

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Carla María Guerrón-Montero for the degree of Master of Arts in Applied Anthropology presented on April 23, 1997. Title: Pan, Techo y Libertad: Women, Gender and Development in the Afro-Ecuadorian Highlands.

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Abstract approved: _____

John A. Young

The area of gender and development has been widely investigated and discussed in academic and non-academic settings. This research utilizes a gender planning methodology to analyze the organization and outcome of two development projects funded by national and international organizations in the rural community of El Chota (Imbabura, Ecuador): the implementation of a bakery (an income-generating project) and the execution of a housing project (an infrastructure project). El Chota is an Ecuadorian highland community composed of black peasants. The Afro-Ecuadorian community has been neglected both by the government and the scientific community; this research intends to generate interest in further analysis of this ethnic group. In this study, emphasis is placed on the effect of the projects on women and on the feminine sphere. The fundamental objective of the research is to determine if these projects were able to fulfill practical and/or strategic gender needs and the short and long-term consequences in the lives of men and women. The research proposes that Choteño women tended to prefer income-generating projects because they were closely related to the immediate needs of the household while men had a tendency to prefer infrastructure projects for they had more access to other type of resources. It was found that women were more successful than men in the implementation of the projects due to their economic needs and because of a level of autonomy of the feminine sphere, which allows for women's involvement in activities outside the home. Furthermore, the participation of women in development projects --even if they were not based on gender planning procedures-- resulted in some degree of autonomy and confidence among women.

Finally, the research provides further recommendations for the implementation of development projects in the community from the perspective of gender and exchange.

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Pan, Techo y Libertad: Women, Gender and Development
in the Afro-Ecuadorian Highlands

by

Carla María Guerrón-Montero

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Carla María Guerrón-Montero, Author

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AHBC-I-J	Archivo Histórico del Banco Central-Ibarra -Carpeta Judicial (Historical Archives of the Central Bank-Ibarra- Judicial Folder)
BEV	Banco Ecuatoriano de la Vivienda (Ecuadorian Housing Bank)
CCA	Centro Cultural Afro-Ecuatoriano (Afro-Ecuadorian Cultural Center)
CESA	Central Ecuatoriana de Servicios Agrícolas (Ecuadorian Center of Agricultural Services)
EMETEL	Empresa Ecuatoriana de Teléfono (Ecuadorian Telephone Company)
FEPP	Fondo Ecuatoriano Populorum Progressio (Ecuadorian Fund Populorum Progressio)
IANCEM	Ingenio Azucarero del Norte - Compañía de Economía Mixta (Northern Sugar Cane Refinery)
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

*A Sonia y Nicolás, por alimentar en
mí la capacidad del asombro*

PAN, TECHO Y LIBERTAD:
WOMEN, GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT
IN THE AFRO-ECUADORIAN HIGHLANDS

CHAPTER ONE

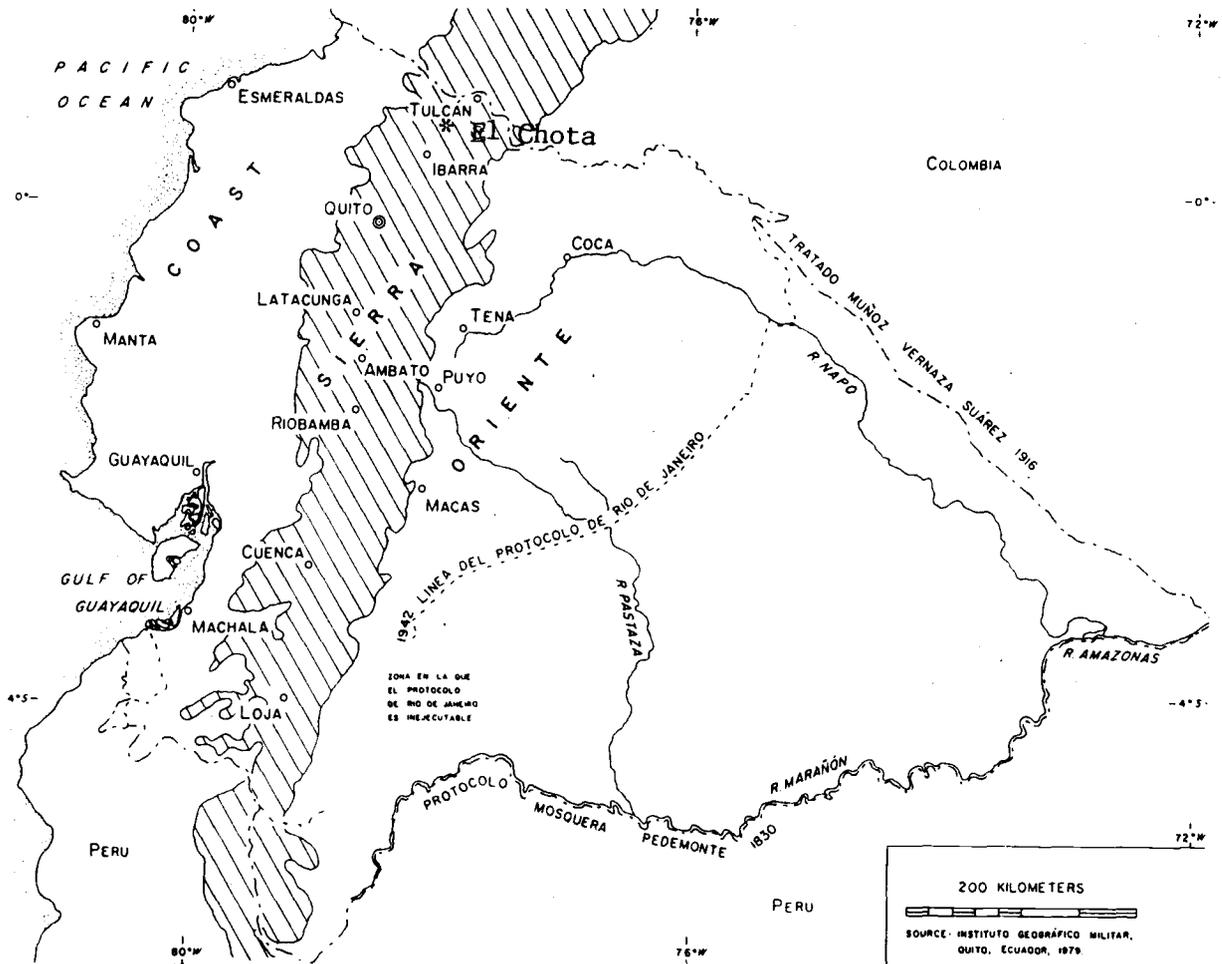
INTRODUCTION

The theme of gender and development has been widely investigated and discussed in academic and non-academic settings. Diverse approaches have been used to examine the outcomes and consequences of development projects on social groups; likewise, the effect they have on women has been reviewed thoroughly. In Latin America in general and Ecuador in particular, literature on the impact of development projects on indigenous groups is relatively extensive¹; however, less attention has been given to Afro-Latin American communities.

In order to fulfill --to a certain extent-- the need for information regarding gender and development among Afro-Ecuadorian populations, my participatory research examines two development projects (an income-generating project and an infrastructure project) done in the rural community of El Chota, Imbabura (Ecuador) from a gender-analysis perspective (See Map 1).

¹ Crain (1990) points out that, even though earlier images of the Indian population depicted a rudimentary contrast to the Ecuadorian Mestizo, "more recent images of the Indian have been circulating that represent native peoples as dutiful citizens and national subjects in their own right" (1990:43). This change in national perceptions has not occurred, however, in the case of Afro-Ecuadorian populations.

MAP No. 1
 MAP OF ECUADOR



I became interested in this particular subject while performing fieldwork in the area prior to writing my *Licenciatura* thesis.² I determined that the feminine sphere in El Chota is strong and autonomous -economically, socially and symbolically- because of women's economic independence and their control over remunerated labor, especially commerce in its diverse forms. Women's autonomous realm produces conflicts and tensions between the feminine and masculine sphere, since men are not able to fulfill their traditionally assigned role as providers.³ In a like manner, I perceived that development projects aiming toward or involving women were more successful or permanent than those performed by men, which in fact were almost nonexistent.

Likewise, I have a commitment to work for the improvement of people's conditions around the world and specifically for ethnic groups of African ancestry in countries of the South⁴; consequently, I decided to study how development projects planned at the national and/or international level affect everyday life for Afro-Ecuadorian women. Generally, when the topic of development is discussed, it is conceived as voluminous infrastructure or economic transformation; in reality, although there are projects designed in that fashion, most development projects consist of the introduction

² My *Licenciatura* thesis focused on the autonomy of the feminine sphere in El Chota and the conflicts between the feminine and masculine realm by reason of that autonomy. (*El Color de la Panela. Estudio Antropológico de la Esfera Femenina en la Comunidad de El Chota. Imbabura*, Quito, PUCE, 1995-in press by the Afro Ecuadorian Cultural Center, 1997).

³ Traditionally, men have been responsible for fulfilling four interrelated roles in society: procreator, provider, mediator and chief. In El Chota, "when the role of 'provider' is taken away, the remaining three start to be challenged by the society. If men continue to be mediators and chiefs it is because of the system of organization of Ecuadorian society, where it is assumed that men, by definition, represent every institution within the society" (Guerrón-Montero, 1996c:30-31).

⁴ The term "countries of the South" refers to those nations that were formerly called Third World or "underdeveloped" nations; the term "countries of the North" is used to designate the so-called "developed" nations. The recently coined terminology (countries of the South/countries of the North) alludes to the geographical disposition of poverty throughout the world. This designation has been used by organizations and scholars as a political statement against biased use of language in the Social Sciences.

of a modest amount of capital or a new activity which transforms, in a positive or negative manner, the lives of the recipients.

The objective of my work was to study the use of gender planning tools in the implementation of two development projects in El Chota: a bakery run by Choteño women and a housing project sponsored by the European Community. I considered it important to identify whether the purpose of the projects was to fulfill practical or strategic gender needs or, ideally, both and how these projects affected women's triple role in society: production, reproduction and community management. By practical gender needs I understand the needs "women identify in their socially accepted roles in society", while strategic gender needs are the necessities "women identify because of their subordinate position to men in their society" (Moser, 1993:39-40).

My participatory research focused on how women responded to the projects and on their immediate and long-term consequences in people's lives. I addressed the differences between the responses from female-maintained households⁵ and male-headed households to development projects and the influence of gender planning procedures in the incorporation of female-maintained households in development programs. Gender planning is defined in this research as a particular form of planning where the essential goal is the emancipation of women from subordination, in order to generate gender equity, equality and empowerment. This goal is achieved through meeting practical as well as strategic gender needs (Moser, 1993:83-87).

⁵ Throughout this thesis, I have used the term "female-maintained" instead of "female-headed" in order to "emphasize the fact that, although many women take sole responsibility for supporting their families, they are seldom accorded the same recognition, rights, and powers as male household heads" (Mosse, 1994:45).

The differences between development projects aimed toward income-generating activities and those pointed at infrastructure were also discussed. Income-generating projects tend to be more praised by Choteño women, while projects directed at infrastructure improvement are addressed mostly by men, even though women do collaborate on those projects as well. One of the reasons for this preference is the fact that women are in close and daily relationship with immediate needs (practical gender needs) of the household, while men have more leisure time and are more concerned with general needs or with their particular interests (Mosse, 1994:23-24). Therefore, women require a means of obtaining resources; this is particularly true in the case of female-maintained households.

Another fundamental component of my research was to determine if the projects examined provided more strength for the feminine sphere and thus fulfilled a strategic gender need. I was interested in finding out if development projects have increased autonomy in the feminine sphere, the influence of female-maintained households on this autonomy and the reasons for a more successful outcome of projects carried out by women as opposed to those executed by men.

Similarly, I examined the survival strategy of poverty utilized by Choteño people and the effect of development projects on the complexity of organization of the Choteño society. Some Choteño people try to present the image of poverty to visitors, organizations and authorities. Even though poverty is a reality, the community has placed an emphasis on the deficiency of collaboration from the government or from private institutions. Nonetheless, further analysis shows that there have been a number

of community development projects, the majority of them financed by international institutions, which have failed for different reasons. The depiction of poverty has become a politic and economic strategy elaborated by the Choteño community to confront Ecuadorian society; it is a cultural and ideological mechanism that provides some access to resources (Guerrón-Montero, 1996:11). This representation could also be considered as the result of the insufficiency of class consciousness and organization⁶ of the community.

I will introduce the contents of the following chapters of this thesis. In Chapter Two, I discuss the methodology used in the research; in Chapter Three, I analyze the theoretical aspects of the research and the theoretical approach I have taken; in Chapter Four, I present a review of geography, history and ethnographic data of El Chota; Chapter Five includes the analysis of two development projects carried out in the town; in Chapter Six, I present the conclusions of this thesis, as well as some final suggestions for future work in the area.

⁶ Although it is possible to find a general feeling of pride in their ethnic ascription, Choteño people have not developed a profound sense of class consciousness or a level of organization that allows them a means for real transformations.

CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGY

In this research, I used the anthropological method¹ and as part of it, I focused on the ethnographic method, which according to Agar (1980) is "the most general process used to understand another human group" (1980:71). Thanks to the ethnographic method, I was able to find cultural themes² in the community of El Chota. The theme I found especially useful for this particular research was that of poverty, around which Choteño people develop a survival strategy mentioned in Chapter One.

I carried out a bibliographical review as a first step of my research. Then I conducted fieldwork in the community of El Chota during the months of January and February of 1993. I also made two visits per month from March to August 1993 and from September 1994 to December 1995; each time, I stayed from three days to a week.

I used participant-observation as a fundamental technique.³ Participant observation is a technique that allows for the acquisition of a relationship of mutual trust and respect between the community and the ethnographer. I lived in El Chota and participated in different everyday activities with men and women of the community. I developed particular rapport with women, and I followed them in their daily routines: I washed clothes and dishes in the river with them, cooked with them and accompanied them in market activities within the town. I followed men in the agricultural work they performed; I accompanied women who visited their husbands involved in construction

¹ The purpose of the anthropological method is to discover the regularities of human social life, particularly through the observation of acts and the analysis of the culture of specific social groups (Cerdeña Gutiérrez, 1993:127).

² A cultural theme is "any cognitive principle, tacit or implicit, recurrent in a number of domains and which serves as a relation between subsystems of cultural meaning" (Spradley, 1972:186).

³ Participant observation is an anthropological technique where the ethnographer "observes" the events and everyday life of the community while participating on them" (Vansina, 1968:29).

activities in nearby towns. In addition, I participated in different festivities and important celebrations in the community and in near communities.

I carried out ethnographic open-ended, semi-structured interviews with 25 women and 10 men. The criteria for selection of my informants was based on a representative model of the general universe of study, for which I utilized a non-probability quota sample (Leiva-Zea, 1984:23-24). In selecting the sample, I considered the variables of gender, marital status, socio-economic condition and level of participation in the community. The interviews were held with men and women, married and single, from 16 to 70 years old, from those who had limited economic resources to higher economic levels and who were active and less active members of the community (See Table 1 and 2).

I have used fictitious names to present the data given by my informants in order to maintain confidentiality and respect for their opinions. Throughout this research, the terms "black" and "Afro-Ecuadorian" have been used interchangeably to refer to the ethnic group studied. Choteño people use the word "black" as a term of self-identification and there is no pejorative connotation in its usage. The word "Afro-Ecuadorian" is a recent innovation and is mostly used in academic circles.

In addition to interviews with specific informants, I conducted open-ended, semi-structured interviews with outsiders directly or indirectly related to the community and to the development projects analyzed; for example, the social worker and one electrician at the Refinery, the director of the school "Valley of El Chota", and the nurse of the town. In the same manner, I carried out several informal conversations with members of the community who were not chosen as informants. Finally, I analyzed the data obtained using a theoretical framework based on the perspective of gender and exchange.

TABLE N° 1
LIST OF FEMALE INFORMANTS

No.	NAME	ABREV	AGE	INTERVIEW	CIVIL STATUS	SOCIO-EC. CON	COMMUN.PAR
1	Lucia Acosta	L.A.	23	Oct/05/1995	Single	Low	Middle
2	Beatriz Acosta	B.A.	60	Feb/15/1993	Widow	Middle-High	Middle
3	Pamela Acosta	P.A.	20	Oct/05/1995	Single	Low	Middle
4	Maria Anangono	M.A.	28	Feb/05/1993	Single	Low	Middle
5	Norma Arce	N.A.	38	Jul/10/1993	Married	Middle	Active
6	Eugenia Arce	E.A.	35	Oct/10/1995	Married	Low	Active
7	Clara Caicedo	C.C.	40	Oct/05/1995	Married	Middle	Middle
8	Cecilia Calderon	C.Cl.	34	Oct/05/1995	Single	Middle	Middle
9	Laura Caravali	L.C.	26	Apr/09/1993	Married	Middle-High	Middle
10	Eugenia Congo	E.C.	21	Oct/05/1995	Single	Middle	Active
11	Uvidia Congo	U.C.	59	Oct/08/1995	Married	Middle	Middle
11	Elena Chala	E.Ch.	21	Oct/06/1995	Single	Middle	Middle
12	Marta Diaz	M.D.	41	Apr/09/1993	Married	Middle	Middle
13	Delia Espinosa	D.E.	65	Oct/05/1995	Widow	Low	Middle
14	Maria Lara	M.L.	55	Oct/10/1995	Married	Middle	Active
15	Fabiola Lara	F.L.	42	Feb/16/1993	Married	Middle	Middle
16	Uvaldina Lara	U.L.	58	Jan/16/1993	Married	Low	Middle
17	Rosa Lara	R.L.	45	Oct/06/1995	Single	Middle	Active
18	Beatriz Maldona	B.Ma.	22	Oct/10/1995	Single	Low	Middle
19	Augusta Manteca	A.M.	50	Mar/14/1993	Widow	Middle-High	Middle
20	Diana Mendez	D.M.	33	Oct/08/1995	Married	Middle	Middle
21	Lupe Mendez	L.M.	32	May/30/1995	Married	Low	Active
22	Carolina Minda	C.M.	17	May/28/1995	Single	Middle	Middle
23	Clemencia Mind	C. Mi.	18	Feb/20/1993	Single	Middle-High	Active
24	Elvia Mina	E.M.	37	Oct/10/1995	Single	Middle	Middle
25	Pilar Mina	P.M.	62	Mar/14/1995	Married	Middle	Middle

TABLE N° 2
LIST OF MALE INFORMANTS

NAME	ABREV	AGE	INTERVIEW	CIVIL STATUS	SOCIO-EC. CON	COMMUN. PART
Manuel Arce	M.A.	34	Oct/06/1995	Married	Low	Middle
	A.C.	25	Mar/15/1993	Single	Middle	Middle
Raul Caicedo	R.C.	38	Oct/08/1995	Married	Middle-High	Middle
Elias Congo	E.C.	60	Jul/10/1993	Married	Middle	Active
Vinicio Chala	V.Ch.	54	May/29/1993	Married	Middle-High	Active
Jorge Diaz	J.D.	22	May/30/1993	Single	Low	Middle
Danilo Lara	D.L.	18	Oct/10/1995	Single	Low	Middle
Ignacio Maldon	I.M.	70	Feb/26/1993	Widow	Low	Middle
Jacinto Minda	J.M.	52	Oct/09/1995	Married	Middle	Middle
Manuel Mina	M.Mi.	63	Jan/26/1993	Widow	Middle	Middle

During my fieldwork, I encountered several limitations. First, I did not have the economic means to stay in El Chota for an extended period of time. Second, monetary constraints and bureaucratic restrictions did not allow me to interview the director of the European Community, the staff from the Ecuadorian Housing Bank (Banco Ecuatoriano de la Vivienda) which worked in the housing project, or officials from the Populorum Progressio Ecuadorian Fund (Fondo Ecuatoriano Populorum Progressio).

In searching for the members of the European Community who were responsible for the housing project, I visited the Embassy of Germany where I was informed that Spain had the lead on the project; in the Spanish Embassy, I was told the Embassy of Italy was responsible for handling the project. Ultimately, the Italian Embassy did not allow me to enter into their archives or to speak to any official regarding the project. These bureaucratic problems are fairly common in Ecuador; it is unfortunate that these difficulties commonly affect Ecuadorian researchers.

In the case of the housing program, the impossibility of obtaining such information limited my comprehension of the planning, implementation and outcome of the project; I present only one side of the story, the perspective and information given by the Choteño community.

In like manner, there were other instances where I could not find information. One example is Father John Kelly, the person who donated the industrial ovens for the bakery project and the sewing machines to the cooperative New Horizons. I was told by some informants that he was a member of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID); others informed me he worked for the Andean Mission (Misión Andina). The USAID Development Information Office assured me they did not know Father John Kelly, and I was unable to find any information regarding the Andean Mission. Hence, I could not trace Father Kelly's affiliation.

A further obstruction was the fact that some comments and answers to my questions were based on mistaken assumptions that I was able to provide financing for

other projects, since I was a Mestizo educated woman. This happened even though I made my graduate student status clear. Some informants felt it was appropriate to praise the outcome of the projects in case I could fund other projects, particularly if they were welfare-oriented.

Similarly, some informants perceived the international donors not as agencies or organizations but as philanthropic individuals who recognized their poverty and took charge with a commitment to transform that situation. In general, those who withdrew from projects or disagreed with their outcome, were not willing to provide information, fearing their ideas would be known and that this would cause reprisals from those who benefited from the projects, or their families. These perceptions restricted, to a certain extent, the information given by some Choteño people, as they felt they needed to show gratitude by not giving negative comments about implementation or results of the projects.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL CONTEXT

“Development.” What does it mean? What implications has it? This easily, commonly used and misused term has come to signify a whole subfield within the Social Sciences. Various antagonistic theories have arisen to explain development; nonetheless, however it is defined or understood, its critical impact on society is undeniable. This chapter addresses the major theoretical trends surrounding the theme of development and the transformations of the theory, as well as the linkages between development and gender.

III.1 PARADIGMS OF DEVELOPMENT

The dominant paradigm set out in the North after World War II and during the 1950s and 1960s was one that perceived development as “a process of industrialization and economic growth, encapsulated in what has come to be termed ‘modernization’” (Mosse, 1994:10); economic growth was assumed to be the solution to world poverty. According to Braidotti *et al.* (1994) the first United Nations Development Decade’s goal was the industrialization of the countries of the South “involving large-scale projects in order to foster fast economic growth which would eventually benefit the entire population” (1994:17). The principal goal of development was to provide an alternative to communism for the recently decolonized countries of the South.

The tripartite post-war order was based on the construction of the First World, the modern, ‘developed’ ‘self’, that is, the capitalist West in opposition to the ‘other’, the Second World, the socialist East, which was subsequently left out of the development discourse altogether. The Third World, the ‘underdeveloped’ South, became the residual category (Braidotti *et al.*, 1994:20-21)¹.

¹ Braidotti *et al.* argue that the main line of differentiation of the nations within the countries of the South was “their alliance to either the capitalist West or the socialist East as development models.” This arrangement was a political move whose goal was to mark distinctly an ideological opposition between capitalism and socialism; however, it was disguised under the mask of a technical problem by casting it “in the language of science” (1994:21, 23).

