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Indigenous Women in the Andes of Ecuador:
The Barriers to Attainment of Functionings and Capabilities

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In Loving Memory of

Ian Henderson

1975-2002

He taught me acceptance, and could always make me laugh.

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

CESA	Central Ecuadorian Agricultural Services (<i>Central Ecuatoriana de Servicios Agrícolas</i>)
CEDIME	Centre for Investigation of the Social Movements in Ecuador (<i>Centro de Investigacion de los Movimientos Sociales del Ecuador</i>)
CODENPE	Development Counsil of the Nationalities and Towns of Ecuador (<i>Consejo de Desarrollo de las Nacionalidades y Pueblos del Ecuador</i>)
CONAIE	Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (<i>Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas de Ecuador</i>)
CONMIE	The National Council of Indigenous Women of Ecuador (<i>Consejo Nacional de Mujeres Indigenas del Ecuador</i>)
CONAMU	National Women's Council (<i>Consejo Nacional de Mujeres</i>)
FENOCIN	National Confederation of Peasant, Indigenous, and Black Organizations (<i>Confederacion Nacional de Organizaciones Campesinas, Indigenas y Negras</i>)
FEPP	Popular Progressive Ecuadorian Fund (<i>Fondo Ecuatoriano Populorum Progressio</i>)
FLACSO	Lantin American Faculty of Social Sciences in Ecuador (<i>Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales - Sede Ecuador</i>)
IFI	International Financial Intuitions
INEC	National Institute of Statistics and Census (<i>Instituto Nacional de Estadistica y Censo</i>)
IMF	International Moentary Fund
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
SAP	Structural Adjustment Polices
SIISE	Integrated System of Social Indicators of Ecuador (<i>Sistema Integrado de Indicadores Sociales del Ecuador</i>)
UNIFEM-AR	United Nations Development Fund for Women – Andean Region

Chapter 1: Introduction

Indigenous women's visibility and representation in the indigenous and women's movements is ambiguous. They have distinct needs that are not prioritized in the forums of debate, development planning, and political agendas of the movements and they are marginalized in decision-making with lower overall well-being. The ideological approach in both movements must ameliorate indigenous women's inclusion and engage with the precise discrepancies they experience. This study will supplement the current knowledge on indigenous communities from a women's perspective.

Relevance or Justification of Research

There is sense of crisis in Ecuador. Poverty and inequality are increasing in an environment of political instability, rampant corruption, neo-liberal policies, animosity between the ethnic groups and extreme social stratification. Ecuador borders Colombia and Peru in South America, a region familiar to political insecurity and conflict¹. Ecuador is a richly diverse nation with multiple eco-systems and ethnicities and can be divided into three regions, the coastal plain, the central Andean highlands, and the tropical Amazonian jungle. Each region has a distinct cultural identity and diverse natural resources in which people create and sustain their livelihoods. The implicit dimensions of poverty differ accordingly. This paper focuses on the Andean highlands and will be referred to interchangeably as the Andes, Sierra or highlands from this point forward.

The population of Ecuador was 12.8 million in 2002 with many familiar to poverty, especially the marginalized groups, indigenous peoples and afro-Ecuadorians. In 1998, 96% of the rural Andean indigenous suffered from poverty versus 61% for non-indigenous.² According to the 2001 census, implemented by the government of Ecuador, poverty, or unsatisfied basic needs (NBI), affected 61.3% of the population. Extreme NBI in the Sierra for the same time period was 42.3%, versus a 30.1% national average. In addition, this region has the highest concentration of indigenous peoples. The province of Chimborazo has an estimated indigenous population of 58%, with poverty affecting 67.3%.³ Chimborazo has the largest percentage of Quichua speakers and will be streamlined throughout the paper as

¹ A recent collapse of the democratic process was the removal of President Lucio Gutiérrez from office in May of 2005, resulting from a massive uprising in the capital city, Quito, and prior collapse of an alliance with indigenous factions. Gutiérrez was removed because of his policies towards liberalization and speculation surrounding corruption.

²<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/LACEXT/0,,contentMDK:20505836~pagePK:146736~piPK:146830~theSitePK:258554,00.html>

³ SIISE-<http://www.frentesocial.gov.ec/siise/siise.htm>

representative of the Andean indigenous situation. Current statistics clearly show a disparity between ethnic groups, however there is a gap in the literature on gendered differences. Human development and poverty for some citizens in Ecuador is the cumulative effect of multiple realities; indigenous women face ethnicity and sex-based discrimination.

The indigenous of Ecuador have been marginalized and discriminated against since colonial times. Rural indigenous communities are generally poorer than *mestizo*⁴, more remote, and with less infrastructure or public services. As a result the past two decades has seen an uprising in the Ecuadorian indigenous movement, now one of the strongest in Latin America with representation at the federal level⁵ (Yashar, 1999:73; Korovkin, 2003:127), giving greater inclusion to indigenous in the existing democratic process. Increased representation in the political sphere is critical for the long and short-term goals of the indigenous community (Yashar, 1999:77). That being said, are indigenous women included in the collective articulation of the movement?

Despite increased political influence, indigenous communities have a higher incidence of material poverty, lower levels of education & healthcare and experience temporary or seasonal out-migration. Poverty as defined by traditional neo-classical economics (income and consumption) is most predominant in the rural context in Ecuador, especially indigenous households, however deprivation is a wider phenomenon leading this study to conceptualize poverty in a holistic manner based on human experience; Sen's capability approach suits this interpretation.

A person's 'functioning' is what an individual can achieve, for example, participation in the community. It can be interpreted as the desirable states of individuals or that which individuals' do or be in leading a life. Functionings are complex and elementary, such as dignity and nourishment, respectively and represent the "...parts of the state of a person." Choices are made based on importance of functionings, given alternatives (Sen, 1993:31). The essence of capability as defined by Sen, is "*a persons freedom to choose different ways of living*". Any constraints within the structure are reflected in inequitable capabilities (Cohen, 1993:24). The quality of life can then be "*assessed in terms of the capability to achieve valuable functionings*" (Sen, 1993:31). Differences in functionings reflect inequitable opportunities to make choices in society. By examining the functionings of indigenous women we can analyse the possible capabilities

⁴ A mestizo is of mixed indigenous and Spanish lineage.

⁵ Nina Pacari, an indigenous woman, was appointed minister of foreign affairs in 2002. She is a leftist who advocates anti-globalization and indigenous social and cultural rights.

that escape them. Indigenous women like others, should have the opportunity to use their practical reason and agency to make informed choices so to live life as they value.

In the past decade, academia and mainstream development has placed more emphasis on indigenous peoples as target beneficiaries by directing programmes to communities, for example PRODEPINE (*Proyecto de Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas y Afroecuatorianos*) from the World Bank⁶. International support and recognition of the need to strengthen indigenous rights inspired and fuelled a global movement, recognition of past exclusion and the systemic marginalization, which justifies indigenous specific research. This paper goes one step further to focus on indigenous women.

Deprivation and poverty in Ecuador are extreme in the Andes (Prieto, Cumia, Flores, Maldonado, Pequeño, 2005:2; Lefebre, 2003:41). If the situation is to change, social justice demands an understanding of this phenomena, especially for indigenous women who face a triple burden of being indigenous, a women, and often rural. Poverty differences between *mestizos* and indigenous households are pervasive; that is not to say *mestizos* do not experience deprivation. World Bank Data from May 2005 illustrates an ethnic education gap, resulting in lower human development and standard of living. Indigenous peoples aged between 30 and 34, have on average 2.7 less years of formal schooling than non-indigenous. Approximately 24% of the indigenous population has had no formal educational training versus a 5% of non-indigenous justifying focus on this demographic group⁷.

The severity of the situation for rural Andean communities is reflected in the levels of income and education, and the deprivation of opportunities that has been reinforced over many generations. Rural incomes are lower, along with life expectancy and access to arable land, all of which perpetuate the cycle of poverty and low human success. Some can be attributed to changes in the world market, globalization and SAPs that have transformed the dynamic of livelihood strategies; especially for women who are increasingly involved with wage labour and the informal economy, albeit marginalized sectors. Cultural, structural and gendered biases in the labour market, access to education, infrastructure, and reproductive work impedes the ability of indigenous women to successfully increase their standard of living to find a

⁶ PRODEPINE, implemented in 1998 and closed in 2004, targeted afro-Ecuadorians and indigenous peoples, used local institutions at all stages of the project cycle to empower civil society organizations and put development in the hands of the people. Project plans were heavily criticized in not having a gender component, illustrative of institutional ideology; amendments then mainstreamed gender (Radcliffe, Laurie, & Andolina, 2003:402). It is recognized as a leader in creating a methodology for indigenous issues by using indigenous organizations and creating an environment for institutional strengthening and social capital. Phase II has recently been approved.

⁷<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/LACEXT/0,,contentMDK:20505836~menuPK:258559~pagePK:146736~piPK:226340~theSitePK:258554,00.html>

viable and sustainable route out of poverty (Dolan, 2002:3). The patriarchal dividend circumscribe women's ability to secure employment and/or livelihood options with short-term results or long-term durability, creating a cycle of functioning deficiency (Masika & Joekes, 1996:2).

In order to address the current needs of indigenous women the social processes that facilitate gendered capabilities/functionings and ethnicity/identity-based discrimination and how they manifest themselves, must be understood. The indigenous movement can be recognized as a vehicle for poverty alleviation; however, without sufficient knowledge concerning what stifles the mobility of indigenous women and the families they support, development programs, and policy cannot be directed towards them productively. A deeper understanding is necessary on the conditions and impediments they face on a daily basis in order to provoke real social transformation, poverty alleviation, and improve well-being. Understanding the causation of poverty, conceptualized as low functioning attainment within the context of a highly stratified and unequal society will give deeper understanding as to the most effective entry points for development.

Research Objectives

The research question acts as a guide to the forthcoming analysis and came about as a result of my personal experience and interaction with the various institutions and indigenous women in Ecuador.

Does the indigenous movement within Ecuador need greater recognition & insertion of a gender component within their political agenda and ideology, given the functionings deficiencies experienced by indigenous women in the Sierra? Does the women's movement in Ecuador consider the patriarchal norms governing the life opportunities of indigenous women?

Sub Questions:

- What are the functionings deficiencies experienced by indigenous women?
- Do indigenous women benefit from and are they integrated into the mainstream indigenous and women's organizations?
- Do indigenous women have visibility in the indigenous and women's movement?
- Do indigenous women need to be empowered through a wider conceptualization of their identity?

Objective:

To provide insight into the constraints and opportunities in the development of functionings for rural indigenous women in the Andes of Ecuador given the current structure and power hierarchies in the

indigenous and women's movements. It is debatable whether they live in an environment favourable to poverty alleviation or improved functionings.

This paper will illustrate that the national indigenous and women's movements are in actuality disregarding the gender specific needs of rural indigenous women. Finally, this research paper will exemplify that the distinct experiences of rural indigenous women based on their immutable identities requires individualized attention, planning and respect separate from the indigenous' movements collective mindset and the women's movement's homogenization of needs.

Organization of the paper

This study addresses the issues relating to gendered rural indigenous functionings and is organized as follows. Chapter two outlines the importance of incorporating and mainstreaming gender into development and provides a theoretical overview of the strengths and weaknesses of the most relevant theory that supports the analysis: Amartya Sen's Capabilities Approach. Chapter three presents applicable background and contemporary Ecuadorian information, highlighting the socio-economic conditions of rural indigenous women, the dynamic structure of Ecuadorian society from gendered and ethnic perspectives and illustrates the contemporary factors stimulating change in rural communities. Chapter four justifies the use and selection of the indicators in relation to the theoretical framework and analyses the data drawing from literature, secondary sources, and knowledge of the current situation. The data is placed in the context of neo-liberalism, gender subordination and identity-based discrimination to illustrate a wider force of change within the structure and agency. Chapter five will summarize the main findings, comment on the relevance of the concepts and theories used for the study and makes concluding remarks.

Chapter 2: Gender & Capabilities

Gender and Development:

Development discourse widely accepts gender as an important variable in analysis. Contemporary feminism has also recognized that women are not homogenous and that there is a much more complex interaction of social identities, such as class, ethnicity, and location that impact well-being. Gender is not the only reference point for development action, however it remains an important axis of analysis (Pearson, 2000:383). This paper examines capabilities and functioning, thus the differences between men and women are critical.

Women need to be key participants and beneficiaries of development goals, a perspective that is mainstreamed in international institutions and the major development agencies⁸ (Pearson, 2000:383). It is important to keep in mind that gender includes both men and women and the assimilation of men into the process of females' emancipation is key. Acceptance of the female identity and gender specific needs into the indigenous movement has been met with resistance in the past, thus the importance of working with men in the national movement. Men are an integral part of gender relations and part of the solution to women's poverty and capability deficiency. They are not the cause of inequity but the behaviours and norms accepted over time in relation to power and dominance are, it is these behaviours that cause differences in functionings (Pearson, 2000:400-401).

Some critics of gender mainstreaming view gender as another method in which the hegemonic powers of development or Western nations impose their ideological perspectives and priorities on the 'South' (Pearson, 2000:385). However, the importance of women being involved in the process of development for poverty alleviation has empirically shown that, by improving the welfare of women, you also improve the current and future welfare of the household (Pearson, 2000:386). The issue is to bring to light entry points for change through greater understanding of the gender specific disadvantages for indigenous women. Gendered norms reduce the chances of indigenous women being successful by her own valued terms; achieve success in society or equal functionings to men or *mestizos*. When poverty is combined with gender inequality there is acute failure in human capabilities. The extreme poverty in the sierra of Ecuador could be strongly linked to gender inequality as one of the mitigating factors (Nussbaum,

⁸ The UN agencies, the European Union and bilateral development agencies such as DIFID (United Kingdom) have mandatory project frameworks that require a gender assessment (Pearson, 2000:385).

2000:3), for example women ought to have equivalent access to resources and engage in empowering economic activity (Masika & Joekes, 1996:4).

Human Development, Capabilities & Sen:

The capabilities framework, mainstreamed by Sen, is the culmination of many great thinkers and ideas including Mahbub ul Haq and Martha Nussbaum. However, the focus of a 'human good' dates back to Aristotle (384-322 B.C) who argued that wealth was just a means to another end, that is, for people to lead "flourishing" lives (Haq, 1998:13). Human development has two meanings that are interconnected. It promotes human needs and values respecting the total reality of human life and puts the human actor at the centre of the development process (Truong, 1997:349). In principle, development is to enlarge people's dynamic economic, political, social and cultural choices to live healthy, safe, and valuable lives (Haq, 1998:13).

