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The GENESYS Special Studies Series

**Key Findings
and
Recommendations**

GENESYS Project

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The GENESYS Special Studies Series

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GENESYS SPECIAL STUDIES NO. 6

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

Key Findings and Recommendations

* GENESYS 1992

ABSTRACT: This paper presents a critical overview of the literature on women and the transition to democracy in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). It was prepared at the request of the LAC Bureau's Women in Development (WID) Working Group in an effort to identify research gaps on gender in the LAC region.

The paper is based on the LAC Bureau's recognition of three factors as key determinants to growth and sustainability in democratic forms of government: history and political culture, socioeconomic conditions, and government institutions and legislation. Taken together, these factors also define historical and current opportunities for women's participation in political organizations, elections, political parties, public office and the media.

In addressing the impact of these factors on women, the literature often categorizes women's participation in terms of practical and/or strategic interests (e.g., social services and legal status, respectively). More recent research concentrates on the *interconnections* between practical and strategic interests and emphasizes how mobilizing around short-term practical issues, as LAC women have traditionally done, may serve as a precursor to a focus on longer-term, strategic interests.

Overall the literature provides a clear indication that women's participation in sociopolitical movements, formal political systems, and the media differs both quantitatively and qualitatively from men's in the LAC region. Women's increased participation in sociopolitical movements during the 1980s reflects practical and strategic interests related to the impact of the global economic crises on the livelihoods of women and their families, the political atmosphere, and changes in women's level of education, labor force participation, and fertility rates.

Education and economic status represent the two principal socio-economic factors that affect women's participation in democratic processes. The importance of education to democracy is undisputed; and statistics indicate that women's literacy rate is approaching that of men's in most LAC countries. However, the literature suggests the existence of

gender-specific differences in *how* education relates to democracy. For instance, education does not appear to increase women's political participation to the same degree that it does men's. Conversely, research suggests that increased income and economic status *do* have a positive impact on women's political participation. Thus efforts aimed at increasing women's incomes relative to men's is likely to increase women's political participation.

In some cases, gender may also determine the degree and level of participation in the political process. While information on women's voting behavior is limited, and biased in some areas due to compulsory voting laws, the literature suggests that fewer LAC women vote than men, and that women frequently vote quite differently. An even wider gap exists between women's and men's participation in political parties, in part because working through existing parties is not always an effective way to advance women's concerns. For example, parties or unions often set up a women's group or an auxiliary branch that has less influence. Finally, while women in the region represent 9% of the membership in legislative bodies, the degree to which women hold real decision-making power in these and other government institutions remains unclear, as does the influence of gender on public policy.

Gender issues also arise in communications and the mass media in LAC. The media are an important tool in civic education. They can also be used to demonstrate how women and men can achieve their practical and strategic objectives through political participation. Research has shown that LAC women's access to radio, television, film, and the press as a means of communicating gender-specific messages is limited. With a few exceptions (e.g., Ecuador and Dominican Republic), national media do not provide a serious forum for women's concerns. But scholars point out that the media could serve as a mechanism for women to demonstrate that they represent a significant political force. In fact, along with networking with international women's organizations, alternative media have proved a powerful tool to promote the development of women's movements in the region.

Political Participation

FINDING: National and cross-national surveys that include concrete behavioral measures are needed to provide data on the gender-specific modes, motivations, and obstacles to political participation, in order to design interventions that will encourage greater participation by women and men at all levels.

RECOMMENDATION: Research suggestions from the literature include conducting cross-national studies of motivation and influence on voting; identifying strategic issues of concern to women vs. men; and surveying attitudes of women and men in government and leadership positions to gauge gender differences in public policy priorities.

Women's Mobilization

FINDING: Studies of the impact of women's political mobilization on democratic institutions are needed. The literature raises several questions in this regard. Has women's mobilization around practical and/or strategic interests had an impact on state policy, local implementation of existing policy, or the structure of local government? Has this mobilization changed structures, or has it served only to momentarily divert resources to a squeaky wheel? Wherever real structural change appears to have taken place, in-depth case studies of the key factors involved should be undertaken.