Recently formed nations were pressured by Western interests to industrialize and raise their technological level in order to overcome poverty and to emulate the “epitome of the ‘developed’ world”: the United States; aid was provided by the rich developed countries “in the form of injections of capital inputs and technical assistance, which was supposed to encourage economies to reach a point from which sustained economic growth could ‘take off’” (Mosse, 1994:10) {Cf. Khrisna-Raj, 1988:16; Brydon/Chant, 1989:6}. At the same time, emphasis was placed on the creation of infrastructural facilities and institutions in order to smooth the “natural” transition toward modern, capitalist, industrialized societies; the association between “the rate of saving and increase in income” was also a major area of concentration (Krishna-Raj, 1988:17). It was assumed that through this process poverty would be overcome and would balance Third World societies, for it would reach all socio-economical strata²; development practices became the instruments to organize the post-colonial societies (Braidotti *et al.*, 1994:22)³. Therefore, during this period, governments from the North, the World Bank and the United Nations, along with non-governmental organizations (referred to as NGOs) financed small scale infrastructure and agricultural projects (Mosse, 1994:10).

² “Modernization” included the perspective that urbanization was a sine qua non of economic development; therefore, “the process of becoming ‘urban’ would necessarily involve the rejection of the traditional (and, by implication, ‘obsolete’) values” (Brydon/Chant, 1989:5). It was assumed that over time, the effect of modernization would “trickle down” into the “delayed” rural regions. The pattern of change was described as follows: first, tradition with old fashioned beliefs and technology; then, introduction of modern technology; after that, take off toward modernization; and finally, a stage of modernity with mass consumption (Rostow in Braidotti *et al.*, 1994:22).

³ During this period, the primordial economic indicator of the development of a nation became the gross national product (GNP) along with economic growth rates and export rates, among others. Khrisna-Raj (1988) points out that the figure of GNP is a “rough and ready and composite index which converts the value of all goods and services into money value” (1988:6). Based on conventional statistics and economic indicators, the work of women has been considered as complementary; in reality women in Third World countries are “the *de facto* heads of households with full responsibility for their own and their children’s survival.” Indicators need to reflect the real productive role of women, their magnitude and significance; in developing these indicators, Buvinic (1981) argues that the contextual values of a given society are fundamental (Buvinic, 1981:11).

In the decade of the 1970s it became obvious that this paradigm was inaccurate because the socio-economic gap between the people who benefited from the projects and those who did not increased considerably; so-called modernization was introduced in societies with socio-economically and politically stratified systems; far from transforming social structures, already hierarchical social organizations became even more stratified. In addition, it was understood that so-called underdeveloped countries could not replicate the model of development experienced by countries of the North for "the matrix of international relations, both economic and political, [had] altered irreversibly" (Khrishna-Raj, 1988:18). It was acknowledged that the problem of poverty was not based on economic growth but on the distribution of wealth {Cf. Braidotti *et al.*, 1994:17}. Attempts to revise the dominant model were based on the recognition that the social factor of development was absent, "in an analysis that viewed the major mistake of earlier development practices as missing out on the 'human factor'"(Mosse, 1994:11); it was understood that the "development of people" was to be a prerequisite for sustained economic growth. The goal was to trespass the early capital investment and invest in "human resources"⁴, to achieve "equitable distribution of wealth and income, social justice and improvement of facilities for education, health, social security and so on" (Braidotti *et al.*, 1994:17). Social and human issues were seen as limitations that could be overcome by extending technologies into rural areas, and "by the further penetration of capital into non-capitalist and non-commercial forms of production." In terms of market systems, this maneuver succeeded, since the monetization of economies advanced rapidly. Nonetheless, human beings were still perceived as passive recipients of development "planned by outsiders, as 'consumers'... rather than 'producers'" (Mosse, 1994:11).

The oil crisis in 1973 negatively affected trade between the countries of the South and the North, and increased interest rates on previous loans which "led to the debt crisis

⁴ The World Employment Conference held in 1976 by the United Nations International Labor Organization was notable for the appearance of the concept of Basic Needs, essential for the perspective of human

and generally a deteriorating economic situation in the South” (Braidotti *et al.*, 1994:18). A focus on short-term economic management replaced the human approach toward development during the 1980s, even though the definition of development provided by the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women in Copenhagen, July 1980, emphasized the importance of the social dimensions of the field. Development was defined as a process which occurred,

in the political, economic, social, cultural and other dimensions of human life...the development of economic and other material resources and also the physical, moral, intellectual and cultural growth of the human person... Women’s development should not only be viewed as an issue in social development but should be seen as an essential component in every dimension of development” (Khrishna-Raj, 1988:21,22).

Many countries of the South underwent structural adjustment policies in order to “speedily remove external imbalances of payment in the debtor countries.” These countries shifted their economic priorities toward production of internationally exchangeable goods that could generate foreign currency. Government expenditures for social services (health, education and diet) were severely reduced “with serious consequences for poorer people of the South as well as the natural environment” (Khrishna-Raj, 1988:21,22). For this reason, the 1980s is generally referred to as “the lost decade.”⁵

The approaches cited above are in essence top-to-bottom views of development. They ignore the international context of the global economic order which has forced Southern economies to engage in exporting activities, in the production of low-value raw materials, and in the supplying of workers in off-shore assembly plants; the local context, and “particularly the internal mismanagement of Southern economies” (Mosse, 1994:15); the unjust social structures in which the local oligarchies have sold their nations to

development. This approach was incorporated as a condition for loans and services by the World Bank and by multilateral, bilateral and non-governmental organizations (Braidotti *et al.*, 1994:17).

⁵ And, invariably, women and children suffer the major consequences of structural adjustment measures for the services no longer provided by the public or private sector fall heavily into their hands. As Mosse (1994) points out, “women...are paying the price of the debt crisis” of the countries of the South (1994:121). In short, structural adjustment has produced a shift of costs from paid to unpaid economy.

international interests; oppression and repression and the upholding of relationships of disparity; colonialism and neo-colonialism as the objective of development according to dependency theory (Cardoso 1974, Frank 1969)⁶; environmental degradation; and the external debt.

In the same manner, orthodox development theory has tended to equate subsistence with poverty because a specific economy does not generate surplus for the market place. Nevertheless, there is ample difference between poverty as subsistence and poverty as deprivation. As Mosse (1994) points out, "subsistence living may appear to 'richer' outsiders as poverty but it may satisfy local needs adequately. The process of economic development, if not sensitive to local needs, can so damage existing local economies that real poverty (i.e., deprivation) is created as a result" (1994:19). The crisis produced by "developmentalism" on the countries of the South has led to more poverty; the large debts acquired by these nations created the necessity of structural adjustment policies and "economic austerity measures" (1994: 26).

More recently, the newly re-emerging concept of human development, although firmly committed to economic growth as its central objective, focuses on the amelioration of past failures of development practices and "denotes a human needs-oriented development model which encompasses more humane values and respect for human life" (Braidotti *et al.*, 1994:19). It does not, however, solve the imperative need for the creation of new ways of looking at the developmental process.

⁶ Dependency theory states that so-called underdeveloped countries are in their current position "not because these countries stopped short while others with superior endowment raced ahead" but because the development of the successful countries resulted in underdevelopment for the others. As Khrisna-Raj (1988) points out, "the root of 'underdevelopment' lie [sic] in the particular history of the development of capitalism in an uneven way in different countries" (1988:18, 19). Consequently, the situation of the Third World is the product of a structural dependence; "Third World states rely on First World markets to buy their produce...in order to buy foreign exchange to finance projects concerned with providing the infrastructure and services necessary for development" (Brydon/Chant, 1989:6). In addition to the dependency concept, world-systems theory (Hopkins/Wallerstein 1982) made similar observations regarding the relationship between development and underdevelopment in the world.

The two major themes of development during the decade of the 1990s are the investment in people and human-centered development. These concepts have been mainly promoted by the World Bank (1990-1991) and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP 1992); policies drawn by the UNDP are intended to “weave development around people, not people around development” (Truong in Braidotti *et al.*, 1994:19). Some of the issues considered are the undertaking of poverty; the “equitable involvement of all people in the economy”; the improvement of the quality of life for women and men through access to basic goods and services along with the information needed to take well-informed decisions; the reorganization of the sexual division of labor; the creation of political institutions which can guarantee the maintenance of human rights; the creation of a diversified, appropriate productive base which can satisfy the needs of the population and which will allow countries to maintain their economies in the international market system (Mosse, 1994: 20); and an interest in environmental problems. For Braidotti *et al.* (1994), these changes indicate that reformative elements need to be included in the policies of mainstream development institutions in accordance with the global context of the 1990’s.

As the authors point out,

They [the changes in development practices] mark an important shift in the international economic and political landscape after the collapse of the Eastern bloc with important implications for Southern countries and their economic development...As industrialized countries join into economic blocs to strengthen their internal relations and defend their wealth, Africa, Latin America and large parts of Asia are becoming increasingly uninteresting for the countries of the North as targets for development assistance (1994:20).

Northern concern for development in the South is based on self-interest in the safety of the global environment or in the economic and material resources of these countries. The transformation of the top-to-bottom approach into a bottom-up one has not been addressed in real terms; in the same manner, the “inherent gender blindness” of development policies has been ignored (Braidotti *et al.*, 1994:19).

III.2 GENDER DEFINITIONS

The Social Sciences have analyzed the category of gender from different perspectives. Fernández-Kelly (1992) states that the variable "gender" refers to a social construction based on sexual differentiation (1992:4){Cf. Brydon/Chant, 1989:2}. However, gender is not a synonym for sex because it "interprets and defines morphological and physiological characteristics that differentiate and define the individual inside a specific social and economic framework" (1992:4)⁷. The category of gender implies economic dimensions because it assigns a different role to men and women in the process of production and reproduction. In the same manner, it has political repercussions since it delineates areas of power, activity and vulnerability in the public and private sector. Gender as a concept covers theoretical constructions used throughout time and it implies political discourses that justify specific economic activities (Coronel/Guerrón-Montero, 1993:63). Society in general has tended to elaborate unequal notions of masculine and feminine, considering gender "as a quantity, out of which men have more than women, as if in that situation would lie their superiority" (Anderson, 1990:80).

In this sense, gender should be understood as part of a social system and as an economic factor. Gender is situated in a social system "where inequality in status and privileges determine the goals people want to achieve, their motive for politics and the conditions they wish to explain." An appropriate model to understand the category of gender should be one that maintains "the connections among productive relations, political processes and the conceptions of human nature" (Rosaldo/Fishburne-Collier in Ortner/Whitehead, 1981:275, 282-283). As an economic factor, the position of women in the public and private sphere "does not derive from immutable biological factors but from material limitations and processes of socialization" (Fernández-Kelly, 1985:7). In almost every society there is a differentiation between domestic and social labor; in many societies the social significance of domestic labor is understood as the product of "the expression of

⁷ This and other translations from the Spanish language appearing below are my responsibility.

love and devotion of women” (Jelin/Feijóo, 1985:6) and not as a material activity which is socially necessary.

The “gender roles” each culture assigns to men and women are socially transmitted from generation to generation; gender roles change over time; they are also “strongly influenced by social class, age and ethnic background” (Mosse, 1994:4).

Gender should be related to the variables of class⁸ and ethnicity⁹. Neither class nor ethnicity are independent; on the contrary, they “exist in relation to other ethnic groups and classes; therefore, as pluralized social entities” (Cardoso de Oliveira in Anderson, 1990:80).

According to Harding (1986), the category of gender can be understood through three intimately related levels: the symbolism of gender, which implies “the dual assignation of gender metaphors to the differences that appear in the social and natural world” or what men and women think about themselves and about the other gender in a symbolic level; the structure of gender or division of labor around gender, which indicate “the form in which the social activities are organized based on that symbolism” (in Cuvil *et al.*, 1992:4- 5); and finally, the individual symbolism, which is the image each person has in relation to his or her gender.

Within the same perspective, Yanagisako and Fishburne-Collier (1987) propose to transcend the dichotomous analytical categories that characterize the studies of gender and take into consideration society as a whole. Therefore,

...instead of assuming that societies are constituted of domains institutionally based on functionality, we propose to investigate the social and symbolic process through which human actions

⁸ I understand social class as “structural positions which the system assigns objectively to specific individuals” (Cueva, 1987:14). Social classes are the specific effect of certain modes of production, those in which the means of production are privately owned. According to Lenin (in Cueva), class is a large group of people that have differences “because of the place they occupy in a historically determined system of production, because of their relations with the means of production...[and] because of the role they carry out in the social organization of labor” (1987:14-15).

⁹ Ethnicity --in its broad sense-- is understood as a group of persons with common features in terms of “culture, language, religion, costumes and institutions” or in terms of “physical or racial types.” Within the relations of interaction among human entities “each ethnic group classifies itself and it is classified by the others in a different manner” (Pujadas, 1993:85).

in particular social worlds have consequences and meanings including its apparent organization in supposedly "natural" social domains (1987:39).

Since a society is a system of relations and values, each society tends to prize those who follow and maintain its values and to punish those who, for one reason or another, do not do it. Each society has a "structure of prestige" (Ortner/Whitehead, 1981) and a "morality of behavior" (Foucault, 1990) and "patterns of inequality" (Di Leonardo, 1993) which outline the actions of the members of a specific culture.

Di Leonardo (1993) proposes to include a perspective of political economy in the study of gender and society through the combination of a historical materialistic framework and a cultural paradigm. It is of vital importance to relate the problem of class, race/ethnicity and national background with the category of gender, as well as with the "enssembled nature of gender", which implies that "in any given population, the major social divisions --race/ethnicity, class, religion, age, sexual preference, nationality-- would cross over and influence the meaning of gender division" (1993:30).

The term "gender" covers the different social roles of men and women, the relationships between them in terms of interactions and the influence they receive from society at large. However, when discussing gender needs and interests, the word gender generally has come to apply to women in particular.

Because of differences in roles, and also because of differences in class, ethnicity and age, among other variables, gender interests and needs differ greatly. Moser (1993) proposes that a gender interest or a "prioritized concern" translates into a need or the "means by which concerns are satisfied" and that gender needs are a fundamental element of gender planning (1993:37-38). A further distinction can be made between strategic and practical gender needs (Molyneux 1985). A strategic gender need is "formulated from the analysis of women's subordination to men." It varies in relationship to particular contexts, and relates to gender divisions of labor, power and control such as legal rights, domestic violence, equal wages or women's control over reproduction, among others; by fulfilling

these needs, women attain greater equality in a given society. Practical gender needs are those "formulated from the concrete conditions women experience." These needs confront neither the established division of labor nor women's subordinate position in society. They respond to immediate and specific necessities and "are practical in nature and often are concerned with inadequacies in living conditions" (Moser, 1993:39-40). On certain occasions, a practical gender need provides the required elements to fulfill a strategic gender need; nevertheless, it is not a relationship of cause-effect, as will be shown in the discussion of different perspectives contained in several approaches to gender and development.

III.3 APPROACHES TO GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT

After considering the ideas of development and gender as separate entities, it is necessary to establish the relationship between the two concepts. Why is it so essential to relate the issue of development to the perspective of gender? There are several reasons to emphasize this relationship. In Moser's words, in the world of policy and planning "where fashions come and go, women and development concerns are a peculiar anomaly. They resolutely refuse to disappear" (1993:1). Nonetheless, they have succeeded neither in attaining planning legitimacy nor in achieving overwhelming success. Mosse points out that after a decade of development specifically focused on women and on gender issues, "there is evidence that suggests that many of the world's women are worse off now than they were in 1975" (1994:23).

It is not possible to ignore the fact that women around the world encounter what has been called "the double burden of production and reproduction" (Afshar, 1991:2). The concept of production implies the work done by women and men for payment in cash or species. It includes market production with its exchange value and subsistence/home production with a use-value, but only a potential exchange value. In rural areas, agricultural work is the most common activity; in cities, women work in small informal

enterprises based at home or in the neighborhood. Reproductive work includes child bearing and rearing tasks, fundamental to guarantee the maintenance and reproduction of the labor force. It also comprises domestic chores; as Moser points out, "it includes not only biological reproduction but also the care and maintenance of the workforce (husband and working children) and the future workforce (infants and school-going children)" (1993:29).

Moser emphasizes that besides these two roles, women undertake community management work, which involves activities that take place at the community level, "as an extension of their reproductive role." These activities "ensure the provision and maintenance of scarce resources of collective consumption, such as water, health care and education. It is voluntary unpaid work, undertaken in free time in contrast with community roles which are taken by men at the formal political level; men's political work is paid, directly or indirectly, "through wages or increases in status and power" (1993:34).

The fact that gender is used as an organizing principle of the social division of labor is not based on physical or biological differences except for childbearing; this situation is the historical result of the separation between production and reproduction in Western capitalism (Mackintosh in Moser, 1993:29). As Mosse points out, poor women of the Third World experience a "triple yoke of oppression" because of their place as members of oppressed nations, their position as part of the working class or peasantry within those nations and their gender, as women "subjected to discrimination in marriage, property rights and access to services" (1994:86).

Most household responsibilities are done by women; as stated above, the result of a change or crisis in the economic and political aspects of a nation due to internal politics, neocolonialism, structural adjustments, the world market system, or the like, very often falls on women's shoulders for they are responsible for nourishing, clothing and educating children with diminishing resources. As Mosse points out, "as long as the task of keeping families together remains a women's responsibility, women will continue to bear a

disproportionate share of the costs of failed 'development'" (1994:23). Within the household women are generally in charge of the fulfillment of the immediate needs of a family; hence, they take the initiative in the implementation of projects and are the primary actors within them.

The implications of development projects for women are broad. I will present a brief summary of how different paradigms have addressed the issue of women and development.

III.3.1 THE WID PERSPECTIVE

Moser states that there are five different approaches to the issue of women and development in the Third World followed by international and national institutions both in the private and public arena. These approaches range from a perspective of welfare, equity and anti-poverty, concepts previously developed by Buvinic (1983), to efficiency and empowerment. This shift in policy perspectives "has mirrored general trends in Third World development policies, from modernization policies of accelerated growth, through basic needs strategies associated with distribution, to the more recent compensatory measures associated with structural adjustment policies" (Moser, 1993:55).

III.3.1.1 Welfare Approach

The welfare approach was introduced in the 1950s and 1960s; it is the oldest and most popular social development policy applied to the Third World. Moser calls it the "pre-WID" approach. This perspective considers women to be passive recipients or mere beneficiaries of development, with its primary purpose to guarantee the existence of better mothers for the Third World. In this case, only the reproductive role of women is recognized and "policy seeks to meet practical gender needs through that role by top-down handouts of food aid, measures against malnutrition and family planning" (1993: 58). Its origins can be traced to the model of social welfare involving voluntary charity organizations introduced by colonial administration in many Third World countries. This

approach implies that women and not the lack of resources are the cause of poverty; therefore, the solution lies in family welfare. Under this perspective, women were either ignored, seen as another part of the household or the community as a whole, or became objects of welfare (Mosse, 1994:153).

A model of two parallel approaches to development assistance, financial aid for economic growth and relief aid for social groups, was implemented by development agencies¹⁰. As Moser points out:

This strategy had critical implications for Third World women. It meant that international economic aid prioritized government support for capital-intensive, industrial and agricultural production in the formal sector, for the acceleration of growth focused on increasing the productive capacity of the male labour force [sic]. Welfare provision of the family was targeted at women, who, along with the disabled and the sick, were identified as 'vulnerable' groups, and remained the responsibility of the marginalized ministries of social welfare (1993:59).

The welfare approach is based on three principles: first, that women can only be passive recipients of development and cannot participate actively in the process; second, that motherhood is the one and most important role of women in society and consequently, that child-rearing is the most productive role for women in economic development (1993:60) {Cf. Mosse, 1994:153}.

This approach emphasizes a strict division of labor, in which men are in charge of the productive sphere and women of the reproductive sphere; the main concern is physical survival through the direct provision of food aid for nutritional education, for refugees, for female-maintained households and for family planning. Although welfare programs tend to encourage dependency rather than supporting women to achieve independence and self-reliance, they remain prevalent "precisely because they are politically safe, not questioning or changing the traditionally accepted role of women within the gender division of labour" (1993:61), or the status quo in relationship to values and economic standing.

¹⁰ This model was the direct descendant of the welfare programs initiated in Europe after the end of World War II which, in Moser's terms, "were among the first to identify women as the main beneficiaries"

III.3.1.2 Equity Approach

During the 1970's an analysis of the welfare approach and a concern with its results took place. The clear evidence that Third World development projects were indeed negatively affecting instead of benefiting women led to the United Nations sponsored 1975 International Women's Year Conference and later to the United Nations Women's Decade (1976-1985). As a response to the welfare perspective, a series of alternative approaches to the issue of women arose; although they have a common origin and were formulated in the same decade, there are "significant differences" among them.

The term "Women in Development" (WID) was first used in the 1970's by the Women's Committee of the Washington, DC, Chapter of the Society for International Development. The designation was rapidly accepted and adopted by USAID; USAID created an office of Women in Development. For Moser, the underlying reasoning for this step was the recognition that "women are an untapped resource who can provide an economic contribution to development." The original WID approach --influenced mainly by Boserup (1970) and Tinker (1976)-- was based on the idea that if women were not "fully incorporated" into the process of development, they were left to use their time "unproductively." Moser calls this approach the "equity approach" (1993:2-3).

Studies conducted in the 1970s showed that women were the most important contributors to agriculture,¹¹ yet their participation was not adequately recorded in national statistics. In the same manner, modernization projects utilizing new technologies and methods were "displacing [women] from their traditional productive functions, and

(1993:59). The main objective of these services were to ensure reconstruction through emergency relief aid that was to support the financial assistance provided.

¹¹ Boserup (1986) found three different patterns for the participation of African women in agriculture; those where: "the fieldwork is done almost exclusively by women, predominantly by women, and predominantly by men." The statistical data analyzed clearly demonstrated that women's participation in agricultural work was significantly higher than that of the men; the final result, placing together women's high rate of participation and long working hours, was that "women...were found to do more than half of the agricultural work" (1986:17, 21-22).

diminishing the income, status and power they had in traditional relations" (Moser, 1993:63).

Tinker (1976) demonstrated that many development projects failed because development planners were "unable to deal with the fact that women must perform two roles in society whereas men perform only one" (1976:22). The equity approach recognized that women are active participants in the process of development and that their productive and reproductive roles are a substantial contribution to the economic growth of a nation, even though women's contribution has not been acknowledged by society in the majority of cases (Moser, 1993:63).

This approach acknowledges practical gender needs and it also considers crucial issues of parity that go beyond economic survival. It is concerned with the inequalities that exist between men and women in the public and private arena and within socio-economic groups. The origins of women's subordination are assumed to be, not only in the context of the family, but also in the relationships of men and women in the market place. For this reason, "it put considerable emphasis on economic independence as synonymous with equity" (1993:64). Emphasis was placed on equity programs that allowed for combining the notions of development and equality. The root of the problem was thought to be the lack of participation of women in the development process; therefore, it was assumed that if they received an equal opportunity, women could be incorporated successfully into the economic and social life of a nation.

