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ARTICLE

The women's faces of development in Latin America and the Caribbean: The first generation of *Cepalinas* (1960s–1980s)

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Abstract

This article examines the pioneering contributions of a generation of women civil servants, diplomats, and intellectuals—referred to as *Cepalinas*—to economic thought at the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (CEPAL) between the late 1960s and early 1980s. These women experts, including statisticians, economists, sociologists, and demographers, played a critical role in reshaping CEPAL's development agenda by advocating for the integration of gender perspectives into regional policies. Through extensive fieldwork and data collection, they highlighted the economic and social contributions of women, particularly those from marginalised communities, and challenged the prevailing male-dominated models of development. Despite the progress made following the 1975 UN International Conference on Women, the *Cepalinas* often remained on the periphery of institutional power and have been largely overlooked in the historiography. This article brings their work to the forefront, analysing their publications and mission reports to reveal how their efforts transformed both the Commission's economic frameworks and broader global development policies.

Keywords: women in development; CEPAL; UN Decade for Women; international knowledge production

In June 1977, hundreds of delegates from across the Americas, the Caribbean, and European metropoles gathered in Havana for five days to attend the Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development. This conference was convened in response to growing feminist demands, following the successful adoption of recommendations for the international recognition of women's rights at the World Conference on Women held in Mexico in 1975. The UN General Assembly had mandated all economic commissions to design regional plans for action to integrate women into development programmes. In response, the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (CEPAL) organised the event and spent two years preparing, supporting internal staff and external collaborators in studying the living conditions and economic roles of women throughout Latin America and the Caribbean.[1]

While CEPAL had been a leader in global debates on development in the Global South since the 1960s, the Havana Conference marked the first time women took centre stage to challenge the Commission's gender-biased conceptions of integration and development.[2] Yet, the battle was far

[1]'Report of the Regional Conference on the Integration of Women in the Economic and Social Development of Latin America', Havana, Cuba, 13–17 June 1977, E/CEPAL/1042/Rev.1, 21 November 1977, Collection Conferencia Regional sobre la Mujer de América Latina y el Caribe, CEPAL Digital Repository (hereafter, CEPAL). https://hdl.handle.net/11362/16799.

[2]On the leading role of CEPAL in international development debates, see Margarita Fajardo, *The World That Latin America Created: The United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America in the Development Era* (Harvard University Press, 2022).

from over: despite most delegations being led by women—except for those from Argentina, Canada, France, and the Netherlands—the majority of participants were still men.[3] Women delegates faced resistance from ministers and high-ranking officials who tried to steer the agenda away from feminist issues toward national priorities focused on trade competitiveness, aligning with the New International Economic Order (NIEO) proclaimed in 1974.[4] Yet, women delegates came well prepared, armed with empirical data to advocate for their cause. They seized the opportunity to spotlight the specific challenges faced by women and Indigenous communities in a rapidly globalising economy. They advocated for the creation of alternative data systems that would more accurately capture the social realities often overlooked by experts and policymakers, thereby challenging the supposed neutrality of the statistics and methods commonly used to measure development and social inclusion.

These debates did not lead to immediate, dramatic change. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, CEPAL's focus shifted toward addressing debt crises, financial instability, and structural adjustment reforms.[5] Nevertheless, the Havana Conference planted seeds for changes that would flourish in the decades that followed. This article examines how a pioneering generation of women experts and collaborators at CEPAL, from the late 1960s to the early 1980s, produced new forms of knowledge that laid the groundwork for a more inclusive and sustainable approach to development. It contributes to the expanding scholarship on the global history of women in economics and science, which aims to make visible the contributions of women economic thinkers and expand traditional definitions of economic knowledge.[6] Recent research on gender and international relations emphasises a strong correlation between the internal recruitment of women in international organisations and the advancement of the global women's rights agenda. In simpler terms, it is primarily women who advocate for women's rights, and it is their collective presence—rather than the efforts of a few individual champions—that drives shifts in institutional priorities.[7] At CEPAL, an institution that offered few professional opportunities for women and non-economists at the time, the women studied here displayed ingenuity and strategic thinking in their research and collaborations to navigate their limited access to resources and data. The cumulative impact of their contributions ultimately made it impossible to ignore women's role in global economic development. This article, therefore, demonstrates how the work of women—marginalised within

[3]Delegations represented CEPAL, the UN Secretariat's Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, and member states: Argentina, Barbados, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Cuba, the United States, France, Guyana, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, the Netherlands, Panama, Peru, the Dominican Republic, Trinidad and Tobago, and Venezuela.

[4]'Report of the Regional Conference', 49 and 62. On feminism in Latin America and the Caribbean in the 1960s and 1970s, see Francesca Gargallo, *Las ideas feministas latinoamericanas* (Universidad de la Ciudad de México, 2004); Francesca Gargallo, *Antología del pensamiento feminista nuestroamericano* (Biblioteca Ayacucho, 2010); Mariá Julia Palacios, 'A Critical Examination of Women's History', in *Feminist Philosophy in Latin America and Spain*, ed. María Luis Femenías and Amy A. Oliver (Rodopi, 2007), 95–105; Nora Nínive García, Márgara Millán, and Cynthia Pech, eds., *Cartografías del feminismo mexicano, 1970–2000* (Universidad de la Ciudad de México, 2022).

[5]Joseph L. Love, 'The Rise and Decline of Economic Structuralism in Latin America: New Dimensions', *Latin American Research Review* 40, no. 3 (2005): 100–25.

[6]Günseli Berik and Ebru Kongar, eds., *The Routledge Handbook of Feminist Economics* (Routledge, 2021); Cléo Chassonnery-Zaïgouche, Evelyn L. Forget, and John D. Singleton, 'Women and Economics: New Historical Perspectives', *History of Political Economy* 54, no. 1 (2022): 1–15; Durba Mitra, 'The Report, or, Whatever Happened to Third World Feminist Theory?', *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 48, no. 3 (2023): 557–84.

[7]Madeleine Herren, *Internationale Organisationen seit 1865. Eine Globalgeschichte der internationalen Ordnung* (Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2009); Madeleine Herren, 'Gender and International Relations through the Lens of the League of Nations (1919–1945)', in *Women, Diplomacy and International Politics since 1500*, ed. Glenda Sluga and Carolyn James (Routledge, 2015), 182–201; Myriam Piguet, 'Gender Distribution in the League of Nations: The Start of a Revolution?', in *The League of Nations: Perspectives from the Present*, ed. Haakon A. Ikonomou and Karen Gram-Skjoldager (Aarhus University Press, 2019), 60–70; Myriam Piguet, 'Employées à la Société des Nations: carrières et conditions de travail, 1920–1932', *Monde(s)* 1, no. 19 (2021): 51–72; Kimberly Hutchings and Patricia Owens, 'Women Thinkers and the Canon of International Thought: Recovery, Rejection, and Reconstitution', *American Political Science Review* 115, no. 2 (2020): 347–59; Patricia Owens and Katharina Rietzler, eds., *Women's International Thought: A New History* (Cambridge University Press, 2021).

international institutions—helped institutionalise the inclusion of issues affecting women worldwide, particularly in the Global South, within multilateral development analysis and policy.

I refer to these women as *Cepalinas*, a feminised term derived from *Cepalinos*, coined by Margarita Fajardo to emphasise how CEPAL's most remarkable thinkers adapted Keynesian and Marxist ideas in vogue during the Cold War to local contexts, crafting development models tailored to regional needs.[8] In a similar vein, the *Cepalinas* sought to emancipate their work and ideas from established doctrines to reframe the discourse on women and development. They were diplomats, statisticians, economists, sociologists, and demographers, eager to collaborate and combine their methods and networks to improve women's living conditions and enhance their participation in the globalising economy. This article argues that their contributions were pivotal in mainstreaming gender within international development by critiquing conventional economic metrics that failed to account for both monetised and non-monetised contributions of women to the global economy. Ultimately, their innovative proposals spurred the integration of social, environmental, and gender perspectives into UN economic frameworks.[9]

Writing the history of the intellectual and institutional contributions of non-elite experts and international officials presents significant methodological challenges.[10] While CEPAL's digital repository offers access to public reports, field reports, minutes of international meetings, and most publications, many confidential and internal documents remain inaccessible.[11] To pinpoint when women's participation began to influence the organisation's focus, I compiled a list of 448 reports and articles published from the early 1960s to the mid-1990s by the sixty-three women authors who collaborated with CEPAL and the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES), a regional institution within CEPAL that provided training, research, and consulting in support of development.[12]

In focusing on the period leading up to the Havana Conference, I selected the five authors among these sixty-three collaborators who most explicitly addressed the limitations of existing data collection methods and economic analyses. These authors—Suzanne Aurelius, Fresia Donoso, Sonia Magdalena Cuales, Carmen A. Miró, and Zulma C. Camisa—stand out for their clear critique of biased or inadequate data and for their attempts to overcome these shortcomings. They discussed these issues either in the methodological sections of their work or as the central challenge of their missions. Their contributions exemplify the transition toward a gender-inclusive approach to development. While they were not equally prolific, and their immediate influence

[8]To illustrate this conversion, Fajardo quotes one of the most influential figures of the post-Prebisch era, Aníbal Pinto, who summarised his experience of 'cepalization': 'I considered myself a Marxist and a Keynesian but then I became a *cepalino*.' Aníbal Pinto, 'Si la CEPAL pudiera hablar,' *Ahora*, no. 4 (May 1971), 63, in Fajardo, *The World That Latin America Created*, 6.