The focus on humans as a means to poverty alleviation versus growth as the vehicle of change altered the course of development work and thought. Haq emphasized a people-centred development, that is, 'of the people and by the people'. Human development aids in, the formation of functionings (e.g.: health, skills or knowledge) and the construction of a society that gives equitable access to human opportunities (Haq, 1998:16).

Sen's ideas brought together conventional micro economic welfare indicators (income, goods, and utility) with several broader social science concepts, capability, functioning and quality of life, opening a new multi-dimensional spectrum for analysis (Nussbaum, 1999:232-233; Truong, 1997:358; Iversen, 2003:93). Economic indicators are limited and say little about non-material deprivation or the process of attaining economic well-being, nor do they explain expenditure on different types of goods and services or the links between variables such as the economy and the environment (Haq, 1998:14-15; Nussbaum, 1999:232-233). Sen's theory provides a comprehensive view of poverty and deprivation and acknowledges that possession of resource or commodities is not an adequate indicator (Iversen, 2003:94). For example his theory can conceptualize a capability deficit being the result of social mores versus income (Rai, 2002:65). Well-being is not reducible to economic inputs but non-economic inputs too are important for valued ends; which includes the content and freedom of people's lives and it is from this holistic perspective that the foundation of this analysis is drawn. Sen argued that the objectives of development are to enhance human achievements and opportunities, thereby challenging the status quo, which emphasises growth and

GNP. That is not to say growth should be forgotten or is unimportant. Growth, utility and material needs⁹ are essential to the development process and expansion of capabilities (Rai, 2002:64). The capability approach sees social inequality as differing access to systems of entitlements and how access affects welfare and agency. Sen has constructed the framework to consider the impact of social arrangements and power on a person's ability to convert assets into functionings, thus the theories sensitivity to choice and agency (Iversen, 2003:94).

The distinction between functionings and capabilities is the achievement and the capacity to achieve respectively. Important functionings for example are being psychologically and physiologically healthy, literacy, working, political participation, being respected, educated, sheltered or a member in a community. All are important for a person's welfare and standard of living (Robeyns, 2003:543). The importance of this definition of human development, the 'being and doing' of humanity (people versus goods) is in the impact it potentially has on resource allocation and macro-economic planning for social justice. The dimensions of functionings can be reduced to two elements, well-being (good health and education) and agency (mobility and self respect) (Truong, 1997:358).

Sen advocates strongly the *functionings* of people, how they actually live, and *capabilities*, the sets of functioning people can attain or the actual life choices they face (Nussbaum, 1999: 238). Emphasis is on individual freedom and personal priorities (Nussbaum, 1999:228). Sen argued that social policy, institutions and any evaluation of poverty, inequality, or justice must prioritize the capability to function¹⁰ (Robeyns, 2003:543). Citizens must have equal access to opportunities and decide for themselves how to use them. Our capabilities allow us to achieve a particular functioning, and it is the combined capabilities that represent our combined substantive freedom to do what we want and live according to individual value systems (Robeyns, 2003:544).

As the capability approach continues to evolve as a dominant paradigm, the process of transformation of capabilities and resources must be scrutinized as a means of justice. Ingrid Robeyns shows that resources are only one part of the transformation of capabilities to well-being; ultimately access to opportunities is significant. Resources, goods, and services facilitate certain functionings, however, the process requires conversion of these resources to functionings and is influenced by different types conversion factors. They

⁹ The theory does not diminish the importance of basic material needs such as food or shelter. Satisfaction of these capability-building needs is essential to the process.

¹⁰ For example, policies that prompt literacy often reduce infant mortality or increase life functioning.

are personal, social and environmental¹¹ conversion factors, or social processes¹². Social norms are often the source of a restricted or narrowed capability set, for example the practice of indigenous women remaining in the rural areas limits their opportunities. We can also say that the capability approach assesses social processes in terms of the genuine opportunities people have to lead a life of value. It observes socialization, discrimination and the impact of social and moral norms on life opportunities (Robeyns, 2003:544-545).

Sen's approach has been widely embraced by many development institutions. The Human Development Reports¹³, compiled by Haq, from the United Nations uses a composite indicator of human development. For 2004 Ecuador ranked 100 overall, with a GDP per capital (US PPP\$) of 3,580 dollars, and a life expectancy of 74.3 years¹⁴.

As with all theories, Sen's is not without fault. Sen's theory is comprehensive and at times illusive. No definition or clarification is provided for many components leaving much for interpretation and it is only partially sensitivity to gender. His arguments for equality are limited, being founded on a male perception of the productive economy as a vehicle for change and the reproductive economy as 'natural'. Sen ignores unpaid production and caring labour and the theory does not touch on other forms of power issues, specifically body politics between men and women (Truong, 1997:359).

Sen's version of capability is a method in comparing the quality of life versus Nussbaum's¹⁵ that questions the level of satisfaction and the resources individuals command (Nussbaum, 2000:12). Nussbaum's perspective of the capabilities approach not only pays attention to the distinct needs of women, given their disadvantage, but also to the content of people's lives; the how and why of life situations (Nussbaum, 2000:5). It queries a person's satisfaction (their opportunities or liberties) (Nussbaum, 1999:233). Both

¹¹ Personal conversion factors are how individuals transform resources into functionings, such as metabolism, or reading skills. Social conversion factors are social hierarchies, public policies, religious norms, discriminatory practices, gender roles, or power relations, etc. Environmental conversion factors are for example the climate, infrastructure, institutions, and public goods.

¹² For example, a society with female seclusion limits her from seeking employment outside the home, increasing the difficulty in using the skills acquired to transform a capability into functionings.

¹³ The report includes the *Human development Index* (HDI), in its publication and analysis outlining the status and progress of 177 nations worldwide. The indicator combines three dimension of human development; longevity (life expectancy at birth), education attainment (adult literacy, and primary, secondary & tertiary enrollment rates), and standard of living as measure by real GDP per capita (in purchasing parity dollars) (<http://hdr.undp.org/statistics/>).

¹⁴ http://hdr.undp.org/statistics/data/cty/cty_f_ECU.html

¹⁵ Nussbaum's theory provides a universal list of functionings and a minimum threshold all governments must respect and implement for minimum human dignity.

theorists agree that the capabilities people strive for need to be determined and valued by individuals for themselves. Nussbaum differs slightly from her predecessors in that her discussion is centred on the capability to function versus Sen who focuses on the outcomes. Outcomes are a useful starting point for research into the lives of indigenous women. Ideally, use of the extended and more gender friendly Nussbaum version of capabilities would be more rich and insightful, however, the data available is from a functioning, or an ends, perspective, thus Sen's theory of capabilities is the focal point. This approach is useful in highlighting key problems in empowering women and can aid in that process.

As humans we are all endowed with basic capabilities and internal capabilities¹⁶, however, in order for these capabilities to grow into higher-level capabilities, allowing us to accomplish greater functionings, these capabilities must be nourished and subsist in a favourable environment. The combination of internal capabilities with a complimentary external environment is referred to as combined capabilities. For example free political affiliation can be difficult to attain in a repressive non-democratic environment (Nussbaum, 1999:237). Reinforcing that structure and agency exists only in tandem.

This theory has been strategically selected as the supporting framework for this research. It recognises deprivation as multi-dimensional, which interacts or has links to the broader social structure such as the institutions, norms and power relations that have endured over time and human beings are regarded as an ends, not a means. The ends however are not a given, they are subjective to the social context, values or differences in need. By using Sen's capabilities approach, the gendered needs of women are conceptualized as more than just material and recognizes inherent diversity in humanity. It also permits space for understanding gendered deprivation, such as excess female mortality or malnutrition (Pearson, 2000:399). In many societies one might say that women are not treated as ends in their own right with dignity or deserving of rights under the law but as a means for capability enhancement of others as caregivers or reproducers (Nussbaum, 2000:2). The capabilities framework allows us to evaluate the individual and social welfare based on achieved and valued functionings. This theory cannot deconstruct the social causes of poverty or inequality that are exercised through social power relations or the institutions that sustain them, but gives a unique glance as to where social outcomes have gone wrong with respect to human well-being (Hill, 2003:118).

¹⁶ Basic capabilities are the intrinsic equipment required for development of advanced capabilities. Internal capabilities are the natural state of a person, sufficient to accomplish certain essential functionings (Nussbaum, 1999:237).

Concepts, Scope and Limitations

The capabilities approach defines poverty as not being able to do certain things, lacking the capability to function or the freedom needed to enjoy a life of value. Given the parameters of this study this definition is more suitable versus others for the following reasons.

A monetary definition of well-being, such as the poverty line¹⁷, is a common threshold used globally and is easily comparable worldwide. Living below the poverty line is viewed as a threat to survival, by not meeting basic physiological needs (food, shelter, water). Although consumption is important, using it as the basis to quantify deprivation ignores all other non-material factors that affect human happiness and satisfaction (Glewwe, 1990:805). A monetary definition also implies money-based solutions for policy makers and ignores other limitations in life, such as, diversity or gender where women and minorities face systematic inequality (Laderchi, Saith & Stewart, 2003:244). Poverty is a relational concept and is not absolute, income and GNP overlook the power relations and social structures that create barriers and opportunities for marginalized groups, and thus are inappropriate for this study.

Choices by households are mediated through gender and social relations, institutions and norms. Assets are combined and transformed into practical livelihood solutions in pursuit of short and long-term objectives and households utilize their agency to strategize a viable and diversified livelihood (Ellis, 2000:30). A livelihood is defined as a combination of capabilities, assets (stores, resources, claims and access) and activities required for a living (Ellis, 2000:7). The concept of assets is analytically useful to this study, and it is through these concepts that the indicators in the forth-coming chapter are selected for analysis. Based on the work by Chambers and Conway, the five categories of capitals are natural, physical, human, financial and social¹⁸ (Ellis, 2000:8). The agency and choices of rural households are fixed in a broader system of constraints that determine the most efficient allocation of the five capitals to create a livelihood option, thus the incorporation of Sen's analysis on the freedom to choose a life path of value. Equity in livelihood options requires the support of relevant institutions, for example institutionalized property and land rights for women (Masika & Joekes, 1996:4). The rural livelihoods

¹⁷ The poverty line is measured at 1\$ per day.

¹⁸ Natural capital is natural resource whose yields produce commodities essential for survival, such as water, land, trees. Physical capital are the assets brought about by the economic production process; tools, roads, irrigation. Human capital refers to the health, skills, or education of individuals. Financial capital is the stocks of cash or credit that can be accessed to purchased commodities or production goods. Social capital is the networks or associations' people take part in that offer support and contributes to livelihoods (Ellis, 2000:8).

framework has made positive contributions to development theory, however it has weaknesses, such as its inability to address the structural biases and relations of inequality, which affect women two-fold to men (O'Laughlin, 2004:387). The absence of consideration for structural issues, such as power relations or gender/ethnic discrimination, makes Sen a better choice for this study. Agents independently act and make choices as to their livelihoods strategies within the context of their environments. The livelihood choices of indigenous women are constrained within institutions of the state, the market, family, the community and social relations. Social relations, norms and power relations inherent in gendered relations and racial discrimination influence a person's free ability to express their agency (de Haan & Zoomers, 2005:27). Consequently, the underlying institutional rules and cultural norms that determine the distribution of entitlements, capabilities and resources for indigenous women leading to low functionings will be explored (Masika & Joekes, 1996:2). Neglecting power relations in poverty analysis would be detrimental to finding a viable solution (de Haan & Zoomers, 2005:36).

Ethnic identity is a group of individuals that have common ancestry, traditions, language, or religion. The connection or segregation of one 'ethnic' group to another is based on social categorization, a construction. In the Andean context, one's ethnicity can influence citizenship rights and entitlements. Identification with an ethnic group can lead to exclusion from another social category, which is inherently relational. Social exclusion is a conceptualization of poverty that has made positive contributions to the debate on poverty measurements as it incorporates the cultural and political dimensions of deprivation and raises questions regarding social justice. It also fits well within the capabilities approach as it implies partial or complete exclusion from participation in society, be it education or political activity (Gore, 1995:2). However, the concept of social exclusion is too subjective and abstract for this study and does not implicitly imply poverty. As well, any type of group affiliation will exclude others (Gore, 1995:19). An analysis of functionings will provide insight as to what types of social exclusion and integration indigenous women experience.

Notions of gender are socially constructed ideas associated with being a man or a woman including norms, values, and expectations. The division of labour, access to productive resources, participation in decision-making and participation in the public sphere are just a few of the areas influenced by gender. Gender is reinforced by the mechanisms of the state, institutions, and the gender habitus. According to Roberto Connell, there are four dimensions to gender relations that shape complex social interactions power relations, production relations, emotional relations and symbolic relations. Gender relations can change over time leading to new opportunities (Connell, 2002:58).

One of the major limitations of this study is that it does not give voice to rural indigenous women through the use of qualitative participatory data collection and analysis. The conclusions and interpretations are drawn from development theory and unfortunately do not incorporate insight from the people but rely on data produced during the 2001 census implemented by the government of Ecuador (INEC) and the World Bank and INEC survey of 1998. With any data collection it is important to keep in mind that institutional biases could have tainted any portion of process. Another limitation is the availability of data disaggregated by ethnic group. Only recently did the constitution recognize Ecuador as multi-ethnic and previously INEC did not distinguish between groups in the census. The most recent government census attempts to bring light to the actual circumstance of indigenous peoples, however the data is thin and at times questionable. For example, the percentage of the population that is indigenous is heavily disputed between government agencies (INEC & CODENPE) and international institutions such as the World Bank, ranging from 20% to 45%.

Chapter 3: Context – Ecuador, the Economy and Society:

This section gives insight into the dynamic structure of Ecuadorian society and the contemporary factors stimulating change in rural communities. It will help to explain the disparities between the demographic groups for the indicators selected in the subsequent chapter.

Land Inequality and Land Reform:

The hacienda system was instituted with the arrival of the Spaniards, to extract surplus from the natives, ensure a constant supply of labour through the institution of labour tax and secure riches for Europe. During the 19th and 20th centuries the evolution of the tenure systems, called *huasipungo* altered the economic terms of rural employment and brought a system of oppression and symbolic violence (Plant, 1998:3).