RECOMMENDATION: Conduct comparative case studies of governments that have included large numbers of women (e.g., the Colombian Cabinet during the 1980s and the governments of Dominica and the Bahamas). This will allow policymakers to determine whether increased numbers of women in leadership positions have any effect on women's participation at the local level or on the promotion of policies and institutions that further women's practical and strategic agendas. Additionally, research on intermediary political institutions is sorely needed, including surveys of women's and men's participation in and use of municipal government and services.

Privatization and Decentralization of Social Services

FINDING: Impact studies of the privatization and decentralization of social services on the poor are needed, with particular reference to if and how women benefit from or are disadvantaged by this shift. Scholars note that localizing services so as to include the needs of women will be key to successful democratization in LAC. How gender interfaces with the decentralization process may to some extent determine the degree of success achieved by a DI program, insofar as success is defined as efficiently meeting the needs of the population. Research has shown that privatization of social services has financial and other implications for women, the household, and the community. Yet the gender-differentiated social and economic costs and benefits of privatization still need further study.

RECOMMENDATION: Preliminary evidence suggests that, in some cases, privatization raises the price of (previously subsidized) services to the extent that it limits access by poor women and children. If this pattern is confirmed by other studies, then policy makers need to identify other ways to get services to those who cannot afford to pay for them. Alternatively, further research might indicate that the dollar costs of health care or water and sanitation services, for example, are offset by reduced time costs or improved product quality. Additionally, studies should examine how increased linkages between grass-roots organizations and local governments can facilitate decentralization.

Women and the Media

FINDING: Research is needed to assess how women are portrayed in the media, their involvement in media networks and organizations, and the use of media to develop support among women and men for democratic change. This would allow the identification of gender biases and the monitoring of any changes in culturally-held values and attitudes over time.

RECOMMENDATION: Identify gender-based differences in access to certain types of media, and how messages motivate or are decoded by women and men differently. Also, explore how media can be used to legitimize a gender-specific problem, such as domestic violence, by showing women coping with the problem and encouraging them to mobilize for change; and empower women by improving communications among women of different classes, ethnic groups, and geographic areas.

For further information, please contact Martin Hewitt, Project Officer, phone 703/875-4979 (fax 703/875-4633), Office of Women in Development (R&D/WID), Agency for International Development, Room 714, SA-18, Washington, D.C. 20523-1803.

GENESYS SPECIAL STUDIES NO. 7

*Gender and Agriculture & Natural Resource Management in Latin America and the Caribbean: An Overview of the Literature**

Key Findings and Recommendations

* GENESYS 1992

ABSTRACT: Extensive review of the literature and consultations with experts in the fields of agriculture and natural resource management (A&NRM) reveal a strong consensus that little is known relative to what, in *operational* development terms, still needs to be understood about the respective roles, responsibilities, interactions, impacts, etc. of women and men in A&NRM across Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC).

Throughout LAC, along with men, women clearly play critical roles in A&NRM. For agriculture, there is some debate in the literature as to whether, overall, women's participation has been increasing or decreasing. Most experts agree that censuses and other national-level databases clearly undercount women in the agricultural labor force (albeit less so in the Caribbean). Some researchers argue that a "feminization of farming" has taken place in LAC, with women carrying out more and more of the agricultural work; others cite data showing Latin American women leaving farming more rapidly than men. Because of the region's tremendous diversity, it is likely that opposite trends are occurring simultaneously in different parts of LAC.

LAC women may work as wage laborers on large estates or depend mainly on forest gathering and/or small-scale gardening. But perhaps a majority of women directly involved in A&NRM are found in low-resource farming systems. Their level of participation depends largely on the physical and economic status of their farms. In general, the poorer and more marginal the farm, the higher females' labor inputs. In addition to their field work and domestic duties, women throughout LAC

typically engage in A&NRM-based income-generating activities such as home gardening, aquaculture, brewing, baking, dairying, shearing and spinning, cloth or basket weaving. Many of these activities rely on the availability of basic natural resources such as water, wood, forage, and other flora.

Compared with other world regions, the empirical base for confirming a causal link between gender-related variables and the adoption of new technology and practices for use in A&NRM is weak, although evidence from Africa and Asia tends to support the findings that do exist for LAC. Further data to clarify this relationship would be extremely valuable for the effective development and dissemination of new A&NRM technology and information to both women and men producers and resource managers. Relatedly, an especially glaring gap is the virtually complete absence of empirical research on women's roles and responsibilities vis-à-vis the productive use and management of natural resources in the LAC region. Many authorities agree that LAC has the least developed knowledge base on this issue -- an assessment supported by the extensive literature review conducted for this report.

