EnGENDERing
Wealth and Well-Being
Latin America in Global Perspective

The fundamental purpose of this multivolume series is to broaden conceptual perspectives for the study of Latin America. This effort responds to a perception of need. Latin America cannot be understood in isolation from other parts of the world. This has always been so; it is especially true in the contemporary era.

Accordingly, the goal of this series is to demonstrate the desirability and the feasibility of analyzing Latin America in comparative perspective, in conjunction with other regions, and in global perspective, in the context of worldwide processes. A subsidiary purpose is to establish a bridge between Latin American "area studies" and mainstream social science disciplines, to the mutual benefit of both. Ultimately, the intent is to explore and emphasize intellectual challenges posed by dynamic changes within Latin America and in its relation to the international arena.

The present volume examines the impact of economic change on gender and on women's roles in Latin America and other parts of the world. The keynote volume for the series, *Latin America in Comparative Perspective: New Approaches to Methods and Analysis*, explores theoretical and methodological issues involved in the comparative analysis of Latin America. Other studies in this series will include:

- *Domestic Politics and Global Environmental Policy*, edited by Gordon MacDonald, Daniel Nielsen, and Marc Stern;
- *Civil-Military Relations After the Cold War*, edited by David Mares;
- *Cooperation or Rivalry? Regional Integration in the Americas and the Pacific Rim*, edited by Shoji Nishijima and Peter H. Smith.

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EnGENDERing
Wealth and Well-Being

Empowerment for Global Change

edited by
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Cathy A. Rakowski
Irene Tinker
Michael Monteón

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Rae Lesser Blumberg
Cathy A. Rakowski
Irene Tinker
Michael Monteón
### Acronyms

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>AD</td>
<td>Acción Democrática (Democratic Action)</td>
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<tr>
<td>AFL-CIO</td>
<td>American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations</td>
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<td>AMAVEN</td>
<td>Asociación de Mujeres y Ambiente de Venezuela (Venezuelan Association of Women and Environment)</td>
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<tr>
<td>AMIGRANSA</td>
<td>Asociación de Amigos en Defensa de La Gran Sabana (Association of Friends in Defense of the Great Savannah)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CBI</td>
<td>Caribbean Basin Initiative</td>
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<tr>
<td>CESAP</td>
<td>Centro de Formación a Servicio de la Acción Popular (Social Movement Training Center)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIPAF</td>
<td>Centro de Investigación para la Acción Femenina (Research Center for Feminism)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CONFEVECINOS</td>
<td>Coordinadora Nacional de Federaciones de Vecinos (National Coordinator of Neighborhood Federations)</td>
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<td>COPAN</td>
<td>Comité Patriótico Nacional (National Patriotic Committee)</td>
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<tr>
<td>COWAN</td>
<td>Country Women Association of Nigeria</td>
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<td>DR</td>
<td>Dominican Republic</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECLAC</td>
<td>Economic Commission for Latin America</td>
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<tr>
<td>EOI</td>
<td>export-oriented industrialization</td>
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<td>EPZ</td>
<td>export-processing zone</td>
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<tr>
<td>FACUR</td>
<td>Federación de Asociaciones de Comunidades Urbanas (Federation of Urban Neighborhood Associations)</td>
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<tr>
<td>FORJA</td>
<td>Federación de Organizaciones de Juntas Ambientales (Federation of Boards of Environmental Organizations)</td>
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ACRONYMS

