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LINES OF RESEARCH FOR POLICY DECISIONS ON THE ERADICATION OF CRITICAL POVERTY

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Experience in the preparation and subsequent execution of development plans shows that some of the objectives put forward in them have not been attained, despite the fact that growth rates in the past decade have been higher than the ones of the previous decade. For example, achievements in relation to the objectives of reaching greater distributive justice and of relieving the state of critical poverty of large groups of the Latin American population have fallen far short of the proposed targets. The lack of equity in the distribution of growth and the existence of extreme poverty in broad sectors of the urban and rural population are problems for which a solution consonant with their pressing nature has not been found, despite the concern for them at the world, regional and national levels.

The problem is linked by a largely circular causal process to the social, economic and cultural imbalances created by the rapid, inorganic growth of the large metropolis and the sizeable share of available resources which have consequently had to be used in them, with the ensuing neglect of the problems of the regional periphery. Hence the importance of placing stress on regional and urban planning within the framework of global planning.

Furthermore, the social, productive and technological backwardness of the agricultural sector in the region creates a nucleus of extreme poverty and fosters migration from the countryside to the city.

It may be argued that to approach the problem of critical poverty in relation to events in the rural and urban space harbouring it, is to take a partial view of a larger phenomenon, the distribution of income and of growth. This is precisely the argument which provides a justification for ILPES to deal with these topics not in isolation but within the broader context of planning.

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However, in view of the internal heterogeneity of the Latin American societies and the fact that growth has not been a sufficient condition to relieve critical poverty, it becomes necessary to identify nuclei of poverty in order to define their common characteristics, determine causes and adjust policy instruments to the real situation which has not been improved by the traditional redistribution policies.

Nevertheless, it would not be enough merely to study poverty situations in order to improve the quality of life of persons in critical situations; it is also necessary to draw up policies to attack the causes of those situations. Thus the results obtained in identifying nuclei of poverty and the variables with the greatest impact on the quality of life of the persons belonging to them will pave the way for progress in causal explanations and in the definition of specific policies suited to each group.

The research already carried out suggests that in the urban areas a large proportion of the poor are linked to what has been called the informal sector, within which the small businessmen, artisans and wage-earners working in small productive units constitute a significant group. The Institute therefore feels that it is justified to begin specific action on behalf of these groups.

In addition, extreme urban poverty increases not only by natural growth but also by the inflow of persons from the countryside. The flows of migration from rural areas first comes to a halt outside the small or medium-sized town; but finding no welcome there, it continues its search until it reaches the big city. Thus besides the policies to retain labour in the agricultural sector itself, the development and job opportunities of the medium-sized towns must be improved. Agribusiness and incentives to small business are factors which may reduce the flow of persons which increases critical poverty in the metropolis, as well as improve the depressed situation of the medium-sized towns.

/Our awareness

Our awareness of the serious and pressing need to tackle
these problems and our full agreement with the concern voiced at
the highest levels of national and international organizations have
encouraged us to put forward some ideas on the subject.

Part One of this study contains a relatively thorough discussion
of a number of conceptual considerations which we considered
necessary in order to avoid undue simplification in dealing with
the problem of poverty. It is suggested that an effort should be
made to compile, classify and analyse existing information on
critical poverty, by beginning immediately to use the information
collected by the ECLA/IBRD Joint Project, in order to identify the
nuclei of extreme poverty, describe their causes and socio-economic
features, put forward causal hypotheses and suggest specific policies
to eradicate it.

Part Two deals with the situation of medium and small-sized
towns and industries, indicating some lines of action to improve
the living conditions of the poorest groups related to the activities
of small businesses, and to stimulate the development of the medium-
sized cities, as a means of mitigating extreme poverty and of
containing rural-urban and urban-urban migration.

The ideas outlined below are aimed at indicating a number of
aspects which could be studied by the Institute associated with other
national or international entities.

I. STUDY ON CRITICAL POVERTY

In this section we shall examine a number of conceptual problems,
the availability of information and the need to collect it
systematically, and, finally, we propose a study mainly limited to
the analysis of the information compiled by the ECLA/IBRD Project
on the measurement and analysis of income distribution in
Latin America.

1. Conceptual problems

Throughout the discussion of this question there has been
endless argument about the nature and concept of poverty. This has
revealed bolt the difficulties inherent in trying to give "objective"
definitions on which all can agree, and the clear ideological and
political connotations they usually have.

This subjectivism, which should be called to mind before
entering upon definitions, has three causes. In the first place,
as Simmel pointed out as long ago as 1908, poverty is essentially
relative and closely dependent on the social class to which the
person making the judgement belongs [1].

Furthermore, every social class tends to perceive the poor
as being not in a qualitatively different situation from its own,
but only quantitatively deprived according to its own scale.

However, the most important source of subjectivism must reside
in the fact that, explicitly or implicitly, to assert something about
poverty is to say something about the rest of society; the situation
of the "have nots" is incomprehensible if it is not related to the
situation of the "haves".

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[1] Simmel: "El pobre", in Sociología, Esparza-Calpe,
Madrid, 1934, pp. 38-39.

Countless definitions of poverty have been suggested, but they can be grouped in two large categories derived from currents of thought which far antedate the scientific study of the problem. One focuses on poverty viewed as a relationship among social groups; the other sees it essentially as a situation. There are different versions of each of these approaches.

According to a long-standing tradition, the poor are poor because they have been unjustly dispossessed by the rich, although the way in which this mechanism is conceived may be more or less vague, and the consequences drawn from it very different.

From one standpoint, poverty is the result, not always a necessary one, of the exploitation or overexploitation of some classes by others. Marxism is one example--by no means unique--of this position based in the idea that there is a mechanism of exploitation, and that the mechanism is essentially economic.