Ecuadorian agrarian reform was completed albeit unsuccessfully, in 1963 and 1974. Land reform was done on the premise of class and given to individuals working on the *huasipungo* and haciendas, peasants and the landless received little to nothing. Land reform did not redistribute assets sufficiently to create an equitable balance in control of the means of production or in breaking the landlord class. Large landowners maintained control over the most arable land (little actually was redistributed) and expanded production into commercial and export commodities and made alliances with foreign capital. These events consequently kept the power of national agricultural policy in the hands of large landowners turning rural communities into a form of globalized modern day colonialism with peasant supplying cheap labour. Land today remains a point of conflict in society and obstructs poverty alleviation initiatives. Conflict has resulted in the documentation of human rights abuses and resistance from peasants. Failure to transform these power structures culminated in a peasant/indigenous uprising in 1990 in opposition to state agrarian reform, SAPs and social conflict (North, Kit & Koep, 2003:109).

One of the largest failures of the land reforms was the absence or lack of support policies, such as credit, and the “*institutional arrangements imposed on reform sectors*”. Additionally, the import substitution era was unfavourable to domestic producers and brought rural indigenous Ecuadorians to a state of desperation. The creation of CONAIE in 1986, an indigenous civil society group, changed the landscape

of Ecuadorian politics. In 1990 CONAIE¹⁹ mobilized massive protests against government policies, particularly SAPs, demanding improved access to land and ethnic/cultural rights (North, Kit & Koep, 2003:110). It was estimated by the World Bank in 1994²⁰ that approximately 43% land was under the possession and control of 1.6% of farms in the Sierra. More alarmingly, the bank stated the correlation between poverty and per capita landholding is direct regardless of the measurement used (North, Kit & Koep, 2003:109). According to FAO, Ecuador has one of the most rigid land markets in the continent. Prohibition of sharecropping and legislation on renting or sale of land is insecure; as a result the land markets function poorly thereby affecting efficiency and equity. Uncertain land rights in Ecuador are detrimental to rural poverty and development (World Bank, 2004:105).

While land markets remain inflexible, off-farm economic activity or migration are increasingly viable livelihood diversification strategies for rural household (World Bank, 2004:110). Poverty in the rural area can directly be attributed to insufficient access to land; unfortunately radical reforms to redistribute land seem far-fetched given past experiences. Institutionalized policies that secure land tenure and facilitate land transactions, such as rental policies, have great potential to reduce the level of poverty for agricultural labourer; in addition credit has been cited by the World Bank and FENOCIN²¹ as one of the largest impediments to increasing the productivity of small-independent farmers (World Bank, 2004:100).

Contemporary Class Relations

Class refers to the division of society into social categories or social positions. These groups obtain status from their location in the production process and distribution of wealth. The class distinction often manifests itself in opposing interests, political ideology and cultural or social mores towards behaviour. One of the largest impacts class has had on the structure of society is the way it interacts with access to the means of production and resources. Class distinctions become a class hierarchy when access to opportunities, public services, and social mobility are restricted for one group. Consequently class inequity emerges and strengthens the hierarchy between them. Originating from Karl Marx, class theory and class conflict continues to be a source of struggle and change, as groups within society do not equally benefit from the management of social surplus (Kruper & Kruper, 1996:90).

¹⁹ Protests were organized in 1994, 1997, 2000 and 2001.

²⁰ In that year the Law of Agrarian Development was passed establishing penalties for illegal occupation, protected communal lands, eradicated land reform institutions and ended the era of reform (North, Kit, Koep 2003:122).

²¹ Interview on July 27th, 2005 with Pedro de la Cruz, FENOCIN.

Class is an economic phenomenon that evolved with colonialism and was institutionalized by the hacienda system making ethnicity the demarcation. The system permitted class, political and racial domination (Torre, 1999:95). Being indigenous is not synonymous with the peasantry or a lower class, however indigenous are represented there more than any other demographic group. Unfortunately the ethnic divide often segregates the rural indigenous poor from other class-based struggles in rural areas. Integration into peasant organizations or the creation of independent indigenous peasant organization has occurred recently.

The class barrier is particularly hard to break in Ecuador. Immutable identities and ethnicity have long been associated with class status. Even with the emergence of a new indigenous middle class the ethnic based racism and social stratification persists, illustrating that financial gains are not the only barrier Andean indigenous communities confront. As the barriers to accumulation have been broken in some affluent indigenous communities, such as Otavalo, indigenous peoples still experience ethnic exclusion from public spaces and are often relegated to contemporary occupations of low class or status (Torre, 1999:93).

Ethnicity: A Stratified Society & “lo Andino”

With the rise of indigenous articulation in the political sphere through organizations such as Confederation of the Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE) and “lo andino”, a cultural movement revitalizing the identity, knowledge and way of life of traditional indigenous communities, it is imperative that the disparities within the community are not overlooked or forgotten and that the needs of all are represented within this new found political influence. Today, ethnic identity politics shapes the political environment as well as being a major force of social change or conflict locally, nationally and internationally. Ethnicity is treated as a major political force (Dwyer, 2002:459; Hale, 2004:458). Ethnic identity is an elusive, fluid and powerful concept; it is shaped by the historical context, in this case oppression, and can be manipulated for political goals. Ethnicity is a distinction between groups, ‘us’ versus ‘them’ and founded on shared origin or other communal characteristics. Marx and Engels underestimated the strength of ethnicity in stating that the growth of the industrial proletariat would be the demise of ethnic distinctions. Obviously the power of ethnicity has prevailed and evolved into a force of change in Ecuador. Much ethnic discontent is a manifestation of poverty with privilege and suffrage drawn on ethnic lines (Dwyer, 2002:459). When conceptualizing ethnicity and its impact on welfare one must distinguish between internal group/self-identification with categorization. Categorization, a social construction, is derived from power and authority relations (domination) (Jenkins, 1994:197).

The creation of individual identity is the interrelationship between internal and external definitions (Jenkins, 1994:199). The experience of categorization can strengthen a group's identity through shared experience and resistance, as seen in Ecuador with the identity of indigenous peoples being reinforced over the last two decades (Jenkins, 1994:203). Although ethnicity is an important concept that shapes the content of our lives, understanding its effects and what it is²², is at the beginning stages. This research paper will help to highlight how ethnicity can impact well-being in a particular context (Hale, 2004:458).

The scope of this research does not permit an in-depth analysis of ethnic identity or the consequences of socially constructed notions associated with being "Indian", however, it is important to keep in mind that perceived ethnicity in Ecuador has significance in all facets of life. Women in the indigenous community are the reproducers of culture and identity, and often have stronger ties to tradition, as seen in their way of dress. Immutable identity affects their daily interaction with all institutions in society, such as the market place, and builds opportunities or constraints based on perceptions. The choice to study rural indigenous women was conscious. Their continuing marginalization and poverty is clear and remains to be addressed, while their identity is expressed strongly through the maintenance of tradition and language and is central to their position in society. Being indigenous has historically held negative connotations, however is functional in creating and sustaining important networks, social capital and other resources (to be discussed in a further section).

Ethnic discrimination is evidenced in numerous acts against indigenous institutions that have been involved with the revitalization of tradition and culture and the strengthening of social organization. For example, in June 1994 in Cañar, indigenous institutions awarded funding from international bodies for education and cultural programs were vandalized and destroyed (North, Kit & Koep, 2003:107). Discriminatory attacks include verbal assault, exclusion, avoidance, and physical violence (Torre, 1999:94). Ethnic domination, subordination and the ideology of exclusion are pervasive in the political system, which placed voting restrictions on the illiterate, mainly rural indigenous women, until 1979. Exclusion is also supported by informal sanction that remind the indigenous of their 'position' in society, such as paternalistic language (Torre, 1999:99; Radcliffe, 2000:4).

Many indigenous women see their ethnic status as taking precedence in the struggle for justice versus gender inequality. Nina Pacari strongly believes that sexist ideas were imported from Europe and a return

²² Multiple interpretations of ethnicity subsist in academia; an emotional attachment and sense of belonging to a group or a choice fixed in a network of significant symbols (Hale, 2004: 458).

to indigenous values will lead to emancipation. The minister is one of the most visible indigenous representatives in the movement and perceives indigenous women as victims of racial discrimination rather than gender discrimination (Prieto, Cuminao, Flores, Maldondao, Pequeño, 2005:4). Pacari is a firm believer in Andean social, cultural and political rights, such as language and education. Her motivation is, the harmony and cooperation that are the foundations of traditional Andean culture. Pacari does not bring gender issues to any forum and alleges that gender discrimination is missing in Indian communities. For example, Kichwa women of Toacazo, in the province of Cotopaxi, share equal inheritance rights with their male counterparts. Although this position is warranted given the institutionalized discrimination against the indigenous it also means women are placing the needs of the community before their own, either practical or strategic needs²³.

The historical and cultural division of Ecuador places indigenous women and men at a disadvantage in attaining the dignity, empowerment and self-respect associated with a decent standard of living and decent forms of work. The contemporary indigenous social movement is a form of overt resistance to challenge the formal and informal institutions and polices that have oppressed the indigenous ability to develop livelihoods by obverting access to and transformation of assets. The symbolic and effective uprising in the 1990s signalled an era of change (Bebington, 2004:178).

Gender Harmony or Gender Conflict

Traditional gender relations within Andean indigenous communities are based on equality, unity of the family, and equal value of labour. Harmony was the foundation of the Inca ideology, and complementary roles were assigned within the structure of society. Balanced gender relations were not confined to the private realm, as they were also the foundation of the economy, the labour market and religion (Powers, 2000:514). Neither of the ascribed roles in the gender regime was viewed as subordinate or inferior. Men and women were equal, including inheritance, assuring women's access to a means of subsistence and independence. As progressive as this system was, gender equity was not achieved; all the top imperial political positions were reserved for men; women's political participation and power during the Inca times was legitimate but confined women's issues (Powers, 2000:512). Traditional systems have not been able to withstand colonialism and the majority of indigenous communities have been eroded by the Spanish regime and the patriarchal regime that arrived with the European ideology, that is, the hacienda system and Catholicism which exacerbated the functioning deficit of indigenous women (Deere & León, 2001:249; Hamilton, 1998:3).

²³ <http://www.paho.org/English/AD/GE/IndigenousWomenFS.pdf>

“As in other life arenas, gender complementarity and gender parallelism were the cornerstones of the economies and labour systems in the Andean societies.” (Powers, 2000:516).

Andean society was progressive in that it saw a single labour unit as the interdependent work of a man and women and that the family could attain economic subsistence only through this combination (Powers, 2000:516). In the Inca times and today women had a strong connection to the earth and were seen as its protector and conserver and possess knowledge of the earth’s medicinal properties to reinforce the connection (Powers, 2000:517). Although it is true that there is less gender inequality in Andean indigenous communities, women seldom occupy official leadership positions in communities today. This too, is in a process of change as many communities are populated predominately by women (Korovkin, 2003:20).

Gender differences are always in a relationship of power. These relations are relevant when trying to understand the processes that contribute to prolonged functioning deficiency for women. With Robert Connell’s conceptualization of the four types of gender relation in mind this study conceptualizes the home as a site of conflict and not mutual interest (Connell, 2002:55). As Sen reports in numerous publications, competing interest must be negotiated and bargaining within the home takes place under a relationship of power, affecting everything from food distribution to decisions on income expenditure (Sen, 1990:125). Gender relations within the household places major constraints on women’s productive activities and functionings. The duality that is engrained into the psyche of indigenous peoples has inspired economic participation of men and women, today this does not exist in its true organic form and the balanced relations between the sexes has been altered (Prieto, Cuminao, Flores, Maldondao, Pequeño, 2005:4).

Neo –liberal policies and rural livelihoods

Historically Ecuadorian exports were dominated by agriculture, this changed with the discovery of oil in the 1970s making it a very important commodity. Ecuador’s market remains vulnerable to unstable market prices relying on the export potential of a few primary commodities, such as bananas, coffee and flowers.

In the 1980s and 1990s, like much of the developing world, Ecuador became acquainted with the IFIs stabilization and structural adjustment polices²⁴ ensuing in a debt crisis, huge increases in poverty by the

²⁴ IMF policies were short-term financing to meet the balance of payments; key was reducing government spending, raising taxes and interest rates, and devaluation. World Bank policies encouraged privatization of government

late 1990s, high inflation of the local currency the Sucre, a collapse of the banking system and dollarization in 2000. Structural adjustment facilitated globalization of the local economy, increased the vulnerability of small producers and threatened their livelihood sustainability. The Ecuadorian public, particularly indigenous civil society that demonstrated their opposition has been adverse to IFI policies exposing them to high-risk economic circumstances (Beneria & Feldman, 1992:31).

Neo-liberal policies have brought globalization to the countryside of Ecuador. New opportunities for off-farm employment and migration²⁵ are two strategies widely used to sustain the minimum and keep the family farm. This flexibility and mobility of livelihoods reflects the transformation of the political economy. Households have adjusted accordingly based on the portfolio of assets and constraints, altering the relative importance of all assets combined. Human capital and social capital play a growing role for households in accessing work and non-farm activities. There is a higher investment in education for the next generation and a shift in focus of the indigenous social movement to emphasize access to services that build human capital. Land remains extremely important to rural homes and without equal land redistribution, poverty and inequality will remain. However in the mean time skills and relationships are vital in coping with economic crisis (Bebbington, 2004:182).

Neo-liberal reforms have favoured the capitalist farmer through capital markets, incentives for production of export commodities and market liberalization. The modernization and investment required of small-farms to shift the production process to commodities for export is too high and they are unable to compete in a newly competitive market, thus changing the structure of rural society (Kay, 2004:234). Depeasantization and proletarianization of the rural labour force is increasingly visible in Ecuador. Rural peasants are providing cheap labour for both the rural and urban sectors and it is dubious as to whether policies have intentionally inserted rural people into the labour market keeping wages low and extracting surplus for the capitalist elites. For example, seasonal wage labourers often work in bad conditions with low salary and no security allowing producers to generate more profit. Labourers for non-traditional agricultural products are an employment category that women fill. There are high environmental and health costs and there is a desperate need for implementation of protective policies (Lanjouw, 1999:107; Kay, 2004:238; Korovkin, 2003:128).

