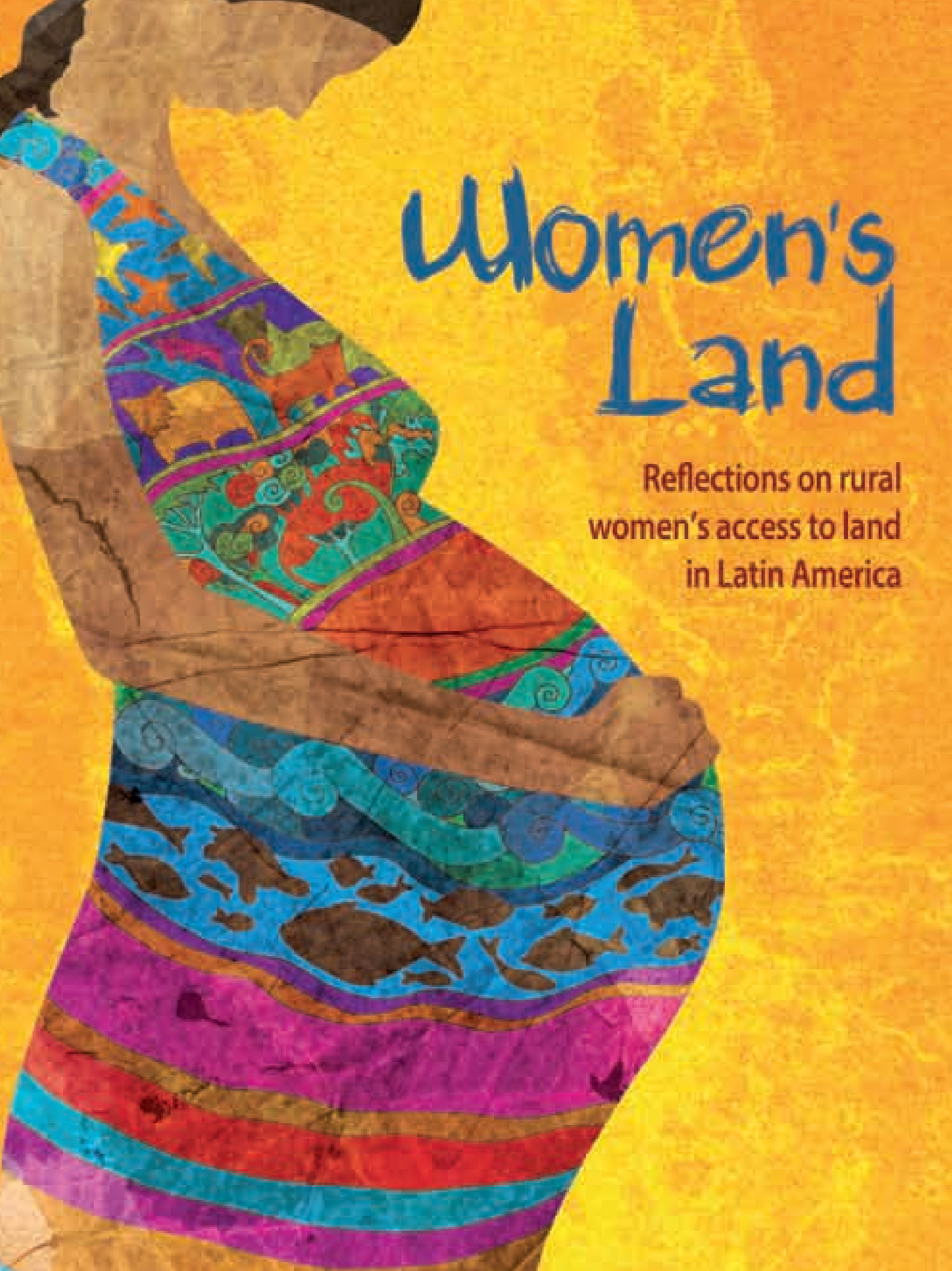
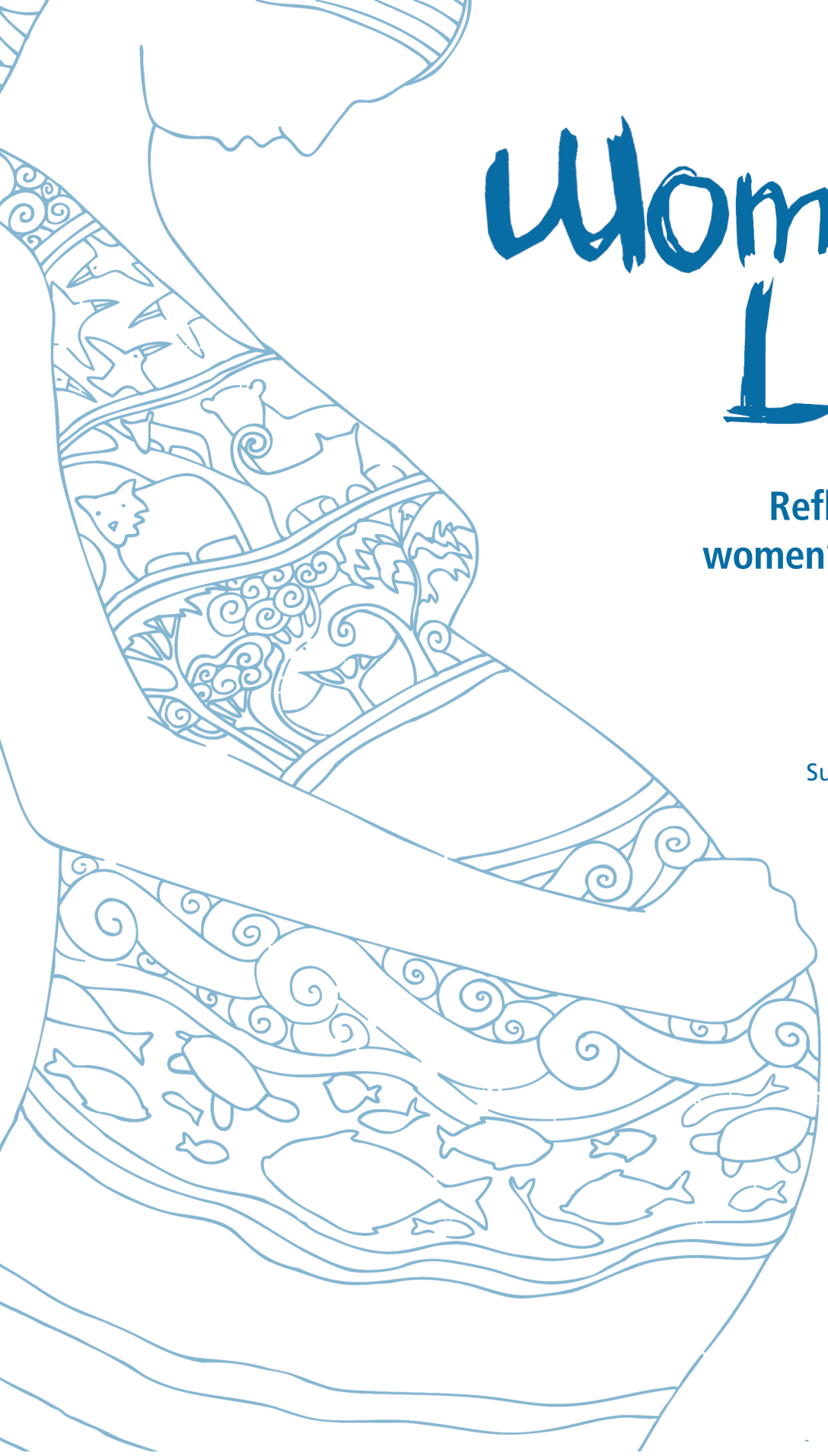


Women's Land

Reflections on rural women's access to land in Latin America



Women's Land

Reflections on rural women's access to land in Latin America

Carmen Diana Deere
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Claudia Ranaboldo

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tierra FUNDACIÓN

INTERNATIONAL LAND COALITION AMÉRICA LATINA

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS BOOK

ACUA	Programa Regional de Apoyo a las Poblaciones Rurales de Ascendencia Africana de América Latina (Regional Support Programme for Rural African-Descent Communities in Latin America)
CABI	Capitanía del Alto y Bajo Isoso (Captaincy of Upper and Lower Isoso)
CEMCA	Centro de Estudios Mexicanos y Centroamericanos (Mexican and Central American Studies Centre)
CIMCI	Central Intercomunal de Mujeres de la Capitanía de Isoso (Isoso Captaincy Women's Inter-Community Organisation)
CINEP	Centro de Investigación y Educación Popular (Research and Popular Education Centre)
CISEPA/PUCP	Centro de Investigaciones Sociales, Económicas y Antropológicas de la Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú (Social, Economic and Anthropological Research Centre, Catholic University of Peru)
CNMCIOB-"BS"	Confederación Nacional de Mujeres Campesinas Indígenas Originarias de Bolivia "Bartolina Sisa" ("Bartolina Sisa" National Confederation of Indigenous and Rural Women of Bolivia)
COCAMTROP	Coordinadora Campesina de Mujeres del Trópico de Cochabamba (Tropics of Cochabamba Rural Women's Umbrella Organisation)
CONGCOOP	Coordinación de ONGs y Cooperativas (Umbrella organisation of NGOs and Cooperatives)
DTR-IC	Desarrollo Territorial Rural con Identidad Cultural (Rural Territorial Development with Cultural Identity)
FAO	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILC	International Land Coalition
INRA	Instituto Nacional de Reforma Agraria de Bolivia (National Agrarian Reform Institute, Bolivia)
LSMS	Living Standards Measurement Study
MAS	Movimiento al Socialismo (Movement to Socialism)
MST	Movimiento sin Tierra (Landless workers' movement)
MYDEL	Mujeres y Desarrollo Económico Local (Women and Local Economic Development)
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PROCASUR	Corporación Regional Programa de Capacitación en Desarrollo Rural (Regional Rural Development Training Programme)
RIMISP	Centro Latinoamericano para el Desarrollo Rural (Latin American Rural Development Centre)
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UN-INSTRAW	UN International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

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Presentation

This book is the result of a collective effort by many women from several parts of Latin America. It is thanks to the contributions they made from their different experiences and skills that you have this unique document in your hands today. It is unique because it represents the accumulation of reflections, inputs, visits, discussions, and meetings. The document synthesises various activities taken forward by ILC and other institutions: the publication of six research studies carried out in 2009, two international discussion forums (one held in Colombia and the other in Costa Rica), and the reflections of three specialists on agrarian issues who – drawing on their own experiences and expertise – engage in a dialogue with the research studies to generate further knowledge.

At the 2007 regional meeting of ILC Latin America, the issue of women's land rights was identified as the priority topic. Strengthening the gender component is one of the Coalition's most important challenges to enable it to address the problem of access to land and tenure effectively and comprehensively. One of the first regional activities was the meeting held in Managua (Nicaragua) in July 2008. At that meeting, the workshop on "Women's participation in access to land" brought 48 people together, including Coalition members and partners (rural women's organisations, research institutes and non-governmental organisations). The event was hosted by ILC members and partners NITLAPAN, FENACOOP, and Grupo Tierra. The workshop identified the following key areas of work for the region:

1. Exercising rights: knowing our rights to be able to exercise them. This implies being aware of the legal obligations, procedures and requirements that govern access to land and natural resources for women. For rights to be exercised, it is important to develop the local capacities of rural promoters and women leaders. Finally, the capacities of women's organisations need to be strengthened so that they can exercise their rights, placing emphasis on the sharing of experiences and learning at the regional level.

2. Managing knowledge to generate change: knowing the real situation of women who live in rural areas. We need to produce knowledge about the relationship between women's access to land, food security and sovereignty, and the sustainable management of natural resources. We must find out about the main forms of access to land in the region and the laws and regulations around women's rights to land and natural resources, and promote their role in the smallholder economy by drawing on successful experiences of women who have obtained access to land.

3. Influencing public policies: recognising the contribution women make to society. This implies accompanying the collective actions of different organisations supporting the formulation of policies that respond to women's needs. We need to promote campaigns to demand appropriate policies that protect women's land rights or, where laws that benefit women already exist, create eligibility mechanisms.

The Coalition has taken forward strategic activities around these key areas of work to promote women's rights. It should be pointed out that these key themes are not clearly separated but instead complement and interact with each other. One important contribution identified as the first step in taking this work forward at the regional level was to support research studies to enhance our knowledge of the situation of rural women in Latin America. These studies not only served to produce in-depth knowledge about the situation of rural women, but also made it possible to inform the authorities and raise their awareness.

The reports that resulted from the research were published in 2010 and disseminated in various spaces through the networks that ILC belongs to, reaching a wide audience throughout Latin America and elsewhere. These reports, which are available on the website http://americalatina.landcoalition.org/, are the following:

- Almeida, Elsa: *Ejidatarias, posesionarias, avecindadas. Mujeres frente a sus derechos de propiedad en tierras ejidales de México.* Mexico: Centro de Estudios Mexicanos y Centroamericanos (CEMCA) and International Land Coalition (ILC), 2009.

- Alonso Fradejas, Alberto and Sara Mingorría Martínez: *Mujeres q'eqchí ante el capitalismo agrario flexible: afrontándolo desde las economías campesinas del Valle del Polochic, Guatemala.* Guatemala City: Instituto de Estudios Agrarios y Rurales (IDEAR), Coordinadora de ONGs y Cooperativas (CONGCOOP) and International Land Coalition (ILC), 2010.

- Bórquez, Rita and Lorena Ardito: *Experiencias activas de acceso a la tierra: estrategias de empoderamiento y aseguramiento de derechos desarrolladas por organizaciones de mujeres campesinas e indígenas rurales.* Santiago de Chile: Corporación Regional PROCASUR and International Land Coalition (ILC), 2009.

- Diez Hurtado, Alejandro: *Derechos formales y derechos reales. Acceso de mujeres campesinas a tierras de comunidades en el marco del proceso de formalización de la propiedad en comunidades de Huancavelica.* Lima: Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas, Económicas, Políticas y Antropológicas (CISEPA-PUCP) and International Land Coalition (ILC), 2010.

- Fuentes López, Adriana Patricia; Javier L. Medina Bernal and Sergio A. Coronado Delgado: *Mujeres rurales: nuevas y viejas exclusiones. Estudio exploratorio sobre el marco jurídico y los obstáculos para el acceso y control de la tierra de las mujeres en Centroamérica, Colombia, Venezuela y República Dominicana.* Bogotá: Centro de Investigación y Educación Popular (CINEP), Centro de Mujeres Afrocostarricenses and IFAD, 2010.

- Osorio Pérez, Flor Edilma and Holmes Villegas Caballero: *Uno en el campo tiene esperanza. Mujeres rurales y recomposición en el acceso, tenencia y uso de la tierra por el conflicto armado en Buga, Colombia.* Bogotá: Centro de Investigación y Educación Popular (CINEP) and International Land Coalition (ILC), 2010.

Our aim with this book was to draw on the wealth of information and experiences contained in these reports and invite well-known researchers on rural issues to reflect on the situation of rural women with regard to the exercise of their rights, access to land, and processes to strengthen their production, policy-influencing, and discussion capacities, among others.

We are therefore delighted to present the texts by Susana Lastarria-Cornhiel, Carmen Diana Deere and Claudia Ranaboldo as the core section of this book, since they represent a solid body of conceptual thinking and offer a wealth of comparative reflections on Latin American realities. They are also a valuable contribution that will strengthen future work in research, advocacy, and defending rights already won to offer better opportunities for Latin American women. The articles are linked and complement each other because they start with a reflection on the existing legislation and legal frameworks governing women's access to land, move on to a territorial and cultural contextualisation of the problem, looking at the particular situation of women in communal territories and, finally, conclude by discussing the empowerment of women by strengthening their production capacities. They enable us to envisage a wide range of possible actions that may be taken in the different settings in which each stakeholder is located.

Susana Lastarria-Cornhiel offers us a reading of women's rights to land in communal territories. Following a regional reflection on the structure of land tenure in Latin America, she provides a comparative analysis of Bolivia and Guatemala. In both cases, she analyses how legal and traditional practices and norms have changed and how they relate to each other, but also the impact they have had on women's rights in communal lands.

Carmen Diana Deere argues that in order to consolidate economic empowerment – understood as a process whereby women achieve economic independence – we need a more in-depth analysis of aspects such as land ownership, control over land, and the multiple factors that determine increased bargaining power within the family and the community. She highlights the need to promote greater inclusion of women in data collection and censuses so that these reflect relevant information on how land ownership is distributed, and analyses the information made available in several countries over the last decade.

Claudia Ranaboldo allows us to look at the problem from a broader point of view, by taking into account aspects such as the changes that have taken place in rural contexts in the region from a territorial approach. She also argues that, within territorial dynamics, access to land is still vital for women's empowerment. She shows us the need to understand the territory as the main point of reference, with identities and diversities as key assets, in order to envisage the possibilities and obstacles in a new rural development that is more inclusive and integrated.

In the chapter entitled "Latin American discussion forums: weaving reflections, experiences, and alliances," we have also included a summary of the discussion forums held in Colombia y Costa Rica. These events were designed to be broad public spaces for dialogue and the sharing of ideas and international experiences around land, territory, and rural women's production and deliberation capacities.