[9]See for example publications in the late 1970s, such as Zulma Recchini de Lattes and Catalina H. Wainerman, 'Empleo feminino y desarrollo económico: Algunas evidencias', *Desarrollo Económico* 17, no. 66 (1977): 301–17; Magdalena León de Leal and Carmen Diana Deere, 'Estudio de la mujer rural y el desarrollo del capitalismo en el agro colombiano', *Demografía y Economía* 12, no. 1 (1978): 4–36; M. Teresita de Barbieri, 'Notas para el estudio del trabajo de las mujeres: el problema del trabajo doméstico', *Demografía y Economía* 12, no. 1 (1978): 129–37. For a general overview, see Evangelina García Prince, 'Agendas legislativas y parlamentarias para el desarrollo de los derechos de las mujeres en América Latina y el Caribe', July 2010, CEPAL Serie Mujer y Desarrollo (2010), LC/L.3234-P, 25, Serie Mujer y Desarrollo, CEPAL. https://hdl.handle.net/11362/5829.

[10]On the challenges of writing the history of 'mid-level' and 'non-intellectual' intellectuals, see Glenda Sluga, 'Twentieth-century International Economic Thinking, and the Complex History of Globalization: A New Research Programme', EUI Working Paper HEC, 2021/1; Thomas G. Weiss and Rorden Wilkinson, 'The "Missing Middle": Behind-the-Scene Global Governance', *Global Governance* 28 (2022): 11–34.

[11]The *CEPAL Review*, for example, can be considered both a primary source for writing the intellectual history of the institution and a scholarly publication. It is indexed in the Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI), published by Thomson ISI, and in the *Journal of Economic Literature* (JEL), published by the American Economic Association.

[12]See ECOINT-Workbench #6 accessible online at https://www.ecoint.org/post/workbench-06-women-contributors-to-cepal-and-ilpes-publications.

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cannot be measured by citations alone, the originality of their work sparked a transformation in CEPAL's institutional practices that endured for decades.[13]

Beyond analysing their publications and mission reports, I reconstructed their biographies where possible. Their social status and career trajectories varied widely, making it challenging to document their lives equally; in some cases, it required cross-referencing available sources. For instance, we know little about Zulma C. Camisa's life, while Carmen A. Miró has been the subject of hagiographic discourses celebrating her achievements. These disparities reflect the varying degrees of influence these women had on economic thinking within international organisations. Some, like Miró, held leadership roles that allowed them to directly influence policy priorities and resource distribution, while others worked on the periphery, often with limited institutional support, passionately advocating for overlooked topics such as the economic impact of unpaid domestic labour and informal work. Despite these differences, each, in her own way, helped transform CEPAL's political agenda and definition of development.

Understanding the institutional invisibility of the *Cepalinas* is key to documenting both the history of international organisations and the contributions of women to economic thought and development. The first section of this article investigates the causes and consequences of the historiographical silence surrounding their work and existence. Arguing that their intellectual innovations were rooted in the empirical research they conducted in the region, the second section analyses the working methods of Carmen A. Miró, Zulma C. Camisa, Fresia Donoso, and Sonia Magdalena Cuales, as well as the intellectual and material contexts that shaped their ideas. The third section explores how Suzanne Aurelius' transnational fieldwork led her to collaborate with local networks of women professionals in eight countries, providing insights into the conditions under which *Cepalinas*' ideas emerged. However, as the fourth section demonstrates, the efforts of the women delegates at the Havana Conference often collided with other development priorities, such as those dictated by the NIEO agenda, creating tensions within the Commission that further delayed the integration of women into development programmes.

Women economic thinkers at CEPAL: A historiographical re-evaluation

Tracing the origins of *Cepalinas* reveals a missing link at the convergence of three historiographical shifts, offering new insights into the intersection of gender, economic knowledge, and development. First, the history of international economic thought in Latin America has undergone a profound re-examination in recent years. Despite the extreme violence of the socioeconomic experiments of the 1970s and 1980s—often considered the first neoliberal reforms[14]—the English-speaking historiography now sees the region as a producer of economic knowledge, rather than a mere receptacle of externally imposed policies in a Cold War context.[15] Furthermore, with the shift toward

[13]To quote a few from the period, see also the work of M. Teresita de Barbieri, María de la Luz Avendaño Raby, Georgina Ortiz Pacheco, María Isabel Seguel, María Idilia Gutiérrez, Sonia Catasús Cervera, and Sonia Mateluna Arriagada.

[14]Alvaro H. García and John Wells, 'Chile: A Laboratory for Failed Experiments', *Cambridge Journal of Economics* 7, no. 3 (1983): 287–304; Judith A. Teichman, *The Politics of Freeing Markets in Latin America: Chile, Argentina, and Mexico* (University of North Carolina Press, 2001); Yves Dezalay and Bryant G. Garth, *The Internationalization of Palace Wars: Lawyers, Economists and the Context to Transform Latin American States* (University of Chicago Press, 2002); Karin Fischer, 'The Influence of Neoliberals in Chile before, during, and after Pinochet', in *The Road from Mont Pèlerin: The Making of the Neoliberal Thought Collective*, eds. Philip Mirowski and Dieter Plehwe (Harvard University Press, 2009), 305–46; Karin Fischer and Dieter Plehwe, 'Neoliberal Think Tank Networks in Latin America and Europe: Strategic Replication and Cross-National Organizing', in *Think Tanks and Global Politics: Key Spaces in the Structure of Power*, eds. Alejandra Salas-Porras and Georgina Murray (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 159–86.

[15]Sarah Babb, *Managing Mexico: Economists from Nationalism to Neoliberalism* (Princeton University Press, 2001); Max Paul Friedman, 'Retiring the Puppets, Bringing Latin America Back In: Recent Scholarship on United States-Latin American Relations', *Diplomatic History* 27 (2003): 621–36; María Eugenia Romero Sotelo, *Los orígenes del neoliberalismo en México: La Escuela Austriaca* (Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2016); Christy Thornton, *Revolution in Development: Mexico and the Governance of the Global Economy* (University of California Press, 2021); Fajardo, *The World That Latin America Created*, 2022.

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a more postcolonial perspective in the history of feminisms, Latin American and Caribbean feminist thinkers are finally gaining their rightful place in the global history of feminist philosophy.[16] Lastly, the growing interest in the role of women officials and employees in international organisations has prompted a re-evaluation of the ideas and agency of long-overlooked actors.[17]

Although women have made substantial contributions to CEPAL's practical and intellectual work since its founding, the historiography has largely neglected them, with the notable exception of the seminal and programmatic study by Rebeca Gomez Betancourt and Camila Orozco Espinel in 2018. Their research shed light on the 'invisible' women authors within CEPAL.[18] From a total of 42,162 documents published between 1948 and 2017 and available in CEPAL digital repository, they identified 9,007 publications by women and 10,416 by authors whose gender could not be identified. Out of this massive corpus, Gomez Betancourt and Orozco Espinel traced the professional trajectories and public visibility of the ten most prolific women authors. While their study emphasises signed publications, which may overshadow anonymous or collaboratively written reports as well as the everyday tasks of CEPAL employees and inadvertently reinforce the invisibility of early contributors who were less prolific than the most recent authors of the 2010s, it remains the only dedicated work on women at CEPAL. They identified four women emerging as prominent authors in the 1970s—Maria da Conceição Tavares, Carmen Arretx, Irma Arriagada, and Susana Schkolnick—which supports the idea that this decade marked a turning point in CEPAL priorities and hiring practices.

