INDIVIDUAL AND COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS IN ECUADOR:

A LESSON FOR DEVELOPMENT THEORY

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

After World War II, governments and institutions in Europe and the United States

began to address the issues of poverty and its effects on human security around the globe.

Institutions such as the World Bank made it their mission to promote and incentivize

economic development, providing loans and other programs to countries in need.

International development and poverty alleviation have been concerns of numerous

governments and other multilateral organizations since this time, and the activities of

these organizations constitute an enormous international effort and enterprise. In 2001

alone, the Official Development Assistance to developing countries was $49.5 billion

(United Nations, 2004).

Development theory and practice have undergone many challenges and changes

over the last few decades, and the institutions that promote development are continually

learning how best to honor and improve the lives of the people with whom they work.

Most recently, development theorists have challenged the idea that economic growth

should be either the primary means or ends of development, and have sought to

understand development in terms of freedoms, capabilities, and human rights. These

innovations in the field of development theory challenge many of the ideological

assumptions of past theories, and offer promising and exciting frameworks with which to

further understand and pursue human flourishing. Despite their ground-breaking spirit,

however, these theories fail to recognize the importance of community as an integral

aspect of human development. In this paper, I argue that the exclusion of *community* development in the process of *human* development results from an inadequate understanding of the roles and functions of community, as well as an over-simplification of the nature of individual and community relations.

In order to illustrate these concepts, I will explore the role of community in the development of indigenous people in the Chimborazo province of Ecuador. Indigenous communities in the Ecuadorian highlands are mostly communal societies that operate within an explicit ethical framework, particularly when it comes to rights, responsibilities, and relationships of individuals and communities. When these communities and others like them participate in Western-style development programs, they present an interesting place to study the ideological underpinnings of the concept of development. I will rely on interviews collected during an evaluation of an education-focused development program to examine the ways that people understand their community, the functions of community, and the relationships between community and individuals. Specifically, I will first use a "community narrative" framework to interpret how the people that I interviewed understand community at a discursive level. I will then describe the roles of indigenous community organizations and the ways they function in indigenous society. Lastly, I will explore indigenous understandings of individual and community relationships, and use these understandings to challenge current development theories. Based on my observations, I argue that development theory must recognize the value of community and re-examine its beliefs about the nature of individual and community relationships. Furthermore, development institutions must be proactive in seeking and creating ways to strengthen communities as well as individuals.

CHAPTER II

DEVELOPMENT THEORY AND PRACTICE

Throughout its history, development has been lauded and criticized, made both

demon and saint. Development is by no means a monolithic entity or process, but does,

on the whole, follow a particular set of practices and respond to a specific set of

assumptions. Over time, both the practices and the assumptions have been questioned

and challenged. Critiques of development practices have traditionally been more

successful in bringing about changes in development institutions. For example, many

development institutions have abandoned the notion of "trickle down" economic growth

and have begun to target the poor as participants in development programs (Cernea,

1991). Furthermore, the repeated failures of development programs due to "the

sociologically ill-informed and ill-conceived nature of the projects" (Cernea, 1991, p. 2)

has resulted in a commitment to community participation in the planning of development

projects and an increase in the employment of social scientists and community advocates

(rather than relying solely on economists) within development institutions (Cernea,

1991). These changes depend on the assumptions that development, when done with

respect for the people involved, is a worthwhile pursuit and beneficial process. This

notion has been challenged as well, however, and the denunciation of these ideological

assumptions continues to incite innovative approaches to development.

After a decade of United Nations commitment to development for the

advancement of women, Sen and Grown (1986) reported the effects of development

efforts on women in the third world in their book, *Development, Crises, and Alternative Visions*. According to Sen and Grown, "the implicit assumption…was that women's main problem in the Third World was insufficient participation in an otherwise benevolent process of growth and development." (1986, p.15) The authors challenge these beliefs about the process of development by providing several examples of women's unfortunate experiences with persistent resource inequalities, gender subordination, population programs and reproductive rights, and participation in development programs. They also note the increased poverty and decreased level of general well-being on the part of women in the third world after the decade committed to their promotion. DeRivero (2001) reports similar findings for other sectors of the population as well: poverty deepened and spread over the last 30 years of the 20th century for male and female urban working class and rural peasants throughout Latin America, Africa, and some parts of Asia. Furthermore, the deleterious effects of development had led to increased militarization and enormous debt burdens for many countries throughout the world.[1] In addition to these criticisms, scholars have questioned the ideological assumptions of development including work and the public/private divide (Ray, C., 2003; Wright, 1997), the reality of participation (Lennie, 1999; Ray, K. 2003; Waller, 2005), the sustainability and desirability of economic growth (Lantican, Gladwin, & Seale, 1996; Phillips, 2005; Steady, 1998) and the neutrality of development institutions (George & Sabelli, 1994; Levine, 2002). These criticisms have paved the way for new aspirations for the processes and goals of development. Sen and Grown (1986) call for development that is rooted in alternative visions, strategies, and methods: "We want a

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[1] In 2001, the total long-term external debt of developing countries was US$ 1.78 trillion (United Nations, 2004)

world where inequality based on class, gender, and race is absent from every country, and from the relationships among countries. We want a world where basic needs become basic rights and where poverty and all forms of violence are eliminated…" (p. 80) The demand for development theories and policies that are informed by a commitment to human rights was also put forward at the World Conference on Human Rights (1993), the World Conference on Women (1995), and the World Summit for Social Development (1995) (Hamm, 2001).

This charge has been answered by scholars in a number of different disciplines including community development, feminism, economics, and political theory. Perhaps one of the most notable and widely acknowledged innovations that has arisen is the "capabilities approach," championed by Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum (Nussbaum, 1997, 2000; Sen, 1999). The capabilities approach is, in many ways, a radical departure from previous development theories because it challenges the importance of economic growth alone, preferences the people engaged in the development process, and acknowledges them as the experts on their own lives. The capabilities approach argues that the goal of development should be to create systems and institutions that provide opportunities for all individuals to increase their freedoms and capabilities.

For example, the traditional measures of success for development organizations and the countries they sought to "develop" have been almost purely numerical representations of economic poverty: GNP[2], GDP[3], income per capita and the like. Development agencies have begun to expand their definitions and measures of poverty.

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[2] Gross national product (GNP): The value of all final goods and services produced within a nation in a given year, plus income earned abroad, minus income earned by foreigners from domestic production.

The most widely recognized example of this trend is the Human Development Index, introduced by Mahboob Ul Haq in 1990 when he directed the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 1990; 2001). This index expands the measure of poverty to take into account three components: longevity (measured by life expectancy at birth), knowledge (measured by literacy rates and years of schooling), and income (using the Atkinson formula for the utility of income).

In his book *Development as Freedom*, Sen (1999) argues that development should be understood "as a process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy," (p.3) and that societies should be evaluated based primarily on "the substantive freedoms that members of that society enjoy" (p.18). He delineates five types of instrumentally important freedoms: political freedoms, economic facilities, social opportunities, transparency guarantees, and protective security. According to Sen, these five "freedoms" are important in their own right and act to improve and strengthen each other. Additionally, they are important both as a *means* to development and as an *end* of development. For Sen, an economist, the economic gain resulting from "development" is only valuable if the gain increases human quality of life. His freedoms are the tools he uses to think about quality of life, and integral to their realization is access to very tangible social resources - education, health care, political representation, and economic opportunity.

From this understanding of freedom, Sen argues for support-led development - development[4] that provides economic and social opportunities on the front end of

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[3] Gross domestic product (GDP): The value of all final goods and services produced within a nation in a given year

[4] Support-led development is a stark contrast to neo-liberal ideology, which informs much of economic development theory and practice today. The neo-liberal agenda of economic growth is committed to a

development as well as being a product of it. For example, where traditional development thinking would have approached the development process by working for economic development *first*, the profits of which would *then* go to fund education and health care (possibly), Sen argues that education and health care are essential social investments from the very beginning of the development process, and that their primacy will both increase the freedoms of the individuals involved and provide good human capital for economic development. Sen cites the Indian state of Kerala as a particularly successful example of support-led development. Despite a very low income-per-capita, Kerala's literacy rates, infant mortality rates, and other social measures are some of the best in the world. Stiglitz (2002) posits a similar idea, comparing the success of development processes in different countries around the world. Stiglitz attributes the East Asian miracle to the presence of a healthy and well educated work force, and uses the example to demonstrate the importance of social investments to incite economic growth.

Likewise, Sen understands poverty to mean something beyond strictly income poverty. While the lack of financial resources is certainly an aspect of poverty, he argues that poverty should be understood in a broader sense as "capability deprivation," and demonstrates that lack of freedom directly affects of ability to achieve basic capabilities. Understanding poverty as a lack of capabilities shifts the focus of poverty analysis away from the *means* by which one is understood to be impoverished (income) toward those

reduced role for the state, privatization of services (including health, education, and social services), and tax-reforms that preference corporate interests. Among other things, this approach to development has been credited with maintaining the economic hegemony of "developed" over "developing" nations (Campfens, 1999).

ends that one would want to choose to pursue (capabilities such as health, education, or political representation).

In conjunction with Sen's conceptualizations of "poverty as capability deprivation," and "development as freedom," Martha Nussbaum (1995, 2000) works to create a universal theory of justice based on human capabilities. Drawing on Aristotelian ideas of human essence and functioning, Nussbaum asserts that there are injustices readily identifiable across cultures and traditions that require universal normative treatment. After working through various critiques of universal norms and values, Nussbaum establishes a list of "central human capabilities" that she argues should serve as the minimum for human quality of life. Differentiating her capabilities from human functioning as well as human preferences, Nussbaum emphasizes the importance of choice in her theory: the role of the central capabilities is not meant to be a prescription for how people should be, but rather a list of choices that all people should be allowed to make and maintain. Illustrating this delineation, she states, "The person with plenty of food may always choose to fast, but there is a great difference between fasting and starving." (Nussbaum, 2000, p.87)

Nussbaum begins her project of creating universal capabilities by defending the idea that there are identifiable "qualities of life" that are required for life to be fully human. By combining this argument with her *principle of each person as an end,* Nussbaum asserts that it is possible to prescribe a list of essential human capabilities that should be available to each and every person. This *principle of each person's capability* and its resulting list of central capabilities is not, however, a complete theory of justice. Rather, it provides us with the "basis for determining a decent social minimum in a

variety of areas." (Nussbaum, 2000, p. 75) Furthermore, "the structure of social and

political institutions should be chosen, at least in part, with a view to promoting at least a

threshold level of these human capabilities." (Nussbaum, 2000, p. 75)

Central Human Capabilities[5]

1. **Life**. Being able to live to the end of a human life of normal length, not dying prematurely, or before one's life is so reduced as to not be worth living.

2. **Bodily Health**. Being able to have good health, including reproductive health, to be adequately nourished; to have adequate shelter.

