METROPOLITANIZATION IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN: QUALITY OF LIFE AND URBAN POVERTY

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The opinions expressed herein are the sole responsibility of the authors and may not necessarily coincide with the views held by the Organizations mentioned.
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SUMMARY

This document is part of a series of studies on metropolitanization in Latin America. The first report in the series "Metropolitanization and the crisis in Latin America: problems and prospects" has already been published under the symbol LC/L.383.

An attempt is made here to analyse metropolitan problems more thoroughly, since they are among the region's most serious social issues.

This document focuses on the complexity of metropolitan poverty and defines it so that it can become an essential item in analysing the metropolitanization process in the region.

Chapter I seeks to establish various definitions of poverty in terms of other concepts, such as marginality, basic needs and democratic stability and ends with a proposal for a political and structural concept of urban poverty. This chapter further puts forward an analytical typology of metropolitan poverty, while recognizing that there are many different forms of poverty from one region to another. A matrix is suggested based on a typology which distinguish among the different types of metropolitan poverty and describes the main features of the different focal groups of poor people and seeks to explain their activities and characteristics.

Finally, chapter I analyses the current metropolitan policies in the region and their link with the problems of urban poverty.

Chapter II looks at the link which might be established between the quality of life and the management and planning of urban development. First of all, it seeks to analyse the connection between this concept and the diagnoses of the actual situation, considering both the contexts of development and underdevelopment and the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the concept in question.

Taking as a basis the fact that one of the central features of underdevelopment is its internal heterogeneity as regards the well-being of the different social groups, a link is established between the concepts of poverty and quality of life in the regional context and a new approach to economic and social development planning is suggested.

This chapter also analyses other issues closely linked with the quality of life, specifically those relating to basic needs and how they should be met, development models, and space as the basis of individual and collective development.
The document concludes with a matrix delineating the key areas for metropolitan planning, chief among which are food and comprehensive health care, urban security, work, housing, infrastructure and services and socio-political participation.

Appended to the study is an extensive bibliography on the subject.
I. POVERTY AS A FUNDAMENTAL URBAN PROBLEM IN LATIN AMERICA

The following comments, which are of a rather qualitative and general nature, seek to probe more deeply into the whole series of urban problems, since it is now abundantly clear that they are in fact one of the most important elements in the region's broader social problems. In fact, in virtually every country the metropolitanization processes are firmly entrenched, and there is growing consensus among academic, experts and politicians that the metropolitanization processes are here to stay and are very difficult to change. More realistic policies are now being formulated and there has been a retreat from the formalistic and utopian trends in urban and metropolitan planning, which have produced only minor successes and a wide range of frustrations, characterized, inter alia, by attempts to reduce metropolitan growth trends (by correcting and controlling the main imbalances) and by concentrating in particular on equalizing social opportunities among metropolises. Foremost among these were the proposals aimed at securing a qualitative and quantitative improvement in the quality of life of the marginalized social masses.

The purpose of these notes, therefore, is to describe the complex phenomenon of metropolitan poverty in greater detail and provide a clear guide for analysing the region's metropolitan problems. Of all the problems of growth, imbalances, congestion, pollution, growing deterioration of the natural ecosystems, mental health, and structural weaknesses impeding the expansion of the formal economy, the question of metropolitan poverty appears as the one most deserving of analysis, because it sums up all the crucial aspects listed above and because it clearly reflects the social sectors which should be given preference in policy making and the major weaknesses of the more traditional government policies.

There are several aspects of the regional crisis: extremely high rates of external indebtedness; very marked recessionary trends in the strategic economic sectors which produce essential goods and services and generate stable employment; and a general context of fiscal indiscipline which considerably reduces investment and public expenditure, especially in respect of basic needs. Thus, almost inevitably, the amount of monetary resources allocated to programmes for improving the quality of life in the marginalized sectors of the metropolises tends to diminish, contrasting with the rising demand of those same sectors. Indeed, the reduced leeway that governments have for adopting measures in the areas of food, health, educational services, housing and the urban habitat stands in sharp contrast to the growing needs in those areas. In this context, the stability of the experiments in the region to restore democracy is seriously jeopardized. The importance of the topic is
therefore obvious. The task is to investigate in greater detail the possibilities which exist for increasing the leeway for implementing these policies, as regards conventional or non-conventional resources, technologies better adapted to the present conditions and providing greater real advantages, and qualitatively more efficient forms of government administration giving greater participation in the society.

The aim of this document, then, will be to make a detailed study of metropolitan poverty in Latin America. An effort will be made to analyse the entire gamut of social problems from this "overall viewpoint" and set them against the concept which is proposed here as a guide for government and social planning, namely, the concept of the quality of metropolitan life, which is examined in detail in chapter II. With the guiding objective of improving the quality of life of the marginalized sectors, of the urban poor, which will be discussed next, an effort is made to lay the guidelines for a form of planning and a set of urban policies which are new in the region.

Metropolitan poverty has been studied from the standpoint of various conceptual schemes, and has been incorporated in very different kinds of planning and policy proposals. This document seeks not only to present these approaches, but also to provide a more detailed description of the phenomenon which contains much that is specific, has important peculiarities, describes very varied social aspects, and is the expression even of socio-environmental peculiarities which clearly intertwine with the question of the informal economies and are broken down socially and organizationally, into multiple socio-political expressions which, in turn, are based on very different socio-political forces and different forms of relationship with the State. This set of issues reveals that metropolitan poverty is a fundamental problem in the large Latin American cities, much more so than all the "more or less questionable" statistics on poverty or the mass of background information on particular situations. These notes are predominantly conceptual and methodological in intent and are designed to give guidelines for defining new metropolitan planning methods.3/

A. The urban poor

1. Directions and guidelines for defining urban poverty

Different analytical, interpretative and instrumental concepts have been used to define urban poverty. Thus, different ethical profiles and values, different views of the labour force as a development factor and different criteria on the behaviour and mobility of the social structures, as well as different ideological roots, different perceptions of development and varied socio-political concepts have significantly influenced the definition of the concept of urban poverty.

It is therefore important to arrive at a concept which involves a relative ideological and theoretical consensus and which is an efficient instrument for implementing new systems of administration and urban planning which provide for concerted government and social action that can
substantially improve the quality of life of the poor urban masses, as a precondition for achieving higher levels of development and stable democracy.

In this paper it is argued that urban poverty—in particular metropolitan poverty, which has been its dominant form in the last decade—is the preponderant feature of the crisis in Latin America's large cities. At the same time, it is recognized that there is a wide variety of different situations because, inter alia, of historical reasons, migratory processes, specialization in production, the social structure, and the different kinds of government action and institutions.

2. Definitions of urban poverty: some relevant criteria

a) Poverty and marginality

From the urban standpoint, poverty has been linked very closely to the concept of marginality, which is seen as a phenomenon of spatial, ecological or socioeconomic exclusion. The already traditional view taken by Desal is noteworthy in this respect. He sees marginality as an absence of active and passive participation, as exclusion "from development", or at least from the gradual process of economic and social modernization as expressed in its urban form, and as a phenomenon of general exclusion, but increasingly cultural exclusion which is affecting ever-larger sectors of the population of the region's large cities. Marginality is therefore probably one of the most important manifestations of the disfunctioning of the system.

José Nun, for his part, advances the concept of the "marginalized mass", linked to relative overpopulation. This concept incorporates a more structural and systemic dimension of the phenomenon and perceives macrosocial relations as one explanation of the growing phenomenon of urban poverty. Given the structural slant of the approach and its link with macrosocial processes, Nun concludes that the search for solutions to marginalization should necessarily involve economic and social policies that are national in scope.

The view of "the marginalized labour force" taken by Aníbal Quijano represents another approach to the study of marginality and poverty linked with situations of economic exclusion, where the structural weakness of the labour market puts huge sectors of society in a different labour situation. This approach establishes one of the most fruitful analytical links from the academic and political point of view: the link between marginality and informal employment.

Manuel Castell's concept of marginalization sees poverty as an active socio-political process, functionally adjusted to specific social situations of domination. The feature of exclusion which is a structural element of the dependent capitalistic systems that predominate in Latin America would appear to heighten the growing tendency towards exclusion and encourage the creation of larger and larger social sectors which go to make up the urban informal sector of the society.
sector, with its special features as regards economic activity, survival strategies, and its peculiar forms of socio-political organization.

b) Poverty and basic needs

There are other views, based on more generic approaches than those linking poverty and marginality, which usually define the condition of poverty as the failure to have access to a given set of basic or essential goods and services. These approaches have had a strong influence on the way governments have acted in the region. For decades (and the situation still persists today), this has led to discussions on minimum standards or indicators of the satisfaction of needs and to the extension of the concept of what is essential to cover an ever-wider range of goods and services. In the same way, suggestions as to the thresholds of relative poverty have been put forward which have established demarcation lines of "extreme urban poverty", usually covering such aspects as housing conditions, equipment, degree of overcrowding and availability of sewage and waste disposal systems. In more general terms, a more complete and varied conceptual and instrumental indicator has been elaborated, namely, the quality of the physical environment. Incidentally, the concept of a socio-environmental quality factor can be created as a yardstick for illustrating the wide variety of specific urban social situations and, in particular, describing the various ways in which poverty is manifested.

Simultaneously, a number of authors, including Jorge Graciarena, began to devise more integral schemes based on the basic needs concept. Thus various approaches to social structuring, productive behaviour and social organization were postulated as methods of socio-governmental management which adopted a strategy of satisfying basic needs as a development option.

Recently, these concepts have provided a basis for a human rights approach which establishes the need to overcome poverty by upholding the material rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This has led to the view that poverty is a socioeconomic situation that must be overcome because it is a violation of the Declaration. In this postulation, just as in Graciarena's approach, impetus is given to the establishment of a new socio-political order which will give rise to a pattern of development in which poverty can be attacked as a social phenomenon.

c) Poverty and democratic stability: a political and structural view

There are few researchers, planners or politicians today who would dispute the fact that poverty is a structural phenomenon which is at present severely undermining the stability of socio-political systems or that the restoration of democracy in the region will depend largely on the success of active and far-reaching government policies, which can fairly quickly generate "minimum conditions of social equality and meet the basic social needs of large sectors of the society which have been left behind". Systemic stability is increasingly linked with marginalization and poverty. Thus poverty is visualized not just as a structural phenomenon, but also as a strategic circumstance which must be modified if there are to be stable
systems. Political action which is far-reaching and diverse and orchestrated by agents whose political frame of reference is the State rather than the government and who are technically proficient and professionally advanced surpasses the kind of action that has prevailed over the past few decades, which is sectoral, partial, primarily governmental, short term and lacking in professionalism and technique.