The first discussion forum was called "Rural women: rights, challenges, prospects," and was held on 7-9 July 2010 in Bogotá (Colombia); the second, called "Rural women in production processes: value creation and distribution of the benefits," was held on 27-29 October 2010 in San José (Costa Rica).

The purpose of these discussion forums was to share the knowledge gathered in the research and life stories of the participants, in order to take forward a collective process of developing operational and policy tools that would contribute to the emancipation of women in all its dimensions.

The key aspect that stood out in both events was the encounter between researchers, academics, policy-makers and representatives of women's political, economic and productive organisations fighting to defend their rights. One of the main agreements reached concerned the obligation to share with these organisations all the experience and learning acquired during these days of working together or include it in our thinking. A second agreement was to intensify coordination and maintain contact between the participants for joint work in the future.

At the end of these days of intense work, it was decided that our efforts should focus on the following actions:

- *Knowledge and consolidation of rights:* We must deepen our knowledge of women's rights in different spheres and ensure that national legislation on women is brought in line with international standards effectively and precisely, with the aim of overcoming the old dichotomy between official and traditional laws. Rights to access and control natural resources and the right to land must go hand in hand with access to credit and training if we are to strengthen rural women's production capacities effectively.

- *Training:* Women need to be trained on various aspects, from organisation and production to new technologies, combining new and traditional knowledge. It is vital for women landholders to build these capacities if they are to avoid the risk of losing their land due to a lack of resources for production or because they cannot get a loan. Therefore, we need to focus on integrated development, including production, trade, the ability to influence policy, the training of leaders, and empowerment.

- *Autonomy:* Savings are a source of autonomy that enables women to overcome their vulnerability to different events, take decisions freely, and be able to expand their economic capacity.

- *Alliances:* Linking up with other organisations and social movements is an urgent challenge for rural women. Only if they are united will they be able to tackle all the forms of discrimination and exclusion that affect them. We must also intensify joint work and alliances with other organisations and institutions, such as the universities and research centres that produce and reproduce knowledge. Such partnerships will enable women's organisations to access better tools for finding out about reality, while the academic institutions will gain first-hand knowledge of the problems and social conflicts they are seeking to analyse.

- *Inclusion in decision-making spaces:* Promoting women's participation in policy dialogue, education, exchange, and decision-making spaces is a pending task. If they have more of a presence in these spaces they will be able to participate more actively in drawing up public policy proposals, and this will be beneficial for the forging of strategic alliances. The ultimate aim of all this is to enable women to take advantage of opportunities.

Finally, the empowerment of women is a wide-ranging and very complex process. It requires a joint effort by institutions, organisations, and policy decision-makers. This is the only way to provide better tools or guidelines for improving the situation of rural women. The task we have pending is to capitalise these efforts further, ensuring that research engages in dialogue with life histories, that capacities are strengthened and, above all, that we have the capacity to build a strategic alliance on solid foundations, in order to weave all the threads of this issue together on the same loom.

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April 2011

* Fundación TIERRA is the focal point for the International Land Coalition's "Women's Land Rights" component in Latin America

Prologue

Although women play an extremely important role in agriculture and, above all, in the food security of their households and communities, there is a significant gender gap in access to and control of productive resources. Women have less land, their land is of poorer quality, and their tenure is often insecure. This inequality is an obstacle hampering the sustainable use of natural resources and rural development.

The UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) report, "The State of Food and Agriculture 2010-2011,"[1] emphasises that by closing the gender gap in agriculture it will be possible to enhance agricultural productivity and bring about significant additional benefits by raising the incomes of women farmers, increasing the availability of food, and reducing food prices, as well as the growth in employment and real wages for women that it would entail.

Strengthening women's access to land and control over its use is not just a matter of agricultural development and food security, but a question of human rights and justice for women.

The human rights of women are not yet fully respected despite the progress made in legislation at global, regional, and national levels. Apart from formal legislation, access to and control of land by women should be part of other mechanisms for recognising these rights, in communities, for example, where women are often not included in spaces for participation and decision-making. Although the law may protect their land rights, it is difficult for rural women to gain access to the judicial system to protest when these rights are violated.

This scenario of inequality in which women find themselves can be reversed through social and economic changes to give women the tools they need to empower themselves.

The International Land Coalition (ILC) is a global alliance of civil society and inter-governmental organisations working to promote better conditions for secure and equitable access to land and control over its use for women and men, through advocacy work, dialogue, the sharing of knowledge, and capacity-building.

Because it is a broad and diverse network, its actions must be coordinated with its members and abide by the established guidelines for its work. Because its work focuses on rural areas, the issues addressed are varied and very complex. Urgent matters tend to absorb the most

1 FAO (2011) The State of Food and Agriculture 2010-11. Women in Agriculture: Closing the gender gap for development. http://www.fao.org/docrep/013/i2050s/i2050s.pdf

attention, and this means that gender issues are often postponed. ILC's work in Latin America, however, has revealed that rural women want to access land in order to free themselves from poverty. The new activities being carried out in this area are welcomed with high expectations and have in turn led to another whole range of new ideas and lessons learned in exchanges with other institutions.

One of our main challenges is to include gender strategies in the different activities we are taking forward. The time has come to capitalise on the knowledge present in the network, pay more attention to the gender dimension, and open up broader internal and external debates, in order to influence national, regional, and global policy processes that will facilitate secure and equitable access to land for women.

Although there is still a long road to travel, we are moving ahead together and at a steady pace.

ILC Secretariat - Latin America Programme
Rome – Italy

I. Women's access to communal land in Latin America

I. Women's access to communal land in Latin America

Susana Lastarria-Cornhiel [1]

Women's access to land, the norms and regulations – both legal and customary – that govern rights to land, and the role played by women in the rural economy (control over assets, decision-making, and organisation) in Latin America are the issues that inspired this paper. In it I seek to examine how local and customary norms and practices with regard to access to communal land are changing in the context of transformations such as land titling projects and the commercialisation of agriculture. In other words, I will look at how the norms and practices of access to land are changing as the meaning of land rights and land use patterns are shifting or undergoing transformations, and what impact these changes have on women in the community.

After a brief review of the changes that have taken place in the structure of land tenure in Latin America, this paper will explore indigenous and peasant women's land rights by comparing two cases: Bolivia and Guatemala. What I aim to demonstrate is that the national context and social movements can have an impact on women's ability to safeguard their rights.

1. Land tenure in Latin America

The land tenure structure in Latin America is characterised by two types of property: privately-owned agricultural land concentrated in the hands of just a few landholders and communal land controlled by peasant communities and indigenous groups. A large proportion of the privately-owned agricultural land is controlled by a small percentage of landholders, who have also seized the best cultivable land, leaving the majority of rural families with no land or with plots so small that they are unable to satisfy their basic needs. After several decades of agrarian reforms (from the 1950s to 1980s) that attempted to redistribute land to smallholders and landless farmers, agrarian reform programmes were abandoned in the 1980s and 1990s as governments adopted neoliberal policies.[2] The lack of political will and international support, together with the reformed sector's weak capacity to turn its land into highly productive farms producing for the market,

1 Professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison (USA), where she has been carrying out and supervising research since 1983. She designs, implements and evaluates applied research projects for policies and programmes on land tenure, titling and registering property rights, agrarian reform, the privatisation of land rights, and gender relations in land tenure systems. As well as Latin America, she has worked in Eastern Europe, Africa, and South Asia. In the last few years, she has directed a study in Malawi and India on rural microfinance and its impact on the wellbeing of rural families, and a study in Bolivia on women's participation in indigenous territories.

2 In-depth studies of this issue include Borras (2007); de Janvry, Sadoulet and Wolford (2001); Zoomers and Van der Haar (2000); Leonard, Quesnel and Velasquez (2003) for Mexico; Reydon and Ramos (1996); de Janvry and Sadoulet (1989); Thiesenhusen 1989.

contributed to the dismantling of redistribution programmes by governments.[3]

The agricultural and rural development that was envisaged with the agrarian reform and the distribution of land to small-scale farmers was replaced by programmes to promote the land market: titling or legalisation of land rights and the modernisation of land administration institutions (public records and property registers).[4] This shift in agrarian policies was justified by the assumption that titling would secure property rights for all landowners, including smallholders; it would give them access to bank loans and would promote agricultural investment and production, as well as creating a dynamic land market – a basic requirement for the "efficient" use of land. That dynamic land markets in turn would generate a redistribution of land from unproductive or inefficient large landowners and smallholders to more efficient producers. In fact, however, small producers in Latin America are unable to get bank credit. Despite having title to their land, farmers with small plots of land are unable to access credit for even agricultural production, let alone for purchasing land or investing in their land.[5]

Communal land[6] in the hands of peasant and indigenous communities usually follows a pattern of use that combines the working of cultivable land by individual farmers and some type of community control over pasture land and forests. With the increasing commercialisation of agriculture and the titling of community land parcels, the form of communal land ownership in peasant communities is changing or land is becoming privately and individually owned. Indigenous groups also control large areas of land, much of which is often forested. Several countries – Bolivia and Ecuador, for example – explicitly recognise the ancestral rights of indigenous groups and have awarded them rights over their territory. The state usually leaves the management of these territories to the governance systems of the indigenous groups. Their tenure is likewise undergoing changes as a result of the commercialisation of farming and other factors such as the awarding of concessions to agroexport, oil or logging companies in or near indigenous territories.

1.1 Women's right to land

What role do women play in these changes and how do they affect their land rights? Since the 1980s, the vast majority of Latin American countries have reformed their laws on land and their civil and family codes, and have approved legislation that recognises equal rights for men and women, including property rights.[7] Constitutions and civil codes, particularly those that deal with family-related matters such as inheritance and the marital property or estate, have been modified to mention equal rights for men and women specifically, in the case of both married and unmarried couples.

With few exceptions, agrarian reform and land laws before the 1980s were less receptive to the demand for gender equity. Although some general articles in these laws mention equal rights for men and women, the language in the rest of the text tends to refer to men and heads of household. Nicaragua was

3 The absence of agricultural policies to support production by families and cooperatives, the lack of access to inputs (including farm machinery) and markets for their produce, as well as weak infrastructure, were problems that prevented the reformed sector from being able to produce in an economically efficient way.

4 Another land market programme is the "market-led agrarian reform," which seeks to distribute land through buying and selling at market prices. The impact of this programme on land distribution in Brazil and Colombia, for example, has been minimal (Borras 2003; Pereira 2007; Hollinger 1999).

5 Studies that confirm the absence of commercial credit for small producers with titles include Molina (2000) for El Salvador; Strasma et al. (2000) for Nicaragua; Apoyo Consultoría (2000) for Peru, and Boucher, Barham and Carter (2002) for Honduras and Nicaragua.

6 Various forms of communal land are found in Latin America, including peasant community land and indigenous territories. In peasant Andean communities, for example, the cultivable land is usually in the hands of individual smallholder families and is often titled, while pastureland is usually in the name of the community (Diez Hurtado 2010). In most Latin American countries, the state recognises peasant communities with some land held communally. The land controlled by indigenous groups is mostly collectively owned, with small plots held by member families for food production. If this land is titled, the title is in the name of the group. But only a few countries – Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru, for example – officially recognise indigenous territories.

7 The studies by Fuentes López et al. (2010), Deere and León (2000), Galan (1998), and FAO (1995, 1996) contain good analyses of these legal reforms.

one of the first countries to make it clear (in 1981) that land reform would benefit women as well as men. Later, in 1995, it stipulated that property titles to the plots of land covered by the reform must be issued to the couple – in other words, in the name of the man and the woman (Fuentes López et al. 2010).[8] However, joint titling was initially sabotaged by men, who refused to let their wives be included in the title or had their land titled jointly with their sons or brothers (Lastarria-Cornhiel et al. 2003).

In Costa Rica, the Law to Promote the Social Equality of Women, enacted in 1990, established joint titling of landed property. Immediately, titles began to be issued to wives and land was awarded to women in unmarried partnerships. There was a negative reaction from men, including a lawsuit that sought to halt the issuing of titles to women. This was struck down in 1994 and joint titling proceeded for married couples (Fuentes Lopez et al. 2010.) Later, other countries gradually introduced joint titling. Despite these efforts, however, only a small percentage of women were able to obtain property titles.[9]

1.2 Communal land and gender

There is not much sex-disaggregated data on the distribution of communally-owned land or who controls the land. For example, it is known that women in peasant and indigenous communities do not usually participate in community meetings or in governance structures, which are the spaces where decisions are taken about land distribution and use. It is also known that the cultivated plots controlled by the family are transferred to sons, and only very rarely to daughters. One case for which data do exist is that of Mexico and the *ejido* land.

The *ejidos* in Mexico are groups of peasant families who received land from the state as their collective property. Plots for cultivation were assigned to the heads of *ejido* families; they also had access to communal land such as pastures and forests, and to collective resources such as water (Appendini 2002). These family heads were the official members of the *ejido* and considered the "owners" of the plots assigned to them. From the start, these *ejidatarios* were mainly men; only women who were single mothers or widows with young children were able to receive land and become *ejidatarias*.

In 1971, women were awarded the same agrarian land rights and this conferred upon them the right to speak and vote in *ejido* meetings. In 1970, only one out of every hundred *ejidatarios* with land rights was a woman. By the year 2000, women controlled nearly 18% of the *ejido* plots and accounted for 27% of the individuals with agrarian rights. Nevertheless, they only hold 5% of the leadership and representative posts in *ejido* assemblies (UN-Habitat 2005). This means that although their access to land has improved, women still have little power to take decisions concerning the *ejido*, its activities and its members' wellbeing, including decisions about *ejido* land.

With the 1992 Agrarian Law, the *ejidos* were permitted to privatise their land and the vast majority of titles were given to men. Previously, if an *ejidatario* wanted to transfer his land, he was allowed to offer it to other people in the *ejido*, but only after his wife and children had been given first refusal. Once the *ejido* plot became private property, the wife was forced to compete with other family members if she wanted to buy it (Fuentes López et al. 2010).[10] Although women have very limited rights under the *ejido* tenure system, with the privatisation of the land and the emergence of a land market, women who live in the *ejidos* are now able to buy land that used to be controlled by men. In 2007, only 20% of *ejidatarios* were women with land rights; but among the *avecindados*,[11] women hold 42% of the land (Almeida 2009). This indicates that in some cases, where the communal system's norms restrict women's right to land, the market offers them an opportunity to access land.

8 The 1981 Agrarian Reform Law and the 1995 Property Stability Law.

9 For the case of Bolivia, for example, see Lastarria-Cornhiel (2010).

10 To privatise ejido land, the seller's family members have the right of the first option to buy, followed by people who have been working on the plot of land for more than a year, ejidatarios, avecindados, and the rest of the ejido's population, in that order.

11 Avecindadas and avecindados, or residents, are people who live in an agrarian community (like an ejido) and are recognised by the assembly as such; they are not ejidatarias and ejidatarios¸ or full ejido members.

1.3 Non-legal obstacles

Although in recent decades formal legal conditions for gender equity have improved enormously in Latin America, it is clear that there are still major obstacles preventing equity from being achieved. Firstly, programmes promoting farming and rural development that provide services such as credit for production, technical assistance, and training on production and marketing continue to focus on male farmers, sidelining women producers (FAO 1995, 1996; Fundación Arias, 1996). Likewise, most leaders of rural organisations are men, and they are the ones who determine how issues are addressed (Deere 2003). As a result, rural women's participation in agricultural production and services programmes and rural organisations is extremely low.

Another obstacle to the recognition of rural women as agricultural producers and their participation as full citizens are the patriarchal norms and practices that consider the man to be the head of household, the owner of the family property and, therefore, the person who makes the decisions about agricultural production, management of the family's property and assets, and how the family's income and resources are distributed. This patriarchal system keeps women's participation and contribution to the family's livelihood hidden and refuses to recognise rural women as independent citizens with equal rights.

Programmes that award collective land titles ought to recognise that both women and men have equal rights. For women, this implies holding rights independently of their male relatives, their husband (if they are married) or anyone else, including the rights use the land and other natural resources, and the right to participate in community decision-making processes concerning the use and distribution of land. Recognising women as full members of the community does not eliminate or negate the community's ability to take collective decisions and practise collective rights to land. Although legislation that recognises communal property and communal land titles is advantageous to both women and men, since it protects their rights to ancestral land, a number of questions arise about how the law is implemented and the extent to which women can benefit from these rights in practice.

As mentioned before, when collective titles are awarded, how land rights are distributed within the community is usually decided according to current customary norms. It may be that these practices differ from the formal laws and rules that recognise equal rights for men and women, but the tendency on the part of the state and governments has been to avoid interfering with communities' internal rules on rights and access to land. It is also often the case that significant amounts of land and natural resources are already in the hands of men in the community, as noted in the case of Mexico's ejidos.

Inheritance practices will also continue to follow customary norms. In patrilineal communities, sons and male relatives will be the main heirs and therefore the main landholders. This means that, even though collective titles do not explicitly prevent women from accessing land and obtaining other land rights, the law should include specific mechanisms and processes to ensure that women are not excluded from participating as members of the community and enjoying the same rights to land and natural resources as men.