Moser indicates that this approach was mainly directed by First World feminists interested in equality between men and women and changes in the traditional roles of both genders; in contrast, Third World women were more concerned with developmental processes. Equity programs encountered problems because of the lack of common indicators to measure women's economic, social and political status. Politically,

the majority of development agencies were hostile to equity programs precisely because of their intention to meet not only practical gender needs but also strategic gender needs, whose very success depended on an implicit redistribution of power (Moser, 1993:65).

Both development agencies and Third World governments were reluctant to accept the equity approach, the former because “as a rule of thumb they [development agencies] tend to believe in upholding social traditions” (Buvinic, in Moser, 1993:65), and the latter because equality procedures were perceived as an unwanted introduction of Western-exported feminism (Moser, 1993:65).

Although the equity approach has been abandoned by the majority of development agencies, its principles continue to be used, especially in official legislation, where legal equality for women has been accepted “as a minimum basis of consensus from which to begin the discussion of more controversial issues” (1993:66).

III.3.1.3 Anti-poverty Approach

The anti-poverty approach is the second WID approach. Contrary to the above approach, economic inequality between men and women is attributed to poverty and not to subordination. Therefore, emphasis is placed on reducing women’s income inequality rather than legal or social disparity. This perspective has been called by Buvinic (1983) a “toned-down version of the equity approach” (in Moser, 1993:67), a product of the hesitation of development agencies to intervene in the construction of relations between men and women in a specific society.

By the early 1970s, the negative results of the modernization theory¹² were widely acknowledged; in 1972, the World Bank “officially shifted from a preoccupation with economic growth to a broader concern with the eradication of absolute poverty and the promotion of ‘redistribution with growth.’” The “basic needs strategy” was fundamental; the primary purpose was to meet so-called basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter and fuel. Women of low income were considered a target group that required assistance in “escaping absolute deprivation” for two reasons: first, because women had not been

¹² Modernization theory determined that “economic development involving industrialization, urbanization, high educational standards, and a steady increase in the overall wealth of the society, is a basic condition sustaining democracy, it is a mark of efficiency of the total system.” Along with this, “effectiveness and legitimacy of the political systems” was needed to facilitate development (Lipset in Arat, 1988:22).

considered in preceding development plans, and second, because in the majority of cases women were the ones in charge of meeting those basic needs of the family (Moser, 1993:67).

This approach focuses on women's productive role. It assumes that "poverty alleviation and the promotion of balanced economic growth requires the increased productivity of women in low-income households" because women's poverty and inequality are caused by insufficient access to private ownership and by sexual discrimination in the market system. Therefore, it is mainly concerned with "the increase of employment and income-generating options" for low-income women. Likewise, it acknowledges that education and employment programs "could simultaneously increase women's economic contribution and reduce fertility" (1993:68).

Projects based on the anti-poverty approach have tended to remain small in scale and generally developed by NGOs. As Moser points out,

Most frequently they aim to increase productivity in activities traditionally undertaken by women, rather than to introduce women to new areas of work, with a preference for supporting rural-based production projects as opposed to those in the service and distribution sectors (1993:68).

The difficulties of the anti-poverty approach lie both in its theoretical framework and in its practical application. In theory, the "basic needs" perspective implies a participatory approach, "yet in practice anti-poverty projects for women rarely included participatory planning procedures" (1993:68); in the design phase, the basic conditions that guarantee viability were usually ignored and in the implementation process projects with this focus often shifted toward a welfare-oriented standpoint.

Constraints on women because of their gender-based roles are generally ignored. These problems may include --among others-- cultural restrictions on women's ability to surpass the domestic sphere, the control of household financial resources by men, and the lack of access to credit for women. In short, "the tendency to distinguish between micro-enterprise projects for men and income-generating projects for women is indicative of the

prevailing attitude...that women's productive work is of less importance than men's" (1993:69). In the same manner, when emphasis is placed on women's productive role, their reproductive role is ignored; many income-generating projects assume that women have spare time and the consequence is an increment in women's arduous chores.

Projects organized around the anti-poverty approach provide employment for women, and therefore meet some practical gender needs, but "unless employment leads to greater autonomy" (Moser, 1993:69) strategic gender needs are not met.

III.3.1.4 Efficiency Approach

The fourth and currently predominant WID approach is called the "efficiency approach." The emphasis in this type of project is shifted toward development, "on the assumption that increased economic participation for Third World women is automatically linked with increased equity." This change of approach coincides with a deterioration of the world economy during the mid-1970s particularly in Latin America and Africa, because of the decline of export prices, protectionism and the external debt. In order to mitigate this situation, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank implemented economic stabilization and adjustment policies in several Third World countries. Moser points out that these policies led to "the reallocation of resources to enable the restoration of a balance of payments equilibrium, an increase in exports and a rejuvenation in growth rates" (Moser, 1993:70) thanks to demand management and supply expansion.

This approach toward women's issues is currently gaining popularity among international assistance agencies and national governments; its prevalence is highly linked to the structural adjustment policies implemented by national governments in the Third World. Top-to-bottom in approach, it emphasizes women's economic participation in a search for greater efficiency. As Moser points out, under this approach women are considered as part of "self-help" programs because of their high reliability in repaying loans, because of their capability of self-development side by side with men, and their commitment as community managers.

The reduction of investment in human resources due to policies implemented by the World Bank and IMF have produced --among other phenomena-- a reduction in income levels, "cuts in government social expenditure programmes [sic]...and reductions in food subsidies" (1993:71). The effects of these cuts, which often create practical gender needs for women, are perceived to be overcome by the "elasticity of women's labor in increasing self-production of food, and changes in purchasing habits and consumption patterns." This perspective not only ignores the fact that the "success" of efficiency projects may be due to longer and harder working days for women, but it also does not acknowledge that the balancing of time around women's triple role may be affected. In Moser's words, "the fact that paid work and unpaid work are competing for women's time has important impacts on children, on women themselves and on the disintegration of the household" (1993:71-72).

Of particular importance for understanding the lack of success of development projects under the pre-WID and WID approaches is the fact that they were organized around assumptions: it was assumed that gender roles are the same all over the world; it was assumed that all the members of a household, or of a community, would benefit from a specific project; it was assumed, as well, that the sexual division of labor was identical in every society. For this reason, on many occasions women were pressured to get involved in projects where they would perform traditional activities perceived as "appropriate for women", needlework, for example, when in fact, in that particular society, men were in charge of that activity. On many occasions, women's projects were an appendage of larger projects and consequently, they did not receive enough consideration to be successful.

III.3.1.5 Empowerment Approach

The fifth policy approach toward women and development planning is the empowerment approach. The origins of the empowerment approach derive from "emergent feminist writings and grassroots organization experience of Third World women." This perspective embraces the notion that inequalities between men and women

and subordination of women exist within the family, but it also accentuates the fact that women experience oppression in a different fashion in relationship to their race, class, colonial history and position in the international economic order. "It therefore maintains that women have to challenge oppressive structures and situations simultaneously at different levels" (Moser, 1993:74).

This approach questions some of the pre-conceived notions of the relationship between power and development in the preceding approaches. The source of power lies in "the capacity of women to increase their own self-reliance and internal strength" (1993:74) rather than on the domination over others. Empowerment of women is achieved through the redistribution of power within and between societies. Furthermore, it challenges two assumptions of the equity approach: first, that development is implicitly beneficial for all human beings and second, that women desire to be part of development projects designed with a western view of the world.

Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN), an organization formed by women from South India in August 1984, is one of the most important groups working on the implementation of the empowerment approach. DAWN proposes the existence of long-term and short-term strategies. The long-term strategies will eventually "break down the structures of inequality between genders, classes and nations"¹³ while the short-term ones provide mechanisms to react to the present social and economic crisis. Long-term strategies not only appeal to strategic gender needs, but also identify national liberation as "a fundamental requisite for addressing them" (Moser, 1993:75-76).

The means to achieve social justice and the transformation of inequitable structures of subordination of women include legal issues as well as political mobilization, consciousness raising and popular education (1993:76). The empowerment approach acknowledges that women confront a triple role in society and works through the activity of

¹³ Including "national liberation from colonial and neo-colonial domination, shifts from export-led strategies in agriculture" and control over the interference of multinational companies in Third World countries (Moser, 1993:75).

bottom-to-top organizations to raise women's consciousness of their subordination. This approach also emphasizes the importance of meeting strategic gender needs through the indirect influence of implementing practical gender needs.

The empowerment approach has not achieved popularity among international aid organizations, policy planners, and national governments because of its challenge to the status quo. Third World organizations based on this perspective remain under-funded, "reliant on the use of voluntary and unpaid women's time, and dependent on the resources of those few international NGOs and First World governments prepared to support this approach to women and development" (1993:79).

III.3.2 THE WAD PERSPECTIVE

Women and Development (WAD) emerged during the latter half of the 1970s as a neo-Marxist feminist approach based on the analysis of the limitations of the theory of modernization. This perspective emphasized the fact that women have always been economically important both within the public and private arena, and therefore, they do not need to be "incorporated" into development. In general terms, Mosse believes that the WAD approach tends to "group women together without sufficiently analyzing class, race and ethnic divisions between them." WAD's principal assumption is that the status of women will be transformed when international structures become more equitable; that is, women's position is perceived mainly as part "of the structure of international and class inequalities, rather than being a result of an ideology and structure of patriarchy." Hence, the importance of women's specific gender oppression is somehow overlooked. This perspective has focused on income-generating activities, ignoring --to a certain extent-- women's work within the household structure (Mosse, 1994:160).

III.3.3 THE GAD PERSPECTIVE

More recently, a shift in approach manifested the necessity of focusing on gender rather than on women, and the Gender and Development (GAD) perspective arose. Oakley

(1972) and Rubin (1975) greatly contributed to this paradigm. As stated above, this approach analyzes the problems of women in terms of their gender relations, that is, "the social relationship between men and women, in which women have been systematically subordinated" (Moser, 1993:3). The approach focuses on the macro-level as opposed to the emphasis on the micro-level of earlier paradigms.

As Moser affirms, development projects organized by public and private agencies around Women in Development are more popular for they are less threatening. Gender and Development, on the other hand, is a confrontational approach, whose ultimate goal is emancipation. For this reason, it is popular among development practitioners with a feminist framework, but is "viewed with suspicion by many aid agencies and Third World governments" (Mosse, 1994:161). Within this perspective, both the process of change and the changes themselves are fundamental.

Nonetheless, it must be stated that the conceptual awareness of both WAD and GAD perspectives "has not necessarily resulted in their translation into planning practice" (Moser, 1993:4). That is, the design of policies based on WAD/GAD approaches have not always succeeded in their implementation.

III.4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The approach undertaken in this research is based on the GAD paradigm in combination with other theoretical perspectives. Lourdes Benería and Gita Sen (1981) state that in order to understand women's oppression it is crucial to analyze the spheres of production and reproduction and the economic and socio-cultural structures as well; women's continual loss of status in the course of economic development should be conceived in the context of an "interweaving of class relations and gender relations" (1981:288).

It is essential to analyze how development affects both men and women within a given society and how the relations between men and women indeed influence development. Women cannot be perceived to be isolated from men; in the same manner, it

is not possible to discern women's position independently of their ethnic condition, class and age. Therefore, in order to understand the development process, the variables of gender¹⁴, ethnicity, class,¹⁵ age, cast, and women's position within the international economic order must be taken into account. Although the micro-level of social, cultural and political organization is important, the analysis will not be complete unless a macro-level perspective is included. The GAD perspective accounts for these elements in its paradigm.

In terms of methods, the gender planning perspective provides an effective framework. The gender planning tradition¹⁶ is "transformative" and political, still developing and "yet to be fully established" (1993:86); its general goal --derived from women's social and political movements around the world-- is the emancipation of women from subordination, "with the aim of achieving gender equity, equality and empowerment through meeting practical and strategic gender needs" (1993:87).

It has been argued that the currently ruling patriarchal structure has always been present, and that indigenous societies are no exception to the rule. I believe that this may be true, but it cannot be denied that colonialism exacerbated this structure; by reinforcing conceptions and lifestyles, it rendered the work of women invisible or less important. In the same fashion, Moser proposes that at the present time, capitalist development models, which could also be called neo-colonialism, have worsened the inequalities between men and women (Moser, 1993:63) {Cf. Mosse, 1994:24}.

¹⁴ Gender analysis must include the examination of interactions between genders, for conflicts of interests between men and women differ greatly from other conflicts. In a class conflict, for example, "a worker and a capitalist do not typically live together under the same roof --sharing concerns and experiences and acting jointly. It is this aspect of 'togetherness' that gives the gender conflict some very special characteristics" (Moser, 1993:25).

¹⁵ The variable of class cannot be understood in isolation from the other set of variables. For example, in a given socio-economic group women tend to have fewer economical resources than men. It cannot be assumed that men and women from a household share interests, needs and resources; however, gender is not the only variable to consider; men and women can encounter the same economic and ethnic difficulties.

¹⁶ A clear distinction between planning tradition and planning methodology exists. The former is "a particular form of planning, with its own focus and objectives, knowledge base, agenda, process and organization"; the latter is "the process of providing organized technical guidance for such action" (1993:83).

As Moser states, the purpose of gender planning is to furnish the instruments that will operationalize the political perspective of emancipation and to guarantee its institutionalization in planning practices. In accordance with this perspective, Longwe (1989) states that gender equality is not only a development issue, but a human rights problem (In Mosse, 1994:168,169).

How is emancipation achieved? An important component is the emphasis on empowerment (Moser, 1993:1) and organization based on two elements: "people gain the strength to create a space for themselves, and to build up the material assets to support their own growth and development" (Mosse, 1994:20) {Cf. Alvarado in Benjamin, 1987:87}.

Gender planning can be characterized by its political and technical nature and by the fact that it assumes conflict in the planning process; it involves processes of modification and it characterizes planning as "debate". Gender planning procedures acknowledge that it is impossible for planners to be apolitical or neutral; there is no "universally applicable set of technical procedures" (1993:78). It considers debate, negotiation and conflict resolution to be mechanisms of central concern.

In order to fulfill practical gender needs, a technical methodology is required, while the planning methodology needed to meet strategic gender needs is political. The gender planning framework consists of an iterative process composed of procedures; each one of them is an "ongoing and overlapping" step. Each procedure incorporates a number of methodological tools and the iterative procedures are connected to the four components of gender planning practice; these four components are: institutionalization as a process for gender planning; operational procedures for implementing gender policies, programs and projects; training strategies for gender planning; and the emancipation approach or political agenda of women's organization.

Another fundamental point needs to be addressed. In metaphoric and political terms, the word "development", however well-intended, perpetuates a paternalistic relation between countries of the South and the North. In linguistic terms, every word has a

denotation and a connotation. The former is the literal definition of a word, while the latter refers to the associations that come with the word. The term "development" implies a biological and psychological relation of inequality between the countries of the North and the South. By using this term, the countries of the North are perceived as mature, fully grown, wise, knowledgeable and experienced while the countries of the South are seen as immature, less than fully grown, small, weaker, dependent and less intellectually able as in a parent-child relationship. In psychological terms, the relationship is therapist/patient, in which the countries of the North are the providers of consciousness, the active ones, those who give, are responsible and clear, while the countries of the South are the receptors of consciousness; they are passive, deprived; they are learning to be responsible for they are undergoing a phase of confusion. Although it may appear inoffensive, the use of these types of metaphors implies pre-conceived assumptions of the relationships between countries.

The word "development" applied to the countries of the world implies a difference between "advanced and complete" nations compared to those that are "primitive and incomplete." Khrisna-Raj (1988) states that "implicit...is a comparison that the group of countries labeled underdeveloped are seen as deficient, in contrast to the other set of countries" (1988:5). This level of advancement is measured in terms of the abundance or lack of material goods of a nation as well as the socio-political and cultural "betterment." As a result, the notion is fundamentally economic and implies a value judgment,

...what the first group [Europe, North America, Australia and Japan] possesses is desirable and therefore everyone else should aim at getting it and secondly that whatever they possess is development -be it food, cars, airplanes, plastic goods or street gangs, crime, pornography or whatever (1988:5) {Cf. Braidotti et al., 1994:22}.

On the other hand, the use of the term "exchange" instead of development refers to an equal relationship between the two hemispheres when "development" projects are designed, implemented and analyzed; this term signifies an adult-to-adult rather than a father-to-children relationship. Therefore, the proposition elaborated by Knott (1996) of

adopting Gender and Exchange (GAE) as a theoretical framework (Knott-personal communication, June 1996) ties these two elements together. Within this paradigm, a relationship father/child or patient/therapist is no longer in effect; a new relationship arises, one of interaction, equality, of giving and receiving discernment, one of sharing information and learning processes; it implies the destruction of barriers between parties involved.

From a GAE perspective, the scientific analysis of men's and women's roles is essential. This analysis is achieved through the study of four elements of a given society at an exploratory stage: the allocation of labor, the sources of income, expenditure patterns and access to resources of a given society. These elements are always examined within the context of the variables mentioned above: class, gender, age, ethnicity, cast and position in the international economic order; and conclusions are drawn afterwards, within a dialectical framework.

I will refer to this theoretical framework to analyze the development projects that have occurred in El Chota, as well as to develop suggestions for future activities.

CHAPTER FOUR

GEOGRAPHICAL AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT

IV.1 GEOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT

The Valley of El Chota is located in the Northern highlands of Ecuador, in the province of Imbabura. It is composed of fifteen small towns (*caseríos*); its population is almost entirely formed by Afro-Ecuadorians and mulattos¹, in contrast to the exclusively indigenous and Mestizo communities of the neighboring areas (Lipski, 1987:157).

The region is crossed by the Chota-Mira river; this river covers an extension of 80 square kilometers from Pimampiro (Imbabura) to Concepción (Carchi). The Valley of El Chota is composed of the following communities: San Francisco de Caldera, Piquiucho, San Vitorino, Pusir, Tumbatú, Chota Chiquito, Dosacequias, Mascarilla, Pambahacienda (Carchi); Chalguayacu, El Juncal, Carpuela, El Ramal de Ambuquí, San Alfonso, El Chota (Imbabura) (Chalá in Savoia, 1992:160), plus Pusir Chico, Pusir Grande, Pimampiro and El Tambo (See Map 2).

The Valley of El Chota is surrounded by a chain of several snow-capped mountains. This feature contributes to the fertility of the soil of the Valley, especially in terms of the varieties of crops suitable for dry, subtropical and even tropical weather (Espín, 1993:17).

¹ "Mulatto" is the term commonly used to designate the Afro-Ecuadorian people whose phenotypic characteristics are a mixture of African and white/Mestizo backgrounds.

The Valley has two specific seasons: a long dry season and a short dry season. The annual precipitation is approximately 330 mm.; the relative annual humidity is 80 percent, constant throughout the year.

The natural vegetation of the area is primarily the xerophile vegetation Subtropical Thorny Mountain (*Chaparro*); the soils of the Valley are formed of sediments of volcanic origins with a low content of nitrogen, organic materials and phosphorus and a high dose of calcium and potassium. The soil is composed of 50 to 60 percent sand; 32 to 33 percent slime and from 5 to 18 percent clay (1993: 23).

The agricultural soil ranges between 5 and 50 cm. in depth. Soils in the Valley require organic material and green manure in addition to commercial fertilizers. In general, soils need irrigation water in order to produce, because of high evaporation, low precipitation and low moisture retention.

Today, the Valley is almost completely deforested; the inadequate use of irrigation waters along with the deficient use of fertilizers accelerates erosion. The Valley boasts a semi-desert landscape, in contrast to the green areas of cultivated land. These lands are extremely fertile and suitable for growing a number of products which “along with the favorable weather conditions and numerous advantages in relationship to other areas, such as proximity to urban centers, transportation facilities, etc.” make the valley an advantageous region for the cultivation of an ample diversity of products (1993:25).

The most important products that grow in the Valley are beans and tomatoes; they are grown as cash crops and are also consumed internally. Besides these two products, other important crops are: sugar cane, yucca, corn, cotton, tobacco, and fruits

such as avocados, bananas, grapes, papayas and citrus fruits (lemons and oranges among others).

Other products grown in smaller scale are: anise, peanuts, cucumbers, chili, peppers, lettuce, cabbage, beet, potatoes, and a great variety of fruits: mango, pineapple, melon and others (González, 1984:26-28).

IV.2 HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The Valley of El Chota², Coangue, “Bloody Valley” (*Valle Sangriento*)³, or “Deadly Valley” (*Valle Mortífero*) is one of the oldest agricultural zones of the country; its mercantile use can be traced from the beginning of the Spanish conquest. From that time on, 1530, there is a shared ethnic history between indigenous and black groups, the latter introduced by the Spaniards.

The history of the Valley can be divided into three phases:

IV.2.1 First Phase

During the pre-Hispanic period, the Valley of El Chota was established as a convergent area and as a symbiotic center of the Pasto and Otavalo cultures (Coronel, 1991:29).

The most important products of the area were considered “exotic” articles: cotton, coca and indigo; these products generated a bonanza for the indigenous groups, because of

² Costales and Peñaherrera (1950) propose that the term “*El Chota*” derives from the patronymic of the woman Angelina Chota from the town of Mira (In Savoia, 1990:58).

³ The Valley of El Chota has received the denominations of Bloody Valley and Deadly Valley because, due to harsh climatic conditions, plagues and illnesses were common in the area. This situation caused massive deaths and displacement of indigenous populations.

their prestige and demand in the market. The plantations were localized at the shores of the Chota-Mira river. In the upper part of the Valley, Pimampiro and its surroundings, the main products were chili, yucca, potatoes, beans and fruits (1991:26).

The arrival of the Spaniards brought great importance to the Valley of El Chota from 1550 to 1610, because of the production of cotton. "All the ethnic groups of the northern Sierra had to pay tribute by producing cotton blankets for men and women"; they purchased that cotton in the Valley (1991:29).

At that time, the Valley of El Chota was part of the Otavalo Jurisdiction (*Corregimiento de Otavalo*) created in 1563; as Navas (1934) pointed out: "In this town of Pimampiro and in this valley known as *Coangue*, there are more than 300 Indians from Otavalo and Carangue and Sichos and from other lands far apart..." (1934:89).

By the year 1576, due to a crisis of production in cotton and coca, the Spanish landlords decided to cultivate grapevines and olive trees. They did not achieve success because:

A plan as ample as the project grapevine-olive trees required not only local consumers, but also the existence of new markets beyond the local borders; this situation implied the breaking of an ancient network established and controlled by indigenous populations, and at the same time a process of change and adaptation of a new taste imposed by the Europeans (Coronel, 1991:43).

The grapevine and olive trees were planted, but it was not possible to produce a high quality product, because the ecological, climatic and productive conditions of the Valley were inadequate. According to Coronel (1991), this situation provoked a "period of crisis and transition" between 1610 and 1680. During this time, there was no

dominance in any of the characteristic farming products of the Valley; grapevines, olive trees, sugar cane, coca, cotton, chili and other crops were simultaneously cultivated.