GAD  gender and development
GALS  guaranteed access levels
GDP  gross domestic product
GDR  German Democratic Republic
GEMA  Grupo de Estudio Mujer y Ambiente
   (Women and Environment Study Group)
GIDA  Grupo de Ingeniería de Arborización
   (Tree Engineering Group)
GNP  gross national product
GSP  Generalized System of Preferences
HABITAT  United Nations Center for Human Settlements
IDB  International Development Bank
ILGWU  International Ladies Garment Workers Union
ILO  International Labour Organization
IMF  International Monetary Fund
INCAP  Institute of Nutrition of Central America and Panama
ISI  import-substitution industrialization
KIP  *kampung* improvement projects
LDC  less developed country
LGA  Local Government Area
MAS  Movimiento al Socialismo (Movement to Socialism)
MNC  multinational corporation
NAFTA  North American Free Trade Agreement
NCHS  U.S. National Center for Health Statistics
NGO  nongovernmental organization
NIC  newly industrializing country
OAS  Organization of American States
OPEC  Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
PDVSA  Petroleos de Venezuela, Socios Anónimos
PRI  Partido Revolucionario Institucional
SAL  structural adjustment lending
SAP  structural adjustment program
SD  standard deviation
SPARC  Society for Promotion of Area Resource Centres
TNC  transnational corporation
UNCED  United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UNCHS  United Nations Center for Human Settlements
UNDP  United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF  United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund
UNU/WIDER  United Nations University/World Institute for Development
<table>
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<tr>
<th>ACRONYMS</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tr>
<td>USAID</td>
<td>U.S. Agency for International Development</td>
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<td>WCED</td>
<td>World Commission on Environment and Development</td>
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<td>WEDNET</td>
<td>Women, Environment, and Development Network</td>
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<td>WHO</td>
<td>World Health Organization</td>
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<td>WID</td>
<td>women in development</td>
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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction: Engendering Wealth and Well-Being in an Era of Economic Transformation

Rae Lesser Blumberg

The dual goals of this volume are to analyze the gendered nature of economic transformation and to promote the understanding of this phenomenon in a cross-regional perspective, comparing trends in Latin America with developments in other world regions. All the chapters illustrate the ways in which economically empowered women engender wealth and well-being that radiate far beyond their own families.

To establish a historical and conceptual framework for approaching these interrelated issues, this introduction offers a three-part expedition through time, theory, and space. I begin by tracing the quarter century of intertwined gender and economic history since 1970. This period witnessed the rise and evolution of the field of women in development (WID), a great increase in the proportion of income-earning women around the globe, and sweeping changes in the world: its economy, its ecology, its political geography, and its population patterns.

In the second part, I will stress the relationship between women and income and I will argue that women's control of economic resources, especially income, is the most important predictor of the degree of gender equality. In addition I will also argue that women's control of income engenders not only their own empowerment but also the creation of wealth and well-being at levels ranging from the micro (family) to the macro (nation). In the third part, I will discusses the evolving field of women/gender and development, which has come to focus less on women's victimization by development policies and world economic trends and more on women's rising contributions to the economy and
welfare at micro- and macrolevels. A concluding comment projects these topics into the future by identifying gender issues for the next century.

A QUARTER CENTURY OF GENDER AND GLOBAL CHANGE

An event-filled quarter century has passed since we began to consider that men and women play different roles in the process of development and are differentially affected by it. In 1970, when Danish economist Ester Boserup published her path-breaking book *Woman's Role in Economic Development*, the world was a far different place. The Cold War drove most decisions about which countries would receive international aid, and gender had not yet been imagined as a variable relevant for promoting economic or human development.¹

Two historic “tipping points” took place in 1970. First, in the United States, the proportion of women in the labor force aged eighteen through sixty-four reached—and surpassed—50 percent.² This was a new phenomenon in Western industrial countries, and it coincided with the dramatic rise of a “second wave” women’s movement that went far beyond the suffrage-oriented goals of the first wave and soon spread around the globe.³ Second, multinational corporations (MNCs) overtook nation-states on the U.S. Library of Congress list of the 100 biggest entities in the world, 51 to 49.⁴ With corporations measured in gross sales and countries in gross national product (GNP), this phenomenon was a harbinger of future global restructuring.

Boserup’s book launched women in development (WID) as a new field. She focused on women, technology, population, and agricultural change, and her data indicated that these changes were more likely to marginalize women, whose workloads frequently rose but whose returns and resource bases also often eroded—especially where they previously had enjoyed more economic autonomy. Subsequent studies by WID scholars⁵ and activists showed that women were, indeed, frequently hurt by development but also that women’s productive labor was greater than anyone had suspected or than official statistics measured.

Now, some twenty-five years later, the Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development, and Peace, in Beijing in 1995, has been set in the context of a worldwide women’s movement of substantial size and achievement. The major world axis is now North-South, between developed and developing nations, rather than East-West. Both the proportion of multinational corporations among the world’s largest entities and the proportion of women in the labor force have risen further, functioning as lead indicators for two even more revolutionary
developments—global restructuring and women's growing access to income.