3. **Bodily Integrity**. Being able to move freely from place to place, having one's bodily boundaries treated as sovereign, i.e., being able to be secure against assault, child sexual abuse, and domestic violence; having opportunities for sexual satisfaction and for choice in matters of reproduction.

4. **Senses, Imagination, and Thought**. Being able to use the senses, to imagine, think, and reason - and to do these things in a "truly human" way, a way informed and cultivated by an adequate education, including but no means limited to literacy and basic mathematical and scientific training. Being able to use imagination and thought in connection with experiencing and producing self-expressive works and events of one's own choice; religious, literary, musical, and so forth. Being able to use one's mind in ways protected by guarantees of freedom of expression with respect to both political and artistic speech, and freedom of religious exercise. Being able to search for the ultimate meaning of life in one's own way. Being able to have pleasurable experiences, and to avoid non-necessary pain.

5. **Emotions**. Being able to have attachments to things and people outside ourselves; to love those who love and care for us, to grieve at their absence, in general, to love, to grieve, to experience longing gratitude and justified anger. Not having one's emotional development blighted by overwhelming fear and anxiety, or by traumatic events of abuse or neglect. (Supporting this capability means supporting forms of human association that can be shown to be crucial in their development).

6. **Practical Reason**. Being able to form a conception of the good and to engage in critical reflection about the planning of one's life. (This entails protection for the liberty of conscience).

7. **Affiliation**. **A.** Being able to live with and toward others, to recognize and show concern for other human beings, to engage in various forms of social interaction; to

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[5] The list and explanation of each capability are taken directly from Nussbaum. p.78-80.

be able to imagine the situation of another and to have compassion for the situation; to have the capability for both justice and friendship. (Protecting this capability means protecting institutions that constitute and nourish such forms of affiliation, and also protecting the freedom of assembly and political speech. **B.** Having the social bases of self-respect and non-humiliation; being able to be treated as a dignified human being whose worth is equal to that of others. This entails, at a minimum, protections against discrimination on the basis of race, sex, sexual orientation, religion, caste, ethnicity, or national origin. In work, being able to work as a human being, exercising practical reason and entering into meaning relationships of mutual recognition with other workers.

8. **Other Species**. Being able to live with concern for and in relation to animals, plants, and the world of nature.

9. **Play**. Being able to laugh, to play, to enjoy recreational activities.

10. **Control over One's Environment**. **A**. *Political*. Being able to participate effectively in political choices that govern one's life; having the right of political participation, protections of free speech and association. **B**. *Material*. Being able to hold property (both land and moveable goods), not just formally but in terms of real opportunity; and having property rights on an equal basis with others; having the right to seek employment on an equal basis with others; having the freedom from unwarranted search and seizure.

Nussbaum argues that, similar to John Rawls' (1999) list of primary goods, these capabilities can be used to form the moral basis of constitutional guarantees. Although the items on the list are all separate and necessary, it is important to also acknowledge that they are related and can work to influence one another. Like Rawls, Nussbaum's formulation assumes the existence of the constitutionally democratic state to enforce such guarantees.

Nussbaum identifies the items on the list as combined capabilities, drawing distinctions between *basic capabilities* ("the innate equipment of individuals that is the necessary basis for development of more advanced capabilities"), *internal capabilities* ("developed states of the person herself that are, so far as the person herself is concerned,

sufficient conditions for the exercise of requisite functions"), and *combined capabilities* (Nussbaum, 2000, p.84). Combined capabilities include both internal capabilities and environmental conditions (referring to one's social, political, economic, and cultural surroundings) that permit the exercise of such internal capabilities and other functions.

Finally, Nussbaum argues that the list of human capabilities as social goals closely approximates goals of human equality, based on the fact that, historically, access to these capabilities has often been restricted on the basis of class, race, religion, and sex.

Nussbaum compares her theory of capabilities to two other "standards" often used to assess development and issues of justice: the GNP and preference driven welfarism.[6] Nussbaum sees the GNP as an inadequate measure of quality of life, despite its almost monopolistic and universal use by politicians and economists around the world to assess "how we are doing." The GNP serves as both a standard and a field for comparison between nations, however, it offers nothing to the essential questions of distribution of wealth and income, not to mention how resources are being spent. While an economist may see an increased GNP as a sure sign of improved conditions within a country, Nussbaum argues that we need far more accurate and in depth measures of how increased economic productivity is affecting the lives of the people - all people - within the respective state.

Although Nussbaum's theory is essentially an argument in political philosophy, its actions and outcomes take place in the realm of political and economic development. Unlike some of the other theories of justice she discusses, her capabilities approach could theoretically occur: it is possible (though difficult) to create institutions and governments

that provide the opportunities for individuals to choose the capabilities she is promoting.

Indeed, there are many programs and institutions that are currently seeking to promote at

least some of Nussbaum's capabilities: development agencies are actively working to

bring about education, health care, economic opportunities, and political power to people

who have traditionally been denied such things by their governments or fellow citizens,

and these "goods" provide much of the base that Nussbaum sees as necessary for human

capabilities to be realized.

Sen and Nussbaum provide a theoretical framework from which to understand the

relationships between development and human rights. Their theories raise many

important questions about the process and goals of development, provide us with new

measures to evaluate quality of life, and challenge us to find new ways to think about

human flourishing. However, their theories remain decidedly individualistic, claiming,

and then justifying, the *individual* as the unit of analysis and operation, and questioning

the value of *community* in any way that is ulterior to individual flourishing.[7] Both are

clear that their focus is aimed at capabilities and freedoms for individuals, and give

reasons for such a focus. While their reasons are well presented, they reflect an

unexamined ideological bias that strengthening one individual's obligation to another

necessarily restricts that individual's choices and capabilities. I believe that these

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[6] Nussbaum calls this approach "welfarism" in her book, but "utilitarianism" in other writings. It is important to note that this approach, when put into practice, is susceptible to classic critiques of utility as a base for justice in addition to the critiques that Nussbaum discusses.

[7] For example, in her book *Women and Development: The Capabilities Approach*, Nussbaum claims: "The capabilities are sought for each and every person, not…for groups or families or states or other corporate bodies. Such bodies may be extremely important in promoting human capabilities, and in this way they may deservedly gain our support: but it is because of what they do for people that they are so worthy, and the ultimate political goal is always the promotion of the capabilities of *each person*."

underlying assumptions about the relationships between individuals and their communities inform an inadequate view of human functioning and development

Sen and Nussbaum both focus on the individual as the "unit" of development, and do so for a specific reason. Sen states that his focus on individual freedoms comes from the violence and terror of "communalism" he witnessed in his native country of India. This communalism refers to religious groupings mobilized by corrupt Islamic and Hindu leaders to capture and control resources in newly independent India and Pakistan. Sen's notion of "community" as religious and coercive in nature is particularly South Asian concept, not widely shared in the scholarly work on community in the rest of the world (Arensberg & Kimball, 1965; Bauman, 2001; Redfield, 1971; Tonnies, 1963). Sen's assertion that seeking to develop "communities" will lead to community violence makes no more sense than asserting that developing and equipping individuals will cause them to harm one other. It is a possibility, perhaps, but not a prescription nor even a likelihood.

Nussbaum's argument against the promotion and development of communities at the cost of individuals is a little bit more difficult to contend with. Nussbaum claims that while communities are important, they are important only to the extent that they serve the needs of individual community members. Nussbaum is wary of "obligation" to community, because obligation often falls to weaker or disadvantaged (physically, economically, or socially) members of the community and can become an excuse for the exploitation of the weaker members (Nussbaum's specific concern is that obligation will fall on women).

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The assumption that governments or institutions are capable of providing adequate resources for human development without the involvement of community represents an overestimation of the potential of institutions and an underestimation of the importance of community. Furthermore, both of these commitments to preferencing individual interests over those of "communities" come from a misconception of the nature of individual and community relationships. These ideas of community and individual rights, particularly in the way that they conflict, originate in Western political philosophy rooted in the ideas of Hobbes and Locke, who understand an individual's freedom to be in conflict with the freedom of the people around them, and that the way to reconcile those conflicts is to gain individual consent to subjugation of particular laws deemed to protect the individual. Individuals have interest in consenting to such laws because they restrict others to the same extent that they themselves are restricted. "Freedom," is maximized and protected when the proper balance of individual and community interests has been achieved. Most political battles today center around discussions over the extent to which individual rights and freedoms may be restricted, not around whether this conception that individual rights and collective rights are always in conflict.

Current discourse on individual and collective relationships tends to understand the two to be on either ends of a continuum, with individual interest on one end and collective interest on the other. The task, then, is not to reconcile the two, but to find the correct balance of individual and collective interests. Furthermore, current discourse envisions the balance to depend on extenuating factors, including economic resources, social opportunities, and personal capabilities of the individual, along with size and

location of the community. Individuals who have fewer resources, opportunities and

capabilities have more need of collectivity and therefore must submit to community

interests more readily and completely than others with more resources.

This view is echoed by Stiglitz (2002), who argues that "social capital" (networks

of trust, obligation, and reciprocity) is useful and important only where the market

function is inadequate. In more developed and economically advanced societies, social

fabric is, at least in part, replaced and held together by economic exchange. According to

Stiglitz (2002), social and economic capital (participation in the economic system) links

individuals together in such a way that they have less need for human and collective

relationships - as individuals once relied on others to meet their needs, they may now rely

on the system.

However, we know from current dilemmas as well and historic experiences, that

individuals, families, and institutions are not sufficient to maintain human functioning.

This is not to say that families and institutions do not have important roles to play, but

rather that they alone are not enough. Communities are essential social structures that

provide the enabling framework for interactions between individuals and families and

institutions. They are the arenas in which ideas and concepts such as self-worth,

meaning, aspirations, and ethics are negotiated and made compelling. In the words of

Cornel West (2001), "Where there is not vital community to hold up precious ethical and

religious ideals, there can be no coming to moral commitment – only personal

accomplishment is applauded" (p. 37). Communities are the primary unit of socialization

through which culture and identity are transmitted and adapted. The "practice" of

community is the primary incubator for networks of trust and reciprocity that

professionals in a wide variety of fields have come to emphasize as the key to well-functioning societies. Indeed "obligation" seems to have been identified as the missing link in creating the behavioral change (whether it be behavior of individuals or institutions) necessary to adequately address issues of poverty, environmental degradation and failing democratic processes.

While these calls for social responsibility are well-accepted (at least at a rhetorical level), the lack of communal fabric in virtually any developed-world institution means that the calls have gone unanswered, and systems that promote *individual* development prevail. These institutions and their values inform international development, thereby propagating sociopolitical structures that are increasingly recognized as inadequate to address the lived experiences of most of the world's people. Furthermore, the conceptualization of the individual/community conflict that underlies most of these institutions and their practices is not universal. Indeed, people around the world think differently about the relationships between individual and collective interests, and the importance of community.