From a second viewpoint, which is perfectly compatible with the above, there is another class of poor: those neglected by the system, either because they play the role of "reserve army" for it, or because there is no way of making them create surpluses worth expropriating.

A third viewpoint considers poverty as the more or less extreme manifestation of the existence of an unequal power structure based on asymmetrical relations among the different groups, which results in the extreme subordination of many of them. According to this current, the two previous views are not wrong, but represent specific cases of the asymmetrical relations of certain groups in the power structure. Power is the basic, original dimension which covers all the others.

It is hard to be sure that the currents of thought which attach prime importance to participation truly represent a fourth current in the conceptualization of poverty. It has been stressed that the essential feature of poverty is non-participation. The poor do not

/share or

share or not enough, in the various goods and services available
in the global society or in the decision-making which affects them.
Although the interest of studying poverty as a lack of participation
is undeniable, it seems difficult to consider this as an independent
dimension. It is power, or rather the differential distribution of
power, which causes some to participate and others not: the structure
of participation could not change if the power structure did not
change.

Poverty can be viewed as being basically a situation, in which
case it becomes important to define the features which characterize
it as such.

In general, the countless recent definitions based on "absolute"
criteria can be summarized by saying that those persons are judged
to be poor who lack sufficient resources <u>to satisfy certain needs
which are considered basic</u> according to some criterion.

Many problems stem from this view. Firstly, it is obviously
neither straightforward nor easy to describe these "basic" needs.
They call for a value-judgement, as is openly recognized in some
cases, although it is often cloaked in supposedly scientific trappings.

Again, even if there were agreement on the broader headings of
the "basic needs" to be satisfied, such as food, clothing, housing,
equipment, etc., the question of the quantity and quality of the
satisfaction would have to be raised.

The relative criterion stresses the economic inequality among
the different income strata of society. Thus a certain percentage
is chosen--20, 25 or 33 per cent of the total income scale--which
shall be considered poor. The corollary of this approach is that the
poor will always exist, because there will always be 20, 25 or 33
per cent of the population occupying the bottom fifth, fourth or
third of the ladder. While the studies based on this criterion may
facilitate the collection of information on changes in income
distribution, particularly transfers which favour the bottom stratum

/(although perhaps

(although perhaps harming those situated in intermediate positions), it will not indicate the progress made to raise the standard of living of the underprivileged. Its advantage lies in that the level of poverty is readjusted according to the changes in the general state of the society.

It may be seen that the relative definitions are more dynamic, and this enables them to show the variations in the minimum standard of living. It is well known that goods which at one time are considered "luxuries" become "necessary" and even "indispensable" with the passage of time.

Another problem of relative definitions lies in the choice of the society in relation to which the situation of the poor groups will be defined. Obviously, it is not the same to be poor in one context as in another. Those who pass for poor in the United States will probably be far from poor in India. The global society to be taken into account must therefore be explicitly indicated. One possibility would be to speak of world society, as a result of which the underprivileged situation of large sectors of the underdeveloped countries could be shown, since according to the "thresholds of poverty" used in the United States or the developed European countries large sectors of the middle classes of Latin America and other regions of the Third World would probably be sunk in the world of poverty. The interdependence which currently exists among regions of the world, and the consequences of the demonstration effect, which arouses increasing consumption expectations in the population of countries which are not in a position to satisfy them, suggest that the choice of world society is by no means absurd. The ILO has made calculations using what is called the "western European" level, equivalent to the basic unemployment benefit for a single person with no dependents in France and the United Kingdom. By this standard, some 1 500 million people (84 per cent of the population of developing countries) were poor in 1972 [1].

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[1] ILO, Employment, Growth and Basic Needs. A One World Problem, ILO, Geneva, 1976, p. 21.

Another possibility would be to refer to "Latin American
society", using uniform criteria to determine the poor in all the
countries. Again, a criterion of this kind should not be rejected
out of hand, although the poor groups identified in this way would
be very heterogeneous, since there would be a single "threshold",
by which to measure the situation in Haiti, with a per capita income
of US$ 97.5, and Argentina (US$ 916.8, according to CEPAL figures
for the end of the 1960s).

Finally, "thresholds" could be chosen for each country. This
would not remove all difficulties, however, since regional differences
may be considerable, not only in respect of the possible minimum
levels necessary in each region, but also in relation to price levels,
wealth and income.

Last, but not least, the phenomenon of poverty could be studied
in the framework of the local society. Thus the "poor" would be
identified according to the criteria of the community to which they
belong, which will certainly be very different from those which the
research worker, coming from a different social environment, would
have used.

With this type of study it would be possible to go deeper into
various subjective, or social-psychological aspects of poverty, and
discover the relativity of the criteria which delimit it and how it
is conditioned by classes, as well as the way in which "perceived
poverty" presents itself. In a study of these factors in English
society, Runciman concluded that the poor are not aware of the
profound inequalities in the distribution of the social benefits
which exist in their society, because they take as reference groups
sectors which are very close to themselves in the social ladder
(Runciman, 1966).

The above analysis show that it is not illegitimate in itself
to conceive of poverty as a social relationship or as a situation.
In the last resort, the adoption of one or the other position depends

/not only

not only on ideological preferences but also on the objectives of
the researcher or whoever takes the public policy decisions in this
field.

This does not mean, however, that it is a matter of no
importance which point of view is adopted, since very different
consequences flow from them. When poverty is defined as a situation,
either in absolute or relative terms, the main and sometimes the only
thrust of the study is concerned with the problems of diagnosis.
The questions in the foreground are: who are the poor; how many are
they; where are they; what features differentiate them from those
who are not poor; through what characteristics can be different
groups be singled out within the overall world of poverty? When
poverty is viewed as a relationship, however, the explanatory dimension
takes pride of place.