First, with respect to global restructuring, capital, information, production, and even services have burst the bounds of nation-states. Corporations search the globe for the most advantageous place to produce products, or buy inputs, or declare earnings from transactions. Cheap, flexible labor is a key consideration. Flexible labor means burgeoning informal sectors in most of the world, rising ranks of temporary contract employees, and an intricate web of subcontracting that extends, for example, from poor Third World women working in their homes to slightly less poor ones working in export-processing zone (EPZ) factories.

Second, the proportion of the world's women who earn income has risen far faster than the proportion actually counted in labor force statistics, which primarily measure waged workers in the formal sector. The growing legions of money-earning females are a truly revolutionary phenomenon. In general, regardless of how humble the amount or stressful the conditions under which it is generated, to the extent that women control that income it typically has multiple positive consequences, starting with women's greater self-esteem and stronger voice in household decision making.

As I have argued elsewhere, women's control of economic resources, especially income, relative to men is the single most important (although not the only) factor affecting the degree of gender equality at a variety of "nested" levels, ranging from the couple to the state. A main theme of this book is the impact of the rising share of income under female as opposed to male control, from the microlevel of the household to the macrolevel of the state and even the globe. Increasingly, new evidence shows that women are contributing to the wealth and well-being of both their families and their nations as the transformations in the world economy over the last quarter century have increased the need to earn income to survive and have enhanced women's ability to generate that income.

Key Economic Trends

One major transformation began with the oil shocks of the 1970s. The price of oil at the wellhead quintupled in the wake of the 1974 oil embargo, then doubled again with the 1979 overthrow of the Shah of Iran. Hundreds of billions of new petrodollars flowed toward the members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). Following extant economic wisdom, the oil-producing countries deposited a large portion of their petrodollars in multinational banks. The banks then lent the funds to Third World countries, including the oil pro-
ducers. Commodity prices were generally high at the time, but during the early 1980s, prices of oil and other commodities dipped. The result was economic crisis. As their income dropped, many Third World debtor nations were unable to keep up their interest payments.

Under pressure from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), those countries that could not keep up with their loan payments adopted neoliberal measures to stabilize their economies, which cut back their public sector budgets and personnel, removed subsidies, floated currencies, adjusted prices, and promoted exports. These "structural adjustment programs" (SAPs) are most prevalent in Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean, where the 1980s have been described as "the lost decade of development." African economies shrank almost 3 percent a year in the 1980s, as fast as they had grown in the heady postindependence period of 1965–1973. Now thirty-five of forty-six African countries have implemented SAPs.

The economic crisis has driven more people into the informal sectors, which are mushrooming in countries around the world. Since the public sector and much of the formal private sector were shedding jobs—and in most of the affected countries there is little or no government "safety net" for the jobless or impoverished—the informal sector proved the best refuge. But jobs in this sector are often precarious for both the self-employed and their even more marginal workers (especially women): except for some of the self-employed, income is usually lower than in the formal sector and fringe benefits are almost nonexistent.

It is not just structural adjustment that is swelling the size of most countries' informal sectors but also the process of global economic restructuring itself. The rates of technological change and increases in levels of "uncertainty" (situations too volatile and full of unknowns to be able to assess) are accelerating worldwide. In response, both businesses and people have become more mobile. Most countries have had to abandon import-substitution industrialization (ISI), which dominated development policy and practice in the post–World War II period. Under ISI, a small number of privileged firms, sheltered by high tariff barriers, with a tiny, often unionized, relatively well-paid, and overwhelmingly male labor force, produced high-cost local versions of previously imported products.

Instead, lured by the success of the newly industrialized countries (NICs), especially the "four tigers" of Asia (Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan), or prodded by SAPs, more and more countries have turned to nontraditional exports. Export-processing zones have sprung up in scores of countries beyond the four tigers, although most are concentrated in less than a dozen nations in Southeast Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean. In contrast to ISI male labor forces, the
workers in the EPZs are predominantly women—especially young, non-unionized women. Often they compete for rarely permanent and frequently tedious jobs. They tend to be better educated and better paid than young women doing similar jobs in domestic-oriented factories in their countries.\textsuperscript{12} But by world standards, they are inexpensive and productive enough to attract an ever-growing number of firms. Export-oriented industrialization (EOI) is the latest development gospel for those promoting national income growth.

