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IN LATIN AMERICA: ISSUES AND IMPACTS

by

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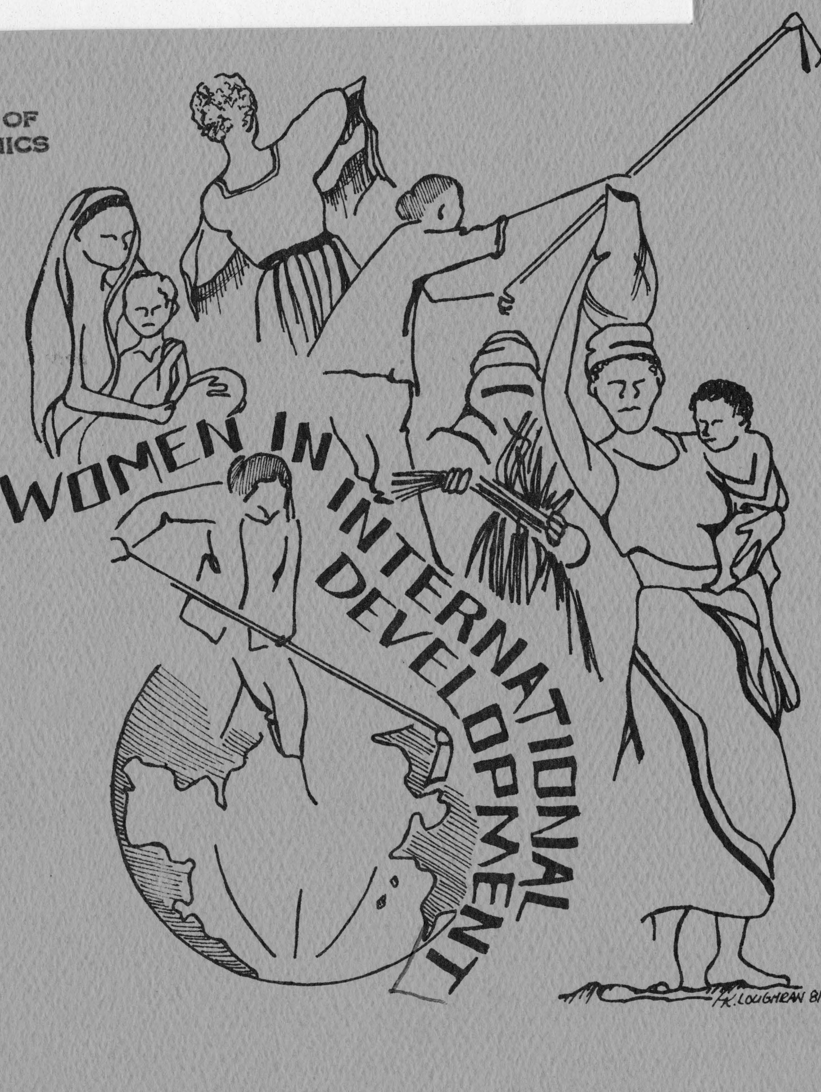

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

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Abstract: For many years, social scientists have debated the ideological positions on the population-development equation. What has been absent from these discussions is the role played by multinational corporations in perpetuating both adverse population processes and economic under-development in Third World countries. This paper first examines the impact of this neglected dimension in understanding the structural crisis of Latin American countries. Second, it examines the impact of multinational corporations on Latin American women and how the globalization of capital undermines some widely accepted propositions concerning the role of women in economic development. Finally, it describes the impact of multinational corporations on internal migration pressures.

About the Author: Patricia J. O'Brien is Assistant Professor of Sociology at Indiana University-Purdue University at Fort Wayne. Her research interests include the sex differential in migration, women's role in economic development, and the impact of male nurses on the professionalization of nursing.

POPULATION POLICY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS IN LATIN AMERICA: ISSUES AND IMPACTS*

Introduction

Prior to the 1960s, most population-related policies adopted in particular countries focused on immigration. These primarily were aimed at the control of the composition of the population by limiting the size of specific sub-populations (especially racial and ethnic, in the case of the United States) rather than population size and growth in general. It was not until after World War II that concern over population size and growth (as a result of natural increase) began to receive attention from world leaders as legitimate fields for national policy. This concern focused especially on Third World or developing countries where death rates had dropped rapidly as a result of the diffusion of modern technology and medicine through foreign aid from developed countries. With birth rates remaining high, the growth rates of developing countries soared. In many nations, population policy soon became synonymous with "family planning."

Population Policy

Population policy is defined as a formalized strategy designed to achieve a particular pattern of population change. Such policy can be aimed at various aspects of population such as size, growth rate, distribution, or composition. This policy can be direct or indirect as well. A direct policy focuses on altering specific demographic behavior(s) (e.g., family planning programs, abortion laws). An indirect policy does not have an explicit goal with respect to demographic behavior but still affects that behavior (e.g., laws governing age at marriage, tax laws). Generally, by the early 1960s, many developing countries were opting for direct policies aimed at controlling growth rates, and ultimately population size, through the initiation of family planning programs.

India (1952), Pakistan (1960), and China (1962) were the first developing countries to initiate family planning programs. By the middle 1960s, 25 developing countries had such programs and 17 others were supporting the activities of private organizations like Planned Parenthood. Further proliferation of population policies continued into the 1970s, such that by 1975 some 63 developing countries had family planning programs (34 of these had direct policies; the remaining 29 countries had programs aimed at improving health conditions). Only 12 or so developing countries retained explicit pro-natalist policies, generally on the grounds of political or religious ideology or national security (Nortman 1975).

Information as of 1979 indicates that almost half of the 135 developing countries of the world have some form of direct or indirect population policy (see Table 1). These same proportions are reflected in African and Asian countries. In Latin America and the Caribbean, however, approximately 60 percent of the countries have population policies while 40 percent do not. This is an exception to the general trend. While many Latin American countries have reduced their fertility rates and slowed their growth rates as a result of these policies, economic development in this region of the world, with few exceptions, has not, as some predicted it would, followed.

