



FEMINIST THEORY, STATE POLICY, AND
RURAL WOMEN IN LATIN AMERICA

- A RAPPORTEUR'S REPORT -

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ABSTRACT

This paper is a rapporteur's report from the Workshop "Feminist Theory, State Policy, and Rural Women in Latin America," sponsored by the Kellogg Institute of the University of Notre Dame in February 1985. The Workshop brought together new advances in feminist theory and recent research on rural development in Latin America. This report summarizes the presentations and issues raised under five broad themes and concludes with a discussion of possible future research topics. The Workshop's major themes were: (1) The implications for rural women of the Latin American agrarian reform experiences; (2) evaluating success and failure of women's subsistence agriculture projects; (3) integrating micro and macro variables of rural women's migration patterns; (4) state rural development models and policy, and (5) new advances in feminist theory--factors contributing to feminist consciousness in Latin American women.

RESUMEN

Este ensayo es un informe de los acuerdos del Taller "Teoría Feminista, Política Estatal y la Mujer Rural en América Latina," patrocinado por Kellogg Institute de la Universidad de Notre Dame en febrero de 1985. El Taller recopiló los últimos progresos en la teoría feminista y la reciente investigación sobre el desarrollo rural en América Latina. Este informe resume las presentaciones y problemáticas estipuladas bajo cinco temas globales y concluye con una discusión de posibles tópicos de investigación en el futuro. Los principales temas del Taller fueron: (1) Las implicaciones para las mujeres rurales de las experiencias de la reforma agraria latinoamericana; (2) evaluación de éxitos y fracasos de los proyectos agrícolas de subsistencia para las mujeres; (3) integración de variables micro y macro de los modelos de migración de las mujeres; (4) los modelos estatales de desarrollo rural y la política; (5) nuevos avances en la teoría feminista--factores que contribuyen a una conciencia feminista en las mujeres latinoamericanas.

INTRODUCTION

Researchers currently engaged in work pertaining to Latin American women were brought together to participate in the workshop "Feminist Theory, State Policy, and Rural Women in Latin America." The workshop had two main objectives: First, to examine aspects of the situation of Latin American women during the past decade, at work and in the household, with particular emphasis on the impact of agricultural development strategies. Second, to use the workshop papers and discussions as a basis for identifying possible future research projects for the Institute in this area, and to make some useful connections between this workshop and the forthcoming discussion at the International Congress of Americanists (July 1 to 7, 1985, Bogotá, Colombia).

All of the papers revealed that a feminist approach to development requires new categories through which to understand and evaluate development policy. Does the policy intensify the division of labor? How does it effect surplus labor? What is its effect on the dependence-independence relationships of women, on the structure of the family? What is the effect on the balance of literacy and education within the family? What is its effect on community participation for women? Here, as in other disciplines, using the perspective of women as a beginning point produces new insights, new answers and new suggestions for action.

The conference was unique in that it combined recent research in feminist theory with field experience in development. The conference was also a milestone in that it gave formal recognition and encouragement to the growing realization among U.S. and Third World scholars that the status of Third World women is of crucial importance to feminism. Now, for the first time, feminist informed research is being directed towards understanding the interrelatedness of political, economic and patriarchal institutions in the development process.

One of the products of this feminist inspired research has been the

"discovery" that women make up the majority of the world's food producers and almost all of the world's food preparers. Policies of state agrarian planners which have not taken into account the roles of women have seriously undermined the position of women both economically and socially. This undermining, mainly in the name of modernization, cannot help but be detrimental both to the long-run and short-run development of a society.

Much of development policy in the Third World focuses on agriculture, since the majority of these countries have agrarian-based economies. Thus, if development policy is to be successful, it must recognize that it will in effect be reshaping the lives of rural women because they are the major food producers.

The enormously wide-ranging effects of such policies made it necessary to bring together in this conference as many perspectives as possible. Therefore the themes which were chosen were sufficiently broad to allow researchers to explore connections among their different areas of work. These were: (1) The Latin American agrarian reform experiences and rural women; (2) women's subsistence agriculture projects; (3) migration patterns of rural women--integrating micro and macro variables; (4) state rural development models and policy, and (5) new advances in feminist theory--factors contributing to feminist consciousness in Latin American women. In addition to working with these central themes, participants shared their experiences both as feminist women and as feminist researchers in Latin America in a Roundtable discussion and pondered the implications of the praxis that feminist research requires.

THE IMPACT OF AGRARIAN REFORMS ON WOMEN

Many of these themes were reflected in Carmen Diana Deere's paper, "Rural Women and State Policy: The Latin American Agrarian Reform Experience," which was based on a study requested of her by the government of Nicaragua. In it she analyzes the experiences of rural

women in 13 Latin American countries which instituted major agrarian reforms. She found that most Latin American land reforms have directly benefited men, but that in two countries, namely Cuba and Nicaragua, the reforms had also been of benefit to women. The question is, which factors made the difference? The governments of Cuba and Nicaragua were both explicitly committed to equality of the sexes as a goal of state policy. In the other countries studied there seemed to be an assumption that, as long as policies improved the position of male heads of households, other household members would automatically benefit. Thus, for example, no effort was being made to gather data on the position of women by determining AID beneficiaries by sex, even though the Percy Amendment ten years previously had made this a requirement.

In the cases in which land reform laws worked against women the mechanisms of exclusion were legal, structural and ideological. First, legal beneficiary criteria excluded the majority of rural women. In all countries except Cuba and Nicaragua only one member of the household, the head (a man in any household containing an adult male), could be designated "beneficiary."

Second, the structure of the labor market, namely the seasonal proletarianization of women for the export harvest, prevented female participation in agrarian reform. Women not permanently employed on estates at the moment of expropriation were excluded from cooperative membership. Under those reforms based on a point system which included education, women were also at an extreme disadvantage.

Third, ideological role restrictions--men as agriculturists, women as helpers--kept female participation low, not to mention inheritance provisions explicitly describing the beneficiaries as male.