In the vast majority of rural communities, gender relations are based on a patriarchal system whereby women are considered inferior and men dominate community institutions, hold leadership posts, and control access to land and natural resources.[12] Women are relegated to the home and the fields, and do not participate in public discussions or community governance. Thus, although the community presents itself to the outside world as a communal entity (where everyone is supposed to be equal and have the same rights), its internal norms differentiate between men and women. This is illustrated in Diez Hurtado's work on three communities in Huancavelica (Peru). Here, according to local norms, in the best case scenario daughters inherit smaller plots of land than their brothers, while in the worst case scenario they do not inherit any right to land whatsoever, either as daughters or as wives, even when they are registered members of the community. In one of these communities, when irrigated plots of land were privatised and titled, the process was carried out according to the formal law and the titles were issued in the names of the two spouses, not

12 One of the first research studies to demonstrate the dual subordination of indigenous women (as women and as indigenous) was by De la Cadena (1992).

just the male head of household. In the other two communities, all the land was titled as collectively-owned land and it is not clear what rights women have outside the local norms.

Peasant and indigenous women usually have a lower level of schooling than men and sometimes they do not speak Spanish. These difficulties, in addition to their reproductive responsibilities in the home and their work in the fields and with farm animals mean that they are less mobile and have fewer opportunities to interact with representatives from the government, development agencies, and non-governmental organisations. It is not surprising, then, that they are not aware of formal laws, their rights to gender equality, and how to exercise their rights.

2. Two case studies: rural women in Guatemala and Bolivia

Comparative case studies can give us an idea of gender relations in communities with communal land tenure, and what rights women have to land and other natural resources. The cases we look at here are in Guatemala and Bolivia, which have very different characteristics, even though both are predominantly rural countries with significant indigenous populations. The differences include the structure of land tenure, organisation and social movements, forms of land tenure, and women's rights to land. As Table 1 shows, both the importance of the farming sector in terms of its contribution to Gross National Product (GNP) and employment rates are similar in the two countries. The major difference is that per capita GNP is much higher in Guatemala.

Table 1: Economic indicators in Bolivia and Guatemala (2008)

Indicator	Bolivia	Guatemala
GNP per capita (Atlas method, in USD)	1,450	2,670
Agriculture (% of GNP)	13%	12%
Female employment (% of women aged 15-64)	64.1	50
Male employment (% of men aged 15-64)	82.9	89.9
Female employment (% of all workers)	43.9	37.89

Source: World Bank: Development Indicators & Gender Stats (http://web.worldbank.org/wbsite/external/topics/extgender/extanatools/exts-tatinddata/extgenderstats/0, menuPK:3237391~pagePK:64168427~piPK:64168435~theSitePK:3237336,00.html).

2.1 The structure of land tenure in Bolivia and Guatemala

In common with the vast majority of Latin American countries, Bolivia y Guatemala had a land tenure structure dominated by large landed estates (*hacienda* and *latifundio*) during the colonial period and the 19th century. Until the mid-19th century, population and agricultural production were concentrated in the highlands in both countries.[13] The impact of political processes on the structure and forms of land tenure, the indigenous population, and women's rights, however, differed greatly.

Officially at least, it would seem that communal land tenure no longer exists in Guatemala, apart from a few areas of forest. Ever since independence, the liberal Guatemalan state has attempted to destroy indigenous communities, promote private property, and allow *ladino* (non-indigenous) landowners to usurp the land of *ejidos* and indigenous communities to form large commercial estates producing sugar, coffee, and cattle. Guatemalan law imposed private property as early as 1825, starting with uncultivated land, followed (in 1836 and 1877) by indigenous communities' *ejido* land. Although few communities privatised their land at that time, the large landowners were able to take land from indigenous municipalities, mainly by invading it, but also by purchasing it (Naylor 1967). It is estimated that indigenous communities have lost half of their land since independence (Palma Murga 1997, McCreery 1990). Attempts since the 1950s to redistribute land to small-scale farmers (referred to as *campesinos*, because according to liberal ideology there were no indigenous people left) were defeated.

Land distribution in Guatemala is extremely unequal: according to the 1979 agricultural census, [14] 2.6% of the farms occupied 65% of the agricultural land. These properties have

13 By making this statement I am not ignoring the presence of indigenous groups in the lowlands of both countries, the migration of people from the highlands to the lowlands and the coast, or agricultural production there. The importance of agricultural production in the lowlands has increased during the second half of the 20th century in the two countries.

14 The next Agricultural Census in Guatemala since 1979 was carried out in 2003; not much data from this latter census has ever been published.

two hundred hectares on average, while the largest have more than nine hundred hectares. Furthermore, the concentration of land ownership is higher in the departments with the most fertile land. At the other extreme, 88% of the farms, with less than seven hectares, occupy just 16% of the country's agricultural land. These small properties are concentrated in the departments of the eastern highlands (CERIGUA 1996). These departments also have a high indigenous population density and high levels of poverty and social exclusion (World Bank 1994).

According to a study carried out in 1982, 50% of the farms with more than fifty hectares are not using the land to its full capacity (Hough et al. 1982). It might be said that nearly 1.2 million hectares are technically classified as idle land (ibid.).[15] According to the 2003 Agricultural Census, however, 78% of the cultivable land is still concentrated in 8% of the farms. Small producers, with just 22% of the land, grow 71% of the country's staple food: maize (Alonso Fradejas and Mingorria Martinez 2010). The low level of land use, together with its extremely unequal distribution, means that the majority of the rural population does not have access to enough land for their subsistence or the opportunity to obtain waged work on the large farms. These two factors, together with the country's export-oriented farming policies, contribute to poverty and extreme poverty among the rural population of Guatemala.

In Bolivia, too, the post-colonial liberal state attempted to convert the communal land that still remained into private property. The forced sale and occupation of indigenous community land led to its ownership being transferred to the *criollo* population to form large landed estates.[16] The tenure structure was extremely concentrated, especially in the highlands and the inter-Andean valleys, where by the mid-20th century about 4% of the landowners controlled 82% of the land. Following several years of rural protest against the extremely inhumane working conditions on the estates, a relatively radical agrarian reform was implemented in 1953. According to Muñoz and Lavadenz (1997), between 1953 and 1993 twenty million hectares of land was distributed to 550,000 rural families in the highlands.

At the same time, the Bolivian state encouraged rural people from the densely populated highlands to migrate to the eastern lowlands, a region that was relatively unpopulated. The National Colonization Institute gave moderately small areas of land to peasant families and large areas to the highland oligarchy and families with political influence. Thus, it could be said that the concentration of land ownership "migrated" from the highlands to the lowlands (Pacheco 2001).

After half a century of agrarian reform and colonization of the lowlands, the distribution of peasant families and of land continues to be highly differentiated and unequal in Bolivia. More than half of the country's peasant families live in the highlands on plots whose size does not exceed three hectares and where soil fertility is so poor that it barely allows them to survive. Another 20% lives and works in the inter-Andean valleys, on land that is more fertile, and where family plots are between five and ten hectares in size; with proper irrigation, this land can produce up to two harvests a year. Another 20% of the peasant population now lives in the lowlands where they work larger areas of land – between 30 and 40 hectares. The *latifundios* are also located in the lowlands, particularly the departments of Santa Cruz and Beni. This region also produces the majority of commercial farm products and almost all the agricultural exports: soya, sugar cane, and cotton.

One reason it was possible to distribute land to peasant families in Bolivia, while it failed in Guatemala, may be that its agrarian reform of 1953 introduced the legal concept of the "social function of land." Law 1715 and Law 3545,[17] as

15 Hough et al. (1982: 34-36) remark that the legal framework for the distribution of idle land is so complicated and unsuitable that in reality it protects the owners of unused land rather than facilitating the redistribution of land to the families that need it.

16 The usurpation of indigenous communities' land in Bolivia had already begun in the colonial era, when large landed estates were formed to supply food and other resources to the mines – the most lucrative sector in colonial Bolivia.

17 Law N° 1715 is the 1996 National Agrarian Reform Service Law, also known as the INRA Law; Law N° 3545 is the 2006 Community Redirection of the Agrarian Reform Law.

well as the Constitutions of 1967 (Article 7) and 2009[18] (Article 56), recognise everyone's right to individual and collective property and affirm that land ownership has a social function. Guatemala, in contrast, has never had a policy that explicitly addresses the problem of access to land or recognises the social function of land, even though this is one of the commitments the state made in the 1996 Peace Accords. In fact, the implicit policy seems to have been to avoid defining an explicit policy.

Although land distribution both in Guatemala and in Bolivia continues to be very concentrated, Bolivia's relatively effective agrarian reform in the 1950s and 1960s led to the distribution of land to the peasant population, both in the highlands and in the lowlands. Consequently, the concentration of landholding in Guatemala is much higher (a Gini coefficient of 0.85 in 1979) than in Bolivia (Gini coefficient of 0.77).[19] Nevertheless, the distribution of land in both countries is highly skewed. The result is that the majority of rural families do not have enough land to live on.

2.2 Indigenous communities and forms of land tenure

The temperate highlands of Guatemala and the highlands of Bolivia are the most densely populated regions in both countries, and the majority of the population there is indigenous (Baumeister 2002; Hough and Kelley 1984). In contrast to the coastal or lowland regions, the *minifundio* or smallholding predominates in the highlands. Communal land, in the sense of land under communal ownership, is almost non-existent today in Guatemala, even in the highlands. For several centuries, the state has refused to recognise peasant communities' communal rights to the land they live on and imposed individual private property. As we saw earlier, governments approved laws and allowed actions that favoured large landowners. However, the ideology of communities in indigenous municipalities is not one of private property in a market economy rationale.

In Guatemala, although cultivated land usually passes from father to son, the community's pasture land, water, and forests are communally owned, as is the non-cultivable land. The indigenous family and community use the land not as their property to be exploited, but as a resource loaned to them for a time by nature. Land has a cultural meaning for indigenous communities (Tapia 1990), as Mother Nature. For the Guatemalan family the cultivated plot of land is the *milpa* [recently cleared field] and its main function is to provide food for the family: maize, beans and wheat. Land is the source of life, not a source of material wealth (Fundación Arias 1993). The land titles that indigenous smallholders possess are not seen as commodities or assets; instead, they signify the right to use that plot of land to feed their family. The informal sale and rental of land, though common in this region, usually takes place on a small scale and typically between family members (Richards et al. 1990; Stringer and Lambert 1989).

Guatemala has not formulated or approved the legislation required to be able to systematise the concepts and rights that correspond to the agrarian sector: in contrast to the majority of Latin American countries with a large rural population, it does not have an Agrarian Code or an Agrarian Law recognising collective indigenous land ownership. This means that it is not possible to register communal property in Guatemala. Although the 1985 Constitution (in section three, articles 66-70) recognises indigenous communities and communal property, Congress has not approved the law on indigenous communities and communal property. As a result, many communities have registered their land in the name of the municipality. But since the municipality then appears as the legal owner, there have been cases where the mayor or the municipal government gradually transfers this land, awarding plots to third parties without consulting the community. In other cases, the state has declared certain areas of municipal land as nature reserves or biospheres, without taking into account the rights of its real owners.

State institutions and civil society organisations dealing with the problem of land in Guatemala

18 The most recent constitution uses gender-aware language and includes legal provisions on the rights of indigenous women, recognising their contribution to the family economy and domestic activities.

19 The figure for Guatemala is based on the 1979 Agricultural Census; the one for Bolivia, on Deininger and Olinto (1999).

are no longer insisting on the legalisation of indigenous community land. At most, indigenous communities have achieved its legal registration as collectively-owned agricultural land, but this procedure is far from being the best or safest way for indigenous communities to legally register their land. Another option is to obtain individual title to land, particularly for cultivated land.

In Bolivia, in contrast, communal land is found both in the highlands and inter-Andean valleys and in the lowlands, where there are indigenous territories recognised by the state.[20] The indigenous movement in Bolivia is very strong and active. During the neoliberal reforms of the 1990s, indigenous peoples demanded that their territories and cultures be recognised. In August 1990, the indigenous peoples of the lowlands organised a march to La Paz, the seat of government, called the "March for Territory and Dignity." The main result was that their demands were accepted, and in 1994 the constitution was reformed to include a definition of the state as pluriethnic and multicultural.

Between 1993 and 1996, indigenous peoples campaigned for the communal titling of their land and to have access to the natural resources on that land. Prior to this, indigenous peoples were simply not recognised. In 1996, the INRA Law recognised communal property and provided for the creation and titling of indigenous territories, called native community lands (*tierras comunitarias de origen* - TCO).[21] The laws have been updated and now, for example, the Law on Indigenous Autonomies has been approved. This takes decentralisation a step further and provides for other regional administration arrangements.

What should be noted in the analysis of indigenous societies, as Cameron (2009) points out, are the class differences that exist within peasant and indigenous communities. In addition to what we have discussed in Guatemala and Bolivia, we might mention the case of the Aymara indigenous community of Chusmiza-Usmagama in northern Chile (Bórquez and Ardito 2009), where one family attempted to take control of a water source that belonged to the community. These class differences are compounded by gender differences. Within indigenous and peasant communities, not everyone has the same access to communal resources; some families control more land and natural resources for themselves, despite the community norm of equal access. Furthermore, there is a tendency to see women as not being full members of the community and as having fewer rights to land and resources.

2.3 Women's rights to land

In the past, in Guatemala, neither the law nor the government protected women's rights to land. The legislative reforms of the 1980s and 1990s strengthened their property rights, explicitly recognising equality between men and women, including married women. Thus, the Family Code recognises that the wife has rights to the family property, and since 1999 the Civil Code (Article 131) no longer discriminates against wives and recognises both spouses as managers of the property of the marriage (and as joint heads of household).

In practice, however, women's rights to land have not been recognised by the state. In state land titling programmes, the title is issued in the name of just one person – usually the male head of household – and the wife is not considered to be a joint owner.[22] It should be recalled, however, that very few legal titles (i.e., titles recorded in the Property Register) have been issued by the state for

20 These "peasant and indigenous peoples' territories" (*territorios indígenas originarios campesinos* - TIOC) are titled as communal property that cannot be sold or mortgaged. Some peasant communities in the highlands and inter-Andean valleys have some land with individual title and other land with communal title.

21 Other laws from this period include the Environment Law, N°1333 (from 1993), which recognises the role played by indigenous peoples in civil society for the first time, and the 1994 Popular Participation Law, N° 1551, which decentralises government and public administration and promotes civil society participation in local government. More recent is the Community Redirection of the Agrarian Reform Law, which was enacted in 2006. With the new Constitution approved in 2009, the TCOs were renamed "peasant and indigenous peoples' territories" (*territorios indígenas originarios campesinos* - TIOC).

22 Article 73 of Guatemala's Agrarian Transformation Law (Decree 1551), for example, states that the family's agrarian property constitutes a farming enterprise and is therefore adjudicated as a rural estate (fundo rustic) with other productive assets to one person as the title holder, with the aim of providing protection to that person's household and a means of support for his family.

the land awarded by INTA (the National Agrarian Transformation Institute) and the Petén Promotion and Development Corporation (*Empresa de Fomento y Desarrollo del Petén* - FYDEP). Instead, beneficiaries received their papers by means of an administrative procedure which does not have the status of civil law. The same procedure was followed in the sale of land to peasant families by non-government programmes such as FUNDACEN – legal titles were not usually issued, only certificates. The point is that these documents do not recognise women's rights either.

Neither do communities recognise women's rights to land. In collective titles and those issued to cooperatives, very few women have been recognised as joint landowners because they are not usually considered full members of the cooperative. Women are in a very vulnerable situation in all these cases, because they have no legal rights at all following a separation or divorce. A housing survey carried out in 2001 in Guatemala shows the extent of women's exclusion: it found that only a quarter of the women who work in agriculture report that they are working land of their own, while 41.5% of men state that they work their own land (see Table 2). The 2003 agricultural census paints an even more pessimistic picture: it found that women who owned agricultural land were only 7.8% of all landowners.[23]

Table 2: Forms of access to agricultural land and tenure by gender in Guatemala (1998-1999)

Form of access to land and tenure	Men (%)	Woman (%)
Own land	41.5	25.7
Land belonging to the family	8.2	12.2
Rented land	17.1	3.7
Farm labourer	32.7	58.4
Other	0.4	0
Total	100	100

Source: Baumeister 2001.

An interesting experience occurred when women who had to migrate to southern Mexico or other neighbouring countries during the 1970-1980 civil war were able to increase their knowledge and awareness with regard to their rights and responsibilities. Worby (2004) recounts how, during the Peace Accords talks in the early 1990s, the organisations of women refugees, supported by the United Nations (High Commissioner for Refugees), were the ones who lobbied the government to recognise women's rights and, more specifically, to get the names of both the wife and the husband registered on the titles to the land that was being distributed to rural families. Perhaps as a result of this lobbying, the 1999 law that created the land bank or Guatemalan Land Fund (FONTIERRAS) stipulates that the titles issued by this institution must include the names of both spouses – in other words, they are joint ownership titles.[24] Nevertheless, case studies have found evidence that FONTIERRAS has followed the cultural norm of awarding land titles to men (Alonso Fradejas and Mingorría Martínez 2010).

Women in Guatemala face many obstacles preventing them from asserting their legal rights: cultural and social norms that do not recognise them as equals, their low levels of schooling, the few resources at their disposal, and ignorance of women's legal rights on the part of state officials (Deere and León 1999).

