
REVIEW ESSAYS

WOMEN AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT IN LATIN AMERICA *

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THE INDUSTRIAL CONNECTION: ACHIEVEMENT AND THE FAMILY IN DEVELOPING SOCIETIES. By BERNARD C. ROSEN. (New York: Aldine Publishing, 1982. Pp. 359. \$24.95 cloth, \$19.95 paper.)

THE TRIPLE STRUGGLE: LATIN AMERICAN PEASANT WOMEN. By AUDREY BRONSTEIN. (Boston: South End Press, 1982. Pp. 268. \$7.50.)

THREE DIFFERENT WORLDS: WOMEN, MEN, AND CHILDREN IN AN INDUSTRIALIZING COMMUNITY. By FRANCES ABRAHAMER ROTHSTEIN. (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1982. Pp. 148. \$27.50.)

WOMEN IN THE GLOBAL FACTORY. By ANNETTE FUENTES and BARBARA EHRENREICH. (Boston: South End Press, 1983. Pp. 64. \$4.00.)

FOR WE ARE SOLD, I AND MY PEOPLE: WOMEN AND INDUSTRY IN MEXICO'S FRONTIER. By MARIA PATRICIA FERNANDEZ-KELLY. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983. Pp. 217. \$39.50 cloth, \$11.95 paper.)

THE REDIVISION OF LABOR: WOMEN AND ECONOMIC CHOICE IN FOUR GUATEMALAN COMMUNITIES. By LAUREL HERBENAR BOSSEN. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984. Pp. 396. \$46.50 cloth, \$16.95 paper.)

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The United Nations Decade for Women has ended. The goals envisioned at international women's conferences and formulated into five-year plans fell short of fruition; much of the earth's female population remains poor and powerless. Women still perform two-thirds of the world's work hours yet receive only 10 percent of the income and own less than 1 percent of the property. But the past ten years have witnessed some achievements, if not in assuaging women's problems, at least in bringing them to the forefront of academic discourse and international policy-making. The subject of women in international development has emerged as an important scholarly focus, catalyzing a flurry of studies on Third World women. Moreover, the insight that gender is as important as class or race in structuring opportunities and life-styles has spawned a rapidly accumulating body of research. The books reviewed here are recent and fairly representative expressions of the eclectic literature on women in Latin American development.

Despite theoretical and methodological diversity, these books have a common thread. Each considers the consequences for women's lives of what some call "modernization" and others label "capitalist expansion." Five of the authors—Bernard Rosen, Frances Abrahamer Rothstein, María Patricia Fernández Kelly, Annette Fuentes, and Barbara Ehrenreich—focus on industrialization's impact on women and their households, while Laurel Herbenar Bossen and Audrey Bronstein consider women's changing roles within the broader context of modernization. This review essay will deal primarily with industrial development, expanding the analysis where appropriate to encompass other types of developmental change within a capitalist framework.

Heated debate surrounds the issue of the effects of industrialization on Latin American women. Current viewpoints can be subsumed within three competing perspectives. The "integration thesis" holds that industrialization leads to female liberation and sexual equality by involving women more centrally in economic and political development. The "marginalization thesis" maintains that capitalist industrialization excludes women from productive roles and confines them to the household or to the informal sector. Finally, the "exploitation thesis" claims that industrialization creates a female proletariat supplying low-wage labor for accumulating capital at minimal cost. A brief discussion of these perspectives will provide a framework for understanding these books and their underlying assumptions.

The integration thesis assumes that industrialization and its attendant cultural and structural changes involve women more centrally in public life. According to this view, expanding jobs for women in industry and related services integrates them into the modern labor market. Wage work increases financial independence while providing productive skills and modern attitudes that enhance opportunities and

motivation for achievement. Women who choose not to enter the labor force also benefit from industrialization and the liberal values that buttress it. The spread of egalitarian, achievement-oriented values increases women's power by undermining patriarchal control. In sum, this thesis argues, industrialization enriches women's opportunities while helping them acquire the skills and aspirations to take full advantage of their options. In this way, women who are traditionally victims of repressive patriarchal norms become autonomous contributors to society and its development efforts.