Mexico, Bolivia and Honduras did institute various laws which recognized widows or single women as beneficiaries, but in none of these cases were the exceptions made strong enough to overcome the intensity of the sexual division of labor, barring women from being considered

agriculturalists.

In Nicaragua and Cuba on the other hand, households, wives, and daughters can qualify as agrarian reform cooperative members. According to Deere, the Cuban commitment to women grew out of both ideological and economic issues emerging during the course of the revolution. The transformation of social relations required the incorporation of women into the labor force. The demand for temporary labor for the expanding sugar cane production was an economic incentive to bring women into the labor force. There was a direct effort at organizing women to participate as permanent workers and as members of the credit and service cooperatives of private producers. To facilitate this, child care centers and communal eating areas at rural work centers were developed. In contrast to this gradually evolving inclusion, the Nicaraguan agrarian reform had as its original objective the incorporation of women. Agricultural Cooperative Law, for example, requires that women be integrated into the cooperatives under the same conditions as men. This conforms to the Nicaraguan Statute of Rights that requires that the state remove all obstacles that impede the equality of its citizens. Case studies of ten cooperatives with women members demonstrate that women's participation in productive activities has been on a par with that of the men. Clear and positive state policy not only creates the necessary preconditions for women's participation but also loosens the gender restrictions on the division of labor. That state policy makes the difference is seen most clearly as these two cases are contrasted with Chile. Here in 1970 the legal structural conditions for the inclusion of women were met but there was ambiguity in the Popular Unity government as to the proper role of women in agrarian reform.

Deere argued that the reasons for including women as direct beneficiaries of agrarian reform go beyond even the obvious requirements of social equity, self-determination, avoidance of exploitation, and recognition of the actualities of rural women's position in the labor force.

Research shows that women are a force of cohesion and stability within the cooperatives because the cooperatives offer a new-found security.

Women's enthusiasm then becomes important in the successful development of cooperatives.

State policy and legal reforms are not, however, sufficient to ensure the inclusion of women as reform beneficiaries. Material and ideological difficulties remain and must be dealt with. Inequalities of education, the temporal and physical demands of reproductive labor, the "double day" of work both inside and outside the home, and the lack of the requisite social authority for leadership still remain to be overcome. The Cuban Family Law of 1975, requiring men to share equally in domestic tasks and child rearing when the wife works in social production, takes an innovative step in the right direction by recognizing this double burden.

During the discussion of Deere's presentation, Denis Goulet listed three categories of demands women may have: (1) for economic benefits, (2) for voice and (3) for political power to obtain their needs themselves; and he wanted to know which demands Deere thought were the focus for women in the countries she examined. Deere responded by saying that women's access to and control over income are fundamental and that male-specific inheritance laws are inimical to this. Women's access to income is crucial for children since many men cannot be depended upon to contribute to children's welfare. This responsibility often falls on the women. The important question is how to prevent new elements of inequality from being injected into the social system as in, for example, male preferential access to technical training.

Magdalena León de Leal affirmed the need to scrutinize the role of policy in reinforcing inequality. She mentioned that the ineffectiveness of Colombia's bilateral inheritance laws is due to the fact that land title can be held by only one person, and that person is preferentially male.

SUBSISTENCE PROJECTS FOR RURAL WOMEN

In the next paper Elsa Chaney described her recent work on the "women's components" of two large rural development projects, one in Jamaica and one in the Dominican Republic. This study, while very different from Deere's in specific subject matter, range and methodology, addressed related questions about women and food production. What are the interactions between women's roles as producers and their roles within the family? How are women perceived as members of the larger community and how does this affect their work? How do these relationships among work, family, and community affect policies which attempt to change the mode of food production? In order for such policies to be successful, do they also have to succeed in altering the social structure itself? The projects studied by Chaney involved the development of garden-sized vegetable plots meant to complement the family diet.

In the Jamaican project, a corps of 20 extension officers was trained to work with women, teaching them the technical principles of small-scale intensive gardening. In the Dominican Republic, an extensive network of 102 already-existing campesina women's groups facilitated the program. The more expensive Jamaican program was terminated after four years and the subsequent level of activity in the garden projects has not been high. On the other hand, the parent project in the Dominican Republic is still in operation, and between 5,000 and 6,000 gardens have been planted.

Chaney asked the question: What made the crucial difference between failure in the Jamaican case and success in the Dominican Republic? She hypothesized that the strategic difference was the intense participation of women's groups, which had been in existence for 20 years emerging from church women's organizations in the Dominican Republic. Here, the women negotiated with the project for what they wanted. And the household gardens were pushed as a conservation method to hold the soil on over-logged hillsides and to preserve the water table. In Jamaica, no such state

backing or local organized group participation occurred.

Discussion produced many questions about the direction of changes in the status of women produced by this policy: Household gardening is not incorporation into the wider labor force. Does aid directed toward reproductive labor in this way increase the role-defined construction of gender? Does it, paradoxically, further encourage women to feel economically powerless within the household by emphasising their marginalized status in the economy? Do projects such as intensive gardening hurt women's situation and status because they increase the burden of women's reproductive tasks? In this case, women take on more responsibility for providing the family food, and men sustain their monopoly on cash crops. Chaney acknowledged this as an area of concern but pointed out that these garden plots are only about 15' by 15' and, on average, require no more than three hours a week of maintenance. Thus, the extra burden has proven to be minimal. The household garden may reinforce the division of labor within the household unit to the extent that women's responsibilities for the garden prevent them from participating in the cash economy. But, as Alain de Janvry noted, in the Jamaican case at least, the opportunity cost for women working subsistence plots was minimal since there are few, if any, alternative sources of employment for women. But then, does the household garden increase the exploitation of male workers by subsidizing their wages? Only, according to de Janvry, if wages decrease as home production increases and he claimed that they do not.