This difference is not haphazard. Poverty viewed as a situation
can only be explained as a function of some social relation or set
of social relations which account for it. A situation cannot be
explained by itself: it must be linked to the relations underlying it.
Plainly, poverty can only be explained as a situation if some of the
following assumption are accepted, explicitly or implicitly:

(a) That the poor are poor because of a genetic inadequacy
which leads them inexorably to be poor.

(b) The situation of poverty is biologically inherited, leading
to the situation described in the previous assumption with the
result that poverty is self-perpetuating. Although analogous, this
assumption is not exactly the same as the preceding one, since the
former would be compatible with a random distribution of genetic
features, while the second assumes they are fixed within certain
groups;

(c) There is a culture of poverty whose features reproduce
themselves from generation to generation and make it impossible to
escape from the situation of poverty. It should be recalled that

/Oscar Lewis--

Oscar Lewis--among others--has upheld the hypothesis of the existence of a culture of poverty, in fact a sub-culture, transmitted to the members of the group through the processes of socialization and education. Many objections have been raised to this explanation. For the above process to occur the sub-culture would have to be constituted by a particularly strong normative system, and this has not been shown. On the contrary, all observation points to its weakness, the very difficulty of believing in the existence of a sub-culture of poverty, the scantiness of the psycho-social relations among the so-called poor, etc. The psycho-social characteristics of the latter seem to be much more easily explained by the network of social relations with the global society than by their own sub-culture or culture, taking these terms in their strict sense.

None of these three assumptions may be upheld on the basis of current knowledge, nor are they ever upheld explicitly, in the radical form in which it would be necessary to do so. Nevertheless there is no shortage of people who speak of poverty as a situation, as if it were possible to understand it outside of some kind of social relationship, and who sometimes implicitly accept some of the above assumptions but would reject them, however, if they were made explicit. Even in the exaggerated forms of the theory of the culture of poverty or of inherited intelligence, for example, it is impossible to deny an important role to the social relations which form the pith of the explanatory tissue of the phenomenon of poverty.

In any attempt at explanation, therefore, priority must be given to poverty as a social relationship. Furthermore, only when it is viewed in this way can there be a suitable view of the dynamic character of the phenomena usually covered by the term.

A dynamic view is essential for the design of public policies whose priority objective is to alleviate poverty. Even if they are successful they may create new forms of poverty, and anyway throughout the different stages of implementation they will face problems arising from their own impact at earlier stages.

/Without any

Without any pretense of adding yet another definition to the
many which have been presented, for the purposes of this document
poverty shall be considered both as a situation and as a relationship.
From the first point of view, it should be viewed as the structured
situation, possessing a certain level of congruence, of a shortage
of resources to satisfy needs which are considered to be basic.
"Structured" means that the different dimensions used to characterize
the situation are interrelated and form a whole. Thus poverty has
sometimes been described as a total situation. "Resources" is
understood in the generic sense of instruments which give access to
goods society considers valuable. For the poorest groups, income
is a fundamental resource; education, power, organization, etc.,
are others. Mention is made of a certain level of "congruence", since
it may happen that a specific individual is not poor in respect of
some of the resources considered, or in other words that those
particular resources are inconsistent in terms of the availability
of other resources for the same subject. But those resources will
be built into a situation which continues to be poverty, because
of shortcomings in the other dimensions, although they may have a
positive effect for escaping from it. The needs considered to be
basic should be defined for each country in the light of its particular
characteristics. For a concept of critical poverty such as that
described above, considerable information is required to be able to
identify the causes of situations and relations on the basis of
which specific policies can be formulated.

The proposal set forth later in this study to establish a data
bank on the subject of poverty is designed to fill the existing
information gap.

In spite of the inadequate information available, some initial
research may be envisaged restricting the concept of poverty to that
of income, on the basis of the assumption that for the poorest groups
the employment, education, health, organization, participation and

/other variables

other variables are directly related with the aim of increasing
their incomes, and that the power, status or other motivations
emerge after the state of critical poverty has been overcome.

It is not possible, however, to deduce directly from the
acceptance of a concept of critical poverty, what public policies
to adopt in this respect; one concept may be the basis for
different policies.

The explanation obviously lies in the fact that a policy
presupposes the adoption of some system of values and some ideology
that will permit the establishment of its objectives. Although the
ideology may exert influence from the very concept that is adopted,
this is not so inevitable as in the adoption of the policy.

The combination of these factors or of others such as the
explicit or implicit diagnosis of the situation confronted gives rise
to many different possibilities regarding the orientation of public
policy.

It has been deemed necessary to dwell at some length on these
conceptual considerations in order to draw attention to the complex
nature of the situation of critical poverty and the variety of
information that is required to formulate effective policies for
eradicating it. As regards information, it is considered essential
to make an effort to compile and systematize statistical data,
experiences, institutions, etc., connected with critical poverty
in Latin America.

Some suggestions are put forward below.

/2. Compilation, classification

2. Compilation, classification and analysis of existing information

(a) Installed capacity in this field

Obviously, in each of the Latin American countries and in the various United Nations agencies operating in the region a fund of experience may be found on the subject of poverty. It is probable that it derives from attempts of a partial nature or confined to a specific sector, and that a more global perspective is lacking for an understanding of the problem. It would be unreasonable, however, not to take advantage of it; on the contrary, it is important to make use of those inputs in any attempt to eradicate critical poverty.

Conscious of this, ILPES proposes to undertake a survey of the availabilities existing in the region as a whole and at the country level for the purpose of combating poverty. This would comprise:

(i) The preparation of a directory of institutions supplying information and reference material on situations of poverty, and of professional personnel experienced in questions connected with eradication policies.