Information on how gender concerns have been integrated into A&NRM development projects, programs, and policies in the region is also scarce. LAC is usually under-represented in collections of case studies on this subject from around the world, although there may be a significant volume of unpublished "grey" literature which has yet to be widely disseminated.

Technology and Gender

FINDING: Evidence from the Caribbean indicates that female-headed households generally do not rely on chemical inputs in agriculture.

RECOMMENDATION: Future research addressing the linkages among gender, use of chemical versus agricultural inputs, labor-intensive versus technology-intensive farming techniques, and environmental degradation should be promoted both in the Caribbean and in other parts of the LAC region in order to clarify these relationships. Relatedly, female-headed farms may be a good choice for testing out and demonstrating the value of sustainable agricultural methods in general.

Migration and Seasonal Work Patterns

FINDING: Preliminary evidence indicates that as men migrate out of rural areas, women shift out of cropping and into increased stockraising. Migration and seasonal workforce patterns have gender-based implications for training and extension programs in both sustainable agriculture and agribusiness development.

RECOMMENDATION: Research is needed on the effects of male migration on rural women's agricultural activities (and subsequently on household nutritional levels and the environment) and the gender composition of the workforce in various stages of the agribusiness cycle. This information should be used in training and technical assistance programs in sustainable agriculture and export-oriented agribusiness development to target the different socioeconomic and gender groups of workers, whose literacy levels and work patterns, for instance, vary.

Biodiversity

FINDING: The conservation of biodiversity will depend in part on knowing who protects individual species, by gender, race, and ethnicity.

RECOMMENDATION: In order to identify the parameters of assistance in biodiversity programs, research should establish what species different gender groups are already protecting, in what ways and to what extent, in order to determine how best to support their continued maintenance.

Sustainable Forestry Practices

FINDING: Programs aimed at reducing deforestation by developing alternative sources of food or income for rural households require information on household needs and resources with respect to forest products, production levels, goals, decision-making patterns, incentives and constraints. For example, since women and men usually draw income from different forest activities, the incentives and benefits of more productive and sustainable forestry practices differ by gender. Additionally, little is known about gender-based responsibilities for forest products -- a key to designing sustainable forestry programs.

RECOMMENDATION: Support for the collection and analysis of gender-disaggregated data, via rural household surveys for example, can provide information critical to the design and implementation of sustainable forestry projects. Researchers should pay special attention to differences in households headed (*de facto* or otherwise) by women, in order to elicit any gender-specific needs.

GENESYS SPECIAL STUDIES NO. 8

*Gender and Trade & Investment Promotion in Latin America and the Caribbean: An Overview of the Literature**

Key Findings and Recommendations

* Mulhern and Mauzé 1992

ABSTRACT: This paper summarizes the literature related to gender and trade and investment (T&I) in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). It was prepared at the request of the LAC Bureau's Women in Development (WID) Working Group. The paper examines how gender concerns have been explored in the context of selected topics relating to T&I generally, and suggests research that the Bureau could support to better guide and inform its T&I programs.

Given the relatively recent development focus on T&I promotion, not surprisingly even an extensive literature review reveals that few works deal specifically with gender and T&I, and they are thinly spread across a number of disciplines. Moreover, they leave much to be desired in the way of comparable, systematic analyses and quantitative information. In reviewing the existing literature, however, one theme is salient: the links among T&I, labor, and gender.

Scholars are beginning to raise some critical questions regarding the differential impact of T&I promotion on the employment opportunities, characteristics, and patterns of women and men in the labor force. Gender issues arise in the distributions of females and males employed across sectors and occupations, in wage discrimination within the labor force, and in other T&I-sensitive labor contexts such as support for local labor movements, the gender implications of T&I impacts on the informal sector and industrial outwork systems, occupational

health and safety, and regulatory reform of the labor market, particularly protective legislation for workers.

