INTRODUCTION

The span of years that have elapsed since most of the less developed countries achieved independence and seriously focused on development is extremely short, considering the historical experience of the developed countries. Yet governments of the developing world now believe that they have much less time to achieve modernization and significant increases in living standards than was available to other countries in the past. While it took many decades for the more developed countries to industrialize, most LDCs today are demanding that they show significant change in the structure of their economies and the levels of per capita income in one or two decades.

The impatience with delayed progress is the result, in part, of the rise of politically active and restless groups within the developing economies. These groups have emerged in part because of the relatively recent phenomenon of massive migration of poor and unskilled people from rural areas to the large cities. Large population shifts have created serious problems of unemployment and inadequacy of public services such as water and sanitary facilities. In addition, the contact of poor people with the wealth and life styles of the urban upper and middle classes has raised their awareness of consumption possibilities, has heightened their expectations and demands, and ultimately has crystallized their dissatisfactions and frustrations. Concentrations of dissatisfied people in urban centers pose a serious threat to the stability of governments. The political need to satisfy some of the demands from the urban poor represents a new constraint on the range of policy options available to countries that are now in the earlier stages of development.

At the same time rural areas have become more politicized as communications have expanded the horizon of the previously parochial and politically apathetic rural population. In addition, nationalist movements and post-colonial politics have brought new elements into the political arena and new demands upon the LDC governments.

Additional pressures are coming from a significant local intellectual community, many of whom were trained in the developed countries as a part of the aid policies of the 1950s and 1960s. Such people have been able to articulate the demands of the local poor as well as the demands of their poor nations vis-à-vis the rich countries. They have taken the lead in criticizing and rejecting past policies and in formulating demands for a "new world order."

Finally, LDCs are being forced to take a hard look at their development strategies and to come up with alternatives as a result of the recent and continuing decreases in foreign aid from developed nations, the growing foreign debts of the LDCs, the end of U. S. food surpluses and the phenomenal rise in energy and chemical prices resulting from recent increases in petroleum prices.

The failure of past economic development policies to alter significantly the conditions of abject poverty experienced by the bottom forty to fifty percent of the less developed countries' population and to reverse the growing gap in per capita income between rich and poor countries has, in the last few years, led to a reassessment of those policies and of the developmental models that justified them. The sudden shift in emphasis toward distributional issues has caught social scientists unprepared. Economists, for example, still do not have a widely-held and well-developed theory of income distribution which would explain how distribution is determined at any given time and how it changes over a period of time. Indeed, until very recently there were practically no data on the distribution of income for most LDCs and for earlier periods of the now-industrialized countries, so that it was impossible even to make quantitative comparisons among countries or within a country over a period of time.

Thus it has only been in the last decade that discussions of income distribution have been taken seriously in social science literature. For economists, who traditionally defined economic development as a sustained increase in per capita income, without reference to the distribution of the increase in income, the shift in focus is of even more recent vintage.

The previous lack of interest in income distribution had many origins. First, there was a general consensus that the key problem in less developed countries was to increase the rate of growth of their gross national product. It was assumed that if output grew at a sufficiently rapid rate, employment and the income of the poor would also grow; these goals were considered to be equivalent. Any "bad" connotations of inequality were offset by the argument that it was sufficient to increase everyone's income in absolute terms even if the distribution became more unequal.

Second, there was some belief, supported by the work of Simon Kuznets, that the distribution of income was determined largely by the productive structure of the economy and that the changes in that structure which accompany economic development will, in the early stages of growth, produce more income inequality. The inevitability of a deterioration in distributional equity was made more palatable to egalitarians by the belief that, since the rich save a higher proportion of their income than the poor, higher degrees of inequality would generate a higher savings rate and, hence, a higher rate of output growth, ultimately helping the whole society.

A third factor was the dichotomy between growth on the one hand and equity on the other which has developed in the economic literature in this century. It was believed—a belief which is still strongly held in some developed economies—that the two issues were separable; that economic policy should be organized to maximize the size and growth rate of the economy; any undesirable distributional outcomes could be rectified *ex post facto* by means of tax-transfer schemes of one sort or another. Recognition is only now being given to the overwhelming evidence of the failure of governments to redistribute significant portions of income through fiscal and welfare policies, and to the fact that these policies usually have enormous efficiency costs of their own (e.g., through decreases in incentives to work or take risks).

