gender and labor rights might suggest the need to extend such programs to workers in the informal sector -- a majority of whom are women.

Outputs. Recent development theory has begun to pay more attention to the role of laws and regulations, especially property rights, in economic development. Property rights facilitate access to credit; and according to ILD research, entitlement leads people in the informal sector to invest considerably more in their properties, thus increasing property values. But there are currently no answers to questions such as the following.

- What proportion of women/men hold property in the informal sector?
- To what extent do women/men benefit from titling programs in housing or rural lands?
- What impact do property rights have on women's/men's ability to access credit?
- To what extent do property rights actually translate into increased access to credit?
- What is the role of customary property law and how does it condition women's status and roles?
- How will property rights change women's status and roles vis-a-vis men and will these changes lead to changes in the structure of political participation and power?
- Do newly acquired property rights translate into increased productivity for women/men?

Honduras may provide a ready site to study these questions given the relatively high proportion of women who own property in the informal housing sector there. The Land Tenure Center (LTC) in Wisconsin has begun to look at some of these questions in the rural areas. But LTC researchers indicate that more research is still needed in both rural and urban areas, particularly with regard to the impact of changes in women's right to property as a result of titling programs.

In the realm of labor rights, little information exists regarding the gender-differentiated application and impact of labor regulations and women's participation in labor organizations. The limited data that are available suggests that women's knowledge of their labor rights and their participation in unions and other such groups are limited. This situation may be exacerbated by the nature of women's work and their low socioeconomic standing. For example, more and more women are engaging in low-wage industrial activities that pose health and other hazards, and more women work in the unregulated informal sector. Two specific topics that could be addressed include:

- the impact of labor laws and regulations (including those covering homework or "outwork") on women's access to, and participation in, formal labor organizations or other groups that represent women's concerns; and
- the gender-differentiated impact of current efforts to deregulate the labor market on labor force participation, income, occupation, benefits, and formal vs. informal sector employment.

5. *The Articulation of Gender Interests in the Media*

Purpose and Justification. The literature clearly stresses the negative impact of cultural stereotypes on LAC women's political participation. Such stereotypes affect not only men's image of women, but also women's perception of themselves. Research in this area would address these stereotypes, assess their impact on development, and recommend possible shifts in development approaches.

Illustrative Programmatic Implications. Research on gender stereotypes in the media could suggest how to promote and strengthen alternative information and opinion sources, pluralism and citizen participation, and democratic values and attitudes. Studies on women in the media may, for example, show changing values and attitudes towards female participation in the political process; or they may show that gender biases are still very prevalent. In the latter case, development efforts might include training and civic education programs for women that stress the role of women in democratic systems. . Flora (1991:n.p.) notes: "Training and networking would be relatively easy areas to enter and have a quick, high payoff. Excellent women's groups exist in every Latin American country currently producing alternative media. Bringing them together to seriously discuss the issues of democratization that are inclusive of women and empowers them at the local level could be extremely useful, as would be comparative studies of the impacts of different kinds of women's media access." Research may also identify means of overcoming stereotypes in the media or suggest which types of media are more effective than others in reaching women or men.

Outputs. A number of research topics address these programmatic implications.

- In order to pinpoint gender biases, examine the relative portrayal of women and men in the media and monitor changes in culturally-held values and attitudes.

- Compare women's and men's behavior and roles in media networks and organizations.
- Investigate how the media can be better used to empower women and to articulate women's interests so as to facilitate the transition to democracy.
- Investigate how the media can improve communications among women and men who are now separated by class, ethnic, and other boundaries.

To facilitate the research suggested above, much information regarding the media's roles and resources for promoting gender equity could be gathered and discussed by bringing together people producing alternative media in Latin America.