Participants raised a number of other concerns regarding the projects. Cheywa Spindel wondered whether the "Small is Beautiful" approach of this kind of project could alleviate poverty. In response, Chaney stressed the important nutritional and educational aspects of the project, but admitted that this sort of approach could never provide a solution to the basic problem of poverty. The Caribbean nations are experiencing a food crisis along with increasing balance-of-payments import constraints.

A cornerstone of the projects was the incorporation of highly complex

gardening techniques to increase the variety, duration, and nutritional value of the crops. Deere argued that the successful household garden would be empowering, pointing out that the pride women experience in learning these techniques could be an essential feature of these projects. Beatriz Schmukler supported this view; it is not merely an issue of nutrition and economics. It is also important to examine the effects these kinds of activities will have on the patterns of male domination within the households. How will this change the woman's recognition of what she does in the household in relation to the husband? Effects seem to vary. Afro-Caribbean women, Chaney suggested, are empowered by their reproductive responsibility and independence, and it is quite usual for there to be no husband in the household. Due in part to heavy incidence of male out-migration, women find themselves heads of households in up to 50 percent of cases. Two to three generations of women in these households is not uncommon. These women tend to be aggressively independent and expect to be financially responsible for their children.

The strategic question here was whether such projects increased or actually decreased women's power. Chaney mentioned the frequently misguided intervention of well-meaning state agricultural extension agents who did not recognize women's role as agriculturalists and so failed to distribute the needed technical information, instead stressing only food transformation skills, sewing, and the like. In this case, she argued, the projects did not challenge the basic extension structure. Whether the successful household garden actually empowers women or not will depend, said Chaney, upon whether the strength of women's organizations can be maintained and used to channel collective action in further directions.

GETTING BEHIND THE MIGRATION STATISTICS

One of the dominant facts of life in rural Latin America is the existence of widespread migration both to large cities and to other countries. María

de los Angeles Crummett presented research which showed that some macro-structural factors in the migration process relate more specifically to women than to men, yet existing migration studies have failed to address gender differences. She said that greater methodological and theoretical precision is required in research in order to understand why it is that in Latin America women have historically predominated in rural-urban migration and why they have increased in numbers in international migration.

Several trends have emerged from data available at the national level which, according to Crummett, show that migration theory needs to be sensitive to patterns in the sexual division of labor. Women in many countries migrate from rural to urban areas in greater numbers than men do, while men predominate in migrations from one rural locale to another. The women who migrate tend to be single and between the ages of ten to nineteen--much younger than the average male who migrates. According to many macro-level studies the proportion of women migrating to the cities has begun to level off after an increase which has been occurring since the 1940s.

Studies on migrants in urban areas are problematic. Crummett argued that studies which document female labor force participation in urban areas often grossly underestimate the level of women's economic activity. Women are highly integrated into wage work; some estimate that one third are employed as domestics, even in highly industrialized areas such as Buenos Aires (where 80 percent of domestics are migrants). Some studies show that one half of all women in unskilled jobs are migrants. Migrant women cluster almost exclusively in domestic occupations in the urban area, while the urban male migrant may land in any one of a broad range of jobs. Males also experience more job mobility than the female migrants to urban areas.

These patterns of urban migration produce particular class relations. The influx of low-wage domestic labor into the urban areas frees

middle-class women to work in the labor market. Crummett wondered about the possible consequences of this two-tiered structure, the low-mobility low-wage segmented female work force along side of a newly emerging middle-class female work force.

Much data on the rural sector is available at the micro level documenting the sexual division of labor in the household and how it has placed the burden of subsistence on women. However, the integration of macro variables, such as migration patterns and labor force participation, with micro household analysis has not yet been done. We need to ask, for example, whether the experience of a daughter being sent out of the rural household to the city by her father constitutes a new degree of autonomy for women. Suppose her income is subsequently controlled by him? The assumption that wage income implies increased autonomy for women may not be valid. Demand-pull type migration studies do not incorporate an analysis of household factors in the rural area. Census data, for example, do not pick up return migration, only permanent migration. The limitations of these kinds of studies need to be overcome.

In her own forthcoming research, Crummett proposes to use her survey of rural households in Mexico to examine the sexual division of labor and to see what changes may be brought about in its economic and social organization by migration. She hypothesizes that with the presence of widespread male migration, tasks that have been traditionally men's domain are now being taken over by women, increasing women's burden. This, however, may also lead to a general breakdown of the rigid sexual division of labor as women take on responsibility for all aspects of agricultural production and household maintenance. This may result in greater female participation in the household and the community. High rates of female out-migration may have the effect of depriving the household of older daughters, thereby increasing the child-care burden for mothers who depend on daughters for this and other domestic chores.

Alain de Janvry objected that abstract quantitative approaches cannot explain variables such as class. Analysis must be done by region or country in order to understand social relations which are culturally specific. It is not true that women make up the majority of migrants; on the contrary, in some areas more men than women migrate. Crummett replied that such case studies have in fact been done; the problem is that these studies must be dealt with at a greater level of analysis.

Cheywa Spindel affirmed the importance of incorporating the gender specificity of migration as well as the need to account for regional variation. She cited the phenomenon of reverse migration in Brazil where temporary agricultural jobs for women have expanded particularly in the harvesting of crops such as sugar cane and oranges. Here women are drawn out of urban areas and into rural employment. A new political phenomenon has paralleled this trend; for the first time temporary workers are demanding better wages and equality of wages for women. The question becomes: Will income gains for women improve circumstances and possibilities for them and their children?

Carmen Diana Deere said that the significant question may not be so much why women are migrating, but what will be the consequence of this migration. Migration for a woman means that she is pulled out of her paternal home. What is needed is an investigation of the effects of this on her relationship with others. Where gender and class roles are changing, will this affect her consciousness?