In the interest of challenging this ideological assumption that informs even the most cutting edge development theory, I will examine an educational development project with indigenous people in Ecuador. The goal of this analysis is to understand the experiences of people involved in a development process, how and why they value the opportunity for education, and how their interpretation of individual and community relationships informs their lives and goals for development.

CHAPTER III

DEVELOPMENT IN ECUADOR

As development approaches abandoned the trickle-down model of economic

growth and began to target impoverished or otherwise marginalized sectors of society,

programs focused on indigenous peoples grew throughout Latin America. At the time

that the United Nations declared 1995-2004 the "International Decade for Indigenous

Peoples," approximately 40 million indigenous peoples were living in Latin America.

These people represent an enormous amount of cultural diversity with over 400 distinct

tribes speaking equally as many languages. Despite the heterogeneity of these groups,

experiences of poverty, social exclusion, and a long history of oppression are common to

most indigenous people around the globe. According to Partridge and Uquillas (1996),

> The extreme impoverishment of the indigenous population, characterized by poor
> health, disease, hunger, malnourishment, illiteracy, degraded natural resource
> base, poor housing, unemployment and the lack of access to basic services such as
> water, sewage, and electricity, is largely due to long-standing processes of
> domination, exploitation, and discrimination. (p.4)

Indigenous peoples have typically dealt with these circumstances either by

acculturating or forming pockets of isolation. In the first strategy, survival requires

renouncing cultural identity and practices in order to blend with the dominant society. In

the second, survival depends on isolation which often results in further marginalization

(Partridge & Uquillas, 1996). Recently, however, indigenous people have begun to

confront the very governments that help perpetuate their marginalization and have

demanded increased recognition and representation, access to natural resources, bilingual

education, and better social conditions. The assertion of these demands typically coincides with grassroots activity that relies on ethnic identity and solidarity. These activities are often termed "ethnodevelopment," defined as "those processes which are defined by and controlled by the indigenous people themselves as they seek better lives for their communities in the face of increasing poverty and social disintegration." (Partridge & Uquillas, 1996, p.7)

Although Ecuador has received less attention from scholars and activists than most other South American countries (Dash, 1997), it represents an integral part of the ethnodevelopment movement. Despite dire conditions, indigenous peoples in Ecuador maintain strong social organization and have managed to stage several peaceful uprisings in the last 15 years. The uprisings rely on a system of community organizations linked by second-tier organizations that feed national organizations, all of which draw strength from a commitment to indigenous cultures, values, and identities. Through these uprisings, the indigenous peoples have been able to obtain increased political recognition, representation, and power.

Approximately 30 percent of Ecuador's population is either indigenous or Afro-Ecuadorian. The conditions of Ecuador's indigenous people are similar to those of other Latin American indigenous peoples noted above – approximately 80 percent of indigenous children live in households with income below the poverty line ($28/month) and 43 percent of indigenous people older than 14 are illiterate (Uquillas & Van Nieuwkoop, 2003). These conditions are rooted in a long history of marginalization and oppression. Conquered by the Spanish in the 16th century, most of the Quichuan people of the highlands worked as service-tenure laborers on Spanish haciendas from the 17th

century well into the 1950s and 60s. With much pressure from the Indigenous Ecuadorian Federation (FEI), in 1964 the government passed the Agrarian Reform Act abolishing service tenure and granting property rights to former service tenure workers. The reform act promised more than it delivered however: to illustrate, in the region of Chimborazo only 3 percent of the land was transferred to the indigenous peasants in the seven years following the reform, and several other resources (firewood, water) that had been available as a result of working on the haciendas were restricted (Korovkin, 2001).

Despite the economic loss, the political organization and mobilization accomplished by the indigenous people involved in FEI during the negotiations for the Agrarian Reform Act lay the groundwork for further, more successful political activity. Between 1964 and 1970, more than 100 Chimborazo communities legalized their status as communes, illustrating a deep commitment to maintaining indigenous values and traditions (Korovkin, 2001). The communal nature characteristic of Chimborazo's indigenous peoples persisted through the colonization and hacienda system eras and continued to be an essential source of indigenous power. Additionally, the leaders of the indigenous movement began to access more external support, especially from the Catholic Church. Under the leadership of Bishop Leonidas Proano, the church was extremely important throughout the Chimborazo region in helping the indigenous people access legal, economic, and political support.

With the help of the church, community organizations came together to form provincial and regional indigenous federations - Ecuador Runacunapac Riccharimui (ECUARUNARI) and Movimiento Indigena de Chimborazo (MICH). (Korovkin, 1997). Today, there are about 2,500 grassroots indigenous organizations and about 250

provinical and regional federations (Uquillas & Van Nieuwkoop, 2003). (See Table 1 for description and structure of indigenous organizations). The role of these organizations continues to be important, not only for local activity, but also for gaining political power within the national and provencial governments. By working through local community organizations, CONAIE (Ecuador's national organization of indigenous people) was able to organize 150,000 to 200,000 indigenous people (roughly 70% of Chimborazo's indigenous population) to participate in an uprising in June of 1990 (Korovkin, 1997; Selverston, 1994).

According to Selverston (1994), the uprising, "nearly paralyzed the country for over a week. Main access roads were blocked, markets boycotted, water supplies were cut off to urban areas…" (p.140). The uprising was successful in forcing the national government to negotiate with the indigenous people and listen to their demands. Among the requests were access to land, increased supply of drinking and irrigation water, funding and recognition of bilingual education, creation of credit agencies to be controlled by the indigenous organizations, and an amendment to the Ecuadorian constitution to declare Ecuador a multinational and multicultural state.

Table 1

Structure of Indigenous Organizations in Ecuador

Type	Example	Description
Community Organization	COICE (Organization in Chimborazo province)	Organization composed of indigenous community members. It is located in a specific community and provides structure and regulation for community life.
Second-tier Organization	MICH (Movemiento Indigenía de Chimorazo)	Organization composed of representatives from community organizations in the province of Chimborazo. MICH provides resources and guidance to community organizations, and links them to national organizations such as CONAIE
National Organization	CONAIE (Confederacion de Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador)	Organization composed of representatives from second level organizations throughout Ecuador that works to strengthen indigenous organizations and provide support for specific indigenous interests such as territory and water rights. CONAIE is independent of independent of political parties, or any state, foreign or religious institutions.

In order to aid indigenous development in Ecuador, the Ecuadorian government formed PRODEPINE (Project for the Development of Indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian Peoples in Ecuador) in 1998.[8] PRODEPINE is involved in a number of development projects throughout the Andes, including programs to strengthen regional and national organizations, regulate land and water rights, and develop locally accessible financial institutions. Additionally, PRODEPINE recognized education as an essential component in accomplishing their mission of strengthening the social and human capital of the indigenous and afro-Ecuadorian people. Indigenous people have historically been excluded from the educational system because of language barriers, racial discrimination, and a lack of the financial resources required to participate in the formal education system (Partridge, 2004). Gaining access to social and material resources to finance secondary and university education is a top priority identified by the indigenous people themselves and a number of development agencies throughout the world.

Between 1998 and 2002, PRODEPINE provided over 3,000 grants for indigenous and afro-Ecuadorian people to attend high school, university, or post-graduate studies. Grant money was made available by PRODEPINE to pay for the students' enrollment fees, materials, and transportation. Students were able to attend school via one of three modalities: "presencial," in which students studied full-time, "semi-presencial," in which students lived in their home communities and traveled to school once or twice a week, and "a distancia," in which students studied from their home communities via radio or television and traveled to school only occasionally. Students were nominated by the

[8] PRODEPINE served the highland Quichua, by far the largest indigenous group, but also twelve other smaller indigenous groups – Awa, Chachi, Cofán, Epera, Huancavicas, Huao, Manteños, Punaes, Secoya, Siona, Shuar, Tsáchilas – spread throughout the Amazonian and Coastal Lowlands.

organizations representing their communities and were selected by a PRODEPINE

committee composed of PRODEPINE employees and leaders of regional and cantonal

organizations.

Although the afro-Ecuadorian and indigenous students who participated in the

PRODEPINE grant program identified many important successes of the program, it was

discontinued in 2002 due to the high drop-out rate (almost 50%) of the students. In

response to the discontinuation of the program, and in order to better understand its

benefits and limitations, a team of 5 graduate students from Vanderbilt University in the

United States and FLACSO[9] of Ecuador conducted interviews with 80 grant recipients in

indigenous communities during the summer of 2004 (Partridge, 2004). Based on the

interviews, many important conclusions were drawn and suggestions made for the

continuation of the program.

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[9] Facultad Latinoamerica de Ciencias Sociales is a University System created in 1957 by UNESCO in order
to promote the study of Social Sciences throughout Latin America. FLACSO has University branches in
Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Costa Rica, Cuba, Chile, Ecuador, Honduras, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua,
Panama, Dominican Republic, and Suriname.

CHAPTER IV

METHODOLOGY

PRODEPINE had a substantial amount of quantitative data, which they used to

interpret the impact of the granting program. Such data included the names and

communities of people who had received grants, as well as the schools they attended,

how many grade levels they finished in school, and whether they studied presencial,

semi-presencial, or a distancia. Table 1 summarizes the PRODEPINE data

(PRODEPINE, 2002).

Table 2

PRODEPINE Educational Grant Program Enrollment Summary

	Total Grants	Graduate	In- Progress	Total Retained	Total Withdrawn
High School	1655	498	357	855	800
(a) Indigenous	1378	274	275	685	694
(b) Afro-Ecua	276	88	82	170	23
University	1351	49	505	554	796
(a) Indigenous	1147	35	134	169	645
(b) Afro-Ecua	193	14	40	54	139
(c) Mestizo	11	0	2	2	9
Post Graduate	66	3	19	22	44
(a) Indigenous	57	3	18	21	32
(b) Afro-Ecua	6	0	1	1	5
(c) Mestizo	3	0	0	0	3
Totals	3072	550	881	1431	1640

While the data were able to tell us basic information about the program, they were able to tell us nothing about the education experience of the grant recipients, what they valued about the program, or their reasons for finishing or discontinuing their schooling. Although we could have used surveys or questionnaires to try to gain this information, information such as this is most accurately captured with more qualitative methods such as interviewing (Maxwell, 1996).

According to Maxwell (1996), qualitative research excels at providing understanding of a) meanings of events, situations, and actions in which participants are involved, b) the particular context in which participants act, c) unanticipated phenomena, d) understanding the process by which events take place, and e) developing causal explanations, all of which were goals of this study. We decided that conducting qualitative semi-structured interviews would yield the most useful and informative data. Rather than using a formal interview instrument, the interview schedule (see appendix A) suggested a number of topics to which participants were invited to respond. Some of the questions asked for basic information (age, gender, place of birth, school attended, level completed, employment status), but most of the questions were designed to "elicit the views of research participants, including their classificatory systems, analytical frameworks, value structures and explanatory ideas and theories, many of which may be derived from Indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian cultures." (Partridge, 2003) These questions included topics such as whether the participant valued his or her educational experience and why, whether that participant found their educational experience to be culturally appropriate, and how specific topics such as gender, values, and indigenous life were addressed in the educational system.