However, with the arrival of the Spaniards, the sowing of coca was prohibited for it was considered a sin; the production of cotton declined in intensity and the grapevines and olive trees project was not developed adequately; the activity that became preponderant was the production of sugar cane⁴; the sowing and harvesting of sugar cane produced the emergence of a new economic and social phase in the Valley of El Chota.

IV.2.2 Second Phase

From 1610 until 1780, a peculiar system of hacienda production was consolidated, and a black population settled in the Valley of El Chota as a slave labor force⁵.

The Order of the Regulators of the Jesuit Company (*Orden de los Reguladores de la Compañía de Jesús*), a Spanish religious order, arrived in Ecuador in 1584, and became the key factor in the accelerated development of the sugar cane hacienda system during the sixteenth century (Coronel, 1991:51). This process was organized around three essential elements:

a) Concentration of land: The Jesuits accumulated land using different mechanisms such as buying it from native Caciques and Indians and through donations.

Coronel considers two periods defining land tenure in the Valley Chota-Mira. The first period goes from 1610 to 1680 and is considered a transition period. The

⁴ The production of sugar cane was considered a promising project because of the adaptability of this product to the weather and land conditions of the Valley of El Chota.

⁵ Nonetheless, some authors argue that the first blacks arrived in Ecuador between 1533 and 1536 (Lipsky, 1986:157).

Spanish landlords acquired control of the land by pressuring the Caciques and Indians to surrender their territory. During this period, the Jesuits bought land in the Valley of El Chota. The second period dates from 1680 to 1740 and it is marked by the purchase of land from particular individuals into the hands of the Jesuit Company.

b) Irrigation: Sugar cane requires well irrigated land. According to Coronel, in the Valley of El Chota, “the short annual precipitation could be overcome by the use of the Río Grande and its tributaries” (1991:64). From 1680 to the expulsion of the Jesuit Order in 1767, this religious group monopolized the land as well as the water rights of the region.

c) Labor force: Labor, a key element of agricultural production in the Valley, became a difficult problem during the sixteenth century.

The first hacienda owners that settled in the Valley used indigenous workers. During the seventeenth century, however, pressure imposed by the Spanish on the Caciques and Indians to relinquish their land provoked indigenous groups to leave the Valley:

And since the Spanish tie up the Indians, they [the Indians] burn the houses where they live which are made of wood and straw and they leave to other places and if from there they are also searched out, leaving that place they go forward to other places and wherever they want...(Cieza de León, in Bustamante, 1978:160).

Another reason for Indians leaving the Valley of El Chota was the Royal Ordinance (*Ordenanza Real*) of 1573 which “prohibited the relocation of the Indians to the warm lands”, for it was believed that indigenous labor was not suitable for working in such climatic conditions (González, 1984:13).

Thus, a series of confrontations between the indigenous population and the Spanish landlords occurred, and for this reason the indigenous populations abandoned the Valley. New strategies needed to be developed to acquire labor force; among those were the attraction of a volunteer indigenous labor force and the introduction of black slaves of African ancestry to work the sugar cane plantations as well as the gold mines (Coronel, 1991:77-81). As Mellafé (1975) points out, “the institution of African slavery was introduced...as the imperative solution to a shortage of labor [indigenous population] created by the inherent necessities of the expansion itself” (1975:19).

Stutzman (1974) supports these trends. He believes that at the end of the sixteenth century, the indigenous labor force continued to be predominant in the gold mines; the particular illnesses of this tropical zone, “along with the precarious living conditions contributed to the death of thousands of Indians” and to the introduction of a black labor force in the Valley (1974:64).

The black labor force originated from Angola, Nigeria, the Ivory Coast, Calabar, Senegal, Congo (Price in Whitten/Friedeman, 1974:92) as well as from Guinea in West Africa (Stutzman, 1979:100). “The first black slaves already spoke Spanish (*ladinos*)⁶; they were servants recruited among many other blacks that lived in Spain and Portugal at that time” (Morner in Whitten/Friedeman, 1974:95), while others were *bozales*⁷ or what Whitten (1974) calls “fresh from Africa” (1974:38). According to Savoia (1990), the

⁶ The term *ladino* refers to African people who served as slaves or workers in Spain and Portugal and followed their masters to America. They spoke Spanish or Portuguese and practiced Catholicism. According to García (1994) until 1517 it was illegal to bring Africans to the Americas “out of fear that their religion might ‘contaminate’ the Indian population” (In Kleymeyer, 1994:104). Other scholars refer to *ladinos* as Creoles or *Criollos*.

Jesuits also acquired an African labor force from the pier at Cartagena de Indias⁸ (1992:148).

By the end of the seventeenth century, the Jesuits controlled almost every piece of productive land in the Valley of El Chota, in spite of the “numerous decrees expedited to limit ecclesiastic property” (Coronel/Navarro in Maloney, 1995:77). They possessed ten haciendas, eight produced sugar cane and two cattle: Tumbabiro, Carpuela, Santiago, Chalguyacu, Chamanal, La Concepción, Caldera, Cuajara, Pisquer and Chorlaví; altogether they comprised a total of almost 6000 hectares (16,446.0 acres) (Savoia, 1992: 149) and employed approximately 1780 slaves (Coba, 1980:27).

These haciendas based their production on textiles and derivatives of sugar cane such as sugar, *aguardiente*, *raspadura*⁹ and honey. The implementation of a strategy of interdependent haciendas¹⁰ guaranteed the reproduction of the slave labor force, and therefore, the production of the sugar cane.

Each hacienda was composed of a quadrille (*cuadrilla*), with twelve to a hundred slaves. They were divided into: workers of the mine (*piezas de mina* or pieces for mines) and of agriculture and sugar mills (*piezas de roza* or pieces for tilling). There was also a captain (*capataz*), usually a black person trusted by the landlord and who received special

⁷ *Bozal* is the term used to identify African slaves who were taken directly from Africa and therefore did not speak Spanish or Portuguese and maintained their particular culture intact.

⁸ Besides using a black labor force, the Jesuit Order participated in the importation of slaves for sale; this business provided abundant financial profits for the Order (Coronel, 1991:86).

⁹ *Aguardiente* is a liquor derived from the sugar cane; its different varieties contain from 40 to 90 percent pure alcohol. *Raspadura* or *panela* is non-processed sugar commonly used as a sweetener in beverages.

¹⁰ This term refers to a system developed by the Jesuits where each hacienda was dedicated to the production of specific products; in this manner, the Jesuits developed a mechanism of self-subsistence that reduced costs of production.

treatment; he was in charge of “assigning daily tasks and places, and supervising labor; he maintained discipline in the quadrille and also distributed the food” (Coba, 1980:34).

The slaves received modest small plots of land or *huasipungos*¹¹ or *chacras de esclavo*. They harvested corn, cotton, wheat and fruits on these pieces of land. These lands were usually worked through share cropping¹² (*trabajo al partir*); a common practice in the Valley: “...the many blacks that live there not only harvest in their small plots but they also rent land and do share cropping for the whites, and they sow sections of cotton, corn, wheat and other products...” (In Coronel, 1991:110).

By giving small plots to the slaves, the Jesuits were able to reduce costs of production because sustenance for the labor force came from those plots. Productivity in the Chota-Mira basin was based on selling sugar cane for the market; the system prospered from “a productive and complimentary combination that, through self-subsistence, made it possible to guarantee monetary savings and share economic risks.” The Jesuit Order was able to develop an extremely effective organizational model, which produced a successful economic enterprise (Coronel, 1991:114). In this sense, the religious rigor that highland slaves were forced to endure differs highly from the

¹¹ *Huasipungo* is the name given to a system of production where the landowner (*patrón*) provided a small plot of land to the *huasipunguero* in exchange for work on the owner's land four or five days per week. The land given to the slave was also known as the slave's plot of land (*chacra de esclavo*). The *huasipungueros* were allowed to work in their fields in the remaining days and to use the products harvested as a mean of subsistence. House sites and pasture as well as water rights were also permitted. In addition, the *huasipungueros* received a small amount of money for their labor in the hacienda fields (Stutzman, in Whitten, 1981:50). This system of production was used by the Jesuits with their African workers, in a system that resembled feudalism more than slavery. However, it is important to remember that slavery was “a constantly shifting relationship between masters and slaves within the framework of juridical, cultural, and economic realities that formed its structure” (Schwartz, 1992:164).

¹² *Trabajo al partir* or share cropping is a common practice among black groups since the time of the Jesuit hacienda. It implies that one person provides the land and another one cultivates it. The harvest of the land is divided in equal parts. Divided labor started during the traditional hacienda system and

experience of coastal slaves. Whitten (1965) argues that Afro-Ecuadorians who inhabit the province of Esmeraldas “originated with slaves who were imported by Negro [sic] slave traders, shipwrecked on the Esmeraldas coast, and led by a Negro named Illescas” (1965:22). West (1952) proposes that Afro-Ecuadorian populations arrived in northwest Ecuador through Cartagena (In Whitten, 1965:23). In any event, the history of Andean and Coastal blacks varies considerably; the former were slaves in a hacienda system run by a religious order, while the latter worked independently as manual laborers; they experienced a milder slavery system with lack of ties to religion.¹³

The Valley of El Chota underwent a series of transitions to a more developed economic system as a result of a process of accumulation of capital. A new logic of exploitation of resources appeared as the circulation of merchandise created a tendency toward the monetization of the economy. This situation produced competition with local landlords, and the Jesuit Orders became a serious threat to the traditional economic system. In 1767 the Jesuits were expelled from the country, and their property was expropriated by the Crown; the Ministry of the Expatriated (*Temporalidades de Expatriados*¹⁴) took charge of the Jesuit haciendas from that time until 1784.

The black slave population that inhabited the haciendas became, “along with the other belongings of the haciendas, part of the possessions of the new owner” (González,

continued after this process with a new system of production because of its proven usefulness (Guerrón-Montero, 1996c: 7).

¹³ Andean blacks believe lowland blacks are robbers, indolent and dangerous, while Coastal blacks think Andean blacks are slow and ignorant. This deployment of stereotypes could be perceived as a strategy for increasing identity maintenance and esteem, as well as access to resources for these populations.

¹⁴ Agency in charge of the administration of the possessions of the ecclesiastic orders. The first person in charge of this Ministry was Don Andrés Salvador.

1984:14). According to Lipski (1986), during the years preceding the expulsion of the Jesuits “most of the slaves simply changed masters as these lands were taken over by Ecuadoran [sic] owners” (1986:158).

There is not a great deal of information regarding the economic and social dynamics of slavery in the Ecuadorian haciendas and sugar cane plantations *per se*. However, some similarities exist with other areas of Latin America where slavery was present.

Slavery in Latin America followed two fundamental patterns: it either presented a deliberate imbalanced sex ratio which favored men (Schwartz, 1985:11) {Cf. Bush, 1990:33} or it emphasized the reproduction of slaves (the “buy or breed” dilemma, Reddock 1986) (Hünefeldt, 1995:140).

Only a third of slaves imported to the Caribbean, for example, were women. This was true because it was more “economically viable to buy fresh slaves from Africa” than to rely on reproduction within the plantations (Bush, 1990:33-36). According to Mintz and Price (1976), the highly restricted nature of kinship in the slave system produced “a limited possibility for the development of ties other than those between mothers and children and between siblings” (1976:74). A major effect of enslavement was the almost complete destruction of the previous status held by individuals in the ancestral societies they inhabited.

In terms of sexual division of labor, both men and women worked on field labor and on their personal plots of land. However, men were considered elite slaves, while women were regarded as of inferior importance. Women were believed to be well- suited

for field work. Likewise, they were chosen to perform domestic chores or menial labor in the household of the master. Women also performed domestic activities within their own families and took care of the children.¹⁵ Men were valued for their craftsman skills or work in the sugar mills. The Jamaican planter, William Beckford, summarized the occupations ascribed to the different sexes in plantation society:

A Negro [sic] man is purchased either for trade, or the cultivation and different process of the cane-- the occupations of the women are only two, the house, with its several departments and supposed indulgences, or the field with its exaggerated labours. The first situation is the more honourable, the last the most independent (In Bush, 1990:34).

According to Gautier (1983), a clear division of labor was present in the plantations: women cut cane, weeded and manured while men cut trees, extracted stones and carried heavy weighs. Women also fed the mill. Pregnant women and children were given so-called "light labor." Likewise, women were in charge of commercial activities both within plantations and in nearby towns and cities (Hünefeldt, 1994:205).

Skilled artisans and drivers formed the highest rank of the plantation, followed by domestic servants, the slaves in charge of menial tasks, the field laborers, the children and the so-called "unemployable" (Bush, 1990:34). Women slaves, excluded from the elite occupations, suffered more than male slaves "from inevitable restriction to their ascribed occupations;...their opportunities for social mobility were severely limited" (1990:38).

¹⁵ Mintz and Price (1976) argue that it is possible that certain African notions about "the relative separateness of male-female roles were reinforced by the plantation experience, to produce what seem to be characteristic African-American patterns" (1976:80).

IV.2.3 Third Phase

This phase extends from 1770 until the present time. The expulsion of the Jesuits and the appropriation of the haciendas in the hands of the government made the Spanish Crown the largest proprietor of sugar cane haciendas and, consequently, of black slaves (Lucena-Salmoral, 1994:74).

Since the Spanish economic organization did not provide a specialized administration, private individuals were placed in charge of the haciendas. This situation provoked a reduction in the supervision of labor. Soon afterwards, the haciendas started to lose production, and the Crown decided to sell them in 1784. Private landowners acquired the haciendas on advantageous terms paying 10 to 20 percent of the land price in cash and the rest was financed through convenient loans (Lucena-Salmoral, 1994:75).

The new owners tried to obtain maximum benefit from their haciendas, and the slaves were compelled to work under difficult conditions. Because slaves were considered essential, many law suits revolved around disputes of ownership, as in the following example:

In front of this court...Don Manuel Antonio Luzuriaga brings a trial in Guayaquil because Mr. Palacios has taken his slave Pedro Rodríguez, who is in Ibarra and who was bought by Vicente Ramón Roca (AHBC-I-J/6598/1/61-1844).

The intellectuals in the capital city of Quito, however, questioned the validity of slavery as a means of production. Ideological opposition started to appear among those influenced by the Enlightenment for whom slavery was perceived as unnatural and anachronistic. As a result, new laws were implemented in order to ease the system of

slavery (Lucena-Salmoral, 1994:81). The first legislation regarding slavery in Ecuador was written in 1821, and was based on a previous document that originated in Colombia. According to this law, the international traffic of slaves was prohibited, and those who were born as slaves were to be freed at the age 18; it also mentioned the need for the manumission of adult slaves. The law is referenced in a document from 1847:

[The secretary] certifies that the documents of baptism of the slaves of Cuajara are kept in the books of the parish and that it is necessary to review them in order to verify the age of those who have the desire to be free by the law (AHBC-I-J/2169/367/3 -April 20, 1847).

In spite of the existence of the new law, manumission hardly ever occurred in reality. In order to be freed, a slave had to apply to a committee and present a convincing case. However, information provided to the committee by the master was vital. As Lara and Tenorio (1994) point out, "...the black family was left under the will of the master. He had the authority to maintain a family together according to his interests or to separately sell each member to different buyers" (In Moscoso, 1994:46).

When Ecuador became an independent republic in 1830¹⁶, the problem of slavery was ignored because black people were considered of secondary importance. In fact, none of the four constitutions written during the first twenty years of the establishment of the Republic of Ecuador mentioned either slavery or its abolition. The fifth constitution,

¹⁶ The independence process in Ecuador can be divided into two phases: the first one from 1809 to 1820 began with the first attempt of independence from the Spaniards on August 10, 1809; the forces against the Crown were directed and composed of descendants of Spaniards born in America (*Criollos*). The second phase took place between 1820 and 1822, ending with the Battle of Pichincha in May 24, 1822. This battle was directed by Simón Bolívar and Antonio José de Sucre. In 1822, the territory that is now called Ecuador became independent from Spain and was annexed to the Andean countries liberated by Bolívar under the name of *Gran Colombia*. The organization of the *Gran Colombia* was not successful and

written in 1851, finally abolished slavery as a legal institution (Costales/Peñaherrera, 1959:247, 248).

In 1853, Ecuadorian President José María Urbina directed the assembly to pass the necessary legislation to guarantee the abolition declared two years before. According to Costales and Peñaherrera (1959) 2391 slaves were officially declared free.

Nevertheless, a group of blacks arrived in Ecuador at the end of the nineteenth century from Jamaica to work on the plantations and in construction projects. This was the last significant migration of Afro-Americans to Ecuador (Lipski, 1986:157).

When manumission became official, landlords employed former slaves to work for them as salaried employees; soon, the former slaves became tied to the system by debt peonage. For this reason, it can be argued that the hacienda owners profited from the abolition of slavery.

The abolition of slavery in the sugar cane plantations did not produce a free worker as a capitalist economy would imply; it created the appearance of haciendas where the semi-servile relations reigned, where the workers had rights but at the same time were tied to the hacienda, where they had to work on a obligatory basis a number of days per week in exchange of a plot of land (Espín, 1993:14).

The laborers of the hacienda had to work three of the five working-days a week on the owner's land. This system was maintained throughout the nineteenth century until the beginning of the twentieth century¹⁷. Until 1918, workers were not allowed to

Ecuador was formerly designated a republic in 1830. The first Ecuadorian President was the Venezuelan Juan José Flores.

¹⁷ Unfortunately, thorough research on the particularities of the hacienda system during the nineteenth century and part of the twentieth century has not yet been conducted; therefore I cannot describe how the system operated. There is a lack of documentary materials dealing with "the most mundane aspects of life, especially among slaves." This is a situation that "has often left slaves mute" (Schwartz, 1992:137).

leave the hacienda until they paid their debts to the landowner. During the 1930's, the hacienda system, which had maintained a level of prosperity and expansion since 1880, was adversely affected by changes in the national economy. From that time on, the haciendas began to disintegrate. At the same time, the articulation of the hacienda with the market started to take place; the government intended to integrate all the social sectors into one "national project."

During the decades of the 1930's and 1940's, the progressive disintegration of the haciendas accelerated; a growing number of Afro-Ecuadorian families abandoned this system of production in search of new means of subsistence. Disintegration was caused by the constant purchase and sale of land, and the divisions based on inheritance, among other factors (Rodríguez, 1994b:50).

Starting in the decade of the 1950's, the first cooperatives and peasant organizations appeared in the Valley of El Chota and attained successful results in terms of access to land from the government. Peasant unions were able to utilize the Labor Code to demand just compensation under a new labor law. They obtained access to the land through the Law of Untitled Land, which in 1936 incorporated a provision called "Extraordinary Prescription"; through this law, ownership of fields which remained uncultivated for 30 years was transferred to the government. During this period, twenty three percent of the Afro-Ecuadorian population of Ambuquí, eighty five percent from San Vicente and eighty four percent from Mira depended on the hacienda system (Rodríguez, 1994b:50, 51).

The most significant recent change was the Agrarian Reform in 1964¹⁸. This act was implemented in Ecuador with the purpose of accelerating and deepening capitalist development in rural areas and of eliminating the traditional peasant sector (Velasco, 1983:64).

The Agrarian Reform meant “the rupture of all traditional obligations between *huasipungueros* and hacienda” (Klumpp in Whitten/Szwed, 1970:248). For the first time, it allowed hacienda peasants to own their land. In the Valley of El Chota, for example, the state divided the haciendas which were part of the Social Assistance System: San Vicente de Pusir, Carpuela and Mascarilla and distributed the land among the peasants (Rodríguez, 1994b:52).

With the dissolution of the hacienda system, many families pursued different means of subsistence. Low-paid work in construction sites and migration to the cities were among the most important alternatives. Some families remained on their lands, maintaining their livelihood through “independent land tenure, through rent or share cropping, or as independent daily workers”, either in agriculture or in the sugar cane refineries of the area (Costales/Peñaherrera, 1959:131).

The creation of sugar cane refineries greatly influenced the economic development and social organization of the Valley. A sugar cane refinery called “San José” was established in Urcuquí, and another sugar cane refinery called “Tababuela” (today known as the Northern Sugar Cane Refinery [IANCEM]) was established in the Valley of El

¹⁸ Velasco (1983) defines the Agrarian Reform as a “massive and prompt elimination of the landowner’s vast property... It constitutes a process directly tied to the necessities of the development of capitalism” (1983:26). The Agrarian Reform was expedited by a military take-over on July 1st., 1964.

Chota on June 2, 1964; they have employed a considerable amount of Afro-Ecuadorians from the valley (Manual de Información, 1980:941, 942). The Refinery became a key element of the economy of the area “because of the demand of sugar cane [in the national market] and the work opportunities it offered” (Rodríguez, 1994b:52).

During the 1970's, further changes occurred in the Valley. These were the product of a general oil “boom” which provoked a focus on infrastructural development by the Ecuadorian government (Belote/Belote in Vitzthum, 1988:102); the implementation of a series of development projects by the Ecuadorian Center of Agricultural Services CESA (Central Ecuatoriana de Servicios Agrícolas) and the construction of an irrigation system were among the most important changes. The communities of the Valley of El Chota were incorporated into a national plan of agricultural development in order to transform the production of sugar cane into a short cycle harvest of fruits and vegetables. These developments helped in linking peasants to the market (Rodríguez, 1994b:52).

During the decade of the 1980's, and thanks to CESA, the Valley acquired access to irrigation water and incorporation of new technology. The production of tomatoes, beans and avocados was improved; crops such as watermelon, melon, bell pepper, cucumber, onion and red pepper were introduced. Notwithstanding, land was intensively cultivated and peasants used a large amount of chemicals to increase production. This situation, along with considerable population growth, have generated intense pressure on the land and inequality in the economic and social organization of black groups. These trends in production have continued until the time of this research.

IV.3 THE SETTING

I conducted research in the town of El Chota, which is located in the rural parish of Ambuquí, in the canton of Ibarra, province of Imbabura. The town is composed of approximately 150 families, and a total of 1000 inhabitants (See Map 2, p. 39).

The inhabitants of this town belong to the Afro-Ecuadorian ethnic group; they are referred to as "Andean" or "highland" blacks in order to distinguish them from the Coastal Afro-Ecuadorian groups. In terms of kinship, the society is based on the nuclear family, but there are some extended families as well. The Choteño domestic unit is generally composed of a father, a mother and from three to eight children. Choteño families have a large number of children, although this tendency is declining at the present time, perhaps because of the lack of economic resources to send children to school and the reduction of the practice of using a child labor force in the fields. Children have become dependents and not workers so that "the economic advantages of a large family diminish" (Mingel-Klevana in Fernández-Kelly, 1985:14).

Extended families --which are several nuclear families grouped together in the same frame of organization (Wolf, 1975:83)-- in El Chota are households composed of related adults from different generations, or from the same generation, who do not have their own home and find housing with their parents and siblings. Female-maintained households often fall into this category.

Choteño families are patrilineal, although matricentric homes are common. In matricentric families, the woman heads the household for various reasons: because she has children with different men and none of them takes care of the family; because she is the

concubine of a married man whose home is already established in another town, or even in El Chota; because the father of the family has died and the widow does not get married again; or because the father has abandoned the house. Women are in charge of the decision-making process in these households; this situation often confers on them a feeling of security. Nonetheless, there are sanctions for those who trespass the “structures of prestige” (Ortner/Whitehead 1981) recognized by the community (Guerrón-Montero, 1995:140).¹⁹

The marriage system is essentially monogamous with the *de facto* practice of polygyny. This social situation is tacitly accepted. The spouse always maintains a superior status has greater social prestige in comparison to the concubine.