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Population Policy and Economic Development: The Role of Ideology

The onslaught of concern over population control in the 1960s was intrinsically related to concerns over economic development, especially in Third World countries. An old controversy was revived: What is the relationship, if any, between population growth and economic development?

Economic development is more than economic growth. Economic growth merely denotes an increase in a country's total wealth, regardless of the number of people in that country. Economic development refers to the growth in per capita income or, in more general terms, a sustained increase in the socioeconomic welfare of the population and its standard of living.

Typically, economic development is measured by per capita income or per capita gross national product. This may be very misleading, however, because it does not take into account how the income or wealth of a country is really distributed in the population. For example, a country may have a high per capita income figure, but the income may be concentrated in the hands of a small percentage of the population. Unfortunately, adequate distribution figures for many developing countries are lacking and per capita income or per capita GNP figures are used instead to measure economic development.

Statistically, economic development and population growth are related to each other; that is, as one changes, so does the other. Controversy rages over the direction of the relationship and the spuriousness of the relationship. Does population growth hinder economic development? Does population growth stimulate economic development? Are population growth and economic development related to each other at all, or are they perhaps both effects of a common cause?

These three different views of the relationship between economic development and population growth are tied to ideology. To argue that population growth, if left unchecked, will hamper economic development is to adopt a neo-Malthusian ideology. Malthus argued that there is a universal law of population: population grows geometrically and food supply arithmetically, resulting in periods of starvation and poverty until the population and food supply are balanced again. If population growth is not checked, this scenario continues to recur and economic development never occurs. Neo-Malthusians argue that economic development cannot proceed unless the population is growing at a slower rate than the economy. If it is growing at a more rapid pace than the economy, then the demographic overhead (expenses incurred in feeding, clothing, housing, educating) will eat away any improvement in the overall standards of living for the population.

Most Western countries, especially the United States, and those developing countries following the capitalist model of development have embraced neo-Malthusian ideas. It is not surprising, then, that these countries, reacting to the world population explosion in the 1960s, and especially that in Third World countries, called for population control as a necessary precursor to economic development in the Third World. Family planning was the central ingredient to this strategy. By limiting population growth through fertility control, it was believed that poverty and economic under-development in the Third World countries could be reduced.

A number of Third World leaders do not agree with the neo-Malthusians and view population growth as a stimulus to economic development. Their "nationalist" ideology is common in African and Latin American countries seeking independence from political and economic exploitation (as colonies or cheap labor markets) experienced at the hands of the world's more powerful nations. In these countries, population growth is viewed as necessary to produce the labor needed to develop fully their natural resources and to stimulate economic growth and development. Indeed many of these countries, such as Argentina and Brazil, are under-populated relative to their land areas and indigenous natural resources.

This nationalist-oriented ideology is expressed in the writings of Clark (1967) and Boserup (1965). They argue that, in the long run, a growing population is more likely to stimulate economic development because (1) it will stimulate "revolutions in agriculture" to meet the growing number of mouths to feed, and (2) it will increase the productivity of the people who recognize that if they are not increasingly productive, their standard of living will fall. Countries adopting this stance have generally also opted for pro-natalist population policies that limit access to family planning services and abortion. Other nationalist countries have adopted no formal policy at all, with the same result.

The third ideological stance on the relationship between economic development and population growth is that there is no relationship. This is the neo-Marxist position. Marx (and Engels) argued that the political and economic organization of a country exerts the crucial influence on economic development and population processes. According to Marx and the neo-Marxists, capitalism encourages overpopulation (or at least is very conducive to its development) to keep wages low (i.e., Marx' idea of a reserve army of labor). From this perspective, seeking to control population growth as a means of reducing poverty and stimulating economic development is seen as attacking the symptoms, rather than the root, of the problem. Under socialism, according to this ideology, economic development proceeds and population is not a problem. Unlike the neo-Malthusians, neo-Marxists believe that each society, depending on its mode of production, has its own special laws of population (Meek 1971).

Neo-Marxists do not view family planning programs or other population-related measures as means to economic development, but rather cite the concentration of wealth in Third World countries and imperialism by capitalist countries as the principal causes of overpopulation and economic under-development. Countries adhering to this ideology view contraception as an individual choice, a human right, not as a matter for national policy. Population growth and distribution policies are, however, viewed as a matter for national policy to coordinate these processes with the larger economic planning of the socialist economy (McQuillan 1979).

These three ideological positions came to the forefront of international debate at the 1974 World Population Conference in Bucharest (and more recently in 1981 in Cancun). World leaders from 163 nations met to develop a "World Plan of Action" especially with regard to the world economic order and population trends. The United States and other developed Western countries, taking the neo-Malthusian viewpoint, argued that high priority be given to family planning programs as a means to eliminate barriers to effective Third World economic development. The socialist-bloc countries, the Catholic Church, and many developing countries called for a more equal distribution of economic gains to the poorest sectors of the population within and between countries. Still others argued for a pro-natalist platform.

Despite the controversy, a degree of consensus was reached and a "World Plan of Action" adopted. This was written in a vague and general tone to accommodate all positions. Despite its lack of specificity, the document did affirm the need to consider population growth and economic development together.

> Policies whose aim is to affect population trends must not be considered substitutes for socioeconomic development policies but as being integrated with those policies in order to facilitate the solution of certain problems facing both developing and developed countries and to promote a more balanced and rational development (United Nations 1974).

Population Growth and Economic Development: The Statistical Bases

As previously noted, there is a statistical relationship between population growth and economic development, regardless of the direction or reality of that relationship. Table 2 contains the cross-tabulation of 1980 annual rates of growth (natural increase) with 1980 per capita gross national product (as noted, a crude measure of economic development) for developing countries as a whole as well as for the separate continents of Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

Looking at all developing countries on these three continents together (2A), a number of trends are evident. First, those countries with the highest rates of growth also tend to have the lowest per capita GNP. Second, those countries with the lowest rates of growth tend to have the highest per capita GNP. Nevertheless, there are a number of exceptions to the rule and the relationship is not a perfect one. The chi-square is significant at the .01 level, however, indicating an overall relationship between rates of population growth and per capita GNP in developing countries in general.