Beginning with a list of grant recipients provided by PRODEPINE, we used snowball sampling techniques in order to identify and recruit the participants in our study. Snowball sampling is particularly useful when studying "small, bounded or difficult to find populations," because it takes advantage of pre-existing social networks and relationships of trust (Bernard, 1994, p.97). Because our population was small and bounded, and because we were seeking to gain entré into communities of people that are typically distrustful of outsiders, relying on networks and relationships was essential to the success of our research.

We began by interviewing the grant recipients that we had ready access to: people whose places of work were in Riobamba, people who worked for indigenous organizations, and people whose correct addresses were provided on the list from PRODEPINE. At the end of each interview, we asked the participant if they knew of anyone else who had received an educational grant from PRODEPINE. In general, people were able to name 3 or 4 others who had received grants, and give us information as to where they lived, worked, or how to contact with them. Additionally, we met with the director of MICH (Movimiento Indigenia del Chimborazo - a second level organization that served as a liaison between the community organizations in the Chimborazo province and CONAIE), and asked him to provide us with a letter approving our study and issuing his support. To avoid potential biasing of the sample, we did not have MICH or any community organizations put us into contact with individuals to be interviewed; rather, we relied on the letter of approval when any questions as to the legitimacy of our activities arose.

Over the course of eight weeks, five researchers (3 American students and 2 Ecuador students) visited 14 communities in the Chimborazo and Tungurahua provinces. We traveled to each community by bus and typically located potential participants by going into the first business, local government office, or other public institution we found and asking for the people whose names we had been given by previous participants. We explained our project, and explained that we were unaffiliated with PRODEPINE, the government of Ecuador, or any other outside organization other than our universities. We said that we had been referred to interview the person we were inquiring about in a previous interview, and provided our letter of approval from MICH when necessary.

One of my most distinctive experiences occurred when a community member bent down in the dirt and drew a map with his finger, indicating where one of the people we were looking for lived. Luckily, our sometimes-present guide, Gonzalo, happened to be accompanying us that day and understood how to read such a map.

In each case, once we found the person we wanted to interview, we again described our project, gained consent from the participant, and began the interview. All interviews were conducted in Spanish, tape recorded, and generally took about an hour. There were two interviewers present at each interview – one person to ask questions and tape record the interview, and one person to take notes on the non-verbal aspects of the interview – the surroundings, body language, dress – any ethnographic clues that might provide a fuller understanding of the situation. We talked with farmers, teachers, government officials, cobblers, radio station employees, and people who had no employment but always managed to be working furiously. Parents, children, brothers, sisters, young and old – all provided us with their accounts of their education experiences

with the PRODEPINE program. In addition to conducting interviews, researchers also participated in a number of community events (parades, celebrations, religious festivals) in surrounding towns and villages.

After we had visited the communities, we had reached everyone we could through snowball sampling, yet we still felt that more interviews would be beneficial. Knowing that radio is an important form of communication in the indigenous community (particularly in rural areas), we wrote a radio announcement requesting that any interested person who had received a PRODEPINE grant for educational purposes come to the Casa Indigenía (an indigenous community center in Riobamba) on Saturday (market day) to be interviewed. The turnout from the radio announcement surpassed our expectations – over 20 people came to be interviewed and offer their feedback on the education program. Although this strategy is somewhat risky with regard to representative sampling, the feedback we gathered was varied in content and corroborated much of the data we had from previous interviews. This, along with the fact that we ended up with a relatively balanced sample (Bernard, 1994) in terms of gender, age, rural/urban, graduates/non-graduates, and school attended, gave us confidence that our sample was adequate and representative.

After interviews were complete, each researcher listened to all of their interviews and took detailed notes. We then came together to discuss our findings and identify common themes. These were presented to faculty members at FLACSO and a number of indigenous community leaders. The focus of our preliminary analysis presented in Ecuador was the evaluation of the educational program and the grant recipients' experiences relevant to that specific program. At the end of our presentation, we asked

the FLACSO faculty and the indigenous leaders for feedback on our findings. The

feedback was generally positive and upheld our findings. Where there were

disagreements or inconsistencies, we incorporated this feedback into our final report.

Upon returning to the United States, I carried out a textual analysis of the transcribed

interviews to further explore the indigenous conception of community. Interviews were

transcribed by native Ecuadorian Spanish speakers in the four weeks after our interviews

were complete. Though we had approximately 80 interviews from the Sierra, I chose to

analyze only the interviews at which I was present, approximately 20 interviews. I

thought it was important to analyze only those interviews whose context I was familiar

with, and whose conversations I had heard.

Using a grounded theory approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), I read the interviews for

themes around indigenous conceptualizations of community, relying on the data to

inform the creation of concepts, categories, and potentially, new theories (Miles &

Huberman, 1994). I read the interview data for themes in participant responses that

cohered because they dealt with the same topic. Topics were then divided into several

subtopics based on re-occurring themes within the larger topics. The creation of sub-

topics allows for more in-depth analysis and more complex understandings and

interpretations of each particular theme (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Schensul, Schensul,

& LeCompte, 1999). Each of the themes and sub-themes were given a code, and all

codes compiled in a code book (Appendix A). Initial topics, sub-topics, and codes were

discussed with Bill Partridge, the Principal Investigator for the PRODEPINE Evaluation

research project. VanHooser and Partridge worked to provide clear definitions for each

code, and to ensure that all codes fit into a structure, and "relate to or are distinct from each other in meaningful, study-important ways" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 65).

Based on my interviews, I developed three major themes:

- Community (with sub-themes: function, structures, representations, value)

- Indigenous (with sub-themes: culture, development, symbols)

- Relationships (with sub-themes: individual, family, community, and institution)

Once the codes were developed, I coded all 20 interviews using Atlas-ti software, a program that allows line-by-line coding and overlapping codes (See Appendix B – Coded Interview). This type of program is useful in exploratory research, because the ability to give multiple codes to a particular phrase or participant response aids in more comprehensive and robust data interpretation. After coding the data, I examined the content of each coding category and the interactions between the codes to generate my findings.

CHAPTER V

FINDINGS

The PRODEPINE education program is important to current development

theories such as the Sen and Nussbaum's because it represents an institutional

commitment to creating opportunities for individuals to improve their capabilities.

Nussbaum cites education as a capability in and of itself, and a means by which to

accomplish other capabilities. The PRODEPINE program provided economic and social

resources for individuals in the indigenous communities to attain an education (thereby

increasing their capability *for senses, imagination, and thought*, and *control over one's

environment*, among other things). Additionally, many aspects of the program curriculum

also facilitated opportunities to improve an individual's family planning, health,

knowledge about sustainable development.

Furthermore, the value that people placed on their educational experience

supports a Sen/Nussbaum orientation to development – although many people identified

employment and poverty alleviation as an expected outcome of educational development,

they also noted that there were many benefits to gaining an education beyond the

possibility of financial gain. There is no doubt that these opportunities were appreciated

by the people who participated. Without exception, people said "vale la pena" ("it was

worth it") when asked to sum up their educational experience. The grants were seen by

all as an opportunity for which they were incredibly grateful. One of the biggest

complaints about the program was that it was not extended to *every* member of the

community. For people who experience a great number of restrictions on their "capabilities," the opportunity to participate in the formal educational system was invaluable.

Educational Experience

Some of the educational experiences reported by the grant recipients varied widely depending on the students themselves, the families and communities they came from, and the schools they attended. There were, however, several reoccurring themes, and these will be reported here.

Particularly for the people we interviewed from rural areas, the shock of attending school in the city was often overwhelming. Transportation and lodging costs, time spent traveling and away from families, communities, and work, and the bureaucratic nature of city life proved to be unanticipated burdens of attending school. Language barriers (Spanish is a second language, learned by way of radio programs, for most of Ecuador's indigenous people), proved to be an additional challenge.

Racism, pace of life, poverty, and inexperience with bureaucracy were all factors that people noted as barriers to a positive educational experience. Relaying the experiences of prejudice based on being poor and indigenous, one man described his experience as such:

> *"Here in Ecuador there are the middle class and the very poor and we were considered the latter. The teachers were middle class and others were from the very rich, and because of this, it isn't important to them that the students prepare, that they work collectively, or that they are organized in order to develop the country. Rather, they cared about the technical things - between the academics and as professors how to get paid."*

Furthermore, grant recipients often felt that their way of life was misunderstood or misrepresented by the formal education system. One grant described a class lesson in which the teacher talked about organized living and "civilization" as a Greco-Roman invention:

> *"In Quito, when the professor of political science came to give classes about civilization, what he shared in his lecture was about Greece and Rome – he told how they started to form the city, not as in Ecuador, where the people that live in the jungle, that live in the mountains, in the Andes, they aren't organized, they lived dispersed. To my knowledge, this isn't so – we live more organized than in the city – for me, this professor was ignorant – he didn't know our world."*

Although dominant stereotypes throughout Ecuador portray the indigenous people as disorganized and primitive, and we can speculate that these stereotypes are what informed the teacher's assertion, the lesson must have come as a shock to the student whose knowledge of civilization runs quite contrary. The Incan civilization into which the Quichuan people were integrated in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries was one of the largest in the world - a complex society with sophisticated culture. At its peak, the Incan Empire stretched for almost 3,000 miles along the Andes from the southern tip of Colombia to central Chile, had an elaborate economy involving over 6 million people, monumental architecture, and made important social contributions that are studied throughout the world today (Gerlach, 2003). Though the Incans were defeated by the Spanish, the legacy of the Incan civilization is celebrated today through a number of festivals and traditions practiced by the indigenous people in Ecuador. Furthermore, many of the patterns of social and political organization followed by indigenous communities originated long before the Spanish conquest and have persevered to the present. The teacher's suggestion that civilization came from Europe

offended not only the student's current experience with indigenous life in the Sierra, but also his knowledge of Incan history.

Due to these experiences and others like them, grant recipients reported that they felt the community organizations and PRODEPINE should have done more to prepare them for entry into the higher education system. The skills and knowledge required to navigate these institutions proved to be quite different from the students' experiences in their primary schools, which were typically located in their communities, and worked to accommodate the demands of community life. Additionally, they expressed the need for schools to incorporate more accurate and inclusive understandings of history, culture, and indigenous ways of life.