Among these, Maria da Conceição Tavares stands out as the only woman widely recognised in the history of economic thought,[19] particularly for her contributions to Brazilian economic thought through her involvement with the National Bank for Economic Development (BNDE).[20] Often described as a strong figure, the 'first' woman who played an important role in a man's world, she is the most famous woman at CEPAL prior to Alicia Bárcena, the current Executive Secretary of the Commission. No other woman economic thinker at CEPAL has received comparable attention.

To break away from the established canon, a systematic review of women's signed contributions—despite the inherent invisibility of unsigned work—reveals a broader participation of women in both the practical and intellectual work at CEPAL, with a noticeable increase from the 1970s onward. The silence surrounding their existence and contributions contrasts sharply with the plethora of hagiographies and tributes dedicated to the most renowned *Cepalinos* since the organisation's early years—figures like Raúl Prebisch, Osvaldo Sunkel, Fernando Fajnzylber, and

[16]Ofelia Schutte, 'Cultural Alterity: Cross-Cultural Communication and Feminist Theory in North-South Contexts', *Hypatia* 13, no. 2 (1998): 53–72; Ángela Ixkic Bastian Duarte, 'From the Margins of Latin American Feminism: Indigenous and Lesbian Feminisms', *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 38, no. 1 (2012): 153–78; Breny Mendoza, 'La epistemología del sur, la colonialidad del género y el feminismo latinoamericano', in *Tejiendo de 'otro modo': feminismo, epistemología y apuestas decoloniales en 'Abya Yala'*, eds. Espinosa Miñoso, Gómez Correal, and Ochoa Muñoz (Editorial Universidad del Cauca, 2014), 91–103; Ochy Curiel, 'Rethinking Radical Anti-Racist Feminist Politics in a Global Neoliberal Context', trans. Manuela Borzone and Alexander Ponomareff, *Meridians* 14, no. 2 (2016): 46–55.

[17]Herren, 'Gender and International Relations', 182–201; Eric Helleiner, 'Silences of Bretton Woods: Gender Inequality, Racial Discrimination and Environmental Degradation', *Review of International Political Economy* 30, no. 5 (2023): 1701–22; Myriam Piguet, 'Gender Before Mainstreaming: The Integration of Women to International Civil Service in the Secretariats of the League of Nations and the United Nations, circa 1920-1975', PhD diss. (University of Geneva, 2024).

[18]Rebeca Gomez Betancourt and Camila Orozco Espinel, 'The Invisible Ones: Women at CEPAL (1948–2017)', in *The Routledge Handbook of the History of Women's Economic Thought*, eds. Kristen Madden and Robert W. Dimand (Routledge, 2018), 407–27.

[19]Mauro Boianovsky, 'Maria da Conceição Tavares', in *A Biographical Dictionary of Women Economists*, eds. Robert W. Dimand, Mary Ann Dimand, and Evelyn L. Forget (Edward Elgar, 2000), 415–22.

[20]Elisa Klüger, 'Técnicos e políticos nos primeiros anos do BNDE', *Cadernos do Desenvolimento* 9, no. 14 (2014): 59–81; Fajardo, *The World That Latin America Created*, 2022.

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Celso Furtado, who left a lasting imprint on CEPAL.[21] The institution itself contributed to the canonisation of its male leaders. In the late 1980s, Gerth Rosenthal, then Executive Secretary, and José Besa García, head of CEPAL's library for thirty-seven years, conducted a comprehensive census of all signed and anonymous publications by CEPAL and ILPES contributors, including both employees and external consultants, spanning from 1948 to 1989. This monumental effort, which took over nine years, brought coherence and visibility to the work of the most influential *Cepalinos*. While women were a minority in this collection, this resource proved invaluable for identifying previously unknown women authors.

Discovering women in development: *Cepalinas'* methodological approaches for new data insights

To account for women's living conditions and their participation in the globalising economy, the *Cepalinas* developed new methodologies for collecting statistics and conducting both micro- and macro-economic analyses. The origins of CEPAL's focus on women in development can be traced to the work produced by the Latin American and Caribbean Centre for Demography (CELADE), a research centre established in Santiago by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in the 1950s to compensate for irregularities and approximations in national population censuses in developing regions. Carmen A. Miró, a Panamanian sociologist and statistician, served as its first director from 1957 to 1976. She was the daughter of the Panamanian poet Ricardo Miró and had graduated from the London School of Economics. Heavily involved in politics and international work, she had previously headed the Department of Statistics in Panama from 1946 to 1956, and later even ran for Vice President of the Republic on Renán Esquivel's ticket in 1984. At CELADE, Miró developed a structuralist approach to the study of the demographic boom in Latin America in the 1950s and 1960s, according to which demographic patterns, such as population growth, distribution, and composition, are seen as interconnected with larger social structures, including economic, political, cultural, and environmental factors. Her monumental work contributed to the rise of population and development studies in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, and Uruguay.[22] In 1973, she launched *Notas de Población* (*Population Notes*), a scientific journal for demographic studies that has become instrumental in disseminating knowledge about population trends in Latin America and the Caribbean for the past fifty years.[23]

Throughout her career, Carmen A. Miró advocated for the integration of demographic factors into economic and social development planning.[24] She challenged prevailing neo-Malthusian ideas associating poverty with rapid population growth. In her influential 1971 essay, 'Política de población: ¿Qué? ¿Por qué? ¿Para qué?' ('Population Policy: What? Why? For What?'), now

[21]Joseph Hodara, *Prebisch y la CEPAL: Sustancia, trayectoria y contexto institucional* (Colegio de México, 1987); José Antonio Ocampo, 'Raúl Prebisch and the Development Agenda at the Dawn of the Twenty-first Century', *CEPAL Review*, 75 (2001): 23–37; Edgar J. Dosman, *The Life and Times of Raúl Prebisch, 1901–1986* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2008); Alicia Bárcena Ibarra and Miguel Torres, eds., *Del estructuralismo al neoestructuralismo: la travesía intelectual de Osvaldo Sunkel*, LC/PUB.2019/9, (CEPAL, 2019), CEPAL. https://hdl.handle.net/11362/44710; Miguel Torres Olivos, *Fernando Fajnzylber. Una visión renovadora del desarrollo en América Latina* (CEPAL, 2006), CEPAL. https://hdl.handle.net/11362/2458; Wilson Cano, 'Celso Furtado: Doctor Honoris Causa', *CEPAL Review* 43 (1991): 165–8; Luiz Carlos Bresser-Pereira, 'Method and Passion in Celso Furtado', *CEPAL Review* 84 (2004): 19–34.

[22]Marco A. Gandásegui, 'Carmen A. Miró: científica social y luchadora panameña', *Papeles de población* 9, no. 36 (2003): 9–19.

[23]Jorge Martínez Pizarro and Jorge Dehays Rocha, 'El CELADE-División de Población de la CEPAL y los 50 años de *Notas de Población*', *Notas de Población* 116 (2023): 13–14.

[24]Brígida García and Dídimo Castillo, *Carmen A. Miró: América Latina, Población y Desarrollo. Antología y presentación* (Siglo XXI Editores; Buenos Aires: CLASCO, 2015); Carlos Altamirano, Boaventura de Sousas Santos, Edelberto Torres Rivas, and Carmen A. Miró, 'Interrogando al pensamiento crítico latinoamericano', *Cuadernos del Pensamiento Crítico Latinoamericano* 43, no. 4 (2011): 1–4; Marco A. Gandásegui, Dídimo Castillo Fernández, and Azael Carrera Hernández, eds., *Antología del pensamiento crítico panameño contemporáneo* (CLASCO, 2018).

