

WOMEN, POLITICS AND DEVELOPMENT

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- LATIN AMERICAN WOMEN: HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES*. Edited by ASUNCIÓN LAVRIN. (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1978. Pp. 345. \$22.50.)
- TEN NOTABLE WOMEN-OF LATIN AMERICA*. By JAMES D. HENDERSON and LINDA RODDY HENDERSON. (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, Inc., 1978. Pp. 257. \$15.95.)
- YAQUI WOMEN: CONTEMPORARY LIFE HISTORIES*. By JANE HOLDEN KELLEY. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1978. Pp. 265. \$12.50.)
- NINE MAYAN WOMEN: A VILLAGE FACES CHANGE*. By MARY LINDSAY ELMENDORF. (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1976. Pp. 159. \$10.00.)
- WOMEN IN JAMAICA: PATTERNS OF REPRODUCTION AND FAMILY*. By GEORGE W. ROBERTS and SONJA A. SINCLAIR. (Millwood, NY: KTO Press, 1978. Pp. 346. \$16.00.)
- LA MUJER Y EL DESARROLLO EN COLOMBIA*. Edited by MAGDALENA LEON DE LEAL. (Bogota: ACEP, 1977.)
- MUJER Y CAPITALISMO AGRARIO*. By MAGDALENA LEON DE LEAL. (Bogota: ACEP, 1980.)
- WOMEN AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT: THE COMPLEXITIES OF CHANGE*. Edited by the WELLESLEY EDITORIAL COMMITTEE. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1978. Pp. 346. \$4.95.)
- SUPERMADRE: WOMEN IN POLITICS IN LATIN AMERICA*. By ELSA CHANEY. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1979. Pp. 210. \$14.95.)
- SIGNS: JOURNAL OF WOMEN IN CULTURE AND SOCIETY*. Volume 5, number 1 (Autumn 1979). Special Section "Women in Latin America."

One of the areas of dramatic growth in scholarship on Latin America has been the analysis of women's roles and issues. In the late 1960s, and with great intensity in the 1970s, scholars, activists, and planners turned their attention to that half of Latin Americans about whom little was known and about whom stereotypes proliferated. Several useful and significant books, such as Ann Pescatello's *Female and Male in Latin America: Essays* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1973), called attention to the need for greater investigation into and discussion of this topic. Now a flood of work has been added to the trickle; in fact, scholars interested in work on women in Latin America will find it difficult to keep up with the volume and diversity of publications flowing from Latin America and the

U.S. The ten pieces of current interest and significance reviewed here follow a progression from historical studies through anthropological life histories and analyses of women and development, to a macro-descriptive analysis of women in politics.

Research on women in Latin America is complex and frustrating for a number of reasons. First, the research base on which contemporary scholars build their analyses is still weak; there were simply too few histories written, too little data collected, and virtually no hypotheses generated on the role of women. Second, the emergence of women's research quickly clashed with other conceptual parameters: Should women be separated from the overall system and analyzed in their own right? Would women's roles and issues be more cogently addressed by framing them in macro-theoretical contexts such as dependency theory, colonial and neocolonial institutions, capitalism, or Marxian analysis? Third, studies of women bifurcated into biographical profiles, portraits, and analyses, on the one hand, and studies of groups, households, or communities, on the other; often, vertical and horizontal linkages were overlooked. Fourth, the scholarly community experienced the trauma of "investigator legitimacy." In the early 1970s it was not uncommon for male researchers to be viewed with suspicion when they became involved in research on women or even to be asked to leave organizational meetings on women's issues. This atmosphere was a byproduct of the intensity with which the women's movement came into existence. Accompanying this early identification of research about women with women's advocacy there was also an emphasis on women *researchers* (not just women's research), and it is fair to say that male investigators shied away from or felt that it was inappropriate for them to study women's issues.

Research on Latin American women has tried to meet a variety of objectives. One of these is research as *advocacy*—the need to raise consciousness, to change values, to forge ahead. Another has been to provide technical evaluations and technical resources for "development" policy. Still another argument for doing women's research is simply because so little has been done. Finally, research has been carried out to balance the scales of wisdom and information—if existing studies are on "elite" women like Eva Perón, studies of peasant women are needed to complete the picture. This extraordinary range is a tribute to the elasticity and innovativeness of the researchers. Moreover, while disorderly and at times chaotic, this approach has produced at least a beginning for many of the areas of research that should be touched. The selections under consideration here continue this interdisciplinary, multipurpose, and multimethodological advance into women's research.

