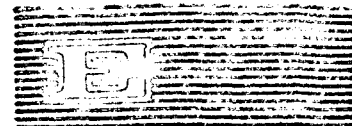


UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC
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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA

LATIN AMERICAN PREPARATORY MEETING FOR THE
WORLD POPULATION CONFERENCE

Jointly sponsored by the Economic Commission
for Latin America, the Secretary-General of
the World Population Conference, the United
Nations Population Division and the Latin
American Demographic Centre

San José, Costa Rica, 15-19 April 1974

PROVISIONAL AGENDA

1. Opening statements
2. Election of Officers
3. Adoption of the agenda
4. Recent demographic trends and future prospects
5. Relations between demographic change and economic and
social development
6. Relations between population, resources and the environment
7. Population, the family and human well-being
8. World Population Plan of Action
9. Other business
10. Adoption of the report of the meeting

74-3-0452



1974

World Population Year



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DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS, DEVELOPMENT AND INCOME DISTRIBUTION
IN LATIN AMERICA: INTRODUCTORY NOTES

74-2-0339



1974

World Population Year



DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS, DEVELOPMENT AND INCOME DISTRIBUTION
IN LATIN AMERICA

(Introductory notes)

1. In recent years, it has become increasingly evident that new and unified approaches are required to tackle development problems. It is no longer a question of drawing attention once again to the dichotomy between development and economic growth, although this has lost none of its validity; on the contrary. It is true that progress has been made in the field of analyses and policies, since development is now understood to be a quantitative process of economic growth and a qualitative process of structural social change. It is therefore necessary to emphasize explicitly the need for coherence between the style of development, the forms of organization and running of society, and the possibility that this offers all its members to participate in the taking of decisions and the benefits that development generates.

2. Judging from various conventional quantitative indicators, such as growth, total and per capita domestic product, industrial production, exports and imports, etc., economic growth has taken place in most Latin American countries. However, this growth carries with it a number of characteristics that render it more or less unacceptable in terms of development and human values. These include the meagre capacity of economic systems to absorb all their potential human resources productively, the failure to cope with situations of extreme poverty deriving both from this limited capacity and from the inequality of income distribution, the growing tendency for the productive structure to be geared towards the provision of sophisticated consumer goods for the high-income groups instead of the large-scale production of essential goods and goods for social use, and the lack of any real participation of the population in decision-making, not only at the level of local units - whether as producers or consumers - but also in respect of the democratic definition of broad national objectives.

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3. The lack of proper development as defined above results not only in the minimal or non-existent participation of vast majority sectors of the population but also in the absence of any appropriate incentives to improve the rational capacity of these sectors in the realm of personal and social decisions, so as to facilitate the emergence of forms of organization and social conduct that reflect and correlate their requirements and interests more satisfactorily. On the contrary, the mass media and political propaganda machines bombard them with frequently alienating and irrational messages that disturb their sense of reality, their personal priorities and their general orientations, thereby limiting their ability to take their own decisions and participate constructively and creatively in social life. The capacity to organize themselves and press for higher incomes, the ability to gear their consumption to their individual purchasing power and requirements, and their personal behaviour in terms of procreation and family life are thus inclined to be profoundly modified by these psychological pressures that hinder the attainment of higher and more suitable levels of rationality and the progress towards the taking of responsible personal decisions that are more firmly based on the values and interests of the individuals and of society as a whole.

4. A major aspect of most recent manifestations of economic growth in Latin America is growing internal inequality in the distribution of income. This is true both of countries that have experienced very rapid economic growth, industrial modernization and intense urbanization, and in countries which have registered slow growth or are predominantly rural. The reasons for this phenomenon are varied and complex and it would be optimistic to imagine that reference to a few isolated factors could provide a satisfactory explanation. A clearer understanding of the problem of concentration of income must be based on a more general view of the situation that takes into account the manner in which the income is generated and distributed among the community and the domination structure that contributes to reproducing and maintaining it. Patterns of income distribution do not arise arbitrarily; their

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roots are to be found in historical trends and in the structure of society, that is to say, in the formation of the types of production and relative levels of productivity, in the social ratios of production and the social classes, in the ecological distribution of the population, etc. Another factor that has a bearing on the concentration of income is the structural heterogeneousness of the economy and society resulting from intense and partial processes of modernization that have helped to create wide internal gaps in terms of productivity, decision-making ability and, consequently, personal wealth and income.