Conversely, in situations were the people felt that education was an exchange – an opportunity to gain new knowledge that would help them attain goals that fit with their own ways of life, or an opportunity to share their lifestyle and values with others – new experiences were welcomed and desired. Although there were some people who voiced interests in having an "indigenous university" where only indigenous students could learn and interact, most students enjoyed the opportunity to encounter people outside their community and families. One of the most frequently noted "best experiences" of the grant program was the opportunity to encounter and relate with people. Explaining the nature and value of sharing experiences with new people from different cultures through the process of education, one grant recipient noted,

> *"Well, we have had the principle of collective organization that we have come sharing from the indigenous culture…in Ecuador we have organizations from the local level to the national level, I mean in the cantons and the provinces, and later in the national level. Between the indigenous as well there is diversity of ethnicities, we have national exchanges, there we share the reality. Each society*

> *has its reality, necessities, culture, this is how we share experiences, so we help…we apply our principles."*

Though they are unified though a single organization (CONAIE), thirteen tribes comprise

Ecuador's indigenous population (see footnote 8). The opportunity to interact with

people from different indigenous cultures, as well as mestizo people was an important

aspect of this participant's educational experience.

Some students reported that the university was very accommodating, and, in fact,

allowed them to develop and strengthen their culture and organizations.

In the words of one participant:

> *"…thanks to the University Salesiana we have had the opportunity of cultural rehabilitation in order to not lose our culture…University Salesiana had taught us much about how to continue fighting for sustainable development of the indigenous people."*

The indigenous people repeatedly stressed the importance of having learning experiences

that were applicable to their own lives and allowed them to share their values and culture.

In general, students identified the subjects they learned in school to be necessary for all

people, whether they be indigenous or not. Reading, arithmetic, health, use of technology

and computers were seen as important skills that needed to be acquired in order to

continue to grow and interact in the developing world:

> *"That which I have learned, I am applying…I have learned to write, speak, and read with more agility than before…the same with mathematics and accounting, and I have more knowledge to be able to help our organization."*

The aspects of education that indigenous people saw as conflicting were those

that failed to recognize their cultural values and ways of life. In asking for "cultural

relevance," they weren't necessarily referring to skill sets so much as they were to

principles: values such as working collectively, fostering community engagement, and

seeking alternative means of development. Education that provided indigenous people with necessary skills but allowed them to maintain their culture was much desired. In particular, the discord between the individualistic learning style that is advocated by teachers and supported by text books as opposed to collective projects and lifestyles was often reported:

> *"Well, the books are made by educated people and we (indigenous people) were left out. Of course, they didn't speak much of the culture and, as leaders, we had demanded that there was participation in the culture and the values of our communities. However, the books are made with the ideology of other, better educated people, but not with cultural value, the history of how the people lived."*

In the most unfortunate cases, there were times when the difference between their values and cultural practices and the pressure of the mestizo world were irreconcilable. In these instances, students often discontinued their education and returned to their communities and families.

Value of the Grant

For every participant we interviewed, the opportunity to get an education was highly valued. Often, people went through extreme measures to find ways to pay for their education. One man recalls his struggle to attend school before he received his grant from PRODEPINE:

> *"I was born as an indigenous person who didn't have anything. I sold my burro in order to buy my school supplies, and I had a lamb. I was counting from cent to cent in order to make a sucre, so with these tokens, I didn't eat, I didn't eat lunch, I didn't eat, I didn't eat lunch, I didn't have anything for bread...but carrying on, studying, thinking in spite of these circumstances, at times selling my sheep or going to a patron..."*

Another man tells of his current commitment to education, and how he is continuing to go to school, even though his grant from PRODEPINE had been discontinued:

"I acquired a grant from PRODEPINE that helped me until the 5th course, but during the 6th course they stopped paying me. It is necessary to continue studying, so I applied for a loan from FEPP ((Fondo Ecuatoriano Populorum Progreso). I pay 12%, but this is difficult because I am very poor."

People who received grants emphasized how necessary the provision of economic resources was to their schooling experience:

"Education is important and the people must learn quickly when they can study something, anything – the people who don't want to learn always stay behind things. The grants were very important because we didn't have money for the costs. We don't want charity, but we do need support. For me it has helped to be able to study."

Without a doubt, the most common criticism of the PRODEPINE program was that it was not available to more people:

"…how great it would be if all the men and women were educated! Lamentably, PRODEPINE gave all their grants and many people remain without access to studies…"

Again and again, people voiced their desires for more opportunity and resources to access higher education.

The proclaimed purpose of "education" in much of the world is that of economic advancement, and several of the grant recipients emphasized the importance of education for improving their economic situation. Despite the hope of economic advancement, however, most of the grant recipients weren't better off financially after they attended school. It wasn't that they were unprepared when they finished their education, but rather that there were no jobs available. The lack of jobs and burden of poverty was something that numerous people mentioned during their interviews, however, even those who were most concerned valued education for reasons other than economic advancement. Indeed, most of the significance assigned to education found its value in something other than economic resources. One grant recipient said,

"The experience is the most important. We had such an experience – education opened our eyes to a political and global world."

The new experiences and relationships gained by the students were an important part of growing and learning about the world. Individuals brought their experiences back to their communities and families in order to share the knowledge they had acquired:

"I come from COICE...and from my point of view, the grants are very important. At 19 years of age, I was lacking the resources to study. (During the grant) we shared experiences and improved our livestock in Cayambe and other provinces. COICE and PRODEPINE have opened the way for us. I believe that they can help us to strengthen our knowledge and why not go to other countries in order to see the technology that could be applied here in our country. (Now that the grants have been discontinued) I will continue advancing although it will be with my resources. However, I would like for them to continue helping the poor."

This commitment to the continued development of indigenous communities and indigenous culture was one of the most notable themes present in the interviews we gathered. Nearly all aspects of the education program and its benefits or failures were filtered through the lens of "community." Individuals did note personal obstacles and personal gains, however even these were typically tied back into community experience. For example, one of the most often-cited reasons for dropping out of school was that the student needed more time or resources to contribute to his or her family or community. Likewise, individual achievements were noted, but even they were couched in the context of community and one's ability to contribute to it. When describing the best or most important aspects of their educational experience, the two most commonly cited aspects were gaining the skills to improve one's community organization, and forming relationships with other people and sharing in their experiences. Commitment to community organizations seemed to symbolize commitment to the communal culture and values that are essential to the indigenous way of life. In the words of one student,

"The important thing is that we do our duty with the community and that we don't lose the community organizations."

Furthermore, it seemed that given the opportunity to further one's own development or to maintain commitments to the community, individuals frequently chose the community. Explaining the difficulties she encountered while attending school, one woman said,

"the teachers didn't understand our commitment, didn't understand having a spouse, a family, a community responsibility..."

However, when asked what she would change, the woman asked that the teachers be more understanding and flexible, not that her relational commitments would be relieved. This woman, like many others, went on to say that the very reason that attending school was important to her was so that she could help improve her community and educate her children:

"...I have a little more knowledge to be able to help in our organizations, more than before. For my family, as a mother, really for me it (education) is very important because I can help my children."

It is important to reiterate that this woman (and many others like her) was given the opportunity to choose individual advancement and capability (in the form of education) and has chosen her community. While Nussbaum might argue that this woman is acting out of an ill-formed preference (an unreliable measure of one's self interest, for reasons discussed earlier) and that justice has been realized by providing the opportunity to choose, I would argue that Nussbaum's theory, by missing the importance of community, has missed an important goal of "human development." I believe that there is a communal aspect of "human development" that current development theory grossly underestimates and misunderstands. Not only are individuals essential to the

development of the community, but also, community is essential to the development of the individual. In a sense, the self is realized in the community as the community represents history, heritage, family, identity and a larger sense of groundedness. Although Nussbaum identifies the need for human relation with others in her capability "affiliation," this concept does not seem to adequately capture the experience or the values of the people in the Ecuadorian Andes. If people are choosing community and believing it to be valuable, it is essential to create institutions that, in promoting individual capabilities, provide spaces in which people can choose activities that will benefit both themselves and their communities.

      This commitment to community represents an aspect of the "development experience" of the people who participated in the grant program that would not be anticipated (or accommodated) by Sen and Nussbaum's theories of development. The understanding of the relationships between individual and community within the Indigenous-Ecuadorian culture is quite different from the neoliberal[10] conception of such, as evidenced in a number of ways. Rather than conceptualizing the individual and the collective at opposite ends of a spectrum, the indigenous people found the collective and the individual necessary to each other.

<center>Individual and Community in Development</center>

      The values identified and demonstrated by the indigenous communities call into question the traditional liberal-individualist view that an individual's rights and

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[10] Liberalism, in its most basic form, is the belief that humans are free and equal, and that any limitation of individual freedom stands in need of justification. Individuals are the basis of law and society, and social institutions exist to further the ends of individuals. More recent theories of political liberalism closely tie

development, expressed through their interests and autonomy, must be balanced and negotiated against the interests of the community. Rather, they seem to indicate that the interests of the individual and the interests of the community are essential to each other. For the people we interviewed, contribution to the community seemed to be an important measure of one's own skills and interests. Through the overwhelming commitment to the community organizations, individuals demonstrated that community and individual interests coincide more than they conflict, overlap more than they diverge. One person proclaimed,

> *"The students must not learn to think solely of the individual rather, it is necessary that we all come out ahead…that has more value than only to be one."*

Individuals viewed themselves as integral parts of the communities in which they lived, and valued service to the community as a measure of personal integrity.

However, it is important that this commitment to community is not construed as an altruistic commitment to serving and 'loving thy neighbor.' While there are certainly altruistic components to the relationships between individuals and their families and community, community involvement is valued because of its place in the long history of the indigenous people in Ecuador, and because history has demonstrated that the survival of community is essential to the well-being of individuals. Rather than viewing commitment to community as a burden impinging upon individual freedom, community provides identity, purpose, and political power. For the indigenous people in Ecuador, individual freedom is defended and practiced collectively.

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personal property rights, access to a free market economy, and limited state intervention to personal liberty. (Gaus & Courtland, 2003)

Community in Ecuador

Though there are myriad definitions of *community* and equally as many debates about the validity of each, for the purposes of this paper, I am referring to community as a group of people who rely on each other for social, economic, and informational exchange, and transactions in a locale or arena of activity (Arensberg & Kimball, 1965) are brought into contact with each other due to geographic proximity. This definition gains its validity from its practical use as well as its theoretical generalizability: During my time in Ecuador, every person I interviewed could identify their "community," and, in many ways, identified themselves by that community. Furthermore, "community" in Ecuador operates at a discursive level as well as a functional one (see Table 3 and Table 4 for summary). At the discursive level, the stories or narratives of "community" work to construct sociocultural understandings and meanings of individual and collective experiences. At the functional level, commitment to community is expressed and shared in a number of social practices and organizations, most notably the "<u>minga</u>" and "<u>organizaciones de base</u>," (local organizations).

Sociocultural Understandings of Community

Narratives, as discussed by Rappaport (1995) are the stories we use to define ourselves. They tell us "not only who we are but who we have been and who we can be" (Rappaport, 1995, p. 796). These narratives affect individuals by creating meaning and influencing emotion, memory, and identity, however they exist on many levels of analysis (individual, organizational, community) and all of these levels influence each other (Rappaport, 1995). For people who lack social, political, or economic power,

narratives that define their community, neighborhood, or culture are often negative and/or imposed. Confronting and reconstructing these narratives can result in transformative change within an individual or community because it allows the members to redefine themselves as valuable and see themselves as sources of potential action. Additionally, it calls into question the power inequalities and rule of dominant culture, often reframing the "problems" experienced by a given individual or community.