As well as these socio-cultural obstacles, there are still legal impediments affecting women, especially rural women. The Labour Code, for example, considers women to be assistants or helpers in agricultural work.[25] Consequently, women and children do not appear on payrolls and are not registered with the Guatemalan Social Security Institute – the man, as the head of household, receives the wages for all the members of his family (Hernández Alarcón 2001). The control exercised by the male head of household over his wife's income (and other rights such as those related to land) not

23 Of a total of 819,162 landowners, only 63,627 are women.

24 Article 20 of the Land Fund Law, Decree N° 24-99 (1999), states: "titles shall be issued in the names of the spouses or cohabitees who are the heads of the beneficiary family."

25 Article 139: "All agricultural or livestock work carried out by women or minors with the consent of the employer makes them farm labourers, although this work is considered to be complementary or contributing to the tasks performed by the [male] farm worker who is the head of household. Consequently, it is the latter farm workers who are considered to be associated with the employer by means of a work contract."

only keeps her in a position of dependence but also deprives her of the opportunity of making her own investments in the household economy. Thus, women are denied equal status in their family groups and communities, and prevented from being full citizens who participate in civil society.

Table 3 shows some indicators of women's wellbeing in Guatemala. Those related to schooling confirm that women have less access to education and end up with a lower level of schooling than men. Although the trends indicate that girls are catching up with boys, it is still expected that women will continue to receive less education in the future.

Table 3: Indicators of wellbeing in Guatemala (2007-2008)

Indicator	Guatemala
Life expectancy at birth, women (years)	73.9
Life expectancy at birth, men (years)	66.9
Literacy, adult women (% of women over the age of 15)	68.7
Literacy, adult men (% of men over the age of 15)	79.5
Literacy, young women (% of women aged 15 to 24)	83.6
Literacy, young men (% of men aged 15 to 24)	88.5
Ratio of female to male primary school enrolment (%)	94.2
Ratio of female to male secondary school enrolment (%)	93.5
Primary school completion rate, female (% of relevant age group)	76.9
Primary school completion rate, male (% of relevant age group)	83.1
Persistence to grade 5, female (% of cohort)	69.8
Persistence to grade 5, male (% of cohort)	71.2
Expected years of schooling, women	10.3
Expected years of schooling, men	11.0

Source: World Bank, Development Indicators & Gender Stats (http://web.worldbank.org/wbsite/external/topics/extgender/extanatools/extstatinddata/extgenderstats/0, menuPK:3237391~pagePK:64168427~piPK:64168435~theSitePK:3237336,00.html).

Both in Bolivia and in Guatemala, the laws recognise equal rights for women and men, including the right to own property, the right to inherit, and the right to manage the family assets. Customary norms and practices, however, discriminate against women, especially in rights to land. Men control the family's land and, if the land is titled, only the name of the husband usually appears on the papers. When the time comes to inherit, the land passes from father to son, although the widow may stay on the property. Daughters might inherit a small plot of land (Salazar 2004).

In Bolivia, with the 1953 agrarian reform, the law stipulated that all Bolivian farmers aged 18 or over, without distinction in terms of gender, could benefit from the reform and the colonization programmes. In practice, however, the only women who received land were heads of household with dependants, such as widows with young children. In the departments in the west of the country, such as Cochabamba, La Paz and Potosí, only 4-6% of all the beneficiaries were women (Deere and León 2000).

With the 1996 INRA Law, the legislation became more favourable: both the language and the pro-gender equality procedures have increased the percentage of women receiving titles to their land. Article 3, paragraph V says: "In keeping with Article 6 of the Constitution, and complying with the stipulations made in the *Convention* on the Elimination of *All Forms* of *Discrimination against Women, ratified by Law* 11100 of 15 September 1989, the National Agrarian Reform Service shall apply equity criteria in land distribution, administration, tenure, and use in favour of women, *regardless of their marital status*." This last phrase that I have put in italics is important: the law no longer requires women to be married or heads of household for their rights to be recognised. The 1979 Family Code and the 1975 Civil Code, as well as the reformed Constitution of 1994 and the new Constitution of 2009, enshrine and protect women's rights to land, as wives and as daughters.

Bolivia's agrarian laws, including the recent Community Redirection Law and the new Constitution, does not establish a clear position with regard to the situation of women in collectively-owned territories or communal land. Therefore, the question is: What rights do women have in communities with communal land in Bolivia? Do they have the same rights as men? We can explore these questions by considering the community norms and practices of an indigenous people who now officially have their own TIOC.

The Guaraní Isoseño people have lived in the Chaco region of Bolivia, more specifically in the south of the department of Santa Cruz, for centuries. Isoso is a group of communities located along the banks of the River Parapetí, but their territory includes large areas of forest. After decades of presenting the state with requests and demands for land, the processes to title 560,000 hectares in the name of the Isoseño TIOC were finally completed between 1999 and 2006, and the women and men of Isoso now officially have control over their territory. Isoseña women, both individually and through their organisations, were very active in the demand to have their territory recognised (Bórquez and Ardito 2009). The governance body for the TIOC is the Captaincy of Upper and Lower Isoso (CABI). Land is communal and the Isoseño people have no individual titles to land parcels.[26]

The natural resources in and around each community are usually used by all its members. Land next to the river can be watered or irrigated and used to grow staple food crops (maize, rice, yuca and beans). Each family has a plot of land (or field), and when a couple sets up home together the community allocates a field to the man, next to his father's or father-in-law's field. A 1998 study found that the average size of the fields ranged from two to seven hectares and the area cultivated in a year was one or two hectares (Beneria Surkin 1998). Men prepare the land for planting (slash and burn clearing), while women – with the help of children – are responsible for planting, weeding, watering, harvesting, and carrying the harvest to the home.

Natural resources are used by everyone in the community. In the forest, women gather fruit, firewood, medicinal herbs and other products. Men hunt wild animals and women prepare the meat to be eaten by the family and other people in the community. The River Parapetí is the only source of water for the fields and also provides families with fish, an important source of protein. The norms governing the use of natural resources stipulate that people should use only what they and their family are able to consume (their way of life or ñandereko); natural resources such as wood, animals, and fish are not usually sold.

Until recently, the Isoseños did not have much livestock; families kept just a few cows together with pigs, goats, and chickens. In the past, the meat people ate was obtained by hunting in the forest or fishing in the river. The introduction of cattle in the area is the result of the cattle ranches that were established in the lowlands of Bolivia by people who were given large areas of land by the state from the 1960s to the 1980s (Urioste and Kay 2005). There are several of these cattle-ranching estates within the Isoseño TIOC, together with agroindustrial enterprises and Mennonite communities producing cotton, sorghum, soya, and rice (Villaseñor 2007). All these outside influences have had impacts that go beyond the introduction of cattle. The large ranches and agroindustrial enterprises attract workers, and some Isoseño families grow certain crops in their own fields under contract for the Mennonites.

The impact of the increasing size of livestock herds – goats as well as cattle – has been twofold. Livestock are the major source of wealth for the Isoseño people and most of it is individually rather than communally owned. By 2004, 76% of the cattle were in the hands of 497 individual owners (Villaseñor 2007; Barahona et al. 2005), and 20% of them had 63% of the cattle. Because most people do not own livestock, differences based on wealth have been created among the Isoseño people. Since the accumulation of individual wealth and economic differences go against Isoseño community norms, they are a source of conflict.

The other impact concerns the management of natural resources. Most of the livestock are free to wander around the community and graze wherever they like, especially in the riverside forest. Smaller livestock such as goats mainly belong to women, while cattle are the property of men. The environmentally adverse impact of livestock in the dry tropical ecosystem of Isoso is already noticeable in the scarcity of certain trees and shrubs, and in the degradation of soils and pasture land (Villaseñor 2007).

The infiltration of a market economy and the accumulation of wealth by some individuals and families are influencing the Isoseño people's culture

26 Within the boundaries of the TIOC there are properties that belong to non-Isoseño parties, usually small and medium-sized landowners. The titling process awarded individual titles to these landowners.

and way of life. Such influences have a particular impact on women, traditionally the guardians of the Guaraní culture, and on their organisation, the Isoso Captaincy Women's Inter-Community Organisation (*Central Intercomunal de Mujeres de la Capitanía de Isoso* - CIMCI). The norms, values, and practices of their culture are changing, although change in itself is not destroying the culture. The women do not consider it a contradiction when they defend their Guaraní way of life (their ñandereko) while also seeking to improve their status and their rights within the Isoseño community and the Guaraní people.

The women recognise that their fight for empowerment not only takes place in the public sphere, where many men now support them, but also within the household, where they face more resistance. These women are quite clear that by demanding equal rights with men they are not putting their culture in danger (Bórquez and Ardito 2009). However, the women also say that although many men are now supporting their participation in governance and their increasingly important role in commercial production, these new responsibilities are not leading to a reduction in the work they have to do in the home: women have to find a way to manage their domestic tasks and responsibilities as well, assuming a double burden (Bórquez and Ardito 2009).

As far as access to land is concerned, the economic changes and their impact on the management of land and natural resources may have a negative effect on women. As we have seen, the land tenure system in Isoso has traditionally been communal, with everyone being allowed to use the land (except the family fields), the forest, the flora and fauna, and the water. Now, however, some families are "lending" (renting out) their fields to third parties for commercial crops, while others are producing commercial crops under contract, in exchange for inputs and the use of machinery. These practices may result in the privatisation of this land and ultimately lead to communal land being parcelled out. As men are the ones who enter into these commercial agreements, it is very likely that women are losing the right to use the land they need to produce food for their family.

Another problem with a potential impact on women's rights is the increase in privately-owned livestock and the associated grazing practices. This is currently having a negative effect on the environment, as it is destroying natural pastures and small trees and shrubs. The solution would be to assign land to livestock owners for corrals to be built for livestock and allocate land for forage crops to be grown. But, once again, the effect would be the privatisation of the land.[27] Since plots of land in the community are allocated to men and handed down from father to son, and because cattle are usually owned by men, there is a very high probability that when land is privatised, it will become the exclusive property of men (Lastarria-Cornhiel, Barahona and Orti 2008). Women may retain some use rights, particularly for crops for family consumption, but they would lose control over the land and other natural resources.

Because the Isoso TIOC is officially a territory governed by its own authorities, the tendency is not to abide by the laws of the Bolivian government. The TIOC forms part of a municipality (Charagua) which is currently undergoing an indigenous autonomy process (Vadillo Pinto and Costas Monje 2010). This indigenous identity and autonomy process may strengthen customary norms and practices – something that could be damaging for Isoseña women unless they demand that these norms and practices respect gender equality. The Guaraní people's governance proposal seems to be one of respect for different cultures. Furthermore, the plan is to establish "a form of autonomous government in which resources are managed locally and under equal conditions for all inhabitants" (ibid.: 284). This raises the question of whether the phrase "all inhabitants" means that women will have the same rights as men.

This de facto privatisation process that we are seeing – the parcelling out of communal land and the conversion of communal property into individual private property – is resulting in increasing control over the land by men from the communities. When this privatisation is formalised, ownership rights will remain in their hands and women's rights to land may not be recognized. It falls to the Isoseña women themselves to claim their rights and demand that they are recognised.

27 Villaseñor (2007) and Barahona et al. (2005) offer examples of where land within the TIOC has been privatised for cattle farming.

By tradition, women are not considered equal to men in Isoso: they are less mobile, have fewer rights to land, and participate less in governance. We have already looked at the subject of land rights. Another palpable example is that decisions in the community assembly are taken by voting, and each family has one vote. Although it is an achievement that women can now participate in the assembly meetings and are able to speak (Bórquez and Ardito 2009), they are still not allowed to vote unless they are heads of household. Furthermore, they have less schooling and many do not speak Spanish, which makes it more difficult for them to move around and earn an income. As Table 4 shows, adult women in Bolivia have lower levels of literacy than men, although it is expected that girls will soon reach the same level as boys because schooling is currently almost equal. It should be remembered, however, that women and girls in rural areas are at more of a disadvantage.

Table 4: Indicators of wellbeing in Bolivia (2007-2008)

Indicator	Bolivia
Life expectancy at birth, women (years)	67.9
Life expectancy at birth, men (years)	63.6
Literacy, adult women (% of women over the age of 15)	86.0
Literacy, adult men (% of men over the age of 15)	96.0
Literacy, young women (% of women aged 15 to 24)	99.1
Literacy, young men (% of men aged 15 to 24)	99.8
Ratio of female to male primary school enrolment (%)	99.8
Ratio of female to male secondary school enrolment (%)	97.1
Primary school completion rate, female (% of relevant age group)	97.6
Primary school completion rate, male (% of relevant age group)	97.9
Persistence to grade 5, female (% of cohort)	83.3
Persistence to grade 5, male (% of cohort)	83.4
Expected years of schooling, women	13.5
Expected years of schooling, men	13.9

Source: World Bank, Development Indicators & Gender Stats (http://web.worldbank.org/website/external/topics/extgender/extanatools/extstatinddata/extgenderstats/0,menuPK:3237391~pagePK:64168427~piPK:64168435~theSitePK:3237336,00.html)

Women's participation in CIMCI is changing their status, and it remains to be seen whether they can protect their land rights by means of their own organisation. One important success of the women's organisation was to gain community representation in the Captaincy of Upper and Lower Isoso (CABI). Since 1998, each community has had a *capitana* (as well as a *capitán*) who represents her community in CABI. It is said – even by men – that this change has made CABI more democratic. Since 2007, the *capitanas* have been on CABI's executive council. Women's participation in the governance of the Guaraní people of Isoso is an achievement that is perhaps unique among Bolivia's indigenous organisations. Whether this participation will lead to women being considered as having equal rights to land when the coming changes in the land tenure system begin to take place is an open question.

3. Conclusions

The objective of this paper has been to explore women's rights to communal land, both in peasant communities and in indigenous territories. The state now has formal legislation recognising equality between women and men. In countries like Bolivia, the law explicitly recognises women's right to land. However, as we have seen, local norms go against official laws, with the result that peasant and indigenous women do not enjoy the same rights as men: they do not inherit as much land as their brothers, they receive less land from the state in distribution programmes, and they are issued fewer land titles in property formalisation programmes.

In places where land is communally owned, plots of land for cultivation are customarily given to men, who then pass them on to their sons. Women have access to this land through their parents and, when they marry, through their husbands. Women are often not recognised as full members of the community, with all the rights that come with being *comunarias* or *ejidatarias*. There are two major problems in this situation. One is that women are dependent on men for access to land, a position that makes it difficult for them to end a conjugal relationship if it becomes abusive. The other problem is that their rights to land and other natural resources are not recognised when these are privatised.

This process has been observed in several countries where, as a result of neoliberal policies or the commercialisation of agriculture, communal land has been privatised legally (Guatemala and Mexico) or informally (Bolivia). Within peasant and indigenous communities there are differences in wealth and sometimes also class differences. In addition to these there are gender differences. Within indigenous and peasant communities, not everyone has the same access to communal resources; some families take more land and natural resources for themselves, despite the community value of equal access. Furthermore, there is a tendency to see women as not being full members of the community and as having fewer rights to land.

Because they have few rights to land and a low status (less schooling, less mobility, low participation in governance), when land is privatised women lose the few rights they had before, while men strengthen theirs. When privatisation is formalised, men are the ones who receive the property titles. In Bolivia we are seeing a process whereby land use is shifting from production for the family and the community to production for the market. In this process, men are taking control of how the land and other resources are used. What will the result be when this land is titled? In Guatemala, where the state has attempted for centuries to privatise the territories of indigenous communities, the indigenous view of land as "Mother Nature" has survived. Nevertheless, we have seen that Guatemalan mothers do not have the same rights to land as men. In Mexico, the state has formalised inequality: during the process of privatising the ejidos, 87% of the privatised ejido land was handed over to men, and only 10% was given to women (Almeida 2009).[28]

To change unequal relations in general, and more specifically to achieve equity in access to land and control over its use within the community, indigenous and peasant women's organisations will have to broaden their demands with regard to land. It is not enough simply to demand state recognition of communal indigenous or peasant community land; women need to demand recognition within the community of their rights to land as full members of the community. For example, are all adult women – married and unmarried – included in the list of community members? Do women have the right to speak and vote in governance bodies? Are women represented in local governance spaces, and are they among the authorities who deal with land issues? In this internal struggle, women will need the support (material, educational, and political) of outside organisations and groups, as we saw in the case of the Aymara indigenous community of Chusmiza-Usmagama (Bórquez and Ardito 2009). However, it must be kept in mind that it is the women themselves who, by negotiating with men in the community, will be able to achieve effective rights to land.

Research on land tenure within peasant communities and indigenous territories should document the power relations in the community and the family. The processes to be studied in the community would be: 1) the relations (family, economic, political) that determine access to land and natural resources, and 2) changes in the concept of property, and more specifically the land privatisation process. In addition, it is necessary to identify the trends in terms of which families or groups are increasing their control over land and natural resources; it should also be determined whether the control that men are gaining is being acquired by undermining women's rights. In the household setting, research should specify who controls the land and its benefits, and how rights are passed down from one generation to the next. Do daughters and sons have the same right to inherit land, for example? Where the community assigns land to the couple for their livelihood, it would be necessary to find out whether the woman has the same right to that land as the man, especially in the case of separation or widowhood.

Indigenous women find themselves in an ironic situation: they are considered to be the incarnation of their culture, responsible for safeguarding the community's cultural values and preserving cultural practices for future generations; thus, women are seen as more indigenous than men. But this esteemed condition is used to justify placing restrictions on their education, their opportunity to learn Spanish, and their mobility inside and outside the community. Men, in contrast, participate in commercial production, acquire land, get an education, and control the institutions of governance. Meanwhile, peasant and indigenous

28 The other 3% was allocated to schools.

women are losing their ability to access and control land and natural resources in their community.