Women are also more likely to be employed in nontraditional agricultural exports, such as broccoli, spices, and flowers, than in such traditional export crops as bananas, cocoa, and sugar. The nontraditional agricultural export crops tend to be more labor-intensive or require more care in handling than traditional export crops, which is why the industry employs higher proportions of (lower paid) women. These new export crops are burgeoning, stimulated by SAPs and a growing global demand for healthy vegetables, unusual spices, and fresh flowers. It remains to be seen whether either export-oriented industrialization or nontraditional agricultural exports are viable strategies for large numbers of countries.

Meanwhile, the cash economy has penetrated to the most remote locations. Low-resource farmers increasingly sell part of their production out of dire financial need, and this means that millions more women and men enter or expand their involvement in the money economy. Due to the combined effects of the exploding informal sector, the jobs created by the "new international division of labor," and the spreading cash nexus, uncounted millions of women formerly in the subsistence sector have begun earning or increasing income.\textsuperscript{D}

\textbf{INCOME UNDER FEMALE VERSUS MALE CONTROL}

A growing body of research supports the hypotheses of my theory of gender stratification and suggests that increased income under women's control enhances (1) their self-confidence, (2) their say in household decision making in the areas of fertility, economic decisions (such as buying, selling, or allocating major resources), and domestic decisions (such as the education of sons and daughters), and (3) their sway over other "life options" (such as marriage, divorce, and freedom of movement). Additionally, it is proposed that men spend income differently than women with provider obligations, who tend to hold back less for themselves and devote more to children's nutrition, health, and education.\textsuperscript{13}

Elsewhere, I have argued that women contribute to the wealth of their nations (and families) by two intertwined chains, one based on production and the other on education.\textsuperscript{14} In the first chain, women create wealth via their productive activities, especially those that result in
income under their own control. Empirical studies now show the much greater share of national wealth created by women's production than is revealed in traditional analyses of national accounts statistics.\textsuperscript{15} Other studies are demonstrating that women are more willing to take on extra work—even to the point of assuming workloads that approach physiological limits—if there is a monetary return they can control. The data indicate that women can approach or equal men's productivity in economic activities such as low resource farming and informal sector microenterprises even with smaller resource bases. For example, in findings from three studies in Africa, which statistically adjusted women's resources to equal those of men, women were consistently more productive.\textsuperscript{16} An econometric study in Burkina Faso found the most spectacular difference: Women proved to be 600 percent more productive.\textsuperscript{17}

Women often have greater unmet income needs and typically earn less than men. This means they have both greater incentives to earn money and lower opportunity costs (the value of their time for alternate income-producing uses). Therefore, they may also respond more strongly than men to a modest lowering of production constraints or a small rise in income. This was found, for example, in Jeanne Koopman Henn's study in Cameroon comparing the labor and income of men and women in two villages—one in which a new road was built connecting it to regional markets and one that remained isolated.\textsuperscript{18} In the village with the new road, the women—who already worked over sixty hours per week (double the hours worked by men)—responded to the new access to markets by increasing their production and sale of perishable vegetable crops. This increased their workweek even more, but they averaged over 2.5 times more earnings from these crops than women in the village without a new road. The data also showed that men in the village with the new road barely increased the amount of time they spent in the cultivation of plantains and bananas, which became more marketable, even though these crops brought a significantly higher return than cocoa, their main cash crop. Henn offers no explanation for the men's less responsive market behavior.

It is also posited that women, to the extent possible, will attempt to reallocate their labor toward activities that put income or food under their direct control and away from activities that do not, even if the latter are somewhat more profitable to the husband or the household.\textsuperscript{19} A good example is Christine Jones's quantitative random-sample study of the SEMRY I irrigated rice project in Cameroon.\textsuperscript{20} The project could not cover its costs because farmers failed to cultivate enough of the available pump-irrigated fields. Women were expected to grow one rice plot as a marital obligation, but most wives would not grow a second plot of rice for their
husbands. Jones's data show that the income from the SEMRY I project's harvests were given to husbands even though the wives had grown the crop. The husbands shared that profit with their wives, often paying them more than the women could have earned in other activities. Nevertheless, most women chose to cultivate their own sorghum, the planting and first weeding of which conflicted with the transplanting of rice.