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considered a classic reference in Latin American demographic research,[25] she introduced the concept of 'population policy' as a variable to be integrated into development planning. Notably, she emphasised the lack of information about internal migrations, both urban and rural, the labour force (including unemployment and underemployment), and the differential demographic behaviour of various social groups. These limitations hindered, in her view, the state's ability to formulate effective economic strategies.[26] Miró's influence extended far beyond the field of demographic studies and contributed to transforming CEPAL's practices. Under the leadership of Raúl Prebisch, CEPAL collaborated with and supported CELADE, until the Centre was integrated into the CEPAL system in the mid-1970s, becoming the Commission's official Population Division in 1997.[27]

From the outset, CELADE publications closely intertwined demographic variables related to women's health, fertility, and mortality with socioeconomic conditions.[28] Until then, demographic data had not been systematically disaggregated on a gender basis. To produce accurate knowledge and compensate for the lack of information, CELADE statisticians and demographers collaborated with national centres that collected complementary data through interviews. The work of Zulma C. Camisa, an Argentinian demographer who worked at CELADE for more than 25 years, illustrates this effort. For her study on fertility in Honduras, Camisa collaborated with the National Demographic Survey-Honduras (EDENH) that conducted a survey of approximately 52,000 individuals who were interviewed four times over a two-year period.[29] The study served as an experiment to evaluate the quality of results obtained through a multi-round demographic survey, incorporating variables such as marital status, socioeconomic categories, and geographic origins. Commissioned by CEPAL, this inquiry arose at a time when the organisation was critically examining the reliability of the sources and methods used to produce official statistics.[30] The study's findings underscored previously unrecognised correlations between vital statistics and living conditions. These correlations extended beyond traditional economic indicators to encompass factors such as social and familial integration, geographical isolation, and access to unaccounted-for subsistence agricultural goods.[31] Based on these empirical findings, Camisa and her colleagues retrospectively re-evaluated incomplete data and proposed revised projections that challenged conventional population projection methods, which often err on the side of conservatism to maintain comparability.[32]

[25]Dídimo Castillo Fernández, 'Carmen Miró, hacedora de la demografía crítica latinoamericana', *Notas de Población* 116 (2023): 15–17.

[26]Carmen A. Miró, 'Política de población: ¿Qué? ¿Por qué? ¿Para qué? ¿Cómo?', en *Actas 2, Conferencia Regional Latinoamericana de Población*, México, El Colegio de México, (1970): 276–81.

[27]Antonio Golini, 'The 50th Anniversary of CELADE', *Genus* LXIII, no. 3–4 (2007): 9–17.

[28]Pilar Fonseca, 'Tasas de reproducción, incremento y natalidad. Costa Rica, 1950', December 1958, E.58/3, Serie C - CELADE (Santiago), CEPAL. https://hdl.handle.net/11362/8185; María Eugenia Baltra, 'Participación de la mujer en las actividades económicas en Chile (1960): un análisis de las variables demográficas, en particular la fecundidad', December 1971, Serie C - CELADE (Santiago), CEPAL. https://hdl.handle.net/11362/8012; Zulma C. Camisa, 'La nupcialidad de las mujeres solteras en la América Latina', *CELADE Revista* 1034 (1977): 9–75; Zulma C. Camisa, 'La nupcialidad femenina en América latina durante el periodo intercensal 1950–1960', 1971, Serie AS - CELADE (San José), CEPAL. https://hdl.handle.net/11362/8555; Carmen Arretx, 'Revisión de las estimaciones de la fecundidad de Brasil, a base de los censos de 1940, 1950, 1960 y 1970', March 1970, CELADE internal distribution, Collection Sede de la CEPAL en Santiago (Estudios e Investigaciones), CEPAL. https://hdl.handle.net/11362/32062.

[29]Zulma C. Camisa, 'El estudio de la fecundidad a partir de una encuesta demográfica de visitas repetidas: el caso de Honduras', April 1976, Collection Notas de Población, CEPAL. https://hdl.handle.net/11362/12569.

[30]Antonio Ortega, 'Encuesta Demográfica tipo Guanabara y Cauquenes. La experiencia de Honduras', Documento presentado a la Reunión del Comité de Expertos para el Mejoramiento de las Fuentes de Estadísticas Demográficas, convocada por CEPAL, Buenos Aires, March 1974, Collection Sede de la CEPAL en Santiago (Conferencias y Reuniones), CEPAL. https://hdl.handle.net/11362/18218.

[31]Camisa, *El estudio de la fecundidad*, 37–8.

[32]Manuel Rincón and Zulma C. Camisa, 'Honduras: Proyecciones de población por sexo y grupos de edades, 1950–2000', December 1977, NU CEPAL-CELADE, Collection Estudios e Investigaciones, CEPAL. https://hdl.handle.net/11362/32244. See also their use of the retrospective 'Brass method' from William Brass, 'Seminario sobre métodos para medir variables

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Structuralist intellectuals at CEPAL and CELADE followed the Prebischian idea that Latin American and Caribbean economic thinkers should elaborate autochthonous theoretical perspectives and methodologies to analyse socioeconomic issues in accordance with the region's specific characteristics and historical evolution. In his programmatic 1949 essay 'El desarrollo económico de América Latina y sus principales problemas' (The Economic Development of Latin America and Some of Its Main Problems'), Raúl Prebisch had argued that economists responsible for Latin American development needed local training. He contended that knowledge acquired abroad would not help in understanding the concrete problems and structures of the region. His central argument was that European and North American economic theories, based on concepts such as the international division of labour or the Ricardian principle of comparative advantage, failed to explain the role of Latin American economies in the world system. In his view, these 'dogmatic generalisations' led the world monetary and trade system astray. The rules developed for the North American and European economies after the Great Depression were inadequate to manage peripheral countries. The urgency of producing and disseminating appropriate economic knowledge and analysis therefore required the collection of new data, the development of alternative ways of thinking, and the training of new generations of economic thinkers.[33]

Cepalinas working on women in development appropriated Prebisch's thinking and tried to apply it to the gender division of labour in the region. The work of Fresia Donoso illustrates the difficulties of applying models designed in other contexts to local situations. She focused on the fertility and health conditions of migrant women, for whom data were particularly scarce. The censuses to which she had access were conceptually weak and did not distinguish between transnational and internal migration, thus obscuring the diversity of life situations faced by concrete individuals. Most did not even include information on fertility. Thus, the graphs and tables in her reports are handwritten, highlighting the need to create systematic databases to be able to apply and adapt mathematical models (see Figure 1).[34] Nevertheless, she attempted to mix sources and compensate for the lack of data to apply the Coale-Trussell model of fertility, published in 1974 and now widely used in demographic studies.[35]

Donoso's work was part of a broader reflection on the allocation of resources to improve sources of demographic statistic in Latin American and Caribbean countries. The CELADE and CEPAL demographers were unanimous in pointing out the difficulties of working with data that were rife with undercounting, age-related omissions, and a high concentration of 'not specified' or 'not declared' responses in census questionnaires. They blamed a lack of trained personnel and unskilled enumerators who provided them with flawed information.[36]

demográficas (Fecundidad y Mortalidad)', 1973, NU CEPAL-CELADE Series Históricas, Serie DS-CELADE (San José), CEPAL. https://hdl.handle.net/11362/8416.

[33]Raúl Prebisch, 'El desarrollo económico de América Latina y sus principales problemas', *El Trimestre Económico* 16, no. 63 (1949): 347–431.

[34]Fresia Donoso, 'Análisis de la fecundidad diferencial de inmigrantes y nativas, por provincia y area de residencia, Chile, 1960, trabajo final de investigación', 1965, NU CEPAL-CELADE, Collection Conferencias y Reuniones, CEPAL. https://hdl.handle.net/11362/20973; Fernando Cortés, Fresia Donoso, Mario Kaminsky, Adriana Marshall, Mónica Preger, Susana Torrado, and Luis Zuñiga, *Investigación e Información Sociodemograficas. Hacia un Sistema Integrado de Estadísticas en América Latina* (CLACSO, 1977).

[35]Fresia Donoso, 'Aplicaciones del modelo de Coale-Trussell para ajustar tasas por edad de fecundidad matrimonial', 1979, NU CEPAL-CELADE, Collection Conferencias y Reuniones, CEPAL. https://hdl.handle.net/11362/20495.