While some cultural practices – such as men's economic activities and their individual control over land and other assets – are changing rapidly, the norms and practices that restrict women tend to persist and are resistant to change. This is why it is interesting to follow the story of the Isoseña women in Bolivia's Chaco region. These women have managed to get involved in the government of their people. They also seem to be gaining the respect of local government institutions and are holding important positions in these. It remains to be seen whether this growing political power will enable them to achieve socio-economic power and gain recognition of their rights to land during the informal privatisation process that has already begun in their indigenous community territory.

In their fight against power structures, peasant and indigenous organisations are gaining political space at the national and regional level with the full participation of women, as we saw in Bolivia and – less successfully – in Guatemala. These organisations will also have to tackle the socio-economic processes taking place within their communities, and the resulting conflicts. Women's participation in governance and representative organisations may enhance democratic processes and reduce the negative effects of the growing influence of the market economy. Women are responsible for the wellbeing of their children in particular and the family in general. Women are the ones who look after the elderly and disabled people, as well as their children. These responsibilities and the development of the capacities of everyone in the community become more evident when women participate in the distribution of resources.

But women encounter resistance and opposition to their participation in their own organisations, from their families and community structures, but also from other women in the community. To combat these obstacles it would be useful to learn from the experiences of women's organisations in other communities, and even in other countries. In short, although the struggle for equity is local and in the hands of the women themselves, it is also important for them to have the support and accompaniment of men in the community who accept gender equity and outside organisations that can offer material resources, education on legal issues, and positive experiences.

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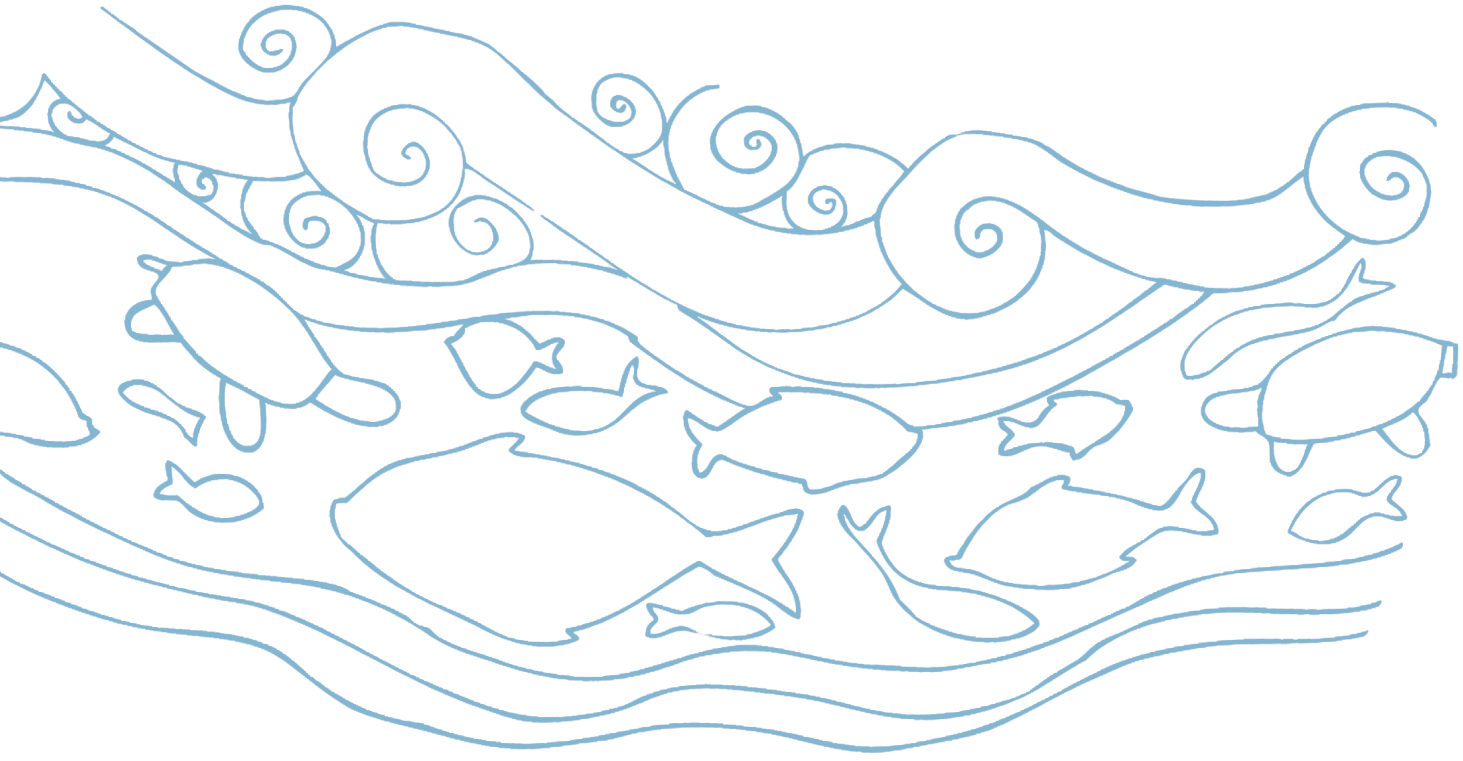
II. Land and rural women's economic autonomy: progress and challenges for research



II. Land and rural women's economic autonomy: progress and challenges for research

Carmen Diana Deere[1]

1. Introduction

"I contributed nothing, or almost nothing, or very little, so I can't demand much, let alone be decisive or influence the economic decisions that are taken in my family without causing conflict." This is how a rural woman in Peru[2] explains why she endures her husband's violence against her. Since she did not contribute land to the marriage, she has little bargaining power in her household. If she tries to express an opinion when family decisions are being taken, it provokes conflict with her husband and leads him to abuse her. Worst of all, she has few options for changing or getting out of the relationship. In what follows, I will refer to such a situation as a woman having a weak fall-back position, meaning that if the marriage breaks up due to separation or divorce, the woman will be in a most unfavourable economic position.

This is just an example of what land ownership means for women in Latin America and the way in which the ownership of land and other assets is related to women's economic autonomy, bargaining power and economic empowerment. Hence the importance of knowing how land ownership is distributed between women and men in the region, and what it means for a rural woman to own a parcel of land.

The objectives of this essay are as follows: first, it attempts to summarise what is currently known about the distribution of land ownership by sex, analysing both the shortcomings in agricultural census data and the information that can be derived from the household surveys that have been carried out in the region over the past ten years. Second, it considers whether women's ownership of land is equivalent to exercising actual control over it, and offers a summary of the evidence available on the relationship between land ownership and women's participation in farm decision-making. Third, it examines how land ownership can increase

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2 Reported in De la Torre (1995: 15).

women's bargaining power within the household, summarising the available studies. Finally, it summarises what we know about the processes and factors that favour women's access to land ownership, focusing on relevant information from the last decade. Throughout the essay, I will highlight the gaps that exist in the literature which warrant further research, and these will be summarised by way of a conclusion.

I begin by offering a brief conceptual framework to guide the discussion, explaining the relationship between economic autonomy, bargaining power and rural women's economic empowerment in Latin America.

2. Economic autonomy, bargaining power and economic empowerment

Economic empowerment is not the only route to empowerment for women, nor does it necessarily represent the most important one in every context.[3] Nevertheless, economic empowerment is usually crucial for analysing a woman's wellbeing, due to the emphasis that the concept places on being able to choose among different alternatives, make decisions, and determine and influence the outcomes for her or her family. Economic empowerment refers essentially to the process through which women achieve economic autonomy. The elements involved in this concept include:

1) The ability to generate income and decide on how it is used.

2) The possibility of participating in decisions regarding the income generated by each member of the household, including who contributes to the common pot, how much each person contributes, and how this income will be used.

3. The ability to acquire assets (or goods) in one's own name and use or dispose of them as one sees fit.

4. The possibility of participating in household decisions about the acquisition of assets using funds from the common pot and how these assets will be used or disposed of.

The women's movement, both in Latin America and in the rest of the world, has given priority to the first point: women's ability to earn and control their own income. The income-generating projects and microcredit programmes of the last few decades provide ample evidence of this. Furthermore, it is often assumed that the second point – the possibility of participating in household decisions about the common pot of funds – depends on women having a source of income of their own to be able to contribute to it. Here it is argued that women's participation in household decisions – either with regard to the common pot or the whole range of decisions (for example, about the division of labour inside and outside the home, children's education, family planning, etc.) – depends on a broader range of factors related to her bargaining power within the household.

This takes us to the third point: a woman's ability to acquire assets in her own name, and to use and dispose of such assets as she sees fit. First, it must be taken into account that assets such as land or a dwelling are means of production, which boost the capacity to generate income. Second, a woman's ownership of assets may contribute independently to her bargaining power within the household, whether or not she uses these assets to generate income directly.

What are the factors that influence women's bargaining power within the household? Feminist economists tend to see women's fall-back position as the most important (Agarwal 1994; Deere and León 2001). The fall-back position is defined by whether the woman can survive outside the household if the marriage or consensual union breaks up, or by the economic position in which she would find herself if such a break-up were to occur. Following Agarwal, the elements that constitute a woman's fall-back position include: a) her ownership and control of assets; b) her access to employment and other

3 There are many definitions of the concept of empowerment, including those that use the concept simply to refer to participation, without inquiring into the nature of that participation. In this essay, I will follow the definition offered by Kate Young (1993: 158), who defines empowerment as "the radical alteration of the processes and structures which reproduce women's subordinate position as a gender." See Deere and León (2001) for a more detailed discussion of the debates about this concept.

sources of income; and c) the possibility of being able to access other resources – economic as well as social and emotional – from the extended family or the community. In certain circumstances, the state, non-governmental organisations, or political or social organisations may provide these supporting resources.

The basic proposition of women's bargaining power theory is that the greater the individual's ability to survive outside the marriage – for example, by owning her own home or a plot of land where she could build it – the greater will be her ability to negotiate and influence household decisions, and therefore the stronger will be her economic autonomy. In this sense, economic autonomy implies the possibility of being able to get out of an unsatisfactory conjugal relationship, as well as being able to decide whether or not to get married or enter into a long-term relationship in the first place.

Agarwal (2004) argues that, for rural women, access to land – specifically, independent and effective rights to a private plot of land – is just as if not more important as being employed, since ownership of land enables them to confront gender inequality in various dimensions. Deere and León (2001) also place emphasis on the very limited possibilities that rural women in Latin America have to obtain a well-paid permanent job or a stable income.[4] But it is also necessary to take into account the advantages that an asset such as land can offer that are not provided simply by employment. As well as being means of production that can generate income, assets also have use value (such as housing) and can generate rents, interest, and profits. They can serve as collateral to obtain a loan to undertake other economic activities. They have the advantage of holding and accumulating value. In addition, they can be sold, mortgaged or pawned in an emergency. Assets usually provide a household with greater economic security, and reduce its likelihood of falling into chronic poverty; and they also generate social status and advantages (Deere and Doss 2006).

Women's ownership of land may be linked to another set of advantages as farmers: access to credit, technical assistance, marketing channels, and other complementary resources, such as water. Furthermore, land ownership may determine whether women can participate in rural or community organisations, and is related to their identity and recognition by society (Ramírez Carpio 2010).

This argument does not ignore the potential importance of women having a job or an independent economic activity. Worth noting is that most studies that have examined the relationship between women's economic autonomy and their family's wellbeing have focused on analysing the benefits that accrue to the children from the fact that their mother is earning and controlling her own income.[5] Also, having an independent income and savings of her own may be an important means for a woman to acquire assets such as her own dwelling or land parcel, a business or consumer durables, or – point 4 in our discussion above on economic autonomy – to have greater voice when assets are purchased with the household's pooled income. Our argument highlights the importance of women having assets of their own – land, in the case of rural women – as these directly strengthen her fall-back position and, therefore, her bargaining power within the household. Later we will examine whether having assets of her own has more of an influence on a woman's bargaining power than the joint ownership of assets with other members of the household.

There are other elements that influence a woman's bargaining power within the household, such as differences in age and level of education between the spouses (when the woman is older or has a higher level of education than the man), or stage of the life cycle (such as when a woman has passed the reproductive age) (Katz 1999). Furthermore, anthropological studies have demonstrated that the place of residence of a young rural couple, near the family of the wife or the husband, may influence a woman's bargaining power, and the same is true

4 For a detailed analysis of the income that rural women contribute to their households in 13 countries in Latin America, see Ballara, Damianovic and Parada (2010). Although in most countries the contribution made by rural women seems to be rising, it is being achieved in relatively unfavourable conditions compared with men, given the gender gap in wages.

5 See Pages and Piras (2005) for references to studies on Latin America that show that women invest more of their income than men in their children's wellbeing, through food, education, etc. See also the important study by Quisumbing and Maluccio (2000).

if she has a network of relatives who can support her. Friedemann-Sánchez (2006) shows the interconnections in the bargaining power of rural women – in this case, women working in the cut-flower industry in Colombia – who have access to a stable job, ownership of their home, social capital and a high level of self-esteem.

As we will see later on, another important factor in a woman's bargaining power may be the backing she has from a women's organisation or a social movement that includes gender equality among its objectives. This factor may influence the bargaining process itself – how people perceive the woman's contribution, for example, or what it is socially acceptable to negotiate over (Agarwal 1997).

To summarise, land ownership influences a woman's economic autonomy in two ways, both directly and indirectly. Land ownership strengthens her fall-back position directly, increasing her economic autonomy since it broadens her options for choosing whether to enter into a relationship and being able to get out of it. Further, a strong fall-back position increases her bargaining power within the household and thus, her agency. And the stronger her bargaining power is in the household, the more likely she is to achieve greater economic autonomy in a process of economic empowerment.

Before moving on, it is important to explain what "having effective land rights" actually means. First, we need to distinguish between what it means to "have rights" and simply to "have access" to land. Access to land – the possibility of working a plot of land that belongs to a family member (including one's spouse), or having a rental or sharecropping contract – does not necessarily imply having a right to the land parcel. The right to land is defined as "ownership or […] usufruct (that is rights of use), associated with differing degrees of freedom to lease out, mortgage, bequeath, or sell" the land (Agarwal 1994: 19). As summarised by Deere and León (2001), the owner of a right must control at least three elements of the bundle of possible rights: i) to be able to use it as a resource; ii) prevent others from doing so without his/her permission; and iii) be able to transfer control of this bundle of rights to others. Therefore, it implies "a measure of security tied to an enforceable claim" (ibid.: 3).

Effective land rights not only imply legal rights but also the social recognition of those rights and effective control over the land (Agarwal 1994). "Effective control" includes the ability to decide how the land should be used and how the benefits it produces should be disposed of. As Deere and León (2001) point out, in Latin America women can inherit and own land in their own name, but this does not necessarily mean that they are considered its legitimate owners if they are expected to sell their inheritance to a brother. It does not mean that they have effective control if, for example, the land inherited by a woman is incorporated into the family farm managed by the male head of household.

Therefore, in the sections that follow my interest is not only in summarising the available information on women's ownership of land in Latin America, but also in digging deeper and exploring the relationship between ownership and effective control of the land, and what this implies for women's bargaining power within the household.

3. The shortcomings of agricultural censuses

It is alarming to see that in the new round of 21st century agricultural censuses, no Latin American country has asked who owns the land. This is obviously a basic question for analysing the distribution of land ownership, both between social classes and between genders. Instead, the censuses, which follow the guidelines established by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), focuses on enumerating the number of farms and only asks about who runs the farm or is the farm manager; i.e., the principal farmer. This information, if disaggregated by sex, contributes to a gender analysis, but is insufficient, since it does not allow land ownership to be cross-referenced with the information about who exercises control over the land –one of the relationships that feminist analysis is most interested in.

Further, the census question of "who manages the farm?" lends itself to the response that the manager is the household head – the person who is culturally recognised as the head of the household and by implication, the farm. But is this "principal farmer"

the one who is actually making all the decisions about crop and livestock production? If no specific questions are asked about the range of decisions involved, such a response may be simply reflecting what is socially appropriate in a patriarchal culture. Following this same line of reasoning, does just one person make the decisions about both the crops and livestock, or about the cows as well as the guinea pigs? Unfortunately, no agricultural census considers the possibility that there may be more than one principal farmer on a farm, either because several people in the household make the decisions together, or because each person manages their own plot of land or carries out their own agricultural activities within the same farm.

Although these shortcomings persist, there has been some progress over the last twenty years, at least in terms of the visibility of rural women. The first agricultural censuses did not even ask the sex of the principal farmer or, if they did include this question, the statistics office did not publish this information in their census reports. In a detailed review of the agricultural censuses conducted up through the 1990s, Deere and León (2003) found that only four countries provided information on the principal farmer broken down by sex. As Table 1 shows, the visibility of women has improved in the last round of censuses. Based on censuses carried out in the 2000s, eight countries are now providing information about the distribution of their principal farmers by sex.

In the first decade of the 21st century, women ranged from only 7.8% of the principal farmers in Guatemala, to as many as 29.9% in Chile. For both countries, there is a previous point of reference. In the inter-census period, there was a significant increase in the share of principal farmers who were women in Chile, rising from 21.9% to 29.9% of the total. In Guatemala, in contrast, the increase was only from 6.6% to 7.8%, much less than the increase also registered in Peru between 1972 and 1994, which was from 13.3% to 20.4%. In the Dominican Republic, another country for which we have two points of reference, the percentage of principal farmers who were women declined slightly, from 11.4% in 1960 to 10.2% in 1998.