STATE RURAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY: 1) Colombia

Magdalena León de Leal discussed general agricultural development policies in Colombia and their relationship to policies specifically affecting peasant women. In the course of reviewing the Colombian agrarian experience since the 1950s, she emphasized the need for the strategic importance of rural women in agricultural reform to be recognized at the

national policy level. Two distinct agrarian policies have characterized the past thirty years: 1) the Agrarian Reform and 2) the Integrated Rural Development Program (DRI). The Agrarian Reform Law of 1961 was instituted during a period of highly unequal land and income distribution in the agrarian sector. These inequalities occurred particularly where rapid commercial agricultural development had taken place. In 1960 more than one million peasants with plots of less than 20 acres represented 86 percent of the landholders and only occupied 15 percent of the land. Meanwhile, 41 percent of the land was held by 8,000 landlords in parcels greater than 500 hectares. The reform law was intended to promote capitalism in agriculture and, at the same time, alleviate some of the severe economic and social hardships. However, by 1970 the concentration of property had increased while the reform itself remained extremely limited.

León maintained that there were some major costs to this policy. For one, it led to a significant increase in rural-urban migration. It also accelerated the proletarianization of the rural population and gave new impetus to peasant mobilization. The policy of the 1970s then turned away from reform measures and instead focused on promotion of mechanization of agriculture with the emphasis specifically on productivity. But these policies coupled with lines of credit being made available to large land owners and other capitalist producers, sharply increased the deterioration of the peasant economy and the resulting misery in rural areas.

By the late 1970s no reform measures were left standing and, effectively, no agrarian policy. At this point the Integrated Rural Development (DRI) program emerged as an alternative to the reform. It was conceived as part of the National Food and Nutrition Plan (Plan Nacional de Alimentación y Nutrición--PAN), which was established in response to a growing food crisis. The situation was critical. Vast numbers of people were suffering from various degrees of malnutrition. The overall strategy was directed toward production and distribution, health and nutritional

education. The DRI was oriented toward those peasants who had the potential to increase their efficiency and income with the aim of making them into small entrepreneurs. The assumption was that the peasant economy could generate some level of productive employment and technology. To increase productivity, the State has been funneling credit and technical assistance into the peasant sector. The outcome has not been entirely positive. An evaluation of the DRI indicates that it has encouraged class and economic differentiation within the peasant economy. The conditions prerequisite for success--availability of cultivatable land and access to tenancy--are lacking amongst the majority of the peasantry.

León saw some reason for optimism, however, especially in regard to the position of women. The present government has given new direction to the DRI. Policy is to be aimed at generating productive employment for the average peasant family through organization of the peasantry. To undertake this, a series of subprograms have emerged, furthering infrastructure, production, and commercialization as well as communal and social development. Especially important is the focus on development activities that provide a more equal position to peasant women as a part of bettering family life.

Thus, according to León, for the first time the existence of the rural woman has been recognized. Peasant women are no longer invisible. She attributed this new phenomenon to two factors: 1) analyses that have empirically and conceptually maintained that the peasant economy is based on family labor, thus focusing on women's roles in the sexual division of labor, and 2) the fact that international agencies have recognized the role of women in production of foodstuffs, even though they had to be forced to do so by an international food crisis.

Women, then, have been included within agrarian policy in order to increase women's social and economic participation. The aim is for greater efficiency in productive work, to increase the supply of food, and to better the economic condition of the rural family. The fundamental feature of this

view is that women are now considered direct agents in production, not merely recipients of development benefits.

León did have several criticisms of the policy. The lack of access to land is a crucial aspect of the agrarian problem yet there has been no discussion in this area. Failure to redistribute land will seriously limit possibilities for rural women. Also, analyses have not taken class structure within the peasant economy into account. Women of the lowest strata of the peasantry have the greatest participation in agricultural production. Thus these women should be more intensely targeted in development, policy which is not happening at the present time.

Finally, León said that one of the most serious difficulties in Colombia lies at the ideological-cultural level. The patriarchal ideology of machismo in Colombia is very strong and works against women's full participation in development projects. Government agencies cannot define the problems merely as technical ones, but must deal with the problem of the patriarchal ideology itself. Without recognizing this and the problems of land access and class structure, the Colombian projects for rural women are fated to remain merely academic rather than the agents of practical change in the everyday lives of Colombian women.

STATE RURAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY: 2) Brazil

Cheywa Spindel's current work involves looking at the Brazilian development process over the last three decades to assess the effects of policies on income distribution, social relations, and the sexual division of labor in rural areas. Her preliminary findings are that unprecedented numbers of women have been drawn into wage labor in certain agriculture activities. The implications of this phenomenon are the focus of her research.

Spindel identified five distinct periods in Brazilian economic development over the past decades, beginning with the years 1956-1961. In this period, import-substitution policies marginalized the agricultural sector in development plans to such an extent that agriculture grew at an inferior rate compared to other sectors. Insufficient growth of the agricultural sector had an impact on the cities--lack of foodstuffs, rising prices, inflation, etc. The countryside experienced increased migration and proletarianization. At this time, social groups both in urban and rural areas proposed the need for agrarian reform as the essential precondition to overcome the unsatisfactory state of agricultural production and to remove one of the structural obstacles to socio-economic development. This prefaced a two-year period of intense debate on agrarian reform which occurred during the period of deceleration of economic growth that precipitated the fall of the democratic regime in Brazil.

The years 1964-1967 saw the least growth of the economy since World War II with the GNP rate declining by one-half. The vision of agricultural reform gave way to policies to further the modernization of agriculture with the emphasis on growth of productivity. The economy turned around with the 1967-73 "Brazilian Miracle" (GNP growth rate was 14% in 1973), bringing with it a worsening disparity between sectors and regions. But the modernization drive in agriculture paid off. Agricultural output for internal consumption grew at a higher rate than industrial output. The balloon began to deflate after 1973; real wages fell by 50% from 1974 to 1981 and economic growth was again negative.

During this time the state acted as the agent of economic development through financial investments, credit creation, and infrastructure development. State policies had the effect of increasing the concentration and capitalization of agriculture as well as decreasing the labor force in the sector. The effects on income and the health status of the populace were dramatic. Approximately one third of the Brazilian population was suffering from serious malnutrition, according to a 1975 World Bank study.