(ii) An exhaustive survey of the existing research on poverty, and other related subjects, which could be used in the preparation of a description of the phenomenon and its particular features in Latin America.

(iii) A survey of the experience existing in connexion with policies of eradication or alleviation and, where possible, of the evaluation of the results obtained.

(iv) An analysis of the existing legislation affecting the situation of the poor and its compatibility with policies aimed at alleviating poverty and overall economic and social development policies.

(v) A study

(v) A study of the institutional framework within which
each State implements the policies adopted in connexion with
the poor; preparation of the respective organizational charts
for purposes of subsequent advisory assistance with regard to
the best way of enhancing the influence of public spending in
improving the quality of life of the poor.

(b)　Consultations

The need for an overall appraisal of the problems of
poverty in the region in the near future makes it advisable to
effect collective consultations with national and international
experts for the purpose of rapidly identifying the main problems
and focal points of poverty situations, as viewed and considered
by institutions and technical personnel in each country.

These collective consultations could take the form of
National Meetings on the Eradication of Poverty, and could be
organized separately by each country as consistent with its own
particular conditions. Some of these meetings could be restricted
to selected institutions and technical personnel and others could
be open to the public. Obviously, the strategy, level and
specific nature of each meeting should be established by common
agreement with the national authorities.

Upon conclusion of each national meeting, a report should
be prepared presenting as complete a picture as possible of the
situation concerned.

(c)　Limitations of statistical information

One of the problems most frequently mentioned in the
literature on poverty is the lack of data for an analysis of the
problem in Latin America. It may be affirmed, however, that
this difficulty lies not so much in the non-existence of
statistical data, but in its availability, dispersion and access.
Various studies which have been carried out with the general aim

/of analysing

of analysing other subjects constitute important sources of
empirical data on groups in a situation of critical poverty.
A systematic effort could be made to "reconvert" this information
and use it in research on the subject and in the formulation
of eradication policies.

ILPES proposes to undertake the systematic compilation
of this material, to study the reliability of the information
it contains, and to process it so that it will be easily usable.
In short, the aim is to set up a Data Bank on Critical Poverty
in Latin America within the medium term.

The basis for initiating this task would be the information
deriving from the research on income distribution, the use of
which is analysed below.

3. Analysis of the information included in the Joint ECLA/IBRD Project

The information which will serve as a basis for this
analysis has been collected by the Joint ECLA/IBRD Project on
measurement and analysis of income distribution in Latin America.
This information consists basically of household surveys and
manpower and employment surveys. The permanent inventory of
household surveys kept by the Statistical Division of CEPAL includes
about 120 surveys; 31 of these covering 13 countries were selected
by the Joint ECLA/IBRD Project as a basis for the measurement
and analysis of income distribution. These surveys were carried
out in the following countries: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia,
Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Honduras, Mexico, Panama,
Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela.

Generally speaking, this file contains 30 characteristics
of household and persons, many of which are of great importance
in analysing the common characteristics and causality of poverty.

/1. Household income

1. Household income
2. Socio-economic group
3. Sex and age
4. Size of household
5. Number of income recipients
6. Recipients' income
7. Source and type of income
8. Type of household
9. Type of activity
10. Occupational status
11. Kind of economic activity
12. Occupation
13. Employment situation
14. Duration of unemployment
15. Weeks worked in the year
16. Type of working day
17. Hours worked per week
18. Earnings per complete working day
19. Number of occupations
20. Occupational status in the secondary occupation
21. Kind of activity in the secondary occupation
22. Literacy
23. Educational level attained
24. Type of dwelling
25. Type of structure
26. Number of rooms
27. Tenure
28. Sanitary facilities and electricity supply
29. Final household consumption
30. Object of expenditure

It should be noted that information is not always available at the level of the analytical unit of the relevant survey: in some cases it is available only in more aggregate form. Other surveys include information on size of enterprise, age of enterprise, experience, length of residence in the city, etc.

(a) Descriptive analysis

The main purpose of this stage is to describe the focal group known as "the poor", which is identified in the previous stage whatever the criterion used in defining it. This descriptive exercise is intended to discover the common or most frequent characteristics of this group. Obviously, the search for these common characteristics should be comfined to the group of variables listed above on which information is actually available.

For this purpose, use can be made of techniques for classifying or dividing the sample universe in each survey. These classification techniques should be based on the group of variables on which the respective survey provides information, and will make it possible to distinguish between those variables which are relatively neutral with respect to poverty from those which are not $\underline{1}/$. The so-called "common characteristics of the poor" would be obtained from an analysis of this second group of variables. In other words, it would be determined whether the poor are concentrated in a specific region or geographical area or whether are spread out at random; whether they are concentrated in a certain kind of economic activity or are found scattered in all activities; whether they are most frequently of a certain sex and age; whether they are most often to be found in large households; whether they are concentrated more frequently in small-scale enterprises than in large-scale enterprises, and among

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$\underline{1}/$ See Annex 1 for a summarized account of a simple version of this methodology.

own-account workers than among wage-earners; whether they usually
constitute the group of unemployed or illiterates; whether they
most frequently present high rates of dependence, have a specific
marital status or belong to a particular socio-economic group,
etc. It is possible that this analysis, which classifies the
variables and considers them individually, will not permit much
progress to be made in the search for these common characteristics
and it may be necessary to classify the population according to
two or more variables at once. A multi-variable classification
of this kind would be of particular importance if the poor
possessed a parcel of attributes in common which acted upon
another to generate poverty. For example, the poor may simultaneously
have a particular occupation and be of a particular sex and
age; they may tend to be concentrated in a specific region,
kind of activity, size of enterprise, etc. That is to say,
the distribution of these characteristics among the poor
may not be independent of one another, but may be closely
correlated.