Latin American Women: Historical Perspectives helps to consolidate the foundation of case studies of past accomplishments by Latin Ameri-

can women. The twelve essays touch on material related to women from the sixteenth through the early twentieth century. Asunción Lavrin notes that the book avoids the temptation of following the “. . . ‘great woman syndrome,’ whereby only prominent females are the subject of what pretends to be the history of Latin American women” (p. 4). Instead, more complex social, economic, and political contexts are explored; in addition, the essays stress women’s active roles and special areas of influence. It becomes clear from reading this book that the search behind traditional discussions of women produces a rich and exciting variety of significant ways in which women were fundamental to the growth and development of Latin American societies.

Lavrin’s opening chapter on Mexico and A. J. R. Russell-Woods’ on Brazil provide useful overviews of social processes, primarily among white women. Family responsibilities, although well researched before, emerge here in more complicated form. For example, Lavrin discusses restrictive legal constraints on women only to suggest that this often did not prevent them from marrying outside their class or race. Women also are seen as managers of important economic assets, primarily through dowries and wills, that often placed them in central roles for cementing kinship networks and contributing to the consolidation of family alliances. Two important points are raised here and reinforced in other chapters of this book: first, women were individuals who carried out independent activities at home and in society rather than shadows or passive subordinates of husband and family; second, women were viewed as the embodiment of marriage and family and, as a result, they were expected to be both the *protector* of these institutions and at the same time *protected* themselves by church and state. These observations are helpful in understanding many of the norms and institutional arrangements that evolved in Latin America over the past four hundred years. Russell-Wood’s chapter on colonial Brazil parallels the marital, economic, and social discussion in Lavrin. However, partly because of the existence of slavery in a less urban setting, Brazilian women appear to have been less active and less enterprising than their Mexican counterparts.

One comes away from these two chapters somewhat uneasy because the arguments do not rest on a sufficient data base to be evaluated quantitatively; the authors are talking about a rather small, though certainly significant, segment of Mexican and Brazilian women. If women indeed were an economic and social force in the colonial and early independence periods, the subsequent essays detail more specifically what form this took. Elinor C. Burkett’s chapter on Indian women in sixteenth-century Peru explores the opportunities that Indian women may have found open to them in Peru *because* they were women: “. . . Spanish sexism tended to mitigate Spanish racism, thus allowing the

indigenous female more opportunity than the indigenous male" (p. 122). The juxtaposition and interaction of two separate forms of discrimination form an imaginative matrix in this piece.

Shifting from the lower to the upper class, Edith Couturier analyzes several generations of the Counts of Regla women in New Spain. This study is important insofar as it tests the impact of industrialization, urbanization, greater educational opportunities, new career possibilities, and so forth on the internal structure of the family as it affects women. Ann Miriam Gallagher R.S.M. and Susan A. Soeiro describe the life and contributions of nuns (a vocation that was legitimate and encouraged for women) in Mexico and Bolivia, and Brazil, respectively. Soeiro's description of the nunnery as a place of refuge for women who were guilty of violating "patriarchal canons of behavior" (especially adulteresses) is a rather sad commentary on the brutal relations between the sexes. Both chapters also offer valuable insights into the social and economic status of women.

Johanna S. R. Mendelson and June E. Hahner deal with women and the press. Mendelson argues that, as a new awareness of women appeared in the Spanish American press, the issue of women's education emerges with great intensity. Another theme, found by the author in articles about women written during that time, was the critical significance of class in determining women's roles. One concludes, however, that despite an interest in and recognition of women, it was not until the wars of independence that women's roles and self-perception began to take on new form.

Evelyn Cherpak's study of women's contributions to the independence struggle in northern South America examines the more active and dynamic expansion of women's activities. Women played a variety of roles during the wars against Spain, especially as soldiers and camp followers. Cherpak argues that only the former are remembered because their roles more closely paralleled men's. Despite their contributions, women did not receive any recognition or reward for their performance or sacrifice.

After 1830, charity work, education, and feminist activities became avenues for self-expression. Cynthia Jeffries Little does a neat case study of the evolution and interaction of these three in Argentina from 1860 to 1926. Church charities had often been identified with women's work, and this avenue expanded as the Church lost ground and lay societies, such as the Sociedad de Beneficiencia in Buenos Aires, grew. Little points out that these opportunities, as well as those in education, provided women with the skills to become at least partially employed. In turn, this new self-reliance, coupled with a growing philosophical commitment to feminism, contributed importantly to women's self-awareness. Little argues that early Argentine feminism did not have the

ambitious aggressiveness to push for extensive change in women's status. However, its successful 1926 reform of the Civil Code set in motion the future progressive reform of existing statutory repression of women's rights.

June E. Hahner describes how a sector of educated and motivated women in Brazil used a new vehicle, the printing press, as a means of forcing dialogue on and awareness of women's issues, especially among the middle class. The two salient themes of this Brazilian feminist press were an insistence on the intellectual equality of women and men which would justify or necessitate complete educational opportunities for women, and the need for women's legal rights both in the home and in society at large.