The impact of the growing income disparity between the rich and the poor was manifest, for example, in the average life expectancy for the poor at 51 years of age, contrasted to the rich which was about sixty.

What have been the specific effects of policy on women in the recent experience? Spindel noted that during the 1970-80 decade, women's participation in agriculture increased by 133%--largely in temporary seasonal work--compared to growth of men's participation of only some 5%. This, she argued, meant a massive increase in the exploitation of women; the vast majority of women receive less than the legal minimum wage. In addition, temporary work implies a lack of the usual benefits. Temporary work too, is not unionized. From Spindel's position, what we are seeing is a major shift in both the composition of the agricultural labor force and the type of work available. There appear to have been dramatic changes in the last decade.

For Spindel, many questions emerge because of these changes. Why has this explosion in female labor force participation taken place? Have women possibly been drawn into the agrarian labor force because of male out-migration? Better statistics may offer the key to some of these questions. The present process of gathering information is not specifically designed to reflect the situation of women, and the accuracy of existing information has itself been queried: are these changes in fact as recent and as dramatic as the statistics suggest? One thing at least seems clear. Women's increased participation in agricultural work has definitely meant a greater involvement of women in political activities. Spindel cited one instance where, for the first time, women agricultural workers have engaged in strikes to obtain equal wages with the men.

STATE RURAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY: 3) Ecuador

Lynne Phillips' work on gender, class and development in rural coastal Ecuador has suggested that, as the tasks once part of women's household

work become commoditized, women develop an increasingly pivotal place in non-commoditized networks of social exchange. Here too she found that change in women's work roles is tied to alterations in their social interaction. Phillips argued that loss of power in the production of household goods seemed to increase the reliance on (and production of) non-commodity based relationships.

Phillips reported that women's roles in rural Ecuador had undergone substantial change even prior to the reforms of the last two decades. In the primarily family labor system of the pre-1920 cocoa haciendas, there was no role differentiation by sex. But the cocoa crises of the 1920s led ultimately to a dramatic division of labor. As cocoa production withered away, massive unemployment followed. There was a shift toward rice growing but the dissolution of the feudal landlord-peasant structure of the hacienda left peasants only the possibility of share cropping or tenancy, a much more tenuous access to the land necessary to grow rice. Peasant labor continued to work on a family basis with flexibility in the sexual division of labor. 1930 saw urban expansion at the same time as a shift in the sexual division of labor. Women began to enter domestic service in the cities.

The most dramatic shift occurred with the influx of sugar and banana interests in the 1940s and 1950s. United Fruit moved in and hired male labor for banana production. It paid salaries higher than those from other agricultural activities on the coast. The movement of capital into the countryside during this time increased the number of day laborers in agriculture production, and with it the exclusion of women, thus increasing the movement of female labor into domestic service.

Moreover, the influx of capital interests to the rural sector brought mounting conflicts between landowners and tenant laborers fighting for their continued access to land. In response to concerns for Ecuador's increasing political instability, the United States fostered agricultural cooperative programs through AID initiatives. The Ecuadorean state

legislated these programs in direct opposition to worker's syndicates.

The first limited agricultural reform program was not introduced until the early 1960s and was designed to limit the size of land holdings of the non-banana and sugar interests. The most extensive reforms were instituted in the 1970s and, according to Phillips, were less significant for the redistribution of land, which was in fact minimal, than for changes in the role of commodity relations. Phillips argued that contradictory effects of this commoditization, as the process pertains to women, have emerged in the Ecuadorian context: On the one hand women have become more marginalized from agricultural production; yet they have maintained control of the non-commoditized exchange networks necessary for the reproduction of the household. The state agrarian reform policies in the areas of technical credit access and land redistribution have contributed to this outcome.

To demonstrate this, Phillips turned to the factors of production which were to be mobilized through the agrarian reform programs: land, technological inputs, credit and labor. For example, while almost all farmers both within and outside of coops can now buy insecticide for their crops, only the larger landowner can afford expenditures such as renting corn grinders or tractors. At the same time, women's work as human 'scarecrows' has been replaced by insecticides, and their work of degrading corn by hand has been replaced by the corn grinders.

There are several effects of limited access to both credit and product markets for some producers in the face of increased commoditization. These effects are the result of the need to sell and produce more in order to survive. For one, women's labor can be extended and intensified in households where men tend to be the wage workers without their demanding increased remuneration in the form of money. And secondly, kinship networks which serve as a buffer against complete dependence on the market become that much more important. Obtaining credit from 'family' is safer, in that the family is not as likely to repossess land for one

thing. For women, this networking is especially important as they are the ones without access to wage labor, and they need access to land—for wood gathering purposes, for example. Establishing forms of exchange outside of commodity relationships has become, Phillips argued, a source of power to the extent that it brings women out from under the influence of individual men.

Phillips suggested that there are serious political implications of this reliance on non-commodity relationships among households. It often takes the form of 'compromiso' relationships whereby a wealthier male will support several households—a situation women must accept for survival. The problem is, in Phillip's view, that women's struggles are intricately woven into the personal ties of their relationships and, as such, are individualized and not defined in terms of women's oppression. The questions remain as to how the countervailing forces attendant to the uneven development will bear upon women's political awareness.

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In summary, to compare the three countries' experiences, we find that Colombia instituted policies which gave explicit attention to the role of women in the labor process, while Ecuador and Brazil did not. What needs to be examined, Deere suggested in discussion, is the ways in which patriarchy influences the politics of the state both in the case of Colombia, and in the other two instances where women were not specifically included.

NEW ADVANCES IN FEMINIST THEORY: FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO FEMINIST
CONSCIOUSNESS IN LATIN AMERICAN WOMEN:

1) Strategies Used by Mothers to Negotiate Gender Meanings in the Family

Phillip's discussion of women's new strategies outside of commodity relations in response to the pressures of capitalization of the rural sector brings a new focus to feminist theory. Beatriz Schmuckler affirmed the importance of this focus.