On the basis of this analysis it is possible to distinguish
between those variables or groups of variables which are relatively
neutral with respect to poverty from those which are not. By
classifying the population according to those which are not neutral,
either separately or together, it should be possible to identify
what are usually the common characteristics of the poor, a
knowledge of which is indispensable for the efficient formulation
of poverty eradication policies.

(b) Analysis of causality and policy design

From the foregoing descriptive analysis, some causality
hypotheses may be inferred with respect to the focal groups
identified. Broadly speaking, it may be affirmed that the causes
are interrelated and that it is difficult to separate those referring
to the inadequate supply of human capital of the poorest sectors

/of the

of the population (nutrition, health, education, etc.) from those
relfected in the prevailing institutional system (labour legislation,
access to the administration, social security legislation, etc.)
or in the existence of segmented markets with very different
characteristics (labour, goods and capital markets).

In any case, the productivity of individuals, assuming that
it is directly related with their income, can be affected either
by improving their individual situation (human capital) or by
removing the institutional obstacles which prevent them from
appropriating an income consistent with their productivity.

Only after the relatively homogeneous focal groups and the
causes most influencing their state of poverty have been identified
can more effective policies be designed than those hitherto
implemented. For this reason, no conclusions can be advanced
regarding the last part of this study, which would consist precisely
in the proposal of policies for the eradication of critical poverty.

Nevertheless, in the light of the technical knowledge and
empirical evidence available, it has been considered possible to
suggest some working hypotheses aimed at dealing with the problem
of the backward state of medium-sized cities and the bases for
action to stimulate development and increased productivity in
small-scale enterprises, which so far have generally been unable
to take advantage of the facilities in terms of access to credit,
technical assistance, markets, etc., that form part of the normal
system of operation of larger enterprises.

/II. SMALL AND

II. SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED CITIES AND INDUSTRIES. BASES FOR A STRATEGY AGAINST EXTREME POVERTY

1. General considerations

From a study of the present situation and demographic, economic and social trends in Latin America there emerge two outstanding problems which the countries of the region should endeavour to solve in the next two decades. One is, or would appear to be an urban problem: the need for urban system to absorb a large number of inhabitants. The other is a social and economic problem: the need to eliminate the conditions of extreme poverty, also for a large number of inhabitants. These two problems are not independent of each other and the hypothesis may be advanced that the unilateral treatment of them has actually worsened the situation.

It will be difficult if not impossible to limit rural-urban migration in Latin America (one of the factors giving rise to the first of these problems) to reasonable terms and periods. If the aim is concurrently to avoid the hyperbolical growth of the major Latin American cities (Mexico City is expected to have a population of 31.5 million inhabitants by the year 2000, Sao Paulo 26 million, Rio de Janeiro 19.3 million and Buenos Aires 13.7 million), there is no alternative but to try to reorient the expected population increase geographically. This does not entirely solve the problem of the growth of the major cities, since the most important component of their expansion is not migration but natural population growth.

At all events, a serious attempt to strengthen the medium or small cities could be a better alternative than to leave the present trends to take their course, even though it may be difficult at the moment to justify the economic rationality of this course (there no longer appears to be such faith in the mass emergence

/of diseconomies

of diseconomies of agglomeration, a kind of guardian angel of urban expansion).

From a different standpoint, the problem of poverty or any attempt to solve it partially or completely is inevitably bound up with the question of an increase in the worker's real income (or productivity). As suggested in a World Bank study [1], an increase in the real income of the workers in general and the poor in particular (many of whom are unemployed) can be achieved by two independent or complementary means: (i) an increase in wages deriving from a greater demand for labour, and (ii) an improvement in the quantity and quality of the services--particularly public services--available for use [2].

The crucial question, therefore, is: in what cities can the manpower absorption capacity be maximized and the cost of providing services, particularly public services, be minimized? Unfortunately, there is little empirical evidence regarding these aspects and it would be difficult to find a universal answer to the question.

Although some studies--both theoretical and applied (Alonso, 1968; Hera, 1970, 1973)--have endeavoured to find a positive correlation between the degree of priority and economic efficiency, they are still a long way from proving it, on the contrary, other studies advance opposite arguments, at least in relation to some Latin American countries (Boyce, Boisier, 1974). A study prepared some years ago by CENDES (Universidad Central de Venezuela) provides

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[1] The Task Ahead for the Cities of the Developing Countries, World Bank Staff Working Paper N° 209, Washington, 1975, p. 67.

[2] By way of example, some research undertaken in Latin American cities would seem to show that the inadequate marketing systems for food products existing in marginal neighbourhoods reflect overprices of about 50 per cent in the value of essential products, thus representing an onerous item in the budget (and real income) of wage-earners.

some information on another aspect of the problem--urbanization
costs--which would also point to a potentially better situation
of the medium-sized city compared with the great metropolis
(CENDES, 1971).

Assuming for the moment (a hypothesis which should be proved
empirically in each case) that medium and small towns (which
would also have to be defined empirically, but for present purposes
could be fixed within a range of 50 000 to 500 000 inhabitants)
have a greater relative capacity for absorbing manpower and/or
increasing labour productivity through the strenthening of medium-
or small-scale industrial enterprises (of up to 50 workers), and
at the same time show lower costs for the provision of services,
a number of aspects would then emerge which should be considered
in the design and implementation of a strategy for combating
poverty in the two aspects referred, to i.e., the medium- and
small-scale industry and the medium- and small town.

In a strategy such as that proposed it would be possible
to distinguish four interrelated aspects which almost completely
determine it:
   (i) size of enterprises;
  (ii) size of cities;
 (iii) technology, i.e., use of labour-intensive industrial processes;
  (iv) administration and institutional aspects, that is, on
       the one hand the existence at the national level of
       financial institutions capable of operating as the
       counterpart of international credit agencies and, on
       the other hand, the existence of a body capable
       simultaneously of co-ordinating the four components
       of the strategy.