A variety of factors have made it necessary to adopt this change of approach; they have been felt more keenly during the last decade owing to the uncommonly severe crisis experienced by the region. Some of the factors which have lent political urgency to the problem of poverty are listed below.

i) The increase in the number of poor people in the region is due to the magnitude and permanence of a number of factors related to the marked inadequacy of the prevailing development patterns and styles, especially in respect of the creation of stable employment, and the manner in which the mechanisms used to distribute income and consumption operate.

ii) The rural exodus and the difficulties encountered in keeping the population in medium-sized and small towns have made for an even greater concentration of the migratory flows towards metropolitan areas and caused greater poverty in the large cities. The decline in population growth attributable to the general effectiveness of birth-control policies has not significantly affected the tendency for migratory flows to concentrate on metropolitan areas because of considerable relative advantages accruing to poor people in metropolitan areas as compared with those living elsewhere, owing in particular to the increasingly extensive and diverse informal economic activities practiced in the cities and easier access to public social services which make survival strategies work better.

iii) State and government policies have been characterized by ineptitude in dealing with these problems although it is recognized that they vary from sector to sector and the social sectors have been favoured. The deficiencies of these strategies have been aggravated by the crisis which has led to the reduction of social expenditure and public investment and to a cutback in government activities.

iv) The social and political outspokenness of the urban poor—particularly in metropolitan areas—has increased considerably in recent times as a result of mounting shortages of urban goods and services and the need to strengthen the methods of horizontal co-operation in order to deal in a more organized fashion with family survival strategies. This has led to stronger and more diversified associations which range from mutual aid organizations and production and consumption co-operatives to real economic organizations which engage in a broad range of activities. Although the degree to which these bodies interact with the State varies widely and it is difficult to be specific in this regard, it is clear that the presence of diversified representation of the population is becoming increasingly important in the socio-political dynamics of large Latin American cities.
3. A political and structural concept of urban poverty

In conclusion, it may be said that this document sees urban poverty as being a persistent structural phenomenon which is particularly noticeable in the large cities of the region and is due to the systematic process of marginalization of large sectors of the population, who find themselves critically below the level of satisfaction of their basic needs and have increasingly adopted various kinds of survival strategies that lead to new forms of informal socioeconomic organization.

Urban poverty of this kind takes many different forms, each with its own peculiar history and organizational stamp and hence with its own way of relating to the State.

The poverty found in big cities and metropolitan areas must therefore be studied in detail if it is to be described with sufficient accuracy and fully understood in all its complexity and foundations are to be laid for the establishment of general and specific policies for dealing with it within the tenuous framework of the regional crisis.

B. Fundamental characteristics of poverty in big cities and metropolitan areas: An attempt at analytical policy typology

1. Poverty in metropolitan areas: A phenomenon which is continuous, critical, new and specific

In recent decades, the Latin American metropolises have demonstrated increasing vitality in that more and more people and levels of economic activity have concentrated in them. However, it has now come to the point that they are experiencing a multifaceted, complex and persistent crisis.16/

On the one hand, problems may be observed which are in general due to unrestrained metropolitan growth; to poor administration and institutional management; to the rising cost of urbanization stemming primarily from large urban development projects and to the dangerous threats posed to the natural ecosystems of cities.

In another discussion of the study, the Latin American metropolises are seen as presenting problems which come into contact with those listed above. Large cities are now extremely apt to show a persistently high tendency towards social segregation, which obviously produces marked disparity in the quality of life. The contrast between social groups and the restructuring of the large variety of such groups to be found in urban areas, under the impetus of the main manifestations of the crisis, have become an especially critical factor in the metropolitan dynamic.

Certain aspects of the crisis, such as insufficient and unsteady growth of the economy and the various sectors, the critical shortage of jobs, high rates of external and internal indebtedness and the absence of sufficient resources for carrying out government programmes and projects for combating these crisis-related problems with any degree of success have resulted in a
continuous rise in metropolitan poverty, which is a new and particularly critical phenomenon and the salient feature of the metropolises of the region.

It is the contention of this study that metropolitan poverty has now reached a critical stage because it is seriously destabilizing the socio-political system as a whole since those social groups affected by it often comprise the vast majority of society. Urban violence, which is increasingly expressed in a struggle for survival and for the maintenance of a minimum standard for a large majority of society, is also extending, endangering the whole of society. There is growing conviction among professionals, educators, politicians and government and social leaders that the situation which has arisen can be met only by systematic, active, planned and participatory intervention.17/

It is argued that metropolitan poverty is a new phenomenon since those things which have traditionally characterized such poverty have been changed quantitatively by present circumstances. It is probably more than a question of the growth of sectors which fall below certain arbitrarily established poverty lines; it is a new phenomenon in that all of society is directly affected, and a poverty economy, even an informal culture,18/ has been spawned and interacts symbiotically with the formal economy so that the two are largely interdependent. The really phenomenal thing about Latin American metropolises is the presence in them of heterogeneous poverty which takes a variety of forms and directly or indirectly affects the whole of society.

Finally, in this general description of metropolitan poverty, mention should also be made of the factor of historic specificity. Historically speaking, the conditions which gave rise to the social exclusion responsible for the national and regional characteristics of the development styles prevailing in the region differ greatly from country to country. In addition, there are differences in levels of economic activity and in the ebbs and flows of development; in the technological relations which predominate in each national and international situation; in demographic pressure and the direction of migratory movements; in the types of States which are emerging and in the kinds of policies followed vis-à-vis development and poverty. All of these vary notably in each specific national situation. As further proof of this specificity, the margins for action, the political and social conditioning and the individual social agents which constitute the framework in which policies are formulated also bear their own characteristic national stamp.

2. A detailed analysis of metropolitan poverty

In recognition of this diversity of poverty situations, the attached matrix lays the foundations for a typology that differentiates among and pinpoints the various modalities of metropolitan poverty and attempts, in a preliminary and still very tentative approach, to define the main characteristics of target groups of poor people and to describe their activities and the basic aspects of their economic and productive role, their relationship with the State and their different modes of expression as a mobilized social force.
In this connection, it has been decided to have recourse to the following five dimensions of complementary analysis: socio-ecological typologies in which the poorer sectors are classified; types of economic insertion in labour markets, which show the various forms of economic and productive behaviour; preferred approaches to the satisfaction of basic needs, which are indicative of the varying degrees to which essential goods and services are available on the market and through private, official and non-governmental networks; the main types of interaction with the State or other subsidiary agencies and the leading forms of association and organization, which are marks of the various organizational and social structures to be found in different territorial, economic and socio-political areas.19/

These dimensions of analysis do not constitute an exhaustive and exclusive system of classification. The structuring of such a system would require technical agility far greater than that needed for making the latest advances in the definition of poverty as well as a better qualitative understanding of the complex realities of the poverty found in the metropolitan areas of the region.

Since there are a large number of theories in respect of the problems associated with poverty, which have evolved either from the experience of governments or from the lessons learned from international co-operation, some consensus has to be reached in this connection or at least it must be agreed that these problems are becoming increasingly acute (and affecting a growing number of social sectors), that the policies for coping with them have yielded only partial and very limited results and that the material and financial resources available for taking action and the scant likelihood that stable political and social agreements can be reached make the road ahead look difficult. There is growing recognition that any policy for coping with poverty in urban and metropolitan areas must contain a set of measures specifically designed for dealing effectively with the largest possible number of factors, processes, variables and social agents which make up the phenomenon broadly defined as urban social impoverishment.

a) Socio-ecological typologies

This rather general system of classification provides for something which has become clear in much of the research done in metropolitan areas in Latin America, the existence of marked spatial segregation and the social discrimination responsible for the differences in accessibility to the goods and services that basically determine the quality of urban life.

The socio-spatial tendencies responsible for this segregation and discrimination appear to have grown stronger in the region in the last decade due to the main manifestations of the crisis, to the increase in poverty and, at times, to some of the partial or sectoral measures effected by governments.20/ The growth of the tertiary sector and the increase in the number of informal organizations also reinforce the tendencies towards segregation found in metropolitan areas. Private building activity has given rise to sharp speculation,21/ which is largely responsible for the division of cities into socio-spatial zones which are becoming increasingly cut off from each other. Those countries which have implemented liberal management schemes,
liberalizing land market, doing away with the city limits concept and relaxing zoning regulations and building codes, are now experiencing a considerable increase in segregation and a marked tendency towards socio-spatial polarization.

Furthermore, the state of poverty has its own growth pattern and has tended to the existence of sectors, which although they differ widely in respect of social level and were formed recently or a long time ago, are now experiencing poverty, which keeps them on the fringes of society in varying degrees of stability or crisis. This may well include large sectors such as those made up of the impoverished middle class, located in or near the centre of metropolises, whose urban behaviour is influenced by strong attachment to neighbourhoods which gave rise to them.

Thus from the socio-ecological point of view, four types of sector made up of the urban poor may be observed in metropolitan areas —sectors comprising the impoverished middle class, sectors in which poverty is long established, sectors where marginal poverty has not become stabilized and sectors which are critically marginalized.

In general, impoverished middle-class sectors would seem to consist in government, or private-sector workers and labourers working on their own account, who have been profoundly hit by the crisis which has persisted in the region over the past decade. Restrictions on government activity, the predominantly recessionist tendencies displayed by private activity and widespread reductions in all levels of activity are some of the factors responsible for these relatively dignified and unvocalized forms of poverty. Under the region's non-democratic regimes, these sectors have lost much of their traditional influence over the policy and decision-making system and this has made their situation even worse. These groups usually reside in or below the centre of metropolitan areas, resist the pressures exerted by urban renewal projects to push them out of their old neighbourhoods to which they are deeply attached.

Whereas they have traditionally been protected by far-reaching State action, nowadays, they are almost always beyond the reach of such action and are usually pushed down into the more extreme or traditional forms of poverty.

The traditionally poor sectors include a large slice of the population made up of people whose main characteristic is the state of chronic poverty in which they live. These are the sectors which have benefitted from preferential social action taken by governments, particularly in respect of housing and the quality of the environment, which usually results in stable settlements. With mobility variants (which were by and large fewer during the most recent period) these social sectors would demonstrate a relatively high degree of organization, and they will probably continue to receive substantial government assistance. Reduced activity and unemployment, compounded by the cutbacks in social action by the public sector have caused the substantial deterioration of these sectors.

People living in poverty which is sometimes marginal and sometimes not constitute a varied social group usually associated with the informal sector of the economy and social structure. These groups invade the peripheries of
metropolises or live in crowded conditions on privately owned land in the centre. They are casual workers, enjoy no legal protection and which, as a rule, comprise those people who sustain the vast majority of informal metropolitan activities. These people are beyond the reach of official policies and are constantly at odds with the formal socio-political system and constitute a social group which appears to have grown markedly during the crisis. Their ranks include a substantial number of migrants from rural areas and from medium-sized, relatively less well developed cities and experience great difficulty in integrating into the internal organization of the metropolises.

Poor people living in critically marginalized conditions also constitute a varied sector and suffer from the drawbacks of the sector described in the preceding paragraph in a particularly virulent manner as displayed in minimum levels of nutrition and access to basic health facilities and in instability in the areas available to them for settlement. They have even lost their capacity for basic social organization and find it very difficult to make elementary survival strategies work. They are apt subjects for social policies in the realm of public or private charity, and their ranks have swollen in the past decade.

b) Forms of insertion into the labour force

The classification described above shows that informal activity may well be used as a category in the study of urban poverty. This is not a question of the simple correlation which obviously exists between informal activity and marginality, which are, of course, closely related but has to do with determining the ways in which various informal social groups are incorporated into labour markets, which, as everybody knows, are very complex, since belonging to the informal economy is a characteristic of social sectors which cannot be classified as even remotely poor.23/

It would be difficult to devise even moderately effective policies for coping with urban poverty without first solving the problem of incorporation into the labour market. Hence, an effective approach to the study (and possibly the categorization) of poor people is to consider them on the basis of their incorporation into the labour market, whether in the formal or the informal economy,24/ and this is no easy task.

To this end, it would be recommendable to draw up a basic set of distinctions as to the form of insertion into the labour market in order to come to a more realistic view of the various social subsectors to which the urban poor belong as an aid in designing strategies for action to deal with the different types of urban poverty and prevent the formulation of blanket policies whose effectiveness has been severely challenged.

c) Preferential access to basic consumption

It is important that the poor sectors too should be classified according to the preferential access they have to the means of meeting their basic needs in such areas as food, health, education, housing and infrastructure goods and
services. Access to basic mass consumer goods and services is a common issue where poverty is concerned and indeed, some of the most widely applied government policies for improving the quality of life of the poor sectors are in fact policies for improved access to the various components of basic mass consumption.