The marginalization thesis, by contrast, holds that capitalist industrialization isolates women from production and political control. Women in precapitalist society are integral to household production and community leadership. Capitalism and industrial development separate the household from the modern firm and factory, thus furthering the division between the domestic and productive spheres. Men are drawn into the labor force to produce commodities in exchange for wages while women are relegated to the household to engage in domestic and subsistence activities. Their isolation from production and resulting economic dependence on men limit their autonomy and access to cash, property, and other resources. At the same time, economic necessity forces many women into the informal sector, which involves part-time tasks performed intermittently for small incomes in cash or kind (for example, washing and ironing clothes, housecleaning, cooking and selling food, and other extensions of women's domestic roles). Because jobs in the informal sector are unstable and replicate services performed more efficiently elsewhere, they are considered peripheral to the modern capitalist economy. Thus despite the ideology of egalitarianism, industrialization has generally increased Latin American women's economic and social marginality, according to the marginalization thesis.

The exploitation thesis assumes that Third World women are often central to industrial production but that their involvement is more harmful than beneficial. According to this view, women provide cheap and easily expendable labor because discriminatory hiring practices, sex-segregated labor markets, and inadequate preparation weaken their position within the labor market. Also, the typically intense competition for scarce jobs keeps wages low and workers docile. Because women workers rarely organize effective workers' unions, they are often powerless to change their circumstances. This thesis asserts that the exploitation of women is particularly pronounced in the Third World, where racism and dependency exacerbate gender inequalities. In recent decades, multinational corporations have transferred the assembly phases of their operations to Third World nations, where they employ a predominantly female labor force. While export-processing industrial-

ization absorbs many women into the global economy, the price paid is economic exploitation—dehumanizing work that threatens women's physical and mental health while providing minimal incomes, few worker benefits, and limited opportunities for advancement. In sum, the exploitation thesis holds that industrialization provides jobs for women, but because it operates within a system whose *modus operandi* is the extraction of surplus value to accumulate capital, industrialization weakens the position of women workers.

These three perspectives are not mutually exclusive. I believe that the marginalization and exploitation theses share basic assumptions and that although the integration thesis interprets the data differently, it describes trends similar to those noted by the other two perspectives. The debate centers on this basic question: does industrialization improve women's lives, both absolutely and relative to the lives of men in their society? The data presented in these books provide some insight into this question.

Bernard Rosen's *The Industrial Connection: Achievement and the Family in Developing Societies* illustrates the integration thesis. Applying modernization theory to the study of family change in Brazil, Rosen explores issues involving kinship networks, fertility, child rearing, achievement orientation, and relations between husbands and wives. He indirectly measures industrialization by comparing individuals from rural villages, nonindustrial cities, and industrial cities. Rosen employs quantitative methods to test whether industrialization leads to a more flexible and equal division of labor between the sexes, increases verbal communication between married couples, enables couples to express their feelings more openly, improves women's ability to have opinions different from those of their husbands, or increases women's relative power within their marriages. Rosen finds no support for the first hypothesis but concludes that the empirical findings bear out the last four. He uses modernization theory to explain these outcomes, concluding that industrialization increases gender equality by bringing women into the labor force and by supporting an egalitarian, achievement-oriented ideology.

Rosen demonstrates how survey research can be used to test hypotheses about Latin American women, but his work has some methodological problems. Some measures are of dubious validity. The indicator of marital affection ("When your husband returns from his job, how often does he tell you about the day's happenings?") has more to do with communication than with actual feelings. Marital conflict is measured by asking wives whether they hold ideas different from those of their husbands on such topics as sex and politics. This question assumes that women know their husbands' opinions, which implies communication, yet the reader is told in another context that 67 percent of

the men do not talk to their wives about politics and 78 percent of the women do not talk to their husbands about sex.

Rosen reaches many conclusions by comparing the averages of complex scales. Such scores are difficult to interpret, however, because he presents neither the standard deviations and ranges for the scales nor the percentages of respondents agreeing with the items composing the scales. He tends to generalize from very small differences between mean scores and to gloss over exceptions, concluding, for example, that marital communication increases with industrialization. Yet the average communication scores for the largest industrial city and the two nonindustrial cities differ by only .7 and .4 points, and the 1.9 point difference between the industrial and nonindustrial migrant groups runs in the wrong direction. Rosen maintains that women's domestic power increases with industrialization. Yet the statistics show (to give only two examples of the problem) that women in the village are more likely to win arguments with their husbands than women in any of the four cities and that husbands in nonindustrial towns are less likely than those in industrial cities to veto their wives' activities.