The literature offers a series of arguments for considering the direct and indirect linkages among gender, employment, and some of the policies and programs advocated through the LAC Bureau's T&I initiative. Two key themes permeate these arguments: LAC women's traditionally disadvantaged position in the labor market relative to men; and the need for a well-functioning labor market with full access to the scope and quality of human resources required to develop an internationally competitive production base.

Following the introduction of a framework for analyzing people-level concerns in T&I and an overview of gender issues in structural adjustment in LAC, the paper explores women's and men's relative position in the region's labor market. An in-depth review of the literature presents selected gender issues related to employment and A.I.D.'s T&I initiative in LAC. The paper also explores how consideration of gender may enhance the long-term success of T&I initiatives. Three types of gender-based discrimination pertinent to T&I are explored, followed by a summary of gender issues arising in unionization, the informal sector and outwork, occupational health and safety, and protective legislation. The paper concludes with research recommendations targeted to A.I.D.'s Missions and/or Bureaus.

Impact of Changes in the Trade Regime

FINDING: How the move to freer markets will affect gender distributions in employment and the labor force in LAC is unclear. For example, the existence, intensity, and duration of a feminization of the work force in export-oriented production is not well-documented in LAC. Additionally, more information is needed on the household-level impacts of changes in the trade regime.

RECOMMENDATION: To analyze the implications of freer markets for the gender composition of the work force -- including any evidence of feminization (or masculinization) of the work force in specific sectors or subsectors -- background research should compare economies under open versus restricted trade regimes. Such studies should focus on, e.g., the size and nature of the formal/informal sector, industrial concentration, and size distribution of firms. These data would make it possible to estimate changes in the gendered demand for labor in countries that make significant efforts to open their economies. Economic analysis of household-level income and employment information will allow development planners to measure the impact of changes in the trade regime at the micro level, and to tailor human resource and social programs accordingly.

Job Training

FINDING: Research is needed to better identify how to help women retain traditionally female jobs when industries modernize, as well as how to move women into new employment in growth industries. For example, in response to direct foreign investment or joint ventures, to a more open trade environment, and/or to the pressures of international competition, some traditional industries may introduce new production technologies for which women are poorly trained.

RECOMMENDATION: Identify skills training needed to allow women to retain jobs in industries that have traditionally offered them employment. Two subsectors where LAC women are already being edged out because of new technology are food processing and chemicals; better documentation of the effect of biotechnology and other innovations on the structure of employment in these subsectors would allow program design to mitigate the negative effects. Additionally, research on the employment effects of new technology, including skills profiles, should look at the availability of local skills and characteristics of the local production structure, so as to gauge how well-suited local firms and workers are for the new technologies, and vice versa.

Unions

FINDING: Unions in the LAC region have been characterized as non-responsive to women workers' concerns, and unavailable to the large numbers of women and men who work in the informal sector. Additionally, some countries forbid union activity in EPZs, leaving those workers without effective representation.

RECOMMENDATION: Assess the extent and nature of women's participation in unions in the region and of union effectiveness in representing women members' concerns. Research could draw on the successes and failures of the unions of independent and temporary workers in Chile, for example. Such comparisons could also suggest creative ways in which unions might adapt to the informal sector, where large numbers of women are employed. Similarly, pilot projects could explore alternative forms of organization for EPZ workers.

Occupational Health and Safety

FINDING: Preliminary evidence from LAC and other developing regions indicates that there may be gender-based differences in the incidence of pesticide-related illnesses and other occupational injuries and diseases, particularly in sectors such as export-oriented agroprocessing.

RECOMMENDATION: Where applicable, project-level social-soundness analyses, background assessments, and evaluations should document gender differences in the incidence of pesticide-related illnesses and other occupational diseases and injuries in the relevant A.I.D.-supported sectors of T&I, such as export-oriented agroprocessing. Also, data collection should extend to the informal sector and should include potential health hazards related to outwork (such as the unregulated use of toxic chemicals in electronics assembly piece-work in the home).

Labor Legislation

FINDING: A better understanding of the gender-specific effects of protective legislation on both T&I and employment in LAC would help A.I.D. Missions encourage a productive mix of investment incentives, flexible labor markets, and worker safety and rights. At a minimum, enhanced understanding of this issue should reduce the adverse effects of T&I and regulatory reform activities on workers in sectors affected by T&I initiatives.