The failure of neo-liberal policies to reduce poverty has revitalized opposition to the free market paradigm. The rural poor do not live in isolation from the market and strategies to integrate the rural economy have

enterprises, removal of price controls, external trade liberalization through lowering of tariffs and quotas, removing export restrictions and currency devaluation.

²⁵ 2001 estimation of remittances to Ecuador valued \$1.41 billion (Bebbington, 2004:191).

aggravated living conditions. The rural communities of Ecuador need to function in a favourable political and economic environment with state protection and provision of basic services. Unfair international competition, lowered trade barriers and cheap food imports have slowed production of food for the domestic market while production of non-traditional export products has not been able to compensate the loss of income, leaving a gap in the rural economy (Kay, 2004:235). In short, poverty and inequality has worsened (Lefeber, 2003:26).

A discussion on the IFI policies would not be complete without exploring the gendered impacts of neo-liberalism. Macro-economic policies do not integrate gender into their analysis, thereby ignoring the importance of social reproduction and care and were not conceptualized with consideration of household reproduction (Beneria & Feldman, 1992:30). The underlying economic models driving SAPs are male-biased because of gendered assumptions, such as women's time being infinitely elastic, women being able to substitute for cuts in public spending, and not recognizing unpaid domestic work (Beneria & Feldman, 1992:35; Pearson, 2000:394). As public services are reduced, prices of basic food commodities rise and economic conditions worsen consequently women use their own resources, time, energy, and labour power, to supplement the loss. Women inadvertently cushion the shock of SAPs for the reproduction of society and human capital, while sacrificing their own well-being. As well, SAPs are biased in that they do not recognize the inflexibility of the sexual division of labour and the difficulty women face entering new or different productive spaces (Pearson, 2000:394). Another shortfall of the SAPs from a gendered perspective is the assumption of the household as a unit of cooperation that discounts the power relations and hierarchies that determine negotiations and exchange. (Pearson, 2000:395). The plight of rural indigenous women has been compounded by the economic strategies of the IFIs in Ecuador.

Cohesion through Social Capital in Indigenous Communities?

Although social capital is a 'fuzzy' concept, difficult to quantify, it is an important aspect in rural life and is the arena in which many community members negotiate for legitimate use of resources. Pierre Bourdieu first introduced social capital in 1972 by conceptualizing the reproduction of power and hierarchy in society as the interaction and connection of multiple categories of capital: economic, social, cultural and symbolic capital through, for example, symbolic violence, and construction of an accepted 'normality' through the habitus. Putnam developed the ideas further, perceiving social capital as individual participation in civil-society and voluntary organizations²⁶.

²⁶ Amrita Chhachhi: Class Notes ISS – OPT 306, Session 16.

Gender and social capital thus far has seen little analysis, surprisingly so given that women are central to the reproduction of family values and community cohesion. The evolution of women's responsibility for social capital maintenance is naturalized given their status as caregivers and mothers. However it is important to keep in mind when analysing social capital in relation to gender, that some social capital, (associations or institutions) are gender neutral while others biased (Mayoux, 2001:437). One must not place too much faith or importance on social capital's ability to aid in community growth and redistribution. Many of the institutions in which social capital originate are laden with and reproduce hierarchy, power and privilege.

Social networks play an important role in the daily lives and productive activities of women; they provide security, social, and emotional support for rural women and create a reciprocal economic structures rooted in traditional indigenous kinship networks. The *mingas*²⁷ have remained in Ecuador. However, out-migration of men has put a strain on the productivity of *mingas* and the progress of infrastructure in communities. The original intent of *mingas*, community cohesion, differs from the contemporary purpose that supplements the lack of support from the government to rural communities. The state will at times provided financing for small community improvements, such as provision of electricity, however the responsibility to organize and provide labour power is on the *mingas*²⁸.

To understand importance of social capital in indigenous communities, examination of past social organization is imperative. Prior to the arrival of the Spanish, labour was organized on the principle of reciprocity. Reciprocal relationships were the foundation of the wealth and prosperity that the Inca Empire attained. Organized through kinship ties²⁹, families expected and demanded the labour of all members from the basic social unit while being obliged to return it. This valuable resource could be called upon in times of economic crisis and was a form of social security for all members of the *ayllu*. As a result wealth was equated to the size of one's kinship ties, because kin equalled a larger source of labour, making fertility and social reproduction of great importance and an enormous responsibility of women. One could say that this importance placed on biological reproduction has been sustained over the years; indigenous families have the highest fertility rate in the country. This system produced a strong sense of community and responsibility of all to contribute for sustainable survival in a harsh environment (Powers, 2000:516).

²⁷ *Mingas* are community work groups to which all members contribute. Labour helps build roads and irrigation systems, for example.

²⁸ Interview on July 27th, 2005 with Pedro de la Cruz, FENOCIN.

²⁹ In Andean society the basic social unit was the *ayllu*. Marriage among commoners typically was endogamous and took place within the *ayllu*, provided a few generations were between unions (Powers, 2000:515).

Chapter 4: Functionings in the Sierra

Men, Women, Indigenous, Non-Indigenous: A comparison

It is undisputed that a disparity of functionings between *mestizo* and indigenous peoples exists; in table A.2.1 of the Appendix this is demonstrated for every variable. Extreme poverty of indigenous people in the Andes is more than twice the national average and results from inequitable access to assets and resources, market liberalization and ethnic based discrimination in the provision of government services. Female illiteracy and non-completion of secondary school is four times the national average, the possible causes of which will be discussed later in this chapter. Telephone, electricity and garbage collection services are improving, albeit slowly. These discrepancies are often due to the remote location of indigenous communities and lack of political will from the Ecuadorian government to support marginalized groups. These figures provide an overview of indigenous communities and are the background for the forthcoming analysis. Gender research and theory has justified sex specific development research, given that women often suffer at the hand of patriarchal dominance within the household thereby reducing women's opportunity and choice in accomplishing 'ends'. In this paper there is an implicit assumption that women have lower functionings and capabilities than men. Illustrating differences in functionings becomes particularly challenging in a culture that does not recognize gender-based differences and interprets gender as a concept foreign to traditional Andean mores and *meztizo* culture that has historically ignored ethnic difference through paternalistic assimilation (Prieto, Cuminao, Flores, Maldondao, Pequeño, 2005:5).

Gendered inequality manifests itself in various ways and differs by culture. For example, in Ecuador there is a large difference between estimated earned incomes of men and women. This is symptomatic of the gender division of labour and segregation of the labour market. Due to gendered hierarchical norms women are employed in less lucrative and often marginalized forms of employment such as domestic service or petty trade³⁰.

The economic status of women and their overall well-being is paramount to development and growth. The feminist movement of the 1970s brought to social debate and discourse the injustice and inequality women face. While structural adjustment worsened the standard of living for many women, giving rise to the

³⁰http://hdr.undp.org/statistics/data/cty/cty_f_ECU.html

erosion of Andean social organization. Women have become semi-proletarianized, are increasingly dependent on male-migratory remittances and remain the governors or protectors of rural life.

International organizations, such as the United Nations, have recognized the importance of mainstreaming gender and the need for a paradigm shift in how gender issues are addressed. Most governments globally have ratified a number of conventions such as the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against women (CEDAW,) ratified on July 17th, 1980 by Ecuador. Ratification represents a political commitment and will to gender equity, however does not guarantee implementation³¹.

One of the major steps towards indigenous emancipation was international recognition of the urgency to protect their human rights in ILO convention (no.169)³². Under this convention land issues, cultural rights, recruitment and conditions of employment, rural industry, social security and international cooperation are addressed. For example, governments are expected to respect the social and cultural importance of land and protect indigenous rights of ownership over natural capital, involve the indigenous in the management, conservation and use of resources. Ecuador ratified the convention on May 15th, 1998, however implementation and monitoring of compliance has been scarce³³. The autonomy and self-determination of indigenous communities is progressing in the right direction with ratification thereby increasing acknowledgment of indigenous issues and a greater consciousness of indigenous identity. An international platform has been created to support the indigenous movement and its claims for equality. It has also broadened the scope of financial resources for indigenous groups giving women and men alike opportunities to push forward relevant issues. This structural change has been fostered by globalization and strengthens the collective agency and bargaining power of indigenous groups trans-nationally. On the other hand, feminist critics of convention no.169 state that institutionalized gender inequality based on tradition often occurring in the private realm, such as inheritance practice, is perpetuated under this convention on the premise that it is cultural custom (Deere & León, 2001:231).

This chapter will outline the primary functionings deficiencies for indigenous women in Ecuador and the corresponding factors that limit functionings given the contemporary context. It is important to outline some of the functionings rural indigenous women need to attain for an acceptable standard of living, dignity & self-respect, and full citizenship entitlements. The intent is to look beyond basic needs for survival, to the functionings needed for development and the accomplishment of a valuable life. In this

³¹ <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/states.htm>

³² Convention (No. 169) concerns Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries, adopted on 27th, June 1989 by the ILO.

³³ Reference: <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/english/convdisp1.htm>

context the five assets or capitals used to create livelihoods are not merely resources but the building blocks for the capability to act, create meaning in an individual's world, and possibly transform the social structure to a more equitable reality. As Anthony Bebbington states, these assets become vehicles or sources of power for agents to challenge the status quo or the rules that govern "*control, use, and transformation of resources.*" The highland indigenous have cultural ties to their environment in which traditional values impact household livelihood choices, in livelihoods the material and cultural cannot be separated. Allocation of capitals is linked to the meaning and identity of being 'indigenous', where women are typically linked to land, family and community and men are permitted to explore external opportunities (Bebbington, 1999:2002). Some of the functionings identified as important to rural indigenous women are greater time availability, improved conditions of health, nutrition, completion of educational or vocational training beyond literacy, social networks and national participation and decision making power in relevant organizations.

Land remains an undeniably important resource that most homes do not have sufficient access to, meaning agriculture is no longer the primary source of income. However, it is deemed more acceptable for men than for women to diversify in the indigenous communities. For indigenous communities physical location is important to their spiritual well-being and identity is often constructed through the possession of rural land (Bebbington, 1999:2026). Access to land is constrained by the institutions that govern land transactions, such as peasant associations that oversee use of collectivized plots and the socio-economic climate of the economy.

The 1998 constitutional amendment addressed land tenure systems and collective land rights of indigenous peoples and afro-Ecuadorians and inadvertently integrated social and natural capital into the constitution. Whether this has generated greater security of access to agriculture land for these groups remains questionable. Land in Ecuador is distributed most inequitably in the Sierra and the area surrounding the coastal city of Guayaquil, with huge disparities in farm output. In 1996 approximately 50% of the indigenous population did not have access to land. These areas also have the highest level of agriculture productivity, showing how a capitalist structure creates inequality. The functioning of food security and their full potential as agricultural producers is constrained for indigenous households (World Bank, 2004:95). The inability to survive as agricultural producers forces the rural poor to find other ways to generate income, potentially breaking social networks the loss of indigenous knowledge, modes of production, customs, and the enjoyment derived from being close to ones family.

A large portion of the Ecuadorian population, approximately 40%, still resides in the rural areas the majority of which are poor and many are considered extremely poor (World Bank, 2004:81). A study of households in the Sierra in 1990 found that 28.4% were landless, 31.8% of households had at most 1 hectare of land and 29.1% between one and five hectares of land (Plant, 1998:19). According to the World Bank, the Gini Coefficient of landownership in the year 1974 had a value of 0.85 and in 2000 it was 0.81, both highly unequal measurements. The positive relationship between unequal land distribution and high productivity is attributed to the ability of wealthy landowners to purchase the highest quality plots and influence policies favourable to their export production goals (World Bank, 2004:94).

Since SAP crop production is heavily focused on export commodities, 40% of agricultural production value is bananas, cocoa, coffee and fresh flowers. The indigenous during the 1990s were characterized as land-poor with declining yields, but have embraced the cut-flower industry as the off-farm sector offering the highest pay while keeping their land. It employs a high percentage of women (Korovkin, 2003:24), most under renewable temporary six-month contracts in which the employer is not obliged to make any social security contributions³⁴. For rural women, the cut flower industry has provided an opportunity to gain employment, but health hazards; long hours and insecurity are pervasive in the industry.

Land titling and property rights in Ecuador are perceived as gender equal in the legal framework, in practice this is far from true. There is a disjuncture between the *de jure* and *de facto* practice of land inheritance, use and titling for women in rural Ecuador. For example, a married couple that purchases land is automatically creating a common property however the land title is often placed under the name of the husband giving him legitimacy and authority to use or sell the asset as he pleases. Regardless, local authorities rarely enforce the double signature requirement for the sale of land if both names are registered exposing women to vulnerability. One indigenous woman who is a community leader is quoted in Deere and León's book that "*The father gives [her] land and then they marry and the husband sells it...This is against the law, but women are not aware of their rights.*" (2001:55). Here, knowledge and literacy become essential for women to defend their rights. Indigenous men who use the rational that indigenous culture will be lost if women are educated, disallow the enjoyment of rights for indigenous women culminating in male benefit and control over resources.

Land reform in Ecuador was unsuccessful and in the productive highlands redistribution was worse. Of those that benefited, women were the least likely and represent only a small portion of the total. There is no official data pertaining to beneficiaries by sex, however illustrative of this point is data on the canton of

³⁴ Interview July 27th, 2005 with Pedro de la Cruz, FENOCIN.

Machachi, in the province of Pichincha. It was found that women were 5.3% of the total beneficiaries; a direct result of the process of reform, the legal system, and gendered social perceptions constructing the household. During reform, priority was given to the household heads who were land-poor and whose principal activity was agriculture, the assumption being that the man is the household head. The civil code of Ecuador went further to support this inequitable and discriminatory practice, stating that husbands were the administrators of all marital property. The last factor that impinged women's capacity to benefit from reform was the law on cooperatives that had two discriminatory elements. A woman had to acquire permission from her husband to join an agricultural cooperative and prohibited a husband and a wife from being members in the same cooperative (Deere & León, 2001:85). Reform practices and the cooperative laws lowered any legitimate participation or decision-making power women potentially had. Their functionings as agricultural producers was ignored and their position as active members of a community with rights to association.