/In the

In the first place, this strategy is necessarily <u>selective</u> from the geographical point of view, and <u>large-scale</u> from the standpoint of the resources involved. This tends to prevent the dispersion of resources over too many localities so that none can attain a critical mass or impulse, which is a fairly frequent error in Latin America.

Secondly, such a strategy should operate on the basis of systems of <u>medium and small towns</u> rather than on the basis of individual cities. This criterion is based on the need to make full use of the technical and economic complementary between enterprises located in different cities, to maximize the impact or effect of dissemination of such industries on the inter-urban rural medium, and to locate certain common services in a city while at the same time permitting access to them from various localities. Lastly, if the implicit idea is to offer one or several centres as an alternative to the great metropolis (in order to reorient migration), this aim would obviously be better served by the organization of urban systems than by isolated cities.

Thirdly, the small- and medium-scale industries to be established or strengthened should maintain economic and technological relations with some large-scale industries in the region so as to benefit from an induced demand in sectors of considerable income-elasticity.

Finally, and without prejudice to the above criterion, these medium- and small-scale enterprises should be linked with the industrialization of the region's natural resources and should primarily produce mass consumption goods to meet the needs of the lowest-income population groups.

In the last analysis, the aims of a strategy based on the strengthening of medium and small industries and towns would be: (a) to increase employment opportunities (or the demand for manpower); (b) to help deviate the rural-urban and inter-urban migratory flow; (c) to increase the capacity for the provision of services in towns on the periphery; and (d) to develop entrepreneurial capacity.

2. Specific aspects relating to small-scale enterprises and artisans

a) Diagnosis

One of the socio-economic strata where major degrees of poverty are to be found is that constituted by the small industrial and service enterprises, the artisans and the "self-employed" group.

A small-scale enterprise may provisionally be taken to mean a production unit with between 1 and 50 employees, and this category may be subdivided into three sections:

1 - 5 employees

6 - 20 employees

21 - 50 employees

working on the hypothesis that the smaller the size of the enterprise, the greater are its problems of productivity and hence the greater the poverty of the owner and his operators. In order to verify the foregoing, the industrial surveys or censuses of the countries in which the situation of the small-scale enterprises is to be studied would have to be processed.

This definition and statistical analysis should be complemented with functional or qualitative criteria on the situation of the small-scale enterprises, adopting the hypothesis that most of these enterprises have fairly similar characteristics.

The functional criteria which should be taken into account and which would determine the marginality of the small enterprises from the economic structure could be the following:

i) capital and technological level of the production process;

ii) the methods of management and administration of the enterprise;

iii) the supply and marketing possibilities of the enterprise;

iv) the position of the enterprise as regards obtaining financing;

v) the possibilities for development and innovation;

vi) the situation regarding political and economic power, deriving from the degree of fragmentation of the stratum.

/This analysis

This analysis would have to be broken down into branches or
sectors of production and into regions, since the problems encountered
by enterprises carrying out different activities, located in different
geographical areas, or engaged in providing services and producing
final products and spare parts on a sub-contracting basis are likely
to vary in degree and intensity.

It would also be important to analyse the effects on the
stratum of the country's global economic policies and possible changes
in them.

b)   Policies for the stratum of small-scale enterprises

At the second stage it could be necessary to specify the global
and specific policies which should be established for the stratum
of small-scale production would be determined. Because of the nature
of the problems of small enterprises, it is necessary to define a
set of measures relating both to the general framework of the
country's planning and policies and to direct action affecting the
stratum.

Global policies should be taken to mean the definition of a
set of measures which would fix the rules for this production
stratum in such a way as to incorporate them into a normative system
accessible to small enterprises and oriented towards their promotion
and increased productivity.

The definition of specific policies for small enterprises
would involve differentiating between sectors or branches in the
use of the various technical and financial instruments capable of
promoting and assisting this type of enterprise. Special emphasis
should be placed on the fact that the specific policies used should
have the priority objective of encouraging the owners of small
enterprises to organize themselves in order to promote both
self-help and the multiplier effects of the actions of the central
institutions responsible for encouraging and assisting them.

/Another fundamental

Another fundamental aspect to be settled is the unity or coherence of the different policies. Little would be gained by providing financing for small enterprises if the taxation policy, for example, discouraged capitalization by these enterprises. In other cases, it might not be worth establishing a line of credit for the small-scale stratum if the owners were not at the same time afforded facilities for improving their legal status and level of management, obtaining inputs, marketing their products, etc. This coherence and interaction of policies should likewise be sought in the institutional framework for their realization and implementation.

c)   The institutional framework needed for encouraging and assisting small enterprises

Each country naturally has its own situation and problems which have to be considered and studied in defining the institutional framework for the implementation of an integral policy for this stratum.

It is nevertheless possible to put forward some initial considerations which can later be developed in more detail in general and country studies.

Both from the point of view of the advantages to small enterprises, and from that of the better use and multiplication of the resources available for the functions of assisting and promoting this type of enterprise, it is worth studying whether these functions should be concentrated in a few institutions or ideally in a single institution which would be given the necessary status and resources to carry out the policies defined.

An enterprise is a production unit with distinct but closely related functions and problems. The task of management, financing, supply, maintenance of equipment, staffing, marketing, accountancy, and also the legal and tax aspects, etc., are closely related functionally especially in small enterprises where in practice they all fall to the owner or manager.

/It is

It is therefore necessary to analyse whether a more unified and intergal form of assistance could most effectively meet the needs of this type of enterprise, since it would save the employer from having to turn for specific assistance to various different institutions which might not have any unity of criteria and might lack any inter-relation of the assistance at different stages of the productive process, thus producing discrepancies in the execution of the various measures in time.