El Chota maintains endogamous marriages as the norm. This means that people prefer to choose partners within the boundaries of the town itself; nearby Afro-Ecuadorian towns also provide some spouses. Interethnic marriages are fairly rare in this area. The pattern of residence is neolocal; however, if economic means are insufficient, the couple resides with the parents of the bride or the groom. Bachelorhood is considered an undesirable lifestyle, for it is assumed that a man who does not get married must have some sort of problem (Guerrón-Montero, 1995:141).

Vinicio is not married, and he's old, who's going to like him? I always tell him that...Same with Don Eliceo, he doesn't get married. He must have something wrong if nobody likes him; he will have to look for somebody

¹⁹ This situation may be due to the fact that many Afro-American families disintegrated during slavery and women had to cope with “the forceful separation [from their families] because of the slave trade” (Lara/Tenorio in Moscoso, 1994:46). However, Mintz and Price (1976) argue that this idea, based on a proposition by Frazier 1939, of a completely disrupted African family needs to be reconsidered, for “neither social context nor cultural traditions alone can explain an African-American institutional form...[without] their full historical setting” (1976:64).

in other town, because here it will be very hard with that big nose he has (Interview C.Mi./February 20, 1993).

The community of El Chota has an economy firmly established around former hacienda structures, with strong attachments to the land and to a lifestyle based on agriculture. Choteños are fundamentally peasants²⁰ who also carry out alternative activities.

The ancestors of present day Choteños worked on the haciendas Cuajara and La Concepción, first as slaves and then as low-paid employees. Prior to the first Agrarian Reform in 1964, the land where El Chota is now situated (formerly known as Hacienda “*Chota Chiquito*”) was sold by its owner, Luis Tobar Subía, to 18 families (Rodríguez, 1994b:70). Rodríguez points out that:

The remaining Choteño families tried to gain access to the land of the Hacienda, but it was not possible because the owner already had established negotiations with families from Mascarilla [nearby town]. [The members of this town] bought the land thanks to a loan financed by the Cooperative San Francisco de Asís (1994b:70).

²⁰ The category “peasant” is understood as: “small agriculture and/or cattle raising producers, who occasionally participate in other activities such as handicraft production, commerce, etc. These small enterprises are activated by family labor, and they constitute units of production and consumption, with a logic of self-subsistence. These units cannot be maintained individually, for they belong to a community of family units that help each other thanks to a specific culture. The culture is active because of values, traditions, kinship, etc. and not only because of economic reasons” (Mintz, -1974). However, it is important to mention that a series of factors such as growing rural populations, concentration of land ownership, limited economic resources, and changes in preferences for goods and services influence peasants’ choices and activities and create semi-dependence on other resources or economic agents. In these circumstances, the Choteño group creates communal networks in order to maintain their condition as peasants (Guerrón-Montero, 1996c:2).

Thus, not every Choteño family owns a plot of land. For those who are land owners, land is either inherited by the eldest son or divided equally among sons and daughters²¹.

Those individuals who do not have access to land work in other people's fields as share croppers or in adjacent haciendas as day laborers. Share cropping is a fairly common practice among black groups since the time of the Jesuit haciendas (Coronel, 1991:110); it started during the traditional hacienda system and continued afterwards because of its proven usefulness. According to Costales and Peñaherrera (1959), the families that remained in the haciendas after their dissolution "maintained a form of production based on the possession of independent plots of land, rented or through share cropping, or as 'free peons', which means free daily laborers" (1959:131). This mechanism of access to land is essential and,

...it is related to kinship relations and mutual help, of giving and receiving favors among those who participate in the deal. It implies a sense of confidence on the other person. It has a strictly economic dimension, but it also expresses a net of social relations and a whole system of dispositions incorporated in everyday practice (Rodríguez, 1994a:66).

Some individuals pay annual rent for a piece of land, but the arrangement is rare. Several Choteños are technically prepared to work at the Northern Sugar Cane Refinery IANCEM as machine operators, cane receptors and floor supervisors. Seventy-five

²¹ There are two basic types of heredity in El Chota: the undivided, when property given in heredity is not divided among siblings, and the divisible or divided when property given in inheritance is divided among inheritors (Wolf, 1975:98). Inheritance is generally restricted to the sons of the family (Guerrón-Montero, 1996c:6).

percent of the refinery workers are Afro-Ecuadorians from different communities of the valley (Interview O.M.M./June 8, 1995). Others work as harvesters.

Temporary employment in El Chota is mostly carried out by young men. Some young men participate in agriculture; others pick up stones at the Chota River, two times a day during two or three days per week. There are two versions told about where the stones go: according to the Choteño people the stones are utilized by the Cement Factory "Selva Alegre"; Oswaldo Mera-Mora (electrician at the sugar cane refinery) says the stones are used by the National Soap Factory in Otavalo (Interview O.M.M./June 8, 1995). Young girls generally help their relatives in domestic duties or in commerce-related activities. Some study at accounting or beauty schools in Carpuela or Ibarra.

Within the past six years --thanks to the construction of the irrigation pipes in Ambuquí, the weather conditions and landscape of the region-- the area known as Ramal de Ambuquí (approximately 5 km of distance from El Chota) has become a tourist zone. Mestizo-owned hotels and restaurants have been installed and black labor is usually hired because of its vicinity as well as its low cost. Many young men and women from El Chota are currently working in these places, as cooks, waiters or construction workers (Guerrón-Montero, 1996c:12).

The Choteño community is neither harmonic nor homogeneous in terms of social stratification and status. Some domestic units have access to better or different resources, and thus to a higher status within the community. This stratification is based upon three fundamental elements: access to economic resources, family configuration and education.

A tight relationship develops between men's work and family status within the society. The households where the men work at the sugar cane refinery, especially as floor supervisors, share the advantages of economic stability and prestige in the community. This is due to the fact that working at the Refinery requires a certain level of ability and knowledge, and because the salary provides economic stability to the family unit. According to one informant,

My husband has been working for some years at the Refinery; that's a really good job, because we don't need much, you see, we have a TV, a kitchen; I don't need to work anywhere else but the house, I spend my time at the house. At Christmas, we receive rice and sugar, the products last a while; I give some to my mother, and still have lots for me too (Interview C.C./Oct. 5, 1995).

Work in agriculture also involves prestige, particularly if the land is owned by the family; of lesser prominence is share cropping and land-renting activities. Those families without access to the land, and whose means of subsistence is temporal and unstable (night guards, construction workers) experience the lowest degree of prestige in the community. Therefore, there is a close relationship between men's work and family's status.

In terms of family configuration, there is a relationship between nuclear families and their status. Patrilineal nuclear families have more status and acceptance from the community compared to female-maintained households. The community does maintain cordial relations with members of female-maintained households, but many of them are the object of ridicule, gossip and rumors. A Choteño woman told me that:

In El Chota there are some women who like to be with men; they steal other women's husbands, then they have kids and have to take care of them. Here you find many women like that, old and young, who let men take advantage of them and then have kids who they need to take care of. Have you seen Rosa? She has many men and four children from different men, and now she married Miguel so he can pay for the children and so people don't talk, but we all know she still has men, even in Mascarilla (Interview B.A./February 15, 1993).

Education also influences social differentiation. Families that have the economic means to send their children to school beyond the high school level attain higher status in relationship to the rest of the society.²² Education is regarded as a fundamental tool to acquire mobility and acceptance in Ecuadorian society. Those who can afford to send their children to high school and later to the university obtain higher status. Notwithstanding, this achievement marginalizes them to a certain extent, for they become too sophisticated and knowledgeable for small rural communities and usually migrate and settle in the cities.

I don't like that Maritza, you know, because she thinks she's the best just because she's studying to be a nurse in Ibarra. She only comes on Fridays to El Chota, and then leaves on Mondays to Ibarra. I don't know why she thinks she's great because she didn't pass her first year, maybe her second either, so she's still in first year. People say it's because she got pregnant and had to leave school. (Interview C.M./May 28, 1995).

²² Few families send their children to high school. When they do, the general choice is the Technical High School "Valley of El Chota" in Carpuela. The Technical High School offers two areas of specialization: Chemistry/Biology and Mechanics. Men usually specialize in mechanics, in order to apply for a job at the sugar cane refinery, and women study chemistry and biology, generally with the aim of becoming nurses.

These levels of social and economic stratification demonstrate the contradictions in Choteño society. The existence of social divisions inside the community made it difficult to establish a sense of community and cooperation, and therefore the means for organization.

Choteño families adhere to a distinctive sexual division of labor. Men are in charge of family agriculture, including the selection of seeds, farming, harvesting and packing; they establish share cropping agreements; and they work in alternative occupations as sugar cane workers, night guards, and construction laborers. Within a household, men usually make decisions about “important” investments, for example in electric appliances or in business ventures. Men help in the discipline of children.²³ Outside the household, men represent the community; in families where a man is present, he is the head of the household and becomes the mediator between the family and the community. Men also are the leaders in the political organization of El Chota, specifically the town council, and mediate between their ethnic group and the society at large (Guerrón-Montero, 1995:153).

Choteño women participate in productive and reproductive work, and are also involved in community-management activities such as the town council and organization of different festivities and events. They collaborate in agriculture and are in charge of the organization of the household and the domestic work in general. Women’s days start at 6:00 a.m. sweeping the town’s streets. Then, women prepare children for school and

²³ However, women perform an important indirect role in the decision-making process for they “advise” their husbands on which decisions to make, both in the public and private arena (Guerrón-Montero, 1995:148).

prepare breakfast. They also cook lunch and dinner; wash dishes and clothes in the Chota river, and clean the house. Besides these activities, women participate in agriculture work. Daughters collaborate with their mothers in these activities.

The relationship between mother and child is usually strong; children grow up around a maternal figure who makes “minor” decisions on an everyday basis. Even though men participate in the discipline of children, the mother corrects and socializes the children in the “morality of behavior” (Foucault 1990) of Choteño society. Even in families where mothers are not present, the feminine figure is replaced by grandmothers, aunts or sisters.

My wife left me to live with other man from Juncal; she left me with my son Danilo. Since I work in Quito, Danilo lives with my mother. She takes care of him, and I come every 15 days or so to see him. I give him everything: clothes, food, toys. His mother visits him sometimes. My sisters also take care of him (Interview A.C./March 15, 1993).

Women’s productive activity *par excellence* is commerce. Women sell the products of the land: tomatoes, beans, fruits, yucca, corn, sugar cane, etc., and they gather snails, strawberries and prickly pears to sell in nearby towns, and in large cities such as Quito, Ibarra and Otavalo.²⁴ In the Valley of El Chota, commerce is a fundamental activity for Afro-Ecuadorian women; out of 2346 economically active women in Ibarra, 412 (17.56 percent) worked in commerce activities. Only agriculture (864 women or

²⁴ Some women from the Valley of El Chota buy merchandise in Colombia in order to sell it in Guayaquil and Quito. During my research, I did not find any Choteño women who worked on this activity.

36.82 percent) and communal services (589 women or 25.10 percent) surpassed this activity (INEC, 1990:88).

Money obtained through the above activities belong to women and they manage the everyday household budget. This economic independence,

provides autonomy to the feminine sphere, which can be perceived in the real spaces and times that belong to it such as the kitchen and the Chota river, where women “own” those places and moments, and the symbolic rituals that occur in relation to them; the level of organization and social consciousness of women in cooperatives, and groups and the importance that society confers on women in everyday affairs (children’s socialization and discipline as well as on ceremonies and rituals, such as Mother’s Day, and other special occasions (Guerrón-Montero, 1996a:30).

Blumberg (1995) argues that increased income under women’s control enhances their self-confidence, “their say in household decision making in the areas of fertility, economic decisions (such as the education of sons and daughters) and their sway over other ‘life options’ (such as marriage, divorce and freedom of movement”) (1995:5).

The independence and authority exercised by black market woman in regard to their use of their capital can also be found in the Caribbean where there are Afro-American women. These independent women “probably have few parallels in the Western world, where individual prerogatives commonly are assumed to flow from individual male wealth, embedded in an economically indivisible nuclear family structure” (Mintz/Price, 1976:79).

Commerce is an activity that women performed immediately after the abolition of Spanish and Portuguese slavery (Mintz and Price 1976) {Cf. Cuche 1975}. This

activity rendered mobility to the Afro-Latin American woman (Hünefeldt, 1994:93). According to Mintz and Price, the historical and anthropological data shows that, at the present time, black women in West Africa as well as in Latin America and the Caribbean carry out the overwhelming majority of marketing activities. The possibility arises that slavery repressed women's traditional economic activities in commerce, and that these reemerged effective immediately after manumission.²⁵ It may be argued, therefore, that the autonomy of the feminine sphere can be considered as part of the social structure of African people which survived despite strict patriarchal organization of slavery.

Women's role in commerce relates to the division of labor of Choteño society. Women are able to acquire independence thanks to the system of kinship wherein it is possible to delegate childcare responsibilities to a relative, a neighbor or older children.²⁶ In this sense, a large family facilitates both agricultural tasks and the commercialization of agricultural products. The characteristic of independence of Choteño women is reinforced by their creativity and ability to develop relationships with their clients.

Even though men formally represent the family in the community and the community in Ecuadorian society in general, women have a degree of power. When men are not able to fulfill the role of provider adequately, conflicts and contradictions, domestic violence being one example, develop; some of these conflicts are "usually resolved in everyday rites...or during the festivals, where women are in charge of the

²⁵ Men, on the contrary, took over the majority of agricultural tasks.

²⁶ Hünefeldt found several examples of the practice of delegating childcare responsibilities to relatives and neighbors among nineteenth century black slave women in Peru (1994:205).

organization; this reversal of roles becomes an escape valve for tensions and disagreements" (Guerrón-Montero, 1996a:31).

In El Chota, therefore, it is not possible to affirm that men control every aspect of society. On the contrary, the feminine and masculine sphere exercises leadership in different areas. There are spaces and situations of dominance for each sphere; Choteño society shares a "female power" and a "male dominance" (Sanday 1981).

However, in spite of their elevated position in some aspects of society, women are indeed abused and neglected by their partners and other men; they are ignored by development planners, public and private organizations and by the Ecuadorian society at large. Women encounter opposition and conflict when acquiring new roles and trespassing traditional social barriers within Choteño and Ecuadorian societies.

In terms of the political organization of El Chota, the principal institution is the Town Council (*Cabildo*). The Town Council was formed in 1965; it is composed of a president, a vice-president, a treasurer, a secretary and three senators. Elections should be held every year (although the current president has been in power for more than five years without an election).

Men usually are elected as presidents of the Council. At the present time, a woman is the treasurer. The functions of the Town Council are,

...to take care of the needs of the community, social development, organization of dance groups (we are helped by people from Quito in this task). In case of disputes, we intervene; also, if a father does not want to send their children to school, I go talk to him and try to convince him...We have open meetings; everybody can join us. We are interested in promoting

collaboration and participation in the community.
(Interview M.M./January 26, 1997).

According to the current president of the council, Manuel Mina, the role of the Council is mostly to represent the community to other towns in the Valley of El Chota, and to the Ecuadorian society in general. The Town Council represents El Chota in meetings with different authorities in the Valley, the city of Ibarra and the province of Imbabura. However, inside the community, the Town Council is not taken seriously, and “sadly, very few people support the work the council does” (Interview M.M./January 26, 1997).

Even though the role of the Council is not highly respected inside the community, it is the institution that must approve the implementation of development projects. On most areas of community life the Council and its leaders have little influence.

The Choteño community practices the Catholic religion; however, there is a tendency to ignore activities related to religion. Possibly, this is due to the limited presence of religious authorities in the vicinity; Combonian Missionaries visit the area periodically, and a priest from Ibarra conducts mass every Sunday. Furthermore, it can be argued that this lack of interest is related to the fact that continuous and permanent devotion is not as important as ceremonies of transition --baptisms, first communions, confirmations, weddings, and funerals-- or traditional religious celebrations --Christmas and Holy Week. As a result, the influence of religious leaders within the community is weak.

In general terms, women are more interested in religious practices than men. Religion can be perceived as an ambiguous force: on the one hand, it can provide certain level of independence and autonomy to women; on the other hand, it may limit women's prerogatives because of the traditional religious view of women as belonging to the domestic sphere and as having to depend on men. Combonian Missionaries, the most important religion influence on the community, however, have a broader and more accepting view of women's work and sphere of activity.

It is difficult to argue for the existence of one particular figure that could be considered the leader of the community. The Council has a certain degree of power, but it is not all-inclusive. The guidance of elders (male or female) is highly respected and taken into account. Some men and women are perceived as wise or successful entrepreneurs and therefore, asked for advice. Religious figures are somewhat important, but certainly not fundamental as people do not conform to the dictates of any religious leader. Individuals and families make decisions mostly for their own particular benefit. The lack of a uniform authority may be part of the reason for a lack of cohesive ties in the community and no compelling search of the "common good."

CHAPTER FIVE

THE PROJECTS

El Chota has been the locale of several development projects. Some have been successful while others have failed after a few years. This chapter will describe and analyze two recent development projects in El Chota and their outcomes.

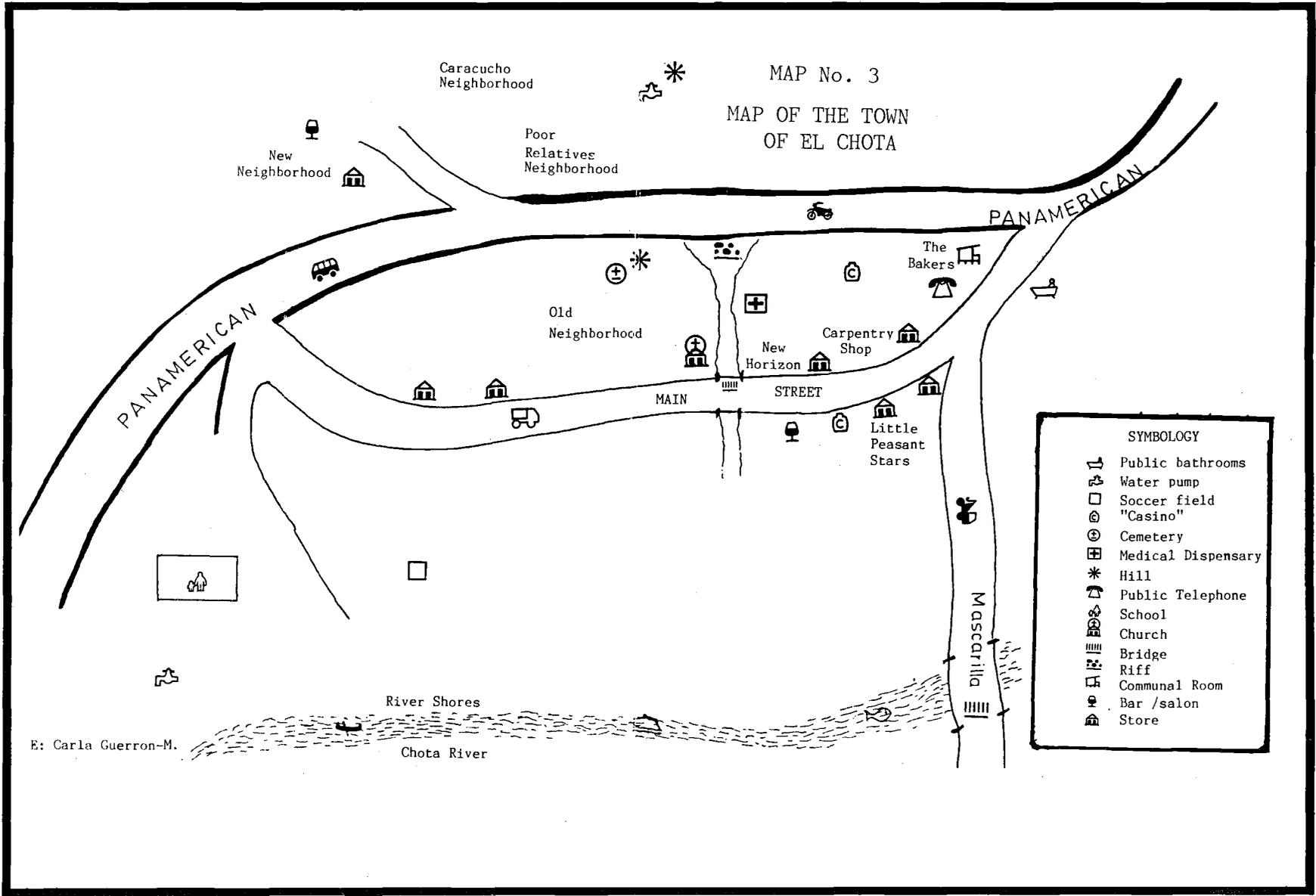
V.1 CASE STUDY N° 1: THE BAKERS

“The Bakers” (*Las Panaderas*) is the familiar name Choteño people give to a group of six women, one married and five single, all with children, who prepare bread and sell it in El Chota (See Map 3).

In 1990, Father John Kelly¹ initiated The Bakers when he donated two industrial ovens to the community of El Chota. In response, forty women with the help of the Combonian Missionaries² and the financial assistance of the Populorum Progressio Ecuadorian Fund [FEPP] (Fondo Ecuatoriano Populorum Progressio), organized themselves and started a bakery. This group was an “independent” organization, not recognized by the Ecuadorian government; that is, it had no legal status.

¹ The affiliation of this person has been extremely difficult to confirm. I was informed that he was a member of USAID; however, this institution could not find any information regarding the donation of industrial ovens to El Chota or the connection of Father Kelly with USAID (John Butsch, Coordinator of USAID Development Information Center/May 13, 1996).

² The Institute of Combonian Missionaries was founded in Italy in 1867 (male missionaries) and 1872 (female missionaries) under the spiritual guidance of Daniel Comboni (Limone sul Garda, Italy/March 15, 1831-Jartum, Sudan/October 10, 1881). Comboni was ordained as a priest in 1849 and spent the majority of his life in Africa, working for the evangelization of Africa and the eradication of slavery, under the motto “Africa or Death” and “To Save Africa through Africa.” Eventually, Combonian projects extended to other parts of the world. Presently, the Combonian Missionaries work in several countries of Africa, America, Asia and Europe. Their primary objective is evangelization and pastoral work through different activities such as the “formation of Christian communities, human improvement, promotion of women, schools, health and technical assistance, and formation of grassroots movements, formation of leaders, etc.” Two other organizations grew out of the original Combonian Missionaries: the Secular Missionaries (1969) and the Laic Missionaries (1993). The Combonian Missionaries arrived in the Valley of El Chota in 1987, and have collaborated in several projects in the area (Interview Cecilia Sánchez-Miranda/May 14, 1996).



The group of women took courses in baking and pastry-making taught by a baker from La Esperanza, a nearby town. They created a bakery with their own capital³. The community supported this project by providing a "communal room" for the bakery to function. In addition to the cooking courses, women took needlework and weaving classes; they made shawls, children's clothes and carpets for sale. However, they discontinued producing these items after a few months, as they found it was not a profitable business because of limited clientele.