In 1994, the Ecuadorian government, in negotiation with CONAIE passed the Law for Agrarian Development. It has been labelled as gender neutral and is mediocre in protection of land rights. An achievement is the stipulation that communal land needs a two-thirds majority vote for fragmentation or sale and communal property at high elevation cannot be subdivided³⁵. The law recognizes various forms of productive organization, such as cooperative or collective, but must serve in the conservation and protection of the eco-system (Deere & León, 2001:159). The law was victorious for indigenous peoples however it did not make any explicit mention of women's land or agrarian rights. Women were only considered in the section on training. Article 3 states that their role must be incorporated into training activities. The law does not give the same emphasis to women's rights as it does to ethnicity or race, both mainstreamed throughout. This is illustrative of the ideological perspective of CONAIE, in that women or gender issues are not a priority and secondary to ethnic rights. The law ignores the rights of women in agrarian issues but accomplishes gender-neutral language by eliminating the perceived household head. During negotiations CONAIE was only concerned with government's recognition of indigenous collective properties thereby ignoring women's active role in agriculture and the actual practices of inheritance or land sale, and not protecting or valuing indigenous women's rights. CONAIE, the principal national indigenous organization, and its philosophy reject indigenous women as having rights independent of indigenous people/community. This paradigm has influenced the indigenous movement, how resources are allocated and the perceived right of indigenous women to a gender identity. However, if indigenous men are legitimized in their male identity, authority and enjoyment of a patriarchal dividend, are women

³⁵ Unfortunately land can be expropriated under certain conditions. A success for the indigenous fight against capitalism was stopping privatization of water.

not legitimate in negotiating the terms under which they enjoy the use of resources and are represented in society? By not bringing the rights of indigenous women to the negotiations of agrarian law, CONAIE is not recognizing indigenous women as a social group worthy or warranting their representation, thus inherently devaluing indigenous women as lesser than the men and the community (Deere & León, 2001:159). Does gender merit attention or reflection in important legislation? Or is it a matter of monitoring the implementation of practices in the community? According to Teresa Simbaña of CONMIE, women now need greater awareness of their property rights in marriage or inheritance, since communal land is legitimized (Deere & León, 2001:254). Rights to land impact indigenous women's functioning such as access to extension services, spiritual peace, economic and food security, belonging, status, negotiating power, and other 'ends' vital for valued living, community influence and the right to participation.

The reasons gender and women's land right's were not a component in the debate of the 1994 law was the focus of CONAIE on indigenous collective land the national women's machinery was not involved as they were prioritizing legislation regarding domestic violence and the government had eliminated the Department of Peasant Women in the ministry of agriculture. Women had no representation. This error was partially corrected by CONAMU in the 1998 constitutional amendment while CONAIE continued to push ethnic issues. Since 1999, CONAMU has been lobbying with the appropriate authorities to make joint titling the norm in accordance with the civil code and constitution which until now, Ecuador has delayed implementing (Deere & León, 2001:242). A land title is important for the functioning of indigenous women as it decreases dependence on male family members, improves the fall-back position in time of crisis, grants the social value associated with land, gives women legitimate authority over the assets management and the strength to challenge other existing gender hierarchies and legitimizes their participation in cooperatives.

The Andean indigenous of Ecuador have a greater level of gender equitable land ownership than the coastal region due to the cultural philosophy of collective land and dual principle of women and men in the indigenous identity (Deere & León, 2001:314). Collective land rights in theory should benefit all and thus does not warrant a gender component, however it is not guaranteed all members of the community have secure access or control over land because the institutions, councils, assemblies or cooperatives that govern the distribution and access are dominated by gendered power relations and hierarchies to the demise of women's right to use, control, and influence over the communal asset. Subordination of women in the decision making process coupled with the subordination of women in the private realm makes the indigenous notion of collective land rights an ideal masking the advantage of some. Who makes the rules

or participates in setting the rules regarding communal land in indigenous communities? (Deere & León, 2001:27). The community leaders and household representatives that are men govern these rules. Some functionings of indigenous women are affected by this phenomenon, such as the dignity to participate, creation of social capital, sense of belonging in the community, to plan one's life, control over the environment, integrity and confidence in choices. The traditional systems of Andean culture gave decision-making power to both sexes in distinct spheres; however, this is insufficient alone to argue gender equality as men always occupied the roles of authority. As well, indigenous culture has been under attack for centuries weakening the argument of the movement's declaration that gender has no place in indigenous issues for it is already equal, thereby implying Colonial pressure has had zero influence on gender relations, where it has on every other aspect of life (Deere & León, 2001:249).

In Andean society land and women are the purveyors of life; the mothers to the community and culture, that cannot be separated. This link and identification women have to nature directly impacts their duties and is summarized nicely by Deere and León in the following quote - "*Just as the Earth feeds and reproduces life, the roles of indigenous women is defined in terms of physical and cultural reproduction. In our view, this limits their human development.*" (2001:248). This ideology of women and the earth is defended as the essence of indigenous culture, forcing out any discussion of women specific issues and confining women to a reproductive role based on biological determinates, excluding them from other domains (Deere & León, 2001:250). By linking indigenous women to culture, reproduction, and nature their opportunities in life choices are limited, their roles in society predetermined, and their achievable functionings confined to a small space in society. Accordingly, the social hierarchies and roles have manifest themselves in indigenous organizations and rural peasant organization that maintain a male-dominated atmosphere and in some cases actively marginalize the local participation and decision-making of women (Cameron, 2003:181). Women have become the vehicles for indigenous cultural identity, such as the social expectation of maintaining traditional dress (men less so), and their actual bodies become a space for social control and masculine dominance (Prieto, Cuminao, Flores, Maldondao, Pequeño, 2005:8).

From natural capital we move to the functionings of human capital. The transformation of human capital is contained or enabled by the relationship of the market, state, family and civil society (Bebbington, 1999:2023). Ecuador has a high over-all literacy rate in comparison to international standards, however, education and health outcomes are poor and social spending in these sectors is rapidly declining. Social expenditure in education as a percentage of GDP declined from 3.2% in 1973 to 1.7% in 2000 (World Bank, 2004:121). Enrolment in primary education along with the rate of completion is very high in

Ecuador, given the level of development, however, concern does not limit itself to enrolment rates, as the quality of education in Ecuador is very low and particularly worrying (World Bank, 2004:113).³⁶

Today more than half indigenous women are illiterate and only 25% of indigenous women completed primary school. Indigenous women in the highlands receive on average 1.4 years of school, indigenous men 2.4, and 7 for Ecuadorian women according to World Bank data for 2001. 16% of indigenous Andean women are monolingual (World Bank, 2004:120). Only speaking a native language aids in sustaining local networks but severely inhibits any chance of pursuing opportunities outside isolated rural indigenous communities these spatial limitations are placed on women in the name of culture (Radcliffe, Laurie & Andolina, 2003:392). From table 1.1 the large disparity in literacy is clear. We can assume that indigenous women are being overlooked in the provision of public and social services, development initiatives, in addition to gendered household restrictions in accessing education (Uquillas and Van Nieuwkoop, 2003:4).

Table 1.1 Illiteracy rates for 1995 - 2001 in the Sierra of Ecuador disaggregated by ethnicity

	1995		1999	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
National Average	7.50%	14.10%	8.10%	16.30%
Indigenous	36.60%	56.20%	31%	53.20%
Non - Indigenous	5.20%	11.00%	4.80%	10.90%

*Source: SIISE – INEC for 1995 &1999

Neo-liberal policies have limited government investment in the education system, particularly in rural or indigenous communities. Facilities are appalling; there is not enough teaching staff and quality is not well monitored. The citizenship entitlements of these individuals are being breached and the ‘doings’, in Sen terminology, of developing skills prohibited. These women do not have the functionings to interact at an equal level in Spanish speaking society even with equal internal and basic capabilities. Their capabilities have not been nourished to grow in a favourable micro, meso or macro environment. Rural indigenous women 15 years and older in Chimborazo have a functional illiteracy³⁷ rate of 60%, proving development and state education programs are not reaching those that could benefit most. Illiteracy limits the

³⁶ The ministry of Education implemented standardized math and language tests in private and public schools for the second, sixth, and ninth grades in 1996, 1997, 1998, and 2000. Results showed large deficiencies in both areas, especially for rural and public school students (World Bank, 2004:113).

³⁷ INEC census (1990) defines functional illiteracy as an individual with 3 years or less of primary education who is unable to fully comprehend what they read and cannot perform basic mathematical functions.

functioning of women to engage in debate and discourse in the community and larger society, limits their ability to negotiate within the household, the market and the state reduces their ability to access important information such as the price of commodities or confidence to participate in local organizations. Education in this discussion is seen as a catalyst for empowering the agency of indigenous women but not a solution to poverty or deprivation. Some of the possible reasons the capabilities of indigenous women are constrained are early pregnancy, lack of financial resources, poor education services, male-child preference, reproductive responsibilities, and more.

Human capital growth however goes beyond literacy to provide people with the skills that allow them a greater set of life choices. The macroeconomic crisis impacted resource allocation at the micro level and girls have 2.6% less chance of enrolment than boys. According to an analysis of social indicators by *Secretaría Técnica del Frente Social* (STFS), enrolment rates in primary education are not impacted by ethnicity. However enrolment in secondary school, children 12-17 years of age, are strongly impacted by ethnicity for indigenous women. The indigenous population is approximately 8% less likely to enrol than the average (STFS, 2004:67). This phenomenon is clear given the data in table 1.2.

Table 1.2 Enrolment rates by ethnic group in Ecuador

	Primary School	Secondary School (%)	Tertiary
Indigenous	85%	22%	3%
Afro	83%	31%	6%
White	92%	54%	19%
Total	89%	44%	14%

*Source: World Bank (2004):120

There are numerous reasons behind the lower enrolment rates of the indigenous, one such reason is families generally have more children than non-indigenous³⁸ and although this is decreasing, the costs of sending children to school are high. The expense of uniforms, transportation, and supplies are out of reach for many rural indigenous families. Indigenous families also have children at a young age, which limits mother's functioning and capability in education, forcing her to leave school early. In the province of Chimborazo, in 1990 the net completion rate of primary school was 53.6% and in 2001 52.9% (STFS, 2004:57). Table A.2.2 of the Appendix, shows reasons for not enrolling in an education program for rural youth. The cost of pursuing an education is a preventative reason for all groups except indigenous women

³⁸ The rural fertility rate of Chimborazo in 1982 was 7.0 children, urban 4.2. In 1990 the rural fertility rate was 6.3 and urban 3.4 (SIISE -<http://www.frentesocial.gov.ec/siise/siise.htm>).

and men. The burden of contribution for indigenous women in sustaining the household is high and impedes education opportunity. Income poverty and education have a positive mutually reinforcing relationship, not surprisingly, the poorest households in Ecuador have a high opportunity cost should they dedicate resources to education versus income earning activities. The loss of labour in sending a child to school can often be too great in relation to the over all welfare of the household. Only 17% of indigenous women cited cost as the reason for not enrolling which is illustrative of how indigenous women have normalized and internalized the gendered hierarchies in the family. The service quality is referred to in the category 'absences of professors', indigenous women cite this more than other groups and could be a reflection of their status as the proprietors of indigenous knowledge and culture, a knowledge system of great significance for their livelihoods and communities. According to Víctor Morocho, Manager of education and culture at FENOCIN, barriers to female indigenous education are lack of financial resource, productive responsibilities of young women and *machismo* or sexist attitudes from the male 'benevolent' dictator.³⁹ School is perceived as a male space in indigenous communities, however the ideology is changing with innovative institutions such as the Dolores Cacuango School of Women's Leadership⁴⁰. Women must believe they have equal rights and equally deserve the same knowledge and skills as *mestizos* or men and reject the symbolic violence of oppression in capabilities and education 'ends'.

"...We have been busy with household chores, working the land and looking after children, we haven't had the chance to expand our knowledge...we are very behind men."

Blanca Chacoso school co-ordinator - Dolores Cacuango School of Women's Leadership⁴¹

For many indigenous, the education system is oriented towards Spanish speakers and follows a culturally Spanish curriculum. In 1994 the Board of education reformed the Law of Education in an attempt to include topics oriented towards indigenous people.⁴² Full integration and implementation of the reforms were not achieved, leaving the indigenous in a precarious position to find educational intuitions that suits their language and cultural needs⁴³. The formal education offered by the government is another example of the paternalism from colonialist Spanish society towards the indigenous. The fear of stigmas against their language and knowledge systems creates an imbalance in the social power systems. This type of

³⁹ Interview August 2nd, 2005 with Víctor Morocho, FENOCIN.

⁴⁰ Named after Dolores Cacuango who founded the first bilingual education program for indigenous peoples in the municipality of Cayambe. The school placed value on Kichwa language, indigenous culture, community, solidarity and spirit (King & Haboud, 2002:379).

⁴¹ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/default.stm>

⁴² Thematic areas included 'myths and legends', 'ancestral technical knowledge' amongst others (King & Haboub, 2002:377).

⁴³ Prior to the 1960 all formal schooling was in Spanish. In January of 1981 legislation was passed which made official bilingual and intercultural education.

curriculum diminishes the importance of indigenous identity and deters parents from sending children to an institution that symbolically rejects their value system. According to Luciano Martínez of FLACSO in Quito, the obstacle facing indigenous women is not only rooted in politics of the state but familial and community based hindrances as well. That is, their conceptualized roles as the centre of the community and traditional values prohibiting full involvement in the labour market or seeking education⁴⁴.

Indigenous women lacking education is a problem of state commitment, conceptualization of rights within the family and the indigenous movement confining women to tradition. For example, the President of FENOCIN, one of the most influential and active NGOs regarding rural issues, cites women to be the guardians of culture, tradition, custom and language with too many activities under their responsibility. Señor Cruz believes education is synonymous with a loss of indigenous values but can aid in family planning thereby freeing available time of women for productive work⁴⁵. This perspective is mainstreamed within the indigenous movement and epitomizes protection of tradition at the sacrifice of women's advancement in functionings and capabilities. However, male absence forces women to act in lieu of men as household head and community management, thus one can argue that the education of women is indispensable to the community (Prieto, Cuminao, Flores, Maldondao, Pequeño, 2005:16).

Graph A.2.1 in the Appendix shows a rise in labour participation, which confirms the desperation of impoverished households due to unfair market mechanisms and liberalization⁴⁶. Contemporary Ecuador has moderately incorporated indigenous women into the formal labour market, which is increasingly flexible but; some barriers remain. The insertion and segregation of indigenous peoples, into particular areas of the labour market is a result of a number of social phenomenon; they are perceived to be more docile (not challenging superiors), the language barrier (lack of or limited Spanish) facilitates breach of their rights as labourers, and they are often likely to accept lower wages for lack of other viable opportunities due to limited development of their human capital or skills and remote location. Human capital deficit contributes to limited formal labour opportunities. (Radcliffe, Laurie & Andolina, 2003:392).