RECOMMENDATION: Several questions need to be addressed in this regard: How large a share of employers are affected by which regulations? To what extent are which existing health and safety regulations enforced, possibly with gender-based differences? What exemptions from labor (including health and safety) regulations are there for export-oriented firms or firms operating in free trade zones, and what are the repercussions of these exemptions? To what extent do foreign and domestic investors consider the costs of labor regulation in deciding where to locate new facilities? And how does the introduction or enforcement of legislation correlate with increasing proportions of women or men employed in smaller enterprises or as outworkers, such that employers avoid complying with many regulations?

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GENESYS SPECIAL STUDIES – SUPPORTING MATERIALS

*Reference Documents: Bibliography and List of Institutions**

Abstract

* Mauzé 1992, Mauzé and Mulhern 1992

ABSTRACT: As part of its work to develop a research agenda for the LAC Bureau's Women in Development Working Group, GENESYS produced two reference documents for use by persons concerned with gender issues in LAC.

Bibliography: Gender Issues in Latin America and the Caribbean was compiled during 1991 and printed in June 1992. This comprehensive bibliography identifies key sources in three main thematic areas: agriculture and natural resource management, democratic initiatives, and trade and investment. Information is provided to a lesser extent in the areas of statistics, poverty, and human resources. A.I.D. personnel will find this a ready guide to the literature when seeking information for project or program design, background studies, and general information on gender issues.

The 76-page bibliography was compiled by systematic database searches and lists of references passed on by experts in each thematic area. An index of the nearly 1000 entries is provided at the end to enable the user to identify material specific to an author or country, with both primary and secondary authors referenced. It contains both English- and Spanish-language materials.

The second reference piece, *Institutions Working in Gender Issues in Latin America and the Caribbean*, was printed in April 1992. It is an annotated guide to institutions working on gender issues in three key sectors -- agriculture and natural resource management, democratic initiatives, and trade and investment. It has entries for over 100 LAC-based and 90 U.S.-based institutions. The list is an important reference for A.I.D.'s LAC Bureau and Missions -- in addition to gender research groups, it profiles institutions that are leaders in social science research and active in gender issues but may not be widely recognized as gender specialists.

The institution list is divided into two sections. The first part is a partially annotated list of LAC-based institutions that conduct, fund, or coordinate research and development activities in the key sectors. Names and addresses of each country's national statistics institute are also provided. The second section describes U.S.-based institutions that conduct research in the 3 sectors. Some of these institutions work worldwide, while others specialize in LAC. All U.S. entries are annotated, with a description of the organization and the type of activities they undertake.

For further information, please contact Martin Hewitt, Project Officer, phone 703/875-4979 (fax 703/875-4633), Office of Women in Development (R&D/WID), Agency for International Development, Room 714, SA-18, Washington, D.C. 20523-1803.

GENESYS SPECIAL STUDIES -- SUPPORTING MATERIALS

*Case Study: Gender, Industrialization, and the Labor Force in Ecuador**

Abstract

* CEPLAES 1992

BACKGROUND AND RESEARCH DESIGN: This research study was designed to overcome a lack of gender-disaggregated information on labor force participation and employment characteristics at the subsector level in Ecuador. It provides information on the extent to which development of Ecuador's industry will depend on women compared to men workers; who is likely to benefit from increased employment and in which subsectors; and some of the reasons why these trends may be occurring. The principal data source for this descriptive analysis is Ecuador's national urban household survey on employment, unemployment, and underemployment -- the *Encuesta Permanente de Hogares (EPH)* -- from 1987, 1988, 1989, and 1990.

CONCLUSIONS: The industrialization process in Ecuador during the last 20 years has opened the doors to participation by women in industries that, until recently, were predominantly male territory. The entry of women into the industrial labor force, however, has not translated into equal opportunities for women and men. A summary of principal findings is presented below.