Rosen's explanations for the empirical outcomes are untested. He speculates that industrialization increases gender equality by absorbing women into the labor force and by diffusing a liberal, egalitarian ideology. Neither variable, however, appears in the statistical analyses of husband-wife interaction or marital power. Ideology is not measured anywhere in the study, while women's employment is introduced only in the context of changing fertility patterns. One might question whether labor force participation really liberates women, for its correlation with women's liberal attitudes about sex roles is a mere .09, and with their participation in family decision making, a weak .16. If Rosen wants to claim that industrialization increases gender equality by drawing women into the work force, he should demonstrate a positive relationship between industrialization, women's labor force participation, and egalitarian relationships between husbands and wives. In the absence of such verification, his conclusions are difficult to accept.

Audrey Bronstein's *The Triple Struggle: Latin American Peasant Women*, a compilation of interviews with peasant women from Ecuador, Bolivia, Peru, El Salvador, and Guatemala, provides evidence that capitalist modernization increases Latin American women's marginality. Victims of what Bronstein labels the "triple oppression" of underdevelopment, class inequality, and male domination, most women believe they are inferior to men and cannot control their own lives. While the majority of their husbands work at least sporadically for wages, women are generally peripheral to the cash economy. Although they work long hours at domestic, subsistence, or informal tasks, they have little access to the cash that is so essential in an increasingly monetized economy.

Women who find agricultural jobs are often paid in kind, while others earn only meager incomes from informal tasks. The fortunate few who encounter wage employment invariably earn much less than men for the same work. Most women depend on men's wages to support themselves and their typically large families, but many admit that the amounts received are inadequate to cover family expenses. Still others complain that their men spend their own wages on alcohol, prostitutes, or supporting a second family.

Nonetheless, the portrait Bronstein paints is not wholly negative. Women who have organized handicrafts cooperatives tend to gain not only some economic security but also a sense of autonomy and self-direction. Yet Bronstein tells nothing about the women who join these cooperatives, whether membership is the norm, or how common such cooperatives are. Nor does she suggest whether the interviews included represent the attitudes of most women in the communities she visited. From her argument that most women are excluded from public life, it seems that many of the women she quotes are atypical because they hold positions of community leadership or are actively involved in establishing cooperatives. Why and how they overcame their marginal status to become publicly involved is not made clear.

Frances Abrahamer Rothstein's *Three Different Worlds: Women, Men, and Children in an Industrializing Community* is also consistent with the marginalization thesis. She compares divisions of labor, authority relationships, and economic resources in peasant and proletarian households to document how dependent capitalist industrialization has affected families in San Cosme, Mexico. Peasant households are described as family economies in which all members make productive contributions, the sex-based division of labor is flexible and interdependent, and relations between men and women are relatively egalitarian. These patterns are changing, however, as the spread of the cash-based economy makes it difficult for any but the largest landowners to support themselves and their families. Some 60 percent of the adult males in San Cosme have taken factory jobs in nearby communities. The result for these proletarian families has been to isolate the household from the productive sphere and to transform men's and women's roles. Women are confined to the household, occasionally earning small amounts of cash through informal activities. Their economic dependence on wage-earning men has increased male authority within the household. These women have little political power within the community. Proletarian men, by contrast, are using their factory jobs to gain personal contacts and economic resources that give them a higher standard of living and more political influence than most peasants. But their gains are tenuous because automation, rising unemployment, and the "de-skilling" of manufacturing tasks threaten to erode their eco-

conomic position. Men and women are responding to increasingly precarious positions by investing personally and economically in their children. Most believe that education is the key to upward mobility for their offspring, and they make considerable economic sacrifices toward this end. Rothstein wonders what will transpire if, as appears likely, their hopes are dashed.