Consistent with this intellectual orientation, development policies promoted by donor countries and institutions and pursued by developing countries during the post-World War II period neglected distributional issues. Attention was focused on issues such as ways in which domestic savings could be mobilized, foreign exchange earnings enhanced, and foreign exchange use decreased. Policies that grew out of these concerns, such as import substitution, export promotion, or management of foreign exchange rates, were considered almost entirely for their effects on the growth rate of output. Other indicators of success included the ratio of domestic savings to GNP, the ratio of savings to total investments, changes in the level and rates of growth of exports, the ratio of output of manufactured goods to GNP, and so on. If one reads the literature written during the 1950s and 1960s, whether by academics or by practitioners, one is struck by the absence of reference, except in a perfunctory way, to the issue of distributional equity as a criterion for evaluating developmental policies. Furthermore, the literature neglected variables that would measure the benefits accruing to the poor affecting at least their absolute standard of life as opposed to their share of the total. Rather, attention was focused on broad aggregates.

The result of these policy criteria and the policies they inspired was an ever-widening disparity in the incomes of rich and poor nations as a whole and between rich and poor groups within the LDCs. Twenty-five years of unprecedented development efforts often left the majority of the people in the LDCs unaffected or, worse still, left them poorer (as, for example, when the spread of modern industry gradually eliminated the jobs and livelihoods of those engaged in more traditional modes of production). These effects occurred despite significant, albeit limited, success in achieving what are, by historical standards, respectable rates of growth of GNP in the less developed countries.

I

The papers presented in this volume are an outgrowth of four years of research on income distribution carried out by Associates of the Program of Development Studies (PDS) of Rice University. The Program itself is a product of discussions among members of the Departments of Economics and Political Science, begun in 1970, which sought to delineate areas of common concern that might lead to a unified research project. After considerable discussion, the varied interests of the Associates were narrowed to an analysis of the economic, political, and social ramifications of the distribution of gains, wealth, and income in the developing world.

The overall project was begun with an initial grant of seed money from the Menil Foundation and then augmented by sizable research support from the Agency for International Development (AID) and the National Science Foundation. Over the past three years the Program of Development Studies has expanded its membership and research under the general rubric of income distribution. The interdisciplinary nature of its work was reinforced by the inclusion of Rice faculty and graduate students in anthropology, sociology, and architecture, as well as of associates from other universities. Field work was carried out primarily in Colombia, Malaysia, Brazil, and Turkey. Scholars and government officials from the United States and other countries who are interested in income distribution have presented papers and held seminars at Rice. All of this interaction has been subject to critical evaluation of the Associates at regular meetings where research proposals, ongoing research, and results are discussed. The products of these activities have appeared in sixty-six PDS Discussion Papers and twenty-three published articles and monographs (a list of the Discussion Papers follows this introduction).

The Program of Development Studies is now launching a second phase of its income distribution research under a three-year renewal of its AID contract. It is appropriate at this time to present to a general audience the results of our several years of work. It should be emphasized that this small volume can in no way encompass all of the research and analysis accomplished by the Associates of the PDS. Topics of the sixty-six Discussion Papers have ranged from economic analysis of agricultural and tax policies, by economists, through research on communal groups, by anthropologists and political scientists. Our activities in Malaysia and Colombia illustrate the scope of the Program's activities in any one country. In Malaysia, political scientists have analyzed problems of industry, health, and education; anthropologists have studied aspects of expenditures by communal groups; and economists have assessed taxation and market structure. In Colombia the work has included studies by economists of agricultural policies, wages, migration, small-scale industry, and taxation, while students of architecture and political science have investigated housing and political attitudes. Where possible, efforts were made to utilize the interdisciplinary interests of the participants in the Program.

This volume has several objectives. We wanted the papers to reflect the scope of PDS-supported research. Therefore, the individual studies are ordered under three broad headings: 1) the political, social, and economic factors that help to provide the background to problems and programs related to income distribution in particular areas; 2) specific domestic research issues assessed by Associates; and 3) problems that affect the distribution of income and wealth among states within the international community. Secondly, the papers reflect the interests of the Associates as well as the wide geographic range of research. Finally, we have urged the authors to present their work in a manner readable by those outside the respective disciplines. While the particular jargon of economics and political science has been restrained, disciplinary demands have made necessary the inclusion of some nomenclature which may not be entirely familiar to those outside each "fraternity."

II

Outlining the contents of the papers that follow will allow the reader to recognize the relevance of the particular contributions to our general investigation of the distribution of gains, wealth, and income. As noted previously, the first section of this volume is part of an effort to provide general background for the study of particular issues in income distribution. It has been a basic assumption of the Program that it is necessary to understand the fundamental social, economic, and political characteristics of the societies within which we are analyzing more specific income distribution problems. Four papers display different perspectives of this effort.

Professor Rimlinger's paper analyzes the changes in the distribution of income and wealth in tropical Africa that followed the end of colonial rule. It shows which groups have benefited and which have lost from decolonization and assesses the reasons for disparities. Rimlinger notes that while inequalities between Africans and non-Africans have been reduced, inequality among Africans has increased. Factors responsible for the latter phenomenon relate to a complex combination of elements including geographic location, resource bases, government policies, and problems related to post-independence political and economic development. Rimlinger points out patterns of disparity which have appeared in other newly independent states in Afro-Asia, and his concern with growing inequality among Africans is shared by Associates working in Asian states.