- Between 1982 and 1990, women's measured rate of participation in the economy increased -- from 24% to almost 31%. In industry, women's participation rate increased at a faster pace than men's during that period. By 1990, women represented around one-fifth of the industrial labor force and around one-third of the manufacturing labor force (MLF).
 - Within industry, women are overwhelmingly concentrated in manufacturing (93% in 1990), while men are more evenly divided between manufacturing (55%) and construction (40%). Women are typically employed in relatively labor-intensive, light industries that range from processed foods, textiles, and clothing, to chemicals. More than half of all women employed in manufacturing in 1989 were in textiles/clothing/leather (58%), followed by smaller percentages in foods/beverages/tobacco (18%) and chemicals (7%). When combined, the foregoing subsectors together employed 83% of the female MLF in 1989, compared to just 47% of the male MLF.
 - In 1989, 55% of the MLF was employed by small firms (<10 employees). Of these workers, slightly more than 40% were women. In comparison, in large establishments (>20 employees), less than 25% of all employees were female. This pattern is found in both traditional (e.g., textiles and dressmaking -- and in modern industries (e.g. chemicals and nonmetallic minerals). One of the important implications of women's concentration in small firms is their reduced access to benefits, including social security membership, overtime pay, bonuses, mandatory maternity leave, and so forth.
 - Also in 1989, women comprised nearly 30% of the informal sector industrial labor force, compared to 22% in the formal sector. Further, approximately 55% of female industrial workers were employed in the informal sector compared to 44% of males. This finding supports the hypothesis that women in Ecuador have a greater tendency to work in the informal sector than men, even in industry.
 - On average during 1987-1990, women's share of the manufacturing unemployed (44%) was higher than their share of the MLF (34%).
 - The extent and nature of women's participation in the labor market tend to be more dependent than men's on their family responsibilities. This is particularly true for manufacturing, where employment is often characterized by more demanding schedules, less flexibility, and stricter discipline than work in the service sector. Around 16% of the female MLF in 1989 were heads of households, 45% were married, and 27% lived with their parent(s). Female heads of households in particular may accept unfavorable working conditions and low salaries in exchange for the more flexible employment terms found in traditional manufacturing subsectors. For example, 18.5% of women in textiles/clothing/leather were heads of household compared to just 4% in machinery/equipment and nonmetallic minerals.
- The highest percentages of women workers identified as residing with their parent(s) are found in relatively modern manufacturing subsectors -- paper/printing/publishing, chemicals, basic metals, and machinery/equipment. On average, >40% of these women lived with their parent(s), compared to <30% of men and an average of only 27% for the female MLF as a whole.
- Of the MLF in 1989, 19% worked less than 40 hours per week; this encompassed 34% of women workers but only 11% of men. Compared to only 15% of men, 29% of women said that for personal reasons they worked less

than a regular workweek. Men were more likely to cite a reduced workload (e.g., slowdown in production).

- In 1989, around 72% of female and 68% of male workers in manufacturing were between ages 20 and 44. While women age 12 to 29 join the labor force more slowly than men, the 1990 census data show no large declines in women's participation rates during the childbearing years. In textiles/clothing/leather and foods/beverages/tobacco, more than half of the 1989 female workers were between 25 and 44 years old; 20% of the labor force was over age 45; and some women age 65 and over were still employed. The relative maturity of the workforce in these subsectors is influenced by the prevalence of employees who work at homes (e.g., doing piece-work). In contrast, in three of the more modern subsectors -- paper/printing/publishing, chemicals, and machinery/equipment -- 48% of female workers (but only 27% of male) were under age 25 in 1989; very few were over age 45; and none were over 64.
- Female manufacturing workers in Ecuador are fairly well-educated, and most are better educated than their male co-workers. Approximately 45% of male and 33% of female manufacturing workers in 1990 listed gradeschool as the extent of their education. Conversely, almost 53% of women compared to 44% of men manufacturing workers in 1990 had attended secondary school. The data confirm the hypothesis that in more modern industries, women workers are not only younger, but also better educated than women workers in traditional subsectors.
- Women in manufacturing are less likely than men to be employers or salaried/wage workers, and more likely to be self-employed and unpaid family workers. Among blue-collar workers (machine operators, artisans, and laborers), women are highly concentrated in textiles, garment manufacture, and foods and beverages industries. In contrast, men are fairly well-distributed throughout a wide range of jobs. In traditional subsectors, women constitute a substantial share of the blue-collar workforce: 80% in the garment industry and around 50% in textiles.
- Only 30% of the female MLF in 1989 was affiliated with the *Instituto Ecuatoriano de Seguridad Social* (IESS, i.e., social security), compared to 40% of men. Affiliation with IESS is directly related to firm size. Less than 30% of female manufacturing employees worked in large firms in 1989 (of which 66% had social security), compared to almost 45% of male workers (70% with social security); this partially explains the 10% difference in membership rates for women and men in the MLF. The distribution of women and men across occupational categories also