[36]Francisco Azorín and Carlos Cavallini, 'Estudio sobre la asignación de recursos para el mejoramiento de las fuentes de estadísticas demográficas en los países de América latina', May 1974, Collection Estudios e Investigaciones, CEPAL. https://hdl.handle.net/11362/32371; Valcedir F. Lopes, 'Los censos como fuentes de datos demográficos en América latina', *Notas de Población* (1974): 49–62; Fresia Donoso, 'Situación de las Estadísticas Vitales en América Latina', Documento de Referencia No 4, presented to the Comité de Expertos para el Mejoramiento de las Fuentes de Estadísticas Demográficas, Buenos Aires, 25–9 May 1974, reproduced in Valdecir F. Lopes, 'Los Censos Como Fuentes de Datos Demográficos en América Latina', August 1974, Collection Notas de Población, CEPAL. https://hdl.handle.net/11362/12541; Mónica Preger, 'Variables socio-económicas relacionadas con estadísticas vitales e información censal sobre migraciones en América latina', 2–6 December

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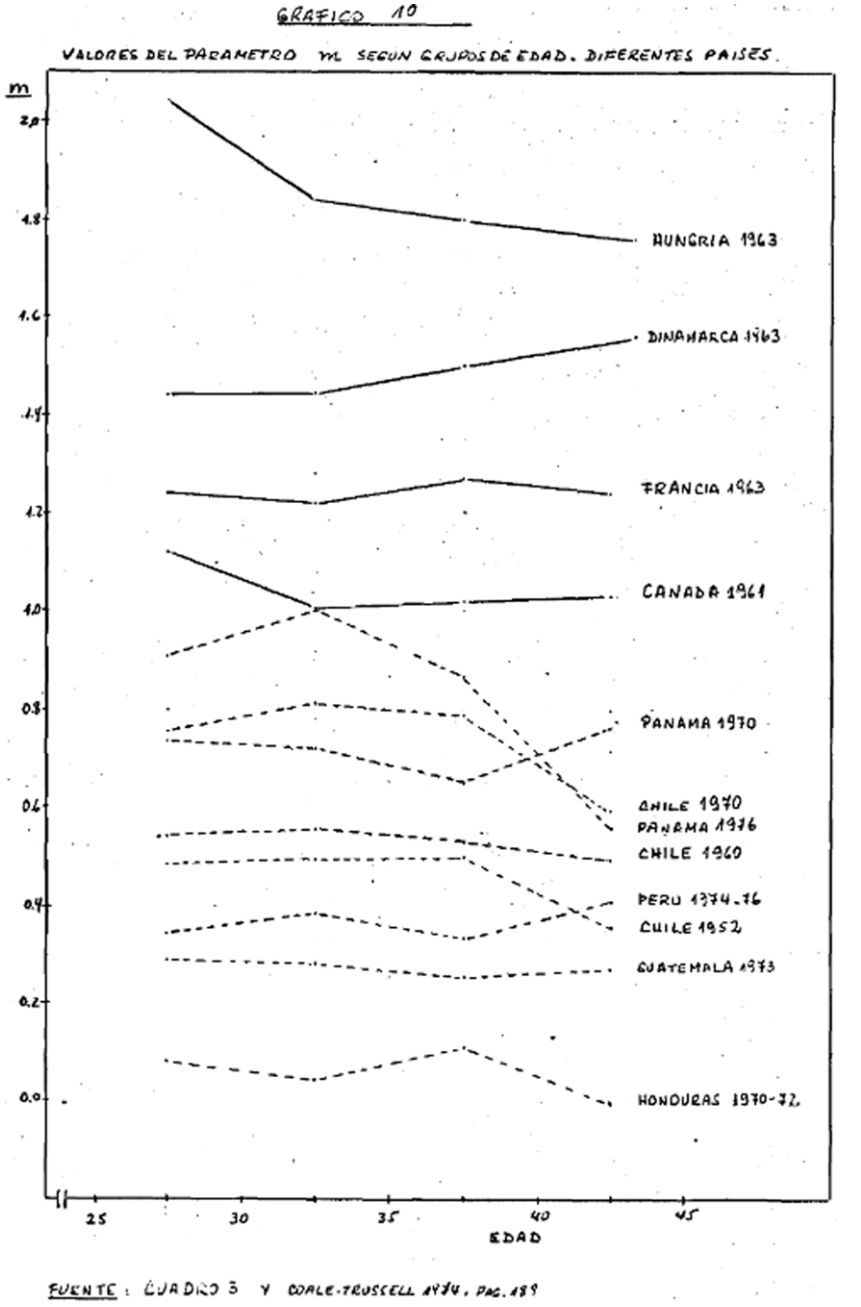

Figure 1. Graph from Fresia Donoso's work on the fertility of migrant women to illustrate the values of one parameter in the Coale-Trussell model, comparing Latin American countries to countries with a higher degree of fertility control. Fresia Donoso, 'Aplicaciones del modelo de Coale-Trussell para ajustar tasas por edad de fecundidad matrimonial', Centro Latinoamericano de Demografía, 1979, NU CEPAL-CELADE, Collection Conferencias y Reuniones, CEPAL. https://hdl.handle.net/11362/20495.

1974, Communication to the Working Group 'Sistema integrado de Estadísticas Demográficas y Socio-Económicas', Comisión de Población y Desarrollo (CLACSO), NU CEPAL-CELADE, Collection Sede de la CEPAL en Santiago (Conferencias y Reuniones), CEPAL. https://hdl.handle.net/11362/20398.

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From then on, *Cepalinas*' initiatives to create databases on women's social and economic development multiplied. The production of specific data on the participation of women in economic activities, particularly agriculture, in relation to fertility, demography, and levels of economic development increased in the country case studies.[37] However, national-scaled works did not allow for a general understanding of regional integration. In the Caribbean, in particular, the demand for information was tremendous, and most contributors to the task were women who had been involved in decolonisation and women's rights movements before they joined international organisations. In this respect, the career of Sonia Magdalena Cuales epitomises this movement, while also demonstrating a distinct originality in her contributions.

Born in 1941 in Curaçao, one of the three islands of the Dutch Antilles, Cuales earned a PhD in Non-Western Sociology from the University of Leiden, where she was active in feminist and socialist circles. Returning to the Americas in the 1970s, she joined the UNICEF office in Colombia and then the Social Affairs Unit of CEPAL in Trinidad.[38] Along with her institutional and research work, she collaborated with Black transnational feminist superstars and international economic thinkers Peggy Antrobus and Rhoda Reddock, among others, to found the Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action (CAFRA) in 1985.[39]

Cuales' work contributed to transnationalising the understanding of economic life at the regional level in the Caribbean. Huge linguistic and institutional fractures characterised academic and international knowledge of the Caribbean along imperial lines between the Spanish, French, English, and Dutch-speaking islands. As Sydney Mintz and Sally Price argued in the mid-1980s, 'the metropolitan tradition has tied each Caribbean polity to one or another European power, such that the region is culturally and ethnically perhaps the most heterogeneous for its size in the whole world'.[40] Cuales's gendered approach to regional development broke with methodological imperialism to highlight the overlooked role of women traders in the inter-island exchange of fresh produce. Haitian *madan sara*, Jamaican *higglerers*, *hucksters*, or *peddlers* in other English-speaking islands, *traders* in general, were women commercial and financial intermediaries in inter-island agricultural trade and credit systems.[41] This 'huckster economy' was critical to the Caribbean economy and had an indirect impact on women in agriculture and rural development in the region, but little was known about the extent of its economic reality. Most data produced by export companies and governments focused on extra-regional trade. Faced with such ignorance, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the International Labor Organization (ILO) and the Caribbean Development and Co-operation Committee (CDCC) mandated CEPAL Secretariat to investigate the issue. Sonia Cuales and Monique Lagro were commissioned to conduct research and create a database on inter-island traffickers in Trinidad and Tobago, Saint Lucia, Saint

[37]Ricardo Jairo, 'Panamá: participación de la población urbana femenina en la actividad económica, 1950–1960: trabajo final de investigación', 1969, NU.CEPAL-CELADE, Collection Sede de la CEPAL en Santiago (Conferencias y Reuniones), CEPAL. https://hdl.handle.net/11362/21006; Waldomiro Pecht, 'La población económicamente active en las actividades agrícolas en Brasil y México: un análisis a partir de los censos económicos y de la población', March 1975, NU CEPAL-CELADE, Serie IPI - CELADE (Santiago), Collection Series Históricas, CEPAL. https://hdl.handle.net/11362/8057.

[38]Although Caribbean countries joined CEPAL in 1984 only, they had been considered in *cepalian* regional analyses since the late 1960s. CEPAL sub-headquarters in Port-of-Spain had been responsible for the Caribbean in Trinidad and Tobago since 1966. On this point, see Johanna Gautier Morin, 'Freeing Markets and Democratizing Economics: Regional Development, Global Integration and the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean', European University Institute, HEC Working Paper 2023/01.

[39]'2020 Outstanding Woman is Posthumous Sonia Magdalena Cuales', *Curaçao Chronicle*, 3 June 2020.

[40]Sydney W. Mintz and Sally Price, eds., *Caribbean Contours* (John Hopkins University Press, 1985), 5.

[41]The first known literature on the topic was primarily produced by sociologists and anthropologists. For a general overview on the topic, see Huguette Dagenais and Denise Piché, eds., *Women, Feminism and Development* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994).