Although today women's labour force participation is quite high, they are concentrated in unstable and insecure sectors such as home based employment and much of the informal economy. These forms of economic participation leave women particularly vulnerable to other forms of deprivation and maintain the status quo in Ecuador by confining them to marginalized sectors with no possible mobility. Women as

⁴⁴ Interview August 1st, 2005 with Dr. Luciano Martínez, FLACSO.

⁴⁵ Interview July 27th, 2005 with Pedro de la Cruz, FENOCIN.

⁴⁶ See Appendix A for additional information.

men should be entitled to certain functionings derived from productive work such as dignity, freedom from abuse, adequate remuneration, and enjoyment. The factors limiting women's functionings are high entry requirements, cultural norms regarding labour market segregation, poor monitoring of employment codes, and women's limited knowledge of their rights. There is a high demand for women's labour in the flower sector in which many indigenous participate and the reality is very few indigenous households survive by traditional means and have gone through the process of proletarianization.

Unfortunately, entrance into the flower industry has been done on an individual basis and the capitalist flower sector is hyper exploitative with no one overseeing the welfare of the workers⁴⁷. Indigenous communities face new challenges, such as health issues from pesticide use, however the traditional mode of thinking does not permit indigenous institutions to address these concerns that face predominately women. Exploitation of indigenous workers is the problem of no one. CONAIE maintains its focus on ethnic rights and overlooks other emerging issues⁴⁸. For women working in the flower sector, the industry becomes a place in which patriarchal norms are reproduced, as many women are unwilling to challenge superiors or create/participate in organized unions. Empowerment, status and autonomy over income and some household decisions are functionings that improve with labour force participation for indigenous women, however it is not likely that patriarchal relations are challenged while other functionings are sacrificed, such as time spent with the family, *mingas* and community (Korovkin, 2003:28).

A discussion on human capital would not be complete without reference to health and nutrition. One cannot dispute that women are biologically different from men with important health needs. They need independence of choice and knowledge to control their reproductive bodies, and the agency, self-confidence and economic autonomy to implement choice. It would be preferable to explore deeper into the differences in functionings between indigenous women and other groups of the population, such as illnesses or disease, unfortunately the data sources used for this paper do not provide insight.

Since 1995 the average number of health check-ups for pregnant women has decreased in the Sierra. In 1995, the urban average was 6.3 visits and the rural 3.3. The decrease in use of health services could be a result of the economic crisis at the end of the decade and diminishing government spending. According to the Ecuadorian Ministry of Public Health the acceptable minimum number of health check-up is five, which the rural average does not meet as seen in table 1.3 below.

⁴⁷ Ecuador does have pesticide use regulations and labour codes but neither are enforced, women work well over the legal 40 hours per week and do not have access to protective clothing (Korovkin, 2003:26).

⁴⁸ Interview August 1st, 2005 with Dr. Luciano Martínez, FLACSO.

Table 1.3: Reproductive Health Services in the Sierra

Location	Average Number of checkups	Percentage of Births with No Medical Attention
Urban	5.1	7%
Rural	3	27%
National Average	4.3	14.90%

* Source: SIISE- INEC & World Bank 1999

This demonstrates that rural women have a less opportunity to prevent complicated births and receive less formal medical attention in protection of their health. Remote location is obviously one explanation for the shortfall. Many indigenous communities compensate for this inequality by returning to traditional medicines and the use of midwives. Nationally there is more cause for concern as the maternal mortality rate since 1995 has increased from which indigenous women suffer most.⁴⁹ Federally funded health services have been reduced and increasingly citizens are turning to private health insurance and services, if they use services at all. This is a direct result of neo-liberalism. (STFS, 2004:76).

Table A.2.3 in the Appendix shows that the rural areas have a consumption deficit impacting a broad scope of capabilities/functionings, such as security of a safe dwelling, mobility, entertainment, access to information and emotional well-being. The data reveals that poverty worsened in the last decade concluding in an economic crisis in 1999, followed by dollarization. Dollarization has had many effects on the economy, most of which are beyond the scope of this study. With respect to consumption patterns, the cost of utilities, housing and clothing have increased and the costs of food and durable items have decreased (World Bank, 2004:21). For additional information on consumption refer to Table B.2.1 in Appendix B.

Although this data is not disaggregated by category of consumption it is a reliable starting point for analysis of food consumption deficiencies in Ecuador, an affliction common in the Sierra leading to malnutrition. Food consumption is lowest in the Amazon, however highland rural provinces suffer the most extreme food deprivation. The provinces of Chimbacazo, Cotopaxi, Imbabura, Loja, Bolívar, Tungurhua, and Cañar have the highest rural food deprivation and the corresponding concentration of indigenous people (World Bank, 2004: 115). Chronic malnutrition occurs in Chimbacazo, Cotopaxi, and Bolívar (STFS, 2004:85). The long-term effects of malnutrition could cause stunting in children; slowed brain activity, and lower fertility for mothers. Mothers, and women generally, have lower nutritional

⁴⁹ Maternal mortality rate (total maternal deaths per 100,000 births) in 1995 was 62.7 and in 2000 it was 80.0 (SIISE (2002)).

functioning then other members of the household because of lower perceived need from the benevolent dictator or a mother's food diversion to children. Malnutrition is a direct result of unjust land reform, inequitable access to sufficient land for subsistence agriculture and neo-liberal policies.

Social capital is based on trust, history and social cohesion and is often conceptualized as the networks or associations that assist in collective action for collective benefit. It is a concept that is difficult to quantify and interpret. Indigenous women have not yet capitalized on formal institutions for their own benefit but do sustain and create networks through less formal channels such as *mingas*. Within Ecuador there are very few visible indigenous women-only organization, CONMIE is the only one at the national level, which leaves us to question who is representing the needs of poor rural indigenous women? How are women accessing national institutions that distribute resources and make decisions regarding investment and programming? (Bebbington, 1999:2036). Social capital has more recently been the foundation of many indigenous development initiatives; unfortunately the beneficiaries are too often those individuals in the community with the power to direct resource allocation. Social capital is a driving force in sustainable community development, and has often been a response to diminishing support from the state and failure to provided minimum public or social services. Thus communities have developed coping strategy to assure their own advancement and been dubbed more efficient in targeting specific local needs, through decentralization. This is in actuality a reflection of the wider economic policies that have placed many communities, especially rural, at a greater disadvantage because of less state assistance and transference of social responsibility.

Indigenous people in the Andes understand that interaction with the community is important for self-preservation and collective progress. Indigenous worldviews recognize the community as an entity for growth and *pueblos* of the Andes interact with their environment on a very personal level, linking material and non-material benefits of a healthy community. For example the use of land in traditional ceremonies reinforces the solidarity of community members a tangible resource delivering material and spiritual wealth. Social capital decreases economic transaction cost, thus women's continuing investment in the *mingas*, which can address issues of incomplete markets and asymmetrical information through exchange relationship and reciprocity. Social capital also plays a larger role in identity creation and the sense of belonging, both, affecting one's happiness. For indigenous women social capital is increasingly important because it is women who populate the communities.

Speaking an indigenous language is one of the key aspects to identification within an indigenous group. Belonging and acceptance increases with this shared value strengthening social ties to the community. In

relation to poverty and productivity, speaking a native indigenous language has a positive impact on the productivity of small farmers. Landowners who are weary of renting out their plots with uncertain protection of property right favour those with strong kinship ties and are more likely to rent through networks versus the formal market (World Bank, 2004:105).

Indigenous women are emerging as new social actors within the indigenous movement and independent of the movement at the local level, which limits their ability to provoke social change. Many of the predominant social institutions addressing indigenous issues do not mainstream gender. For example, CODENPE⁵⁰ does not have in its organizational structure a gender focal point⁵¹; resulting in unequivocal marginalization of gendered needs at all levels of organizational objectives. Many indigenous women have recognized their incomplete representation in mainstream indigenous organizations and that specific political and development arenas remain off-limits (Radcliffe, Laurie & Andolina, 2003:393) In response, women are beginning to strengthen their national networks and solidarity independently, in accepting the female indigenous identity and creating women's organizations or platforms. In 2004⁵² and 2005⁵³ formal gathering of female indigenous leaders took place to discuss the political, social, economic and cultural rights of indigenous women. These events were an important step in creating the political power and influence indigenous women need for social change and full inclusion into organizations such as CONAIE and CODENPE. Transnational networks have also been created at the Indigenous' Women's Summit of the America's in 2002 and again 2004, strengthening, solidarity and acknowledgment of female demands. Women are not excluded entirely from the mainstream indigenous movement, however, because women are solely responsible for social reproduction, their political role and influence is often confined to being 'cultural guardians' at the local level (Radcliffe, Laurie, & Andolina, 2003:393).

In 2004 CONMIE invited indigenous women from all over the country to discuss social and political participation, access and control of natural resources, participation in the formal labour market, reproductive rights, social protection and violence against women (CONMIE, 2004:4). Comparatively, the resolutions from the 2005 meeting of CONAIE women only included the thematic areas of politics and organization, rights and territories. The gender specific resolutions were freedom of participation of women with voice and vote in all decisions, 50% participation of women in all councils, assemblies, and any other institutional bodies, a political agenda of indigenous women, women's rights to education, and

⁵⁰ Indigenous representatives who oversee development projects staff CODENPE, a state institution.

⁵¹ On July 28th, 2005, CODENPE had not had a gender focal point for over a year. Prior, a temporary intern from abroad filled this position.

⁵² The event was collaboration between UNIFEM-AR, UNFPA, CONAMU and CONMIE.

⁵³ Organized by CONAIE.

regional teams of women to train in human rights; excluding domestic violence. The CONAIE event and its participants reject the idea of an indigenous women's organization, openly discredit CONMIE as illegitimate⁵⁴ and the bulk of the resolutions nurture the community and a minority are gender aware (CONAIE, 2005:1). It would appear that CONMIE addresses a more comprehensive list of concerns affecting women's functionings, including violence and male alcoholism. CONMIE has set the stage for national indigenous women's organization, but is not without fault. It too is very critical of indigenous women in mixed organizations. This type of conflict between indigenous organizations only debases their objectives and organizational reputation. Solidarity is key, especially when faced by opposition against women only organization.⁵⁵

Rural Andean indigenous women, unlike mestizo women or indigenous men are not migrating to the urban centres, forcing the gender division of labour to change and women having an increasing number of responsibilities. The traditional gender roles are being challenged, giving women access to productive resources; social forums like peasant organizations, and increased labour force participation. Indigenous women must recognize these new opportunities to use their agency for an improved set of opportunities⁵⁶. These changes in the structure of rural society are creating new spaces, challenging gendered stereotypes and the gender regime. Conscious recognition of the gender hierarchy, on the part of rural women, is necessary should actual social change be achievable and rejection of the "natural" gender order for a new more equitable social organization.

Visibility of women in the indigenous movement has been a reoccurring theme since the beginning of this research endeavour. Communities must re-evaluate the significance of women's roles at the micro, meso and macro levels. CONAIE, with the most political power and influence of indigenous NGOs, has yet to make concrete declarations to eliminate discrimination against women or to establish an agenda oriented towards bettering gender relations (Prieto, Cumia, Flores, Maldondao, Pequeño, 2005:2). No policy has been passed in commitment towards female emancipation because it is not convenient to the organization or its leaders. There are no policies or will within CONAIE to increase the visibility of women and its vision stipulates that ethnic issues address all citizens. Community leaders do not recognize disparity between men or women and claim it is a distinction foreign to them. The indigenous movement gives virtually no recognition to a difference in functionings or women's issues. The influence women do

⁵⁴ CONAIE accuses CONMIE of inciting conflict within the indigenous movement.

⁵⁵ Interview August 5th 2005 with Jorge Leon and Alicia Garces, CEDIME.

⁵⁶ Interview August 5th 2005 with Jorge Leon and Alicia Garces, CEDIME.

currently have is a bottom-up endeavour and not top-down⁵⁷ and women's demands have remained secondary to ethnic demands (Radcliffe, 2000:8; Ferraro, 2001:49).

Agency and Structure: The influence of identity and society

Rural women, potential agents of change, struggle within structures to overcome their functionings deficiencies. The existence of assets alone will not suffice in creating a sustainable and viable livelihood. As agents we interact within the broader social structure, which modifies transformation of assets. The institutions that govern behaviour and the organizations that either inhibit or facilitate the exercise of capabilities and choices take place within complex social relations (Ellis, 2000:39; Bebbington, 1999:2035). If we conceptualize assets as more than the means to accomplish a certain goal, assets also represent importance and *meaning* to an individual or household's world, thereby making the ways in which assets are employed very significant. For example, what is the perceived importance of female indigenous human capital, given the preceding analysis that clearly illustrates suppression and marginalization of their full functionings? Although assets function within the structure of the political and economic environment, households still make rational choices based on the apparent value of each (Bebbington, 1999:2022). Masculine interpretations of indigenous needs are based on traditions affecting the rights and functionings of rural communities and create a community identity that is centred on indigenous women (Radcliffe, 2000:10).

“Indigenous women represent the collective, without their specificity within the collectivity being recognised beyond the cultural dimension.” (Radcliffe, 2000: 10).

Mixed livelihood strategies have become the norm in the rural Andean landscape in large part due to long-term insufficient access to land. Livestock, migration, home-based work, trade, and textiles have allowed families to remain in their communities while improving the possibility of accumulation. Entrance into such economies requires skills and access to the mediating institutions or networks that link the rural markets to the wider economy, both social spheres dominated by men (Bebbington, 1999:2028). The structure of indigenous society is changing by the forces of globalization; yet, cultural norms prohibit women from participating in a variety of new opportunities.

With respect to use of natural capital, the land markets in Ecuador act as a huge constraint on the agency of individuals, particularly indigenous peasants, in renting or purchasing land. Resource allocation is by

⁵⁷ Interview, August 1st, 2005 with Dr. Luciano Martínez, FLACSO.

no means fair and the functioning derived from indigenous access to land surpasses that of income generation to include meaningful cultural practices (Bebbington, 1999:2034). Indigenous communities derive 'ends' from land such as spiritual peace, maintenance of indigenous knowledge, status, ritual practices along with production; most households preserve a plot under all circumstances. Thus, valued functionings for rural indigenous communities is clear in the agency expressed by foregoing additional income opportunities for the preservation of a rural home by members of the family remaining behind (women), while men migrate. However, are these women making choices independently and in their own best interest? The practice is empowering to the community as a form of resistance to the dominant neo-liberal ideology and macro-economic policies but suppresses women's inclusion or growth into new social opportunities.