5. The relationship between the structures and trends of the population and income distribution are highly complex; the inter-play between them is not usually direct and it is frequently no easy matter to distinguish clearly the whole chain of social links between one dimension and the other. These relationships may occur at various levels, ranging from the wider macro-structural level of global social formations and styles of development to the more specific micro-social level of the individual and family. This study can do little more than allude briefly to just a few of the many problems and relationships involved. In the first place, from a general point of view, a historically defined type of social formation implies, albeit in varying degree, a particular form of income distribution and, moreover, its own particular population structure and growth pattern. This is not to deny that some problems may be common to various social formations or that each dimension has a relative autonomy; the point is that they share certain similarities and influences which can only be explained at the rather abstract level of the society as a whole and never at the more specific level of its internal contents.

6. The way income is distributed, the groups among which it is distributed, the economic and social functions of those groups and the amount of power they possess to accumulate and retain income are all factors which help to define the nature of the prevailing social order. The struggle for income is a major element in social and

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political dynamics, and something rather similar occurs with population. The absolute and relative size of the population, its tendency to expand or diminish, its ecological distribution, the extent and manner of its participation in economic production, the existence of population surpluses (or "reserve armies") and their function in the labour market are just a few of the aspects which go to determine the configuration of the type of society, but they are also, and very largely, a product of the society and of the inter-play of forces therein. At this level, it is not difficult to distinguish the relationships that exists between these population aspects and the distribution of income; for example, those that derive from the labour (or consumer) market and its function of incorporating the population of working age in the labour force, on the one hand, and of allocating income (wages and salaries), on the other. In both cases, government policies have a capital influence on the concrete form that these connexions take on within the context of the prevailing relationships of domination.

7. At the other extreme, and at a less general level, the individuals and families appear as basic social units both in their capacity as income recipients and nuclei of consumption and in their capacity as fundamental demographic agents which take decisions in such matters under conditions of variable heteronomy, depending on the social class to which they belong and on other types of participation in society. This is another important area of convergence between population and income in which the trend towards more coherent individual and family behavioural patterns and a greater modernization of attitudes can be seen as desirable. Judging from some empirical evidence, the highest levels of income and most rational patterns of consumption are not necessarily mutually exclusive and tend to coincide with family planning, since the objective of the latter, now as always, is to increase income and to utilize it in a manner more in keeping with consumer preferences. It can thus be assumed that a distribution policy which tends to standardize incomes and

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living conditions will also make it possible to standardize reproductive patterns, by means of a downward-oriented process of assimilation of the pattern followed by the middle and high income groups, which are the groups which have lower fertility rates and reach more rational decisions in respect of the ideal size of the family.

8. The problem is obviously complex and the little empirical evidence that is available does not support all the conjectures and hypotheses that can be devised with regard to the mutual connexions and influences of population and income. As a kind of introductory summary, however, one can say that there is a certain community of roots and causal factors which have a simultaneous bearing on the dynamics of both population and income and which derive both from the structure of society and from the conduct of the families and individuals. Their correct identification as units of a complex scheme of social relationships is one of the biggest problems facing social research in this field and the formulation of more appropriate strategies and policies than exist at present.

9. The situation posed by the high growth rates of the urban population is extremely problematical. It generates a demand for an expansion of employment opportunities which modern urban productive sectors are in no position to offer. In this respect, the process of urbanization in Latin America differs from similar situations in the past in terms of the speed of internal migration. In a very short time, the region has witnessed a spatial redistribution of population which, under different circumstances, took place elsewhere over a much longer period of time. Moreover, the process has gone hand in hand with an unprecedented rate of demographic growth.