The data presented in Table 1 refer to the principal farmer irrespective of the form of land tenure. In other words, they include both the farms that

Table 1: Distribution of principal farmers by sex, according to agricultural censuses in 11 Latin American countries

Country	Year	% women	% men	Total (%)
Argentina	2002	18,2	81,8	100
Brasil	2006	12,7	87,3	100
Chile	1997	21,9	78,3	100
	2007	29,9	70,1	100
Ecuador	2000	25,4	74,6	100
Guatemala	1979	6,6	93,4	100
	2003	7,8	92,2	100
Nicaragua	2001	18,1	81,9	100
Paraguay	1991	9,4	90,6	100
Panamá	2001	29,3	70,7	100
Perú	1972	13,3	86,7	100
	1994	20,4	79,6	100
Rep. Dominicana	1960	11,4	88,6	100
	1998	10,2	89,8	100
Uruguay	2000	18,1	81,9	100

Sources: for Chile (1997), Dominican Republic (1960), Guatemala (1979), Paraguay (1991) and Peru, Deere and León (2003); for Brazil (2006), derived by the author from IBGE (2006: Table 1.4); for the other countries and years, FAO Gender and Land Rights Database, www.fao.org/gender/landrights (consulted on 8 November 2010).

are owner-operated and those that are held in a rental or sharecropping arrangement or another form of usufruct. Few census publications present tables where the variable of the sex of the principal farmer is cross-referenced with the variable on land tenure. For the three countries where this information is available – Chile (1997), the Dominican Republic (1960) and Peru (1997) – the percentage of women who are principal farmers on owner-operated farms is always higher than for the total number of farms (Deere and León 2003: Table 1). In Chile, for example, 24.3% of the principal farmers on owner-operated farms were women in 1997, compared with 21.9% overall. These figures suggest that women are less likely than men to acquire land through tenancy arrangements such as renting or sharecropping.

It is worth raising a few questions about the Chilean case, with the aim of encouraging future research. The increase of eight percentage points in a decade reported in Table 1 is exceedingly high and begs for an explanation. Are men abandoning agriculture, either through migration or perhaps by finding other more profitable employment opportunities off the family farm?

It would be important to examine whether the share of rural female household heads has increased concomitantly, as well as whether the rate of female economic participation in agricultural activities has done so as well, especially as self-employed workers.[6] Such an analysis should be complemented by qualitative case studies in the regions where the increase in the share of female farmers has been highest, in order to examine the processes that might shed light on this trend.

4. The gender gap in land ownership

Some household surveys are starting to ask the question that interests us: who owns the land? The most useful surveys are those that are nationally representative rather than small scale.[7] The most progress has been made in the Living Standard Measurement Study (LSMS) surveys promoted by the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank. Several of these surveys gather information on the ownership of each land parcel in the way that serves our purposes: first, they provide information on the owners of each plot, recognising that the farm may be comprised of more than one land parcel and each may have a different owner; second, they provide the option of reporting joint ownership of plots, meaning that the land parcel may belong to two or more individuals.

With this information three indicators of interest can be constructed: 1) the distribution of the ownership of land parcels by sex; 2) the proportion of households in which women have land ownership rights, and 3) the distribution of landowners by sex. Here we will explain these different ways of measuring women's access to land ownership, because all too often studies fail to clearly explain what is being measured, making it difficult to undertake comparative analyses between regions or countries and over time.

4.1 The distribution of land parcels

For this variable, the unit of analysis (the "n") is the plot of land, and the measure of interest is its distribution among men, women, and forms of mixed ownership. As the data presented in Table 2 show, the share of plots that are owned by women range from 12.0% in the case of Honduras to 19.8% in Mexico. One important difference between the four countries considered here is the extent of joint ownership by a couple, i.e. joint ownership between a man and a woman.[8] As the figures indicate, joint

6 It would also be necessary to disaggregate the data on principal farmers by type of tenure in order to verify whether the increase in the percentage of women who are principal farmers has taken place mainly on owner-operated farms. This would be the information most closely related to land ownership, although it is not the same as knowing precisely who owns the land. The principal farmer may be managing or working land that belongs to her husband or parents, for example, without owning this land herself. In such a case, she may not be running the farm independently of other family members; what is more, if she is not the owner she would not have the right to freely dispose of the land or perhaps, even the fruits of her labour.

7 In Deere and León (2003; 2001), we compiled information from all the surveys with data on landowners by sex up through the 1990s. Some of these surveys covered only specific sectors, such as the *ejido* sector in Mexico or commercial farms in Brazil, and were not nationally representative.

8 In most cases, the joint owners are the household's principal couple. However, because of the way the data

Table 2: Distribution of ownership of land parcels by sex in four Latin American countries

Country	Survey year	% owned by women	% owned by men	% jointly owned	Total (%)	N
Honduras	2004	12,0	87,2	0,8	100	280,088*
México	2002	19,8	66,3	13,9	100	4,9 m.**
Nicaragua	2005	16,8	79,2	4,0	100	269,231*
Perú	2000	12,6	74,8	12,6	100	2,9 m.*

Notes: N = national estimate using the expansion factors provided in the database for each survey.

** Refers only to titled land parcels.*

*** Refers to all plots owned.*

Sources: For Honduras, Mexico and Nicaragua, calculations by the "Improving statistics on gender and assets" project, based on the LSMS surveys; see references under each country. For Peru, calculations by Rosa Luz Durán.

ownership is an important practice in Mexico and Peru, but less so in Nicaragua and especially in Honduras.[9]

The information reported in Table 2 is not quite comparable since the data on Mexico refers to all the plots of land owned by a household member, whereas in the cases of Honduras, Nicaragua and Peru, the surveys only gathered information on the sex of the owners if there was some type of ownership document or title for the land parcel. Therefore, for these countries we only have information about the owners of titled land, which – despite the large number of land titling projects that have been carried out in Latin America – may still be a minority of the total number of land parcels belonging to households.

Furthermore, we do not know if the incidence of having a land title is different for men and women. We are only able to calculate this for Mexico, where women are more likely to have a land title than are men (Deere, Alvarado and Twyman 2009). If this were to be the general tendency, the estimates presented in Table 2 for the other countries may overestimate women's share (in other words, we would expect a lower percentage of the total number of plots of land – titled and untitled – to belong to women).

The indicator of the distribution of land parcels by sex is usually the easiest to tabulate, but it may contain other gender biases. For example, it does not tell us whether male landowners tend to have more plots than women owners, or whether there are gender differences in the size of the plots of land[10] – other potentially significant factors in the gender land gap. Neither does it tell us anything about how common it is for the women in the household to have land rights.

4.2 Land ownership rights

Table 3 presents the data on the distribution of land ownership by households and responds to the following question: who in the household is/are the owner(s) of the land? If all the plots of land that belong to a household are owned by women, the household is considered as having female-owned land; if some of the plots are owned by women and others by men (or are jointly owned by an opposite sex couple), the household is considered as having land under mixed ownership, etc. The sum of the columns of households

were processed, the joint owners may be a mother and her son, for example, or other combinations of persons of the opposite sex (including all family members in the case of Honduras). For the purposes of this table, if a plot of land belongs to a mother and daughter, it is classified as owned by women rather than by a couple, in order to place the emphasis on opposite sex couples.

9 In the case of Honduras the only options were to report one individual or the whole family as owning the plot of land. This way of asking the question fails to take into account the possibility that the plot may be jointly owned by the couple, since the form did not offer a space for specifying two people.

10 See Deere and León (2003: Table 5) for data on the average amount of land owned by men and women, using various sources. The average size of the plots owned by women is almost always smaller than those owned by men, although the differences are not always statistically significant.

Table 3: Distribution of households by land ownership rights and sex in four Latin American countries

Country	Year	% owned by women	% owned by men	% with mixed ownership	Total (%)	N
Honduras	2004	12,1	86,3	1,6	100	227.769*
México	2002	20,7	63,9	15,4	100	3,42 m**
Nicaragua	2005	16,9	79,0	4,1	100	160.084*
Paraguay	2001	27,9	69,4	2,7	100	246.173*

*Notes: * Refers only to households with titled land parcels.*

*** Refers to all households that own land.*

Sources: For Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua and Paraguay, calculations by the "Improving statistics on gender and assets" project..

with female-owned land and mixed ownership gives us the percentage of households in which women have land ownership rights.

By presenting the information in this way we can include the data on Paraguay, where the survey did not disaggregate by plots of land, and only the information for the whole farm is available. The data presented in this manner can be compared with the information presented in the agricultural censuses on the principal farmer.

According to the figures in Table 3, Paraguay is the country with the highest percentage of households in which land belongs to women. This is related to the high share of households reported in the survey as being headed by women. However, when households where men and women jointly own land or both have their own plot are taken into account, Mexico turns out to be the country with the highest percentage of households where women have land ownership rights: 36.1%, compared with 30.6% in Paraguay. Honduras is at the other extreme, where a woman has land ownership rights in only 13.7% of households.

4.3 The distribution of landowners

For gender analysis it is also of interest to know what percentage of the total number of landowners are women. To make this calculation, the base is all the people who own a plot of land, either individually or in joint ownership with someone else.[11] For this measure in Table 4 we have information from six countries; the share of women landowners is highest in Mexico (32.2%) followed by Paraguay (29.7%), and lowest in the Central American countries.

By analysing these three measures, we can conclude that the gender gap in land ownership is smaller in Mexico than in any other country. This result is especially interesting because hitherto the only information available for Mexico on land rights by sex has been for the *ejido* sector. According to the 9th Census of *Ejidos*, carried out in 2007, women accounted for just 20% of the *ejidatarios* (full members of the *ejido*) and *comuneros* (community members), and 23% of the *posesionarios* (landholders with informal rights) (Almeida 2010: 20). This implies that land ownership by women is much more widespread in the non-*ejido* sector, which is governed by the property regime of the civil code rather than by the agrarian law.[12]

Another point that stands out in the analysis undertaken by Deere, Alvarado and Twyman (2010) is that the gender biases in land ownership contribute to gender gaps in the accumulation of other assets. In the analysis of home ownership by sex in ten Latin American countries, they found that women are 27% of the homeowners in Guatemala and 50% in Panama (ibid.: Table 2). As Figure 1 shows, when the percentage of women homeowners in urban and rural areas is compared, there is an alarming difference between urban and

11 It should be noted that the number of observations (the "n") in Tables 2, 3, and 4 changes according to the universe – in other words, depending on whether we are looking at the total number of plots, the total number of households, or the total number of landowners.

12 In the *ejidos* only one person per household could be designated as an *ejidatario*, with the agrarian rights that this status confers. In the *ejido* sector, joint ownership between spouses, for example, has never been recognised. There are also important differences with regard to the inheritance regime. See Deere and León (2001) and Deere (2007).

Table 4: Distribution of landowners by sex in six Latin American countries

Country	Year	% Women	% Men	Total (%)	N
El Salvador	2005	14,1	85,9	100	120.716 **
Haití	2001	23,5	76,5	100	1.4 m. **
Honduras	2004	14,4	85,6	100	236.697*
México	2002	32,2	67,8	100	4,4 m. **
Nicaragua	2005	19,9	80,1	100	168.156*
Paraguay	2000	29,7	70,3	100	254.000*

*Notes: * Refers only to people with titled land parcels.*

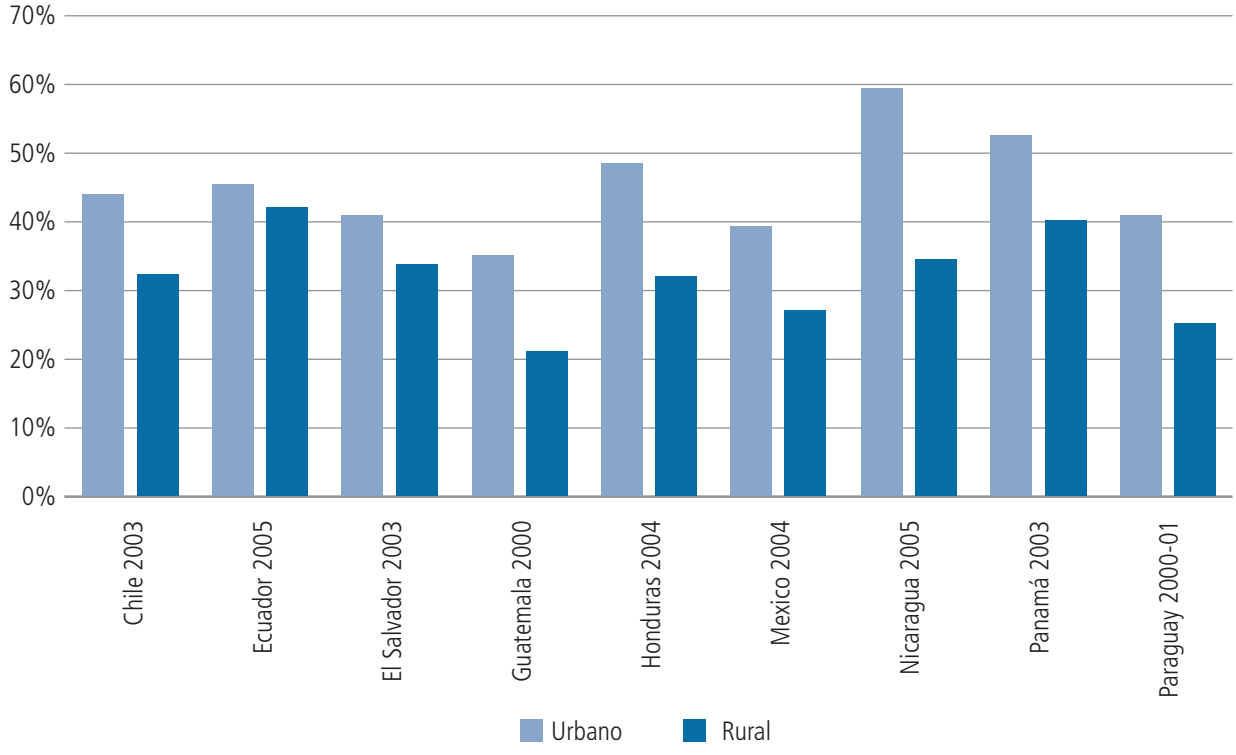
*** Refers to people who report that they own plots of land, either individually or jointly.*

Sources: For Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua and Paraguay, see Deere, Alvarado and Twyman (2010: Table 3), with a correction for Honduras. For El Salvador, UNDP (2010: Table 8.4).

rural women in most countries: the share of women homeowners is always higher in urban areas than in rural areas.

This tendency may reflect the different ways that a dwelling is acquired in urban and rural areas, particularly the housing lot. In rural areas, inheritance of a plot of land tends to be an important factor in owning a home, because the married couple usually builds their house on it. One factor that may explain why fewer rural women come to be homeowners is related to their lower probability than men of inheriting land (a topic we will discuss further later on). If the dwelling is built

Figure 1: Percentage of women homeowners in urban and rural areas of nine Latin American countries



Source: Based on data from the household surveys cited in Deere, Alvarado and Twyman (2010)

on land inherited by the man, this house is often considered to be his property as well; but if it is built on land inherited by the woman, it sometimes ends up being considered as jointly owned by couple.[13] These data may also reflect the urban bias of many state housing programmes, especially those that give priority to low-income women who are heads of household.

5. Ownership and control over land

As mentioned before, one of the hypotheses of most interest for gender analysis is the relationship between ownership and control of land, and whether women who own land have effective control over it. Unfortunately, few surveys gather information on both variables. In the national household surveys that we reviewed, there is only information available for two countries, Nicaragua and Honduras. In both surveys, information was gathered on who in the household makes the decisions regarding the farm. It would have been much more appropriate to gather this information about each land parcel. Moreover, it was assumed that only one person in the household makes decisions about farm production, rather than leaving open the option for several people to be so designated.

As Table 5 shows, the percentage of households with owner-occupied farms where the woman is reported as the main decision-maker is similar and quite low in these two Central American countries. Also, in both countries, in a significant number of households where the woman owns the land, it is reported that the man is the main farm decision-maker. This might suggest that land ownership does not always give women control over this asset. But before we conclude that many women landowners are not involved in the decisions concerning their land, we would need much more detailed information at the level of individual plots and for different farming activities. As we suggested in the discussion regarding the concept of the principal farmer in the censuses, this question – who runs or manages the farm? – may be influenced by assumptions about who is considered to be the household head or who ought to be making the decisions according to cultural and social precepts, rather than who in the household actually does so.

Another survey, of commercial farmers in Brazil (defined as those having a farm of fifty hectares or more), did ask about the sex of both the farm owner and the farm manager. In her analysis, Mardon (2005) found that although 10.5% of all farm owners were women, women were only 7.1% of farm managers. This is a statistically significant difference, suggesting that women owners of these relatively large farms were more likely than male owners to have an administrator other than themselves. Women also managed smaller farms and had less access to inputs than did men. Even so, a multiple regression analysis – which offers the great advantage of being able to control for a series of variables – revealed that if all other individual and farm characteristics were equal, women who manage their own farms generate a higher value of production per hectare than men.