This would also have to be studied in relation to the better use and greater multiplication of the State resources, so as not duplicate functions by dividing the tasks of assistance and promotion between various institutions. In the light of the preceding considerations on the coherence of policies designed for small enterprises and the need to differentiate between sectors or branches of activity in determining the use of particular technical or financial instruments, it is necessary to analyse the possibility in specific cases of concentrating institutions (whether public, mixed or private), since international experience would seem poit to the advantages of this course.

d)   The organization of small enterprise owners

Another of the aspects to be studied in order to carry out a programme of massive aid to small enterprises is the need for the organization of the owners and the forms it should take.

Because of the fragmentation of the small enterprise stratum in terms of numbers and geographical location it is necessary to study ways of encouraging organization so that technical and financial assistance services can reach the greatest possible number of owners. It would definitely make it easier for the institutions responsible for the programme to reduce the costs of this assistance if the recipients were organizations made up of homogenous groups of owners linked by geographical location or branch of activity. This would in turn help the owners themselves to engage in mutual co-operation

or to create common services of a legal, accounting or administrative nature, etc., thus reducing the costs to each individual enterprise.

e)   Methods and procedures of technical and credit assistance

Another aspect which should be analysed in future studies on the subject, and especially in case studies in some Latin American countries, is that of the methods of operation to be followed providing technical and financial assistance to this stratum.

One of the main aspects to be studied is the potential and scope of the method of "collective action" as the principal approach to be adopted in the work of co-operation with small enterprises; at the same time, the requirements for the use of the method of "extension services" as an additional instrument should be established.

Annex 1

One of the most simple techniques that could be used to identify those attributes that are common to or characterize the target poverty group is the following:

Let $V = \underline{/}\,V^1, V^2 \ldots V^p\,\underline{/}$ be the vector of the variables contained in the survey which are presumed to be relevant from a poverty point of view.

Let N be the total number of individuals in the sample.

- Let F be the number of "poors" in the sample.

Therefore, $f = \dfrac{F}{N}$ represents the number of "poors" as a percentage of the total population.

Each of the p variables considered can take $\bar{V}^i$ different values.

For example the variable SEX can take two values which correspond to male and female.

Therefore the classification of the sample universe according to the variable $\bar{V}^i$ will generate $\bar{V}^i$ different groups. S^i_j each of which will have N^i_j individuals, where j goes from 1 to $\bar{V}^i$.

Let us define F^i_j and f^i_j as the absolute and percentage number of "poors" in the jth group determined by the ith variable.

$$f^i_j = \frac{F^i_j}{N^i_j}$$

If the ith variable were completely neutral with respect to poverty then the expected percentage of poors in each of the $\bar{V}^i$ groups defined by this variable should be equal to the percentage of poors in the population as a whole.

$$f^i_j = f \quad \text{for} \quad j = 1 \ldots \bar{V}^i$$

However if the ith variable is not neutral with respect to poverty then for some groups this percentage will exceed the population parameter, the opposite being true for the other groups.

$$\underline{/}\,f^i_j\,\underline{/} > f$$

$$f^i_j > f \qquad \text{for some } j$$

$$f^i_j < f \qquad \text{for others}$$

This follows directly from the fact that

$$\sum F^i_j = F$$

$$\sum \frac{F^i_j}{N^i_j} \frac{N^i_j}{N} = \frac{F}{N}$$

$$\sum n^i_j f^i_j = F \quad \text{where} \quad n^i_j = \frac{N^i_j}{N}$$

.Therefore f is a weighted average of the f^i_j where the weights are the percentage of the total population in each of the groups. These weights add up to one. Therefore if some f^i_j exceed f, then the opposite must happen for others.

Therefore, those values of the ith variable for which $\frac{f^i_j}{f} > 1$ can be considered to be more common to the poverty group than to the population as a whole. The greater the value of $\frac{f^i_j}{f}$ the more common the jth value of the ith variable to the target group.

For example if V^i is the area which can take two values, urban and rural, then if poverty tend to be concentrated in the rural areas we will have:

$$f_R > f > f_U \qquad \frac{f_R}{f} > 1$$

$$\frac{f_U}{f} < 1$$

This technique can be repeated for each of the p variables. This procedure will permit us to discriminate those variables which are neutral with respect to poverty from those which are not and to identify the values of the latter group of variables which are common to the target poverty group.

/In the

In the extreme case where $F^i_j = F$

then $\dfrac{f^i_j}{f} = \dfrac{N}{N^i_j} > 1$

which is the maximum value that this ratio can take and illustrates
a situation where all the poors have the jth value of the ith variable
and none of them have other values. In this case the jth value is
absolutely common to all poors and the ith variable is absolutely
non neutral with respect to poverty. This variable alone permits
us to perfectly identify the target group.

However it is possible that none of the variables is such powerful
or non neutral with respect to poverty to allow for a significant
homogenization of the target group. In this case it would be necessary
to analize the joint contribution of groups of two, three or more
variables.

If we simultaneously classify the population according to the
variables i and k we will have $\bar{V}^i \times \bar{V}^k$ different groups $S^{i,k}_{j,l}$ with
N^{ik}_{jl} individuals where the group $S^{ik}_{j,l}$ is composed by all those indi-
viduals which have the value j for the ith variable and the value
l for the kth variable.