10. Furthermore, the phenomenon described above is accompanied by rates of overt unemployment in the cities - especially medium-sized cities - which are higher than the overall average in most of the countries, and by a "false tertiarization" of the economy due to the fact that employment is growing faster in the services and trade sectors than in the basic productive sectors and causing serious

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decline in productivity and increase in under-employment. This is one of the structural causes of the phenomenon of urban marginality which is increasingly apparent in the style of development prevailing in Latin America.

11. Nevertheless, despite the low incomes of the unemployed or under-employed urban masses, some kind of change and improvement in income distribution would seem to come about through the process of urbanization. The reason for this is that urban life provides access to a number of benefits that are not available to rural sectors. In particular, access to education, health and sanitary services, recreation and cultural life are advantages that rarely extend to the countryside. No less important is the possibility of diversifying consumption in a society which places a high value on this objective. Confirmation of this assumption can be found in studies that were carried out, for example, in Peru where, in 1967, the large majority of migrants to Lima considered that their situation had improved substantially since they had left their place of origin.

12. To what extent is the urban economy of these countries going to be able to maintain the kind of expansion of physical infrastructure and services that is necessary to meet the demands of the growing population? The magnitude of the task can be gauged from the estimate that the urban population in Latin America will increase by 75 million persons during this decade, compared with 18 million during the 1960's. The demand for public and private investment resources for these services is very great and, to a certain extent, competes with the need to accelerate the expansion of the fixed capital investments of the productive sectors of the economy.

13. In rural areas, the problem is just as acute. In spite of internal migration, the rural population continues to grow at a considerable speed. The annual average growth rate of the rural population of Latin America was 1.5 per cent during the 1960's. Nevertheless, in many countries the figure was much higher. The problem of employment has become more critical, on the one hand,

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because of the slow expansion of agricultural production and, on the other, as a result of the agricultural mechanization that has been taking place in the largest and most modern productive units and has tended to reduce the permanent labour force accordingly. Moreover, where some significant expansion may take place in the export-oriented agricultural sectors, the multiplier effects deriving from tax collection tend, because of the urban bias of fiscal policy, mainly to benefit the cities. If these trends are not arrested, it is likely that the migratory pressure will intensify or that the demographic pressure among rural sectors living at subsistence level will increase, thereby provoking a further decline in their standards of living.

14. As has been pointed out above, the inter-relationships between the process of development, demographic growth and redistribution of income are complex, while empirical data on the subject are still very meagre. In addition, such generalizations as could be made are often invalidated because of the wide variety of situations that exist. An analysis of the subject can be attempted, however, although on a very tentative basis.

15. The influence of changes in the age and sex structure of the population, which does not show up in analyses of global tendencies, is particularly relevant in this respect. It is due to the individual's varying capacity as both consumer of goods and services and producer.

16. To begin with, the productive capacity of the population and its ability to generate income is affected both by the relative size of the economically active population and by the level of participation of the population in the labour force. Available information indicates that, in 1970, the proportion of the population of working age (between 14 and 64 years old) was similar to that of other developing countries but much lower than that of the developed countries. The tendency over the past two decades was towards a slight decline. From the point of view of the population's participation in the work force, however, Latin America is at a notorious disadvantage. In 1970,

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the active population represented 31 per cent of the total population whereas the figure for the whole of the developing world (including Latin America) was 40 per cent and for the developed countries 45 per cent. This proportion also declined during the previous period, owing mainly to a reduction in the participation of men which more than offset the increase in the participation of women.

17. Despite the increase, the participation of women continues to be very low compared with that of other regions. According to studies conducted in 1970, the figure was 19 per cent of the total female population in Latin America, compared with 33 per cent in the developing world as a whole and 38 per cent in the developed countries. By contrast, the participation of children of 10 to 14 years old in the work force was five times higher than that in the industrialized countries and that of persons aged more than 65 was twice as high.