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Vincent and the Grenadines, Dominican Republic, Barbados, and Jamaica.[42] Their report shows that the majority of traffickers were women, while male traders monopolised extra-regional markets. These women were also farmers who had to 'transport, sort, clean, crate and package their products'. They were also involved in 'documentation procedures, customs procedures, shipping, product presentation, wholesale and retail arrangements at the market of destination'.[43] Because of the informality of their activities, these women traders faced two major issues: they were denied access to credit and insurance, crucial for expanding their businesses and mitigating the risks associated with relying on sometimes unreliable shipping schedules for perishable goods. In response to these challenges, they established the Traffickers Small Business Association in 1983. This interest group aimed to regulate shipping prices and implemented a rotation system among traffickers to limit newcomers' entry into the intra-island trade.[44] The study concluded that fostering this networking and promoting the Association were vital not only for enhancing the women traders' activities but also for 'sharing and developing self-created skills and to deal with the burdens, including household related activities, of this particular form of economic survival'.[45]

The project intersected with the recommendations of the CARICOM meeting on the question of statistics on women, held in Barbados in 1986. It also addressed the problem of the lack or inadequacy of statistical data on women and implemented elements of the Nairobi forward-looking strategies on the adequacy of gender-specific data.[46] In Nairobi, at the third world conference on the status of women that marked the conclusion of the UN Decade for Women in June 1985, participants had observed indeed that the lack of knowledge about women's living conditions and economic activities hindered institutional attempts to improve or support them. They suggested that 'gender-specific data and economic indicators sensitive to conditions of extreme poverty and oppression … should contain spatial, socio-economic and longitudinal characteristics and should be designed specifically for use in policy, programme and project formulation and implementation'.[47] To achieve this goal, participants believed that inter-agency coordination alone was insufficient. They recommended complementing it with local and transnational networking to enhance data availability, foster information exchange, and facilitate shared experiences.[48]

Cepalinas working behind the scenes for inclusive development

Given that the *Cepalinas*' primary innovations focused on more sophisticated approaches to field research, they relied heavily on local networks to effectively carry out their missions. Reports from their fieldwork show a dense network of women professionals actively engaged in local development, either within or in collaboration with CEPAL. Suzanne Aurelius's 1977 mission to Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Cuba, Jamaica, Dominican Republic, Colombia, and Peru serves as a striking illustration of the extensive efforts of women from diverse backgrounds working behind the scenes to facilitate major international events. While little information is available about them, a fragmentary portrait can be reconstructed from details found in genealogical databases and sometimes from ancillary information about their husbands.

[42]Sonia M. Cuales and Monique Lagro, 'Women Traders in Agricultural Products. Aspects of the Women in Development Programme of UNECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean', 10 September 1987, LC/CAR/R.234, Collection Sede subregional de la CEPAL para el Caribe (Conferencias y Reuniones), CEPAL. https://hdl.handle.net/11362/24639.

[43]Ibid., 6–7.

[44]Ibid., 8–9.

[45]Ibid., 10.

[46]Ibid., 3.

[47]'Report of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, Nairobi, 15–26 June 1985', 1986, paragraph 282, 67, A/CONF.116/28/Rev.1, United Nations Digital Library, https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/113822?ln=en&v=pdf.

[48]Ibid., 83.

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Suzanne Aurelius, née de Kispéczy, was born in Budapest in 1918, presumably of Jewish descent, and later migrated to Sweden. She graduated from the University of Stockholm in 1945 with a degree in biology, genetics, and chemistry. She spent decades in Sweden, where she married the industrialist Nils Olof Aurelius from 1965 to 1974 and then Lennart Einar Hennings.[49] Lennart's father, Einar Hennings, a prominent Swedish diplomat, had played a crucial role in disarmament efforts at the League of Nations during the interwar.[50] During the Second World War, he distinguished himself once more when serving as an ambassador to Vichy France, where he protested and reported against Jewish deportations.[51] His son Lennart became the Second Secretary at the Swedish Permanent Mission in Italy in 1950 at the age of 37.[52] We later find Suzanne, who retained the name Aurelius, pursuing a diplomatic career in Chile with various positions at the Swedish International Development Authority and as regional coordinator for the United Nations Fund for Population Activities and the United Nations Development Programme. She died in Chile in 2013.

In preparation for the Regional Conference on the Integration of Women in the Economic and Social Development of Latin America held in Havana in June 1977, the CEPAL local committee in Guatemala organised a series of working sessions to provide its delegation with compelling arguments and data to advocate on behalf of local organisations. Suzanne Aurelius took advantage of this event to network with 'women leaders', as she called them, including members of the UN system and local institutions. Among the notable figures she met was Graciela Quan, the first Guatemalan woman to earn a law degree, a pioneer in social work and a fighter for the emancipation of women in Guatemala. Quan had just retired as director of Social Welfare, a semi-official agency, and had an extensive experience with Indigenous professional women. Jeanette Simons Paganini was appointed by the government to attend the CEPAL conference as representative of the Inter-American Commission on Women (CIM), the only official organisation for the advancement of women registered with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Ana María Vargas de Ortiz was a family judge. She had recently presented a project for a new Family Code, which had cost her a major public battle for its approval. A member of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, she had been her country's official representative at the Women's Conference in Mexico. Blanca Luz Molina, governor of the province of Guatemala, former congressperson, and journalist, had been a lifelong advocate of women's rights.[53]

These women did not know each other before they met Suzanne Aurelius. She invited them to brainstorm needs and opportunities for action at the local, national, regional, and international levels at the home of Dr Odette Alarcón, professor of medicine and human development at the University of the Valley of Guatemala. Aurelius noted 'the growing social awareness among women who make some of the decisions in the country. They are the ones who know the realities of their country, who fight for rights and monitor the fulfillment of the commitments made by the government regarding the integration of women in development.'[54] Jeanette Simons Paganini reported on the activities that CIM was developing in the country, such as courses on

[49]Jill Salander Mortensen, *Vem är det: Svensk biografisk handbook 1997* (*Who is it: Swedish biographical handbook, 1997*) (Norstedts Förlag, 1997), 82. http://runeberg.org/vemardet/1997/0082.html.

[50]Andrew Webster, 'The Transnational Dream: Politicians, Diplomats and Soldiers in the League of Nations's Pursuit of International Disarmament, 1920–1938', *Contemporary European History* 14, no. 4 (2005): 493–518.

[51]Paul A. Levine, *From Indifference to Activism: Swedish Diplomacy and the Holocaust: 1938–1944* (Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, 1996), 125, 159 and 178.

[52]'Ricevimento del Corpo Diplomatico per gli auguri di Capodanno', 23 December 1950, Portale storico della Presidenza della Repubblica. https://archivio.quirinale.it/aspr/diari/EVENT-002-000606/presidente/luigi-einaudi.

[53]Suzanne Aurelius, 'Informe de misiones: Guatemala, Honduras, México, Cuba, Jamaica, República Dominicana, Colombia, Perú', July 1977, INT-1578, 77-7-2039, Collection Sede de la CEPAL en Santiago (Estudios e Investigaciones), CEPAL. https://hdl.handle.net/11362/34242.

[54]Ibid., 4.

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cooperativism to train hundreds of women in the field, or courses on leadership techniques and Indigenous women's issues in a country where 80% of the population was Indigenous and lived in extreme poverty in the highlands. At the time, Guatemala was locked in a decades-long civil war marked by a series of military coups and a succession of autocratic regimes. Government forces were accused of genocide against the Mayan population and human rights violations against civilians. In the 1970s, social discontent persisted among Guatemala's large Indigenous and peasant populations, and many organised into insurgent groups.[55] In the throes of chaos, the CIM programmes were designed to teach women about nutrition, early infant stimulation and breastfeeding, family planning, handicrafts, horticulture, and marketing of their products.

All the participants in this informal meeting insisted on the essential but invisible participation of Indigenous women in agricultural and handicraft production in the country. In 1989, a private study conducted by the auditing company Ernst & Young for the US Agency for International Development (USAID) in Guatemala, noted that the scope of the available censuses and manufacturing surveys was restricted to establishments with five or more employees, which excluded microenterprises and the informal sector where most women worked.[56] Moreover, although they worked as both producers and traders, they did not profit from the opening up and modernisation of the Guatemalan economy.[57] Corporate intermediaries were reaping the benefits of the growing demand for handicraft exports and the rise of the tourism industry by paying an extraordinarily low price for a product that was highly valued in international markets—a problem that affected most artisanal productions in Central America and the Andean countries. Local studies and investigations increasingly highlighted how the gender division of labour had become embedded in the international division of labour.[58]

No country for women in the new international economic order?