In all of the preceeding papers questions were raised about the economic circumstances of women and about the interaction of those circumstances with social patterns and government policy. Schmuckler began her presentation on a cautionary note. In Latin America, both the history of reproductive analysis and the theoretical lines of the interpretation of gender have cast women as passive victims of oppression rather than as actors in a series of social interchanges reproducing the gender system. The papers given here certainly contained this implication. But, said Schmuckler, an emphasis on the silence of women, on their exclusion from development and state policy, hides the possibility that women may participate and the reality that their actions have effects, even though they are in a structurally subordinate position. Without our recognizing this possibility, change becomes problematic at the very least.

Schmuckler presented a brief account of the three major directions that she thinks the analysis of the conditions of women has taken in Latin America. These, she suggested, are not false but, if such analysis is taken as the whole story, it actually helps to promote the powerlessness of women. They were, briefly: (a) Women are the source of reproductive labor. On this view, motherhood becomes the activity reproducing the social, sexual and economic values of the larger society in an essentially passive child. Thus the mother becomes society's instrument for

perpetuating its structures. According to this Marxist account of the female reproductive psche, women voted in large numbers for Alfonsín because they believed he would conserve the family. (b) An account of patriarchy, particularly as it is described by the French feminists, explains women's subordination as a result of silence and exclusion. On this view, even our language assigns women to the category of "the other" and the invisible referent. (Think of Deere's account of legislative assumptions resulting from legal language.) Lack of presence in language relegates women to invisibility, to non-existence in the written and oral text. Here too women appear as victims and the problem reemerges in a new form--how can the silenced speak? (c) Ego psychology (of which Schmuckler took Carol Gilligan to be the major proponent) suggests that the fundamental female psychic structure is altruistic, nurturant or communal. But this carries with it the difficulties of separating self from others and the consequence that a woman, in not separating herself from her mother, subordinates her own desires to the desires of others. Schmuckler argued that these three theoretical accounts of women as essentially disempowered were not borne out in her studies of and encounters with women she interviewed in Argentina. Women are able to defend their own interests in practical behavior, and they do act with power. The key to seeing this, Schmuckler maintained, is to recast the concept of socialization in terms of centers of power where the gender system is being constructed. Here, in these centers an elaboration of the ideological aspects of gender occurs. And the centers struggle among themselves. One of these centers is located within the family. The family is always the origin of discourses on gender which then emerge in the public sphere, because all members of society live in a family of some sort throughout their lives.

In Argentina, the structure of the concept of gender is opposition --men and women cannot share the same attributes; the male is aggressive, the female passive, etc. But women are in fact powerful in the sense that

many of them are able to negotiate in the ways in which they are female, developing various informal methods of resistance. Thus, a woman may choose to take a job outside of the home. But she explains this by saying she is working for the children's welfare. Here she attempts to negotiate between the accepted moral discourse (which she herself promulgates within the family) and her own real power which is actualized in her work. But she has no legitimation for her self-empowerment, no ideological way to support this behavior. An interior individual struggle results from the contradiction between the only moral discourse available to her and what she wants to do. And though she has no way to articulate this contradiction because she has no alternative moral categories, she gives her children a double message and that in turn loosens the possibilities for them. It is a "strategy for freedom." Perhaps when women begin to come together, Schmuckler speculated, they can legitimize this process of negotiation and as collective actors gain their own discourse. Though a woman cannot admit her own power she is still negotiating a compromise in the space allowed by the contradiction. It forces/allows her to reconstruct the gender roles in her family.

FEMINIST THEORY AND FEMINIST CONSCIOUSNESS:

2) Popular "Therapeutic Practices," Gender Meanings and Social Decomposition: Healers and the Female Subproletariat in the City of Santa Fé

Marta Roldán maintained that the two analytic perspectives, namely gender and class, which have surfaced in feminist thought, have remained divided and that what we now need is to overcome this dualism by attempting to understand the integrated and simultaneous construction of class and gender. The sexual division of labor usually occurs in church, in school, in

the family and at work and of course these are the loci of gender construction as well. All of the papers have reflected this interaction as they examined the practical circumstances of women's lives. Roldán chose as an example for study the experience between healer and patient/client in Argentina. Here, in treatment, Roldán suggested, one can actually see the process of gender construction occurring as normative expectations of gender roles emerge from a specific social practice. Healers are part of the lives of the community and of every woman in the subproletariat. As problems of anxiety, depression, friendship, work and marriage are diagnosed and treated, meanings emerge from the series of activities or processes prescribed. So, as a treatment focuses on an errant husband it reproduces the meaning of getting back the husband, viz his instrumentality, or her dependence and passivity. The diagnoses of problems are always one of two sorts: evil or envy. Significantly, the culprit is always female. Either an evil woman has put out a contract on the patient through the intercession of another healer, or an envious woman has enticed the patient's husband to wander. Usually the client is asked a rhetorical question: "What do you want, to have him stay or leave?" And the answer is typically the same, "I want him back." Even though most of the women studied worked full time, there was still severe economic dependence on male wage labor. Also fears of being alone and fears of revenge were common. Rarely was the desire for reconciliation the result of love or affection.

The healer's goal in treatment is to throw evil back on the originating woman through the medium of another healer. Thus the image of the patient which is projected and reinforced in this exchange (money for cure) is the image of helpless dependence and weakness. Nothing in the treatment suggests autonomy or self-responsibility in the patient. There is no intimation that the structure of familial relations might need changing. Nothing is suggested that would throw doubts on the legitimacy of asymmetrical relations resulting in violence and physical harm to women.

In this social context, no new meanings for gender develop. "Women" are the "weaker sex." Alone, as individuals rebellion is possible through the healer. But in that process economic, psychological and emotional dependence are reemphasized, recreated. Women acquiesce in this because it reinforces the same definitions that they themselves hold.