As noted, once women with provider obligations gain control of income, evidence shows that they are more likely to spend that income on enhanced children's nutrition, health, and education and on family welfare. A variety of studies have found that income controlled by the mother is associated with better nourished children than is income controlled by the father. Current research also suggests a connection between income controlled by women and enhanced children's education—for girls as well as boys. For example, household survey data from Santiago, Chile, show that female household heads earned only half the income of male heads, but their children's rates of high school attendance lagged little behind the attendance rates of children in male-headed families: 3 percent less for girls, 11 percent less for boys. In contrast, in male-headed households, boys were significantly more likely to attend high school—except when the wife earned more than her husband; in this case, there was no significant difference. If female-controlled income is also preferentially used for educating both girls and boys, we have an empirical link between the first chain (production-income) and the second chain (girls' education), whereby women contribute to the wealth and well-being of nations.

Education, or human capital formation, has long been documented as one of the most important factors stimulating development. Its role as a cornerstone of democracy is also increasingly recognized. Today, one of the first gender issues to be enthusiastically advocated by top development policy makers has been the importance of educating girls. Their level of funding for girls' education does not yet match their level of verbal endorsement, however. This is particularly unfortunate in view of the fact that matching every dollar spent educating boys with the same amount for educating girls generally has multiple payoffs: (1) a later age of marriage; (2) increased contraceptive usage; (3) lower fertility; (4) dramatically reduced infant and child mortality; (5) improved child nutrition and general family health; (6) higher female participation in the modern wage labor force; (7) higher female earnings (which brings us back to the first chain); and (8) increased national development as measured by gross national product.

The impact on national income growth stems from two sources: the human-capital effect of education and evidence that reduced fertility contributes to economic growth in less developed countries. There is
considerable evidence that income-earning women also have greater say in fertility. In most parts of the world, they use this leverage to lower it.

In sum, women's key contributions to world wealth and well-being—through production, through spending of the resulting income under their control, and through the consequences of their education—have come to provide an alternative view to women as victims of development.25

THE EVOLUTION OF A PARADIGM: FROM "WOMEN AS VICTIMS" TO "WOMEN—NEEDED TO SAVE THE WORLD"

When the field of women in development emerged in the wake of Bose-rup's book, its initial focus was on how women were being disproportionately disadvantaged and marginalized by development and "modernization." Women were generally the sole focus of analysis, and they were viewed mainly as "victims" in need of advancement and assistance.26 The 1970s emphasis was on "equity" and on integrating women of various countries, classes, and ethnicities into extant development efforts—which then almost always ignored or undermined them. Numerous empirical studies documented both women's major (albeit unsung) productive roles and the disasters that ensued from undercutting them.

The early 1980s saw the rise of conservative administrations (most notably Ronald Reagan's in the United States and Margaret Thatcher's in Britain), as well as the onset of the debt crisis. The major international donors of development aid—the World Bank and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)—shifted from a focus on "development with equity" to an emphasis on the private sector, economic efficiency, and, as noted, the austerity and export-oriented policies of structural adjustment. The rhetoric of the growing WID field soon changed to accommodate the new realities. It stressed "efficiency" arguments: Planned development assistance better achieved its goals by incorporating women. For example, the largest-scale evaluation yet of the extent to which women were taken into account in a major donor's projects—and the consequences—concluded that the mainstream [USAID] projects that ensure women's participation in proportion to their roles and responsibilities within the project's baseline situation are more likely to achieve their immediate purposes and their broader socioeconomic goals than are projects that do not.27

One result of such findings was the emergence of "gender analysis" for development projects and programs. Although aimed at making sure that data on women are collected, gender analysis requires that informa-
tion be gathered not only on women but also on women in comparison to men. A proper gender analysis looks at the gender division of: labor, resources and income, time, and other constraints, such as mobility. Gender analyses must also disaggregate by class, race, ethnicity, and, where relevant, by age or other significant planes of cleavage. These data must be related to the activities and benefits of the project. Ideally, the project then should be adapted to remove constraints on benefits to women.

By the mid-1980s, new rapid appraisal methodologies—including Rapid Rural Appraisal, Rapid Assessment Procedures, and Participatory Rapid Appraisal—were proliferating. They permit the quick and inexpensive collection of generally valid, reliable information on, inter alia, the gender analysis variables listed in the preceding paragraph. By the late 1980s, USAID and other development agencies adopted policies stipulating that all social indicators be disaggregated by gender and that projects incorporate a gender analysis. To date, these directives have met with only intermittent compliance, however.