We have chosen to classify the different forms of access to the means of meeting basic needs on the basis of decisions taken in the formal (and the corrected formal) market, government and semi-government services and networks, independent and semi-independent social networks, non-governmental organizations and various other channels of access. It is worth noting that forms of access obviously vary in nature (hence the classification provides for the favoured access route) and may be geared to different indispensable goods and services. Even so, this classification, which is necessarily a provisional one, is fundamental for drawing a destruction between the various social sectors affected by poverty and for formulating and implementing policies for coping with the most significant shortages.

The formal market rarely provides the poor sectors with access to the means of meeting their basic needs. Hence, the term "corrected formal market" is used when mechanisms exist to establish or facilitate access by means of different kinds of subsidies which give preference to certain poor sectors. During the past decade this kind of assistance has been available in Chile where mechanisms for providing access to social housing and primary health care programmes have set differentiated rates for services.

Public and semi-public services and networks are the most usual means of access for the poor sectors of the society and much of the more traditional type of government action in the region is carried out by them. The differences between public and semi-public services and networks reflect the variety and varying degrees of complexity of approaches to the structuring of government institutions in the countries of the region, and are also indicating the types of centralized or partially centralized policies which have been or are currently being implemented.

Independent and semi-independent social networks are the organizational instruments which the population has set up to meet its basic survival needs. The approaches to organization followed in some of the large cities of the region are very diverse in terms of their history, the ways in which they operate, their particular fields of action and degrees of power. At some stage of development —especially at the outset—, many of these organizations depend on external agencies for their resources.

There is an ample variety of non-governmental organizations at both national and international level which make it easier for the urban poor to meet their basic needs. Many of these institutions are the fruit of the various international co-operation arrangements, constitute the best reflection of the regional crisis and have promoted the implementation of sweeping measures in the areas of food, health and the quality of the environment.
A category entitled "highly varied forms of access" has been added to the classification in order to provide for the situations where there are various forms of access, no one of which predominates.

d) Main forms of interaction with the State

The growing need for and basic lack of protection experienced by large marginalized sectors of the population of the region's largest cities must be, and in fact is, countered by extensive, varied and expanding State action, appropriate to the particular institutions and social situation for which it is designed.

To help in this task, the varying "urban poor" sectors may also be classified according to the kind of relationship they maintain with the State. During the past decade, considerable pressure has been placed on the State to deal primarily with fundamental issues, and, in addition, socio-political systems which are notably limited in so far as democracy is concerned have very much discouraged interaction between State and society. The outcome of this has been that non-governmental options (agencies which back up State action) have now emerged, which, within their various limitations and possibilities, perform the functions of government and carry out a wide range of programmes and projects designed to increase the extent to which basic needs are satisfied.

Thus, there is need to include two more categories in the classification, one relating to the agent responsible for interaction on the part of the State itself, and the other, to activities which are carried out by agencies substituting for the State. In the classification there is a tendency for these two categories to be especially specific, in recognition of the special characteristics of each entity, be it a State or a non-governmental entity, in the different countries of the region.

The way in which the institutional bureaucracy has evolved in each State, the extent to which it is centralized, the progress which the various institutions of the State have made in the course of time and the sectoral and geographical distribution of State responsibilities (regional and local) in each country are all important factors in determining the type of relationship that is established with the State. Thus, the classification system, contains a major category for centralized States characterized by the presence of central planning schemes, scant development of decentralized institutions and action which has not been broken down by sector. Another category covers centralized sectoral agencies, most of them having a broad action base. These agencies are primarily ministries of centralized social services, and the category differs widely from the first one described and is usually appropriate to social and government situations where the government plays an important legitimate role and the traditional social policies are firmly rooted in the society. Still another category is for the public and semi-public enterprises or bodies which have been decentralized through central government or sectoral measures, which shoulder the responsibility for more specific action of given scope. For instance, there have been times when they have been delegated responsibility for general management and administration in cases where such management is viewed in entrepreneurial
terms. Finally, a category is assigned to local and municipal bodies (decentralized territorial government structures which tend to exist more in the realm of the desirable than in real Latin American city development and offer great potential).

Non-governmental agencies (which act as substitutes for the State) carry out a variety of activities in the region and include a gamut of religious bodies, agencies engaged in international co-operation and professional associations designed to be alternatives to the State. It makes sense to break down forms of action, such as those described above because some of those bodies, such as those of a religious nature, have a raison d'être which might be described as permanent and predominantly ethical, whereas in others it is more transitory, being based on political and ideological exclusion by the State (bodies engaged in alternative, professional action). There is also a wide variety of non-governmental agencies engaged in international co-operation; their activities vary considerably, depending on the forms taken by international relations in each country where they work and also on the priorities which international agencies (United Nations bodies, other international co-operation arrangements and private international co-operation agencies) have established for their activities.

With respect to the kinds of interrelationship to be found in both cases, a number of possibilities are open, and these depend on whether the non-governmental body works directly or indirectly, whether its links with the State are temporary or permanent and whether it acts in contradiction or collaboration with the government. These dichotomies provide only a relatively simple outline of a more complex set of problems, but they do explain (or at least describe) those links. It has been decided also to include other dichotomies which take the structure of the relationship into account because they agree on the nature of relationships between non-governmental organizations and the State.

e) Leading organic and social structures (main approaches to participation)

In the metropolitan cities of Latin America, poor people fall into different social categories structured around the particular demands and needs of their socio-political requirements and their economic needs in terms of income and basic consumption. The organizational and social dynamics, needed to deal with these demands and needs call for a wide variety of structures which function in different ways and exert different degrees of political pressure.

Many of the ways in which poor people organize themselves are very closely linked to the urgency of meeting their indispensable needs if they are to survive in the metropolises of Latin America. The activities involved cover a very wide range and are performed by organizations for meeting essential food needs; organizations engaged in personal services and itinerant trade; organizations concerned with meeting demands for housing, infrastructure and basic urban services (self-help construction and service organizations) and even cottage industries or other small-scale industries with a more complex economic organization, which are engaged in the production of goods and the provision of basic services. The activities of these organic and economic
structures of a predominantly informal nature have developed tremendously in the metropolises of the region and have been further strengthened as a result of the magnitude and persistence of the economic crisis. Thus, the economic organizations serving the urban poor are classified in terms of food, trade and distribution, self-help building and habitat, handicraft and pre-industrial production and provision of services.

These organizations also have a territorial base which has been strengthened as territorial segregation has been consolidated in the large cities. Furthermore, the fact that they are deeply rooted in the neighbourhoods which gave rise to them and their organizational histories mean that a variety of such structures can be identified foremost among which are those relating to education, health, housing and habitat and those dealing with requests made by young people's organizations. The way in which these organizations interrelate is also significant, and this relationship can extend to such areas as sports and religion. Associations of neighbours (juntas de vecinos) constitute one of the more integral approaches to organization in the cities of the region, and when they reflect the more dynamic realities of neighbourhood life, they are the most active and effective form of organization.

Finally, with regard to the ways in which poor people organize themselves, any system of classification must take account of the political aspects of participation, which make themselves felt more effectively in areas with a large tradition of organization or in those where the demands of the inhabitants have a markedly political flavour, and jeopardizes the stability of the social system. In practice, the direct political influence of the low-income sectors of metropolises has grown significantly and on occasion has been on par with that of the more traditional sectors such as those made up of workers, professionals and other people in the managerial class. In this case, for the purpose of this system of classification, consideration is given to the adherence of poor people in political parties and in independent social movements —a noteworthy development in some metropolises in the region.

C. Aspects of metropolitan policies on poverty

1. Direction and scope of metropolitan policies

It seems advisable to expand these notes on metropolitan poverty by including in them a short analysis of some of the individual metropolitan policies implemented in the region, which must necessarily be brought into line with the principle of improving the quality of life (which is the guiding principle behind comprehensive and effective government action in the social field) and must therefore be submitted to the critical judgement built up by analysing the situation in each metropolis in the region.

With this in mind, we have prepared the table on the following page, which, although preliminary and descriptive, gives some characteristics of various types of metropolitan policies.
| Policies with sociological dimensions | Policies governing city limits; policies relating to zoning and urban density policies concerning the location of activities; low-cost housing policies; policies relating to the expansion of urban infrastructure |
| Policies relating to incorporation in labour markets | Special employment policies; policies for controlling informal employment; special wage policies; training policies; pre-investment policies; policies for rewarding job creation in the private sector |
| Policies relating to access to the means of satisfying basic needs | Extension of State networks; specific food programmes; programmes to promote compatibility between social and State institutions; policies favouring national and foreign non-governmental bodies |
| Policies relating to the nature and type of link with the State | Policies on participation by the public in State management; policies providing specific mechanisms governing relations between the civil society and the State; municipal reorganization policies; policies for adjusting and co-ordinating metropolitan agencies |
| Policies governing social organization dynamics | Policies relating to the legalization of social organizations; policies governing State financing of social organizations; policies facilitating the access of people's economic organizations to financing, technical assistance and markets; policies regulating political parties and social movements |
a) To begin with, allowance is made for the need to recognize the existence of explicit and implicit policies, explicit policies being those which are discriminatory in nature in the sense that they favour those social sectors which we may identify as being low-income metropolitan sectors. Wage, tax and pricing policies, in particular, are "strategic" policies for dealing with metropolitan poverty and can hardly be classified as explicit.

b) The questions to which the policies are addressed have been arranged in a scheme consistent with the five dimensions used in classifying metropolitan poverty to which the matrix established above refers. This scheme makes it possible to treat the sociological dimension. The labour dimension, the dimension of access to the means to satisfy basic needs, the dimension of links with the State and the organic-social dimension as key issues which have helped to create not only the phenomenon of metropolitan poverty but also the policies which have been implemented to combat it.

c) Although policies relating to poverty usually fall into the public policy category, action taken under policies of non-governmental bodies, i.e., by bodies which actually "compete with the State" or by semi-autonomous social organizations, is also taken into account. In other words it is recognized that non-governmental social action can generate policies, leading to action which is macrosocial in scope and is not confined to partial experiments.

d) Allusion is made to relatively conventional policies with no attempt made to be specific as to their nature and objectives, and this lack of specificity constitutes an important limitation. However, these policies must be viewed in the light of new concepts and must take account of different government (or social) policies, such as integral policies, the various facets of which are designed for certain specific sectors.

2. Changes needed in metropolitan policies if poverty is to be treated as a key issue

Since it is being increasingly recognized that poverty is a key issue in the large cities in the region, it seems essential to make a number of major changes in metropolitan policies and in the general focus of the efforts in which most metropolitan planning consists. Moreover, in addition to these changes, there is also a need for changes which emerge out of the critical thought which is part of the planning process and focuses on the procedures of planning on the minimal importance that is attached to participation, on all the administrative and institutional weaknesses which have crept in and on the lack of flexibility shown in the handling of planning strategy concepts.

The changes referred to here depend to an enormous extent on whether careful examination of the specific political determinants adduced in the policy reveals that they are in fact feasible; on the degree of institutional development achieved, on the relationship between the civil society and the State and on the practical experiences which can be critically established. All these factors of "determinants" must be identified as fundamental to the kind of metropolitan planning which, being politically, materially and technically feasible, is characterized by the realism postulated on various occasions. It
could also be determined whether the planning effected sets margins for possible action, those margins being defined more as prevailing tendencies than as strict, clearly defined restrictions. Similarly, it must be noted that the aim of planning, which may be expressed basically as the achievement of that degree of socio-political consensus needed to facilitate urban change, presupposes also that there is a certain way in which the social behaviour of political forces and specific ideological positions operates in society. Hence, the ideology of desirable change, which is closely linked to the ideology of change that is materially and technically possible, will comprise some of the basic features which determine the feasibility of suggested approaches to planning.