The bread produced by the bakers was sold in El Chota and in nearby towns within the area of the Valley, especially Mascarilla and Chalguayacu; initially, women produced fifty pounds (two *arrobas*⁴) of bread per week. According to my informants, the bread was sold promptly, the profits were high and the success of the business was promising. Nevertheless, over time the original enthusiasm waned and fewer women took interest in the bakery. Within a year of the bakery's opening, twenty-two women had left the organization; the remaining eighteen continued their work for two more years; by 1993, only six women were working in the bakery and they are the only ones who were involved at the time of this research.

The majority of the original group of women felt it was degrading to walk long distances and sell bread. According to Cecilia Calderón, one of the founders of the bakery, many women left the organization because:

they were married, you see, and they said their husbands did not let them go out, so they were quitting; they used to say that they didn't like to go and sell bread in Chalguayacu, or wherever; but those who really needed the money, we went (Interview C.Cl./October 5, 1995).

During 1994 the bakery was closed because of health problems among members of the group. "One of the workers had medical problems with her ovaries, others in their legs, and their heads...because this is very hard work" (Interview L.A./October 5, 1995).

³ Data on the initial capital invested could not be provided either by informants or by the Combonian Missionaries.

⁴ An *arroba* is a measure of Spanish origin equivalent to 25 pounds or 11.5 kilos.

At the present time (1997), the bakers make 25 pounds of bread per week ; they sell it only in El Chota because of the small number of workers, health problems and also the pressure imposed by relatives who argue against the long and potentially dangerous journeys added to the already busy schedules of the women.

I'm telling you, sometimes we had to come all the way from Mascarilla walking, we were risking ourselves, there were people with bad intentions; they thought that if we were walking at night they had the right to assault us, and we became more and more afraid; and also our relatives at home would get mad because we were working at night; we used to come home at eight o'clock at night (Interview E.Ch./October 6, 1995).

The Combonian Missionaries played a fundamental role in this project. According to sister Carmen, Director of the Missionaries for the Valley of El Chota until March 1996, who had lived in Carpuela for seven years, the project required attending two-to-three-day regional meetings once every three months. Women from various towns and groups traveled far to participate in these meetings. The issues discussed were not necessarily religious and included such topics as sexuality, children's care and machismo. The meetings were open to any woman who wanted to attend, and on occasions, men joined the meetings as well. Among the women who regularly gathered, only two groups ran bakeries, one in El Chota and the other one in Mascarilla (See Map 2, pg. 39) (Interview Sister C./October 7, 1995). One of the woman observed that both men and women "enjoy listening to the Sisters; they know a lot and they bring doctors and persons from Quito and Ibarra to tells us important things about our health and about religion" (Interview M.Mi./October 5, 1995).

The Combonian Missionaries settled in the Valley of El Chota in 1987; their headquarters in the Valley is located in Carpuela (See Map 2, pg. 39). The main objective they wish to accomplish is to provide advice to the people to help them achieve self-financing and self-sufficiency. Their policy has been not to give any financial assistance because they do not think people should "get used to just receiving money"; they see their

work as providing "higher social consciousness" to the Afro-Ecuadorian people (Interview Sister C./October 7, 1995).

Sister Carmen insisted that Choteño women themselves created the bakery and only consulted the Combonian Missionaries for advice; the women understood they needed financial support and found the mechanisms to obtain it. The work performed by the missionaries she said was solely as "intermediaries." However, for the bakers, the work done by the missionaries was regarded as essential; an informant calls them "mediators, the principal foundation" of the organization (Interview U.C./October 8, 1995).

At the present time, the business is still operating, but the bakers continually encounter economic problems. The price of one unit of bread is 100 sucres (.025 US cents)⁵. According to my informants this rate does not compensate for the work of the bakers and the cost of the ingredients. The general complaint of the members of the group is that there is no solidarity among the Choteños; all nine stores in the town receive their supplies from bakeries in Ibarra. The bakers cannot raise the price of their bread because "you see, if we sell our bread at 150 (.038 US cents), I myself would say: I am going to the other store and buy one at 100, even though it is not of good quality; that's why we cannot raise the price of the bread" (Interview C.C./October 5, 1995), especially since "over all, we have lots of kids to feed. If you sell the bread at 150, I go to another store and buy it at 100 and with the price of one I buy almost two breads for my children" (Interview L.A./October 5, 1995). According to a woman who usually buys bread from the bakers because of its quality, the solution would be for the community to stop buying bread from other merchants, because "if they [the members of the community] would learn to appreciate things from here, they [the bakers] would make a lot of bread and then they would sell it here, and people would not get it from other places" (Interview P.A./October 5, 1995).

⁵ As of April 1997, one dollar is equivalent to 3900 sucres.

In addition to the bakery, in 1995 the group received a loan of three million sucres (769.23 US dollars) to install a small goods-store in the same room where the bakery is located. The loan provided by the Afro-Ecuadorian Cultural Center [CCA] (*Centro Cultural Afro-Ecuatoriano*)⁶ was invested in products such as candles, soap, detergent, toilet paper, aspirin, and basic food stuffs including beans, rice, bananas and spices. The store is open every day of the week except when celebrations are held.

The project's members have to repay this loan under very convenient terms, but they have not been able to do so. According to Cecilia Sánchez-Miranda (a member of the CCA), women have stopped attending meetings and are not paying their debt on time since sister Carmen's transfer away from the Valley of El Chota.

Even though the bakers have a great deal of work to perform, they do not wish to admit new members in their organization because they believe it is not beneficial for themselves. The original bakers consider the ovens and the store to be theirs; they are not willing to share their profits unless a potential new member accepts their conditions; these requirements are to join the group "free of the inventory, the freezer, the other things we have...but then she [the person who becomes a new member] is not going to like it because she is going to say: 'Well, I am also part of the group,' but they have to realize how much we have worked before" (Interview C.C./October 5, 1995). As an informant pointed out:

If I join Lucía in her work, she already has her own capital, and I come in empty, it is not equivalent, it is not good for her or for me, and if she, by herself, she may tell me "yes" but the rest of the group says "no." I would have to match what they have or have spent if I want to do my duty. She has worked so hard and I come,

⁶ The Afro-Ecuadorian Cultural Center (CCA) was organized in Guayaquil in 1981; in 1985, a second office was opened in Quito. Its founder and present director is Father Rafael Savoia, m.c.c.j. Its mission and name was inspired by the Second Congress of Black Culture of the Americas (Panama, 1980). The Center is a non-profit corporation which "serves the Afro-Ecuadorian communities and organizations, in search of the affirmation of their identity and culture, respect for their historical contribution, fighting against their poverty and marginality, collaborating with the enhancement of the values of the multi-ethnic Ecuadorian people." The Center provides research and studies of the reality of the black community and divulges to the public the culture and problems of black groups, through publications and slides, and trains Afro-Ecuadorian leaders and students through the School for Leaders San Martín de Porres. In this school, young men and women take courses on Christian and human organization, sociology, anthropology, economy and "in general, themes related to training community leaders." The CCA has an archive of photos, documents and videos; a library; videos and educational materials; and provides assistance for the integral promotion of black communities (Interview Cecilia Sánchez-Miranda/ May 14, 1996).

put money and that's it; I come up with clean hands, well, it's not good (Interview N.A./October 8, 1996).

The bakers do not have a fixed clientele; people buy in their store only if the prices they offer are better than in other places. They make 25 pounds of bread each week, usually half on Tuesdays and half on Thursdays. The bread sold casually to those who wish to buy it.

The bakers' schedule is particularly busy on baking days. The six women get together early in the morning and make the bread. Household duties and childcare are generally given to older children, who go to school and also attend to the needs of their siblings. Relatives who live in the same household or neighbors are sometimes asked to collaborate in these tasks. Nonetheless, the bulk of the house work is still performed by the women, who work from early in the morning until late at night. During the rest of the week, the bakers take turns in running the store or buying ingredients and new products; this mechanism alleviates the workload. The store is closed during festivals and celebrations, because the bakers regard their enjoyment and participation as more important than the profit they could obtain from selling their product.

The bread is either sold by the end of the day or kept for the following morning if any remains unsold. The bakers do not feel they are competing with the other stores because "there is always somebody" who would buy their bread⁷ (Interview C.C./October 5, 1995), especially during a funeral or on All-souls' Day, November 2nd., when people traditionally eat bread and drink cinnamon tea⁸.

In the past, the bakers have given monetary credit to neighbors and relatives. Apparently, the possibility of receiving credit attracts clientele. However, since their

⁷ The perception of lack of competition among the bakers may be due to the fact that bread is an item consumed on a daily basis in Choteño households. Variety is also essential, as people wish to try different flavors of bread; therefore, the majority of the bread sold in town is eventually consumed.

⁸ The traditional food of Choteño people during All-Souls Day is very different from the food eaten by Mestizo and Indigenous populations; among some indigenous groups and the majority of Mestizo families, a thick sweet soup (*colada morada*) and loafs of egg bread are eaten during that day.

experience often times has been negative in this respect, credit now is rarely given and only when based on trust or living close by.

What is the perception of the rest of the population toward the bakers? Some members of the community cooperate with the initiative of these women by buying their bread and other goods, yet others do not cooperate. A man from the community believes that the work of the bakers is positive because they are able to maintain themselves "since they don't have a husband who can help with money for the family" (Interview M.A./October 6, 1995). The general perception the bakers themselves have is that people in El Chota are not sympathetic because they are "envious" of this alternative source of income; "people say that we are going to get rich at their expense, but that is not true" (Interview L.A./October 5, 1995).

As one informant who supported the bakery said:

They don't realize that if there is an organization that is willing to support us [referring to a national or international NGO], even if it is only with money, that is good...then they think what they [the bakers] do is wrong; that is not true, it is better, because if they progress it is for good, for our future. They are also helping us with the things they do, but how are they going to share their work with everybody?, it is not fair. Each one of us works and helps, they [the bakers] do it with their work and we do it with our money helping them as well (Interview E.C./October 5, 1995).

V.2 ANALYSIS OF THE BAKERY PROJECT

The Bakery project was based on a welfare-oriented approach. A group of women organized themselves to receive machinery donated by Father Kelly. FEPP provided only the financial assistance. Furthermore, the project in its initial phase contained some elements of an anti-poverty approach because it intended to incorporate women into the productive sphere by encouraging income-generating activities, without considering their reproductive role. Although there is a high potential for women's organization in El Chota, in this particular case the association was formed around a specific project; it seems that the gathering of women was possible only because there were two ovens that had to be used.

When work became burdensome or when profits were poor, the majority of women withdrew from the project.

The project did not include gender planning procedures and it contained several false assumptions. It was not contemplated that women in El Chota maintain an arduous daily workload; they manage the domestic sphere and likewise, the large majority participate in the productive sphere and in community management. Therefore, those who participated in the project were immersed in the task of making and selling bread in nearby towns besides their regular work. The triple burden⁹ Choteño women encounter was not acknowledged. Moreover, it was implied that those who entered the project had "spare time" to use for this enterprise.

Due to lack of gender planning, a shortage of markets and difficult transportation were not addressed. This situation caused several problems; the families of various women involved in the project did not support their work and the community in general was not willing to cooperate. For some women, selling bread from town to town became a humiliating activity. The main activity for women in El Chota is commerce; however, it appears that Choteño people differentiate between the commercial activities they perform. There is some degree of prestige associated with the commercialization of products in pre-established markets, and even more in specific market stalls in cities such as Quito and Ibarra; selling products in nearby towns does not receive the same status. Furthermore, when women sell products in the city markets, their clientele is unknown and anonymous while in near towns, the customers are kin, friends or neighbors who may resent feeling exploited.

In short, cultural constraints on women were not considered; even though Choteño women are independent and commerce is perceived as a feminine activity par excellence, planners did not recognize that by walking long distances women were being exposed to

⁹ The triple burden women encounter evolves around their productive and reproductive work, as well as their participation in community management.

harassment, violence and conflicts within their households and with other members of the community.

In the same fashion, the complimentary part of the project, production of shawls, children's clothes and carpets, lacked gender planning. First of all, women carried out traditionally assumed "women's tasks", sewing and embroidery in this case, which limited the possibility of developing new skills. In the same manner, this was a time-consuming activity which required financial investment and market development, but did not provide commensurate profits. These factors were not taken into account. The production of bread, which is a staple food in Ecuador, persisted despite problems and limitations but the production of clothes was definitively an ineffective strategy.

These problems provoked a massive departure of women from the project. Although the project promised a relatively good source of income, it also implied large sacrifices. At the present time, the six bakers who currently maintain the store are able to obtain resources and support their families to some extent; nevertheless, their situation could certainly be improved, especially in terms of market and business expansion or better working conditions. It was difficult to incorporate the voice of the women who withdrew from the project for fear of future retaliation. The general consensus among others was that women left the bakery because their families, husbands in particular, disagreed with the schedule and time spent in the activity. The women did not feel comfortable selling bread in the streets; they were not in desperate economic need; they felt the profits from their business were not equivalent to the amount of work and time spent; and, even if they were in economic need, they were not able or willing to endure the bad working conditions. Undoubtedly, discussions and misunderstandings among the members of the bakery occurred; the group lacked solidarity and the mediation of the Combonian Missionaries was not sufficient to overcome this deficiency.

The bakers do not desire to incorporate other women into their project even though it would mean an increase in capital and opportunity for expansion. The bakers feel that

their work has been constantly arduous and that only those who have remained faithful deserve to obtain the profits. Furthermore, the bakers believe the community does not recognize and support their work. This lack of cooperation appears to be a general trend in El Chota; a sense of community does not seem to be present. People maintain a position of ethnic solidarity and cohesion in front of outsiders, but cooperation among themselves is not easy to develop.

The mediation of the Combonian Missionaries was decisive in the life and outcome of this project. Throughout the duration of the project, the Missionaries supported the women in their activities; they worked as mediators between the Afro-Ecuadorian Cultural Center and the bakers, and were warrantors of the loan provided by this institution to start the small goods-store.

Despite the assistance of the missionaries, the idea of starting a store was not thoroughly planned; they failed to recognize that the market potential in El Chota is limited and fairly saturated and that competition is stiff. Since the bakers cannot lower the prices of the bread and the products they sell, because they do not have the capital and labor force to do so, they are not able to compete or to attract clientele; they offer temporary credit to some of their customers, but this practice is not unusual in El Chota and affords no special advantage. As a result, the women have made only one payment on their original loan.

Although the Combonian Missionaries encouraged independence and decision-making, through lack of education women's initiatives may have ignored important factors, such as market conditions in the town or supply and demand concepts.¹⁰ In this particular case, it would have been more appropriate to invest in other improvements to expand the bakery, such as marketing or transportation to carry supplies to markets.

Through sponsoring regional meetings, the Missionaries were able to reach not only the bakers but a larger audience. The discussions and workshops offered an analysis

¹⁰ Even though the members of the community know their situation and understand their reality, they do require assistance and advice.

of fundamental problems. Women who attended these meetings¹¹ were able to consider new perspectives and to incorporate them into everyday life; they confronted issues of gender, class and ethnicity. The result of discussions about machismo, sexual behavior, family planning, domestic violence, was generally positive; yet the perspective of some members of the community on these issues seemed confused and unclear.

The Bakery project addressed practical gender needs; however, it also allowed for the potential fulfillment of strategic gender needs through the regional meetings. This part of the project is comparable to the experience of a project undertaken by GABRIELA, an alliance of local and national women's organizations in the Philippines. This project consisted of combining a women's traditional task, sewing tapestry, with a non-traditional activity, the discussion of women's legal rights and the national constitution. As Moser explains:

A nation-wide educational "tapestry-making drive" enabled the discussion of rights in communities, factories and schools, with the end product a "Tapestry of Women's Rights" seen to be a liberating instrument (Moser, 1993:77).

A similar outcome may derive from the regional meetings if the quality of discussion and topical emphasis are maintained, and if the incentives for the community to participate are seriously considered¹².

In the same manner, the Afro-Ecuadorian Cultural Center has helped in fulfilling a strategic gender need --the control over financial resources-- by providing credit to the bakers, without the necessity of male collateral guarantees. It was a logical decision to grant loans to Choteño women since they provide economic resources *de facto* to their families; in this particular case, the women contribute economically to the household on a constant basis and some are the sole bread-winners for their families; furthermore,

¹¹ Choteño women and women from the Valley of El Chota attend these meetings and are able to learn this information. Moreover, the regional meetings also reach men and the elderly, and are often well attended.

¹² As mentioned previously, presentations are given by professionals. In fact, I have been invited to join the regional meetings as a lecturer in the year 1997; I plan to organize a gender-awareness workshop for the participants.

commerce in its multiple forms is an activity performed by Choteño women on a daily basis, and it has become a feminine strategy of earning income.

The influence of Sister Carmen on the project was fundamental. Sister Carmen was a mediator and organizer of the bakers' activities, and of other activities in the Valley of El Chota, for seven years. The bakers were quite attached to her presence and now are experiencing difficulties adjusting to a new coordinator; once Sister Carmen left her position, women began to attend meetings irregularly and fell behind in the payments of their debt. This situation can be considered either as a normal component of the process or as an indication that the project was not as self-sufficient as originally claimed; in reality the project relied on the Combonian Missionaries' participation much more than was expected and acknowledged.

In general terms, the Bakers project was not carefully planned or organized. No consideration was given to how much advice and coordination was required by the Combonian Missionaries and how could they collaborate without being intrusive. Their contribution has been positive, and it has kept the project alive and made it successful to some extent for those women who have remained in the organization. However, the initial stage of the project was not well planned and there was no component to encourage self-sufficiency.

Nevertheless, a level of success has been achieved in the bakery project; this project can be considered self-sufficient in some ways. Initially, women received a donation and financial assistance to start the bakery; however, they organized themselves and paid for their own training; means of production came from their own resources and work. The women decided that a bakery, rather than a pastry shop, would suit their interests better; the Combonian Missionaries acted as advisors and intermediaries between the community and institutions such as FEPP and CCA which cooperated in this project. Another element to take into account is that the bakery provided more than a means to acquire resources for women; it was a way to acquire independence. The women worked in the bakery not

primarily because of a calculated economic interest. If this were the case, they would have kept their store open every day, even during festivities, and would have admitted more women as members of the group in order to expand their business. Social independence and pride in an ability not shared by everybody in the community were essential to the women's motivation.

The feasibility of developing broader accomplishments for this project lies heavily on the cooperation of the community. If the bakers are able to produce more bread and can sell it for a lower price, the community could decide to provide an exclusive market for the bread. This situation would be beneficial for both parties. The presence of the goods-store, however, could be reconsidered, taking into account that there are nine competing goods-stores functioning on a regular basis in El Chota.

The above expansion plan could only succeed if the community develops solidarity, but the prospects for this do not seem to be good in El Chota at this time. This situation may be due to the fact that every household confronts poverty in its own manner.¹³ Jesuit hacienda structures from which the Choteño community derives may have contributed to this situation by emphasizing competition for scarce resources among individual families {Cf. Scott, 1985:50}. The shortage of strong leaders within the community may influence this outcome; socio-economic stratification based on education, resources, family structure and miscegenation also discourages cohesion.

Lack of solidarity also may be due to the insufficiency of class consciousness although some level of class consciousness does exist in the community.¹⁴ This enables

¹³ Some social scientists tend to romanticize peasant and rural ways of living presupposing redistribution and reciprocity are general and permanent. In the case of El Chota, although there is some degree of cooperation (share cropping being one of them) and reciprocity, the majority of families prefer to struggle for their own survival.

¹⁴ Nonetheless, it must be acknowledged that there is some level of class consciousness in the Choteño community, for men and women gather together as poor Afro-Ecuadorians when there is a threat by the

people to mobilize around some issues but not others; the community maintains cohesiveness in opposition to the Ecuadorian society at large, but atomization occurs within the boundaries of the community itself.

In any event, Choteño people do not find immediate benefits in acts of solidarity. In order to solve this problem, it is necessary to organize grassroots initiatives that advocate self-sufficiency and discourage dependency on national or international donors.

Finally, the support of the Combonian Missionaries produced some positive effects. It is remarkable that a number of women, six in this case, from El Chota became immersed in a self-employment activity. As Rasanayagam (1993) points out, self-employment projects have shown to improve women's access to housing and to better general conditions. In El Chota it is possible to improve the project and to guarantee that it benefits more members of the community (in Momsen/Kinnaird, 1993:158).

The future of the bakery depends largely on the expansion of markets and on the possibility of admitting more members. It will be important for the new coordinator of the Combonian Missionaries in the Valley to develop a consensus among the bakers to achieve this goal and to guarantee positive outcomes.

Great success may be achieved if a project based on gender planning and with a perspective of gender and exchange is conducted in El Chota. The inclusion of the Combonian Missionaries would be highly beneficial in any such project because of their long-term involvement in the area and their commitment to Afro-Ecuadorian people.

Ecuadorian society to remove their benefits or to condemn injustices against other Afro-Ecuadorians. That was the case in January 1993, when people from the Valley of El Chota manifested their discontent with the removal of their benefits from the Peasant Social Security system, or when they protested in front of the Congress in December 1996, opposing the crime committed by a police officer against a black woman in Quito. Ethnic identity, class and gender variables play a fundamental role in the response of Afro-Ecuadorian communities toward Ecuadorian society.

V.3 CASE STUDY N° 2: HOUSES FOR ALL

El Chota has a new neighborhood, "Poor Relatives", (*Parientes Pobres*), and another will soon be formed. These additions are the product of a December 1993 donation and loan provided by the European Union¹⁵ in conjunction with the Ecuadorian Housing Bank [BEV] (Banco Ecuatoriano de la Vivienda¹⁶) (See Map 3, pg. 72).

This project consisted of two phases. In the first phase, nineteen families, out of forty-two that applied, received free housing facilities. In order to select the housing recipients, one architect and one engineer from the main office of BEV conducted oral surveys in the community. The criteria for selection was based on levels of "poverty"; people considered "poor" were eligible to receive a house. Several types of questions were asked to find out the economic condition of each household: Does the household have electric appliances --refrigerators, TV sets, stereos, etc.?. Is a residence shared with other families?. Is there a female-maintained family occupying the house --single mothers or widows? Does the family that applied for aid already possess a piece of land?¹⁷

To be honest, they chose those of us who didn't have things in abundance, those who lived several families together and who didn't have the strength to keep on going; those who lived with their parents; they took the single mothers and they gave us the houses (Interview M.D./October 8, 1995).

¹⁵ The European Union provides 45 to 50 percent of the total of public aid for development in the world (ECU 4 billion a year). This organization uses this aid "to encourage economic and political reform." Priorities are given to measures that advocate "domestic reform in the developing countries on the basis of the four main principles set out in the Treaty of European Union: developing and consolidating democracy, economic and social development, integration into the world economy and the campaign against poverty." The European Union focuses on rural and agricultural development and on financing programs rather than individual projects. Trade between the European Union and Latin America is worth more than ECU 45 billion (European Union Web Page).