The same analysis for each continent is also presented (2B, 2C, 2D). For Asian countries, the chi-square is significant at the .05 level, indicating a statistical relationship between population growth rates and per capita GNP such that lower rates of growth are associated with higher per capita GNP. The relationship for the Third World countries of Africa and Latin America, however, is not statistically significant.

Given that the focus of this paper is Latin America, the question to be addressed is: Why, despite the fact that the majority of these countries have family planning programs and medium to low population growth rates, are their GNP figures also low? In other words, why doesn't the neo-Malthusian perspective hold in Latin America? In part, the answer may lie in the role played by multinational corporations in the economic under-development of Latin American countries and the ways in which population policy has been used to facilitate their penetration of these economies.

Structural Barriers to Economic Development in Latin America

Most economic development strategies adopted in Latin American countries after World War II involved import substitution. Import substitution was accomplished through such measures as protective tariffs, controls on exchange, cheap credit for domestic industries, and preference for the importation of raw materials and intermediate goods. The consequences of this strategy were two-fold. First, import substitution often created inefficient industries that produced consumer goods for a limited middle-class market rather than capital goods. Second, it led to an adverse balance of trade and, ultimately, national deficits (Stavrianos 1981).

By the early 1970s, many Latin American economists were calling for a new development strategy to deal with what was called the "structural crisis." A Chilean economist, Oswaldo Sunkel, outlined four major dimensions of this crisis (cited by Ayres 1975). The first of these is the sluggish rate of economic growth and, perhaps as importantly, the inconsistency in economic growth rates as a result of periodic external pressures and internal disorders. Table 3 contains data on gross national product, its rate of growth, and inflation over a twenty-year period in selected Latin American countries. These average annual rates conceal major periodic fluctuations that have a history of occurrence in Latin America.

In the early 1960s, the Alliance for Progress was established by the Kennedy Administration. Its stated objectives were to carry out a ten-year plan of tax and land reform in Latin America designed to keep annual economic growth rates at 2.5 percent, to encourage income redistribution, trade diversification, and agricultural productivity. During the 1960s, only two countries, Bolivia and Brazil, met the 2.5 percent annual economic growth rate goal. Argentina's average was only 1.9 percent a year, Venezuela's only 1.3 percent, and Uruguay suffered a net loss (Stavrianos 1981).

In the 1970s, periodic swings in economic growth continued in Latin America. For example, the "economic miracle" in Brazil, that lasted from 1968 to 1974, saw that economy growing at a rate of 10 percent a year and inflation falling to 12 percent in 1973. By 1975, however, economic growth plummeted to 4 percent with a concomitant rise in inflation to the level of 30 percent (Stavrianos 1981). The sluggishness of the majority of Latin American economies as well as periodic booms and busts have meant rising unemployment and under-employment in both rural and urban areas.

A second, and related, dimension of Latin America's structural crisis lies in the agricultural realm. Major portions of the richest agricultural land are owned by a few wealthy farmers or agribusinesses and, in some cases, agricultural productivity has declined. Furthermore, even when productivity has increased, this increase often has been accompanied by a shift to cash crops or luxury foods for sale on the international market rather than staple crops for domestic consumption. For example, in Brazil, the larger agricultural landowners have moved from growing black beans (the staple crop of the domestic food supply) to soybeans. Not only are soybeans more marketable on the international market, but they also bring a larger profit. Overall, between 1964 and 1974, the per capital output of export crops in Latin America increased by 27 percent while the per capita output of domestic crops dropped by 10 percent (Stavrianos 1981). These trends are reflected in findings that indicate 40 percent of Latin American children suffer from hunger.

Tables 5 and 6 contain data on merchandise exports and imports in selected Latin American countries. The information presented here indicates that Latin America has become a major supplier for the "global supermarket": 72 percent of Argentina's exports are primary commodities (especially foodstuffs), as are 55 percent of Brazil's and 43 percent of Peru's (World Bank 1981). Despite high levels of malnutrition and starvation in Latin America, it continues to export more food than it imports. In return, it tends to import technology (not necessarily labor-intensive) for use by large multinational corporations and others that syphon off large profits while draining the economies of the capital needed for economic development.

A study of 27 Asian and Latin American countries for the period 1950 to 1970 concluded that where population increases were rapid, and the land crowded or unevenly distributed, migration to the cities would be high (Firebaugh 1979). An extreme example was found in Colombia, where 0.6 percent of all farms contained 40 percent of all agricultural land, while 63 percent contained less than 5 percent of available land (Todaro 1981). As a result of these trends, formerly small, self-sufficient farmers in Latin America have declined in number, forced to sell their labor for low wages or to migrate to the already over-populated cities where jobs are all but nonexistent to meet the demand.

A third manifestation of the structural crisis is the distribution of income (see Table 7). In every case shown, over half of the disposable household income is in the hands of only 20 percent of the households. Indeed, ten percent of families control over one-third of household income in these countries. Some economists and politicians continue to argue that the concentration of wealth is needed to encourage investment and reinvestment and that eventually everyone will benefit through some "trickle-down effect." This has yet to happen on a significant scale outside of contexts such as Cuba which has undergone radical reorganization of the political and economic structure.

The final symptom of Latin America's structural crisis is chronic indebtedness. Foreign banks, foreign governments, and international aid agencies are typically eager to make loans to Latin American countries because they can realize a larger profit there than at home or almost anywhere else. For every dollar made available through foreign banks, Latin America nets only seven cents (Stavrianos 1981). The external debt of Latin America has drastically increased from $10 billion in 1965 to $150 billion in 1980 (New York Times 1981). Brazil is the most debt-ridden. Its 1980 external debt was $61.2 billion, constituting 15 percent of the total debt of all Third World countries (Dollars and Sense 1981). Repayment of these loans has consistently consumed available capital in Latin American countries (see Table 8). It has especially eroded whatever profit can be made from export sales.

Many Latin American countries, unable to meet payments, have defaulted on their loans. At that point, the International Monetary Fund usually steps in to stabilize these economies through a variety of measures. The typical agenda calls for: (1) devaluation of currency to boost exports and curb imports; (2) cutbacks on government spending, especially on social services; (3) introduction of wage controls; (4) raising interest rates; and (5) removal of barriers to foreign investment and free trade (Lappe and Collins 1978).