Professor Dix's paper is a case study of populism as one kind of political movement that promotes "distributive" justice in reaction to "developmentalist" policies stressing economic growth. The populist movement in question is ANAPO, led by the former Colombian dictator, Gustavo Rojas Pinilla. The paper marshals empirical data on voting patterns to show that although ANAPO has been the most class-based political movement in Colombian history, it is also a "heterogeneous coalition including support from some of the more" conservative groups in Colombia. An examination of ANAPO's leadership, program, and organization bears out its characterization as a modern mass movement retaining persistent elements of traditionalism. In particular its leadership is drawn from the elite groups (albeit the marginal elite groups) and its organization involves the mobilization of groups "from above."

Dix discusses the changes in ANAPO since it nearly won the presidential election in 1970, and speculates on the reasons for the waning of its electoral support. Basically, support for the party has declined as its rhetoric and program have moved to the left.

The importance of Dix's paper in this volume lies in the fact that Colombia (and to some extent other Latin American countries) shows that concern for social justice and distributional equity can be displayed through support for a populist (as distinct from a strictly class- or Marxist-oriented) revolutionary movement. Dix argues that "populism, in the guise of marginal elites mobilizing a heterogeneous mass and unified around a leader, is the typical Latin American reaction to developmentalism." He predicts that such populist movements will continue to characterize political development in Latin America.

Professor von der Mehden's paper is one part of an interdisciplinary effort to provide the political and social background to Malaysia's drive toward narrowing income disparities. While other research has assessed the social and economic roles of particular communal groups in contemporary Malaysia, his study attempts to define the political dynamics that have led to government distributional policies, and especially to understand the actions of interest groups regarding economic programs. He argues that in western democratic states interest groups try primarily to influence the "input" functions of government (i.e., they are engaged in affecting the formulation of legislation and thus attempt to "pressure" voters, legislators, the executive, and, at times, the judiciary). In Malaysia (as in many other less developed states), however, interest groups are primarily engaged in efforts to influence the "output" functions of the country's political system —i.e., to affect the impact upon their firm or organization of laws and regulations already promulgated.

After providing empirical evidence, based upon interviews with Malaysian executives, to support this pattern in Malaysia, von der Mehden discusses the reasons for concentration on output functions. The most important factors include: 1) attitudes antithetical to the activities of western-style interest groups; 2) the tenuous role of the private economic sector; 3) the ownership of firms largely by foreigners and local Chinese; and 4) the existence of other informal means of access to decision-makers.

Professor Soligo focuses on the interrelationship between equity and growth. Because of the increasing pressures for greater distributional equity in less developed economies, it is important to know both the direction and magnitude of the effects of greater equity on other variables such as the growth rate of output and employment. Soligo discusses several approaches. The classical model posits a trade-off between growth and equity. Policies which tilt the distribution of today's income in favor of the low income groups will result in a lower growth rate and a smaller aggregate income in future periods.

A more optimistic approach notes the inefficiencies with which resources are utilized in the typical developing economy, as a result of both undeveloped and imperfect markets and of "bad" economic policies. In this view the adoption of policy changes which improve the efficiency of resource use permits greater output in the aggregate as well as greater output and employment for the lower income groups.

A third approach emphasizes the effects of certain structural characteristics of producer and consumer behavior on the growth-equity relationship. The model discussed in Soligo's paper hypothesizes that lower income families spend a substantial portion of their income on goods and services produced with labor-intensive techniques while the higher income groups tend to spend their income on goods and services requiring relatively more capital. Since LDCs are characterized by an overabundance of unskilled labor but a dearth of capital (both human and tangible capital goods), a shift in the composition of demand towards the more labor-intensive goods would permit the economy, with a given resource endowment, to produce more output, provide more employment, and sustain a more equitable distribution of income. In this model greater equity is consistent with a higher rate of growth in output and employment.

While this last approach is the most optimistic with respect to the possibility of finding alternative development strategies which will lead to an early improvement in the living standards of the poor without sacrificing income levels in the future, its relevance is dependent upon certain assumptions which must be supported or rejected on empirical grounds. Empirical studies which test these assumptions are summarized and the implications of the findings discussed.

The second part of the volume consists of discrete studies of various aspects of income distribution within national polities, presenting examples of the complex nature of the problem in the developing nations. Each of the papers, like those in Part I, is based in part upon field work by the authors, but also reflects an interest in the more technical methodological economic and political issues attendant to the study of income distribution.

Professor Thirsk questions some of the basic solutions usually offered in the developing world to the problem of rural poverty, by analyzing the issue of a trade-off between equity and growth in the context of agricultural policy in Colombia. He argues that while theoretically there is a trade-off, one does not exist in practice because, as a result of policy, the economy is operating well within its efficiency frontier. By changing policy it would be possible to increase efficiency, and hence output, and at the same time increase the incomes of the poor.