18. From another point of view, the new age structure is reflected in the dependency ratio, which measures the ratio between the population less than 15 and more than 65 years old and the population between 15 and 64 years old. This ratio has been increasing over recent decades, albeit at a decreasing rate, which shows that the growth of the economically unproductive population is even faster than that of the total population and the labour force.

19. The drop in the global participation of the population in the labour force referred to above does not derive solely from a relative decline in the population of working age. It is partly the result of the slower expansion of employment opportunities generated by the productive system and partly that of the systematic raising of technical training standards which postpone people's entry into the labour force. These stricter standards are not only due to the greater technological requirements of economic activities but, also, to the fact that social pressures have produced a surplus in the supply of better-educated labour by means of the expansion of enrollment in secondary schools - at a rate several times greater than the growth of the total population. As a result, the problem of overt and disguised unemployment referred to above has assumed new forms.

20. The foregoing does not mean that there is a simple inverse relationship between the degree of education of the population and the level of unemployment. Indeed, some country studies indicate that the highest level of relative unemployment in 1970 was among people who had received secondary education, while illiterate and uneducated groups registered lower levels of unemployment than the national average. One should make no hasty generalizations, but the phenomenon is definitely significant and suggests the existence of a certain degree of non-functionality of secondary education in terms of the demand for employment.

21. It is necessary to see what type of education is being offered and what its effects are on the quality of the labour force. Empirical evidence indicates that among the various branches of secondary education, which generally speaking have expanded rapidly in Latin America, the relative participation of general secondary education (which is a pre-university stage) increased considerably, more than that of technical secondary education. Since the former is not equally available to all social groups and benefits mainly the middle and high income groups, one can ask to what extent it has a redistributive effect in favour of the low income groups in terms of levels of employment. As to the demographic trend, the modernizing effect would seem more positive since the increase in general school enrollment is conducive to greater and more efficient family planning.

22. To sum up, the analysis of some of the demographic trends that have accompanied the process of urbanization illustrates the complex nature of the phenomenon and of its distributive effects. Owing to the lack of sufficient empirical data, these tendencies pose more questions than they answer satisfactorily. Moreover, situations differ so widely according to the country and region involved that any generalizations are dangerous and not necessarily valid. However, many of the problems mentioned would seem to be common to a large number of countries. In particular, internal migration and the very rapid increase in the urban population appear to be of considerable general significance. The resulting pressure on the urban economy

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because of the demand for a greater number of employment opportunities, services and urban equipment tends to re-occur, although with certain variations, in very different regions. The incapacity of the systems to cope with these pressures is apparent in the tendency to create new types of social differentiation, in which a growing segment of the society is virtually excluded from participating in the taking of decisions and prevented from enjoying the benefits of economic growth while another minority sector becomes modernized and imitates the patterns of life and consumption of the industrially advanced societies.

23. No less important are the problems - several of which they share with the urban environment - that arise in the rural areas, where most of the population of the countries of the Third World still live. Demographic expansion continues to be high in relative terms and to exceed the capacity to generate employment in the most productive and modern rural activities. Given the new problems that it poses in the cities, it is no solution to accelerate the already intensive process of migration. In both the urban and the rural areas, social marginality and relative poverty exist as a result of the concentration of income and wealth, which retains many traditional features that are difficult to eradicate without a major structural transformation.

24. The relationship between development and population has been studied for a long time in relation to economic and social theories. More recently, and especially since the Second World War, a set of hypotheses and premises of a neo-Malthusian nature has been devised, particularly in the central countries, which points to the negative effect of rapid demographic growth on the process of economic and social development. The result has been the frequently hasty adoption of policy decisions that emphasize the need to act directly and exclusively upon the demographic variables in order to reduce the birth rate as the most rapid and economic means of intensifying the process of economic growth. The realization that the most fertile groups are also the poorest has created great expectation regarding the stimulating effect that a reduction in the growth rate can have on the expansion of saving, investment and growth.