Rothstein's study leaves many questions unanswered. Why are men, rather than women, involved in manufacturing, when in certain industries in other parts of Mexico, women are the preferred labor force? Rothstein mentions that some young women have industrial jobs, but she says nothing about their households or their employment. Do their youth and unmarried status allow them to migrate or commute to factory jobs? Are their wages essential to the household economy? Do both peasant and proletarian families send their daughters to work? Are they working in light industries such as textiles or electronics, which predominantly employ young women? Do they see their work as merely a temporary activity prior to marriage and child rearing? If they quit their jobs to become full-time wives and mothers, is their resulting marginality of their own choosing or have they been pressured into this choice by husbands or community norms?

Questions like these are addressed by Fernández Kelly and co-authors Fuentes and Ehrenreich, whose studies are consistent with the exploitation thesis. Both works deal with women's involvement in export-processing industrialization. Fuentes and Ehrenreich's *Women in the Global Factory* is a broad and somewhat ideological description of how multinational investment affects women in northern Mexico and Southeast Asia. Fernández Kelly provides a more scholarly work based on a case study of assembly workers in Juárez, Chihuahua.

Fuentes and Ehrenreich believe that multinational corporations exploit their workers, of whom some 85 percent are women. According to their view, companies invest in the Third World to obtain the inexpensive labor of young women. Most workers are young (between fifteen and twenty-five) and inexperienced, and many are supporting unemployed or underemployed husbands or parents. The lack of employment alternatives for women leads to intense competition for assembly jobs. This structural vulnerability gives the women little choice but to work under terms dictated by multinational corporations. Women work for minimum wages, frequently under temporary contracts, amidst conditions that damage their eyesight and threaten their mental and physical health. Their docility is maintained through a two-pronged corporate strategy. On the one hand, multinational corporations appeal to workers' feminine sex roles through such activities as beauty pageants and cooking classes; on the other hand, these corporations resist unionization and repress collective protest, often with the

assistance of the host government. Fuentes and Ehrenreich argue that assembly work provides women with a wage and a modicum of independence, yet these gains are undercut by the constant threat to workers' health and well-being.

Fuentes and Ehrenreich seem to be arguing that the exploitation women face as industrial workers differs fundamentally from that which male workers would experience in similar circumstances. This assumption raises critical questions that are not satisfactorily addressed in *Women in the Global Factory*. Are women exploited as women or as workers? Are the abuses and the methods for containing discontent different for women than they would be for men? How does this modern-day exploitation contrast with that of men or women workers during industrialization's early stages? Answering these questions would help unravel the effects of what many feminists believe are two distinct systems of exploitation—capitalism and patriarchy.

A step in this direction is María Patricia Fernández Kelly's *For We Are Sold, I and My People: Women and Industry in Mexico's Frontier*. Although the author would likely agree with most of Fuentes and Ehrenreich's conclusions, she arrives at her own interpretations through a more reasoned analysis. Employing concepts taken from world-system theory, she explores the reasons why women enter export-processing plants (*maquiladoras*) and how their work affects them. Her conclusions challenge the integrationist assumption that this route to the formal sector improves women's well-being. She establishes that maquiladora employment is not a source of financial security, upward mobility, or job stability because wages are low, job advancement is limited, and employment is insecure. Women enter factories not as autonomous individuals but as members of households that are depending on their wages. Their work often fails to increase their financial independence because many deliver their wages to fathers, mothers, or husbands. Nor does their wage labor increase their domestic power, for most women submit to male authority. Thus assembly work is not so much a key to personal autonomy as a reflection of women's subordinate domestic status. Fernández Kelly does not argue for abolishing the maquiladora program, however, because during the twenty years since its inception, women and their families have come to depend upon the jobs it generates. She nevertheless argues that the program reflects women's vulnerability in the household and the labor market. Rather than being a source of feminine liberation and gender equality, the maquiladora program contributes to their economic exploitation and structural oppression.