Due to the lack of information on who manages the farm or makes the farm-related decisions, most of the studies that have examined the differences in production outcomes by sex have been based either on the head of household (Lastarria-Cornhiel 1988) or, more recently, on who owns the land. Although these latter studies are not entirely satisfactory, land ownership would seem to be a more accurate indicator than household headship.

Masterson (see 2007), for example, examines in the case of Paraguay whether there are any significant differences between farms that belong to women, or men and women together (these being the households where women have land ownership rights), and farms that belong only to men. He found that both total farm income and per capita income were lower in the households where women have land ownership rights compared to those where they do not. However, those where women have land rights have a higher farm income per hectare than the latter. This result is explained by the fact that the households where women have land rights (the majority of which are also female-headed households) have smaller farms and use the land more intensively; the most significant portion of farm income in these cases comes from dairy production.

13 This result is from our qualitative field work in Ecuador (see Deere, Contreras and Twyman 2010).

Table 5: Distribution of landowners and farm decision-makers by sex in land-owning households in Honduras and Nicaragua

Country	Variable	% women	% men	% mixed	Total (%)	N
Honduras (2004)	Landowners	12,1	86,3	1,6	100	227.769*
	Decision-makers	8,7	91,3	s. i.	100	308.111
Nicaragua (2005)	Landowners	16,9	79,0	4,1	100	160.084*
	Decision-makers	8,8	91,2	s. i.	100	190.867

*Notes: * Households that own titled land. The observations (in the "N" column) differ because the sex of the decision-makers can be identified for all the farms reported as owned, whereas the ownership data is only available for land parcels that are titled.*

Source: Deere, Alvarado and Twyman (2010: Table 4).

Masterson also found that these households differ according to their specialization. Those households where women do not have land rights are more likely to produce commercial crops like wheat, soya, and cotton. Those where women have land rights, in contrast, are more likely to grow subsistence crops such as maize, and to devote a relatively larger area of their farm to such crops. Moreover, these households obtain higher yields than the others in subsistence crops, and lower yields in commercial crops, partly explaining their specialisation. Multiple regression analysis revealed that holding the characteristics of the household and farm constant, – households where women have land rights are associated with a lower rate of return on their investment[14] than households where only men have property rights. This analysis shows some of the gender differences that may arise between men and women farmers who own land, but it does not provide a full picture since we do not know who is actually making the decisions on these farms.

To date, only a few studies have examined farm decision-making among smallholders or in the peasant economy in any detail. One of these studies, carried out in the mid-1970s in Cajamarca, in the northern highlands of Peru, illustrates how household decision-making may vary depending on the activity or task. First, when people were asked who in the household is responsible for crop-related activities, 64.5% reported that it was the father, 5.7%, the mother, 7.6%, the children, and 22.2%, the whole family. With regard to livestock-related activities, 61.9% of the households reported that the person responsible was the mother, 4.4%, the father, 22.9%, the children, and 10.8%, the whole family (Deere 1990: Table 40). This example illustrates the distortion that may be produced if the survey (or census) assumes that only one person runs the whole farm, without taking into account the possibility of specialisation by gender. This becomes even more evident if we break down the different tasks involved in crop or livestock production, as shown in Table 6.

Although in Cajamarca it is reported that the man – or father – is responsible for crop production, in most households it is apparent that several activities are controlled by the mother. These activities include the selection of seeds and deciding how much of the harvest is to be sold, bartered or kept for the family's own consumption. Likewise, although most households report that the woman – or mother – is responsible for the animals, when they are asked who decides whether animals are to be sold, it is noticeable that this decision is taken in almost equal proportions either by the woman alone or by the husband and the wife together.

In order to test the hypothesis about ownership and control of land, then, we would need detailed information about a series of decisions that are taken about each land parcel and each type of animal. Other decisions that should be taken into account, besides those reported in Table 6, include the following: Who in the household decides how the plot of land is to be used – for example, if it is to be cultivated by the household or rented out or given to someone else under a sharecropping arrangement? Who decides when, how and where to sell the crops, and to whom? Who receives the

14 The rate of return on investment was measured as the net value of total farm production divided by the value of the farm assets (the value of the land, equipment and installations).

Table 6: Family member in the household responsible for different farming tasks (Cajamarca, Peru)

Task	The mother* (%)	The father* (%)	Both (%)	Total (%)	n**
Selecting seeds	59	7	34	100	104
Collecting and placing the manure	13	54	33	100	92
Buying seeds or fertilizer	3	53	44	100	34
Deciding what, when and where to plant	15	47	38	100	104
Obtaining non-family labour	7	79	14	100	94
Coordinating the field work	6	49	45	100	98
Deciding how to distribute the harvest	56	7	37	100	93
Deciding on the sale of produce	36	16	48	100	77
Deciding on the sale of animals	39	11	41	100	86

*Notes: * Includes cases where the mother or the father carry out the activity or make the decision together with their children.*

*** Refers to the number of households that reported carrying out each activity.*

Source: 1976 Peasant Family Survey, in Deere and León (1982: tables 24-26).

money from the sale and decides on how it will be used? Ideally, one could then construct an index of the different decisions and relate this variable to women's ownership of land in order to examine the relationship between ownership and control over land.

To date, only one study has investigated how land ownership by women is related to women's control over agricultural income. Katz and Chamorro (2003) analyse a rural household survey in Nicaragua which asked who controlled the farm income, and found that in male-headed households where women have land ownership rights, the women manage a higher proportion of the farm income compared with similar households where women do not have such property rights.

5.1 Individual and joint ownership of property

There is an on-going debate on whether women need to have individual ownership of the land – rather than joint ownership – in order to have effective land rights. Agarwal (1994) argues that, for a woman to enjoy all the privileges that land ownership can offer her (such as a strong fall-back position that leads to an increase in her bargaining power), she needs to have property rights independently of a male family member. Although Agarwal acknowledges that joint land ownership between a woman and her husband may represent a more favourable situation compared with not having any property rights at all, she questions whether it is possible for jointly owned land to be a source of empowerment for women, because husbands may monopolise the decisions about how the land is utilized, for example.

In Deere and León (2001), we do not analyse this issue in any depth – the possible benefits of individual vs. joint ownership – first, because little empirical research has been carried out on the topic, and second, because the political situation at the end of the 1990s promised more immediate results by demanding joint titling for women. At that time, a good number of countries in Latin America were carrying out land titling projects, and the concern at the time was to ensure that women not be excluded from this initiative. Furthermore, in many cases, the demand for joint titles to be issued to the couple only meant that the state should comply with its own civil code – the legal regime governing marriage based on partial community property, whereby all the assets acquired during the marriage (or consensual union, depending on the country) are legally considered the joint property of the couple. Unfortunately, no rigorous studies have been carried out examining whether there are differences between individual and joint land ownership in terms of woman's bargaining power, or specifically, with respect to women's participation in farm decision-making.. The few studies related to the issue have focused instead on how difficult it has been to implement

joint titling, or on whether women have obtained concrete benefits from joint titling.

There is evidence that in some of the countries where joint titling of land to couples was established as a requirement in land titling or redistribution programmes, it has been quite difficult to implement (Deere and León 2001). One recent example concerns the Land Fund (Fontierras) programme in Guatemala, a "market-led agrarian reform" initiative which set up a land bank to provide long-term loans for smallholder associations to buy agricultural land. Although the 1999 legislation (the Land Fund Law, Decree 24-99) stipulated in Article 20 that "titles shall be issued in the name of the spouses or cohabitees who are the heads of the beneficiary family," in practice this has not happened on a large scale. According to a UN-Habitat report (2005), it was found that although land sales contracts included the names of both the men and the women who were members of the association awarded the loan, once the farm was divided into individual plots and these were registered, they were registered in the name of the male head of household only. This study highlights the fact that women lose their land ownership rights due to opposition from men or because the statutes of the cooperatives that are then set up stipulate that the household is to be represented by just one person, who is usually the male head of household.[15] The UN-Habitat report refers to the results of a study of six such sales contracts financed by Fontierras which found that although 26% of the people who signed these contracts initially were women, in the end only 8% of the members of the cooperatives were women, and all of them were heads of household. This means that women who were married or in de facto unions lost their joint ownership rights.

In their analysis of land titling processes in Honduras and Nicaragua, Lastarria-Cornhiel, Agurto, Brown and Rosales (2003) also demonstrate how difficult it has been to actually achieve the joint titling of land even when it is mandatory in state programmes. These authors highlight the cultural practices that result in men being designated as household heads, and stress how difficult it is to achieve joint titling when the man refuses to let his wife be included in the property title. The problem is aggravated when the government officials themselves are not convinced of the effectiveness of the measure. Likewise, these authors show that in the countries where joint titling has been more successful, the process was usually supported by non-governmental organisations with a clear gender vision (often making access to credit and other benefits conditional on joint titling), or had the backing of rural organisations who played a leadership role in raising their members' awareness of the issue.

As far as the impact of joint titling is concerned, Lastarria-Cornhiel et al. (2003) point out that the women beneficiaries themselves are often not very clear about the advantages that joint titling may offer them. In the focus groups carried out with women beneficiaries in Nicaragua, they found that opinions varied in different regions of the country (Agurto and Guido 2003). In the Jinotega area, women viewed joint titling positively for it had stabilised the family and improved their access to credit; also, the joint title offered them more recognition as farmers. In the Pacific coast region, in contrast, the women beneficiaries placed more emphasis on how little power the joint title conferred upon them; they pointed out that when their husbands wanted to sell the land and they opposed the idea, their husbands simply beat them until they gave their consent. The authors highlight how the women feel completely unprotected in the face of such resistance to having rights recognised, and do not know where to go to lodge a complaint or whose support they can count on.

Agurto and Guido (2003: 29) likewise emphasise how difficult it is for joint titling to increase women's role in farm decision-making when agriculture is culturally defined as a male occupation. These authors quote from their interview with a woman leader of Nicaragua's National Union of Farmers and Livestock Producers (UNAG), who commented that following the awareness-raising work they held with their members, "they have noticed that the men more easily accept that property should be in the name of the couple; where the problem arises, however, is in decision-making. The woman may make decisions, but she often feels that she has to consult the man, and more often than not she obeys the man's wishes."

15 This requirement in the cooperative model also served as a mechanism for excluding women from access to land during the agrarian reform period (Deere and León 2001).

In the case study in Honduras for this comparative study, 50 women beneficiaries of joint titling in two regions of the country were interviewed, and all the women who were married or living with a partner reported that their husbands or partners are the ones who make the decisions regarding what and how much to plant (Rosales 2003).

There is obviously a need to undertake much more in-depth research, and with a long-term perspective, before concluding that joint titling does not work as a mechanism for increasing women's bargaining power.[16] It may be that the advantages of joint titling do not become evident until the couple breaks up, because it would be at this moment of separation, divorce or death that the joint title confers upon the woman the property rights to half of the couple's land. In any case, the studies mentioned above highlight how women's land ownership rights and their participation in farm decision-making are not automatically correlated, and point to the importance of investigating specifically whether individual vs. joint ownership of land women makes a difference for women's autonomy and empowerment.

6. Land ownership and bargaining power within the household

Land ownership by women may influence not only the bargaining power that a woman has with respect to farming activities, but also potentially with respect to other household decisions. Depending on the context, it may be that the bargaining power of a woman with a strong fall-back position, thanks to her land ownership rights, manifests itself in her increased participation in decisions regarding household expenditures or the division of labour in productive and reproductive tasks among different members of the household. Here I will summarise the studies that have associated women's property rights with increased bargaining power within the household, directly or indirectly.

So far, the only study that has focused directly on the relationship between women's land ownership and their role in household decision-making is that of Mardon (2005), which analyses agrarian reform settlements in six states in Brazil. Her objective was to analyse the factors associated with a woman's increased participation in household decision-making, either by making autonomous decisions (ones she makes by herself) or in the decisions made jointly with her partner. In her multiple regression analysis, Mardon found that, holding individual and household characteristics constant, women with land rights (because they themselves are beneficiaries of the agrarian reform) have much higher than average rates of participation in autonomous decision-making. She also found that a woman's participation in social movements – either the women's movement or the Landless Movement – contributes to higher rates of participation in decisions shared with her partner.

Another way in which a woman landowner's bargaining power can manifest itself indirectly is in the economic activities that she or other members of the household are engaged in. It may be that women landowners have a preference for off-farm activities, either because these are more profitable, or because they want to have their own independent activities, or simply because they prefer not to engage in field work.

This is what is suggested by a study of the relationship between women's land ownership rights and the level of income of rural households in Peru, based on the same household survey mentioned earlier, undertaken in 2000. In this study, and taking into account only those households made up of a couple (husband and wife), the households where women have land ownership rights earn a significantly higher income from off-farm activities than those where women do not have property rights. As far as income from agricultural activities on the farm was concerned, there is no significant difference between households where women do or do not have property rights. Nevertheless, the impact on the income earned from off-farm activities was so strong – an average increase of 400% in off-farm income earned (assessed at the mean) – that overall there is a positive and significant relationship between land ownership by women and the household's total income. On average, in households where women have land ownership

16 The University of Norway and the CUANTO Institute in Peru are currently carrying out a detailed research project on this issue, based on a household survey.

rights, household income is 47% higher (Deere et al. 2005).[17]

Women landowners' bargaining power may manifest itself in other outcomes that are favourable to them, such as the absence of or reduction in domestic violence, for example. Several qualitative studies on Latin America have reported that the incidence of intimate partner violence tends to be higher when the woman has not contributed assets to the marriage or does not have an income to contribute to the household (De la Torre 1995), and that women who own land or other assets are in a much stronger position to be able to end an abusive relationship and get out of an unsatisfactory marriage or de facto union (Deere 1990; Bradshaw 1995; Friedemann-Sánchez 2006). To date, what has been most studied quantitatively in Latin America is the relationship between domestic violence and the poverty or employment situation of the man and the woman, but the results are not entirely conclusive (Gonzales de Olarte and Gavilano 1999; Morrison and Orlando 1999). One possible explanation for this is that employment for women may be a route to economic autonomy, but it may also aggravate tensions within the home, especially if the man earns less than she does or is unemployed. In the quantitative studies thus far, little attention has been given to the potential preventive effect of asset ownership by women on intimate partner violence, but there is evidence of such a relationship in a study carried out in a region of India. Panda and Agarwal (2005) show that psychological and physical violence against women is inversely related to whether the woman owns a home or a plot of land. This is an issue that warrants much more attention.

17 This same exercise was carried out for the case of Paraguay, based on the previously mentioned household survey from 2000-2001. In this case, no significant relationship was found between households where women had land ownership rights and the income of farm households. The difference in the results from these two cases may be explained by the very different structure of the farm sector (the farm households in Peru had an average of 3.46 hectares of land, compared with 18.4 hectares in Paraguay). Another factor is that in Peru 70.7% of the women landowners were married or in a de facto union, compared with only 55.8% in Paraguay (Deere et al. 2005). Therefore, in the latter case the size of the sample of couples used to investigate the bargaining power hypothesis (which by definition needs to focus on households with couples) is smaller.

The hypothesis on which most research has been done internationally concerns whether women's ownership of land has positive results for household wellbeing, and specifically the wellbeing of the children. The hypothesis investigated in this case is whether land ownership influences women's bargaining power to such an extent that their preferences regarding the distribution of household expenditure prevail or are taken into account.

The only study along these lines in Latin America is the one carried out by Katz and Chamorro (2003), which was based on rural surveys conducted in Honduras and Nicaragua. Holding household characteristics, the woman's and household's income, and the quantity of maize produced constant, they found that the amount of land owned by the woman is positively and significantly associated with the proportion of household expenditure that is devoted to food expenditures. On average, households where women have land ownership rights spend 5.5% more on food in Nicaragua and 2.5% more in Honduras than the households where women do not have land ownership rights.

Katz and Chamorro (2003) also examine the relationship between women's land ownership and the years of schooling completed by their children. For both countries, they found that women's ownership of land is associated with a positive and significant increase in their children's schooling, although in absolute terms the effect is small (0.10 years). It is worth pointing out that in both Honduras and Nicaragua, female-headed households are at a disadvantage in both aspects. Female headship is negatively and significantly associated with the proportion of household expenditure devoted to food and the years of schooling attained by the children.

These studies indicate how important women's ownership of land may be for the wellbeing of the household, the children and the women themselves. Obviously, there is a need to investigate these relationships in more Latin American countries and with more appropriate data – using surveys that include more information about decision-making within the household, for example. It is one thing to be able to link women's ownership of land to more beneficial outcomes for the household, and quite

another to explain how these outcomes are achieved, as they necessarily depend on the decision-making process within the household.

7. Factors that favour women's access to land ownership

The forms of land acquisition include through the family, the community, the state, and the market. In Deere and León (2001; 2003), based on an extensive review of the literature, we established that the gender gap in land ownership was related to the following factors: male preference in inheritance, male privilege in marriage, the tendency for peasant and indigenous communities to favour men in land distribution, as also happens in state land distribution programmes, and gender bias in the land market.

Based on our analysis of the quantitative data from six countries, we also argued that men and women acquire land in different ways. Although in absolute terms, men are favoured by inheritance constitutes the main means by which women come to own land.[18] For men, in contrast, the land market is more important than inheritance in most of the countries studied. The exceptions are Chile and Mexico, where inheritance is more important for men than the land market. In any case, for all the countries where information is available, inheritance is relatively more important for women than for men. Similarly, in these six countries the state is always much more important for men than for women as a means to acquire land through redistribution programs.