To summarize, economic development in most Latin American countries has either failed to materialize or has been painfully slow because the upper classes and government officials in these countries benefit from the existing under-development. Economist Joan Robinson argues that the very objective of Western economic aid to the Third World is to perpetuate the existing structures and institutions and the resultant economic under-development that made aid necessary to begin with (Stavrianos 1981). If economic development is to occur, Heilbroner (1963:16) tells us it "requires as a precondition the existence of a society in which wealth <u>can</u> be accumulated and in which income and employment are <u>capable</u> of being progressively enlarged." Such is not the case in Latin America where multinational corporations take more capital out of these countries than they invest in them and where wage controls are used to encourage further foreign investment for the creation of capital-intensive rather than labor-intensive activities.

<u>Multinational Corporations in Latin America: Perpetuating Economic Under-Development</u>

As previously noted, after World War II, Latin America embarked on a program of import substitution. This strategy perpetuated a situation of economic dependency, structural unemployment, and massive rural-to-urban migration. As a result, Latin America began to experience urbanization without industrialization.

By 1955, the expectation that import substitution would result in economic development became dubious. In an effort to rectify the situation, many Latin American governments opened their doors to foreign investment and, in particular, to multinational corporations (MNCs). MNCs are not new to the region, but the nature and degree of their involvement there is unprecedented. Prior to World War II, most multinational involvement in the area was of the portfolio variety. Multinationals financed locally organized enterprises, especially in agriculture and mining. But with the opening up of Latin America to foreign enterprise, many multinationals built their own plants in these countries. The United States Tariff Law, Sections 806.30 and 807.00, has been very conducive to this development. This legislation states that tariffs on articles assembled abroad, but made with components fabricated in the United States, are limited to the value added to the product as a result of labor costs. Since labor costs are so low, the tariffs on products manufactured in the Third World by MNCs are minimized (Safa 1981; Morrison 1982). Not only have MNCs reaped the benefits of tax breaks, free plant sites, and cheap labor, they also have acquired direct control over larger and larger portions of these economies. With this financial power, it has been relatively easy for MNCs to acquire political power as well, in the form of puppet governments or massive counter-revolutionary measures, to safeguard their interests.

The proliferation of MNCs in the Third World has been hailed as a progressive step. It is argued that MNCs create jobs and impart the necessary skills for economic growth and a trained labor force. While it may be the case that some jobs are created, they are low-paying and their number comes nowhere close to filling the need. As to the development of a trained labor force, most of the jobs require minimal skill because the technology used by MNCs is labor-saving, not labor-intensive (Morrison 1982). Similarly, the economic growth that does occur should not be equated with economic development. Most of the products of multinationals are for export. Even when Third World governments seek to buy technology from MNCs, 80 percent of the contracts state that that country cannot use that technology for producing exports that are competitive with those of the multinational (United Nations 1975).

It also is argued that MNCs provide the capital necessary for economic development in the Third World. In reality, the opposite is true. Multinationals earn disproportionately high returns from their Latin American investments and these profits tend to be reinvested in developed countries, not developing ones. As one American bank official has stated: ". . . while we can earn around 13 percent to 14 percent in our United States operations, we can easily count on a 33 percent rate of return on our business conducted in Latin America" (Barnet and Muller 1974). Capital is flowing from the poorer nations to the richer ones, regardless of foreign aid.

While foreign investment by multinationals was once hailed as a promising alternative to the import substitution strategy for economic development in Latin America, it has exacerbated, rather than ameliorated, the "structural crisis" in Latin America. The boon to economic growth has been more artificial than real, subject to the whims of corporate leaders in their search for larger profits. The organization of agriculture and agricultural productivity in Latin America have benefited the "global supermarket" not the local populations who sometimes cannot afford to buy the food they help produce. Land reforms have been shunted aside or redirected. Wealth has become more concentrated. Latin America has become more dependent on foreign aid and loans and less able to repay these debts. Numerous examples are available to illustrate the relationship between multinational involvement and economic under-development in Latin America. Two such cases are discussed below: Brazil and Mexico.

Brazil

Brazil is by far the largest and most populous country in Latin America, with vast natural resources and the largest military force in the region. Prior to 1964, economic development in Brazil appeared to be proceeding. President Goulart had adopted a populist platform consisting of agrarian reforms, income redistribution, and restrictions on foreign investments. The Alliance for Progress would have been satisfied, but obviously the C.I.A. was not as it participated in the overthrow of the Goulart regime in 1964.

Goulart was succeeded by a series of military generals, whose regimes were supported by the United States government. These military dictators proceeded to undo Goulart's achievements. Wages were depressed to attract foreign capital, unions were outlawed, and the multinational corporations came in droves to take advantage of tax subsidies, exemptions, and resources. Foreign aid also poured in from the World Bank, the International Finance Corporation, the Inter-American Development Bank, and the United Nations Development Program. In 1964, Brazil had received $25.9 million in aid, but by 1974 this figure was $681.9 million (Black 1977).

Between 1968 and 1974, the Brazilian economic growth rate was 10 percent a year and exports had increased from $1.4 billion to $8.2 billion. But, beginning in 1974, the economic miracle became a nightmare. The limited domestic market had been saturated with consumer goods and Brazil's external debt was absorbing 40 percent of its annual export earnings. In addition, the multinationals in Brazil were retaining 55 percent of their profits from the 40 percent of the industrial market they controlled (Stavrianos 1981). In 1980, President Figuereido stated that Brazil "had nothing left over for development" (New York Times 1980).

The change in development strategy is reflected in the country's population policies. Prior to and during the "economic miracle," Brazilian population policy was pro-natalist in orientation. The government did not prohibit family planning services, but rather adopted a relatively laissez faire attitude. Indeed if population was considered an issue at all by Brazilian elites, they regarded the problem as one of under-population relative to land area (McDonough and De Souza 1977).