But if women were indeed aware and becoming increasingly restless about their needs and requirements, Anna Macia's study of women's liberation in Yucatán, Mexico, under Felipe Carrillo Puerto, reminds us that women themselves were of different minds as to what liberation meant. Among the reforms instituted in Mexico were birth control and legal divorce. However, in the Mexico of the mid-1920s, radical reform such as this often triggered a negative reaction, much of it coming from women themselves. Macia argues that this reaction probably reinforced the conservatives' argument that feminism was dangerous.

Lavrin set out to avoid commissioning ". . . compensatory history, which tries to redeem the anonymity of the many through the brilliance of the few" (p. 4). This the book eminently accomplishes. However, at times one becomes frustrated with the fragmentary nature of its overall structure, the thematic diversity of the chapters, and the only fleeting transitions of thought and content between sections. Despite the strong introductory and useful concluding essays by Lavrin, the book's primary value is as a source and documentation of the range of endeavors in which women have engaged in Latin America. It is, in the final analysis, a sort of "compensatory history" because it tries to redress the image of passivity, simplicity, and irrelevance that has burdened Latin American women for so many generations.

Ten Notable Women of Latin America is a curious collection of biographical sketches held together by the sex of the protagonists. It is doubtful that one can find a book about ten Latin American men written with as much feeling as the social histories of Malinche, Ines de Suarez, the Nun Ensign (Catalina de Erauzo), Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz, Policarpa Salvarrieta, Archduchess Leopoldina of Hapsburg, Mariana Grajales, Gabriela Mistral, Eva Perón, and Tamara Bunke "Tania."

This book is clearly "compensatory history." Nonetheless it serves a purpose in two respects. First, it is readable biographical history and can be enjoyed as well as understood by nonacademics; thus, its potential for reaching beyond the university community to break down stereo-

types and correct misinformation about Latin American women is valuable. Second, the study can be viewed as a chronological history of Latin America using women as the main characters. This affords us a view, from a somewhat unusual angle, of the conquest, colonial independence, and early republican and mid-twentieth century political-economic struggles in Latin America. Looking at Chile through the lens of Gabriela Mistral, for example, provides a new awareness of not only her own life experiences, but also her country's experiences. The personalization of Latin America that the Hendersons achieve may not carry conceptual depth or construct mechanisms that help to move forward the study of women's issues; however, at a time when biography is not as popular a genre as group and process analyses, descriptive narrative sketches of Latin American women have their place in contemporary scholarship.

Biography of a different sort is represented by the four life histories in *Yaqui Women*. The first seventy-five pages of Jane Holden Kelley's study spell out in great detail the methodology of using life histories as a source of insight into culture. On the assumption that anthropologists need to study *individuals* (as well as cultures, societies, or large segments of both), the author focuses on several themes that emerge from the lives of the four women described, including the role of the household in helping to structure interpersonal relationships, general behavioral constellations, emotional bonds, ritual kinship, obligations, and coping with stress and hospitality.

Yaqui Women shows a web of complex linkages among people, institutions, and time. One often gets lost in the maze of relationships and characters in the lives of these women, much like that of a Russian historical novel. After travelling through the Yaqui wars, deportation from Sonora, life in the armies of the Mexican Revolution, life in Arizona to escape persecution, a return to Yaqui villages after the Revolution, and finally coming to rest in the contemporary Yaqui communities, one is exhausted. If anyone still thinks of women as passive and restricted individuals, reading the life histories of Dominga Tava, Chepa Moreno, Dominga Ramirez, and Antonia Valenzuela should put all doubts to rest. For example, of Dominga Tava the author says: "In her seventies at the time of the interviews, Dominga was constantly and efficiently in action, deeply involved in a large and far-flung network of kinship and ritual kin relationships, with their attendant obligations, and with her ceremonial work" (p. 125).

Although touching on the case studies of only four women belonging to a rather small cultural group, the book suggests that society can be described just as well by women, telling of the events through which they have passed, as by men. Nonetheless, it would be theoretically valuable to compare the convergences and conflicts in responses or

interpretations given by Yaqui women and men, and the absence of what might be called the comparative gender-based informant approach is a limiting factor of this study.

Mary Elmendorf's *Nine Mayan Women*, from the village of Chan Kom, is more methodologically diverse than the Yaqui study. Her case studies of nine key women technically occupy only chapter two. Chapter one is a background section on the study and on the study of the Mayan peoples (including Chan Kom which, thanks to Robert Redfield and Alfonso Villa Rojas, is one of the best-known villages in Latin America). Chapter three is called "Analysis of Data" which it is not—it is an expanded reflection on the preceding vignettes interwoven with references to other studies on the Maya. There is no "data" in the usual sense of the word—no statistics or systematic findings. The book is no doubt useful and part of a legacy of building insights into the Maya. Most readers will, however, find it disorganized and, perhaps, over-ambitious in its objectives ("It is my hope that this study has furnished some new information, new insights into the cross-cultural study of women, new knowledge of Chan Kom, and perhaps shed new light on the impact of 'progress' and 'traditionalism,'" p. 130). The author appears to have invested too much emotion in the project; there are constant references, also, to her being amazed by this or that: "In many ways . . . much of the value of the experience of learning for me was in the mutuality of the process" (p. 130).