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25. However, although a reduction in demographic expansion may bring some relief to mass poverty, it neither contributes to its complete eradication nor can be considered a means of accelerating growth, since it does not make up for the lack of the necessary economic and social dynamism. A fairly original conception of the relationship between population expansion and economic development has been developing in Latin America which questions the strictly demographic approach to the problem, in so far as it assigns foremost importance to the institutional, social and political obstacles that hinder the development process, outstanding among which are the factors that affect the demographic variables. This is not to ignore the fact that demographic growth in Latin America is extremely high. But it does prevent jumping to the hasty conclusion that what is needed is to reduce the demographic growth rate as if it were isolated from the wider concept of economic and social development. What is important is to establish correctly which are the real obstacles that have prevented more rapid development - capable of eliminating mass poverty and integrating existing marginal groups - since, ultimately, it is that which will determine the demographic trend.

26. A development policy should face boldly the structural limitations and shortcomings arising from the prevailing economic and social system. In doing so, it must not overlook specific sectoral policies on whose coherence and effectiveness the degree and manner of articulation of the general policies will depend. A demographic policy will therefore only be appropriate in so far as it is a consistent expression of the general development policy.

27. A development style, that is to say the set of values and targets that a society pursues, the means and resources it is prepared to employ and the changes it will introduce to promote a particular pattern of development, represents the type of option that each country must choose for itself in accordance with its institutions and its own decision-making process. Each country

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will have to define the extent and type of relationship with other countries that it is prepared to accept in the field of investment, utilization of resources and know-how, styles of life, consumption habits, or demographic patterns. It will have to decide to what extent the population is to be incorporated in the decision-making process at the various levels of society - in enterprises, in the formulation and implementation of economic and social policies, in Government institutions, in the development of infrastructural projects and in urban and rural planning. It must also decide to what extent and how quickly the results of the development of the productive forces are to be distributed among the various population groups and, to what extent a structure of consumption is to be developed that will be capable of attending to the basic needs of the population and reproducing a style of life in accordance with the sets of values to which the society aspires. It is within the context of these and other related definitions that the problem of a population and redistribution policy, with ample participation by the people, must be tackled.

28. As regards the instruments and mechanisms of social participation, it is fundamental always to distinguish which social groups one is dealing with and what position they hold in economic production and income distribution. Obviously, if the process of participation were restricted to wage-earners, vast segments of the population would be left out which are not made up of typical wage-earners and whose means of subsistence are bound up with other activities. This, for example, is the case of own-account urban workers and smallholders or sharecroppers. In broad terms, a clear differentiation should here be established between various sectors: first, between urban and rural sectors; second, between marginal or under-employed sectors and wage-earners employed in modern enterprises, in urban areas; and, finally, between sectors engaged in subsistence activities and those involved in markedly commercial activities, whether export-oriented or not, in the rural areas. Among wage-earners employed in modern enterprises, the most suitable form of participation would undoubtedly

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be through such organizations as trade unions, administrative committees, etc.; by contrast, own-account urban workers or rural workers living in subsistence economies would seem to be more suited to co-operative forms of participation, possibly connected with their place of residence. Be this as it may, the foregoing is an illustration of a question that can only be answered in the light of the concrete experience which is being acquired in various areas and which will have to be properly evaluated.

29. A process such as that described gives a new meaning to the definition of the redistribution and population policies, since these policies should not be imposed on the population in an authoritarian manner but as a result of decisions reached democratically and with the widest possible participation, not only as regards certain personal aspects but also in respect of the particular style and fundamental orientation of development.

30. In other words, what is needed is a clear understanding of the importance of the policy instruments to be utilized and of the content and orientation that they are to assume so as to ensure the effectiveness of a development strategy which has been determined in accordance with democratic procedures and with ample social participation. As far as redistribution policies are concerned, for example, it is obvious that the income and tax policies of the past do not affect the population as a whole and that there are major groups, such as the rural sectors or marginal urban groups, which derive very little benefit from them. For the benefits of development to reach these sectors in any real sense, it is essential for new redistribution instruments to be devised. Moreover, since these groups only participate to a very small extent in the markets, the instruments must be geared far more specifically towards the redistribution of effective consumption than towards that of their monetary income. This means that investment and production programmes must give high priority to the supply of essential consumer goods. From another point of view, it also requires a reform of agricultural land

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ownership and a reorganization of the marketing system for products, inputs and capital goods, with special attention to the needs of rural workers and smallholders.