At the 1974 Bucharest Conference on world population, the Brazilian government took a very "nationalist" stance on the relationship between population growth and economic development. Population growth was considered a positive force for economic development, for the development of sparsely populated hinterlands, and for fulfillment of Brazil's national destiny and national security. According to this official stance, ultimately with economic development, population processes would come into equilibrium with resources.

Beginning in 1974 with the cessation of Brazil's "economic miracle," the government stance on population policy shifted toward a more active involvement in family planning at the national level. By 1977, the national government initiated family planning programs focused on low-income families and the prevention of high-risk pregnancies. In 1978, family planning programs were incorporated into maternal and child health and nutrition programs and a group of leading medical schools undertook family planning research in in-hospital service programs.

In 1979, the newly elected President Figuereido stated that, "In Brazil's present social conditions, the success of social development programs depend to a considerable extent on family planning, taking into consideration the couple's freedom" (Nortman and Hofstatter 1979). The shift from a "nationalist" stance to a "neo-Malthusian" one was complete. This shift in ideological stance reflected a real decline in the material conditions of Brazil's population and economy, brought about by the alliance of interests between the government and the multinational corporations as well as the growing dependence of Brazil on loans from international agencies and foreign governments. Many of these loan sources, such as the United States A.I.D. program, require the implementation of family planning programs and other population measures before economic aid is initiated (Mass 1976).

Mexico

A similar sequence of events occurred in Mexico. The vast majority of multinational involvement there, however, not only started earlier than in Brazil, but focused more specifically on the agricultural sector.

From 1934 to 1940, under the Cardenas regime, a large land reform program was implemented. Large landholdings were broken up and 47 million acres of farm land were redistributed to one million Mexican peasants. Collectives were established and local banks were the prime lending agencies. In addition, the railroads were nationalized. Despite the size of the effort, much of the population did not benefit directly and Cardenas was defeated for reelection. The administrations to follow focused instead on the industrial sector and much of what Cardenas had initiated was undermined.

The Camacho regime developed an agricultural program that was to serve as the "basis for the founding of industrial greatness" (Lappe and Collins 1978). In 1943, the Rockefeller Foundation's Green Revolution arrived in Mexico to revitalize large-scale production with capital-intensive technology. Agricultural productivity increased; by 1957 some 60 percent of the agricultural output was for export, and 20 percent of the farms accounted for 70 percent of the value in sales (Stavrianos 1981).

The largest agricultural landholdings today are those owned by giant multinational agribusinesses such as Del Monte, General Foods, Campbells, and supermarket chains like Safeway and Grand Union. Currently, 55 percent to 60 percent of all winter and early spring produce sold in the United States comes from Mexico, while the vegetable and fruit crops available for consumption in Mexico have declined. The country is rapidly becoming the strawberry producer for the United States with the help of such multinational corporations as Pet Milk, Ocean Garden, and Imperial Frozen Foods (Lappe and Collins 1978). In addition, the World Bank is currently making some of its largest loans to Mexico for the production of livestock for export.

The increase in agricultural productivity was accompanied by an increase in the number of landless peasants: from 1.5 million in 1950 to 5 million in 1980. It is estimated that two-thirds of the Mexican population lives in poverty. Cities such as Mexico City are teeming with poor, unemployed people driven from the rural areas.

The shift in the Mexican population policy parallels that of Brazil. Prior to 1973, the government platform was strongly pro-natalist and backed by the Catholic Church. In 1973, however, President Echeverria, in his state of the nation address, voiced an anti-natalist platform. In January 1974, a law was enacted which established a National Population Council (CONAPO) whose aim was to stabilize the population growth rate (Nortman and Hofstatter 1979).

By 1977, President Portillo had adopted a "neo-Malthusian" perspective, which held that rapid increases in the number of people were a barrier to economic development. Population growth rate target dates were set. These called for a long-range reduction from 3.2 percent in 1977 to 1.8 percent by 1988, to 1.3 percent by 1994, and 1 percent by the year 2000. Targets for expanded and improved family planning coverage, especially in rural areas, also were implemented (Nortman and Hofstatter 1979).

Given the changes in the national economy, particularly the increased penetration of multinational corporations in the agricultural sector, this shift in population policy is not surprising. The imbalance in the number of rural peasants to available farm land had created adverse population processes. If Mexico was to receive the foreign aid it needed for economic development, such a population policy shift was a prerequisite. It should be pointed out that pharmaceutical companies also had a vested interest in the implementation of a family planning program. These companies, Syntex, Searle, and Scherring, have manufactured birth control pills in Mexico since the 1960s and have promoted family planning and the use of birth control devices specifically. In 1978, some 34 studies were underway in Mexico, with external private and multinational funding, to modify contraceptive methods in order to make them more acceptable to the Mexican population (Nagel 1978).

These two case studies indicate that the penetration of multinational corporations into the economies of Third World countries foster underdevelopment and dependency on foreign capital and contributes to adverse population processes. These assume the form of over-population in some areas and under-population in others. The government then seeks to deal with the situation by implementing population policies, generally in the form of family planning programs. It should be noted that this shift to anti-natalist measures, bolstered by neo-Malthusian propositions, is more often based on political and economic pressures to do so rather than on a shift in the ideal-family-size norms of the population. In other words, the content of population policy is a result of a complex process involving multinational penetration in the economy and the dependency that such penetration creates.

The Impact of Multinational Corporations on Latin American Women

Multinational corporations with subsidiaries in Latin America increasingly rely on women for their labor needs. The preference for female workers is usually explained in two ways. Women are portrayed as more tolerant of tedious work and as possessing more dexterity in small-scale tasks. Actually, such stereotypes are rationalizations. Because women's wages are lower, higher profits can be extracted from them than from the employment of men (Safa 1981).

A number of recent investigations indicate that the effects of the penetration of multinational corporations on women's roles in economic development are contrary to some generally accepted principles characteristic of modernization theories of development. The nature of these contradictions are briefly explored here.

From a modernization perspective, it has been argued that increased participation of women in the labor force results in their gaining greater political and economic leverage. In other words, the sexual division of labor shifts to allow women greater participation in the mainstream of society. Studies of shifts in the sexual division of labor indicate, however, that this is not always the case.