The fight against metropolitan poverty calls for something more than a (socially desirable) government crusade carried out in a very simple ideological context (government concern for those who have less), which gives rise to a heterogeneous and extremely broad set of programmes and projects, which seek to make it easier to satisfy certain basic needs or, in the best of cases, to use government action to assist social sectors suffering from "extreme poverty". In the fight against metropolitan poverty, it must be acknowledged that the situation being combated has all the elements of complexity established in this document and that in order to untangle it, the development pattern must be changed; in other words, a study must be made of the structure, direction, components of the reactivation of production, which gives rise to increasingly larger forms of development, which, in turn, must be broken down into very specific and thoroughly formulated projects and programmes of action, which make it possible to move strategically in the direction desired.

The metropolitan policies, which treat poverty as a fundamental problem call for social action of a kind which is radically different from the traditional action provided for in the programmes now being carried out in the region. Generally speaking, social participation is regarded as a desirable feature of planning, which improves its efficiency but not necessarily in specific areas, or as one of the variety of objectives of planning and not necessarily as the main aim or as being absolutely essential in order to give direction to planning. Participation, in this sense, means going beyond schemes of participatory individualism and giving a pivotal role to urban social organizations which, in that role and within the fields where their autonomy has been consolidated, can conduct their relations with the State with the result not only that official planning is more effective but also that direct social planning can be considered as an alternative form of planning or as making a very valuable contribution to the planning process.

Changes in government institutions also appear to be indispensable in planning ways in which to combat poverty in the large cities of the region. It seems increasingly essential to bypass the great centralization schemes because of the need first to direct specific forms of local action towards their various recipients among the poor inhabitants of metropolitan areas and second to make greater use of local resources in executing action projects and to promote effective and direct participation by the organized population. At the same time, co-ordination between peoples' organizations and local government agencies is improving, primarily at the level of town councils and similar bodies. When changes are made at government level, an increasingly
professional view must be taken of professional/technical and government teams which work on a permanent basis, do not depend on changes at government level 30/ and take an interdisciplinary approach so that they are able to integrate social organizations into their activities as part of a natural, multifaceted process.

Planning with the general characteristics listed above calls for a thorough modification of planning methods as an essential correlative of the determining factors mentioned earlier on in this paper. In this connection, a number of interesting attempts have been made in the region to programme projects in such a way as to allow a marginal population 31/ to meet more of its basic needs. In planning of this kind, the instruments of diagnosis are constructed by the organized population itself, which determines its own order of priorities, analyses the resources at its disposal and conduct a critical review of the projects and programmes implemented in the past. In this approach to planning, instruments are available to promote discussion on strategic options in different sociological scenarios and on available resources, and this will undoubtedly improve the planning process by making it more flexible than the "formal language of the certainties". Such flexibility is absolutely indispensable in the region's metropolitan areas which are characterized by new problems of some complexity which interrelate with other very broad issues and increasingly reflect monumental political conflicts. The kind of planning described above provides a highly varied terminology in the area of projects, which does not consist primarily of the evaluative formalisms of the cost-benefit method but instead refers mainly to substantive improvements in the process of formulating projects and action programmes aimed at specific nuclei of organized recipients which results in more efficient use of resources, especially all those which are available. In summary, the changes in method called for ultimately improve the concepts and instruments involved in the planning task performed by the government and society 32/

Changing the concepts of planning to reflect the fact that poverty is treated as the main problem also makes it necessary to adopt the "gradual solution" concept which has characterized self-help home-building programmes and programmes to improve the habitat of marginalized sectors. 33/ Included in this, is a concept of planning which expresses the logic of realistic change grasped through a conscientious effort to understand the specific factors which determine each socio-political situation and the local resources available in each case, which calls for a real return to those approaches to social problems which have historically proved effective in finding the solution (albeit one with structural limitations) to the problem of the survival of the masses by using non-conventional resources and technologies which are adapted to each situation and which in macroeconomic terms will result in a reordering of national resources to bring about social change, which will almost certainly involve political and social power structure of sufficient strength, extensiveness and persistence to make the approaches to planning described here feasible.
The role of quality of life in case studies prepared within the context of economic and social development

A large number of studies which refer to or are structured around the quality-of-life concept emphasize its usefulness in analysing and diagnosing the situation dealt with. Thus, it seems to provide the observer of that situation with a valuable reference system, which is subdivided into a set of methods, instruments and indicators which reveal a situation that traditional methods of analysis have concealed. Thus, the concept in question is related to development as a process of change, making it possible to identify that part of the system or entity where the change is taking place. In the second place, in analysing the system, the observer has concrete and explicit aims...
relating to the quality of life, which orient his analysis. Thirdly, in respect of the magnitude and depth of the change experienced by the entity observed, the concept serves as a unit of measure. In the fourth place, in its capacity not only to describe but also to explain changes in a system, quality of life emerges as the basic cause of critical situations in the system, mainly those connected with phenomena relating to underdevelopment in the broad sense of the word. Finally, the concept is useful in the construction of a development model when recognition is given to its value for analysis and for the delimitation and initiation of specific action.

a) Quality of life in the context of development and underdevelopment

If development is construed as a process which leads to better conditions than those enjoyed at present, then development and quality of life, and underdevelopment and quality of life are complementary concepts. Both development and underdevelopment are the result of specific, interdependent, historical processes, both of which give rise to a certain standard of living which, in its more qualitative aspects, leads to a particular and specific quality of life. If development is understood as a process and not as a state, it can be conceived as progress towards a better pattern of living as well as towards emergence from underdevelopment.

Not all processes of change in status can be regarded as development. Generally speaking, development refers to one or more temporal processes, where change is desirable for society; viewed in this way, it can be identified with mechanisms for co-ordinating the tasks which must be performed to bring about change directed voluntarily to achieving specific desired situations. Thus, the quality of life paradigm becomes the basic goal of change. In the case of the developed countries, the achievement of this goal is basically a question of maintaining a pattern or of changing it only marginally. In the case of underdevelopment of the type observed in the so-called third world countries and specifically in those of Latin America, thoroughgoing structural change involving substantial alterations of a substantial nature aspires to a quality of life which has traditionally been associated with the developed countries and has only recently begun to be identified in its separate components, it being understood, however, that the quality of life sought in underdeveloped countries has one particularity which renders the thesis of social modernization according to the pattern followed in the developed countries impracticable. This is because poverty as reflected quantitatively and qualitatively creates a fundamental division between the two worlds, both in their present situation and in any future situation which can be envisaged for them.

In analysing the possibilities for the advancement of underdeveloped countries from their present situation to the other stages of development, both theoreticians and practicians have been at pains to identify concrete problems which might hamper development with a view to suggesting policies for removing them. These efforts have revealed that economic growth and, more specifically, saving or investment are essential to development. As quality of life has been singled out, viewed from this angle, the degree of importance attached to specific variables in the field of development. Thus, concern for the quality of life appears also as an indispensable component of development.
and is thus becoming a requirement for passage to another situation. Any underdeveloped country's chances of obtaining a better quality of life depend largely on the opportunities provided by the organized and mobilized segment of society through national projects, because poverty makes it impossible to mobilize other resources. Moreover, the excessive burden which this situation places on the few resources available considerably reduces the possibilities for development.

b) Quality of life and development (quantitative or qualitative)

At the academic scientific level and, in some cases, in the operational structures of government the welfare of the people and economic progress are at present hardly regarded as equivalent. Serious doubts have arisen concerning the value of the growth of gross domestic product as an indicator of progress and well-being (shown by the per capita product) in light of the undesirable side effects of economic growth, including congestion, pollution, difficulties in meeting housing and service needs and unequal distribution of income, which directly affect the well-being of the population. From this point of view, quantitative development expressed in the expansion of the product, does not fully account for the differences which arise in the growth process or for the concentration of these side effects in certain social sectors and national spaces. One suggestion for meeting this situation is to structure systems of indicators and analysis to correct these weaknesses and make it possible to assess the real progress shown by a society.

The concept of the quality of life incorporates this variant of the system of analysing and coming to terms with the true situation, without casting doubt on the value of the traditional indicators, but adjusting them as necessary by perfecting the more traditional instruments and methods used in analysis rather than by changing them.

c) Quality of life and the heterogeneous nature of underdevelopment

There can be no doubt that one of the pivotal features of underdevelopment is the enormous difference in the degree of well-being to be found in different social groups. The existence of poverty as a mark of the underdevelopment of a national economy (the distributive aspects of an economy are often more important than its technical or other aspects) which also embraces social groups whose consumption pattern is similar to that of the developed countries is an important feature of the process of underdevelopment. On this point, priority must be given to considering the dynamics of expansion, which far from making the social and economic structures of the underdeveloped countries homogeneous, widens the gaps between them by reproducing the conditions which existed earlier and creating an even greater gap between them. Nowadays, it is difficult to profile a single form of poverty, and what actually exists, is rather a set of characteristics which presents a real typology of poverty situations, ranging from highly critical forms of poverty to the structural poverty which is associated with the impoverished middle-class sectors, which in the final analysis, demonstrate great heterogeneity whereas for years they were considered to be homogeneous.
This being the case, it is pointless to speak of quality of life and in particular to bring this concept into the analysis and implementation of economic and social development planning without studying the situation explicitly. The quality-of-life concept explicitly and implicitly refers to a given social group.

The importance of the term "quality of life" lies in the fact that it is a shared and evaluative characteristic; it is shared by one group and is evaluative in the sense that it characterizes that group in reference to a standard of comparison in this case another group. From this viewpoint, heterogeneity, in addition to being a neutral characteristic for purposes analysis, is seen as being one of the more substantial aspects of underdevelopment, i.e., social inequality, in terms of the existence of different degrees of access to the benefits of development, and this means that, to some extent or other, depending on the case, one of the objectives of development must be the mitigation of this inequality before attempting to solve the more critical aspects of underdevelopment. In addition, the use of perception by the reference group in its analysis of well-being means that heterogeneity will be viewed from its true perspective in the studies it carries out.

d) Quality of life from the point of view of planning

Not only does the adoption of the quality-of-life concept change the scale of values assigned to the variables used in studying development, it also relates specifically to the approaches followed in economic and social development planning. In the first place, by redirecting planning action away from the goals of development and towards its forms and strategies, quality of life, in terms of bringing about a substantial improvement in the living conditions of the poorest social groups, is interpreted basically as a set of different situations in respect of which decisions are taken with regard to the programmes and projects comprising a development strategy.

At the same time and also with regard to the approaches taken in planning efforts to improve the quality of life concentrate on the elimination of obstacles standing in the way of a speedier transition to higher levels of development. In this connection, the precarious living conditions of large sectors of the population are seen as obstacles to the application of effective development measures.

Another fundamental aspect of linking the quality-of-life concept to the issues of development is that the objectives of development are affected. The "quantity-quality" controversy which has arisen in the developed countries has led to substantive policy changes in terms of scope, time-frames and results. In the underdeveloped countries, the quantitative aspect of development continues to be a key issue. The needs for precision in given areas is specified. In the first place, more than by a change in the way in which development is viewed, the approaches taken to planning are marked by an expansion of the objectives sought, in that there are now a host of them. The development policies devised now view growth in conjunction with, for example, social and ecological issues. In terms of instruments, macroeconomic and microeconomic mechanisms are used in combination, and it is preferred that the
subjects or beneficiaries of development participate in the tasks and share the challenges involved in the application of specific strategies.