In Ecuador, as in most countries, indigenous communities have historically been robbed of their social, political, and economic power, and are often defined by the dominant culture as "backwards" or "primitive." These stereotypes are evident as early as the Spanish conquest and range from paternalistic to demonizing. Bartolomé de las Casas wrote that the indigenous people were "…most submissive, patient, peaceful, and virtuous…They neither possess nor desire to possess worldly wealth." (Quoted in Gerlach, p. 19). Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo, Spain's official court historian, had somewhat different interpretations, far more disparaging: He reported that the "Indians" were "naturally lazy and vicious, melancholic, cowardly, and in general a lying, shiftless people. They are idolatrous, libidinous, and commit sodomy. Their chief desire is to eat, drink, worship heathen idol…" (Quoted in Gerlach, p. 19) Today, few people would be as forthright in relaying their beliefs about the "nature" of indigenous people, however, these stereotypes persist and shape the ways in which indigenous people are often regarded. The psycho-social implications of such stigmatization can be tragic; however, the strengths of the indigenous peoples and communities work to mediate these conditions. The ability and opportunity for indigenous communities to explore their

culture, develop their story, and live out a positive identity can be a powerful and necessary tool to bring about much needed change.

According to Rappaport (1995), there exist three types of narratives that work to construct the experiences of individuals: Dominant cultural narratives, community narratives, and personal narratives. These three types of narratives can be "true" or "untrue," positive or negative, or constructive or harmful, and work together to form the identities and inform the behaviors of the people and communities who create, transmit and interact with them.

Dominant cultural narratives are most easily identified as stereotypes that are displayed in highly visible arenas such as political debates and public discourse, and are transmitted through major socializing institutions of culture (e.g. schools, churches, media). They are stories about persons, places, or things that contain consistent story lines across individuals and settings. These narratives are typically representative of the status quo, and work to frame our debates. For example, current debates in the United States surrounding immigration deal with topics such as the necessity of immigrants to the U.S. economic system, bases on which to grant legality, and methods for "protecting" borders. The framing of these debates depend on dominant cultural narratives that portray that United States as the most desirable home in the world, one that is full of opportunity and freedom. This framing sets the limits of the debates at "who gets to enjoy our opportunity and freedom, and how do they get to enjoy it?" rather than asking questions about why conditions in other countries are so poor, or how United States international policies create an emigration "push" from other countries.

Community narratives are descriptive and historical accounts that represent the collective knowledge and experience of a specific group of people. They are constructed collectively through social interactions and are granted legitimacy when they are shared by others in the community. Community narratives are identified through consistent themes that present themselves in personal stories expressed by individual community members.

Personal narratives represent the stories we tell ourselves about our "self." They shape how we think about ourselves, our world, our relationships, and the actions that we take.

Community narratives mediate dominant cultural narratives that are often oppressive. Rappaport (2000) states that dominant cultural narratives of marginalized groups are often narrow, negative, and other imposed. While these narratives do inform community narratives (Salzer, 1998; Rappaport, 1995), community narratives often also serve as a mediator of dominant cultural narratives. Community narratives are created collectively through shared stories and experiences of community members. Salzer (1998) notes two specific ways in which community narratives mediate between individuals and their communities and broader social narratives: *defending narratives* and *group enhancement stories*.

"Defending narratives are those narratives that are used to fend off perceived attacks or threats from the dominant culture." (Salzer, 1998, p. 578) In Ecuador, defending community narratives often worked by negating the validity of dominant cultural narratives or by criticizing dominant cultural values and practices. Specifically,

the individualist nature of the mestizo culture was identified repeatedly. Referring to the

people he encountered during his time at school, one man said,

> *"…the people don't know me, never invite me to meetings, to a <u>minga</u>, to a
> session, there isn't any collectivity in their work, knowledge, between the
> neighbors, no solidarity when there are problems*."

He contrasted this with his experience at home:

> "*in my community I am familiar with how we come together for whatever
> communal work, they invite us to the sessions, we are able to collaborate, we are
> able to organize ourselves*."

Another man noted the importance of indigenous values in bringing about success

for the indigenous people,

> *"The values, the principles that we conserved to help us and enable us to
> organize are these values: respect, honesty, transparency; these are our values.
> This is the indigenous movement, the way of CONAIE. We had these principles:
> 'Don't be lazy. Don't lie. Don't steal."*

Dominant cultural narratives about indigenous people in Ecuador often portray

them as backwards, stupid, and dependent. Poverty is attributed to a refusal to "advance"

– to abandon indigenous customs and ideas, not to mention indigenous language,

education, and medicine. Defending community narratives mediated these messages by

pointing out the aspects of mestizo society that are interpreted by the indigenous people

as unscrupulous and self-interested. This contrast allowed the indigenous people to

reinterpret the dominant cultural narratives as products of a society whose basic tenets

they distrusted.

> *"Group enhancement stories are narratives about good times, friendships, caring,*

helping, children, religion and community building activities." (Salzer, 1998, p. 578) In

Ecuador, group enhancement stories often involved celebrations and traditions of the

Quechan people that recalled their historical experience, as well as recent political activity and success.

Many references were made to parents, grandparents, and ancestors when defining the strengths of indigenous communities:

> *"This organization was made by our grandparents...and today, in their honor, we are fighting to maintain our culture and to struggle onward."*

Group enhancement stories involved conscious assertion of symbols and practices of indigenous culture as well. Most indigenous people still dress in traditional dress – ponchos, long hair, and black hats, the shape and decoration indicating the community from which its wearer originates. The symbolic importance of the poncho was noted by one grant recipient who said,

> *"I am dressed in a poncho and will always be dressed in a poncho. In the university, they marginalized me, but I have my own desires and my own culture to reassure me. The freedom of expression, of education, of health, of everything...I am indigenous and proud..."*

Narratives that addressed the unique nature of indigenous culture served to unite indigenous people and provide a positive identity. The necessity of "story telling" in the process of establishing positive identity has long been recognized by literary scholars, psychologists, and sociologists alike. It is now becoming equally important in the field of community development. It seems that the development of "our story" is as important to the health of a community as the creation of "my story" is to the wellness of an individual. Positive identity construction is an essential base for collective action and community building. According to Cerulo (1997), collectives "moved by identity…act rather than react…fight to expand freedom…(and) mobilize for choice."(p.393)

A pertinent example of the culture-identity-action triangle is exemplified by the previously discussed indigenous movement in Ecuador. Although the indigenous community continues to face much poverty and discrimination, the indigenous movement has become a force to be reckoned with and has forced the Ecuadorian government into taking some necessary steps on the road to providing equality for all its citizens. It is through certain cultural battles (rights to bilingual education, collective land-holding, and use of natural medicine) that the indigenous movement established itself as an effective political force gaining rights for the indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian communities, as well as influencing national and local politics and policy (Selverston, 1994).

Community Structures and Functions

Common sightings throughout communities in the sierra were buildings, sidewalks, and other community edifices neatly tattooed with the word "minga." According to Rowe (1946), the minga is a tradition of collective, community work dating from the Inca civilization. This tradition, which continues today, obligates every household in the community to participate in the construction or upkeep of collectively held resources such as bridges or irrigation systems. The minga can also be instituted to assemble labor for projects that involve personal property as well. However this process is highly regulated by expectations of reciprocity and labor exchange. Previously, failure to serve in the minga could result in monetary fines or even jail time. Today, the consequences are less severe, but the institution continues to play an important role in indigenous communities. For example, other components of the PRODEPINE project financed community mingas for community work such as irrigation systems,

greenhouses, health center construction, environmental protection and pasture improvement, among other things (World Bank, 2003). These collective activities serve to unite the communities, but also provide communities and individuals with the labor and resources necessary for daily life. Again, the survival of the individual is dependent on the individual's commitment to community. Moreover, the <u>minga</u> is infused with affective and symbolic significance – it is the indigenous way and to join it is to derive great satisfaction and praise.

The affective and symbolic features of the <u>minga</u> are the community organizations, a prominent structure in nearly every community we encountered. Community organizations, or "<u>organizaciones de base</u>," are voluntary organizations that function primarily at the community level, are comprised of community individuals, and are distinct (though often closely related) from local government organizations.

The community organizations are open to participation by any member of the community, however there is typically a core group of officials elected by the members of the organization who hold special office. Women are extremely active and play a large role in many organizations, though leadership roles are mostly held by men.

People who are involved in their community organizations tended to begin participating at a fairly young age and continue to contribute for a very long time. Many of the people we interviewed, especially in communities where employment opportunities were extremely limited, likened participation in community organizations to "employment," even though the participation was voluntary and unpaid. Giving a typical response to the question, "What did you do following your graduation or termination of your education?" one man responded:

"I don't have employment. I have two cows with a little bit of milk and with this I support myself. I continue working at the organization in order to develop and together to overcome poverty. I have 15 years as an organization leader."

It was not rare for people to be involved in more than one organization as well. Often the people we interviewed would be involved in a community organization and an organization representing their <u>canton</u> or <u>parroquia</u> (geographic entities that encompassed several communities), or a community organization and an organization that addressed a specific community interest (women's organization). Illustrating a common response in response to a question about her community involvement during her participation in the PRODEPINE program, one woman said,

"During the time that I was a grant recipient, I participated as leader of the women in the community of Santa Cruz, as secretary of the community and also I was responsible for the education of the <u>canton</u>."

In addition to the contribution made by community organizations to social capital *within* the communities, participation in overlapping organization forms a strong network of trust and reciprocity between communities as well.

The community organizations played many different and important roles within the communities they served. Although the precise role of the community organization varies from community to community, in general, the organizations served four major roles: resource distribution, development and dissemination of indigenous culture, providing social organization within the community, and as building blocks of the larger indigenous movement.

Resource Distribution

When outside resources, material or otherwise, enter a community, they usually come through the community organizations. The community organizations serve as a

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primary mechanism for attaining and distributing information, material resources, social connections, and power. How these resources are distributed relies heavily on the nature of the community organization. In general, most people seem to feel that the resources are distributed fairly (meaning they are shared evenly, though not always in the same modality). For example, when nominating individuals to receive the PRODEPINE grants, the community organizations typically nominated individuals who were already very active in the community and community organizations. Many of the individuals we interviewed reported working for their communities before, during, and after their time in the PRODEPINE program. This was felt by many to be entirely justified by their service, but there were also allegations of corruption and favoritism in the granting process. I heard several stories of community organization leaders nominating family members or close friends, and passing over more deserving members of the community.