One comes away from *For We Are Sold* feeling that the basic question remains unanswered: would women be better off without the ma-

quiladora program? The answer requires knowledge of how women of similar educational and economic backgrounds were supported prior to the program's onset. Fernández Kelly argues that these women were "unemployable" and were either full-time students or wives and mothers. But no data is provided to support this claim. Moreover, the meaning of "unemployable" is not clear. Were such women in need of incomes but unable to find jobs? If so, how did they manage financially? If they were maintained by husbands or fathers, how have circumstances changed during the past two decades to erode this support and push women into the labor force? Future studies would do well to explore these questions within the framework of changing economic and demographic trends in northern Mexico.

How might one account for the divergent conclusions of these studies? One explanation is that industrial development has wide-ranging and often contradictory impacts that are affected by such diverse historical and structural factors as modes of production, class structures, and national roles within the global economy. Laurel Herbenar Bossen's *The Redivision of Labor: Women and Economic Choice in Four Guatemalan Communities* suggests the range of possible variation.

Bossen's work links community-level ethnography with broader questions of dependent capitalist development. The study explores how women in a peasant village, a sugar plantation, a squatter settlement, and a middle-class urban neighborhood have adapted to social change. In the Mayan village of T'oj Nam, men and women make interdependent contributions to subsistence production, but the emerging cash economy is beginning to undermine the egalitarian relations between the sexes. In El Canaveral, a large sugar plantation, women are excluded from wage employment and forced to share the income of a male wage earner or compete for the few informal positions. Because of their economic insecurity, many women become submissive toward men and competitive with other women. In San Lorenzo, a squatter settlement in Guatemala City, most women are economically active in domestic service or informal trades. Their meager incomes are essential to their economic survival, particularly given the instability of most male employment. This economic vulnerability of both sexes makes for reciprocal dependence between spouses and limits male domination. Interestingly, many San Lorenzo women are actively involved in community politics, a role that may stem from their initial involvement in squatter invasions.

In the middle-class community in Guatemala City known as Villa Rosa, about a third of the women participate in the labor force. Their incomes are lower, however, and their options more limited than those of Villa Rosa men. Although the women's wages help maintain their

family's living standard, these contributions do little to reduce their dependence on their husbands, who have little appreciation for their wives' work. Comparing the four communities in terms of economic and social equality between the sexes, Bossen concludes that the rural village ranks highest and the plantation lowest; and while the squatter settlement offers more social equality than the middle-class neighborhood, both afford women similar levels of economic equality.

Bossen's work demonstrates that even among communities at comparable levels of modernization or "capitalist integration," industrialization can affect women differently. Patterns observed in T'oij Nam and El Canaveral are consistent with the marginalization thesis: the cash economy is making village women economically and socially peripheral, while women in modernized El Canaveral are totally marginal to economic production and community decision making. But trends in the two Guatemala City neighborhoods are not wholly consistent with any of the three perspectives. Some Villa Rosa women are isolated in the household as full-time wives and mothers; others hold jobs that involve them in the formal economy but do not ensure personal autonomy. One might actually argue that because Villa Rosa women earn considerably lower wages, fewer benefits, and less security than men performing similar tasks, they are being exploited. Women in the lower-class squatter settlement generally perform informal services marginal to the formal economy. Yet their meager earnings offer them independence relative to San Lorenzo men, many of whom also occupy insecure and marginal positions.

To account for this diversity, researchers must be clear about their basic concepts and the underlying assumptions. Although thoroughgoing analysis of integration, marginalization, and exploitation is beyond the scope of this discussion, considering these terms in light of the case studies reviewed here raises issues that may help resolve the controversy.

First, marginalization is always relative to particular institutions and takes various forms. Let us assume that the reference point is the productive sphere that is to some extent integrated into the global economy. A frequent argument in the literature—and an assumption of the marginalization thesis—is that women who perform full-time homemaker roles are peripheral to the capitalist system and the wage economy. Thus if industrialization draws men into the wage economy and women into the domestic economy, it follows that this process marginalizes women. But the literature on domestic production has demonstrated that domestic workers contribute to the capitalist system.¹ They bear and socialize new workers, service husbands to permit their daily labor, and provide a market for commodities. If full-time houseworkers are marginal, it is not in terms of their productive contri-

butions but rather in their access to the material resources, power, and prestige accruing from public participation.