Defining $F^{ik}_{j,l}$ as the number of poors in the j,l group determined
by the variables i and k and $f^{ik}_{j,l}$ as the ratio of this number to the

total number of individuals in the j,l group $f^{ik}_{j,l} = \dfrac{F^{ik}_{jl}}{N^{ik}_{j,l}}$ we can proceed

to analyze the following ratios:

$$\dfrac{f^{ik}_{jl}}{f^i_j} \quad , \quad \dfrac{f^{ik}_{jl}}{f^k_l} \quad , \quad \dfrac{f^{ik}_{jl}}{f}$$

The first ratio will allow us to analyze the impact of the
variable k controlling for the variable i (within a given value for
the ith variable). The second ratio will allow us to analyze the

impact of the variable i controlling for the variable k (within a given value for the kth variable). The last ratio permits us to determine whether there exists a combination of values for the ith and k^{th} variables where the poors tend to concentrate.

In the extreme case where $F^{ik}_{j,1} = F \; \dfrac{f^{ik}_{j1}}{f} = \dfrac{N}{N^{ik}_{j1}}$ which illustrates the case in which all poors have simultaneously the jth and 1th values for the ith and k^{th} variables. In this case these two variables allow us to perfectly identify the target group.

Example:

$$\text{if} \quad V^i = \text{Area} \left\{ \begin{array}{l} V^i_u = \text{Urban area} \\[1em] V_R = \text{Rural area} \end{array} \right.$$

$$\text{and} \quad V^k = \text{Size of the firm} \left\{ \begin{array}{l} V^k_B = \text{big} \\[1em] V^k_S = \text{small} \end{array} \right.$$

Then if the poors tend to be characterized by living in rural areas and working in small firms:

i) $\quad f^i_R > f > f^i_u \Longrightarrow \dfrac{f^i_R}{f} > 1 > \dfrac{f^i_U}{f}$

ii) $\quad f^k_s > f > f^k_B \Longrightarrow \dfrac{f^k_s}{f} > 1 > \dfrac{f^k_B}{f}$

iii) $\quad f^{ik}_{R,s} > \dfrac{f^i_R}{f^k_s} \Longrightarrow \dfrac{f^{ik}_{R,s}}{f^i_R} \; , \; \dfrac{f^{ik}_{R,s}}{f^k_S} > 1$

The last two ratios allow us to analyze the marginal contribution of one variable given the other.

We can continue with this kind of procedure using three, four or more variables simultaneously to classify the population.

/The larger

The larger the number of variables used the larger will be
the value of:

$$\frac{f^{i,k,m,n \ldots p}_{j,l,m,s \ldots t}}{f} \quad \text{for some } j, l, m, s \text{ and } t$$

and therefore the more precise will be the identification of the
set of characteristics that tend to be common to the poors.

Annex 2

MEDIUM-SIZED AND SMALL CITIES AND INDUSTRIES

Sources of information

In defining strategies relating to medium-sized and small cities, the general information available in the United Nations bodies in Santiago, Chile, should be taken into account.

Firstly, the demographic pattern of this type of urban center and the trends in relation to the big cities should be analysed. For this, the information available in CELADE should be taken into account, particularly that derived from censuses. This information covers all the countries where censuses have been carried out. The information used in the research carried out by CELADE on urban growth in Latin America, with particular reference to Brazil, Mexico, Colombia, Venezuela, Peru, Chile and Argentina, could also be used.

Secondly, the location and development of these centres in relation to the internal migration processes should be taken into account, and for this purpose a number of research reports by CELADE and PISPAL are available. In particular, the measurements of net domestic migration at the level of the first politico-adminis-trative division in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Mexico and Venezuela, classified in the relevant research project by CELADE, could be taken into account.

Thirdly, advantage could be taken of the research carried out on specific problems in some countries of the region:

(a) Research on the supply of and demand for services in medium-sized towns in line with the research on the national financial system for urban investment carried out jointly by the Brazilian Institute for Economic and Social Planning (IPEA) and CEPAL for some cities in Brazil in 1975.

/(b) Situation of

(b) Situation of systems of small- and medium-sized towns in Brazil and Venezuela, according to the diagnoses made by ILPES for the plans of the State of Minas Gerais, on the one hand, and for sub-regions of the Venezuelan Andes, on the other.

(c) Research on differences in industrial productivity and wages for urban centres of different sizes in Brazil, carried out by IPEA and CEPAL for the three-year period 1967-1969.

SOURCES

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CENDES	<u>Desarrollo urbano y desarrollo nacional</u> (First National Congress of Architects, Caracas, March, 1971).
Mera, K.	"On the Concentration of Urbanization and Economic Efficiency", IBRD, Economic Department Working Paper Nº 74, 1974, Washington; "On the Urban Agglomeration and Economic Efficiency", <u>Economic Development and Cultural Change</u>, January, 1973.
World Bank	<u>The Task Ahead for the Cities of the Developing Countries</u>, World Bank Staff Working Paper Nº 209, July, 1975, Washington.

Annex 3

ILPES, through the Latin American Centre for Economic and
Social Documentation (CLADES), has access to the most recent information
on industrial statistics covering the following:

1. <u>Countries</u>
   - Argentina
   - Bolivia
   - Brazil
   - Colombia
   - Costa Rica
   - Chile
   - Ecuador
   - Honduras
   - El Salvador
   - Mexico
   - Panama
   - Paraguay
   - Peru
   - Venezuela

2. <u>Sources</u>
   Censuses
   Surveys
   Other industrial studies

3. <u>Main indicators</u>
   - number of establishments
   - value added
   - gross value of production
   - personnel employed
   - wages

4.   <u>Subdivisions</u>

    1 to 4 employees

    5 to 19 employees

    20 to 49 employees

    50 to 99 employees

    100 or more employees

5.   This information covers all industrial branches and in some cases there is information on regions or principal cities of the countries.

6.   ILPES has a full bibliography on the subject of small-scale enterprises which was assembled for the study on small and medium-sized industry in the countries of the Andean Pact.