If the preceding pieces were personal and, in significant measure, biographical, three of the other books represent the opposite extreme. *La mujer y el desarrollo en Colombia*, the more recent *Mujer y capitalismo agrario*, and *Women in Jamaica: Patterns of Reproduction and Family* are complex, macro-analytical studies.

Women in Jamaica reports the work of a major study sponsored by the American Association for the Advancement of Science, under an A.I.D. grant, administered by the Research Institute for the Study of Man and carried out by the Census Research Program of the University of the West Indies. The study focuses on changes in the West Indian family, examining three types of unions—married, common-law and visiting. It also describes and analyzes social and biological aspects of reproduction and child care—infant mortality, breast feeding, family planning, knowledge of reproduction and menstruation, etc.

Relying on a relatively extensive base of existing information, the study used a survey questionnaire technique, semistructured, with the addition of tape-recorded responses that permitted content analysis. Vera Rubins, then Director of the Research Institute for the Study of Man (and Woman, as this book suggests!) notes in her introduction that the West Indian family has traditionally been viewed as "unstable," with a high incidence of "illegitimacy," "marginal parenthood," and so on.

While technically, and in the eyes of the outside analyst, this is correct, this work suggests that these mating and childraising patterns are really quite complex and, therefore, difficult to evaluate.

Among the findings of this study are that: (1) there is a mating pattern in which younger women enter into visiting unions, with an increase, at a later age, in common-law or marriage union; (2) visiting unions exhibit relatively great contact between the father and his children; (3) the man and woman, even though they do not share a common household, make joint decisions and discuss such topics as the proper functioning of the family; (4) different unions have contrasting status connotations—marriage being highest, visiting second, and common-law last; (5) there is a fourth form of union—casual—associated with sexual contact, which ends when the woman becomes pregnant; (6) one-third of the women have no knowledge of the reproduction process; (7) the social implications of visiting unions do not confirm the belief that they constitute a hardship for women; (8) the choice to “marry” appears to be made by a woman only after becoming convinced that this will be a positive benefit to her and her children; and (9) women’s attitudes about menstruation and widespread lack of knowledge of the reproductive process discourage the use of contraceptives that interrupt the menstrual cycle.

These are only nine of the conclusions reached by the study. It becomes clear from them, however, that this type of research on women in Latin America is valuable not only for planning, public health, education, and other development-oriented policies, but also provides systematic quantitative insight into women’s behavior and the links between women and societal institutions. Rubin remarks: “It is of considerable interest that emergent forms of mating in North America appear to approximate the controversial visiting union. The free and more egalitarian sexuality sought by middle-class women’s movements in North America apparently exists among working-class Jamaican women as a matter of course” (p. xxi). Thus, the search for paradigms and historical parallels, for changes and continuities, and especially the search for cross-national clues on women’s issues is significantly advanced by such studies as *Women in Jamaica*.

La mujer y el desarrollo en Colombia is an ambitious study by nine principal investigators, launched by the Asociación Colombiana para el Estudio de la Población (ACEP) in 1973 and completed in 1977. It deals with women’s political participation; women in the educational system; the health condition of women; women and work; legal norms affecting women in health, work, and education; women and family law; and women’s status in the family. These functionally specific chapters are preceded by an excellent methodological and theoretical description of the study and a very brief discussion of women’s participation theory.

In the review chapter, Magdalena Leon de Leal argues that women's roles can be viewed as part of the development of capitalist structures as reflected in the specific social formations of society. Women are not viewed as a homogeneous group but instead as different groups belonging to various social classes. Unfortunately this discussion is brief. A more extensive treatment would have provided helpful clarification of a major obstacle to the growth of cross-cultural generalizations about women and development. Likewise, the absence of a conclusion weakens the theory-building process so that this book remains a configurational study of women in Colombia.

The seven chapters provide valuable insights and afford an excellent historical perspective on the opportunities for and roles of women in a society undergoing rapid changes. For example, in the chapter on women's political participation, Patricia Pinzon de Lewin and Dora Rothlisberger find that: women vote less than men but not by overwhelming proportions (by 10–20 percent); women rarely go beyond voting to participate more actively in demonstrations, meetings, campaigns, parties, and positions in government (only 5 percent of women do these); women tend to back traditional, more conservative parties somewhat more strongly than men; women are nonparticipants in politics by higher rates than men because they are not interested in politics; the family is the strongest political reference point for women, while the workplace and peer groups are stronger sources of political identification for men; women's political groups have not penetrated the society and generally provide access only for upper-class women to positions in the political party hierarchies; while numerically women are scarce in the overall volume of leadership positions, there are unusually high numbers of prominent women at the highest national levels; and men and women alike (women slightly *more* than men) reject the presidential qualification of a woman (76 percent said no). Women's participation is related to social and economic factors normally associated with political behavior. Higher levels of education, income, and urbanization produce higher participation rates. Moreover, social roles inherited from a patrimonial past still reinforce women's family-oriented behavior and are demonstrated by low percentages of women in leadership positions in business, medicine, science and other sectors as well.