APPENDIX A: *Tables*

TABLE 1.1
Labor Force Participation Rates by Sex (1970-1991)

Country/Region	Women			Men		
	1970	1985	1991	1970	1985	1991
Argentina	24.4	24.7	21.0	73.4	67.1	55.4
Bolivia	24.1	21.5	14.6	75.8	70.9	48.1
Brazil	18.5	26.6	29.7	71.8	71.8	57.1
Chile	18.4	24.4	22.3	66.5	65.2	51.6
Colombia	20.3	19.2	33.2	69.8	67.3	53.9
Ecuador	15.1	16.6	20.5	77.6	69.2	47.2
Guiana	17.1	23.6	33.8	67.9	71.8	50.4
Mexico	15.2	25.0	22.8	68.2	68.1	51.2
Paraguay	19.9	19.5	35.1	75.9	75.5	56.0
Peru	17.5	21.4	33.1	67.3	66.5	51.2
Suriname	20.0	23.6	NA	60.7	59.3	NA
Uruguay	25.4	28.2	NA	71.6	67.6	NA
Venezuela	18.8	25.3	19.8	67.3	68.4	50.0
SOUTH AMERICA*	19.6	23.1	26.0	70.3	68.4	52.0
Costa Rica	15.9	20.6	21.6	73.7	73.5	54.6
El Salvador	20.4	24.3	34.7	78.6	72.9	50.7
Guatemala	12.1	12.9	16.7	77.7	71.7	50.8
Honduras	12.9	15.6	NA	78.2	74.5	NA
Nicaragua	17.8	21.3	22.4	70.5	70.8	47.1
Panama	26.0	25.4	NA	73.6	67.1	NA
CENTRAL AMERICA	17.5	20.0	23.9	75.4	71.8	50.8
Barbados	36.7	55.4	NA	65.1	68.4	NA
Cuba	16.2	29.6	31.7	67.5	64.0	55.4
Dom. Republic	23.7	11.3	NA	71.5	70.7	NA
Haiti	66.2	52.2	32.3	80.4	72.9	50.3
Jamaica	46.9	56.0	31.0	68.6	68.7	44.1
Trinidad & Tob.	27.0	26.8	27.3	66.8	69.5	48.9
CARIBBEAN	36.1	38.6	30.6	70.0	69.0	49.7

Source of 1970 and 1985 data: Statistical Yearbook for LAC:1991 (Santiago: UNECLAC)
Source of 1991 data: Yearbook of Labour Statistics: 1991 (Geneva: ILO)
Regional averages are unweighted for population.

TABLE 2.1
Illiteracy Aged 15 and Over (1980/85)

Region	Country	Female	Male
South America	Argentina	6	6
	Bolivia	49	24
	Brazil	23	21
	Chile	9	9
	Colombia	16	14
	Ecuador	24	16
	Paraguay	15	10
	Peru	26	10
	Suriname	10	10
	Uruguay	6	7
	Venezuela	17	14
Central America	Costa Rica	7	7
	El Salvador	33	27
	Guatemala	53	37
	Honduras	42	39
	Mexico	12	8
	Panama	2	11
Caribbean	Cuba	4	4
	Guadeloupe	10	10
	Haiti	68	63
	Martinique	7	8
	Puerto Rico	12	10
	Trinidad & Tobago	7	4

Source: United Nations.
 The World's Women 1970-1990: Trends & Statistics (New York: U.N. 1991)

TABLE 2.2
Post-Secondary Enrollment 1985/87* (000s)

Region	Country	Female	Male
South America	Argentina	479.0	424.0
	Brazil	740.0	739.0
	Chile	81.0	108.0
	Colombia	203.0	214.0
	Ecuador	108.0	109.0
	Guyana	1.1	1.2
	Peru	106.0	199.0
	Suriname	1.5	1.3
	Uruguay	28.0	22.0
Central America	El Salvador	20.0	54.0
	Honduras	10.0	16.0
	Mexico	473.0	719.0
	Nicaragua	15.0	12.0
	Panama	32.0	23.0
Caribbean	Barbados	2.6	2.7
	Cuba	142.0	115.0
	Grenada	0.3	0.2
	Haiti	1.4	3.1
	Jamaica	2.9	2.2
	Puerto Rico	83.0	54.0
	St. Christopher/Nevis	0.1	0.1
	St. Lucia	0.2	0.2
	St. Vincent/Grenadines	0.5	0.2
	Trinidad & Tobago	1.6	1.6
	US Virgin Islands	2.0	0.8