An investigation by Leon de Leal and Deere (1979) of four rural areas in Colombia indicates that female employment is directly related to the prevalence of labor-intensive crops and to the scarcity of male workers. They found that women's participation in the labor force was temporary and reflected the lack of other viable opportunities in rural areas. In another study by these same investigators (1981) of three regions in the Andes, the results indicated a great deal of diversity in the sexual division of labor. In one region, where tobacco was the dominant crop, female employment was predominantly in the agricultural processing and service sector and in animal care. In a second region, female employment patterns were quite diverse, but the marketing of rice and cotton products and animal care were the most dominant activities. In the third region, women were employed in all aspects of food commodities production.

Arizpe and Arande (1981) studied strawberry agribusinesses in Mexico and found that on the average 80 percent of the women workers were stem removers. If there are any common threads running through these findings, they are that women's work tends to be seasonal, paid for on a piecework basis and subject to the supply of available male workers. Some might interpret these findings as suggesting that as more women enter the paid labor force, they also have the opportunity to enter more types of jobs. Flexibility of the sexual division of labor, however, is indicative not of opportunity, but rather of marginality and exploitation of women. The sexual division of labor shifts to meet the specific material conditions and reflects the uneven process of development that is associated with the presence of multinational corporations.

Table 10 contains data on the labor force participation of women in selected Latin American countries. While these figures may be based on differing categorizations and definitions of work, these figures show that women make up less than one-fourth of the labor force in most instances and that, with the exception of Brazil and Peru, most employed women are not involved in agriculture. They work in industrial jobs, perhaps for multinational corporations, because they are a source of cheap labor.

A second general proposition of questionable validity in Latin America is that as urbanization occurs, the functions of the family change. It has been argued that with urbanization (and industrialization) the family is no longer the basic unit of production and consumption. That is, the family loses its production function and no longer serves as a work group. Evidence from Latin America and elsewhere suggests that this is not necessarily the case. In many developing countries movement to urban centers is associated with the lack of food and access to land in rural areas, not with food surpluses or lesser demand for labor in the agricultural sector. Because the urban labor market cannot absorb these in-migrants, it becomes necessary for as many members of the family as possible to work to supplement the family income. Since women and children are typically paid the lowest wages on a piecework basis, more family members must labor to sustain the family unit. This trend is reinforced by the lack of child labor laws in many Third World countries. In Latin America, as of 1975, 3.3 million children under the age of 15 were in the labor force (McHale and McHale 1979).

In a similar vein, it has also been assumed that with urbanization ideal-family-size norms begin to show a marked decline. Urbanization is supposedly associated with a decline in the number of children born because children represent a liability rather than an asset in the urban labor market. Again, this is not always the case in Latin America. Given the economic hardship of the urban poor, people attempt to sustain the family with as many workers as possible, not to limit family size. It is in this context that one can begin to comprehend the irrelevancy of population policies (as engendered by family planning programs) to many people in the Third World. For people to be motivated to limit their family size, they must also perceive that there are real opportunities and chances for advancement that this behavior would enhance (van de Walle and Knodel 1980). Those opportunities and chances are seldom evidenced in urban areas where the supply of labor exceeds the demand and also provides the profit structure that multinational corporations seek to sustain.

A final point of contention revolves around the composition of rural-to-urban migration streams. It is a commonly held assumption in the migration literature that men far outnumber women in the early stages of industrialization and that women who do migrate to the urban areas are predominantly single (Boserup 1970). While these patterns may have characterized the early or initial periods of large-scale urbanization, they may (or do) not necessarily hold true today, especially in contexts where penetration by multinational corporations has been intense. Arizpe and Arande (1981) cite an overall decline in the amount of agricultural work involving women in Latin America. They suggest that part of this decline is the result of hiring practices. For example, in strawberry agribusinesses in Mexico, multinational corporations prefer to hire young women of middle-level peasant families rather than women heads of households or poorer female or male laborers. Increasingly, then, it is those women with the most dependents and/or with the least resources and skills who must seek employment in the urban market. As the data in Table 11 indicate, a greater percentage of women reside in urban areas in Latin America. This suggests either past or recent rural-to-urban migration streams favoring women.

Research by Roberts (1975) on poor families in Guatemala and by Nieves (1979) on household arrangements in San Salvador adds further support to this argument. Both authors found that women migrate to cities more often than do men and at younger ages than do men. Nieves (1979) found that in-migrants to cities are increasingly women, their children, and other female relatives who adopt consanguineal household arrangements to accommodate the holding of multiple jobs to sustain the family. Similarly, Safa (1981) discusses the impact of the runaway shop on the family and employment status of women in Third World countries. In the Mexican-United States border region, for example, the traditional family system has been broken up as a result of the employment and hiring practices of multinational corporations and the termination of the bracero program in conjunction with the United States. As a result, thirty percent of men are unemployed; and one in three women employed in the garment industry are heads of households.

The role of women in economic development, in general, and especially in the Third World, has long been ignored. Latin American scholars were the first to tackle this issue in relation to Third World women. Their findings, based on the structural dependency framework, call into question some long-held tenets in the Western literature on economic development. To the extent that such dynamics are operating at an ever-increasing rate in the global economy, more research is necessary, describing the role of women in every mode of production as well as generating new theoretical frameworks in which to study and judge the impacts of the globalization of capital.

What Does the Future Hold?

At the end of World War II, most United States corporate investment was in North and South America because the United States became a global economic power only after 1945. In 1957, 66 percent of United States foreign investments were concentrated in the Western Hemisphere (Dollars and Sense 1981). But this soon began to change as the economies of Europe stabilized. In the last twenty years, United States investments have increasingly focused on the capitalist countries of Western Europe. By 1980, Europe accounted for 45 percent of total United States foreign investment. This shift is the result of increased competition in the Third World as well as nationalist movements and government restrictions in many of these countries. This shift also is the result of over-extension and over-diversification of many United States corporations. As a result, some are in the process of consolidating their interests and seeking out only the surest of operations. Nevertheless, while United States foreign investments in Latin America have dropped from 38.8 percent in 1950 to 17.9 percent in 1980, the profits gained from this region continue to be among the highest and undoubtedly will continue to be sought (Dollars and Sense 1981). Indeed many Latin American countries are currently adopting population distribution policies that encourage investments by multinational corporations.