affects IESS membership rates. For example, in textiles/clothing/leather -- where 18% of females compared to 38% of males belonged to IESS in 1989 -- half of the former and one-third of the latter in 1989 were self-employed, probably as seamstresses/tailors or home workers.

- Over 37% of the female but just 16% of the male MLF earned less than the legal minimum wage in 1989. Conversely, the share of the male labor force in the top two income brackets was double that of women -- 60% versus 31%. In virtually half of the manufacturing subsectors, the share of women in the lowest two income brackets was higher than the industry average for that subsector; and above-average shares of men were in the top two income brackets. Particularly in textiles/clothing/leather and paper/printing/publishing, men are disproportionately represented among high-income earners.

Comparison of women's and men's earnings across selected occupational groups in three subsectors (foods/beverages/ tobacco, textiles/clothing/leather, and chemicals) confirms the hypothesis that the gender-based wage gap, whereby women earn less than men for similar work, is more distinct in traditional industries than in modern industries.

The report concludes that the sexual division of labor cannot be explained or justified solely by economic factors and inherent masculine and feminine attributes. On the contrary, there is every indication that this is a social construction. In the context of Ecuador's economic development process, the sexual division of labor will influence how women and men benefit from economic growth in the industry and other areas. Along with the re-opening of the Andean market, economic and industrial development based on exports of primary products and a few processed foods and beverages could favor indirect job growth via agribusiness employment. Such changes might increase demand for female along with male labor, since women already supply a sizeable portion of labor in the processed foods industry.

The descriptive data presented in this report are useful in that the existence and degree of gender discrimination in employment are documented. This information needs to be taken into account when formulating development policy. Nonetheless it should be remembered that this study stops at industry's door. A companion qualitative study would be useful for exploring the complex mechanisms underlying gender-based segmentation of the labor market. Future research should also take a closer look at current models of development and industrialization and their effects on women's participation in -- and benefits from -- the labor market.

For further information, please contact Martin Hewitt, Project Officer, phone 703/875-4979 (fax 703/875-4633), Office of Women in Development (R&D/WID), Agency for International Development, Room 714, SA-18, Washington, D.C. 20523-1816.

GENESYS SPECIAL STUDIES -- SUPPORTING MATERIALS

*Case Study: Gender and Democracy in Honduran Municipalities**

Abstract

* CEPROD 1992

BACKGROUND AND RESEARCH DESIGN: This exploratory study assessed how and to what extent gender influences the way in which Hondurans interface with their municipal governments. Specifically, the research sought to identify: the types of problems that women and men -- either as individuals or as members of community organizations (*patronatos*) -- bring to the municipality; the latter's response to such petitions (hereafter, "demands"), along with citizen's and organizations' perceptions of municipal responsiveness and effectiveness by gender and other variables; and the role of women in community organizations.

Three cities were selected for study: Tegucigalpa, San Pedro Sula, and El Progreso. The first two are large metropolitan areas, while the third is an intermediate-sized town. The research team developed an institutional profile of the municipal offices/departments most frequently approached by the public in each municipality. The team then collected information about the types of demands typically received; and for each city, geographical zones with the highest proportion of poor, marginal neighborhoods were identified. The study intentionally over-represents the lower class in each city, since it traditionally has had limited access to formal legal and political systems. Municipal records were also reviewed for data on women's versus men's level of participation and leadership roles in the "steering committees" or leadership councils of local community organizations.

Field research and interviews spanned a total of 274 subjects (125 women and 149 men). The two principal subject groups consisted of 152 ordinary "users" of municipal administrative, bureaucratic, and legal services in the municipalities, plus 39 leaders of community organizations selected according to geographic zone. Both samples were gender-balanced. Together, they represent the main kinds of grassroots petitioners who most typically approach municipal offices with individual or organizational requests and demands.