After years of preparation and reflection on the participation of Latin American, Indigenous and Caribbean women in the globalised economy—whether through domestic work, community care, agricultural labour, or the production and trade of globally exchanged goods—the *Cepalinas* raised questions that were not incompatible with the concerns of their male counterparts at the Havana Conference. Both groups shared a commitment to advancing the region's integration into the global economy. However, the all-encompassing and sometimes contradictory way in which delegates approached their mission was indicative of the tensions surrounding women's issues in international circles. Moral concerns about the risk of poverty driving women into prostitution coexisted with a sense of injustice in noting that 60 to 80% of the illiterate in Latin America were women.[59] Delegates, men and women alike, feared that the exclusion of women from development

[55]Robert M. Carmack, *Rebels of Highland Guatemala: The Quiché-Maya of Momostenango* (University of Oklahoma Press, 1995); Cindy Forster, *La revolución indígena y campesina en Guatemala, 1970 a 2000: 'Ver un día que nuestra raza maya fuera levantada'* (Editorial Universitaria, Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala, 2012); Joyce Bennett, 'Comadre Work: Grassroots Feminism in a Kaqchikel Maya Town', *Journal of International Women's Studies* 20, no. 6 (2019): 60–74; Rachel A. Schwartz, 'Civil War, Institutional Change, and the Criminalization of the State: Evidence from Guatemala', *Studies in Comparative International Development* 55 (2020): 381–401.

[56]Robert N. Carlson and Flora M. Painter, 'Guatemala: Preliminary Assessment of the Manufacturing Sector. Final Report', prepared for USAID/Guatemala Office of Private Sector Programs (O/PSP) and sponsored by Private Enterprise Development Support Project H, Project Number 940-2028.03. Prime Contractor: Ernst & Young, January 1989, 56.

[57]A series of trade agreements and tariff-free quotas were negotiated with GATT for the export of cotton textiles, agricultural goods, and handicraft products between 1972 and 1974. See WTO online archives, https://docs.wto.org/gattdocs/q/1971_75.htm.

[58]June C. Nash, ed., *Crafts in the World Market: The Impact of Global Exchange on Middle American Artisans* (Suny Press, 1993); Karin E. Tice, *Kuna Crafts, Gender, and the Global Economy* (University of Texas Press, 1995); Jan M. Olson, 'Are Artesanal Cooperatives in Guatemala Unraveling?', *Human Organization* 58, no. 1 (1999): 54–66; Tracy Bachrach Ehlers, *Silent Looms: Women and Production in a Guatemalan Town* (University of Texas Press, 2010).

[59]'Report of the Regional Conference', 50.

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processes was preventing 'the full utilization of women's human and material potential' and that the entire region was suffering from it. It was emphasised that 'the struggle against underdevelopment must therefore be combined with the adoption of measures for the immediate and speedy integration of women into national and international life as an important element for development, the maintenance of peace and regional co-operation'.[60] Meanwhile, as Hector Rodriguez Llompart, Cuban Minister of the State Committee of Economic Collaboration and Enrique V. Iglesias, Executive Secretary of CEPAL, both recalled in their opening statements, the integration of women into the development process should contribute to the interests of Latin America in the NIEO.[61]

On 1 May 1974, the United Nations General Assembly had convened a special session to study, for the first time, the problem of raw material and development, from a postcolonial perspective. The signatories adopted the *Declaration for the Establishment of a New International Economic Order* with the intent of countering the 'structural violence'[62] and 'embedded orthodoxism'[63] of the international legal and economic system that had been conceived at Bretton Woods or Lake Success, at a time when 'most of the developing countries did not even exist as independent states'.[64] The objective was to forge new international laws and financial and banking circuits, regulate the cross-border activities of foreign investors and multinational corporations, and promote technology transfer to alleviate the tremendous power imbalance between industrialised and developing nations,[65] and fight against economic neocolonialism.[66]

From its inception, the NIEO heralded a shift in the global power imbalance, signalling the rise and growing agency of countries long considered underdeveloped and heavily dependent on foreign aid and capital. This 'political imaginary' grew out of a long history of triumphalist struggles since the Mexican Revolution in the 1910s.[67] Calls for South-South cooperation within international organisations multiplied with the Non-Aligned Movement, the decolonisation revolution wave, and the increasing demand for self-determination and sovereignty over natural resources.[68] The origins of the movement were diverse and its roots could be found on every continent, but for the first time, 'developing nations' identified openly as a coherent political group

[60]Ibid., 6.

[61]Ibid., 49 and 62.

[62]Ige F. Dekker, 'The New International Economic Order and the Legal Relevance of Structural Violence', *Revue Belge de Droit International* 12 (1976): 467–98.

[63]Stella Krepp, 'Fighting an Illiberal World Order: The Latin American Road to UNCTAD, 1948–1964', *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights* 13, no. 1 (2022), 90.

[64]'General Assembly Declaration on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order', *The American Journal of International Law* 68, no. 4 (1974), 799.

[65]Umut Özsu, 'Neoliberalism and the New International Economic Order: A History of "Contemporary Legal Thought"', in *Searching for Contemporary Legal Thought*, eds. Justin Desautels-Stein and Christopher Tomlins (Cambridge University Press, 2017), 333–4.

[66]Giuliano Garavini, 'Completing Decolonization: The 1972 "Oil Shock" and the Struggle for Economic Rights', *The International History Review* 33, no. 3 (2011): 473–87.

[67]Thornton, *Revolution in Development*; Christy Thornton, 'A Mexican New International Economic Order?', in *Latin America and the Global Cold War*, eds. Thomas C. Field Jr., Stella Krepp, and Vanni Pettinà (North Carolina Scholarship Online, 2020), 301–42.

[68]Nils Gilman, 'The New International Economic Order: A Reintroduction', *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights* 6, no. 1 (2015): 1–16; Eric Helleiner, *Forgotten Foundations of Bretton Woods: International Development and the Making of the Postwar Order* (Cornell University Press, 2014); Nicolaas Schrijver, 'Self-determination of Peoples and Sovereignty over Natural Wealth and Resources', in *Realizing the Right to Development: Essays in Commemoration of 25 Years of the United Nations Declaration on the Right to Development*, eds. United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner (United Nations, 2013), 95–102; Nicholas Sambanis and Branko Milanovic, 'Explaining the Demand for Sovereignty', World Bank Policy Research Working Paper (2011), WPS5888.

with a shared history of resistance to colonialism and imperialism—what Victor McFarland dubbed an 'emancipatory interdependence' or an 'interdependence of hope'.[69]

The grammar of this hope for emancipation, however, was embedded in a developmentalist rhetoric that primarily focused on national competitiveness in the international division of labour, imperial trade, and global dependency patterns. The establishment of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) in 1960 marked a significant shift in the power dynamics of the global economy, when Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Venezuela coalesced to assert control over oil production and pricing. The Joint Declaration of the Seventy-Seven Developing Countries in 1964 signalled their intent to collectively address economic disparities and advocate for their interests at international levels with the creation of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). The Charter of Algiers and the Declaration of the '77' in October 1967 reflected the commitment of developing countries to addressing economic imbalances and advocating for the adoption of a new international legal and economic order. Empowered by the oil crisis and the massive influx of petrodollars, raw material producers realised that they could have collective power if they unilaterally nationalised resource exploitation and formed cartels to pressure prices on the world markets. As Christopher R. W. Dietrich would put it, the meetings of the Group of 77 were led by 'elites from the oil-producing nations with anticolonial thought'.[70]

This 'revolt of sovereigns' left little room for the advancement of women's rights.[71] When the UN Commission on the Status of Women organised the first World Conference for the International Women's Year in Mexico in 1975, its revendications collided with the priorities of the NIEO, as Roland Burke has shown in the attempts of Mexican President Luis Echeverría to index women's human, social, and economic rights to the NIEO's call for a more equitable international division of labour.[72] During her preparatory tour for the Havana Conference, Suzanne Aurelius lamented that with the change of government in Mexico, interest in women and development had completely faded away. The early hours activism had failed to institutionalise, and the office that had coordinated the organisation of the International Women's Year had even closed immediately afterwards.[73]

During the Havana Conference, this tension became evident between the proponents of the NIEO and the *Cepalinas*, who, without in any way opposing the declarations of the NIEO, still sought to focus on the specific issue of the social and economic integration of women in development. The participants found a compromise language by acknowledging that the conference proceedings served the NIEO, whereas the inviolable respect for the sovereignty of each country put a clear brake on the transnational aspirations of feminist activism. In particular, the final report emphasised the cultural and private nature of relationships between men and women, as well as the role of local media in perpetuating prejudices against women and subjecting them to more discrimination than their male counterparts. It thus pointed to the societal responsibility to change the status of women in each society and in mentalities, while also ensuring that when the development goals of the NIEO are achieved at the national and supra-regional levels, women will benefit from its positive outcomes.[74] I have no record in the archives of the immediate reactions of the *Cepalinas* to these conclusions. The findings were undoubtedly disappointing for those working to reshape the very definition of development, contributing their

[69]Victor McFarland, 'The New International Economic Order, Interdependence, and Globalization', *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights* 6, no. 1 (2015): 217–33.