In the second place, it is thought that if the qualitative aspects of development are taken into consideration in planning, the feasibility of strategies, programmes and projects will be ensured. Political feasibility will also be ensured since the human resources committed to mobilization projects on a national, regional and local scale will perceive the objective and in some cases, also the subjective aspects of the action taken, thereby meeting aspirations that planning should embrace elements which are not purely quantitative.

In a very special way, the quality-of-life concept is becoming a pillar of development strategies and the basic principles underlying the development styles, which emphasize co-ordination between society and nature, changes in consumption patterns and structures of production which call for special forms of technology and energy.

B. Quality of life: some relevant approaches

Since the quality-of-life concept emerged as the central theme of the Vancouver Conference in 1976, it has been approached from various angles with emphasis laid either on its value as a development planning instrument or on the analysis of its contents and scope.

It would be virtually impossible to find a single definition which would cover the quality-of-life concept, reflecting the dynamics and the multidimensional nature of human life. The concept is open-ended, expanding as it incorporates and absorbs elements which can flesh it out.

In this document the most significant of those elements which are closely linked with the concept are noted, and attention is focused on the concept as a whole.

In a balanced concept of the quality of life, recognition must be given to the close connection which exists between its various components. Similarly, an effort must be made to avoid arbitrary or discriminatory exaggerations or omissions, which could rob the elements of their main virtue, namely, that they can be considered as a whole.

1. Quality of life and needs

In specialized publications, the quality-of-life concept is closely associated with all the necessities of human existence and the preservation of human culture. Thus, it may in general be asserted that the main factors affecting quality of life are the environmental conditions of a society coupled with the way in which it is internally organized with respect to meeting its needs.

It may be argued that the satisfaction of needs is the basic requirement for the achievement of a stable society, in which it makes sense to talk about freedom and self-fulfilment.
Some authors describe human needs in terms of food, housing, health, education, employment, recreation and leisure, whereas others divide them into "physical needs" such as food, health, housing and clothing and "social needs", which include education, work, individual liberties and the opportunity to participate in the existing social system.

Some researchers have defined basic human needs as comprising: i) subsistence and security, in terms of the economic and political functions of society; ii) interpersonal relationships and the integration of people into the social structure and iii) training, self-respect and identification within the social environment.

As Manfred Max-Neef sees it, the two large categories of needs relate to "the need to own" and "the need to be", and he proposes a system in which nine basic human needs interact and interrelate. These include the need for permanency (or subsistence), protection, affection, understanding, participation, leisure, creativity, identity and freedom. According to this system of classification, certain items usually described as needs (housing, food, clothing) should not be considered as such but instead are regarded as responses to some of the needs listed above.

Likewise, Carlos Mallman classifies needs according to whether they are personal needs (relating to access) or interpersonal needs (relating to being) and suggests that the former should be used in connection with the desire to possess goods, whereas the second refer to human relations and the desire to expand one's being. Personal needs are subclassified in turn as: i) physiological or vital needs; ii) needs relating to protection or security; iii) cultural or spiritual needs (the need to be trained, the need to advance, the need for recreation). Interpersonal needs include: i) the need for self-fulfilment (the need for independence and for freedom of expression and decision-making and for freedom of the effective and intellectual levels) and ii) the need to belong (participation and love).

The close relationship between basic needs and quality of life becomes clear when the latter is seen to be based on the opportunities available to a social group to meet the basic human needs which correspond to possessing, living and being, by using the resources available in its natural, transformed or social environment and the degree to which it takes those opportunities.

It is interesting to note that the concept of basic needs has evolved and expanded to include a set of human dimensions to which little importance had once been attached and relate to the more intimate being of man (affection, freedom, participation, self-esteem, self-fulfilment, etc.).

These dimensions are now regarded as indispensable to any treatment of the subject, and growing importance has been attached to them now that the value of being as well as that of possessing has been acknowledged.
2. Quality of life and satisfaction of needs

Although, objectively speaking, a minimum consensus could be achieved on the scope and urgency of what we call our primary needs or those which relate to our physical survival (the "food and shelter" referred to in some political slogans), the achievement of consensus on needs which relate to self-esteem (the need for affection, participation, self-fulfilment, etc.) presents far greater complications and when it comes to the goal-needs (the need for justice, freedom, peace and solidarity), it becomes virtually impossible since in these two categories of need, cultural components with their own ethical, ideological and religious values play a major role.

There is also a divergence of views as to how to meet the needs undergoing profound change in terms of how different social groups perceive their aspirations and desires. At any group level (family, local, provincial, national or regional), certain needs are felt in different degrees so that whereas needs regarded as basic and urgent in some broad sectors may be classified as extraneous and unnecessary in others, where failure to meet them would cause no dissatisfaction whatever.

The degree to which needs are satisfied can vary because they are insatiable and relative. This observation has led us to assert that a community's goal must be that its members are succeeding well rather than that they are happy and living well.45

The human needs must be classified or their hierarchical order in different cultures must be determined, as an essential step in getting to the heart of the problem since every need relates to its satisfaction. However, in the final analysis, the quality of life of an individual or a society depends on the quantity and quality of the means available to him or for meeting his/its needs, how he/it obtains those means and the role he/it assigns to them.

Broadly speaking, it may be said that means are those goods obtained domestically or externally which are able to meet or resolve a need to the extent that people no longer consider themselves oppressed by it.

In this connection, Mallman points out that "a person's quality of life depends on the dynamics of the satisfaction-non-satisfaction of his desires. It is therefore a concept which refers to individuals but, like desires, is determined by the dynamic interaction between a person, his society and his habitat. At any given moment, there are as many quality-of-life ideals as there are human beings, societies and habitats. It is a dynamic concept which is eminently existential... The use or consumption of the means for satisfying such type of need can be quantified as well as qualified. The information thus obtained will provide us with the components of the quality of life in the objective sense. On the other hand, the components of the quality of life in the subjective sense are available at every point in time through personal evaluations in terms of the ratio between the satisfiers obtained and the satisfiers desired for each need... Everybody has his own way of proceeding from the components of the quality of life in the objective sense to those of the quality of life in the subjective sense, depending primarily on his
ethical values, in other words, on the priority which he assigns to each need and to each type of satisfier he wishes to use in meeting it".46/

Although the relationship between needs and quality of life is a close one, the relationship between quality of life and the role played by satisfiers is even closer. "Satisfiers" may be defined as those whose use or consumption relieves human needs (conceived of as the requirements common to man) and desires and aspirations, as the specific ways in which a person seeks to meet his objective and perceived needs.47/

The dynamic existence of people or groups constantly gives rise to all kinds of needs, some of which are perceived as being more pressing than others, which are felt less urgently. The actor (the individual or social group) will be called upon to choose among those solutions available to him which present real possibilities, and he is going to choose those "satisfiers" which he perceives as most significant for his existence although objectively they may be regarded as being insignificant.

While "... each need can be satisfied at different levels and in different degrees of intensity, ... they are satisfied in three contexts -the intrahuman context, or in relation with oneself; the interhuman context, or in relation with one's social group, and the extrahuman context, or in relation with one's environment". A change in the traditional concept of poverty is proposed in order to bring it into line with this interpretation of basic human needs: we should talk about "poverties" since: "... any basic human need which is not adequately satisfied corresponds to one form of human poverty".48/

As soon as a need arises, man immediately proceeds to seek the means to satisfy it and sets priorities for himself, which depend on the nature and urgency of his requirements. The priorities which flow from these requirements will profile a different style of development for each culture, which will reflect its own particular life style. It would be inappropriate, therefore, to try to put all cultures on the same level and to judge their quality of life on the basis of parameters unrelated to the way life is actually lived in them.

3. Development models and quality of life

The need to link development styles, needs and means of satisfaction is clear from the following quotation from Max-Neef: "Every economic, social or political system adopts different styles of meeting the same basic human needs. In each system they are met (or not met) by the generation (or non-generation) of different types of satisfiers. It can even be affirmed that one of the characteristics of a culture is its choice of means of satisfaction. The basic human needs of an individual belonging to a consumer society, are the same as those of one belonging to an austere society. The difference lies in the quantity and quality of the means of satisfaction selected and the opportunities of access to those required." "... the culture does not determine basic human needs but rather the means for satisfying them."49/
A development model is, in the final analysis, characterized by the manner in which a society organizes itself to meet those needs to which it assigns priority.

A concrete and dynamic model is one which has been adopted by a social system within a clearly defined environment at a given time in history and its character is determined by the fact that it organizes and distributes human and material resources in such a way as to provide answers to the questions on which goods and services should be produced, and for whom and how.

However, it would not seem enough to search diligently for objective means of satisfaction needs or to attempt to satisfy a greater number of needs unless these goals are perceived as important for the recipient social group.

"Societies which allow some of their members to accumulate an unlimited number of goods and services and to obtain full satisfaction of their needs at the human relations level —i.e., societies in which all the means of satisfaction required are provided— always do so at the expense of their other members since means of satisfaction are always limited, and it has been proven that such societies are socially just and are therefore unhappy societies. Similarly, societies which impose an equal distribution among their members of all the means of satisfaction available to them, are unjust at the level of the individuals comprising them so that they too are unhappy societies because they are built on the assumption that all human beings have the same values and motivations, which is patently untrue."52/

What is being suggested here is that there is the obligation to maintain a high degree of awareness which will make it possible to measure the consequences which people, society and the environment will experience if they obtain certain means of satisfaction.

Not much thinking has been done in this connection, to say the least, as has been demonstrated by the application of exogenous or elitist development models, which far from solving the priority options of the masses, are emptying their cultures of their contents. Values, such as the value attached to the heritage and traditions of countries and to simple, effective ways of meeting basic requirements using family- and local-scale technologies which make it possible to live in dignity and peace, are gradually being eroded and replaced by unattainable goals which threaten the physical and mental health of human groups of considerable size.

In the search for a style of development which will produce a better quality of life, proposals have been put forward based on the premise that only by making radical changes in the social and international organization of the world today can man be freed once and for all from backwardness and oppression, and a social project is being put forward, based on equality and the full participation of human beings in decisions taken in the social sector since "underdeveloped countries cannot make progress by copying the patterns followed in the past by countries which are now developed not only because it is unlikely, from an historical point of view, that this course can be taken again in present-day socio-political conditions, but also and primarily because such a course will be undesirable since it would mean putting back..."
into motion the process of development which has brought the developed countries to their present situation, which is characterized by wasteful, irrational consumption, accelerated social deterioration and growing alienation.53/

Consequently, the idea is gaining ground that in order to achieve a balanced quality of life which will, in the long run, promote efficiency in meeting needs, a style of development based on poverty, a salient feature of third world societies, should be chosen instead of sticking with wealth-oriented methods of work and modes of thought, which serve only to reinforce inequality. In this connection, an attempt is being made to identify creative potential of poor people, who have traditionally managed to survive in subhuman conditions, thanks to their ability to generate minimum and appropriate responses to every restriction they have encountered.

By making such responses people could be freed from false aspirations and the fascination of the wealth model they cannot live up to in their present circumstances.