Structured interviews were conducted with both groups to identify common kinds of demands, respondents' reasons for initiating their demands, and whether or not they were satisfied with the petitioning process and the treatment they received from municipal officials. Subjects were also queried about the role of women in community organizations and any gender-based issues and demands.

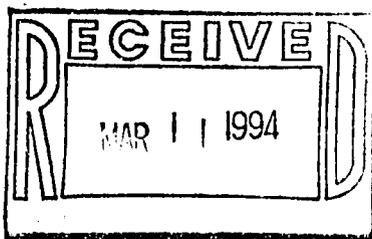
Additional information on community/municipal relations was gleaned from interviews with: 21 alderman and municipal officials (4 women and 17 men); the heads of the Chambers of Commerce in Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula; and as a control, with 20 ordinary citizens per city (total 30 women and 30 men) selected at random in public places.

CONCLUSIONS: Research found that municipal governments are an important and direct channel through which citizens -- both as individuals and as groups -- voice needs and solve problems. In spite of the fact that the petitioning process may be lengthy and involved, or that the municipalities may lack the power or resources to address all problems, the study participants clearly felt that the municipalities are a direct contact point between citizens and their government. Some of the key findings are summarized below.

- While political influence is present in municipal governments, the citizenry does not consider it overly significant.
- In general, all subject groups view the three municipalities as reasonably responsive to citizen demands. In Tegucigalpa, however, users were concerned about the excessively lengthy and disordered petitioning process. And everywhere, leaders of community organizations were more pessimistic about the effectiveness of their petitions and the timeliness of municipal response and action than were officials.

- As compared to El Progreso, Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula have a wider variety of municipal services but also more channels through which petitions must pass. However, this more developed structure lends legitimacy to citizen demands. El Progreso is notably different in the types of demands received by the municipality, in its less complex institutional structure, and its more personalized, face-to-face interactions between the municipality and the citizenry – all reflective of a smaller, more homogeneous and traditional population than in Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula.
- Findings demonstrate that in addition to the municipality, community organizations are a critical point for strengthening the process of democratization in Honduras. They serve a broad and vocal constituency, and they are structured along democratic, participatory lines. Their role as the legitimate representatives of community interests – and the municipalities' recognition of them as such – merits considerable attention in the democratization process.
- Focus groups shared users' and community leaders' generally favorable view of the municipal government. Both women and men considered it an important and legitimate institution and an effective channel for citizen petitions. The focus group members identified collaboration as their preferred means of interacting with the municipalities (as opposed to petitioning, for example). This suggests potentials for expanding the range of ways in which citizens and local governments interact.
- More broadly, findings suggest that relations between municipal governments and their citizenry might be improved by both groups' taking a proactive rather than reactive approach.
- As noted in other studies, research found that women's petitions tend to focus on family security. This was evidenced both by the types of issues women presented and by their reasons for approaching the municipalities.
- Women's participation in community organizations is most notable on project committees and special commissions, which often address quality-of-life issues such as clean water, school construction, or street improvements. Male community leaders and municipal officials alike acknowledge women's active role in community life, although men tend to see women as less preoccupied with "politics" in the form of elections or assemblies and more engaged in solving the problems of daily life. Nevertheless, the study shows that women actively petition the government for legal rights and protection, the safety of their children, and child care, educational, and recreational facilities. These issues can be characterized as long-run, strategic concerns that go beyond the realm of daily survival.
- While research uncovered few explicitly gender-based demands, it did find that many individual and organizational petitions had gender implications. For example, divorcees, widows, or women abandoned by their male partners frequently approach the municipalities for help with property rights and land titling conflicts.
- Additionally, notwithstanding women's active role in community organizations and projects, fewer women hold positions of organizational leadership than men.

The research suggests two areas for further study. More in-depth attention should be given to gender differences in participation in community organizations, and to how these differences evolve and/or are reinforced. In particular, leadership roles and processes should be analyzed for details of gender-based patterns of representation or discrimination. Second, more information is needed on the mechanisms by which citizen/municipality interactions can be broadened and made most effective. Relatedly, the role of intermediaries in this relationship – such as leadership councils that mediate between municipal officials and community organizations – should be examined further.



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