Participation in the informal sector entails a different kind of marginality. Such activities typically involve redistributing goods or providing services that are extensions of women's domestic roles. Economists generally consider these activities marginal to the formal sector. They are superfluous, replicating services provided elsewhere, yet inexpensive enough to stimulate consumption. They provide women with incomes, albeit minimal and unsteady, and also generate informal social networks that foster influence within the community. Thus although informal sector activities marginalize women in terms of productive contributions, they are often the only route to material resources and social power available to lower-class women.

Let us also consider the marginality of women involved in subsistence production for household use. In much of Latin America, the subsistence sector coexists with and supports the cash economy. Bossen and Rothstein both document how peasant households straddle the two sectors. A common theme in the literature on women in development is that modernization erodes women's once-vital subsistence roles.² In this sense, modernization marginalizes them from production and its rewards. Yet because full-time subsistence workers are peripheral to the capitalist sector, undermining these traditional roles could lessen, rather than increase, their marginality. Resolving this issue requires clarifying whether marginality is defined in terms of productive roles or access to resources or both, as well as specifying the mode of production in the context of which marginality is considered.

These considerations help explain the disparate predictions of the integration and marginalization theses. The integration thesis, which evaluates marginality relative to the modern, cash-based economy, assumes that industrialization makes women less peripheral by drawing them out of the subsistence sector. The marginalization thesis emphasizes women's productive contributions to household and community regardless of mode of production. From this vantage point, industrialization frequently marginalizes women relative to their once-vital roles in subsistence production as well as to male workers' centrality within the capitalist system. Once this conceptual distinction is clear, then the debate hinges on an empirical question: are women who have been displaced from subsistence production being absorbed into jobs in the modern sector?

Women in San Cosme, T'o'j Nam, El Canaveral, and San Lorenzo clearly are not. Although middle-class status and education have helped some Villa Rosa women enter the formal labor market, they still suffer from a limited demand for their labor and from segregation into low-paying, powerless "female jobs." These studies suggest, contrary to

the integration thesis, that industrialization has not absorbed most Latin American women into the formal sector. Instead, it has marginalized them from productive resources and wage incomes.

While women's role in export-processing industrialization may appear to deviate from this pattern, it is likely a result of their tendency toward marginalization under capitalist industrialization. Fernández Kelly, Fuentes, and Ehrenreich all agree that multinational corporations locate their assembly operations in Latin America and elsewhere in order to use young women's inexpensive labor. Economic need forces many women to earn an income, yet the shortage of jobs severely limits their alternatives. It is precisely this socioeconomic marginality that makes young women a surplus labor reserve that draws multinational corporations to export-processing sites. Young women's economic vulnerability propels them into assembly plants, where they work under conditions that could be considered exploitive—for low wages under temporary contracts at jobs entailing neither employment security nor career advancement. A further set of links is apparent between marginality and women's role in export processing. Most assembly operators in Fernández Kelly's study have unemployed or underemployed husbands or fathers. Many women entered and have remained in the maquiladoras because male wage earners could not support their households. Thus the economic marginality of lower-class men underlies women's exploitation by multinational corporations.

This example suggests that exploitation and marginality are closely related and that the theses linking them to industrialization share several basic assumptions: first, that women play a major role in subsistence production; second, that this activity offers them autonomy and access to resources; third, that women's status erodes in capitalist society; and fourth, that the "modern" division of labor assigns women primarily to the role of wife-mother. These propositions suggest that marginality and exploitation are the twin faces of women's subordinate status and that both reflect this dichotomous division of labor by gender. The notion that women's primary place is in the home either isolates them completely from productive relations or colors the terms of their participation in the labor force. Raised to view themselves mainly as wives and mothers, women often do not acquire the education or aspirations for top-level jobs. They typically join and leave the labor force as domestic needs arise, thereby failing to acquire the seniority and experience necessary for upward mobility. The image that women are subsidiary wage earners with men to support them becomes a justification for low wages and limited employment benefits. Moreover, sex-segregated labor markets confine most women to menial, poorly remunerated jobs viewed as extensions of their domestic tasks.