Still, the emergence of rapid appraisal gender analysis and the fact that policy makers now pay at least lip service to the goals of promoting greater opportunities for women are significant advances. Moreover, in a 1990s version of the “development with equity” era two decades earlier, the policies of the Clinton administration once again stress that development must reach the disadvantaged. Combined with the Fourth World Conference on Women and the rise of a few “gender-sensitive” women and men into the upper-middle ranks of national and international bureaucracies, these trends should provide building blocks for a stronger, more gender-equitable foundation for development. Will gender finally come to be routinely taken into account in planned change during the remainder of the 1990s?

**WID/GAD Perspectives**

Meanwhile, the original WID paradigm continues to evolve. First, the emphasis is increasingly on gender rather than women (even if, empirically, the focus of practitioners and researchers continues to be mainly on women): Indeed, the field is now often called GAD—gender and development—rather than WID. Second, GAD stresses how gender is socially constructed, via the ways in which men and women participate in both production and reproduction. Third, what may be termed WID/GAD strongly challenges the picture of the household common to both mainstream and radical paradigms of development. These look at the household as a "black box," a monolithic unit that shares resources. For neoclassical economists, it does not matter who does the work or who
receives income, information, or other forms of assistance; the household can be described by a single production function.\textsuperscript{28}

By the late 1980s, WID/GAD researchers were widely contesting this view of the household. As they looked inside the black box, they found differential power and privilege based on gender and age. They discovered another gender-related reason that development assistance so often failed to meet its objectives: It does matter who works, who learns, and who gets rewarded. If the person who does the work is not the one taught about improvements or given a share in the benefits generated, that person is not likely to perform as hoped. In a disproportionate number of cases, the working person has turned out to be a woman.

A look inside the black box also revealed that women's relative control of income and property affected their degree of empowerment vis-à-vis family (and sometimes community) decisions. And because women devoted more of their income to children's nutrition, health, and education, these intrahousehold studies also indicated that directing development resource flows to women (as well as men) not only had a positive economic effect, it also enhanced indicators of well-being.

In short, the paradigm is shifting toward a view that women are needed by the world to solve its problems. This does not mean a shift to a worldview that things invariably are changing for the better for women. Rather, the new framing emphasizes the positive contributions of empowered women. Instead of focusing on "women needing help," the stress is now on how and why the "world needs women." The GAD paradigm provides a new lens to look at the economic transformations sweeping our globe—a gendered one. Analyses of the new international division of labor and global restructuring, as well as the debt crisis and structural adjustment programs, have been enriched by examining how gender makes a difference as a variable and how women make a difference in coping with economic crises. On the negative side, the studies show that many women—especially poor ones—are bearing the brunt of the crises.\textsuperscript{29} They are disproportionately losing good public sector and formal sector jobs, moving into the precarious and often poverty-ridden informal sector, and substituting their own efforts for slashed spending on health, education, urban infrastructure, and other "social" commodities, even if it means adding to already brutal workloads. But there is also a positive side—including women's creative responses to the direst of circumstances.

Women disproportionately bear the responsibility of providing household supplies of water, fuel, and fodder, and they have a vested interest in the continued (or enhanced) availability of these resources. We are finding that women may be more responsive than men to conservation efforts. They may be more responsive to even modest incentives—or small
INTRODUCTION

decreases in constraints—that enable them to steward their resource bases from soils to plants to water. Accordingly, they could help lead the shift away from the extant growth-fixated development model that fails to adequately consider either the planet’s or the people’s well-being.

GENDER ISSUES FOR THE NEXT CENTURY

What are some of the major issues for the future and what role will gender play? First, there can be little question that many of the most blatant forms of inequality, such as slavery and serfdom, have come under such strong international condemnation as to have been legally abolished everywhere although abuses continue in scattered countries. Other forms of exploitation, such as institutionalized racial and ethnic oppression, are censured almost everywhere, although they continue to occur widely. Still other forms, including the institutionalized subjugation of women, have been less universally denounced and in some places are increasing. Even so, there is overall progress. More than 100 nations, including some of the world’s most patriarchal states, have signed the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. Some of these countries may not be enforcing the provisions of this document at present, but a foundation for future action has been laid.