On the level of consciousness, it is not true that each woman does not feel individually oppressed; she realizes the injustice of the beatings and unfaithfulness that she receives at the hand of the male. But this does not imply a consciousness of the commonality of gender interests, even with the knowledge that other women are oppressed. All problems are interpreted on an individual basis, and not as a social complex. Everyone perceives women as individual persons whose problems are caused by other women whom they then justifiably resent. There is no discourse through which one might describe and thus perceive one's difficulties as communal, social, structural or historical.

Thus women's subordination and alienation are reinforced by the therapeutic practices of the healer. These are especially destructive to any development of class solidarity. Neighborhood women, for example, cannot work together to get a much-needed water pipe installed because of perceived jealousies, envies, and mistrust. These problems, as well as lack of employment, cannot be solved by incantations or herbal brews. What is needed is new treatment--a reconstruction of gender and class.

THE FEMINIST EXPERIENCE IN LATIN AMERICA

An important feature of the Workshop was the Roundtable event in which participants joined members of the Kellogg Institute and the University community in a lively discussion of the state of the feminist movement in Latin America and the U.S. The following is a brief summary.

Women have long been excluded as a category of concern in Latin America. Only recently has research been directed at describing and understanding the experience of women. Now, with the initial basic research being done, the next stage, as León argued, is the carrying out of action-oriented research; that is, research with the goal of not only understanding, but changing women's position. Work with a particular focus on the improvement of women is a feminist agenda. This feminist agenda, both in academic research and state policy, is a result of a variety of factors coming together. Feminism itself is permeating all facets of Latin American society and the influence of feminist organizations is being felt at the state level.

In some of the countries the moving force of democratization has added to the forces of the feminist agenda. First in Colombia, and later with the Brazilian abertura, groups at various levels have made inroads to change. Spindel pointed out that Brazil is seeing some initial changes in labor laws towards eliminating discriminatory practices. While it remains to be seen how these changes will work out in reality, the avenues to equity have at least been paved.

The Argentine experience for women, according to Schmukler, was quite different because of the absence of political activity under the recent military rule. With political activity curtailed, community networks became of primary importance for women. Moreover, the severe economic crisis in Argentina in some sense favored women over men within the household arena. The loss of male jobs in the formal sectors gave so much more weight to women's incomes generated in the informal sector; indeed,

with the swelling underground economy, women's incomes tended to rise. This effectively gave women a new capacity to negotiate within the family.

Thus, Schmukler argued, lower class women have tended to progress practically in the face of the Latin American economic crisis. However, the feminist organizations in Argentina at least are still in the beginning stages and are small and mainly middle class. The legal gains such as in divorce laws and child ownership have not yet been significant. But leftist-oriented feminists are now returning to Argentina. The challenge remains, Roldán surmised, in presenting a common platform to congress in the face of class conflict arising between the various emerging feminist groups. No united front exists such as in Mexico. More importantly, the increasing economic crisis is putting a terrible burden on working class women who cannot muster the necessary energy and time to meet, march, and voice their demands.

So, in general, feminism in Latin America is being taken more seriously. There are now both peasant and middle-class feminist organizations that did not exist ten years ago. It remains to be seen what this phenomenon means for the future. The "double-militancy" issues of economic justice and women's justice, for the time being, said Deere, mean separation from the traditional political parties. Meanwhile, the international women's conferences at Bogotá and Lima were charged with enthusiasm and strength and were characterized by improvisation and creativity. One thing is certain: for the researcher, as Schmukler cautioned, the present and the near future will be a time of insecurity as she grapples with the methodological issues. What is the meaning of participating in research in which the researcher is so involved herself --and in which she is in fact the subject of her own study?

RESEARCH AGENDA FOR THE FUTURE

Models of Development and Rural Women

Whatever future research is undertaken on women in the rural area, it must be considered in light of the dominant development model in effect for that particular country. To some extent all the analyses done by participants occurred during periods of Neo-liberal export led policy. What is necessary, according to de Janvry, is to systematize the analyses; the end product would be an understanding of how this kind of policy redefines different classes of households and then in turn the position of the different genders within the household. Specifically, how does it modify the nature of the bargaining that goes on and the nature of possible solutions?

De Janvry maintained that decomposing the implications of the Neo-liberal model into various effects can facilitate this process and identify areas to look at. For one, there are real resource effects: The booming export sector competes for resources with the other sectors, those occupied by the peasantry. How much flexibility do these peasants have to join the boom? Certain schemes can be devised such as funneling credit to the slower sectors, but the main problem is one of rigidity; the resources do not automatically flow to the peasantry. Furthermore, the price-effect of the booming sector means that as incomes and demand rise in this sector, imports become cheaper, crowding out the domestic food sector which, due to relatively lower productivity, cannot compete. Whatever alternatives are possible, shifting peasantry into the booming sector or increasing productivity in the domestic food sector, will have differing impacts on the household and the degree of sexual exploitation.

The booming export sector itself may or may not increase employment significantly for the peasantry due to the degree of mechanization. Thus, the employment effects of various crops must be factored in. And finally, what non-market alternatives exist for the peasantry if, for example, the

international market fails? The home-garden projects do become of utmost importance and their existence becomes crucial to survival strategies under some export regimes. In Latin America in general, de Janvry pointed out, there has been a reagrarianization due to the need for export earnings to pay for the burgeoning external debt. The periods of crisis and austerity in Latin America reinforce the booming sector--stagnant sector dichotomy and the negative impact on peasants. The high urban unemployment which accompanies agriculture export strategies means a slow-down of urban migration, the traditional pressure valve for the country.

Does the focus on Neo-liberal strategies imply that there is no essential difference between the parameters of these regimes and those in the transitional mode such as Nicaragua? Participants discussed the implications of washing out the differences between these broad categories in favor of emphasizing the commonalities of the evolving global economy. Most agreed that it will be important to retain an historical specificity with a descriptive richness in the analysis. This is particularly true in view of the fact that abstract models of development do not answer the needs of researchers involved in both action and policy today. But at the same time, as Chaney suggested, it is fruitful to historically trace the development of each specific country situation. And only when country syntheses and analyses as well as the historical linkages have been done is it useful to do comparative work.