The reproduction of cultural practices, often brought about through indigenous connection to natural capital, fosters the individual and collective power needed to challenge the structure and question the current methodology of development, growth, conservation, and so on. Indigenous households have little access to credit, a structural barrier, which thereby reduces their potential agricultural production or the possibility of modernization. Society, the government and the international community favours commercial market producers, a functioning achieved through opportunities systematically closed to indigenous.

Agency is also expressed in action and many indigenous women do not seek medical attention when ill. In reference to Table A.2.4 and A.2.5 in the appendices, it becomes clear that many women cited minor illness and bad service at the health centres as the reasons. This is a strong divergence from the pattern of all other demographic groups. These respondents, although not disaggregated by region, illustrate much with respect to the external treatment of indigenous women in public or private institutions and their perceived sense of self-importance. The external structure in this case plays an important part in shaping how indigenous women exercise their agency. The perception of bad service could be due to the women's extensive knowledge and preference for traditional medicines or the mal treatment, from long waiting times, received on account of ethnic identity. If we look deeper into the statistic, rural indigenous women in fact wait almost double the time for service in health centres in comparison, supporting the argument that categorization within an indigenous group results in discrimination in the provision of services. These indicators show that discrimination not only exists at the macro level in resource allocation but within the psyche of the healthcare providers. The time it takes to arrive at a health service centre is highest for peasant and indigenous women in rural areas. Given the amount of responsibilities indigenous women have (agriculture, food preparation, caring for livestock, childcare, wage labour, caring for the sick,

cleaning, and more) the time spent in reaching a healthcare centre coupled with the waiting time is a great sacrifice. Interestingly in table A.2.5 no indigenous women cited the cost as an impediment to seeking healthcare, other social barriers are of greater significance, as with education. Perhaps embarrassment of being touched by a stranger (especially a man), disbelief in modern medicine, accepted segregation of spaces between *mestizo* and indigenous, perceived vulnerability to abuse in health centres, or permission to leave domestic duties from male household head.

Indigenous women's identity interplays with the structure to effect their health and well-being. The structural environment effects how indigenous women perceive and act upon the importance of their health. Indigenous women are very conscious of discrimination and are aware of the discrepancy in treatment and services, and this impacts on their identity as citizens deserving of equal dignity. Related to dignity is the extreme modesty of indigenous women, service providers are not sensitive to this identity dimension making women less inclined to seek formal healthcare.

The agency or the self-interest of women as seen by Sen in "*Gender and Cooperative Conflicts*" is overshadowed by the identities of women tied to the interest of the household and to uphold a traditional indigenous communities (Iversen, 2003:97). The transition from capabilities to functionings is an act of choice and opportunity where indigenous women have limited autonomy.

"Our actual agency is often overshadowed by social rules and by conventional perceptions of legitimacy. In the case of gender divisions, these convictions often act as barriers to seeking a more equitable deal, and sometimes militate even against recognizing the spectacular lack of equity in existing social arrangements." (Sen, 1990:149)

Macro Institutions: Indigenous Women's Role and Representation

Previously, access to land was the focus of the indigenous movement's struggle. After the disappointing land reform, and the advent of neo-liberal policies which brought rise to export-oriented agricultural production, the struggle and movement has shifted focus to issues such as access to employment in the formal labour market (e.g. the cut flower industry for women), terms of trade, food security, fair wages and access to education.

Indigenous people are vocal with respect to modernization, especially when it negatively impacts their community values. They are disadvantaged in the global market and the movement has been the principle

voice in trying to change the unequal terms of globalization and liberalization. Women are not foreign to the struggle, they played a major role in the 1990 road blockades, however they enjoy little legitimate authority in indigenous spaces and their articulation is permitted but limited to the local and areas such as cultural preservation, not trade mechanisms forcing their families to migrate. Their goals are secondary to the collective. Meanwhile the national indigenous organizations, in cooperation with international organizations, plan and design development programs and the political agenda. The indigenous movement has limited its political voice and priority to question only ethnic rights and demands, making invisible the gender inequalities behind traditional notions of duality and gender balance. Indigenous women are bound to ethnic discourses, inhibiting them from questioning domestic roles or violence against women, both major problems in communities. Until now indigenous women have yet to be successful in creating public discourse on their specific needs (Sanchez, Ferraro & Flores, 2000:56; Ferraro, 2001:48).

Similar exclusion is noted in the Ecuadorian women's movement. Although women are not a homogenous group few of the major women's organization, including CONAMU, the national women's machinery have yet to implement indigenous specific programs. In a meeting with CONAMU on July 27th, 2005, it was stated that the institution does not work specifically with indigenous women but has programs addressing rural matters such as credit and poverty. If organizations create development programs and collective spaces targeting rural women, it has a homogenizing effect on the category of women and rejects the diversity within the target population. Indigenous women then are unable to participate fully due to stigmas, embedded social hierarchies or a lack of self-confidence to express their ideas or desires, then how are their needs being addressed efficiently. Indigenous women view the women's movement as being concerned with *mestizo* interests and not validating those of indigenous women, poverty and discrimination, thereby reducing their ability to identify with the national discourse on women. The women's movement must be more friendly and sensitive to diversity and indigenous priorities (Deere & León, 2001:248).

Women are invisible as producers and their needs marginalized in agricultural politics and macroeconomics. The Law of Agrarian Development reflects this as does the fact that CONAMU has failed to insert itself into macro spaces. The national women's machinery has not placed economic or productive politics as a priority; greater emphasis is on issues such as gender violence and reproductive health. This is disheartening given the capabilities deficiency and the rural economy in which indigenous women live, work and produce. CONAMU does not prioritize indigenous women's issues and questionably recognizes the diversity of Ecuadorian women (Lind, 1992:148). The women's movement is

removed from indigenous society; in order for a true framework targeting indigenous women direct representation in the state institutions is necessary (Radcliffe, Laurie & Andolina, 2003:402).

Traditional political institutions, based on either male or class perspectives, are unable to address gender needs, forcing women to organize autonomously in a demonstration of opposition towards institutionalized power (Lind, 1992:135), a process in which rural indigenous women are increasingly involving themselves at the local level. Their collective identity has resulted in cooperative organization for community betterment and the politicization of indigenous women's needs. The fact that rural women are organizing independently of men exemplifies that their needs and identities differ and give rural indigenous women a forum for action to overcome the power differentials in their homes, communities and society. Local level indigenous women's organizations address basic survival needs (Lind, 1992:147). The creation of autonomous women indigenous organizations shows that traditional political institutions, both indigenous and non-indigenous, do not offer space for participation and reproduce the unequal social relations that have marginalized indigenous women as seen in Chimborazo (Radcliffe, Laurie & Andolina, 2003:393).

The accomplishments gained by the indigenous movement or the women's movement have made indistinguishable the diversity of those that they represent. In short, indigenous women have not gained access to the same rights as others and "*remain excluded from the social categories to whom rights are awarded or enforced*" (Radcliffe, 2000:1-2).

By no means should indigenous women disregard their ethnic identity; it is essential for a sense of self, belonging and can be beneficial for economic advancement. Korovkin (2003) delineates how cultural resources have been the source of growth in textile producing areas in the highlands in Otovalo and Peguche. Both are known all around the world for indigenous crafts, music and textile commodities and the small local production units wherein women participate. Today the division of labour in these areas is becoming more flexible and indigenous women participate in the commercialization of products, including traveling abroad. Importantly, the capitalist growth of these textile-based economies broke-down the reciprocal labour exchange and communal redistributive mechanisms, vital pillars of the community (Korovkin, 2003:147; Prieto, Cuminao, Flores, Maldondao, Pequeño, 2005:6).

At the municipal level many indigenous communities have managed to advocate and campaign issues and elect representatives. In the *cantons* of Guamote and Cotacachi, in the provinces of Chimborazo and Imbabura respectively, indigenous representatives have been elected community leaders through key

support of indigenous organizations, dominated by men. The participatory forms of government then advocated, marginalized indigenous and peasant women. *“Moreover, the assumption of harmonious and cooperative social relations often masks important inequalities in the distribution of socio-economic and gender power within indigenous communities.”* (Cameron, 2003:181). According to a census done by the World Bank for PRODEPINE, in Ecuador there were 688 indigenous and afro women’s organizations, the majority in the Sierra in 2000, a small figure compare to over 5000 rural organization in 1997 (Ferraro, 2001:46).

Macro indigenous organizations purport that gendered issues are not within the scope of a dual complementary culture, in so doing ignoring the influence of Spanish patriarchal norms. As a result, they pursue legislation or policy in the name of the indigenous movement at the expense of indigenous women’s welfare. Many organizations will defend their position in saying that the indigenous communities face much graver issues than gender equality and poverty, however all matters affect individuals differently. To find an organization that in reality represents indigenous women is a rare occurrence and an exception; indigenous women’s exclusion nationally is blatant. Resistance to the creation of indigenous women’s organizations is explicit in the national arena; such attitudes undermine the confidence of women to speak out against injustice.

Now indigenous women enter the political sphere as actors struggling for social change. The indigenous movement has seen the rise of a number of prominent women to positions of power within local and national institutions driving the movement, such as Dr. Lourdes Tiban, National Executive Secretary of CODENPE. Female leaders do not always approach their work with gender consciousness, nor represent women, and it is highly questionable whether the decision-making power of some women is legitimate or token. As stated by Radcliffe, indigenous women have reached official appointments within the institutions that govern the movement, however *“...they are generally not granted the resources, decision-making powers and autonomy necessary to articulate an agenda that reflects their gender, class and racial position simultaneously”* (2000:11).

Chapter 5: Conclusions & Women's Empowerment

The functionings deficiency of indigenous women is as much a consequence of long-term poverty as it is of embedded patriarchal norm, illustrated in access to education, labour force participation and land rights. Both the indigenous movement and the women's movement have rejected the varied experiences based on the multiple immutable identities indigenous women possess. The indigenous collective identity is a strong mobilizing force, however, is detrimental to recognizing gender specific identities. The collective identity is of great importance for indigenous men and women however the movement must allow for space to recognize the multiple identities within in the collective in order for gendered interests to be fulfilled.

There is currently a disjuncture between indigenous women and the women's movement, which has not politicized the importance of racial difference or ethnic women's needs (Prieto, Cumiaao, Flores, Maldondao, Pequeño, 2005: 2). The women's movement has homogenized women and their needs resulting in few indigenous women participating or identifying with women's organizations and is bound by racial hierarchies that suppress indigenous women's self-confidence to be full participants. Recognition and acceptance that *mestizo* and indigenous women face some of the same afflictions, such as gender violence, could be one way to accomplish a greater level of solidarity between women. Based on the above analysis, indigenous women would benefit if they inserted themselves into the women's movement with more rigor, making demands for representation that includes them in the gender struggle although being recognized as heterogeneous from *mestizo*. The priorities and experiences of *mestizo* and indigenous women differ; however deserve representation and achievement of valued functionings.

This case seems to illustrate that identification with a specific ethnic group bounds these women to remain confined in a system of unequal gender relations in the name of tradition. By no means is this paper trying to advocate the feminist voice, as the catalyst for change, for the feminist voice is not a universal language to express inequalities. However it does support a stronger female *identity* for indigenous women, currently being expressed through CONMIE, a new participant that works within the framework of indigenous rights. The ideological interpretation of the Andean culture, that is, the equal roles of men and women who work in harmony as advocated by Nina Pacari, is the ideal, however this is not a realistic philosophy until the social development, or the functionings and capabilities of indigenous women, reach an equitable level as compared to men and society. Indigenous women must find their own voice to fight the deep inequalities within the ethnic fight (Prieto, Cumiaao, Flores, Maldondao, Pequeño, 2005:3).

Recognition that indigenous women are being discriminated against in mixed organizations is slowly becoming evident and being challenged by a few women. In mixed organizations indigenous women are marginalized in leadership roles and participation and making demands for equal roles, e.g. decision-making and allocation of funds. Women's organizations are slowly emerging and provide the leadership skills and training women need, as with the Dolores Cacuango School of Women's Leadership. Such endeavours are met with strong resistance from mixed organizations, as experienced by CONMIE in 1996. CONAIE was adamantly against the creation of a national indigenous women's organization and threatened expulsion of its female members should they support the attempt made by Teresa Simbaña. The first national indigenous women's congress was held in 1996 without representatives from CONAIE. The primary justification for men's objection to women's organization was that they are not an indigenous idea. Today CONMIE is affiliated with approximately fifty rural women's organizations and provides the beginning to a national female indigenous voice (Deere & León, 2001:253). The emergence of CONMIE gave rise to gender awareness in the movement, however this has yet to transcend into action. Although women are creating their own spaces for participation their lack of influence in the traditional indigenous structures of power and governance has remained (Deere & León, 2001:251).

By focusing on functionings we can judge inequality of choice through the variables that make human life valuable and seek justice. Rural Andean indigenous women in Ecuador do not face legal restrictions to participation, however, social norms hamper the freedom to embrace full functionings. This is illustrated by the statistics on education or health in the preceding chapters. These indicators show that although services, which are resources, are in place, a large portion of the female indigenous population does not participate and therefore is unable to attain all the corresponding 'ends' or freedoms. These women are not experiencing life in ways that Sen would deem characteristically human, on account of the local patriarchy, ethnic discrimination, market mechanisms and more; phenomena which are normalized by the history of symbolic violence. An internal and external change in social perceptions of indigenous women would aid functionings. Indigenous women need to have a sense of solidarity amongst them and to acknowledge that their needs differ from indigenous men. The point of this paper is not to diminish the significance of the traditional Andean philosophy but to deconstruct it and question whether indigenous women can objectively confront the injustice that manifests itself in daily life when they are not 'capable' to function fully due to deep-rooted oppression in the social processes of Ecuadorian society (Valdés, 1995:427).