Similar processes explain women's participation in the educational system. Hernando Ochoa Nunez shows that women have made enormous strides over the past three decades in gaining access to the educational structures of society. Special girls curricula preparing them as homemakers have given way to more uniform grade-school preparation. The tendency for women in secondary education to study for a career as teachers and the early tendency of women to go to female colleges have been changing. However, women still represent a small

proportion (30 percent) of university students. Once again, class and size of city have a favorable impact on women's education.

As one would expect, gender has a very distinct impact on health-related conditions in Colombia. Women's health problems are highest in connection with pregnancies and births, while men suffer from accidents three to four times more often than women. Mortality rates are far higher for men than women: life expectancy averages 61.8 years for women and 58.6 years for men. Women see a doctor more frequently than men. High birth rates and a resulting very young population (roughly 45 percent is under fifteen years of age) is an extremely significant factor in explaining women's health situation and obviously also serves as a signal point of reference for understanding other roles and the problems women face in Colombia. Eighty percent of women and 71 percent of men do not belong to any health insurance plan. This, coupled with the obvious positive correlation between income and medical services use, produces, in a low per-capita income country such as Colombia, a less than satisfactory health services situation.

In an important piece on women and work, Cecilia Lopez de Rodriguez and Leon de Leal discuss the methodological problems faced in describing women's labor force participation. They argue that, traditionally, in a country like Colombia, women have contributed significantly to the family and the community as well as to national and even foreign trade. Artisan work, making clothes, weaving, repairing and knotting fishing nets, hatmaking, pottery, straw weaving, and making cigars are some of the areas in which women have always predominated. These, as well as agricultural production, have been areas of activity that have escaped much of the official statistics gathering on work.

Their figures for changes in the measurable work force participation of women in Colombia are startling because of the dramatic shifts since 1938. In that year women made up 33.4 percent of the primary sector labor force, dropping to 4 percent in 1973. In the secondary sector the drop was from 36.4 to 12.5 percent in the respective years. In the tertiary or service sector, the jump is large, 29 percent to 45 percent. Once again education, income, and the nature of a rapidly developing economy are the primary factors explaining women's income sources and contributions to economic activity.

The remaining three chapters on constitutional norms, family law, and women's status complement each other, although no effort is made to tie them together directly. A woman's function as *mother* and her responsibilities vis-à-vis children seem to form the core of traditional social policy and law. Health provisions affecting women were once almost exclusively related to women as conceivers, bearers, and deliverers of children. Labor laws also have addressed and continue to

point to the special situation of women's maternal responsibilities. Delina Guarín de Vizcaya's chapter concludes that, ironically, labor laws do not adequately protect women (and their children) in the tertiary sector, the home, and in rural areas, the areas where they are found in greatest number.

Virginia Gutierrez de Pineda, the dean of scholars working on the Colombian family, has written a masterful piece on women's status in the Colombian family. An opening discussion carefully spells out the filagree-like intricacies of the family and other institutions; the ascriptive and achieved components of status and role; the impact of society and culture on gender behavior. This is followed by careful historical reviews of the two stages of female status-role dynamics in Colombia: the colonial and republic period, 1499–1830, and contemporary society, 1930–75.

In the first period women, especially indigenous women, were considered minors, were virtually placed under a parent-like stewardship of males and society, and bore the total burden of fidelity, honor, lineage, and legitimacy. The internal power structure was disadvantageous to women, often even placing the mother in an ambiguous position vis-à-vis her sons. Indigenous communities promoted a filial interdependence between male and female, and participation in production, family life, social structure, and the transmission of blood lines and inheritance were recognized. In the second period, socioeconomic changes and increasing cultural complexity produced a quilt-like pattern of regional, geographic-cultural diversities. Three family modalities are identified, each manifesting various permutations of dependency and autonomy in women's relationships and functions. A final section deals with family decision making and female status.

Having constructed this elaborate and significant taxonomy of women's family configurations, it is unfortunate that Gutierrez de Pineda does not reach any sharper conclusions about the impact of her findings on Colombian society. One would especially like to see some strong hypotheses about the self-perpetuating effect on the children of traditional women's roles in traditionally structured families. Likewise, one would like to see judgments made on the intangible consequences, the trade-offs, so to speak, of various types of male-female roles-status.