As an objective of the social groups of which mankind is made up, we propose that each and every one of their present and future members can, by dint of his own labour, satisfy successively each of his personal (accession-oriented) and interpersonal (being-oriented) desires. ... In many countries, this goal has been replaced by goods of increased economic consumption, which is only one of the inputs needed to satisfy the needs of the human race. It seems essential to focus development back on the integral satisfaction of human needs.54/

We propose abandoning a development goal which will never be attained; instead, every effort should be directed to "seeking creative solutions with the idea of achieving a healthy framework of poverty in which everybody can live on the basis of his own fairly compensated labour".55/

4. Living space and quality of life

The space in which man lives his life should be adopted to the solution of all the problems of human existence. Man needs to find within his environment the resources he requires to meet the basic needs of both his physical and his psychical dimension. According to the first of the 26 principles laid down in the Declaration adopted at the United Nations Conference on the Environment held at Stockholm from 5 to 16 June 1972: "Man has the fundamental right to freedom and adequate living standards in an environment equipped to afford him a comfortable and decent life.".56/

While, on the one hand, it is clear that freedom and dignity relate more to the psychological aspect of life than does an equipped environment, which has to do with the physical aspect, it is important to bear in mind that all these terms refer to basic needs, so it would seem they cannot be considered in isolation one from the other, but rather as complementing each other. If individuals and societies are to achieve a "satisfactory" quality of life, it would seem necessary to find means of satisfaction which reconcile these two areas.
"Quality of life does not consist in homogeneous elements; increasing a child's food rations is no substitute for his parents' love; nor does increasing worker's wages make up for the fact that he is compelled to work in humiliating conditions."57/

There will be circumstances in the life of any individual which will cause him to prefer an option in one of these two areas, perhaps because of characteristics of his particular culture (there are people who, for religious reasons, prefer to go hungry rather than sacrifice an animal they regard as sacred) or an emergency situation which requires immediate solution (temporary abandonment of the family in order to look for work). When applied correctly, the quality of life concept will bridge the gap between psychic and physical needs, putting them in their proper balance, and will be of help in finding the means of meeting these without detracting from the importance of one or the other.

Conceived of in this way, the quality of life concept poses a difficulty for all the sciences, and especially for the human sciences such as psychology, anthropology, sociology, ethics, biology and economics, in their attempts to reconcile the opposing desires and aspirations within man and society with means of satisfaction which can and should be applied because they cover the most urgent needs and anticipate the changes which might occur in any dimension. This would involve not only planning for the present but also projecting responsibilities into the future, thereby ensuring the quality of life of the generations to come. In this way a common awareness could be created which would enable the design of better development models for mankind and at the same time not sweep the consequences which might devolve from their implementation under the carpet.

"Nowadays mankind is living in two opposing states of mind: We are full of pride (if not arrogance) about our omnipotence, yet overwhelmed with fear about the loss of our security, and especially about our ability to foresee the future and the effects that our own action may have on the environment in which we live."58/

It is a difficult but not impossible task to ensure that a growing number of people became aware of the impact had by certain styles of development. To do so would be one of the most effective ways of putting a rein on the excessive aspirations of the few in order to meet the pressing needs of the many.

"There can be no doubt that we need to effect a rational assessment of the resources available to us and come face to face with our scandalously wasteful habits, which need to be changed radically ... and it is to be hoped that our quality of life can be safeguarded through the exercise of lighthearted austerity."59/

5. Quality of life and ethics in cultural changes

Another factor that must be noted with regard to quality of life relates to the guiding principles of men and societies. In this connection stress should
be laid on the ethical values—both subjective and objective—which structure and give a deep meaning to life.

These vary according to the type of circumstances in which an individual or a society exists; however, the existence and force of such values is evident from the positive or negative reaction of people or groups of people to certain means of satisfaction when fundamental values are at stake.

The need for happiness or self-fulfilment (which presuppose the satisfaction of all the other human needs) is common to all cultures. As in the case of the quality-of-life concept and the basic needs concept, the difficult thing is to find a definition which encompasses it in all its aspects and is valid, for the majority of mankind at least.

There is a powerful subjective factor in both happiness and quality of life, which greatly distorts the parameters of comparability of periods of history and different cultures owing primarily to the fact that human groups, as experience proves, are different and tend to satisfy their needs in their own way and often independently of "classic" or formal systems.

"A person's desires, and the activities in which he eventually engages to fulfil them are determined by his values as well as by his needs and by the means of satisfaction (human transactions and goods and services) available and his potential for obtaining them ... Human values exclude or favour certain needs and/or means of satisfaction of those needs, with the result that desires and activities are altered."50/

It can however be asserted that there are certain minimum thresholds of subsistence, which must be crossed before it becomes appropriate to speak of quality of life or happiness; and whether they can be crossed depends on the entire human race.

Any type of planning aimed at raising people's standard of living will be ineffective if only the material well-being factor is taken into account. When this happens, people may postpone obtaining means of satisfying their needs, as has happened many times in history, until they obtain means of satisfaction which have been classified as more important, in accordance with a particular way of perceiving self-fulfilment.

As R.H. Tawney suggests, the most obvious facts are easily forgotten. Both the existing economic order and the many projects proposed for reconstructing it are weakened through their neglect of the self-evident truth that since everybody has a soul, greater wealth will not compensate for plans which destroy their self-respect and impair their freedom. If industry is not to be brought to a standstill by continuous protests stemming from hurt feelings, any rational economy must allow those criteria which are not purely economic to be met.61/

A society's scale of values will depend on the priority which is assigned to each need or means of satisfaction of those needs, and that will reflect the identity and traditions of its members. Maintaining the identity of a different culture, through a style of development in harmony with its life style poses a fresh challenge. It also means that the various social actors
must participate in the management of their own development and ensure that more of their needs can be met.

As E.F. Schumacher put it, "history and experience point to the fact that it is man rather than nature, who provides the primary resources and that the key to economic development lies in the mind of man". 62/

To underrate man's ingenuity by inflicting development models on him is to engage in a process of acculturation which may well unleash all sorts of problems, such as result from a decline in job efficiency or the creation of an atmosphere of social tension which would delay or halt the achievement of the goals set.

The consequences of a cultural change would have to be anticipated so that old forms of poverty would not be replaced by new ones, whose effects are sometimes even more crushing. New development models would be based on the perception of an "existing quality of life", which would be improved upon gradually, until an "optimum" quality of life were attained.

"Every 'optimum' quality of life model would involve the introduction not only of a hypothetical standard of comparability, but also of supposedly desirable levels of quality of life for different social groups ... In other words there would be different degrees of quality of life to mark the course of settlements on their way to the optimum quality of life. Each step would be established in accordance with a weighted system of indicators based on variables such as food, housing, equipment and insertion in the environment (communications and culture) in advanced production systems." 63/ The changes involved would be gradual and comprehensible and could be assimilated when desired by their protagonists.

"In short, a culture does not determine basic human needs but rather the means of satisfying those needs. Cultural change results from, among other things, the jettisoning of traditional means of satisfaction in favour of new and different ones." 64/

Thus more care and respect should be exercised in development planning, especially in third world countries where traditions are still of prime importance and planning is sometimes the only weapon available for combating material poverty.

The destruction of tradition through the introduction of a development model which does not take tradition into account results in such insecurity that not only do man and his social structure fail to reap the benefits of the new model, but they experience fear and humiliation as a result of its implementation.

As E.F. Schumacher says, "when a model is intelligible, it produces a sense of participation; when it is unintelligible, it produces a sense of estrangement". 65/

While it is necessary to know and respect people's cultural tradition and promote their diversity, there is equally an obligation to improve the quality
of life of people who live in a state of poverty, to the shame of all mankind.

It is undoubtedly the intention (and the desire) of every planner to devise programmes which will improve the quality of life of human groups. There are "wealth" planners whose main concern is to ensure the continued accumulation and enjoyment of wealth regardless of the harm this does to the poor countries. There is, however, an urgent need for planners in all fields who have a real commitment to all mankind, that is to say technicians and scientists who are able to come to grips with the problems of hunger and self-fulfilment at an increasingly interrelated level and weigh up the repercussions that any type of planning has on people and consequently on the social and physical environment.

What do we really need from scientists and technologists? According to E.F. Schumacher, we need methods and equipment which are:

- cheap enough to be within the reach of virtually everybody;
- appropriate for small-scale use; and
- compatible with man's creative needs.

These three characteristics engender non-violence and a relationship between man and nature which guarantees permanence. If only one of them is ignored, things will probably turn out badly.

What we are getting is precisely the opposite, and this is highly immoral. Artificial needs are being created, which can be met only by falling into subjection or dependence vis-à-vis other cultures which because of their advanced level of development, have built up tremendous power in respect of the manipulation of desires and aspirations. This phenomenon can be observed from many of the development models which have been imposed upon poor countries with the support of their dominant minority groups.

What is proposed here is an efficient form of collaboration, which is not regarded simply as aid but also and more important, as restitution which has become necessary on ethical grounds since it would constitute no more than giving back with the left hand what the right hand has taken. We all know that the rich countries have acquired much of their wealth by exploiting the poor countries, and they should not now shrug off their responsibility, much less export development models which continue to benefit them.

It has become the duty of all mankind to programme and pursue measures leading to the progressive improvement of the quality of life of all men, so as to secure a more satisfying life for more people, more genuine self-governing democracy and blessed relief from the stupid, pernicious adult education dispensed by the producers of mass consumer goods through advertising.

C. Relevant methodological aspects

As established above, the quality-of-life concept is currently in use; that is to say a large number of studies in the social sciences employ this concept in
various definitions. By reviewing studies of this type it may be seen that many of their methodological aspects stem from its inclusion in them.68/

Some of these aspects which constitute basically an operational definition of the concept are:

a) The quality of life concept discourages the tendency to measure progress with quantitative economic indicators.

b) The word "life" as used in the expression "quality of life" concept refers to all men's existential activities regardless of the exact manifestation of human life in which they are performed. The indicators used are structured on the basis of relatively common characteristics shared by any given social group.

c) In its various uses, the quality of life concept is superimposed on other similar concepts, without becoming synonymous with them. In this way, it joins concepts such as the standard of living concept, the living conditions concept and the social indicators concept to form a package of concepts which can be used for purposes of operational research in determining to interpret the state of and conditions surrounding human well-being.

As a research subject, quality of life presents some methodological difficulties, and certain conditions must be met before it can be used. The number and variety of factors which influence the life of an individual differs from moment to moment. Thus, as with any other kind of information used in research, the replies obtained from individuals in respect of quality of life serve to evaluate the quality of life of the social groups to which they belong. Thus, quality of life is a collective attribute which has to do with groups rather than individuals. As in the case of other concepts used in the social sciences, the need arises to systematize quality-of-life measures and indicators, a tax which poses the classic problems as to what type, scale and categories to use to allow the concept to reflect and clarify the well-being of the reference group. One important aspect of research, based on the quality of life concept is that in it there is a tendency to construct indexes and integrated indicators, which make it possible to use a large number of variables simultaneously. This is done in order to describe the interrelationships which occur in and characterize a given situation. Thus, there is, for example, a social mobility index, a social integration index and a social opportunity index.69/

1. Comparative studies

The comparative features of the concept are virtually inherent to its use. The traditional question which explicitly or implicitly guides research as it is carried out is: Quality of life, in respect of what? In the end options regarding another social group, a value pattern or parameter and different times for the reference group under consideration emerge. In the first case, when the basic idea is to show the most significant differences among different groups in terms of quality of life, the approach taken is to structure the variables used in such a way as to permit comparison. In this approach the satisfaction provided by a given life situation, is viewed as an
integral indicator of the economic, social and cultural functioning of a particular society at a certain level of development and under a specific development model.

As for the variables chosen for building up a structure of comparison, they represent specific areas in or important aspects of an adult's life, including, inter alia, interpersonal relationships, socioeconomic conditions, job situation, type and quality of recreational activities and environment assessed on the basis of the characteristics of a territory. In association with each of these variables, another set of variables is structured on the basis of the information available on various aggregates, ranging from income level to sex differentiation. The information obtained on variables which must be evaluated subjectively, depends on the opportunities available for carrying out surveys and rigorous sampling.