[70]Christopher R. W. Dietrich, 'Mossadegh Madness: Oil and Sovereignty in the Anticolonial Community', *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights* 6, no. 1 (2015), 63.

[71]Roland Burke, 'Competing for the Last Utopia? The NIEO, Human Rights, and the World Conference for the International Women's Year, Mexico City, June 1975', *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights* 6, no. 1 (2015), 47.

[72]Ibid., 47.

[73]Suzanne Aurelius, Confidential Notes on the Mission to Mexico, 30 April–8 May 1977, 1.

[74]'Report of the Regional Conference', 7.

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unique knowledge, and understanding of the living conditions and participation in the economic life of half the population. Nevertheless, their efforts and this conference marked a monumental turning point in the history of CEPAL and international economic thinking.[75]

Conclusions

Despite the diplomatic, strategic, and ideological tensions that divided the participants, the Havana Conference underscored the critical importance of the informal sector and domestic work within the regional economy. It illuminated the essential role of women in the process of global economic integration.[76] Over the following decades, CEPAL steadfastly pursued the fight against 'statistical silence' by reforming its information systems, allocating more resources to gender data collection, and training national statistical office staff in gender-focused statistics.[77] This proactive approach has ensured that women's contributions to the economy are recognised and addressed in policy-making.

Since the 2000s, CEPAL's framework has systematically integrated insights from gender studies and feminist theories, allowing for a more nuanced critical analysis of economic issues. The introduction of women's economic autonomy as an analytical category in public policies has become a structural parameter for regional economic development, showcasing the lasting impact of the *Cepalinas*.[78] This conceptual metamorphosis profoundly influenced international economic thinking, showing how the *Cepalinas* not only transformed CEPAL but also redefined the organisation's core identity. In 2015, under the leadership of Alicia Bárcena, CEPAL's first women Executive Secretary, the Commission reflected on a decade of implementing principles from the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. This review reaffirmed that CEPAL's intellectual foundation had shifted; its paradigm was neither purely Keynesian nor neoliberal but had evolved into what we could term '*cepalina*'.[79] Gender mainstreaming in development and economic governance had enabled CEPAL thinking to expand beyond the orthodox 'boundaries

[75]Starting from 1975, CEPAL systematised its studies on the role of women in the development of the region at national, subregional, and regional levels. See for example 'Selected ECLAC Documents and Publications on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean', 31 August 1989, LC/L.460/Rev.1, Collection Catálogos, Bibliografías y Resúmenes, CEPAL. https://hdl.handle.net/11362/3359.

[76]Frédérique Leprince, 'Les "Engagements" en faveur des femmes des États membres de la Commission économique pour l'Amérique latine et les Caraïbes (Cepal)', *Informations sociales* 2–3, no. 203–4 (2021), 143.

[77]'Romper el silencio estadístico para alcanzar la igualdad de género en 2030: aplicación del eje sobre sistemas de información de la Estrategia de Montevideo para la Implementación de la Agenda Regional de Género en el Marco del Desarrollo Sostenible hacia 2030', 9 November 2022, LC/CRM.15/4, Collection Conferencia Regional sobre la Mujer de América Latina y el Caribe, CEPAL. https://hdl.handle.net/11362/48371; *40 años de Agenda Regional de Género*, September 2017, LC/G.2682/Rev.1, Collection Conferencia Regional sobre la Mujer de América Latina y el Caribe, CEPAL. https://hdl.handle.net/11362/40333; *Methodological Guide on Time-use Measurements in Latin America and the Caribbean*, 26 July 2022, LC/CEA.11/17, Collection Libros y Documentos Institucionales, CEPAL. https://hdl.handle.net/11362/48020; Briefing Note, 'Training on Gender Statistics with staff of national statistical offices and machineries for the advancement of women for better equality policies', 15 September 2023. https://www.cepal.org/en/notes/training-gender-statistics-staff-national-statistical-offices-and-machineries-advancemen.

[78]"The challenge of gender equity and human rights on the threshold of the twenty-first century', May 2000, LC/L.1295(CRM.8/3), NU. CEPAL. Unidad Mujer y Desarrollo, Collection Conferencia Regional sobre la Mujer de América Latina y el Caribe, CEPAL. https://hdl.handle.net/11362/5872; Beatrice E. Avolio and Giovanna F. Di Laura, 'The Progress and Evolution of Women's Participation in Production and Business Activities in South America', *CEPAL Review* 122 (2017): 31–55; Nicole Bidegain Ponte, 'Women's Economic Autonomy and International Trade: Evidence from Latin America and the Caribbean', 24 November 2021, CEPAL Women and Trade Training Programme, Module 1, Briefing Note: https://www.cepal.org/en/notes/eclac-highlights-importance-sectorial-contextualized-and-data-based-analysis-promote-womens; Ana Güezmes, Lucía Scuro, and Nicole Bidegain, 'Igualdad de género y autonomía de las mujeres en el pensamiento de la CEPAL', *El Trimestre Económico* 1, no. 353 (2022): 311–38.

[79]See the quote from Aníbal Pinto in the introduction (note 8): 'I considered myself a Marxist and a Keynesian but then I became a *cepalinos*.'

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of the economy' to propose a new vision of the global economy—one that embraces inclusive and sustainable development.[80]

A teleological interpretation of the global recognition of women's status might suggest that their integration into economic policies was simply a reaction to external pressures and international feminist demands. This view, however, renders the transition overly abstract and fails to explain the concrete shifts in methods of economic analysis. Integrating women into development programmes was not just a matter of broadening an existing approach. The work of Suzanne Aurelius, Fresia Donoso, Sonia Magdalena Cuales, Carmen A. Miró, and Zulma C. Camisa illustrates how their commitment to understanding women's living conditions in the region led them to confront the limitations of conventional analytical methods. Their efforts extended beyond merely gathering data to fill a factual void; above all, they proposed new gender-sensitive statistical frameworks and adopted new methodologies to capture the insights they sought on the ground.

This article argued that these practical, on-the-ground adaptations—made in response to urgent needs to combat extreme poverty, illiteracy, and social exclusion—ultimately laid the foundation for a paradigm shift in economic thinking. CEPAL proved to be an ideal setting for this transformation, as the Commission had promoted a unique perspective on economic development and dependency since its inception. Rooted in the Prebischian legacy upheld by many *Cepalinas*, this tradition inspired them to create their own local tools for analysing the specific realities of Latin American and Caribbean economies. This foundation enabled the *Cepalinas* to challenge CEPAL's androcentric structures from within, using the Commission's own critical tools.

Although this transformation met with both internal and external resistance, the Havana Conference, it became clear what the *Cepalinas* had finally made possible. The new abstractions they introduced through the data they had collected for years demonstrated that an alternative conceptualisation of the economic world was possible. This work opened the door to the development of feminist economic paradigms that more accurately reflect the contributions of women from the Global South to the global economy.[81] The legacy of the *Cepalinas*, therefore, is not merely historical; it is a transformative force that continues to shape policy frameworks and drive the pursuit of a more equitable economic landscape.

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[80]'Informe regional sobre el examen y la evaluación de la Declaración y la Plataforma de Acción de Beijing y el documento final del vigesimotercer período extraordinario de sesiones de la Asamblea General (2000) en los países de América Latina y el Caribe', February 2015, LC/L.3951, 13, NU.CEPAL, Collection Libros y Documentos Institucionales, CEPAL. https://hdl.handle.net/11362/37718.

[81]Belén Villegas Plá, 'Dependency Theory Meets Feminist Economics: A Research Agenda', *Third World Quarterly* 45, no. 8 (2024): 1325–42.

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