With the completion of this study by ACEP, the need became apparent to zoom in on the position of women in the rural sector. The 1980 release of *Mujer y capitalismo agrario* is the result of this team research. One should note in passing that both of these studies overlook large parts of the international literature on women in development and, in particular, on women in Colombia. This seems an unnecessary oversight in light of so many excellent publications, such as Meri Knaster's seminal piece in the LARR (vol. 11, no. 1 [1976]:3–74). It would have

been extremely helpful if this larger literature had been incorporated and critiqued in the course of these two analyses.

By integrating data on the household as well as broad economic changes, the authors of *Mujer y capitalismo agrario* propose that “. . . analysis of the social differentiation in the rural areas allows us to connect changes in production relations and the formation of classes with the gender-based division of labor and reproduction in the campesino family.” Access to the means of production, thus the material base of families, is the critical juncture that helps explain fertility, migration, family structure, etc. Access to the means of production resulted in four types of Colombian agriculture from which the sample districts for the study were drawn: regions of mechanized agriculture, coffee-producing regions, areas of traditional agriculture, and traditional cattle-raising latifundios. The specific analysis of permutations in women’s linkages with economic structures and changes in capital and labor demand is fascinating. This study is an excellent analysis of agricultural change in Colombia, and the methodology allows one to follow the degree of labor force exploitation of both men and women. The typology of agricultural forms is in itself a handy tool for research and theory building in agricultural economics, agronomy, marketing, and other disciplines.

One weakness of the book is its failure to generalize, to reach conclusions, and to point to further comparative research on the subject; this is a case study of Colombia and suffers from the usual limitations of case studies. A second weakness is its theoretical isolation: if indeed the crucial variable in understanding women’s roles is the capitalist evolution of the economy, it would be interesting to know if *noncapitalist* systems (for example, the Cuban) exhibit dramatically different patterns. Moreover it is not clear if we would find regional peculiarities and production-related distinctions (for example, on cattle ranches as opposed to vegetable truck farms) even in noncapitalist countries. While there is great significance and validity in the “dependent capitalism” approach for studying Latin America’s problems, its potential evolution is rarely examined: Will the economic and social processes eventually engage more women in production and social roles such as those found in nondependent capitalism? How did rural women participate in the family and economy during past stages of, for example, the United States? Are there similarities between these and the Colombian pattern? Thus the greatest weakness of *Mujer y capitalismo agrario* is that it does not take us beyond the contemporary context toward alternative future patterns and an understanding of what those will be like.

The six papers on Latin America in the “Wellesley Conference” book, *Women and National Development*, all deal with women and work. Even Marysa Navarro’s piece on Eva Perón in Argentina highlights the

importance of her role vis-à-vis the *descamisados* and the Argentine labor movement. Navarro's short paper is a summary of most of what has been written about this interesting woman. She stresses the dependent relationship of Eva to Juan Domingo Perón, concluding with the observation that while he conferred power on her, when she died in 1952 he was unable to recapture for himself the special constituency she had nurtured.

Norma Chinchilla and Lourdes Arizpe argue that to understand the changing methods of economic production and their consequences for women's status, class structure must be examined. In her study of monopoly capitalism and industrialization in Guatemala, Chinchilla demonstrates that competitive capitalism in the developed countries and early, national dependent capitalism in Latin America absorbed large numbers of women into new industrial enterprises. However, she argues, with the advent of monopoly capitalism in development, uneducated women, especially in the cities, are permanently relegated to marginal, tertiary-sector employment, especially as domestic servants. She concludes that "Industrial growth, once the liberal panacea to poverty and backward ideas about women's place, becomes linked to increased poverty and feudal patriarchy. Modernity and backwardness in employment and in the status of women arrive in the same package" (p. 56). The political consequences are that "Industrial growth under imperialism thus generates and accentuates many of the contradictions it was supposed to solve and in so doing creates its own opposition. . . . The struggle of women is inseparable from the struggle of the majority of the population for survival" (p. 56).

In a parallel vein, Arizpe analyzes women in Mexico City's informal labor sector, arguing that the nature of Latin American and Mexican development has created a significant pool of women who cannot work in full-time labor categories, such as laborers, professionals, white-collar workers or store owners; they are locked into menial work as street vendors or domestic servants. Class becomes a crucial point in determining if women have a choice in their employment situation: middle- and upper-class women can refuse a job, but poor women *must* produce an income to support themselves and their families. Because of the flourishing informal economy, the Mexican government can avoid aggressively enlarging and improving full-time job opportunities for women. We are left to conclude that, barring any major new and creative turns in the nature of Mexican economic performance and/or government policy toward women, informal labor will remain the only recourse for poor, uneducated females.