Development and Dissemination of Culture

Extremely aware of the role of indigenous culture in both the positive identity formation of its community members and in the power of the indigenous movement, community organizations made great efforts to develop and protect the culture of their communities. Activities sponsored by the community organizations to promote culture included interviewing community members about traditional indigenous dress, food, medicines, and traditions; sponsoring parades and community celebrations; and teaching lessons and classes about "indigenous culture." I witnessed several parades and took part in three community celebrations. As a participant in the "Dia del Campo," sponsored by a community organization in Guano, I hiked to a small mountain community located on

the side of Chimborazo volcano where I ate a traditional meal of cuy[11] and chicha[12], watched traditional dances and listened to traditional music. Although the presence of a few other gringas[13] and I provided a fresh audience, it was clear that the day was produced for the education and enjoyment of the community itself. In the communities of Otavalo and San Juan, I was witness to community celebrations of Inty-Raymi, an Incan festival paying tribute to father sun and mother earth. On both occasions, traditional music, costumes, and dancing (accompanied by unending amounts of chicha) were shared by locals and visitors alike. Again, however, the primary purposes of the festivals were not entertainment of visitors, attraction of tourists, or production of income. Rather, the gatherings were held to celebrate and preserve Quichuan beliefs, values, and traditions.

Community organizations also seemed to play an important role in helping community members negotiate between "mestizo" and indigenous culture. In particular, the people we interviewed separated the necessity of obtaining mestizo skills for the development of their community organizations from adopting mestizo values. When asked which skills typically associated with mestizo culture and the "developing" world (computers, health, business, accounting, family planning), were in accordance with indigenous ways of life, the students most often answered that those skills were not only amenable to indigenous ways of life, but vital to continued development.

In contrast, the students were able to identify very distinct value differences between indigenous society and the mestizo society. Numerous times, people told us that maintenance of indigenous strength meant maintaining the obligation to community (in

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[11] Cuy is roasted guinea pig and is eaten throughout the Andes region of Peru and Ecuador.
[12] Chicha is a traditional indigenous drink made by grinding corn and then fermenting the juice.

contrast with the perceived individualistic and materialistic values of mestizo culture) and traditional Quichuan values, *"Ama quilla, ama llulla, ama shua – Don't be lazy, don't lie, don't steal."*

Internal Social Organization

Community Organizations also serve to provide a structure for the internal organization of the community. Community organizations address the collective needs of the community. For example, one in meeting I witnessed in Quinsipincha, the people discussed the construction of a community irrigation system. This was followed by collective action to address the needs of community individuals through cooperation in the construction work. When listing the organizations in which they were participating, the people we interviewed identified community organizations and activities such as women's organizations, health organizations, agro-forestry organizations, and organizations focused on natural resource development. In summary, the existence of the community organization provides a space and forum for community concerns and debates.

Building Blocks for the Indigenous Movement

The ability of the indigenous movement in Ecuador to mobilize impressive numbers of people surely starts at the level of the community organization. Community organizations come together to form secondary organizations, which then feed into the national indigenous organizations (most notably CONAIE). Community organizations act as a link for communicating between the indigenous movement and individual community members and also to foster participation in the national movement. Many people discussed the importance of their activities in the community organizations in the

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[13] Gringo/a is a slang term used throughout Latin America to refer to people from the United States.

context of the larger indigenous struggle. Also, much of the "culture" maintained and promoted by the community organizations is used by the national movement to gain international attention. Brysk (1996), identified the indigenous movement as one "rich in identity and poor in everything else."

Brysk goes on to note the importance of indigenous identity and activity in garnering international support (from media sources as well as NGOs and other development organizations). In fact there is much evidence that the ability of the indigenous movement to attract the attention of international media and organizations has played an essential role in their national achievements. According to Brysk (1996), "Some Latin American Indian groups first gained access to their own governments through international organizations." Selvertson (1994) notes the savvy timing of the indigenous uprising in 1990 - the second phase of the uprising took place in Quito during the America's Cup soccer game, one of the most watched and attended events in all of South America. With the efforts of the indigenous people broadcast in the international media, it was all the more difficult for the government of Ecuador to refuse negotiations.

Challenges of Community

The danger of stressing the strength and benefits of any communal tradition is that it is easy to loose the necessary awareness that communities are inherently complex entities. Communities represent "many" in addition to being "one." Different members have differing (and sometimes conflicting) goals and interests. Power is distributed unevenly, and is therefore used both constructively and destructively. In addition to being a place where individual identity is formed and maintained, communities are also

constantly changing and negotiating their own identities, memberships, and functions.

These challenges of community were noted by the grant recipients on several occasions,

often as they influenced power relationships based on gender. One grant recipient

criticized the male-dominated leadership of most community organizations saying:

> *"In my community still now exists machismo…for example in the communities or the federation, 90% of the leadership is only men, hardly 10% are women that form a part of the leadership, but now in the affairs of the parroquias and of the State, it is requiring the participation of the women…that they have to be 50% or 60% , and to me this seems logical because the women are the drivers of the indigenous culture, and in this case have been the propellers, have been the bulwarks in the struggle of the indigenous peoples."*

These types of conflicts, particularly on the basis of gender, age, or race discrimination

are certainly worth critical attention. If the promotion of "community" necessarily meant

the propagation of such norms, it would be an ignoble pursuit, regardless of its functions.

This does not seem to be the case, however, in Ecuador or elsewhere. Because

communities are constantly evolving and changing, spaces exist for the promotion of

more equitable norms and practices within communities (Newbrough, 1995).

CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

These findings indicate that "community" is of great value to the indigenous people I interviewed in Ecuador. Their communities work to create meaning, generate sociocultural understandings of their experiences, and link individuals to one another in a way that provides for human development. They function to promote indigenous development and protect indigenous peoples. The people I interviewed in Ecuador placed enormous value on both the opportunity for increased individual capabilities *and* obligation to community. Furthermore, they understood community to be essential to the creation, protection, and exercise of individual freedom. Based on these findings, I argue that Western development theory needs new ways to think about the relationships between individuals and communities.

Rethinking Development

These findings are important for two reasons. First, they demonstrate that investing in individual people can be an effective way to impact entire communities, particularly in places that have communal traditions. In terms of efficiency and effectiveness, efforts to provide people with "capabilities" work best in communities where resources are shared. In order for this dissemination and sharing of capabilities and resources to continue, however, it is essential that development efforts target and

facilitate the *connections* between individuals as well as individuals themselves[14].

Secondly, given the opportunity to choose between individual and community advancement, people will often choose commitment to community and contingent relationships over personal development. This seems to indicate that a vital part of developing healthy and capable individuals is developing healthy and capable communities.

This is not to say that there was no conflict in communities, or that individuals never felt tensions between individual desires and relational obligations, nor is it to say that communities are simple entities, bounded and homogenous. Certainly there is not a "perfect" community any more than there is a "perfect" individual, and the ways in which a community can harm an individual should be taken seriously. I would argue, however, that in order to value what other people value and provide for their well-being, not to mention create spaces in which humans can realize their full capability, we must make creating healthy communities a priority. It is likely that the communities that oppress the individuals within them suffer themselves from oppression…that just as individuals can be made capable, community can take advantage of such opportunities as well. While I do not believe that we should stop investing in individual development, I do think it is wise to see the limitations of investing in individuals only. These values were reflected in the beliefs of the people I interviewed in Ecuador. Their very well-being was formed in the context of the well-being of their communities.

According to Carruyo (2003),

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[14] Systems Theory is an example of an interdisciplinary field of study that focuses on the organization and interdependence of groups. Particular systems are often studied using Network Analysis. Systems Theory and Network Analysis are used to understand many different types of social organizations and would be useful to this type of community study.

Development as a field of research and practice provides a language to talk about the relationships between nations and economies, but continues to struggle with understanding the complicated relationships between people. Understanding these relationships, as well as people's hopes, dreams, visions, and the meanings that they give to process of improving their quality of living, is at the centre of understanding development. (p. 200)

If we focus our policy and development efforts only on providing opportunities for realizing "development" to individuals, we deny the importance of community and communal living essential to many people. In communities where communal values are held, the "separateness" of individuals would be contested and the idea that an individual can develop fully without their community is a foreign concept. Furthermore, "the community" represents something larger than a collection of individuals - the community itself can have characteristics, connections, and synergistic power that is greater than a sum of its parts.

It may be useful to think of communities as "an ecology of games" (Long, 1958). Referring to the community as a game does not imply that the social institution is trivial, but rather that the interactions and meanings that take shape within it are similar in structure and strategy to those involved in a game. More specifically, Long (1958) proposes that, like a game, the community provides people with a) a set of goals that give them a sense of success or failure, b) an understanding of the "rules" that govern social interactions and expectations, and c) a sense of purpose and a role. Each community has its own set of rules and expectations, however these are similar enough across communities that it is possible to "play" in other arenas as well. In addition to thinking about the functions of individual indigenous communities, this conceptualization helps explain the ability of distinct communities to come together and great larger regional and national movements.

If we desire to take seriously the values of the indigenous people in the Ecuadorian sierra, as well as many others throughout the world that have the same commitment to "community," we must develop policies and development discourses in which development of healthy communities is as important as development of healthy individuals. We must measure the development and capability of individuals through development of community. And we must provide spaces for people to contribute to their communities and be obligated to them in a healthy way. Our prescription, then, should include the good and development of the community. The community, as its own entity, should be given the support it needs to be "capable" and functional.

Challenging Development Theory

Because political philosophy shapes much of our human rights discourse and development goals, its accuracy and inclusiveness is of vital importance. Traditionally and currently, this discourse has been dominated by the idea that individuals must be protected from the collective. Rights, therefore, are constructed almost exclusively on an individual basis and assume competition and conflict between the interests of groups and the interests of individuals. In this tradition, "groups" only have value and importance to the extent that they benefit the individual (Buchanan, 1993). In contrast, communitarian traditions hold up the community as the non-negotiable good: Communities "pre-exist" individuals and therefore individuals can only be understood within the context of their community. All individual action is launched from the pre-existing community and all individual interests can only be interpreted by those inside the community.