The differences observed in respect of the quality of life of certain groups are marked by one of the most salient features of underdevelopment, namely, the differences in the concentration and distribution of the benefits of development in a given situation.

In this connection, the territorial expression of the characteristics of a group (the conditions of its habitat) is fundamental for understanding the relationships which determine the way in which the environment and the individual interact. Furthermore, the characteristics of the quality of life of different social groups with an identifiable territorial expression give rise to different life styles within a single unit, such as a Latin American metropolis, and this, in turn, means that different kinds of activities are carried out within the framework of metropolitan planning and national development.

One of the critical areas in this regard is the precarious growth of settlements in large Latin American cities. Patterns of living give rise to real cultures, both wealth cultures and poverty cultures. One of the most striking findings of the comparative studies relates to the processes of segregation and social integration which are seen to be strengthened by the policies and activities carried out under development plans. Thus, the use of quality of life as a blanket indicator determines the contradictions present in the economic and social development process and throws light on its objectives.

When viewed against a pattern of values, quality of life as a characteristic of a given situation makes it possible to structure policies in such a way as to promote participation in the decisions taken with regard to major development problems. Thus, new proposals are made in respect of a development style which requires that strategies aimed at the establishment of a "new society" be carried out to improve present conditions.70/

In such cases, the quality of life is more than the reflection of a particular situation but becomes a major development objective. Twenty years ago, the ideal of the underdeveloped economies was to achieve rapid insertion in the global modernization process set in motion by developed countries with a very well-defined production-consumption pattern. Nowadays — and primarily because of the existence of a structural form of poverty foreign to the pole
of modernity—the development ideal held by the underdeveloped countries is based on formulations which take into account the cultural conditions and salient characteristics of the poorest groups. Consequently, proposals are made which are based on social management and participation and the mobilization of local resources and are aimed, not at the adoption of a model but rather at the germination of certain powers and a vast variety of potential.

Generally speaking two types of basic approach may be distinguished in the comparative studies being carried out. On the one hand, there are approaches in which quality of life is viewed in terms of a broad system of indicators, which is intended to embrace all the most important areas of the phenomenon. Another approach which has been developed is that in which quality of life is described through the use of a main indicator. In this case, the comparative studies are made with a view to comparison with an ideal pattern of operation. Thus quality of work may, for example, emerge as the principal indicator of quality of life.

One of the most notable aspects of the comparative studies carried out on quality of life in the developed countries is that the situation observed is one in which the majority of needs, or a large number of them, have been satisfied and quality of life is seen in terms not of what life has to offer but rather of what opportunities it gives the individual to "contribute". The dialectic between receiving and contributing produces movement and concrete action.

The comparative studies analysed basically suggest the need to explore the dynamics generated in a particular situation. Thus, studies are prepared which are based on a comparison of the same situation at different times. Does the quality of life today differ from what it was yesterday? This type of study, which makes use of time series, is usually markedly evaluative. This calls to mind another highly important aspect of comparative studies. When research is combined with dynamics, questions relating to causality and explanation arise almost automatically: Why people come to have a particular quality of life? This introduces complex considerations of a psychological, social, economic, political and historical nature which turns research which might have been undertaken primarily as a descriptive effort into a quest for the elements of concrete proposals.

Another interesting factor is the impact had by the rise and fall of the variables which characterize quality of life. Not all the changes which accompany an improvement in quality of life will necessarily have a positive effect. For example, longer life expectancy usually creates problems of physical and social dependence, and access of the masses to recreation may exhaust the services available and destroy their original characteristics.

One of the problems in comparing different periods has to do with the standardization of information. This problem usually affects the studies compared, and sometimes becomes critical. Basically, problems arise in connection with information used in dealing with so-called "subjective" variables. Social change is expressed in a change in perception, values and patterns of behaviour. Thus, the context of a particular situation which is to be described and explained is fundamental to studies on quality of life.
Ultimately, studies on quality of life are organized around one or more of the analysis categories set forth in this paper. Increasing importance began to be attached to comparative research into quality of life when economic and social development emerged as a major political issue. Without a doubt, one of the most important considerations in this type of research is the relationship between quality of life and urbanization. The size of human settlements and the conditions in which they exist now and in the future give rise to a paradox in that they are part of a process in which substantial improvements in quality of life acquire a concrete dimension while at the same time the rapid growth of urban poverty and squatter settlements are an indication that the zone of influence of development as a process of change is actually contracting. For this reason approaches, criteria and options are being reviewed, and quality of life is becoming an aim and means of development.

2. Indicators of quality of life

The concepts, theories and methods applicable to quality of life are in the last analysis determined by the use of indicators whose basic purpose is to interpret the qualitative aspects of any given development situation. In research relating to quality of life, basic information, measurements and indicators, which vary tremendously are used. In general two types of indicators can be identified: indicators which depend on measurements made by someone other than the person whose quality of life is being studied and indicators which depend primarily on the opinion and the judgement of someone with a particular quality of life at a given moment. Usually these two types of indicators are designated, respectively, as objective indicators and subjective indicators.

Comparative studies carried out in Europe within the framework of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) constitute an example of the use and scope of the great type of indicator. The initial objective of these studies was to identify the social demands, aspirations and problems in critical areas of crucial importance so far as planning is concerned. To begin with, a list of 11 areas regarded as important was drawn up according to what information was available in certain European countries. The information examined covers a broad spectrum, ranging from conventional variables, such as employment, housing conditions and health, to such factors as environmental quality, "economic accessibility", the personal satisfaction experienced by individuals in their present life, the degree of receptivity to change, and capacity for training in the social field. Another example is furnished by the system of social indicators set up in the Federal Republic of Germany. As in the case discussed above, the first step is to identify areas of interest, such as conditions governing the maintenance of well-being in the country as a whole, the elaboration of a comprehensive quality of life index and the way in which quality of life measured as an objective, is perceived. The research carried out in this respect covers a period of 20 years and therefore calls for the use of "classical" information which is organized and assessed with a distinct objective in view. In both cases, the use of census data and data taken from certain samplings is not ruled out when the information sought has not been standardized in such a way as to allow effective access to its source (the population at a given quality-of-life level). In the first case this would be due to problems relating to comparison
among countries and in the second, to the temporal nature of the situation studied. In research relating to quality of life, problems attaching to scale and scope are therefore fundamental. The wider the coverage, the fewer concrete opportunities there are to use what are known as "subjective indicators" since their elaboration requires the participation of the subjects themselves.

With respect to indicators of the second type, which constitute the great contribution of the concept of quality of life to operational research, these were structured under the auspices of non-governmental organizations, which usually work in respect of groups or specific areas.

This situation is characteristic of both developed and developing countries. In research on quality of life, the way in which a system of indicators is structured depends on the basic questions towards which the research is directed. Thus, no attempt can be made to describe living conditions or standards of living, quality of life, life style or forms of life have to be characterized, this is impossible without the participation of the persons involved and without holding consultations with them in this connection, the idea being to eliminate any dogmatic or preconceived ideas concerning the categories under study. In this approach, a set of questions is prepared on the levels of satisfaction attained in key areas of life (work, family life, cultural activities, individual and family education, political relations, material well-being and immediate environment). In doing this, it is important to determine the objectives aimed at by the subject himself, since any assessment which he may make is closely linked to his personal expectations or to those of his family or the group to which he belongs. In this way, it is possible to determine, with a high degree of accuracy, the way in which various social groups view their problems, and the practical steps they might take towards a solution. This system for getting a group on the true picture is a very effective way of approaching structured, situational planning in which participation in the process is viewed as almost the only way of guaranteeing that investments and programmes are efficient and successful.

Since quality of life is a concept with group, rather than individual connotations, the problems of collecting "subjective" information are resolved in the course of the research by approaching them one after another in stages. Thus, the precision with which the first stage of a research effort is carried out, in respect of the operative system of values and the mechanisms for socializing them, the prevailing life style and the main agents of change is fundamental. By setting up such a frame in which to operate, it is possible to make arrangements for evaluating the levels of satisfaction during a second stage. Lastly, the information obtained may be incorporated in a causal analysis for use in identifying a programme of action in which the social, material, labour and other aspects of the situation under consideration appear in a useful order of priorities.

In research into the quality of life, objective and subjective indicators are usually employed in an integrated manner to complement each other. The additional complexity this imposes is compensated for by the balance achieved between diagnosis and action.
This new approach to social research, which has been enhanced by the conceptual, methodological and empirical advantages offered by the quality-of-life concept, promises to contribute significantly, in various ways, to structuring the means and objectives of economic and social development. This presents distinct possibilities for changing the development style or styles applied. Opportunities for analysing and managing urban metropolitan development depend upon recognition of the fact that great internal heterogeneity is a mechanism for change.

D. The quality of urban life and the struggle against metropolitan poverty: Fundamental features of a new approach to urban planning

The urban planning schemes devised as part of systematic planning efforts have been only partially successful in improving the quality of life of the marginalized urban dwellers who constitute the majority of society, and the concepts which characterize them are reflected in a large number of formalistic rigidities which in the end have divorced planning from social work, which must be included in order to ensure the presence of enough socio-political efficiency to confront the urgent problems of large cities.

Viewed in that light the thinking reflected above has been expressed in an attempt to orient, or, more precisely, to reorient metropolitan planning by reawakening its essentially political nature by making its activities part of a "social process", in which methodological renewal is taken beyond the formal model-based approach practised in the past, and above all by dealing efficiently with main problems of metropolitan poverty within a criterion which provides guidance and enjoys universal support, namely, a criterion based on the quality of urban life.

The following matrix which provides for the establishment of key areas where metropolitan planning is concerned, has been designed to serve this purpose. Five key areas have been identified including: food and public health; urban security; employment; housing, infrastructure and services and socio-political participation.

The idea is to orchestrate five areas which are of particular importance and are sufficiently integrated (in that the solutions to the problems they present can be found only by going beyond schemes of a purely sectoral nature), where views which are kept systematically informed through explanatory diagnosis can lead to politically explicit lines of action in a strategic option in which resources can be mobilized for investments in integrated project packages in planning phases in which global, multi-related approaches, such as those outlined in the attached methodological table, are taken.
### Key Areas and Main Attributes of the Ideal Quality of Urban Life

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<th>Key Area</th>
<th>Basic Concept</th>
<th>Main Attributes: Specific Problems</th>
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| Food and Public Health    | Basic food and health needs, especially in respect of particularly vulnerable sectors of the population (children and the elderly) | * Production and distribution of basic foods  
* Present efficiency of systems for distributing supplementary food and primary health services  
* Direct participation by social organizations in the provision of primary health services and by grass-roots economic organizations in the area of basic food needs  
* Cultural and ideological content of the food issue and health problems  
* Presence of dynamic participative scenarios  
* Role of the mass communications media  
* Operation of legal systems relating to social rights and controls  
* Incorporation of problems relating to security, freedom and mental health in an urban environment in the educational and cultural domain |
| Urban Security            | The population's basic need for personal, family and social stability (basic urban vulnerability), especially in respect of the degree of security required for the maintenance of a reasonable level of mental health and for the full exercise of fundamental human rights | |
| Work                      | Basic need for stability as a member of a labour market adopted to the requirements of the working-age population as a whole and for a minimum level of income, which is high enough to meet all the basic needs | * Operation of formal labour markets (establishment of standards governing job mobility, prices, job stability, trade-union activity, etc.)  
* Intervention and adjustment in informal labour markets (organization and regulation of increased formalization)  
* Minimum income policies in urban areas and increased access to social security and services for the particularly vulnerable sectors of the population (young people, women, the elderly, migrants) |
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<tr>
<th>Key area</th>
<th>Basic concept</th>
<th>Main attributes: specific problems</th>
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<tr>
<td>Housing, infrastructure,</td>
<td>Basic needs in respect of access to minimum housing conditions (need for urban land, minimal housing and gradual improvement of the habitat) infrastructure and the primary services</td>
<td>* Policies relating to access to urban land by social sectors living in exceptionally marginal conditions</td>
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<tr>
<td>services</td>
<td></td>
<td>* Credit mechanisms and technical assistance and adaptation provided in programmes relating to improved housing and the urban habitat of low-income groups</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>* Technological improvements, extension of coverage of beneficiaries of the main basic services and mechanisms for the organization of active participation in those services</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>* Analysis of infrastructure thresholds and of the ecosystems to which they pertain</td>
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<tr>
<td>Socio-political participation</td>
<td>Basic need for active incorporation of the urban population, working within its local social organizations (in their full range) for and full recognition of that need by government and other social actors</td>
<td>* Emergent forms of social participation at local level (mainly as concerns habitat)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>* Ways and means of fostering participation in production through grass-roots economic organizations</td>
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<td></td>
<td>* Democratic instruments for penetrating civil society (communications media controlled by low-income sectors, mobilization strategies, better approaches to concerted action, etc.)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Types of relationship between society and government with emphasis on institutional, local and neighbourhood aspects</td>
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Thus, urban planning favours qualitative analysis, genuine social practices (including the whole range of non-governmental planning activities), projects which mobilize resources and generate new social orders, and, it being generally understood that planning must be conceived in such a way that it can come to grips with real problems (which are truly devastating in magnitude) and with the exercise of political activities, is tantamount to saying that planning proposals can be feasible only in a context of broad agreement and socio-political consensus.