Taking the analysis of women as domestic servants one step further, Elizabeth Jelin concentrates on rural migrant women who take up this form of employment in cities. Domestic servants have an impact on

the nature of family life in households employing maids. More importantly, however, Jelin argues that this form of work gives us important insights into the economics of the servants' own households: "Housework and domestic production, differential participation in the labor force, the existence and use of paid domestic service, and the unequal division of labor between men and women in these tasks—all of these are interrelated phenomena that can be fully understood only if conceptualized as specific aspects of the organization of households" (pp. 140–41). Especially interesting and important for understanding migration, urbanization, and development is her observation that: "Even migration to the city should be seen not as an individual or isolated event but as part of the strategy of survival of the rural household" (p. 141).

Yolanda T. Moses writes about family status and female economic contributions to the household in Montserrat, British West Indies, where males are deemed household "heads" even when women earn more money. Following other researchers' approaches, Moses stratifies her study along class lines, comparing employed, working-class women's decision-making power with that of middle-class women. She concludes that middle-class women achieve more mobility, higher income, or better jobs and housing but internalize the dominance of the male partner more than working-class women. Moreover, Montserrat women claim that men are supposed to be the "head" while socializing the boys in their own life to be lazy or irresponsible, smothering them with attention; at the same time, they teach the girls to be responsible, independent, and flexible: "Both men and women learn contradictory ideal sex roles that they cannot fulfill" (p. 153).

Why do both men and women suffer from underemployment and marginalization as Latin American economies industrialize? In the Brazilian case, argues Glaura Vasques de Miranda, "dependent capitalist development" stimulates a class-based system of differential opportunities (especially occupational). These, for example as manifested by unequal opportunities for schooling, lead to fewer job opportunities, with women bearing an even heavier burden in this respect than men. De Miranda concludes that women end up being forced into the tertiary sector in excessively large numbers and will be for the foreseeable future.

Perhaps one of the most significant pieces in this book is the short discussion by Ximena Bunster B. on using still photography, or "talking pictures," in conjunction with a carefully prepared, open-ended interviewing technique. Its application by an interdisciplinary team in Lima, Peru, is carefully discussed. An outline-form appendix of the talking pictures kit should encourage others to use this methodology.

One of the scholars participating in the "talking pictures" project was Elsa Chaney. Her timely, long-awaited, and extremely important

book, *Supermadre*, helps to integrate much of the research on women in Latin America. Chaney's review of the literature, explaining women's virtual absence from decision-making structures and institutions, is carefully and lucidly developed. She concludes that the motherhood role has the most profound effect on channeling women's political energies. The second part of the book is a review of images about women and women's participation in Latin America. Her historical treatment of cultural, religious, and literary factors affecting women, from colonial to contemporary times, touches on *machismo*, the *mujer decente*, *marianismo*, the "inferior woman" theme of religion, the chivalric idea of *caballeria* in Hispanic literature, and the preeminence of *la mama* in Latin American society. This is a helpful background to the book's sharply focused examination of women in government and politics, emphasizing the contrasting cases of Peru and Chile.

Using historical material, interviews, sketches of women in politics and government, voting data, and surveys, Chaney traces the slow evolution of voting rights and voting participation, noting that while gross voting figures suggest that women are more politically conservative than men, age and social class are more accurate explanations for this phenomenon than sex. She also discusses the difficulties involved in gaining political party leadership roles, noting that there are few women in upper-level government positions in Latin America. At the local level, women hold positions in somewhat greater numbers, but their participation is still small and short lived. Chaney concludes by saying: "The key to women's winning a share of political power and exercising it on their own terms may lie [in precisely their minority status which makes them more determined to struggle], along with the necessity of fostering a successor cohort with sufficient members so that there is a critical mass to continue the momentum toward change" (p. 166).

Fostering cohorts in the community of scholars working on women's roles in Latin America was also the purpose of the first general women's studies meeting in Latin America, held in Mexico City, November 1977. The Autumn 1979 issue of *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* contains a special section on Latin America that offers in revised form some of the papers presented at that conference.

Nora Lustig and Teresa Rendon's article on female employment and family in Mexico City adds new richness to the discussion of informal labor in Mexico by Arizpe. Using a subsample of 4,458 families they formulated six hypotheses for testing that specified under what conditions female participation in work for pay would be greatest. "We would like to stress that the most dramatic finding of the study was that female labor participation decreased among women from families in the lowest-income stratum."

After reviewing the small number of women holding high public office in Brazil, Eva Alterman Blay reviews the process whereby sixty women became mayors (1972–76) in municipalities where the post is filled by election. Women have not fared well as appointees and have not even had a significant proportion of mayoralities (only 1.5 percent of all prefects). Therefore the analysis explains instead where, how, and why the women who did win elections were able to do so. Her conclusions are important for those doing future work on women in politics in the rest of Latin America: “We saw that the female mayors are elected principally in the poorest, least industrialized, and least urbanized states. Thus we can no longer contend that the political participation of women will lead to their liberation only when the economic and industrial structure of the country has expanded” (p. 58).