Recent literature deviates from both liberal-individualist and communitarian philosophy to propose that both of these traditions provide a less-than adequate understanding of the relationships between community and individuals. Furthermore, this lack of theoretical framework with which to interpret and interact with indigenous communal philosophies may act to perpetuate existing social marginalization. In the words of Holder and Corntassel (2002),

> Two pressing issues for critics of existing human rights mechanisms are the lack of progress in promoting universal recognition of group rights and the continued exclusion of indigenous groups from political, economic, and social participation in many parts of the world. For many the problem lies in the individualist nature of the existing human rights discourse. (Holder & Corntassel, p. 126)

According to scholars who are interested in communal rights and practices of indigenous people, existing ideologies that guide political and economic development efforts tend to overemphasize individual interests and ignore ideas of individual interconnectedness and dependency that characterize communal societies. Even when attempts are made to be culturally sensitive and appropriate, "Western world-views and priorities…do not adequately protect those for whom communal life is vital…Indigenous groups tend to practice a political and cultural philosophy in which the connections between individual and group identity are given as much weight as the boundaries." (Holder & Corntassel, 2002)

These scholars claim that the indigenous understanding of the relationships between individual and community are far more complex than either the liberal tradition or the communitarian tradition acknowledge. These ideas were supported by my findings when individuals spoke of their obligations to the community and community organizations. In most cases, the individuals did not seem to be negotiating their rights

and abilities against the interests of others in the community or the community itself. It seemed that individuals valued their community as an extended part of their individual person, and also as an entity in and of itself. In contrast to the communitarian tradition, however, they were keenly aware of ills within the community including power differences and divisive allegiances. Furthermore, there was room within the community for divergent interests and pursuits, and for incorporating aspects of other communities and cultures. Indeed, one of the frequently noted benefits of gaining an education was exposure to other peoples and ways of life. The people I interviewed interpreted "community" as something that was growing and changing, something that could both direct individual efforts and be directed by them.

Finding ways to honor these values will involve practical and ideological adjustments on the part of development institutions. On a practical level, development institutions should carefully consider supporting communal practices such as collective land holdings, and spending resources to strengthen and support community structures as well as individuals. On an ideological level, development theory must re-examine its assumptions that institutions can provide for full human functioning, that sustainable individual development is possible without community development, or that community obligation necessarily limits individual freedom.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION AND PERSONAL REFLECTION

It is telling that "culture" is most readily recognizable in groups far different from our own. The way of life practiced by the Quichuan people in Ecuador is a far cry from the "highly developed" world of Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee, United States of America. In taking the culture of other people seriously, I think it is necessary to go beyond the thinking that "that way" is beneficial for "them." Taking seriously the lives of other people means reflecting on our own lives and considering that "they" might have something to teach "us."

During the summer of 2000, I worked for the Cherokee National Government in Talequah, Oklahoma. Before going to Talequah, I asked Kyle Smith, the chief's brother, "What should I know before coming to Cherokee Nation?" I was expecting his answer to address some issue dealing with amenities or culture shock. Rather, he said, "Sarah, come as a learner, not a do-gooder." I have thought back to Kyle's invaluable advice many times since then and thought about it almost daily during my time in Ecuador. In essence, Kyle was asking me to consider that I might not have it all "right" - that there might be something that I could learn from the Cherokee people that would improve my life and the lives of those around me. He was asking me to take them seriously enough to believe that they had something to offer. The Quichuan people in Ecuadorian Andes deserve and desire the same consideration. They believe the strength of their people to be the commitment to indigenous values of collectivity, community, and solidarity.

While in Ecuador, I often felt that the quality of the human relationships I witnessed between family members, neighbors, and friends far surpassed the value of the educational opportunity or economic advancement we were there to study and develop. This is not to say that we shouldn't support those efforts with the Quechan people, but rather that we should seriously consider incorporating their ideas of collective obligation into our political practices, development efforts, and personal lives. I often asked myself, "I wonder what it would look like for the people I know (people with tremendous amounts of financial, intellectual, and political capital, relatively speaking) to be this committed to the lives of other people?"

Table 3

Discursive Constructions of Community

	Roles	Example
Dominant Cultural Narratives	• Displayed in highly visible arenas • Transmitted through socializing institutions • Frame public debates • Representative of the status quo	The dominant culture in Ecuador often represents indigenous people as lazy, primitive, and backwards.
Community Narratives	• Consistent narrative themes identified by members of a community • Represent collective knowledge of specific group of people • Constructed through social interactions	Stories told by multiple people in a community about the involvement of their grandparents, parents, and themselves in the shaping of a community organization that participated in the indigenous uprising in 1990
Defending Narratives	• Used to fend off perceived threats from the dominant culture	Narratives by which the indigenous people understand the dominant culture to be selfish and individualistic
Group Enhancement Stories	• Narratives about positive collective experiences within a community	References to community celebrations or activities undertaken by community organizations
Personal Narratives	• Stories we tell about our self • Inform individual actions • Shape individual relationships with others	Personal stories about the experience of attending school in an urban center and the shock of city life.

Table 4

Community Structures and Functions

	Roles	Example
Minga	• Collective community work • Requires labor from each family for construction or maintenance of public resources • Regulated by expectations of reciprocity and exchange	Collective construction and upkeep of an irrigation system that will serve several members of an agricultural community. Community members contribute in different modalities – labor, tools, food, materials – in exchange for use of the irrigation system.
Community Organizations	• Resource Distribution • Development and Dissemination of Culture • Internal Social Organization • Building Blocks for the Indigenous Movement	The community organization in Cebadas (a small Ecuadorian community about an hour from Riobamba) was active in identifying individuals to receive grants from PRODEPINE. The organization also helped run the community market, held meetings to bring community members together on a regular basis, and put on community events celebrating indigenous holidays such as Inty-Raymi (Summer Solstice).

Theme	Code	Name	Description
Community	FUN	Community function	Code corresponds to specific functions of the community (e.g. distribution of resources)
	STR	Community structures	Code corresponds to specific community structures (e.g. community organizations)
	REP	Representations of community	Code corresponds to socio-cultural representations of community
	VAL	Value of community	Code corresponds to the value that the individual places on the community, as well as the explanation of why community is valuable
Indigenous	CUL	Indigenous culture	Code corresponds to indigenous culture (e.g. indigenous values, indigenous practices)
	DEV	Indigenous development	Code corresponds to development strategies and tactics specific to the indigenous people
	SYM	Indigenous symbols	Code corresponds to symbols that are specific to indigenous ways of life (e.g. poncho)
Relationships	IND	Individual characteristics	Code corresponds to characteristics specific to the individual being interviewed
	FAM	Family relationships/obligations	Code corresponds to the individuals family relationships and obligations
	COM	Community relationships/obligations	Code corresponds to the individual's relationship with the community and his or her duties to the community
	INST	Involvement with institutions	Code corresponds to the individual's involvement with institutions such as the education system, health care system, or government institutions (of which PRODEPINE is one)

01   1   Your age, please.   ✦ IND

02   2   I'm 28 years old.

03   3   Where were you born?   ✦ IND

04   4   In the parroquia of San Juan.

05   5   Where do you live today?   ✦ IND

06   6   Right now I am living in Riobamba for work.

07   7   What level of education do you have?   ✦ IND

08   8   I have my high school degree, and I am
         studying in the university.   ✦ INST

09   9   When did you receive the grant from   ✦ IND
         PRODEPINE.   ✦ INST

10   10 I received the grant to do three years, in 2001,
         and I began to study with PRODEPINE.

11   11 How did you attend high school - a distancia or   ✦ INST
         precensial?

12   12 High school was a distancia.

13   13 Where did you attend secondary school, in the   ✦ COM
         community where you were born or in   ✦ INST
         Riobamba?

14   14 I had a meeting with PRODEPINE, with the
         unidad educativa in Chimborazo, for the majority
         of the grant recipients completed high school,
         then I continued studying, and this school runs in
         Riobamba, on Saturdays that we had to attend.

15   15 You lived daily in the community, but you   ✦ COM
         come to study on Saturdays?   ✦ IND

16   16 At that time, I already wasn't in the
         community, I had come to Riobamba, but I
         studied on Saturday for personal reasons.

17   17 You received the grant from PRODEPINE to   ✦ IND
         enroll in what year of secondary school?   ✦ INST

18   18 To enroll in the fourth course (similar to 10th
         grade in the U.S.)

19   19 You had studied until the third course of high
         school?

20   20 Yes.

21   21 You received the grant until the moment that   ✦ INST
         you completed high school?

22   22 I received it, but the final year they didn't give
         me, only I received until the fifth course, and the
         later they told us that they were going to deposit
         it, but it only covered 50% because for the only
         that they told me was for tuition and books, and

not for the rest that we needed.

23   23 What are the rest of the things that they need that they could have financed?

24   24 That which remained is that PRODEPINE gave us in addition to the teaching materials and tuition, they helped us for other books and things like this, the gave us money, in effect they would deposit us in the Bank of Pinchinca, and for this they made us open an account, and they helped us with this, personally for me it was a big help for that which it was eating, traveling. I was here until 12 in the afternoon and we couldn't go back to the communities. It helped us enough, but the final year already they didn't give us.

25   25 Then you received a complete grant, support, tuition, and books.

26   26 Yes.

27   27 What did you do before the grant from PRODEPINE.

28   28 Before I only worked, I didn't study, I had my obligation, I had my son, and for all this I had stopped studying.

29   29 After the grant from PRODEPINE, how did your condition change in general?

30   30 Later from the grant from PRODEPINE, I finished my studies, also continued studying a while, and for other side I acted as a mother, also it limited me, then said like a year of studying, and later enrolled to study and I am studying.

31   31 In what form did you participate in your community?

32   32 Before in my community, I participated in the parroquial organization, there I was the secretary of the organization. I was responsible for the area of natural resources. Also, I worked to make contact with other institutions, and we struggled to make and agreement with FAO. I went through PRODEPINE, and that the permitted us to confirm a meeting, and here we implemented a fishpond, an irrigated region, and later we formed a network of organizations and well until it arrived and I had that to retire.

33   33 This was before the grant?

Annotation codes (right margin):
- IND
- COM
- IND
- COM
- FAM
- IND
- INST
- FAM
- COM
- FUN   IND
- STR

34	34 After the grant.
35	35 Before the grant you didn't participate?
36	36 All my life I have participated in the organization.

COM
IND

| 37 | 37 But organizationally, as a part of the leadership, as secretary? |

| 38 | 38 Yes, before I participated, I was the secretary of the organization of Chimborazo, and for circumstances of life because my parents lived in Riobamba, and they formed a group of women, always I was an active member. |

COM
IND

STR

| 39 | 39 Your parents had access to education? |

FAM

| 40 | 40 Only my father finished school, and my mother studied in the night school, and when I enrolled with the grant from PRODEPINE, she already applied for the grant and studied high school already. |

| 41 | 41 And finished high school? |

| 42 | 42 No but she went until the sixth course, and economically improved enough and also helped in the organization. |

| 43 | 43 Did the grant help you to strengthen the ties with your culture, with your identity? If in this sense the grant was of value, maybe the contents that you studied was related with the strengthening of your identity? |

| 44 | 44 In reality the education level was a different education, well when I investigated and asked how I was to do the grant, I had the idea that it would be a distance education, that was to go to be related to other levels, but in reality beneath this agreement that was established was a traditional education, it wasn't a normal education like whatever other school, and academically, I believe if it helped us, but as I said is wasn't distinct - it wasn't traditional. |

CUL
INST

| 45 | 45 You consider that the grant from PRODEPINE could be valuable in the case of these women. |

| 46 | 46 I think that if, because I have friends that had the grant of PRODEPINE and they became leaders, they studied at the time and at the time they were authorities, I was director of the LORI, Chimborazo. When we had the meetings at |

COM
IND

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