31. As regards the need to increase the level of employment opportunities in both the urban and rural modern sectors, consideration must be given not only to the most suitable type of technology for the degree of labour intensiveness required but also to the type of goods to be produced, since the use and combination of the productive factors (technology and labour) vary greatly according to the type of product and the organization and size of the productive unit. It will be appreciated, therefore, that the process of redistribution does not end with the application of a number of direct measures but affects the general orientation of the development process and the effective participation of the various majority social groups in that process.

32. The current trend towards greater participation of women in the labour force must be stimulated and facilitated since, from the demographic point of view, it has a positive effect on reproductive patterns. There is known to be a close relationship between female employment in modern occupations and fecundity. Various factors contribute to obstruct the entry of women into the labour force, from negative social images and values regarding work outside the home to the age and number of children to be looked after. It can therefore be assumed that greater female participation would necessarily have an inverse effect on fertility, and a favourable effect on the gross per capita income of the family owing to the reduction in the dependency ratio. Consequently, an effective female employment policy may be a major factor in the trend towards a decline in the birth rate. It is, however, unlikely for it to be so on its own since, to be effective, it would have to be accompanied by a series of complementary measures which would facilitate the reorganization of family life and the provision of necessary services previously supplied by the mother.

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33. It is also well-known that the close inverse relationship between the levels of socio-economic stratification, on the one hand, and the fecundity rates and average size of a family, on the other, poses the problem of social classes as a central issue of a population strategy. It has been proved sufficiently conclusively that various negative relationships exist between women's fertility and their educational level, the occupational category and level of their husband, social mobility, expenditure on consumption, and other variables that reflect the socio-economic level of the population. This suggests that a redistribution policy operating through these variables, and particularly through education, may be able to reduce fertility in the lowest socio-economic brackets. It would be wrong, however, to expect any automatic or immediate results from such policies, which are known to be very difficult to formulate and implement. On the one hand, the relationships referred to appear to be valid in certain social contexts and not in others - generally those with a higher level of economic and social development; moreover, in contexts where they are valid, there would seem to be critical points, or thresholds, beyond which the factor involved seems to start operating. Such matters as these have to be resolved on the basis of empirical data before any specific policies can be defined for particular situations, so that proper account can be taken of the intervening variables and the different population and development contexts. Furthermore, account must be taken of the "deferred effect" of many of these factors in generating changes in demographic attitudes and conduct.

34. On the other hand, there are policies which have an obvious redistributive effect but which may provoke increases in demographic expansion. This is the case of nutrition and health policies designed to reduce infant mortality, which affects above all the poorest social groups. Despite their effect on population growth, however, the human values on which these policies are based are now unquestionable. This being so, it would seem essential to complement such measures with other alternative policies designed to promote a conscientious and

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responsible attitude in these families, such as might result from access to the necessary medical information to regulate births rationally and from a suitable education policy to instill in new generations the concept of responsible family organization.

35. Policies designed to reduce the growth rate of the population by means of birth control and family planning must take into account the variety of national situations that exist and the right of States to adopt different styles of development, as has been stated above. On no account could a policy exclusively designed to reduce the birth rate, irrespective of the complex set of socio-economic factors impeding economic growth and social development, be considered acceptable and effective.