Source: United Nations.
 The World's Women 1970-1990: Trends & Statistics (New York: U.N. 1991)

TABLE 3.1
Women Decision Makers in Government 1987

Region	Country	Executive Offices: Economic, Political & Legal Affairs		Social Affairs		All Ministries		Ministerial Level	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
South America	Argentina	2	2.1	1	5.0	3	2.6	0	0.0
	Bolivia	0	0.0	2	16.7	2	3.3	0	0.0
	Chile	0	0.0	1	14.3	1	2.1	0	0.0
	Colombia	0	0.0	1	16.7	1	3.2	1	6.7
	Ecuador	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Guyana	1	3.1	3	50.0	4	10.3	1	7.1
	Paraguay	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Peru	1	1.8	0	0.0	1	1.7	0	0.0
	Suriname	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Uruguay	1	4.5	0	0.0	2	7.1	2	13.3
	Venezuela	1	4.5	0	0.0	1	3.7	0	0.0
Central America	Belize	2	6.9	0	0.0	2	5.0	0	0.0
	Costa Rica	2	7.1	1	7.7	3	7.3	0	0.0
	El Salvador	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Guatemala	0	0.0	2	22.2	3	10.0	2	14.3
	Honduras	0	0.0	2	20.0	2	5.0	0	0.0
	Mexico	0	0.0	1	7.1	1	1.4	0	0.0
	Nicaragua	1	1.5	3	3.8	3	3.8	1	5.0
	Panama	1	5.3	0	0.0	1	3.7	0	0.0

Caribbean	Antigua & Barbuda	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Bahamas	8	25.8	4	22.2	12	24.0	0	0.0
	Barbados	8	16.3	2	28.6	10	17.9	0	0.0
	Cuba	1	2.8	0	0.0	1	2.4	1	2.9
	Dominica	6	18.8	5	45.5	11	25.6	5	45.5
	Dominican Republic	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	22.2
	Grenada	2	8.0	3	33.3	5	14.7	0	0.0
	Haiti	1	4.2	0	0.0	1	3.4	0	0.0
	Jamaica	4	8.9	2	12.5	5	8.1	0	0.0
	St. Kitts & Nevis	0	0.0	1	50.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
	St. Lucia	1	4.8	1	14.3	2	7.1	0	0.0
	St. Vincent/Grenadines	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Trinidad & Tobago	5	13.2	2	22.2	7	14.9	2	9.5
Source: United Nations 'The World's Women 1970-1990: Trends & Statistics (New York:UN, 1991)									

TABLE 3.2
Women in National Legislature 1987

Region	Country	Parliamentary Seats Occupied by Women (%)
South America	Argentina	4.7
	Bolivia	3.8
	Brazil	5.3
	Ecuador	1.4
	Paraguay	1.7
	Peru	5.5
	Suriname	12.9
	Uruguay	0
	Venezuela	3.9
Central America	Belize	3.6
	Costa Rica	10.5
	El Salvador	3.3
	Guatemala	7.0
	Honduras	5.2
	Mexico	10.7
	Nicaragua	13.5
	Panama	6.0
Caribbean	Antigua & Barbuda	0.0
	Barbados	3.7
	Cuba	33.9
	Dominica	12.9
	Dominican Republic	5.0
	Grenada	12.5
	Jamaica	11.7
	St. Christopher/Nevis	6.7
	St. Vincent/Grenadines	5.2
	Trinidad & Tobago	16.7

Source: United Nations.
 The World's Women 1970-1990: Trends & Statistics (New York: U.N. 1991)

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APPENDIX C: *Bibliography*

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