Second, other recent, sweeping historical trends also seem to be moving us into a “techno-economic base.” Most frequently termed the information society, this new way of organizing production is furthest advanced in the United States. In an information society, knowledge is power. And knowledge is creating a more flexible form of power than military or even economic power. Worldwide, classes of the information-rich versus the information-poor may be emerging that do not coincide smoothly with existing forms of stratification. But what is relevant here is that both the information workers and the managers cruising the emerging “information superhighway” have higher than average levels of education, and their ranks are more likely to include women than in the past.

Third, the issue of sustainable development is here to stay. The definition of development as unrestrained pursuit of national income growth at the expense of environmental health is coming under increasing condemnation. Women are heavily involved in the worldwide environmental movement and are actively promoting the idea that, as the principal household-level users of fundamental resources, they have the biggest stake in conservation. But those women must be recognized in their environmental protector role, their worldviews must be validated, and both their incentives and constraints must be addressed.
By placing women at the center of global restructuring and demon-
strating women’s centrality to wealth and well-being at both micro- and
macrolevels, this volume challenges everyone writing on social and eco-
nomic change to utilize gender analysis. The chapters that follow paint a
composite picture of women as active agents of a form of development
that goes beyond economic growth as the ultimate goal. The authors,
documenting how women are empowered through control of wealth,
through education, and through organizing, reveal glimpses of a direct
relationship between these empowered women and a (lower fertility)
world of greater human and ecological well-being.

NOTES

2. Valerie Kincaide Oppenheimer, “Demographic Influence on Female Employ-
3. Janet Saltzman Chafetz, *Gender Equity: An Integrated Theory of Stability and
4. Rae Lesser Blumberg, *Stratification: Socioeconomic and Sexual Inequality*
   (Dubuque, IA: Wm. C. Brown, 1978), 95.
5. For example, Irene Tinker, “The Adverse Impact of Development on
   Women,” in Irene Tinker and Michele Bo Bramsen, eds., *Women and World Devel-
   opment* (Washington, DC: Overseas Development Council/American Association
   for the Advancement of Science, 1976).
   opment* 17, no. 7 (1989): 1079.
7. People working in the informal sector include those in nonprofessional self-
   employment, workers in very small firms, unpaid family workers, and, in many
   definitions, domestic service workers. This work is generally unregulated and
   unprotected, and transactions do not usually enter into national accounts.
8. The formal sector’s workers include self-employed professionals, employ-
   ees, and workers in public sector and private sector firms and in legally registered
   private sector firms whose transactions enter into national accounts. Some sub-
   contract to the informal sector.
9. Rae Lesser Blumberg, “A Paradigm for Predicting the Position of Women:
   Policy Implications and Problems,” in Jean Lipman-Blumen and Jessie Bernard,
   *Sex Roles and Social Policy* (London and Beverly Hills: Sage, 1976); Rae Lesser
   *Sociological Theory 1984* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1984); Rae Lesser Blumberg,
    Sub-Saharan Africa,” in Christina H. Gladwin, ed., *Structural Adjustment and
    African Women Farmers* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1991); *World Bank,
    Sub-Saharan Africa: From Crisis to Sustainable Growth* (Washington, DC: World
    Bank, 1989).
INTRODUCTION

17. According to Ram and Singh (in note 16), yields from randomly selected plots were weighed and income data were intensively monitored. The marginal product for women's labor was 683 compared to 112 for men's labor at the sample mean in units of local currency.
20. Christine Jones, "The Impact of the SEMRY I Irrigated Rice Production Project on the Organization of Production and Consumption at the Intrahouse-


22. In some poor Third World countries, however, those with partial primary education have slightly higher fertility than those with no education, since fewer of their babies die.

23. Blumberg, Making the Case for the Gender Variable.


25. Blumberg, Gender, Family, and Economy, and Chapter 10 by García and de Oliveira in this volume.


30. See Gerhard Lenski, Power and Privilege (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966); Blumberg, Stratification. This would be the fifth major techno-economic base, or way in which people make a living from the planet, in human history. The other four were hunting and gathering, horticultural, agrarian, and industrial societies.