¹⁶ The Ecuadorian Housing Bank (BEV) was created by the government of Ecuador in March 1961. It was founded as an institution for the provision of houses for low-income families; its responsibilities included "the planning, financing, and construction of housing projects as well as the development of a savings and loan system and support for cooperatives." At the present time, it also deals with housing-credit policies, distributes bonds, collects savings and operates other banking services. BEV has four main branch offices and 14 agencies; the central office is located in Quito. BEV determines its financial policy on the basis of "interest rate considerations; loan terms and guaranty requirements; resources acquisition, allocation, and recuperation; and project evaluation and monitoring of project accounting." BEV has had limited experience in working with its initially targeted population (Donoso/Luzuriaga in Kitay, 1985:155).

¹⁷ The land where the houses were built was acquired through the town council (*Cabildo*) of El Chota and the Municipality of Ibarra during 1992 and 1993.

BEV provided the construction materials. The beneficiaries of the project were in charge of picking up some of the materials such as roof-tiles and wood from La Esperanza (See Map 2, pg. 39), a nearby town; they also contributed meals for the construction workers.

We weren't charged anything to build the houses, we only collaborated in...the workers, we gave them the food, we helped in picking up the material and in everything we could, that's it, but money, nothing for the construction, because they even gave us the labor force (Interview M.L./ October 10, 1995).

The houses were built in a very short period of time; Elvia Mina, for example, informed me that her house was finished in two days (Interview E.M./October 10, 1995). The donated houses are identical. They are made out of brick. Each house has four rooms in total; two of them are separated by a wall, while the other one is divided into two units of different size. The smaller unit was constructed to include a kitchen; nonetheless, the majority of families prefer to use one of the bigger rooms for that purpose. Many families use their houses in a similar fashion: one room is used as the kitchen, another one is a dormitory where all the members of the family sleep, and the larger space is used as a living room/dining room area. The small area built for a kitchen is used either as a store-room or as a hen-house. Attached to the main construction of each house is a small room with a toilet; yet, since potable water is not installed in this neighborhood, this room is also used as a storage area.

Houses were turned over to the recipients in an incomplete state. There were no ceilings, and only one of the rooms was plastered, while the others were left with the roof-tile and a wood foundation. The houses were cold, dusty, full of insects, and in general, unsanitary.

What we need now is support so we can do the plastering of the house and the floor, because as you can see, I had to put a big plastic sheet over the roof so the dust won't fall over my things... they gave us the houses without a roof, only the bedroom has staves, and we need to put them in the rest of the house, that's why I have my house like this, like a little house of a poor person (Interview M.D./October 9, 1995).

Only some houses have electricity; the others use candles for illumination. Water meters were installed; at the present time, the neighborhood does not have water, and the women continue to use river water to do their chores.

According to my informants, many people in the town did not believe this project would be a reality, and therefore ignored the presence of the surveyors in the community. The majority of people did not participate in the process of selection. When it was clear that the project was a certainty, many families wanted to join but were too late. BEV carried out an inspection to check property titles and possessions of every member who applied in order to prevent relatively wealthy persons from taking advantage of the project.

I wanted to get a house, I have the land right there, next to Elvia's house; but they [the BEV team] told me that if I wanted a house I had to destroy the house I have now; of course I didn't want to, because the house I have now is much bigger and better than the ones given (Interview L.C./October 4, 1995).

This project was carried out mostly by women. In female-maintained households women were the ones who took charge of the project. In families where there was a husband and a wife the same was true.

We, the women, worked harder than men, because men have their work, and they couldn't help us; they would help us with the money for the food, and we...well, I myself, was man and woman at the same time, because my husband did not have time, but he helped me with the money, but legally the house belongs to the two of us, because we are married (Interview M.L./October 10/1995).

On some occasions, women received houses because their husbands did not live in El Chota. That is the case for Elvia Mina.

The land was in my name, and we received the house because of me, because I used to live in the same house with my mother and he lives in the mill where he is a guard, so we received the house because of me. He wasn't chosen because his work is good, he makes good money as a guard, but I am very poor and lived in my mother's house with my four children (Interview E.M./October 10, 1995).

When the owners took possession of their houses in their "finished" form, they were required to move in immediately. Many families sent their oldest sons or daughters to live there until they could organize themselves. "My mother told me Jesús and I had to live there, without electricity even though it was very cold at night, because if they did not see somebody in the house, they were going to kick us from our houses; my mother stayed with my grandmother in the other neighborhood; others did the same, they sent their sons to live in the houses before them" (Interview R.L./ October 6, 1995). After the houses were given to the new owners, a team from BEV checked the neighborhood everyday at 12:00 noon or at 3:00 p.m. for several months.

We were obligated, if they gave us the house, to live here, but if we didn't live here, the government itself, BEV, would collect the taxes for the house, if we left it inhabited or if we rented it, and that is our obligation, to keep living here even if it [the house] is the way you see it. But little by little we will make it better, doing what we have to do (Interview C.M. /October 5, 1995).

To avoid paying taxes, people remained in their houses even though living conditions were not optimum. The second part of the project includes loans provided by BEV to any member of the community who has a lot and wishes to build a house. The pieces of land are located in the "Poor Relatives" neighborhood and in a nearby area which is now known as the *Caracucho* neighborhood.

V.4 ANALYSIS OF THE HOUSING PROJECT

The problem of satisfactory shelter facilities¹⁸ in countries of the South has not been addressed adequately. Rasanayagam argues that "the need for assessment of housing-related requirements of women has been underscored at the international level by the United Nations and other agencies" (Rasanayagam in Momsen/Kinnaird, 1993:157). This is particularly important, for even though women are primary users of housing "they often

¹⁸ Shelter is understood as "the link between the home and the built environment of human settlements" (Tinker in Blumberg *et al.*, 1995:261).

participate much less than men in the execution of low-income housing projects" (Moser in Østergaard, 1992:76).

In the same manner, Tinker (1995) points out that "perhaps because shelter is so central for survival, its existence was simply assumed --and ignored-- by early development planners" (In Blumberg *et al.*, 1995:261). In addition, female-maintained households are often excluded from low-income projects because of housing policies not particularly sensitive to gender issues.

The general consensus among the recipients of housing in El Chota is that the houses were greatly needed, because "it was not right that several families live in one house and thanks to this project, many of us have our own houses" (Interview M.L./October 10, 1995).

I think this project was very good, because they gave us our houses, not even our father or mother have done that; a nice gentleman who came from heaven gave us these houses; we are very grateful to the gentleman [European Union] who gave us these houses. Because here [in El Chota] there are many people who live two families in only one house and that is not acceptable. And that gentleman, he realized that, I don't know, and he took charge and had the will to come and give us the benefit houses (Interview B.Ma./October 10, 1995).

Some people believe the project should be extended to other members of the community and to other communities as well.

This project is too nice, I always pray to my God and to Holy Mary that as they took pity on us, they take pity on other human beings who need help as we do, because for us it was too big of a gift, and we never thought or believed it could happen (Interview P.A./October 5, 1995).

In spite of the enthusiasm shown by the beneficiaries of the project, it clearly exemplifies a top-to-bottom approach to development and its attendant problems. The housing project was implemented as a combination of a welfare approach and an efficiency approach. It was welfare in the sense that the beneficiaries received their houses without either participating in the implementation stages or contributing to it in monetary terms. It

was efficiency because women were incorporated in the process as labor force exclusively; their work was used to maximize the productivity of the project but they were not consulted or considered as important contributors.

The housing project neglected to include gender planning. One of the reasons for this negligence was the methodology used to design, carry out and implement the project. First of all, the designation of the recipients of the project was done by a team of two persons: a male engineer and a female architect, who conducted surveys in the community; the surveys were prepared beforehand and they did not allow leeway for alternatives or contingencies. Although it was appropriate to ask questions orally and to receive oral responses from the Choteños, considering the great majority of adults in El Chota did not finish primary school, the persons in charge of this task were not professionally trained in social science techniques. Also, the team did not allow time to build rapport in the community; they visited the town on two or three occasions and asked questions immediately upon arrival.

The criteria used to define and differentiate the "needy" people from others was very artificial; the community of El Chota in general has a range of socio-economic differentiation. Even though the team visited households in order to analyze each one's economic condition, the questions posed were partial and incomplete. The members of the community were asked "how do we live, do we have things, are we poor enough to be given the houses?" (Interview E.A./October 10, 1995). The Choteños were able to sense what answers they needed to give and they responded accordingly; furthermore, basing the concept of "poverty" on the number of electrical devices each family had was not consistent with the differences in the community¹⁹; for example, since music is extremely important for the Choteños, the great majority of families own a stereo, but some models are ten to

¹⁹ Jelin (1989) points out that goods such as electric appliances have a certain use-value which contribute to the well-being of low-income families. They also represent a mechanism of "public presentation" of the family, where "given the impossibility of ever acquiring more adequate housing and the very high costs of home improvements, there is emphasis on owning the more accessible consumer goods" (In Edel/Hellman, 1989:96-98).

fifteen years old while others are brand new²⁰. Some people did not qualify as recipients because they owned a very old television or refrigerator. These appliances are considered to be necessities in the community, and they are bought with enormous sacrifices, usually with borrowed money that is paid back over several years.

Families, and women in particular because they were usually involved in the process as main actors, were not incorporated in every stage of the project. The stages include: research, design, implementation and decision-making, labor and evaluation. As it commonly occurs in top-to-bottom approaches²¹ to development, Choteños were "incorporated" in the project as an unpaid labor force to carry materials and to provide food for the construction workers²² in the fourth stage. They were not consulted and their opinion was not considered; BEV knew in advance how the design and implementation of the project was to be accomplished, including the designing of the houses, the materials chosen to build them and the distribution of space within the houses. Therefore, the planners' preconceptions of order were implemented with no consultation with the recipients. Choteño families certainly did not set the agenda for this project.²³

The housing project resembles on a small scale the 1972 Self-Help housing program in Sri Lanka. For instance, feminine labor in the construction, particularly in female-maintained households, became "disproportionately higher making it too exploitative of women" (Rasanayagam in Momsen/Kinnaird, 1993:149)²⁴. It was not

²⁰ Music expresses essential cultural values of the Choteño community; it is also a definer of the Choteño culture. Its importance is such that after I had lived in the village for an extended period of time and after I developed rapport within the community, Choteño people would proudly tell outsiders that I was one of them because I was able to dance the *bomba* (traditional dance of the Valley).

²¹ "Top-to-bottom" housing projects are defined by Moser (1992) as those programs where governmental authorities plan, finance and implement projects without the cooperation of beneficiaries (In Østergaard, 1992:76). This definition can be extended to development projects of any type, where the recipients do not participate in every phase of the project.

²² Women in particular were required to carry materials for construction and to cook for the workers.

²³ This situation is fairly common in development projects. Moser (1993) argues that in the planning stage, "although consultation with women about housing design would ensure that their spatial needs are met, this rarely occurs" (1993:51).

²⁴ However, the new government of Sri Lanka provided, in 1977, new trends for housing programs; the Model Village scheme was organized to grant housing assistance to an entire community rather than particular individuals (Rasanayagam in Momsen/Kinnaird, 1993:148).

acknowledged that women face considerable problems in coping with the numerous burdens of looking after a family and building a house.

In El Chota, as in Sri Lanka, the plan for the settlement and the necessary building materials were provided by BEV, "leaving hardly any choice for the allottee in the design of the house" (Rasanayagam in Momsen/Kinnaird, 1993:152); the recipients of the project were not consulted. An important difference, however, is that in El Chota the women who ran female-maintained households received a property title, while in Sri Lanka only males received property titles. In some male/female households in El Chota the family was able to procure a house through the woman and in these cases the property title belonged to the couple.

In El Chota, the building materials for the construction of the houses were of low quality and the houses were not finished before they were given to the people. The owners received "permission" to improve the infrastructure of their houses during a three-year try-out period, but since they did not have monetary resources or credit, the houses still remain unfinished. However, a second phase of the project does incorporate loans to build houses in the *Caracucho* neighborhood for those who own a plot of land. Even if credit were to be provided, the owners of the houses would have to incur in debts that they could not repay without the development of income-generating activities.

Since the owners are requested to live in houses that are cold, dusty and unsanitary, there is more work for the women: they have to cover all their possessions with plastic bags or blankets, sweep the dust that accumulates every day and get rid of disease causing organisms.

Another problem is the layout of space in the houses. The kitchen space is too small. All the cooking smells remain inside the house producing discomfort, particularly for women who stay indoors for an extended period of time. Thus, women's needs were not taken into account because women are mainly responsible for the physical maintenance of a household. Moser emphasizes the fact that "projects where women are not involved at

the various stages of planning and construction often show poor results in terms of deterioration of the settlement" (1992:89). Many women, because they are the ones in charge of the domestic chores and because the kitchen is an essential part of the feminine sphere, have reorganized the houses and have assigned one of the big rooms for the kitchen. It is clear that those who designed the houses were not aware of the importance that families --and especially the women-- confer to the kitchen in the Choteño community. The kitchen is a place where women gather, where socialization occurs, and where the mother-child relationship is developed. In the kitchen, "ethnic values, traditions and beliefs are transmitted; the world-vision of the Choteño group is represented...the kitchen becomes a kind of kingdom, where men can enter only under women's consent" (Guerrón-Montero, 1995:184-185). Similarly, the large room is used as a dining room/living room area, by reason of the importance conferred to meals and receiving visitors in a spacious setting.

The houses do not have space for income-generating activities which are important to women. According to one informant, a small patio between houses can be used to install a hen-house. Nonetheless, since credit is not available, women cannot buy and raise animals. Other projects such as small restaurants, beauty salons, craft stores, animal-houses cannot be accomplished under the present conditions.

The lack of services such as water, sanitation, electricity, roads and social services highly affect Choteño women in particular, because of their household activities and reproductive role. Although BEV built toilets and water connections in each house²⁵, the sewerage system of El Chota does not work. Women have to walk a fairly long distance to carry water and to take baths and wash dishes and clothes in the river. Hence, the toilet is used either as a storage room or as a hen-house²⁶. Electricity was not included in the

²⁵ The majority of the houses in El Chota do not have toilets. Some houses have latrines; there are also four public bathrooms in disuse.

²⁶ There is risk of losing any animal because of the rats.

original housing plan, although the Ecuadorian government has provided a partial service and currently a number of households have electricity.

In short, the housing project was not a complete program; it lacked gender awareness and encouragement toward self-sufficiency. It appears that because of the socio-economic structure of Ecuadorian society, where black people are considered second-class citizens because of their ethnic identity and social class the Afro-Ecuadorian population of El Chota was not considered economically important.

The implementation of the project was also notably rigid: some Choteños were given the "option" of demolishing their houses if they wanted a house donated by BEV; if they did not have a house and lived with relatives, they were forced to live in the donated houses under difficult conditions.

Many people did not enter the program for they did not believe in the government agency since they have had numerous experiences of promises not fulfilled in the past.

The housing project addressed practical gender needs; it ignored the possibility of empowerment for women because --in a paternalistic manner-- it merely granted them houses without including their participation in any of the stages of organization and planning of the program. It failed to address any other needs than the immediate ones. Women in particular were willing to do any work and to obey any requirement in order to receive their house. The fact that informants praise the benefits of this project does not indicate that it was adequately carried out; it means that women were in profound need of housing and were willing to make any sacrifice in order to obtain it.

The response to the project demonstrates that the practice of sharing a house among several families is not a deeply rooted kinship rule and not even a normally accepted behavior; it means that the lack of resources to build houses obliges families in the Choteño community to follow that residence pattern. Some informants stated how unpleasant and inconvenient it was to reside with their relatives in the same house, and how remarkable the housing project was for providing them with their own space. This

situation shows that, although kinship ties and extended families are important, Choteño society places an emphasis on the nuclear family. Female-maintained families are considered independent and prefer to live in separate houses if the conditions allow for it. This is another reason why the beneficiaries of the project agreed to move into houses that were not finished.

The European Community donated money for housing and used BEV as a contractor. Although the town has more urgent needs and the donation could have been used in other ways to benefit more people, it is clear that a housing project is a “monumental” display of generosity and philanthropy, and is certainly more glamorous than a sewage or water system; large organizations often are inclined to support such kinds of projects because of their visibility for political gain.

BEV, as the contractor, did not include social scientists in the planning of this project; it used low-quality materials and minimal guarantees were offered. Even though I do not have documents to prove it²⁷, I believe the team in charge of the housing project, affiliated with BEV, did not inform the European Community of its real budget, scope and outcome. I think the information was inaccurately presented in order to obtain the money which would be of benefit to BEV.

Unfortunately, these types of arrangements are fairly common both in the public and private sector of the Ecuadorian society²⁸ and in other countries of the South as well. In short, the Choteño community has been subjected to the bureaucracy and corruption of

²⁷ I was not able to access the archives of the European Community or BEV; I was also unable to arrange interviews with authorities from these two institutions. Once again, bureaucracy limits information, specially for Ecuadorian scholars. My opinion is an “educated guess”, based on experiences and knowledge of the policies of my country.

²⁸ Many international organizations do not control the activities of the institutions they sponsor or contact. This situation may be due to the fact that it is assumed that a national institution works toward the betterment of its citizens; sadly, the so-called “third world” has experienced a long history of corruption and discrimination; if the variables of ethnicity and class within a country are not taken into account, assumptions with negative consequences are made.

the public and the private sector, to decisions executed at a national level which in turn are dependent on an international donor.

The housing project was not handled within the broader perspective of "shelter." It is not only the material settlement what influences women's and men's lives but "a range of other supporting facilities that, together with a house, are necessary for a healthy living environment. This covers water and energy supplies, sanitation, drainage and access to transport networks" (Tinker in Blumberg *et al.*, 1995:261).

Another factor completely ignored in this project was that it created problems within the community. Those who received the houses say the disputes were due to the envy of the rest of the community.

Many people in the town couldn't believe it, you know why? Because they didn't take advantage, they didn't believe that one person was going to give us the houses, so many were left behind, and when we got our houses, they said: Those houses look like a match box, they are so tiny, they look like Guinea-pigs' houses, like hen-yards, but that is because they didn't get theirs, because they were incredulous (Interview E.A./October 10, 1995).

The discontent of the community can be perceived by the familiar name given to the new neighborhood; it is called Poor Relatives (*Parientes Pobres*), after a popular Mexican soap opera Poor Relatives of Love (*Parientes Pobres del Amor*). The real implications of the name revolve around the idea that those who received the houses were "so poor that they needed to beg for a house" (Interview D.E./October 5, 1995); they were accused of being dishonorable for accepting charity. Those who received a house in that neighborhood use the name The Lower Balcony ("*El Mirador Bajo*") (Interview P.A./October 5, 1995). These examples show the different perceptions Choteño people have of the housing project; for those who received a house, the project is a blessing and a possibility to acquire status; while those who were left out or disagreed with the project consider it as humiliating to accept a gift from white outsiders and deny their "poor relatives" the possibility of attaining that status.

In spite of its limitations, the housing project provided housing for nineteen families. This project included female-maintained households among the beneficiaries; this is a program policy not commonly implemented. Too often, female-maintained households are ignored and do not benefit from low-income housing projects because of gender biases in the project formulation, implementation and management (Moser, 1992).

Furthermore, ownership of property titles of the houses by female-maintained families was granted; this situation indicates three positive results: it guarantees the family's interests, it strengthens the position and participation of women in decision-making and it enhances women's access to credit (1992:82). It also implies the indirect fulfillment of a strategic gender need, that of overcoming discrimination against women owning land. Moser (1993) maintains that tenure rights for women are a strategic gender need "which ensure protection for themselves and their children in unstable or violent domestic situations" (1993:52).

V.5 OTHER PROJECTS

I will briefly refer to other organizations that are or were sponsoring development projects in El Chota. The most important one is the Cooperative New Horizons Associated (*Nuevos Horizontes Asociadas*), a group formed by 25 women. According to Margarita Espinosa, an active member of the group, the cooperative was created in the decade of the 1960s, thanks to the coordination of the Andean Mission (*Misión Andina*)²⁹. The group obtained legal status in 1991³⁰, and it is the only organization in El Chota with such governmental recognition (Interview M.A./February 5, 1993). This situation allows the group to obtain loans from public and private institutions and to participate in projects organized by big corporations as well as by international and national non-governmental

²⁹ I was unable to find further information about this organization. The Andean Mission was a United Nations Ecuadorian development agency which operated in the country during the decade of the 1960s (Belote/Belote in Vitzthum, 1988:101).

³⁰ Juridical Charge certified in the Notary Public N.1 of the Ibarra Canton, Record N. 59 of the Mercantile Register Book, Civil Tribunal N.4 of Ibarra.

organizations. It also confers a more structured framework for the members of the group; they feel they have a recognized organization they can rely on (See Map 3, pg. 72).

New Horizons received four sewing machines and four semi-industrial sewing machines from Father John Kelly in 1991. Like the bakers, they pooled their personal capital and started a business making bed-sheets for sale and for personal consumption; they also wove purses and bags out of plastic straw. However, once again, the market was limited to nearby towns and the project did not prosper.

Nonetheless, the cooperative remains active; it usually coordinates some celebrations in the town, such as Mother's Day, Holy Week and Carnival. "You see, we are in charge of organizing festivities, block-parties, the celebration of Mother's Day from May 28 to May 30. We also organize the Christmas' party" (Interview B.A./February 15, 1995).

Another women's organization is *Estrellitas Campesinas* (Little Peasant Stars). Initiated after New Horizons, it was meant to be a twin organization; it began in 1991 with twelve women (See Map 3, pg. 72). Jorge Muñoz from Ibarra served as the coordinator of the organization. According to Uvaldina Lara, the leader of the group:

The coordinator received some money from an international organization so we could make hen-yards and pig-houses. The women from New Horizons claimed that Muñoz gave us [the Little Stars] the money only to us, to the Little Stars so we did not have to share it with them, but I defended Muñoz because he never gave us a cent (Interview U.E./January 16, 1993).

Apparently, this problem caused animosity and hard feelings among the members of the two groups. When Father Kelly donated eight sewing machines to both organizations, New Horizons took charge of them and did not allow the Little Peasant Stars or any other woman to join in.

The Little Peasant Stars suffered internal problems as well; the leader of the group thinks that "the women only wanted the money; where they saw money, they went there" (Interview U.E./January 16, 1993). Women did not remain united, "we fell apart, there wasn't understanding among those who formed the group, I told Uvaldina that she should

form it again, that she should look for responsible people and we can do it" (Interview C.M./May 28, 1995). The organization was able to purchase equipment to play volley-ball and plastic straw to make purses and bags, but "there wasn't any patience, they wanted money fast, and we separated even before all the statutes of incorporation were ready at the Ministry of Social Affairs" (Interview U.L./January 16, 1993).

Another group, formed in 1994-1995 as an independent organization, is The People Together (*Union del Pueblo*). It is composed of three women, one single and two married women; they coordinate their activities with an elder member of the community, Gustavo Acosta. This group organizes dances and parties throughout the year, and block parties every Saturday in December. They organized the celebration of Mother's Day in 1995. During this festivity, the election of the "Queen of El Chota" was held; this election has become a popular event and attracts people from several communities in the Valley. Nine candidates were trained for two months before participating in this event. The People Together also organizes a volley-ball competition within El Chota; in 1996, six teams participated in the championship.