Thirsk looks at agricultural price supports, credit allocation policies, farm mechanization, land reform, and rural education. He argues that the elimination of price supports, reallocation of credit towards the smaller farms, and elimination of a subsidy to farm mechanization would lead to an increase in output and a more equal distribution of income. Land redistribution will also lead to an increase in output and will have egalitarian distributive effects (through higher rural employment) in addition to the effects of the redistribution of wealth.

Mr. Bender looks at various alternative solutions to the housing problems of the urban poor in the specific context of Bogotá, Colombia. He considers several types of squatter settlements as well as housing units provided by public agencies. The paper contrasts the traditional view of squatter settlements as blighted areas that must be removed and replaced by institutional means with a more recent view which sees them as viable, adaptive physical environments that allow their occupants to participate in and benefit from development. He also compares these settlements with government sponsored settlements, and finds that the type of growth and change that ultimately results in a mature urban community with a full range of public and private services occurs in both types despite the initial physical constraints imposed by planners in designing the latter.

Finally, Bender emphasizes the fact that home ownership is an important income-generating asset, both from the implicit incomes generated by the housing services provided to the owner-occupier and from the money income received by renting a portion of it to others. In some cases space may be used for commercial enterprises operated by otherwise unemployed members of the family.

The importance of settlement development in permitting the poor to accumulate wealth is influenced by the availability of land, construction materials, and key public services. Changes in any of these factors would affect the rate of settlement development and the ability of the poor to change their living standards under their own initiative. In the case of Bogotá, Bender argues that these elements are changing so as to increase the impediments facing the poor; thus the beneficial outcomes of the past are less likely to be continued into the future.

The contribution of Professors Ho and Huddle results from ongoing research on small-scale and traditional industries, institutions that the authors believe should be encouraged. These firms have important and unique features, including high employment content, location flexibility, and export potential, that could ameliorate some social and economic ills of developing states.

The authors divide small-scale firms into two categories: firms producing non-traditional manufactured goods, which can be produced more efficiently by large-scale methods, and firms producing "handmade goods, artistic products, and other products with distinctive cultural character." The second category holds significant promise as the basis for an alternative development strategy in which employment and income will accrue predominantly to those at the lower end of the economic scale.

Optimism for the future of small-scale firms producing handicrafts and cultural goods is based in part on the growing importance of these goods in international trade. Ho and Huddle find that the demand for these goods by consumers in the developed countries is very elastic, reflecting a desire to acquire nonstandardized, individualized goods and services once more basic needs have been met. On the other hand, small-scale firms are faced with many impediments to their growth. The paper discusses several of these including marketing, financing, and the development of management as well as manufacturing skills.

Professor Krzyzaniak and Mr. Malik are concerned with the effects of market structure and the allocation of property rights on the distribution of income. They discuss, as a case study, the fishing industry in northern W. Malaysia. Noting the importance of fishing for the area and for Malaysia as a whole, they then concentrate their analysis upon distributional problems within the industry itself. The authors state that efforts to control commercial fishing for conservation purposes have led to monopoly through a licensing procedure that has left ownership of the boats and fishing rights in the hands of financiers. When combined with the collusive monopolistic character of the wholesale fish market, the situation produces a very unequal distribution of income in the industry, with the hired fisherman at the bottom. At the same time, fish prices are artificially high, resulting in a further transfer of income from consumers to wholesalers and financiers. Krzyzaniak and Malik call for bringing competition to fish marketing, breaking ties between the retail and wholesale trade, and dispersing ownership of the boats as means of increasing the incomes of the fishermen in particular and consumers as a whole.

The third part of the volume relates to the growing problem of disparities among countries. Both papers in this section note the well-recognized impact of increased petroleum prices on the world economic system. Oil, however, is only one of a variety of natural resources that may affect the international economy, and the OPEC pattern is only one means of dealing with such situations. The paper by Professors Gillis and McLure treats the very complex issue of the distributional implications of taxing natural resources. The authors consider three basic points: 1) the determinants of the incidence of taxation on primary products, 2) conditions under which various types of taxes on primary products can be shifted to nonresidents of the taxing countries, and 3) a case study of Jamaica's tax on bauxite initiated in 1974.

Professor Smith analyzes the employment of internationally held buffer stocks as a means of controlling fluctuations of primary resource commodities, examining copper as his example of the problem. In an effort to evaluate the feasibility of developing a copper buffer stock, Smith used computer simulations of an econometric model of the world copper market. While it is obvious that such econometric simulations give imperfect guidance for the future, they can give order-of-magnitude conclusions which might be employed in using the buffer stock pattern.

RONALD SOLIGO
FRED VON DER MEHDEN
EDITORS

PROGRAM OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

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