Feminist Theory and State Policy

What are the major ways in which feminist theory can influence the kinds of questions we ask about state policy and the new data on the rural sector in Latin America? Schmukler, for one, argued that gender issues become a starting point from which the possibilities of the whole tone of the society take their cue. Democratization in Latin America will never be

stable, she contended, until the gender relations change. Authoritarian relations at the state level are a reflection of those kinds of relations operating at the household level. De Janvry doubted this contention: The growth of western democracy did not parallel the growth of free exchange within the household. Alexander Wilde too questioned the thesis that the breakdown of patriarchal relations at the family level would necessarily lead to the dissolution of authoritarianism at the macro level. In fact it may work the other way. The breakdown of super patriarchal relations in the German family between 1900 and 1930 led to the rise of Nazism.

Instead of looking for a direct linkage between the relations at the household level and those of the state, Wilde suggested, it may be helpful to focus on those intermediate institutions and structures which link the two. The church is an obvious one. Can the progressive elements within the church overcome the patriarchy of the church tradition? Possibly not. Liberation Theology, for example, is not feminist. Indeed, a focus on intermediate linkages may be necessary. Spindel saw that the church in Brazil did play a big role in organizing women. Then when political parties returned during the abertura, women were prepared to go out and demonstrate for many issues.

The most prominent feature of feminist theory is that it implies a value goal: that of the elimination of gender-based relations of domination and subordination. Roldán, in reflecting on future research agendas, implored researchers to not lose sight of this communal goal lest the topics become nothing more than interesting exercises. Hence, the issues of gender domination must be distinguished from issues of state power. At the same time gaps in the understanding of their interrelationships must be filled in order to change the kind of society which systematically fosters unequal relations. Crummett's work on migration, for example, must be related to this end.

While Deere concurred with this goal she had a more specific agenda in mind: to take on the traditional "Women in Development" establishment.

Deere observed that it has been concerned with incorporating issues of women's marginalization into the development process. Its critique focused on the sexual division of labor but it didn't go far enough, however, in telling us what the actual gender content of these relations is and the meaning of these changes. It didn't tell us anything at all about personal relations or what it really meant for women in the long run and how we might act to get different results. So too the socialist-feminist framework, with its concern for sexual division of labor based on class analysis, has not gone far enough in terms of gender analysis. Deere proposed that now is the time to begin to link socialist-feminist work with feminist work within the traditional Women in Development arena. Furthermore, without working specifically in the area of policy, researchers and practitioners have been themselves marginalized. Thus it will be important to make contact with sources of funding associated with broader changes taking place within the various nation-states.

On the more theoretical research issues, Crummett questioned the need to concentrate on historical descriptions or case studies, as has been suggested in an effort to work up from the bottom. It is not that historical linkages and case studies are lacking, but rather that a level of complexity has not yet been reached at which these different types of analysis could be successfully integrated. The attempt to reach this level is an important task for the future.

CONCLUSION

Clear agreement about the importance of the following issues emerged from the presentations and discussion. It is not necessarily the case that women benefit from state agricultural policies and, indeed, some policies may actually aggravate their situation. Hence, agrarian reform must be consciously directed towards ensuring that women are benefited and not ultimately disadvantaged by it. The short-term gains from women's participation in small-scale agricultural projects must be balanced against the possible costs, e.g. reinforcing the gender-based division of labor. Further research is needed into the effect of changes at the macroeconomic level on the practical everyday lives of rural women. There was general agreement that in those cases where government policies have been consciously aimed at improving the circumstances of women's lives, the policies had in fact succeeded in promoting some positive change. More research needs to be done on the actual processes and interactions involved. Studies on the effects of agricultural modernization and commoditization must be sensitive to the risk of women's economic marginalization and also to the changes these processes produce in women's social roles. More work needs to be done as well on the gender differences in migration patterns, both across national borders and between rural and urban areas. A recurrent theme throughout the workshop was the importance of evaluating development programs on their performance in improving (or worsening) the health and nutritional status of women and children. Emerging from the discussion of all of these issues was a renewed commitment to make articulate in our future research on women in development both the self-perception of the women whose lives we study and the social construction of gender, especially as it is reflected in development policy.

EVENTS AND PARTS

The Workshop was organized by María de los Angeles Crummett, Kellogg Institute and New School for Social Research; Carmen Diana Deere, University of Massachusetts, Amherst and Kellogg Institute; and Beatriz Schmukler, Kellogg Institute and FLACSO, Argentina.

Invited participants included: Elsa Chaney, Caribbean Food and Nutrition Institute, Jamaica; Ann Clark, Saint Mary's College, Notre Dame, Indiana; Anne Cubisch, Ford Foundation; Alain de Janvry, University of California, Berkeley; Magdalena León de Leal, Asociación Colombiana para el Estudio de la Población, Colombia; Lynne Phillips, CERLAC, York University, Toronto, Canada; Marta Roldán, Argentina; Cheywa Spindel, Instituto de Estudos Econômicos, Sociais e Políticos, Brazil; Shelley Baxter (rapporteur) University of Notre Dame, Indiana; Alexander Wilde, Associate Academic Director of the Kellogg Institute, and other Institute members.

Workshop proceedings opened with a general discussion of objectives and concluded with a session on research agenda for the future.

The following presentations were given:

"Agrarian Reforms and Cooperative Development" Carmen Diana Deere

"Subsistence Generating Projects for Rural Women" Elsa Chaney

"Rural to Urban and International Migration and its Effects on Rural Women" María de los Angeles Crummett

"Models of Development" Magdalena León de Leal (Colombia)
Cheywa Spindel (Brazil)
Lynne Phillips (Ecuador)

"New Advances in Feminist Theory: Feminist Consciousness and its Relation to the Work Process and Domestic Organization" Beatriz Schmukler and Marta Roldán

"Shared Experiences: The State of Research on Latin American and U.S. Women" Roundtable Discussion led by the organizers.