Population Distribution Policies in Latin America

As previously noted, the failure of agrarian reform programs in Latin America and the increasing control over agricultural lands by agribusinesses have created massive rural-to-urban migration streams as people search for work. Latin American cities are among the fastest-growing in the Third World. Urbanization is occurring without industrialization.

These population concentrations in relatively few urban centers have created massive housing shortages and strains on local government services (see Table 9). Third World cities, full of poor, unemployed or under-employed people, all competing for scarce resources such as jobs, are also breeding grounds for civil disorder. It is probably more than coincidental that it has only been since the entry of multinational corporations and the resultant hyperurbanization of the population that government-controlled social welfare policies have been implemented and expanded in Latin America. Since the mid-1960s, especially, military-backed regimes such as those in Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Peru have sought to frame these social welfare policies in terms of controlling "national security" problems. What these national security concerns refer to is the need to control civil unrest and the unionization of labor in the overcrowded, poverty-stricken, urban areas. Ultimately, these social welfare policies have reinforced, if not intensified, existing inequalities. Because they are urban-based, they have encouraged further rural-to-urban migration and diverted income from the rural sectors (Malloy and Borzutsky 1982).

The national governments are attempting to defuse the situation by encouraging people to relocate in other regions of their countries and other urban areas within those regions. For example, the Brazilian government is trying to encourage its people to relocate in the sparsely populated tropical Amazon Basin, an area unsuitable for intensive farming. Similarly, the Mexican government, alarmed at the fact that every day 1400 people migrate into Mexico City, has adopted a "regional demographic policy." This policy is aimed at reducing Mexico City's share of the national industrial production from 70 percent to 40 percent and its share of the population from 22 percent to 15 percent by the year 2000. To accomplish this, the government has implemented programs encouraging people and industry to move to "rural population centers" along the coasts and in the interior. The government is providing pipelines, electric power, transportation routes, capital investments, as well as large tax credits to encourage investment, including investment by multinational corporations (Population Reference Bureau, Intercom 1981). Whether or not these measures will defuse the frustration of the urban population is highly debatable. They may serve simply to re-create it at other locations.

Latin American countries are not unique in their adoption of population distribution policies that seek either to redistribute people across rural and urban areas or to encourage the relocation of industry to certain locations. In the last decade, nearly all of the African countries south of the Sahara Desert have initiated such measures, as have some Asian countries such as the Republic of Korea and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (Abumere 1981; Nortman and Hofstatter 1979). To some extent the measures utilized to redistribute the population and to create job opportunities take the form of loans, and tax benefits and incentives. These measures often result in capital-intensive, rather than labor-intensive, industries (Fuchs and Demko 1979). A suplus of labor to available employment opportunities results and the vicious circle begins anew.

Conclusions

As a demographer, I do not want to deny the relevance of population processes in societal change and economic development. But, at the same time, as a sociologist, I recognize the overly simplistic demographic determinism and victim-blaming inherent in the neo-Malthusian viewpoint and the United States government's stance on the relationship between population growth and economic development. I have attempted in this paper to show how economic and political decisions, in conjunction with foreign investment, can act on existing demographic realities to perpetuate economic under-development in Latin America. Surely there are other factors, not considered here, that also affect economic development in Third World countries today. But in the end, and in the spirit of parsimony, it would seem that global economics and political decisions have the most direct and immediate impact. As O'Brien (1975) states:

> I am not suggesting that under-development of the Third World is a result of intentional efforts by the developed world, but neither is it the result of misguided benevolent institutions leading to unintentionally negative results. The intention of capital is profit, which, even when it includes the benevolent belief that profit-for-some can be profit-for-all, nevertheless means without some political mechanism for redistribution, an ever-widening gap between those who have more capital and those who have less. There has been no conscious conspiracy to depress the Third World; the unconscious operation of the market has been enough.

Similarly, in this paper, I am not suggesting that there is a conscious scheme to oppress the Third World. I am merely positing that there are structural tendencies inherent in the present global economy that perpetuate economic under-development. To the extent that population policies aimed at containing population growth and directing population distribution are often adopted in response to such under-development, it is not surprising that they are less than adequate as a national response to a global problem.

Table 1

Number of Developing Countries by Government Position on Population Growth and Family Planning, 1979

Government Position	All Developing Countries	Africa	Asia	Latin America and Caribbean
Total	135 (100%)	52 (100%)	48 (100%)	35 (100%)
Official policy to reduce population growth rate	36 (26.6%)	8 (15.4%)	18 (37.5%)	10 (28.5%)*
Official support of family planning activities for other than demographic reasons	31 (22.9%)	17 (32.7%)	3 (6.2%)	11 (31.4%)
Government position unknown	1 (0.8%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (2.1%)	0 (0.0%)
Remainder: no policy to reduce growth rate and no support of family planning activities	67 (49.6%)	27 (51.9%)	26 (54.2%)	14 (40.0%)

*Includes Brazil which in late 1980 changed from a non-policy stance to a direct population policy.

Source: Population and Family Planning Programs: A Compendium of Data Through 1978, Dorthy Nortman and Ellen Hofstatter, New York: The Population Council, 1980. Table 5.

Table 2
Annual Growth Rates by Per Capita Gross National Product,
Developing Countries, 1980

Per Capita GNP (U.S.$)	Annual Rates of Growth (percent) Less than 2.0	2.0 - 2.9	3.0 and over	Total
	(number of developing countries)			
2A. All Developing Countries (Africa, Asia, Latin America)*				
Less than $1000	4	43	21	68
$1000 - $2999	9	18	8	35
Over $3000	7	5	5	17
Total	20	66	34	120
Chi-square = 15.41	Degrees of freedom = 4		Significance = .01 level	
2B. African Countries				
Less than $1000	1	22	17	40
$1000 -$2999	0	5	2	7
Over $3000	2	0	1	3
Total	3	27	20	50
Chi-square = 3.14	Degrees of freedom = 4		Significance = .70 level	
2C. Asian Countries				
Less than $1000	1	14	1	16
$1000 - $2999	2	4	4	10
Over $3000	3	3	3	9
Total	6	21	8	35
Chi-square = 10.82	Degrees of freedom = 4		Significance = .05 level	
2D. Latin American Countries				
Less than $1000	2	7	3	12
$1000 - $2999	7	9	2	18
Over $3000	2	2	1	5
Total	11	18	6	35
Chi-square = 3.13	Degrees of freedom = 4		Significance = .70 level	

*Does not include Somalia, Gaza, Lebanon, Iran, Cambodia, E. Timor, Vietnam, and Taiwan due to lack of GNP figures.