36. One very important aspect is the need to define policies in respect of the spatial distribution of population. It must be clearly understood, in this respect, that the levels of population for the next few years are already determined by the demographic trends of the recent past. Similarly, it must be borne in mind that the greatest pressure will be felt in the urban areas, although this does not mean that there will be any lessening of existing pressure in rural areas. Demographic concentration in the large metropolitan areas has various effects on the spatial and personal distribution of income, since it brings about a concentration of infrastructural activities and public services in the cities to the serious detriment of investment capability and equitable distribution among the less urbanized population. Urban concentration may even reproduce the threat to the ecological system from which the industrially advanced countries are suffering. Once again, one must remember that this consideration cannot serve as the motive force behind a policy of geographical distribution of the population but must be understood within the context of a new style of development capable of generating a satisfactory rate of economic growth which, in terms of the composition of its production, is designed to benefit predominantly the impoverished masses and areas that have not shared in social and

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economic progress and transformation. Regional and spatial policy is a kind of major crossroads of demographic and income distribution policies.

37. To sum up, the foregoing pages contain a general analysis of the relationship between population and income distribution in terms both of some of their most important theoretical connexions and of several policies that can serve as the basis of an attempt to modify the present complicated state of both dimensions. They set out to give a bird's-eye view of the population situation from the point of view of its structure and internal dynamics and from that of its relationship with other social dimensions, such as employment, education, urbanization and income distribution. They also show how the individual and family as basic social units have a decisive influence on the taking of decisions affecting their personal future and the state of society. Consequently, the search for empirical answers and the orientation of the specific policies must also comprise a wide and comprehensive range of social levels and environments, from the global social structure to individual motivations and their type of rationalization.

38. At these various levels, there are a number of points where population and income distribution meet; some of these have been indicated above. Such points of contact would seem to be clearer at the level of the more comprehensive policies. For example, some income distribution policies and instruments (education, health, nutrition, housing) appear to have different but significant degrees of influence on patterns of demographic behaviour (fecundity, mortality, size of family, etc.). This study has also shown how the rationality of patterns of consumption and urban styles of life derive from a wider rationality to be found in the motivations of individuals, and from social processes that can contribute to better planning and orientation of social behaviour in the field of demography. The tendency towards the integration of these various specific modes of behaviour and the configuration of complex sets of action that

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reflect a greater reciprocal coherence and are more representative of the convergence of the aspirations of individuals and social policies, is an inevitable process but one whose speed will depend on the quality of the supporting policies. It is frequently said that the present high growth rate of the population is transitional and that, like the concentration of income, it is a factor which will resolve itself in time once certain spontaneous corrective mechanisms begin to operate. Without entering into a discussion of the coherence and effectiveness of these mechanisms, it would seem unquestionable that the situation today is so serious and urgent that it is impossible to rely on - even less, wait for - these compensatory factors to take effect. Without going to the other extreme and talking of imminent catastrophe requiring rapid, major surgery, it seems undeniable that there is a need for a harmonious body of policies based on a general development strategy and designed to attack at the roots the problems of undesired or unplanned population growth and of concentration of income and dissemination of poverty.

39. The requirements of such specific policies are various and have already been suggested, although only in outline. Attention need only be drawn to a few points. First, there is an internal need for the policies to be coherent and reciprocally complementary and an external need for adjustment to realistic and feasible social objectives, defined and selected in accordance with a general strategy implying a style of development and model of society that is genuinely desired and democratically selected. Secondly, there is a need for theoretical and empirical data on which to base the policies, deriving from the discovery of basic causal relationships and of the reactions of the individuals and groups to the different types of social situation which the policies may help to create. It is unfortunate fact, that what is known about these problems today, although empirically well-founded, is very little and frequently inadequate if not erroneous. A serious research effort in this direction must be carried out with the utmost urgency.

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40. Finally, there must be a social consensus both as to the objectives of the policies and as to the means to be employed to attain them. There is no question how important a broad social consensus is, not only at the policy definition stage but also at the implementation stage. Without the collaboration of the people, any social policy, particularly in the field of demography, runs the serious risk of failing, or of bringing about other results than those desired and perhaps being counter-productive in respect of the objectives pursued. It is not merely a question of mobilizing machinery for collective persuasion but of educating people and promoting objectives that are genuinely and consciously desired by society in general and by the groups concerned in particular. It is a question, neither more or less, of converting the dominant utopias into social and individual objectives and into courses of action that will be conducive to collective well-being and greater social equity.