Moreover, she notes that primary or secondary school education is sufficient for women to be elected in a country where illiteracy predominates. She finds two types of women active in local politics: women of the latifundist oligarchy and women of the emergent petite bourgeoisie. The former tend to work for maintaining the power held by their family group in the community; the latter may be interested in a political career for themselves or their husbands, or more frequently are interested in the development of the municipality itself. Finally, male emigration often leaves women as heads of households, allows them to assume normally male roles (mayor), and encourages them to fill the social vacuum created by the emigrated males.

Isabel Nieves, writing about household arrangements and jobs in San Salvador, El Salvador, indicates that women there outnumber men among rural-urban migrants. Contrasting the family (kinship links among members) with the household (a group of people living together), she explores the patterns by which persons adapt to the urban environment. One of her most important conclusions is that a household “. . . can reduce its membership when it suffers a sudden drop in cash income, or expand when economic conditions are good, removing the burden from other households that are suffering hardships” (p. 140). Her study should be carefully considered by planners and social policymakers because it provides invaluable evidence on employment and economic “coping” among a group of ever-increasing migrant households.

Three pieces in this issue of *Signs* deal with literature: a translator’s note, a piece on poetess Sor Juana Inez de la Cruz by Octavio Paz and translated by Diane Marting, and a fascinating interview with Costa Rican novelist, poet, essayist, and politician-diplomat Carmen Naranjo by Lourdes Arizpe. These selections reflect some of those rare moments when humanistic insights move aside the often too intrusive equations and statistical tables of the social sciences.

Larissa Lomnitz and Marisol Perez-Lizaur investigate the descendants of Carlos Gomez (1825–76), a small-town merchant from Puebla. The short report on this huge clan, its intricate patterns of supports, linkages, information exchanges, and patron-client relations whets our appetite for a more extensive treatment of this important but understudied part of Latin American society and women's kinship roles in upper-class clans.

Besides a useful note on the first feminist congress in Mexico in 1916 by Alaide Foppa and a research note on the women's suffrage movement in Brazil by June Hahner, this volume also contains an important review essay, "Research on Latin American Women," by Marysa Navarro. She explains and illustrates, better than any of the other pieces reviewed here, the propensity of Latin American (as opposed to U.S.) researchers to address theoretical and methodological problems that help to explain social inequalities in Latin America.

At the outset of this review it was suggested that scholarship on women's roles has been one of the fastest growing areas of research on Latin America. The ten pieces presented here, many of them containing multiple contributions, confirms the extent of this work; standing on their own, each adds valuable insights to the body of knowledge and many of the studies contribute theoretical perspectives. However, several considerations should be raised here.

First, most of the works are not systemically comparative. This is a disadvantage because we are often left with insufficient controls on the research to validate the conclusions. Second, the lack of sample controls is more generally reflected in methodological unevenness; hypotheses are not carefully spelled out nor is research conducted to test these hypotheses. Third, the larger objectives of changes in women's roles are often not explained. For example, if indeed there are few women in higher government positions, what range of growth or decline or what rate or ratio of women's participation would be significant? While these may seem to be rather academic questions, their answers might allow the reader to gauge change more easily. Fourth, material in this research will rarely reach beyond the community of Latin Americanists or scholars of women's research to influence other potential "users," such as administrators in charge of university programs. Fifth, despite its importance, these works are not addressed to bureaucratic planners and decision makers. None of these studies takes into account the crowded calendar and distinct interests of action-oriented persons in the way that, for example, Ester Bosserup and Christina Liljenrantz do in the conclusion of *Integration of Women in Development* (New York: UNDP, 1975). Moreover, if dependency model advocates are correct, efforts at incremental changes in women's roles within a system plagued by profound structural problems must be discouraging.

International conferences, such as the 1976 Wellesley meeting, the 1977 Mexican-Central American Symposium on Research on Women (Mexico City), and the 1978 Brazilian conference on women in the labor force in Latin America, as well as panels, like "Women in Twentieth-Century Latin American Politics" convened by Sandra McGee at the 1980 Latin American Studies Association meeting, contribute greatly to scholarly exchange. However, the study of women in Latin America still suffers from a dispersion and particularism that continues to hinder theory building. Perhaps the exceptions are the increasing studies on *dependencia* and women's roles. Here, we would argue, a sufficiently rich accumulation of case studies is in place to facilitate systematic, comparative, evaluative, and theoretical research. A second area, labor-force studies on women, is also beginning to take shape. On the other hand, public opinion research, women in political party and linkage situations, local power structure roles of women, analyses of women policymakers, and sophisticated work on voting behavior are among the areas under-represented in the material we have covered. One hopes that the next decade will see some of these loose ends tied and with that experience research on women in Latin America will come into its own.