Source: Population Reference Bureau, 1981.

Table 3

Per Capital GNP and Annual Rates of Growth in Per Capita GNP,
Selected Latin American Countries, 1960-79

Country	Per Capita GNP, 1979 ($)	Average Annual Rate of Growth in Per Capita GNP, 1960-79	Average Annual Rate of Inflation (Percent)	
			1960-70	1970-79
Argentina	2230	2.4	21.7	128.2
Brazil	1780	4.8	46.1	32.4
Chile	1690	1.2	32.9	242.6
Mexico	1640	2.7	3.6	18.3
Peru	730	1.7	10.4	26.8
Venezuela	3120	2.7	1.3	10.4

Source: World Development Report, 1981, The World Bank. Table 1.

Table 4

Average Index of Food Production Per Capita,
Selected Latin American Countries, 1977-79

Country	Average Index of Food Production per Capita (1969-71 = 100), 1977-79
Argentina	119
Brazil	115
Chile	95
Mexico	104
Peru	88
Venezuela	100

Source: See Table 3.

Table 5

Structure of Merchandise Exports, Selected Latin American Countries, 1960 and 1978

	Percent Share of Merchandise Exports									
	Fuels		Other Primary Commodities*		Textiles/ Clothing		Machinery & Transport Eqpt.		Other Manufacturing	
Country	1960	1978	1960	1978	1960	1978	1960	1978	1960	1978
Argentina	1	2	95	72	0	3	-	8	4	15
Brazil	8	11	89	55	0	4	-	15	3	15
Chile	92	74	4	21	0	-	0	-	4	5
Mexico	24	39	64	31	4	3	1	10	7	17
Peru	49	46	50	43	0	3	0	1	1	7
Venezuela	74	97	26	1	0	-	0	-	-	2

*Includes food, live animals, beverages, tobacco, inedible crude materials, oil, fats, waxes.

-Indicates negligible amounts.

Source: World Development Report, 1981, The World Bank. Table 9.

Table 6

Structure of Merchandise Imports, Selected Latin American Countries, 1960 and 1978

Country	Percent Share of Merchandise Imports									
	Food		Fuels		Other Primary Commodities		Machinery and Transport Eqpt.		Other Manufacturing	
	1960	1978	1960	1978	1960	1978	1960	1978	1960	1978
Argentina	3	6	13	12	11	9	44	39	29	34
Brazil	14	10	19	33	13	6	36	26	18	25
Chile	-	15	-	16	-	13	-	22	-	34
Mexico	4	13	2	3	10	7	52	45	32	32
Peru	16	16	5	19	5	4	37	33	37	28
Venezuela	18	12	1	1	10	4	36	52	35	31

-Indicates unknown.

Source: World Development Report, 1981, The World Bank. Table 10.

Table 7

Income Distribution, Selected Latin American Countries

Country	Year	Percent Share of Household Income by Percentile Groups of Households					
		Lowest 20%	20-40%	40-60%	60-80%	Highest 20%	Highest 10%
Argentina	1970	4.4	9.7	14.1	21.5	50.3	35.2
Brazil	1972	2.0	5.0	9.4	17.0	66.6	50.6
Chile	1968	4.4	9.0	13.8	21.4	51.4	34.8
Mexico	1977	2.9	7.0	12.0	20.4	57.7	40.6
Peru	1972	1.9	5.1	11.0	21.0	61.0	42.9
Venezuela	1970	3.0	7.3	12.9	22.8	54.0	35.7

Source: World Development Report, 1981, The World Bank. Table 25.

Table 8

Debt Service Ratios, Selected Latin American Countries, 1970 and 1979

	Debt Service* as a Percent of:			
	GNP		Exports of Goods and Services	
Country	1970	1979	1970	1979
Argentina	1.9	1.5	21.5	15.5
Brazil	0.9	3.1	12.4	34.6
Chile	3.1	6.2	18.9	26.2
Mexico	2.1	8.8	24.1	64.1
Peru	2.1	6.6	11.6	22.3
Venezuela	0.7	3.2	2.9	9.4

*Debt service is the sum of interest payments and repayments of principal on external public and publicly guaranteed debt.

Source: World Development Report, 1981, The World Bank. Table 13.

Table 9

Urbanization, Selected Latin American Countries, 1960 and 1980

Country	Percent Urban		Percent of Urban Population: In Largest City		Percent of Urban Population: In Cities of 500,000+		Number of Cities of 500,000+	
	1960	1980	1960	1980	1960	1980	1960	1980
Argentina	74	82	46	45	54	60	3	5
Brazil	46	65	14	16	35	52	6	14
Chile	68	80	38	44	38	44	1	1
Mexico	51	67	28	32	36	48	3	7
Peru	46	67	38	39	38	44	1	2
Venezuela	67	83	26	26	26	44	1	4

Source: World Development Report, 1981, The World Bank. Table 20.

Table 10

Labor Force Activity of Women,
Selected Latin American Countries

Country	Women as a Percent of the Labor Force, 1980	Percent Employed Women in Agriculture, 1975
Argentina	26	4
Brazil	23	17
Chile	25	2
Mexico	19	0.3
Peru	23	16
Venezuela	24	2

Source: Population Reference Bureau, 1980.

Table 11

Percent Urban Residence by Sex,
Selected Latin American Countries, 1975

Country	Percent Urban	
	Male	Female
Argentina	79	82
Brazil	59	62
Chile	77	80
Mexico	62	64
Peru	63	63
Venezuela	79	82

Source: Population Reference Bureau, 1980.

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