The indigenous notion of collective rights has been to the detriment of the full functionings of Andean women. It is solidarity and collective agency that will be the vehicle to promote their capabilities and welfare. By structuring the women's identities around being indigenous, the intersectionality of class, race, and gender as combined forces that influence their functionings is renounced. We must not conceive the rights awarded to the indigenous whole as 'ends' for then we are obscuring the issues of patriarchy and eroding the true multiplicity of experience (Radcliffe, 2000: 11-12). Poverty, conceptualized as deficiency in functioning, is largely a structural phenomenon. Rural indigenous women must move towards strengthening their solidarity for collective action to gain political power that will challenge the social, political, cultural and economic organization of society that reproduce adverse circumstance.

Pacari argues that the level of female participation in the decision making process is irrelevant because each household has a vote carried out by the male benevolent head who represents the interests of the entire family. Unfortunately it is not guaranteed that this male representative consults the other family members when making his decision and there is no evidence to support her argument. Indigenous women have different concerns than those represented by the community. Women-only institutions raise very different issues, compared to mixed organizations, including land rights, as seen with CONMIE (Deere & León, 2001:251). Indigenous households are not without hierarchy and ultimately it is the man who makes any strategic decisions. The voice of indigenous women has been strengthened in local decision-making, however this has not been accompanied by a critique of the basic gender inequalities. At this time there is a disjuncture between the leaders of the indigenous movement and actual life of citizens in the community (Ferraro, 2001:48-49). National indigenous organizations must take greater note of the themes that affect the daily lives and are part of the discourse of local women's organizations, such as, illness, absence of men, poverty, marginalization from the state, and mis-information and not to view institutions such as CONMIE as militant but for it's true intention of strengthening the self-esteem of women and question male privilege (Prieto, Curninao, Flores, Maldondao, Pequeño, 2005:21). Indigenous women must feel they are bearers of rights, free from domestic violence with equal voice in the institutions that govern their opportunities.

Indigenous women exist and interact with society by being situated at a fragile meeting point of multiple forms of oppression. For greater understanding of their complex realities more research needs to target indigenous women independently of men and *mestizos*. No longer can male assumptions channelled through male-dominated institutions be deemed acceptable.

By using a theoretical framework such as Sen's capabilities approach, we bring the issue of poverty experienced by the rural indigenous women, back to the notion of the human being versus gender or ethnicity. The discussion must be further explored but this research paper provides the first steps towards a different lens of reflection regarding the realities of rural indigenous women, a lens that captures agency and choice.

Appendices A

Table: A.2.1 Welfare Comparison of the indigenous populations in the highland provinces of Ecuador

Sector/ Indicator	Ecuador- National Average**	Carchi	Imbabura	Pichincha	Cotopaxi	Tungurahua	Bolívar	Chimborazo	Cañar	Azuay	Loja
Poverty: UBN*	61.3%	79.2%	88.6%	72.1%	97.4%	93.9%	96.8%	95.4%	95.2%	85.6%	90.3%
Extreme Poverty- UBN*	31.9%	78.6%	88.3%	71.7%	97.4%	94%	96.8%	95.5%	95.1%	85.2%	90.5%
Illiteracy Women***	10.3%	42.6%	44.2%	28.5%	46.4%	37.3%	48.5%	46.7%	43%	31.6%	29.5%
Completion of Secondary School Women****	22%	3.2%	2.5%	5.2%	1.4%	1.9%	2.1%	2.2%	2.1%	2.6%	6.1%
Home Access to electricity	89.7%	59.9%	80.5%	90.5%	66.2%	86.1%	60.3%	82.1%	82%	86.4%	75%
Home Access to a telephone	32.2%	16.2%	11.4%	21.2%	2.3%	4.4%	2.1%	2.7%	10.4%	11.6%	6.2%
Use of firewood or coal to cook	13.2%	44.5%	46.5%	18.5%	66.3%	60.1%	78.6%	69.9%	30.4%	38.6%	56.3%
Public Water network	X	36.7%	30.2%	39.6%	12.7%	18.5%	16%	15.2%	25.9%	32.5%	20.8%
Garbage Collection Service	62.7%	45%	22.6%	62.3%	3.5%	8.4%	5%	6.1%	5.2%	20.8%	10.8%

*Source: SIISE - INEC VI Population and Living Census 2001

*Unsatisfied Basic Needs measures dwelling, health, education and employment. According to the definition adopted by the SIISE, a home suffers from dissatisfied basic needs (NBI) if presents all except one of the following deprivations:

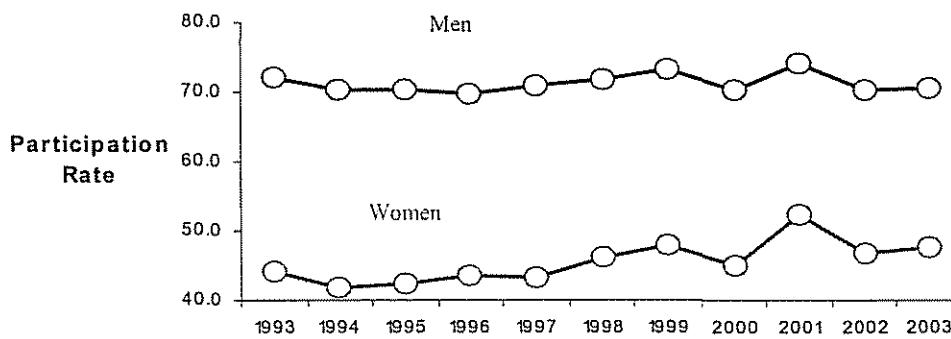
1. A residence does not have access to electricity either publicly or privately
2. Water is Supplied from a river, rain or tubing
3. A home does not have lavatory connected to a sewer system, septic system or latrine
4. The residence has a room for every four people (excluding kitchen, bath and garage)
5. Household head has 3 or less years of formal education and the proportion between the total number of its members and the number that work is greater or equal to 4
6. One or more household members of 10 years or older is illiterate
7. One or more household members between the 7 and 12 years old is not registered (s) in an educational establishment
8. One member did not receive qualified medical attendance during childbirth or was attended by a relative, friend or mother
9. If a household member (s) has had to leave work for 3 or more days due to illness or accident and was and was not attended by a doctor, nurse or pharmacist.

** The national average includes the entire population, indigenous and non-indigenous citizens.

*** Percentage of women 15 years and older

**** Percentage of women 18 Years and older

Graph: A.2.1: Female and Male labour force participation rates over the last Decade



*Source: SIISE - INEC - Sistema Integrado de Encuesta de Hogares, Módulo Empleo. November 2003

Feminist literature and research has proved that economic autonomy, or the empowerment of women through generating and control over income transcends improvements of well-being in terms of material wealth, but also gives women the self confidence and bargaining power to challenge the status quo of patriarchal norms at all levels of the social structure. It is also, well documented that as the income of a women increases, the nutrition and well-being of the family, particularly children, increase dramatically. According to Sen, a women's participation in income generating activities has multiple effects, thereby altering the power dynamic and bargaining positions within the household. Finding employment and generating an independent income, beyond subsistence activity, provides women with a better fall-back position⁵⁸, a better understanding as to her personal well-being and sense of self, while increasing her "perceived contribution" to the family (Sen, 1990:144). Thus the economic participation of women directly improves the well-being of the family and is a catalyst for social transformation and change, both necessary for long term poverty eradication and equity of capabilities (Sen, 1999:199-201).

⁵⁸ The fall back position is the ability of an individual to bargain with in the household, given their capacity to sustain themselves without the support or assistance of the familial unit. This concept directly impact the level of resistance women take in the household and is based on endowments & entitlements (Agarwal, 1997:11)

Table: A.2.2 Reasons rural youth aged 12- 17 years are not registered in an educational institution

Reason	Rural Area		Indigenous		Rural Peasants	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Cost	32%	33%	41%	17%	34%	37%
Work	30%	11%	46%	40%	27%	12%
Domestic Chores	0%	11%	0%	2%	0%	9%
No Interest	23%	18%	9%	16%	30%	15%
Sickness	3%	5%	5%	1%	2%	4%
Absence of professors	2%	2%	0%	9%	0%	2%
Distance	6%	10%	0%	5%	9%	12%
Other	4%	10%	1%	10%	4%	10%

* Source: SIISE (2002)- INEC and World Bank, 1995

Table: A.2.3: Consumption Poverty & Extreme Consumption Poverty⁵⁹

Location	Poverty			Extreme Poverty		
	1995	1998	1999	1995	1998	1999
Ecuador	34%	46%	56%	12%	17%	21%
Urban	19%	30%	42%	4%	7%	9%
Rural	56%	69%	77%	23%	30%	38%

*Source: SIISE (2002) - INEC and World Bank, 1995

⁵⁹ Poverty lines are US\$47, US\$53, US\$42 per person every month for 1995, 1998, 1999 respectively (STFS, 2004:117). The poor are those people that belong to homes whose consumption per capita, in a specific period, is below the poverty line. The poverty line is the equivalent monetary cost of a basic basket of goods and services per person, generally, two weeks to a month.

Table: A.2.4: 1995 Health Comparison by Sex, Location & Ethnicity

Indicator	National Average								Rural Area							
	Ecuador		Urban Area		Rural Area		Campesino		Non-Campesino		Indigenous		Non-Indigenous			
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Average time to arrive at a health centre (minutes)	38.4	36.9	27.6	26.4	64.6	57.2	72.0	68.0	56.3	45.1	72.5	60.1	64.1	57.1		
Average waiting time for attention in a health centre (minutes)	34.7	29.3	34.4	29.6	35.4	28.5	35.9	29.4	35.6	27.6	61.4	26.9	33.9	28.6		
% of population without health insurance	80.9	76.5	82.4	76.5	78.2	76.7	75.7	75.0	81.7	79.3	83.6	85.1	77.7	75.9		
% population covered by social security <i>campesino</i>	7.9	8.4	1.2	1.3	19.1	19.6	23.3	22.7	14.7	14.1	15.9	12.0	20.0	19.1		
% population that does not seek health attention when ill	22.5	25.7	18.0	22.0	28.9	29.4	31.0	32.0	27.0	24.8	24.5	48.0	29.1	28.4		

*SIHSE (2002) - INEC and World Bank, 1995

Table: A.2.5 Reasons no not Seeking Medical attention in the case of illness 1995

Indicator	National Average						Rural Area							
	Ecuador		Urban Area		Rural Area		Campesino		Non-Campesino		Indigenous		Non-Indigenous	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Light Illness	20.5	16.4	25.9	23.1	16.8	10.7	16.4	7.3	17.2	15.5	37.8	0.0	15.4	12.9
Not enough time	1.1	2.3	2.3	0.0	0.3	4.3	0.6	7.4	0.0	0.0	5.2	0.0	0.0	5.2
Distance	5.2	6.0	0.0	1.8	8.7	9.5	7.6	8.3	10.1	11.3	28.5	23.6	7.3	6.6
No money to pay	54.4	56.4	47.6	47.5	59.1	64.0	56.3	71.2	61.0	54.0	0.0	61.4	63.1	64.6
Bad service	4.3	3.3	3.6	4.0	4.8	2.7	3.7	4.6	6.1	0.0	28.5	6.2	3.2	1.9
Other	14.5	15.6	20.6	23.6	10.3	8.8	14.5	1.3	5.5	19.3	0.0	8.8	11.0	8.8

* SIHSE (2002) INEC and World Bank, 1995

Appendices B

Table: B.2.1: Unsatisfied Basic Needs by sector
 Sector allocation based on Economic Activity of Household head

Sector	Incidence of Poverty
Agriculture	88.4%
Mining	50.5%
Manufacturing	53.3%
Electricity, Gas & Water	35.5%
Construction	69.4%
Trade, Restaurants & Hotels	48.3%
Transportation, storage, communications	45.7%
Banks & savings	35.9%
Personal, communal & Social services	40.3%
Non specific activities	52.8%
Inactive	60.2%
Vacant	67.2%

* Source: SIISE (2002)- INEC 2001

Table B.2.1 shows how occupation can impact poverty for households. The agriculture sector of which larger percentages are indigenous experiences the compounded effects of neoliberalism and land inequality. Thus in order for rural indigenous women to function as agricultural producers their access to land must be accompanied by the corresponding extension services, and thought should be given to female collective management and production. Indigenous women's primary occupation in 1998 was agriculture, forestry and fisheries with a total of 82% participation. This has changed with wage labour participation unfortunately the corresponding changes in standard of living have not (STFS&UNIFEM –AR, 1998:117). Women need access to the financial institutions that are currently off limits to them in order for their small farms to prosper and provide and viable livelihood. No indigenous household with a female head gained access to institutional credit and 3% to personal credit. 5% Male-headed indigenous households have access to institutional credit and 13% to personal. This depicts the ethnic and gender based exclusion from financial capital thereby confining their functionings as producers and participants in the economy. (STFS&UNIFEM –AR, 1998:135)

Exclusion for Indigenous women is not confined to formal financial institutions. Indigenous targeted development through NGOs too has historically benefited men over women. An example of the is of the NGO FEPP which has worked in rural development in Ecuador for 30 years and a large portion of its beneficiaries are indigenous. Its mission is to provide services to the poor strategically through initiatives such as savings and credit, land programs; youth group formation or training (Sanchez, Ferraro & Flores, 2000:74). FEPP programs have not been gender neutral. Training of women, for example, has been predominately in handicrafts or perceived female activities (beauty or sewing), while 65% of those trained in small business administration or livestock have been men. This type of training reproduces the traditional division of labour in rural communities and epitomizes the ideology of the organization with little vision regarding gender equity (Sanchez, Ferraro & Flores, 2000:85). FEPP maintains relations with 537 organizations both private and public in 2002 of which 15% were women only and 80% were organizations for both sexes⁶⁰. Other avenues are slowly opening to rural women. Contemporary sustainable development planning is a great opportunity for indigenous women's involvement and the incorporation of gender in programming. Environmental programs do not challenge traditional gender roles; indigenous women are linked to the earth and it's conservation, thus programs are not met by resistance from community leaders (Sanchez, Ferraro & Flores, 2000:64).

⁶⁰ <http://www.fepp.org.ec/>

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Interview with Natacha Morales August 4th, 2005, at UNIFEM –AR in Quito, Ecuador.

Interview with Teresa Simbaña August 4th, 2005, President at CONMIE in Quito, Ecuador.

Interview with Jorge Leon (Director) and Alicia Garces August 5th, 2005, at CEDIME in Quito, Ecuador.

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