Problems exist between New Horizons and the other organizations. Women from New Horizons do not admit new members; the women who belong to this cooperative are perceived as isolated and egotistical. "I don't know anything about New Horizons because they are a very separate group from us, they don't integrate with us" (Interview C.M./May 28, 1995). The two living organizations (New Horizons and The People Together) are not willing to coordinate efforts, and they both expect to take the leading role in important events such as Mother's Day, Christmas, the Holly Week and Carnival. In December 1995, for example, there were two End-of-the-Year celebrations; they were performed at the same time because it was not possible for the women to come to an agreement.

Men, on the other hand, do not maintain active community organizations. However, there is one organization, the Cooperative of Artisans El Chota (*Cooperativa Artesanal El Chota*) created in 1989 after an unidentified international donor provided

machines to run a carpentry shop (See Map 3, pg. 72). The coordinator of the project, a Choteño who lived in Ibarra, stole several machines and disappeared. The members of the cooperative, "felt very bad, we were angry and didn't want to work in the shop. We don't have any wood to use and the room where the machines are located is too small. For all these reasons, we don't work in the carpentry" (Interview F.L./February 16, 1993). For young people, their current source of income appears to be enough to meet their immediate needs, and there is no interest in working on a long-term income-generating project. As Vinicio Chalá told me, "for me it is enough to gather stones from the river twice a week, I get paid some money and I can buy liquor and some clothes. That is enough for me now; others are luckier, because they get a job at the hostels in Ambuquí and can buy many things" (Interview V.Ch./May 29, 1995).

People in El Chota consider basic services such as a sewage and water system, as projects that should be carried out by a private organization since the Municipality of Ibarra does not address these issues; both systems already exist but do not function adequately. Although USAID has worked on latrine construction, hygiene education and mass media campaigns in the province of Imbabura, none of this work has been carried out in El Chota (Interview John Butsch/May 13, 1996).

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS

Throughout this research, it has been emphasized that the subject of women and development is of fundamental importance; women continue to be formally or informally responsible for their family's well-being and because of that development projects influence them directly. Even though new approaches to the issue of women and development have emerged, perspectives that encourage women's empowerment and transformation of unequal social structures are not popular among policy planners, governments and international donor agencies {Cf. Moser, 1993:79}. Projects are still performed with an anti-poverty, welfare or efficiency approach to development. The case of El Chota is no exception to the rule, although some positive outcomes can be found.

As commonly occurs in development projects, the programs performed in El Chota share elements from several different approaches to development; these approaches were combined during a specific phase of a project or throughout the entire project.

The common trend in the community of El Chota has been the presence of projects based on a welfare approach. The donation of machinery, houses or financial resources is a common denominator. The primary result of this orientation is the lack of interest the Choteño community has in working towards self-sufficiency; this is also due to limited education, lack of organization and failure of previous projects. Furthermore,

politicians, students and researchers have visited the area, promised improvements and never returned to fulfill their pledges.

The projects examined in this research were not designed with an adequate analysis of the reality of the community and of women in particular; gender planning procedures were not included, the consequences being diverse. Projects were organized around assumptions and stereotypical ideas about women as housewives. In the same manner, development projects based on a top-to-bottom perspective seem to work well at first, but later they disintegrate.¹ In these programs, new skills for women are not encouraged and problems, but not causes, are addressed; consequently, they are aimed to solve practical gender needs exclusively. The projects examined in this research were based on this perspective (See Table No. 3).

It is necessary to clarify, however, that donations made by national or international agents are not negative *per se*. The problem lies in giving a material contribution without providing education, credit and means for self-sufficiency, fundamental components to forge a positive use of the resources given.

The bakery project was based on a welfare-oriented approach and it lacked gender planning procedures. This situation produced several inconveniences; women used their time unproductively and were discouraged from participating; an analysis of possible markets was not performed and the outreach capacity of the project was limited. At the present time, no further possibilities of income or business expansion will take place; the

¹ A project will succeed not because of the material infrastructure it builds, but because of the consequences it produces in society in the long term.

TABLE N° 3**OUTCOME OF DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS**

PROJECT	GENDER NEEDS MET		APPROACH/WOMEN	GENDER PLANNING
	PGN	SGN		
The Bakers	Income	Self-Awareness	Welfare-oriented	No Gender Planning:
	Labor	Self-Sufficiency	Top-to-bottom	Conflict Home/Comm.
	Sustenance	Credit without	Focus Productive Role	Shortage of Markets
		Collateral		Burdensome Work
		Empowerment		Regional Gatherings:Positive
Houses for All	Houses for 19	Property Titles	Welfare-oriented	No Gender Planning:
	Families	for Female	Efficiency-oriented	Biased Methodology
		Households	Top-to-bottom	Artificial Selection
			Focus Productive Role	Not Included as Main Actors
				Used as Unpaid Labor Force
				Burdensome Work/Women
				Not Consulted for Design
				Conflicts Community
				Poor Quality Materials
				Lack of Basic Services

women have incurred debts difficult to pay back due to a lack of market possibilities both for the bread they make and the store they run.

In spite of that, the bakery project met certain practical gender needs. The project provided an income-generating activity for a number of women. This income has aided them in providing economic means for their families, particularly in the case of those women who maintain a household entirely by themselves. Furthermore, the project fulfilled the strategic gender need of giving credit to women without requiring a male collateral and by recognizing female-maintained households. The project also encouraged the learning of new skills. Through the regional meetings, it has provided for the strategic gender need of developing self-sufficiency and improving self-confidence and well-being.

The housing project was based on a combination of a welfare and efficiency-oriented approaches; gender planning procedures were not taken into account. Although the project addressed the practical need for housing by nineteen families, women in those households faced arduous tasks in order to maintain a house built with flawed features; the recipients were not included in every stage of the project and were only incorporated as an unpaid labor force.

The houses were built based on the planners' preconceptions of order and space; no attention was paid to the need for an area for the development of income-generating activities of different sorts. The project did not grant basic services to the recipients. Therefore, although the practical gender need of housing was provided, no other practical gender needs were met.

In terms of strategic gender needs, the project lacked gender awareness and encouragement towards self-sufficiency. However, it provided the strategic gender need of property titles to female-maintained households which is a legal right not generally granted to low-income women in Ecuadorian society. This situation has guaranteed the indirect fulfillment of the strategic gender need of overcoming discrimination against women owning property.

This research has determined that income-generating projects tend to be preferred by Choteño women, while projects aimed towards infrastructure improvement have a tendency to be favored by men. This occurs because income-generating projects satisfy immediate economic needs (practical needs) of the family, such as pocket money for children's transportation to school or their lunch; this is particularly true in the case of female-maintained households. In spite of their usefulness and long-run benefits (if well conducted), infrastructure projects seem less appealing to women and more inviting to men who --in general-- have more access to economic resources. Potentially, income-generating projects that incorporate a gender-awareness perspective provide the grounds for developing self-sufficiency and for improving self-confidence².

Immediate economic needs generate a certain level of organization for women, who struggle to obtain some benefit for their participation in projects, even if they may not be adequately planned or implemented. On the other hand, due to a kinship system that

² This proposition is supported by Blumberg (1995), who shows that women who have access to independent economic resources "tend to hold back less for themselves and devote more to children's nutrition, health, and education" (1995:5).

helps women with childcare and household work,³ Choteño women are highly independent and can dedicate their time and energy to specific projects outside the domestic sphere because --up to a certain point-- this work is socially acceptable.

Although development projects run by women have not reached their full potential, they have achieved some results; in contrast, projects run by or directed towards men have not progressed beyond initial stages. At the present time, there are no projects organized by men; in the case of the housing project, women took over the organization of it and were more involved than men. Considering the fact that even though the President of the Town Council is a man and might organize projects aiming to adult males or young men, and considering the fact that economic resources are highly needed in the community and that no project run or organized by men exists, it can be argued that women are better organizers than men. Women consider the need to gain access to resources as something more important to their everyday life.

Choteño men have access to other type or resources (agricultural work, work in the sugar cane refinery, work as night guards or construction workers, among others) and are not under the pressure to solve everyday economic problems. Choteño women seem to be better organizers than men and possess a degree of power that is represented in the strength and importance of the feminine sphere. Women's economic independence and level of organization guarantees the autonomy of the feminine sphere to a certain extent.

³ A similar kinship arrangement has been found among Afro-Latin American communities since slavery (Hünefeldt 1994:205).

As Blumberg (1995) argues, "women's control of economic resources, especially income, is the most important predictor of the degree of gender equality" (1995:1).

Women who were immersed in the development projects studied had the opportunity to learn organizational skills of some sort, which could be considered a benefit of the projects. Through the fulfillment of practical gender needs, women were able to accomplish some strategic gender needs, partly because women themselves developed strategies to gain some success from them.

As the projects done in El Chota have shown, there is a substantial difference between consulting women and allowing them to set the agenda⁴. Women in El Chota have coordinated their efforts to a certain degree; nevertheless, self-sufficiency has not been widely developed and for this reason women continue to rely on the strategy of poverty in order to access to resources. This may occur because there are no viable organizations that represent their interests, which also prevents them from developing a voice or from that voice to be heard.

From the perspective of gender and exchange, participation in the process of designing a project is vital. The recipients and planners of the projects in El Chota did not participate in every stage of its implementation --the research stage,⁵ project design,

⁴ Certainly, women in a specific area may not invariably succeed in deciding which specific procedure to take in order to resolve a problem; notwithstanding, they are, undoubtedly, more aware of their everyday reality and needs (Mosse, 1996:27-28).

⁵ In this sense, Participatory Action Research (PAR) is a methodology that allows for the participation of the beneficiaries of a project from its initial phase. PAR places an emphasis on the political aspects of knowledge production. Through PAR, a sharing and exchange of information develops. It is considered a liberationist movement; according to Fals-Borda and Ramhman (1991), the primary task of PAR is the "enlightenment and awakening of common peoples" (In Reason, 1994:327-328).

implementation and decision-making, contributing labor⁶ and evaluation-- as equal partners. This situation arose as consequence the lack of attention to women's needs. As Afshar (1991) points out, "it's only if and when development policies are addressed directly to women and formulated for them [and by them] that they may be able to alleviate their plight" (1991:3).

In general terms, the deficiency in grassroots organization and self-empowerment, and the lack of interest from national and international institutions leads to the implementation of projects that only address practical gender needs.

In connection with other projects briefly discussed in this research, the case of New Horizons is particularly interesting. Even though women joined the project because of a specific donation and with the goal of fulfilling practical gender needs exclusively, the organization that derived from it, the Cooperative "New Horizons", still survives and has attained legal status. Consequently, a positive outcome has derived from this project and a strategic gender need has been fulfilled: the members of New Horizons are well organized and prepared to succeed in other projects. Notwithstanding, they still expect international institutions to suggest or plan such projects because the tactic of "begging" is embedded in Choteños' behavior toward society at large.

This element leads to the discussion of empowerment. Empowerment is a fundamental component of the perspective of gender and exchange toward development. "Empowering ourselves through organization" has been a slow global process; in the areas

⁶ Too often, however, the recipients of a development project participate only in the fourth stage --as an unpaid or inexpensive labor force.

where it has been implemented, it has succeeded in meeting strategic gender needs through addressing concrete practical gender needs (Moser, 1993:78). What kind of empowerment did these projects produce?. Did they encourage individual or collective empowerment?. It can be argued that individual empowerment was certainly more strongly emphasized, particularly in the case of the housing project, where women were in charge of the paper work for their own houses. Nonetheless, the bakers can be considered a group of women who have developed collective empowerment: they organized their schedules and their work in order to gain as much as possible from their own cooperation, and thus alleviate to a certain extent their burdens in the domestic and public sphere. Beyond this point, however, no collective empowerment has been achieved, for the autonomy of the feminine sphere was not an intended outcome of the specific projects analyzed in this research.

It is fundamental to recognize that societies are dynamic and that women's empowerment unfailingly provokes some sort of conflict. This conflict develops between genders, but also within genders; inside the household and between households. Conflict because of a certain level of empowerment was demonstrated by the relationship between the bakers and other women of the community, and by the problems between the women from New Horizons and the Little Peasant Stars.

Women's empowerment and autonomy certainly have limitations; Choteño society is by no means moving beyond the patriarchal model of social organization. Even though in theory female-maintained households are more autonomous in the sense that do not include a male partner, they still have a lower socio-economic status. Conferring

lower status can be interpreted as a mechanism used by Choteño society to establish limitations on the power, strength and autonomy of the feminine sphere.

Choteño society also places control on women's work and activities outside the home; women themselves help to determine the parameters of restraint on other women who are perceived as "too independent" or successful.

Inside male-leader households domestic violence is also a restraint on women. Domestic violence is a generalized problem in El Chota. Vance and Rubin (1989) demonstrate an intimate relationship between sexuality and violence, where the traditional ideology of gender is maintained through the use of violence. Sexual violence in its multiple forms becomes an admonition of men to limit and reduce women's movements and behavior (In Cuvi, 1992:6). Men in El Chota use sexual violence --rape in marriage, harassment, psychological violence, verbal and physical abuse-- in order to maintain the role of chief and procreator inside the household, and in order to regulate women's activities outside the home. Domestic violence is perceived by women as cowardly, but nonetheless accepted, behavior⁷.

These detonators of conflict, which should have been considered in the planning process, were not taken into account in the bakery project, at least not during its initial configuration, nor it was considered in the housing project or in the formation of New

⁷ A peculiar characteristic of Choteño women --perhaps due to the feminine sphere's strength-- is that many of them react toward violence with more violence, either physical or verbal. As opposed to what occurs in the generality of Ecuadorian society, women confront violent acts with determination, they have acquired mechanisms of defense and response. However, this does not mean that domestic violence in El Chota is a resolved issue.

Horizons. The perspective of gender and exchange provides solutions to this problem because it takes into consideration conflict in the planning process.

An important component that crosses over the projects analyzed is the fact that Choteño people belong to a class and an ethnic group that is subordinated and discriminated against by Ecuadorian society. The number of projects aimed toward Afro-Ecuadorian populations is minimal, and is even smaller if compared to the grassroots development work designed by and for indigenous populations in general. Women, in this case, experience a triple discrimination because of their gender, ethnicity and socio-economic class.

In conclusion, I would like to provide some suggestions for future development work in El Chota and in the region of the Valley of El Chota.

First of all, it is fundamental to recognize the barriers that prevent Choteño women from participating in community life and developing organizations, and to provide solutions to overcome those barriers. This is particularly important for Choteño women, who encounter discrimination because of their gender, class and ethnic ascription.

One primordial element is the vehement necessity for grassroots and consciousness work in El Chota. As Mosse (1994) argues, "the emphasis [should be] on a process of empowerment, in which through organization, people gain the strength to create a space for themselves and to build up the material assets to support their own growth and development" (1994:20). This enterprise should go hand by hand with

education: education based on age and gender⁸, development of new skills, adult literacy, among others. If that previous step is not taken, only practical needs will be fulfilled, in detriment of real transformations through strategic needs⁹. The encouragement of Choteño women's self-empowerment and self-esteem should be a priority. It can be argued that Choteño women have acquired a higher degree of class consciousness in relationship to men in the sense that they have been able to organize themselves and cooperate at the community level.

Among other consequences, this emphasis on education will prevent community leaders and Mestizo authorities from taking advantage of the community because of their lack of knowledge and understanding. In practical terms and because education is a slow process, a measure to encourage illiterate women to participate in leadership positions could be, for instance, to record sessions of communal or cooperative meetings on audio tapes. Women's reproductive tasks often diminish their participation in communal activities. In El Chota, childcare is available thanks to kinship structures. With this advantage in hand, women could improve their participation and thus achieve not only practical gender needs --more income-- but also strategic gender needs --women's access to resources, family planning, political life of the town¹⁰. Also, the economic and social benefits of a project ought to be shared widely in order to guarantee cooperation of the greatest number of women.

⁸ Education should include a gender perspective. Although men and women have different needs, isolated efforts are not worthwhile. If Choteño women learn empowerment skills while men maintain their traditional views towards women, problems will remain in the community.

⁹ The differentiation practical/strategic gender needs can be applied to community needs in general.

¹⁰ Nonetheless, the childcare burden should not fall exclusively onto older sisters, because it will negatively affect school attendance for girls.

In terms of gender planning procedures, it is fundamental that future project planners develop familiarity with the community. If sufficient time in the area is not possible, which is usually the case, methods such as Participatory Action Research (PAR) should be applied. Along with these methods, women's participation should be encouraged, by allowing them to "set the agenda", to make suggestions, to determine their real needs. The presence of women in planning teams would allow for a better understanding of the feminine sphere in the area studied. A further positive measure is to run pilot activities and determine their success before implementing them on a larger scale. Project models from elsewhere can be of positive use only when they are adapted to the reality of the community and the region.

Another fundamental component is credit. Women who participate in the projects studied in this research require credit for different purposes: the bakers needed credit to expand their bakery business; the recipients of the housing project needed credit to finish their houses; and the members of New Horizons, Peasant Little Stars and Union of the People needed credit to start income-generating projects. However, investments must be planned in order to achieve success so that credit does not become a burden, particularly for women. In this sense, a possibility could be that an organization provides credit for micro-enterprises based on peer-pressure, following the model of the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh. Tinker (*et al.*, 1995) argues that the Grameen Bank's model has been applied in several countries in the world with success. In these cases, credit is secured only by the members and "social pressure from the group has resulted in an astounding 98 percent repayment rate" (1995:277).

Credit could be used to implement animal-house businesses or animal-houses for each household, for pigs and chickens in particular, the improvement of the sewage system, and other income-generating programs, or a new and more spacious communal house¹¹. The construction of animal-yards with sanitary conditions would prevent pigs from walking in the streets, eating people's excrement and leaving waste in the road. The current situation not only causes health problems for the community but it represents more work for women since cleaning activities are their duty.

Likewise, credit could serve to open restaurants and stores in order to accommodate the recent tourist flow in the vicinity. Although it is not ideal that the Choteño community creates businesses geared toward tourism, it must be acknowledged that the tourism industry is a reality in the area and that an Afro-Ecuadorian labor force is being used at the present time. If Choteño people do not offer facilities to the visitors, the Mestizo hotel owners will obtain all the profits from the industry, and Afro-Ecuadorian populations will remain as a mere tourist attraction and as an added piece of the Valley's landscape.

Another possibly lucrative business is the collection of fruits. Approximately 100 meters away from the town, there is an ample area covered with wild prickly pears; the fruit is rarely eaten by the Choteño community¹². The fruit could be collected in a more constant basis, and sold to tourists or in markets outside the town. An ambitious

¹¹ El Chota has a communal house; one of the rooms is used by the bakers and the national telephone company (EMETEL) occupies the other. There is also a large room used for celebrations.

¹² Apparently, this land belongs to the community of El Chota.

project would be to start a small-scale canning industry, and to sell the fruit in the national and --possibly-- the international market¹³.

Along with credit, classes to improve and encourage women's traditional and newly acquired skills must be included. In short, a complete program must be developed, with the inclusion of credit, education, instruction of new skills and profitable markets.

Another possible project involves a basic resource: water. One of the most important future projects in El Chota is to provide water to every house in the community. This situation would reduce women's work and guarantee better sanitary conditions¹⁴.

In term of housing strategies for the Afro-Ecuadorian community, it is fundamental to formulate and implement housing policies at the national level that recognize the role of women both as agents and as beneficiaries in the housing programs; it is also essential to improve basic services, not only water, but also energy supply, sanitation and transportation in order to reduce women's burdens. When future housing projects are organized, it would be important to design them on a self-help basis, encouraging the active participation of the members of the community. Likewise, it would be positive to implement training and orientation services "which include advice on various aspects of home ownership and maintenance" (Rasanayagam in Momsen/Kinnaird, 1993:158).

¹³ The availability of markets should be considered as an essential element in the planning of a project.

¹⁴ In this sense, it is interesting to conjecture if a feminine space *par excellence*, the river, will be lost when women do not need to visit the river as often as they do at present time. Probably, they will be able to find other mechanisms to retain their space. Furthermore, the time saved in visits to the river could be used in other activities women would like to do and could develop means for empowerment.

These projects could allow the survival strategy of poverty to be transformed into an ability for self-sufficiency, which in the long term is more powerful and represents real progress. At the present time, the Choteño community is utterly expecting to receive donations from a national or international donor; this behavior leads to more dependency on Mestizo people; Choteño people now remain an underclass, disrespected, ignored and with few means to achieve transformations.

In consideration of bottom-up versus top-to-bottom approaches to development, it is important to acknowledge that bottom-up projects have not been the norm in the world of development and at the present time do not seem to be highly successful in the context of El Chota because of the lack of cooperation and sense of community. Although in theory a bottom-up perspective encourages self-sufficiency within a community, in reality these projects encounter problems. The work of small NGOs in the implementation of small projects, where conflict and constraints are taken into account, can provide good results. Nonetheless, it is realistic to affirm that more top-to-bottom projects will continue to be prevalent.

I believe aid provided by national and international donor agencies to countries of the South should always be accompanied by a debate concerning whether such aid is morally sound. Nonetheless, the need for development ethics is not generally recognized. The relations that characterize the flow of scientific and technical knowledge between the countries of North and the South "have often led to assumptions about the way in which science must be conducted which are difficult to apply and monitor" (Morales-Gómez, 1992:198). Development must not be confused with modernization, and it cannot be

restricted to economic growth or reduced to a technological matter. An integrated development must include a culture's identity, self-confidence, independence and a search for its own answers.

An essential part of this integration is the incorporation of a human rights perspective which acknowledges the problem of the relation between countries of the North and the South, including the treatment of the problem of individual development as a component of socio-economic development. The ethics of development lie in the "consensus of the suffering", that is, in those who encounter the consequences of development. At the present time, there is an ever growing change from narrowly empirical development studies to normative development analysis, and development ethics is an essential part of this transformation.

A great deal of wisdom will be needed "to teach human beings how to link micro and macro practices in social policies" (Goulet, 1992:472) and to elucidate and comparatively evaluate various ethical visions for development. A moral reflection on a society's basic goals is highly needed, because such things as economic growth and modernization may be morally problematic and in need of replacement, modification or complementation with more adequate concepts of "fullness of being". We need critical and explicit reflection on the ends as well as the means of development. Development ethics must be considered in close relation with empirical development theories.

The field of international development has and will continue to receive enrichment, both in the operational and ethical aspects, from a group of professionals who are theorists-practitioners *par excellence*: applied anthropologists. I believe the participation

of a professional applied anthropologist in research and implementation teams enhances the possibilities of success on development projects. It is highly probable that the projects analyzed in this work could have been ethically and culturally sensitive to the needs and interests of the recipients if an applied anthropologist would have been a part of the team of analysts and project planners.

Choteño and Afro-Ecuadorian people have been neglected by the Ecuadorian government and by national and international institutions. Their history of slavery and their status as an ethnic minority have reinforced stereotypes and preconceptions, which in turn have limited their access to better living conditions. This research is aimed at helping to overcome the situation of ostracism in which Afro-Ecuadorian populations, and women in particular, are immersed.

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