Women are often so ambivalent about paid employment that

they function as a surplus labor reserve, willing to enter and leave the work force according to the system's labor needs. When unemployed, women often vanish into the household to assume full-time domestic duties. Many women admitted to Bronstein that they needed money and would take a job were one available, yet they rarely considered themselves unemployed. This attitude helps explain why census statistics in Latin America and elsewhere underestimate female unemployment. In sum, the same dynamics that marginalize women by confining them, actually or symbolically, to the domestic sphere make them vulnerable to exploitation. Their assignment to the wife-mother role limits many women's occupational options to peripheral positions in the informal sector or to insecure, low-paying jobs in the formal sector. Their participation in export processing both reflects and reinforces their economic and social marginality.

The inconsistencies of the marginalization and exploitation theses with the integration thesis are less easily resolved. Modernization cannot simultaneously liberate and subordinate women, nor can it both increase and decrease gender equality. Several considerations may make it easier to slip between the horns of this dilemma, however. First, as previously argued, industrialization's effects vary across social classes, geographical regions, and other factors; consequently, industrialization may enhance options for educated, middle-class women while closing doors for poor and unskilled women. Second, liberation may take various forms that may be only loosely related. For example, proponents of the integration thesis usually maintain that modern women are socially liberated even when their dependence on men's wages implies their economic subordination. Third, integration and exploitation are always relative: what might be "exploitation" for one person might be "integration" for another. Neither can be evaluated without historical information to provide a baseline for comparing the situation of women prior to and after industrialization.

Are most Latin American women better off under capitalist industrialization than they were prior to its onset? Five of the six works reviewed here suggest that in many ways, they are not. They have either become more marginal to the centers of production and power in their communities or have been transformed into a vulnerable, low-wage labor force. This conclusion is consistent with much of the most recent literature on women in development, whether written from a liberal or a Marxist perspective. The only author who claims that industrialization consistently improves women's lives is Bernard Rosen, whose conclusions may not be wholly justified by his findings. In general, data from these studies are more consistent with the exploitation and marginalization theses than with the integration thesis. Yet I would be reluctant to generalize from these and other case studies reaching

similar conclusions that the status of Latin American women has declined and will continue to deteriorate with capitalist industrialization. Industrialization is a long, slow process whose roots stretch into past centuries and whose impacts are just beginning to be manifested. The best of these six books excel because their authors bring historical perspective to bear on their data. Fernández Kelly describes conditions in the textile industry since the Industrial Revolution. Bossen and Rothstein selected sites that anthropologists have studied for several decades, providing a framework for comparison. Further, all three authors recognize that their conclusions are tentative because the trends they observe are so recent.

Although the issues and dynamics underlying this debate are complex, they hinge on women's participation in the labor force. Researchers must continue to explore factors that lead women into the work force. We must consider conditions affecting the economy's labor requirements to determine why in some contexts women's (typically low-wage) labor is in high demand while in others they have few employment opportunities. We need to understand better the links between household economic strategies and women's occupational aspirations and qualifications because these links determine the supply of female workers. We must also examine the question of whether employment transforms women's lives and in what ways. Answers to these questions will help ameliorate industrialization's exploitive and marginalizing effects and strengthen its liberating potential.

NOTES

1. For a discussion of how domestic labor contributes to the capitalist system, see Clair (Vickery) Brown, "Home Production for Use in a Market Economy," in *Rethinking the Family*, edited by Barrie Thorne and Marilyn Yalom (New York: Longman, 1982), 151–67; Paul Smith, "Domestic Labor and Marx's Theory of Value," in *Feminism and Materialism*, edited by Annette Kuhn and AnnMarie Wolpe (London: Routledge, 1978), 198–219; and Batya Weinbaum and Amy Bridges, "The Other Side of the Paycheck: Monopoly Capital and the Structure of Consumption," in *Capitalist Patriarchy and the Case for Socialist Feminism*, edited by Zillah Eisenstein (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1979), 190–205.
2. This argument was first set forth in Ester Boserup, *Women's Role in Economic Development* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1970). It is also found in *Women and World Development*, edited by Irene Tinker and Michele Bo Bramsen (Washington, D.C.: Overseas Development Council, 1976), 22–34; and Rae Lesser Blumberg, "Rural Women in Development," in *Women and World Change*, edited by Naomi Black and Ann Baker Cottrell (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1981), 32–56.