Food and basic health; urban security; job opportunities; access to housing, infrastructure and services and active socio-political participation, are basic fields for the conduct of the social activities related to planning.

Attempts to identify some of the attributes or problems characteristic of the above-mentioned areas have led to a preliminary system of classification, in which account is in fact taken of the very issues which constitute the core of the strategy proposals and resource-mobilizing projects.

Furthermore, no priority has been established among the problem areas listed, nor are they even presumed to be independent of each other. On the contrary, their interrelationship is evident and can, in fact, be expressed in terms of the basic social context in which they are found. The creative, original application of these simple guidelines in countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, with all their dissimilarities, should result in a gradual improvement in the methodological and conceptual approaches taken and make them more efficient from the social point of view.

Notes

1/ It would even be possible to construct a comparative analysis of the utopian and universalist concepts reflected in regional and urban policy vis-à-vis the so-called "realistic" concepts of today. Texts which attempt such analysis include the following collections of articles, which are of considerable help in respect of various aspects of this complex problem:


- Beatriz Cuenca et al., Políticas de Asentamientos Humanos.
- J.J. Villamani, "La política de asentamientos humanos y el desarrollo nacional", in Revista SIAP, No. 49, March 1979, pp. 139-152.

The idea of "realistic policies" is based on the incorporation of the fundamental consensus as a key factor in the characterization of those policies. Although realism may serve as a counterweight to technical illusionism or academic utopias, in these notes stress is laid on the inherently political realism of policies. One of the policies where that idea
emerged most clearly is in an article by Guillermo Geisse entitled "El acceso de los pobres a la tierra urbana; tres problemas críticos de políticas", which appeared in Revista EURE (vol. IX, No. 25, August 1982, pp. 73-82).

2/ For new ideas in metropolitan planning, see the following:
- Sergio Galilea, El fenómeno metropolitano en América Latina: El escenario, las metodologías de análisis y las propuestas de planificación, second Ibero-American Congress on Urbanism, Tlaxcala, Mexico, April 1986.

3/ Such as those contained in:
- Declaración de Tlaxcala, second Ibero-American Congress on Urbanism, Tlaxcala, Mexico, April 1986.

4/ An excellent review of what has been written about marginality may be found in:
- Roger Veckemans and Ismael Fuenzalida, "El Concepto de Marginalidad", in Marginalidad en América Latina, DESAL-HERDER, Barcelona, Spain, 1969.

5/ José Nun, "Superpoblación relativa, ejército industrial de reserva y masa marginal", in Revista Latinoamericana de Sociología, No. 66/2, Buenos Aires.


7/ The concept of marginalization has been studied by Castells, and the need to form a link between the closely related operations of the formal and the informal markets has been affirmed. See Manuel Castells, "La urbanización dependiente en América Latina" in M. Castells et al., Imperialismo y Urbanización en América Latina, Editorial Gustavo Gili, Barcelona, 1973, pp. 7-26; and Paul Singer, "Urbanización, Dependencia y Marginalidad en América Latina", pp. 287-312 of the same book.

8/ In this connection see:
- Patricio Gross et al., "Diseño de indicadores para medir la calidad del medio ambiente físico en el Área Metropolitana de Santiago y su aplicación a nivel comunal", CIDU/IFU, Working Paper No. 102, Catholic University of Chile, Santiago, Chile, December 1977.
Santiago de Chile la etapa proyecto Ecoville", Working Paper No. 139 of the Institute of Urban Studies at the Catholic University of Chile (Santiago, Chile, 1983).


10/ In this connection, see the set of articles from the Seminar organized by SIAP and ECIAC in 1984 which is found in "Condicionantes políticas de la planificación en los paises del Cono Sur", Revista SIAP, vol. XVIII, No. 72, December 1984.

11/ Part of the message of the Roman Catholic Church in Latin America when, at the Puebla Conference, it referred to its "option for the poor" as the guiding concept of its pastoral work. In this connection see John Paul II, Inaugural Homily, Third General Bishops Conference of Latin America, Puebla, Mexico, 28 January 1979, in Revista Mensaje, No. 277, April-May 1979, pp. 161-169.

12/ In respect of this subject, see ECLAC, La pobreza en América Latina: dimensiones y políticas (ECLAC, Estudios e Informes series No. 54, Santiago, 1985).


13/ See the report of the Conference on Population and Small- and Medium-Sized Cities in Latin America and the Caribbean held by the United Nations Fund for Population Activities in Mexico City (24-28 February 1986).

14/ For information on urban survival strategies, please consult:
- Larissa Lomnitz, Cómo sobreviven los marginados, Siglo XXI Editores, Mexico City, 1980.

15/ With regard to people's economic organizations, please see:
- Luis Razeto et al., Las organizaciones económicas populares, Labour Economy Programme, Santiago, 1983.

16/ Sergio Galilea, op. cit.

17/ This type of approach is suggested by Blas Tomic in La planificación participativa y descentralizada para las necesidades básicas issued by PREALC in Santiago, Chile in December 1982.

18/ The term "informal culture" refers to informality at a high level with its own values and broad social coverage, which produces new approaches to economic-productive organization, to interaction and to socio-political organization.

For an interesting methodological approach to these complex problems see Teresa Valdés, Comportamiento reproductivo, significaciones y vida cotidiana en sectores populares urbanos, FIACSO, Santiago, 1985.
19/ These categories do not make up an exhaustive and exclusive system of classification. From the outset, note should be taken of the high level of interaction which exists among them, the tremendous differences in the time it takes for them to develop and the peculiarities likely to be found in each of them in the different metropolises of the region.

20/ Such measures include eradication programmes which usually accompany proposals for the rehabilitation or "recovery" of urban centres. Another example of such measures may be found in the construction of metros, which have resulted in heightened urban segregation. In this connection, see S. Galilea and F. Sabatini, "El sistema de transporte y la estructura urbana en Santiago de Chile" in Transporte y Servicios Urbanos en América Latina, INRETS/Ciudad, Quito, July 1985, pp. 217-224.

21/ In this connection see the following articles in Relación Campo-Ciudad: la Tierra, recurso estratégico para el desarrollo y la transformación social, Ediciones STAP, Mexico City, 1983: S. Jaramillo, "El precio del suelo urbano y la naturaleza de sus componentes" (pp. 144-166); Hugo Manzanilla, et al., "El papel de la venta urbana en la economía venezolana en la última década" (pp. 203-220), and Francisco Sabatini, "Precios del suelo y tendencias globales de la economía. El caso de Santiago 1980-1981" (pp. 221-244).

22/ In this connection see Luis Ratinoff, Los nuevos grupos urbanos: las clases medias, PIAFUR/IPL, Lima, 1971.


24/ As proposed by Daniel Carbonetto in his article "Políticas de mejoramiento en el sector informal urbano", op. cit.

25/ Through the use, for example, of the system of indicators outlined by C.A. Garcia in his article entitled "Indicadores para la medición de las condiciones de vida a nivel local", Proyectos locales e indicadores sociales: implicaciones para la reformación y la planificación regional y nacional published by UNICEF (Bogotá, July 1982).

26/ In this connection it must also be noted that specific basic needs are largely dependent on national and regional conditions and also on existing cultural patterns and on traditions as regards basic rights and government action.


29/ For Carlos Matus' situational planning concept see his book entitled Planificación, libertad y conflicto, Caracas, 1984.
This means that the policy established can be viewed as a "decision of State" which is founded on a stable and long-standing consensus, primarily where its strategic objectives are concerned.

Such a population is described by Julio Salcedo Ponde in Discutimos nuestros problemas, buscamos sus soluciones y organizamos nuestros trabajos, UNICEF, Bolivia/Paraguay/Peru Office, Lima, 1984.

In this connection see Sergio Galilea, Planificación de los Asentamientos Humanos en América Latina y el Caribe: Teorías y Metodologías, Nairobi, UNCHS-HABITAT, 1984.


For more details on the development concept, see A. de la Barra, I. Rodríguez and F. Moreno, "Calidad de Vida", Instituto Chileno de Estudios Humanísticos, Santiago.


See entry by Valverde Cruz in Vicente Sánchez and Beatriz Guiza (ed.) Glosario de términos sobre medio ambiente, El Colegio de México, 1982.

See "Las evaluaciones del impacto ambiental" by María Teresa Estevan Bolea in Cuadernos del CIPCA, Madrid, 1977.

Patricio Gross et al., "Diseño de indicadores para medir la calidad del medio ambiente físico en el Área Metropolitana de Santiago y su aplicación al nivel comunal", CIDC/IPU research report (Documento de Trabajo No. 102).


Patricio Gross et al., op. cit.

Carlos Mallman, op. cit.

Carlos Mallman, Ibid.

Manfred Max-Neef, op. cit.

Manfred Max-Neef, Ibid.

Manfred Max-Neef, Ibid.

According to an opinion expressed by Jorge Graciarena in 1976, which is quoted by José Villamil in his study entitled, "Concepto de estilo de desarrollo: Una aproximación", contained in vol. I of Estilos de desarrollo y medio ambiente en América Latina compiled by O. Sunkel and N. Gligo and published in Mexico City in 1980 by the Fondo de Cultura Económica.

According to an opinion expressed by A. Pinto in 1976 as cited by José Villamil, op. cit.

Carlos Mallman, op. cit.

Modelo Mundial Latinoamericano, p. 6.
54/ Carlos Mailman, op. cit.
57/ Jerzi Makowski, op. cit.
58/ Ibid.
59/ Pierre Danserau, Interioridad y medio ambiente, Editorial Nueva Imagen, Mexico City, 1981.
60/ Carlos Mailman, op. cit.
62/ E.F. Schumacher, op. cit.
64/ Manfred Max-Neef, op. cit.
65/ E.F. Schumacher, op. cit.
66/ Ibid.
70/ See O. Sunkel and N. Gligo, Estilos de desarrollo y medio ambiente, Fondo de Cultura Económica, Mexico City, 1980.
72/ See Frank Andrews, Comparative studies of life quality.