Here we will examine in more depth some of the recent legal changes and processes that have favoured land acquisition by women, either through land redistribution by the state or by means of reforms to marital or inheritance regimes.

7.1 Legal changes and in land redistribution processes

In Deere and León (2001; 2003), we showed that when they revised their agrarian reform legislation in the 1990s, a good number of Latin American countries took important steps in favour of gender equity. Several, for example, drafted their laws in non-sexist language or explicitly guaranteed that women and men have equal access to land. Even more importantly, some countries adopted what we term "measures of inclusion" to ensure that women would gain access to ownership of land. The most common measure, adopted at that time by Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua, is the joint allocation or titling of land to the couple.[19] Initially in the state land titling programmes in Brazil and Honduras, joint titling was not compulsory, but such became a requirement in the following decade. In the first decade of the 21st century, countries such as Panama and Bolivia also adopted mandatory joint titling.[20] Another important affirmative action initiative in the 1990s was the priority that countries such as Colombia and Nicaragua established in their legislation to favour female heads of household.[21] In the first decade of the 21st century, Venezuela also gave priority to female heads in its new agrarian reform law, as did Paraguay.[22]

18 This tendency was found in data for Brazil (in a sample of owners of farms more than 50 hectares in size); Chile (for a sample of beneficiaries of its land titling programme); Mexico, for the *ejido* sector; and Nicaragua and Peru, based on their household surveys. The only country where the land market turned out to be slightly more important than inheritance as a way for women to acquire land was Ecuador, but this information refers to women household heads with small farms rather than women landowners (Deere and León 2003: Table 3).

19 Some countries adopted joint titling in special land titling programmes, although it did not appear in their agrarian laws or because these were not reformed, for example, Ecuador and Peru (Deere and León 2001; 2003). Nevertheless, it is striking that in these programmes quite a large share of the titles were awarded jointly to couples. In the case of the PETT programme in Peru it was reported to be 50% (Trigoso 2006).

20 The information on Panama comes from Fuentes López, Medina Bernal and Coronado Delgado (2010). After summarising the most important legislative advances with regard to women and land ownership in Central America, Mexico, Colombia, Venezuela and the Dominican Republic, in Table 7 they present a summary of the countries that have agrarian legislation which includes joint titling for couples. Unfortunately, this table contains erroneous information about El Salvador, Mexico and Venezuela, as evidenced in the text itself. These countries have not adopted joint titling in their agrarian legislation; in El Salvador the proposed agrarian law was never approved.

21 This affirmative action measure was also adopted by Chile for its land titling programme, but was never enshrined in law (Deere and León 2001; 2003).

22 Agrarian Statute of Paraguay, Law N° 1.863/02, cited in Ferro (2010). The case of Venezuela is discussed below.

As we point out in Deere and León (2001; 2003), in the land titling programmes undertaken in the 1990s, women were the highest share of the beneficiaries in the countries that had adopted specific measures to include women. The problem is that very few of the new state programmes involve the distribution of new land; rather, they have focused on titling land that is already privately held. Furthermore, with the exception of Mexico, these processes have rarely been very far-reaching in quantitative terms.

Since 2000, the country that has made the greatest relative progress as far as land redistribution and gender equity is concerned is Bolivia. In the 1996 Law on the National Agrarian Reform Service, or INRA Law, this country undertook to apply "the criteria of equity in the distribution, administration, tenure and use of land in favour of women, regardless of their marital status" (see Bolivia 1996, Article 3). But this law did not establish concrete mechanisms for the inclusion of women. Such would have to wait until the administrative resolutions of 2001 and 2004 made the registration of the woman's name together with her husband's mandatory in the allocation or titling of land.

The Bolivian state's commitment to gender equity was strengthened further in Law 3545, the Community Redirection of the Agrarian Reform Law, enacted in 2006, which mandates – now with the force of law – joint titling of the couple in land titling and land distribution processes, regardless of whether the couple is married or cohabiting. What is more, it stipulates that the name of the woman must appear first.[23] The new constitution, which entered into force in 2009, also makes mandatory "the entitlement of women to access land and benefit from its distribution and redistribution, without discrimination due to their marital status or conjugal union" (Bolivia 2009, Article 395). The constitution also establishes that the state has a duty to "eliminate all forms of discrimination against women in access, tenure and inheritance of land" (ibid., Article 402). It is quite novel for the obligation to eliminate discrimination against women in land inheritance be included as a constitutional provision.

In the decade of 2000, both Ecuador and Venezuela also adopted new constitutions which establish that the state has a duty to eliminate discrimination against women in access to land. Ecuador's 2008 Constitution mentions that "the state will adopt affirmative action measures to promote real equality" and that the state "will regulate equitable access to land by rural men and women" (Ecuador 2008, Articles 11-2, 282, 334-2). But Ecuador does not yet have a new land law establishing concrete measures to include women in this new phase of land distribution.[24] With regard to Venezuela, the language in its 2001 Land and Agrarian Development Law is inclusive, as it explicitly considers "all Venezuelan men and women who have chosen rural work" as the beneficiaries of the new agrarian reform (Venezuela 2001, Article 13). Furthermore, this law stipulates that female heads of household must be "the priority beneficiaries of adjudication" of land (ibid., Article 14). But this law does not make any mention at all of the possibility of joint adjudication and titling of land to couples.

Unfortunately, gender-disaggregated data are not available on beneficiaries under the new agrarian reforms in Venezuela and Ecuador. Bolivia is the only country to have made considerable progress with regard to gender statistics. Table 7 presents a comparison of the beneficiaries in that country during two periods: between 1997 and 2005, and under the Evo Morales government, from 2006 to the end of 2010.

As the table shows, the pace of land redistribution increased considerably under the Evo Morales government, with the average number of beneficiaries per year leaping from 2,750 individuals in 1997-2005 to 26,545 in 2006-2010. This increase, which is related to the approval of the Community Redirection of the Agrarian Reform Law, was very

23 This law's regulations describe the specific mechanisms for including women as beneficiaries; see INRA (2008: 18).

24 In 1999, Ecuador's National Agricultural Development Institute (INDA) adopted Administrative Resolution N° 0017, which establishes joint titling for married couples and joint ownership for those in de facto unions who do not meet the requirements to be recognized as such in titling processes. But INDA did not set up a national information system to ensure compliance with this ruling. According to the interviews I conducted in INDA in November 2009, little was known about this provision and it was never incorporated into the institution's practices.

Table 7: Individual beneficiaries of the land titling process in Bolivia by sex, 1997-2005 and 2006-2010

Period	Women	Men	Couples	Total	Average per year
1997-2005	4.125	14.110	6.511	24.746	2.750
%	16,7	57	26,3	100	
2006-2010	32.060	49.319	51.346	132.725	26.545
%	24,1	37,2	38,7	100	
Total	36.185	63.43	57.857	157.471	
%	23,0	40,3	36,7	100	

Source: Compiled by the author with data from INRA (2008: Table 2) and Ramírez Carpio (2010: Table 1) for the more recent years (up through November 2010). Properties titled in the name of legal entities are not included.

positive for women, who benefited both individually and from the award of land to couples. Although men still received more individual land allocations (37.2%) than women (24.1%), they are no longer the overwhelming majority of beneficiaries as they were in the 1996 -2005 period. And when joint titling to couples is taken into account (counting each member of the couple as a beneficiary), of 184,071 persons benefited, 45.3% are women and 54.7% men. Nonetheless, it should be pointed out that in this new phase of Bolivia's agrarian reform the land titled to individuals comprises a minority of the land that redistributed. Between 2006 and 2010, only 14.1% of the land involved in the titling process was distributed to individuals (including couples), while 85.9% was titled collectively (inferred from Ramírez Carpio 2010: Table 3). Later on, we will analyse what collective redistribution means for women in terms of the possibility that they will effectively benefit from access to land.

One of the factors that explain the progress towards gender equity in Bolivia's new agrarian reform is the important role played by rural women's organisations, especially the "Bartolina Sisa" National Confederation of Indigenous and Rural Women of Bolivia (CNMCIOB "BS") – whose members call themselves "the Bartolinas"– and the Coordinator of Peasant Women of the Tropics organisation (COCAMTROP) – composed of women coca growers from the Chapare region of Cochabamba– in the governing party, the Movement to Socialism (MAS), and in the constitution-drafting process of 2006 and 2007 (Potter and Zurita 2009). One of the demands that arose during the Constituent Assembly was "land for women," which resulted in Articles 395 and 402 of the new constitution that was approved in 2009. This achievement also reflects the active participation of the Bartolinas and COCAMTROP in La Vía Campesina, the international association of small-scale farmers, and its global campaign for agrarian reform, which included a gender perspective (FNMCB-BS 2003). It is also worth highlighting the important role played by international cooperation agencies, both in training INRA officials and in the land allocation and titling projects themselves.[25]

As well as the three countries mentioned above – Bolivia, Ecuador, and Venezuela – another country that is also currently in the process of redistributing land is Brazil. Brazil was one of the pioneers in establishing that land distributed through the agrarian reform could be titled in the name of women, men, or couples, enshrining this in its 1988 constitution (Deere and León 2001). However, joint allocation and titling of land to couples was an option rather than a requirement. It was not until the demand for joint adjudication was fully taken up both by rural women's organisations and by other rural social movements (such as the Landless Movement) that the state responded, in 2003, with the internal regulations 981 of the National Agrarian Reform and Colonization Institute (INCRA), which required land to be allocated to couples who were married or in de facto unions.[26] This regulation was complemented

25 One noteworthy point is that women are the relatively higher proportion of beneficiaries precisely in those departments that have had land title clearing projects with a gender perspective, funded by international cooperation agencies (INRA 2008: 29).

26 For an analysis of the role played by the different social movements (organised rural women, the Landless Movement and CONTAG) in this achievement, see Deere (2003).

in 2007 by another that established that priority should be given to awarding land to female heads of household.

The positive impact of these new regulations is reflected in the data on the beneficiaries. In the First Agrarian Reform Census carried out in Brazil in 1996, only 12.3% of the beneficiaries were women. Of the 448,954 beneficiaries of the agrarian reform between 2003 and 2007, in contrast, 31.5% were women (drawn from Butto and Hora 2008: Table 1). But by 2007 the pace of the agrarian reform under the government of Luiz Inácio "Lula" da Silva was slowing down, calling into question whether the agrarian reform would continue to be a mechanism to increase women's access to land in the near future.

Among other legislative advances of the first decade of the 21st century, is also Colombia's Rural Women's Law (Law 731/2002), which stands out for having guaranteed that spouses abandoned by their partners would be given title to land previously allocated by the state. This law also reaffirms the state's commitment to give priority in allocating land to female heads of household and to women's groups and collectives. According to Fuentes López et al. (2010), these measures have not been very effective. Another innovation, as a result of the demands of organised rural women, was the creation in 2010 of a land bank exclusively for women in Nicaragua (ibid.).

7.2 Collectively-owned land

One of the major achievements by indigenous peoples, particularly in South America, has been the legal recognition of their ancestral lands that many of them have received in recent decades. This process has been quite significant in the Amazon regions of Ecuador and Bolivia, for example. As mentioned above, in the case of Bolivia the vast majority of the land subject to the new agrarian reform process has been precisely such collectively-owned land, which is now known as "rural and indigenous peoples' territory" (*territorio indígena originario campesino* - TIOC).[27] Since in these cases ownership is not allocated to individuals, but rather collectives, how can it be ensured that women's rights to land are respected in practice?

Collectively-owned land presents particular problems, because women and their rights to land can easily become invisible in the process of titling it (INRA 2008).[28] INRA reports that it has dealt with this problem by emphasising training, especially in the land titling projects regarding the TIOCs financed by international cooperation agencies. These projects have tried to ensure, for example, that women or their organisations are always present in the workshops on the land titling process and that the topics addressed include women's right to access land. One necessary condition, it seems, for these rights to become a reality is for women to be represented on their people's or communities' councils and that they participate in the leadership.

Bórquez and Ardito (2010) present an interesting case study that shows how women came to participate in the leadership of their communities in the Captaincy of Upper and Lower Isoso (CABI) in the eastern lowlands of Bolivia (department of Santa Cruz). The women of the Guaraní-Isoseño people were organised in mothers' clubs at the end of the 1970s by the Catholic church. By 1985 they had set up their own independent organisation, the Isoso Captaincy Women's Inter-Community Organisation (CIMCI). Over the course of the following decade, some of its leaders began to participate actively in the indigenous movement – led by the Confederation of Indigenous Peoples of Eastern Bolivia (CIDOB) and the Guaraní People's Assembly – that was demanding the demarcation and titling of indigenous territories. Gradually, the women from CIMCI gained increasing space in the political life of their people, thanks to their active participation in the campaigning and paperwork involved in creating the Isoso TCO and the success of some of their production projects (ibid.).

The qualitative leap came in 1998, when CIMCI proposed to the Captaincy of Upper and Lower

27 Before the 2009 constitution, these territories were known as native community lands (*tierras comunitarias de origen* - TCO).

28 For another example of how difficult it has been to gain recognition of women's rights to communal land, see the case study on Huancavelica, Peru, in Diez Hurtado (2010), and the discussion of this problem in Trigoso (2006).

Isoso (CABI) that women also needed to have their own authorities, with the same ranks as those in the men's organisation. This was accepted by the *capitán grande* (the traditional authority), and women have had a political structure parallel to that of the men ever since, with their own community and inter-community *capitanas* who are elected in an assembly meeting. According to Bórquez and Ardito (2010: 62-63), through CIMCI the *Isoseña* women have achieved "a stronger position for gaining access to land and its resources, which enables them to negotiate and promote strategies for the use and effective control of these and other assets in their territories, to the benefit of their own wellbeing and that of their families." Unfortunately, the case study does not provide much information to be able to evaluate this assertion. One would need to know much more about how decisions are taken about access to land and natural resources. For example, what is the process followed when a young couple gets married and needs access to a plot of agricultural land, or when a group of women needs access to land to undertake a business activity? Is the allocation of plots of land a joint decision taken by the *capitán* and the *capitana* of the community or the community's assembly, and do both men and women participate in the latter? And what happens if the *capitán* and the *capitana* disagree? What is the conflict resolution process? And what happens when a marriage breaks up? Is each individual then guaranteed access to a plot of land? We need to know whether women are involved in the processes to allocate resources such as land, in order to evaluate their participation and assess whether they really are exercising effective control over the land, to conclude that this has been a process of economic empowerment.

7.3 Changes in the legal framework and in everyday practices

Deere and León (2001), provide a detailed analysis of the marital and inheritance regimes in force at the end of the 1990s in 12 Latin American countries. Among the most important changes in the marital regimes, that they highlight is that most countries have gradually been strengthening women's property rights, both through reforms that have evened up their situation in consensual unions and formal marriages,[29] and through the adoption of the legal figure of the dual headed household – where both the husband and the wife can manage the household's community property.[30]

The great challenge in inheritance regimes is the rights of widows. According to the Luso-Hispanic legal tradition, spouses do not inherit from each other (i.e., they are not among the obligatory heirs). In the case of the marital regime of partial community property, when she is widowed, the wife has the right to half of the assets acquired by the couple during the marriage, but this does not represent an inheritance in itself, since it is her property right in the community assets. The only way a woman may inherit from her husband is if he makes a will naming her as his beneficiary in the share of the property that he is free to bequeath.

Until the late 1990s, the only countries that had placed the widow in the first order of inheritance should her husband die intestate were Bolivia, El

29 The only country that does not legally recognise the property rights of consensual unions is Chile, although in 1998 it recognised the inheritance rights of the children of such unions for the first time. Peru, which recognises the property rights of couples in consensual unions, does not give them the same inheritance rights as married couples (Deere and León 2001).

30 The countries where the husband is still considered to be the head of household include Chile and Nicaragua. Table 2.1 in Deere and León (2001) mistakenly includes Honduras among these countries; Honduras established dual headship in 1984. It is also debatable whether Ecuador should be included among the countries with dual headship, which is how it appears in this table, because although both the woman and the man may act as the head of household, it is assumed that the husband is the head of household unless it is declared otherwise when a couple marries (Article 180 of Ecuador's Civil Code); this article is contradicted by Ecuador's new constitution approved in 2008, which clearly establishes in Article 324 that both spouses manage the household's property. Bórquez and Ardito (2010: Table 1) include Argentina and Paraguay among the countries where only the husband manages the property of the marriage. I have not examined the case of Paraguay, but as far as Argentina is concerned it is debatable whether this country has dual headship, because although both the woman and her spouse can manage their own property and the assets acquired by the couple during the marriage, there is a "sting in the tail" in its Civil Code (Article 1276) which gives the husband the power to manage the assets when the origins of such assets cannot be determined.

Salvador, Peru, and Venezuela. In these countries, the widow automatically inherits a portion of the deceased spouse's property equal to the portion that a son or daughter receives. Because women have a longer life expectancy than men, such provisions are important to the economic security of widows. Since 2000, two more countries have reformed their inheritance regime to place the widow in the first order of inheritance should her husband die intestate, Brazil and Chile (Deere 2007).[31] The 2000 reform in Chile is the most innovative because it guarantees the widow or widower at least a quarter of the property of the deceased spouse; in other words, it opened up the possibility for the widow to inherit even more than the children if there are four or more of them.

In the literature on the subject, there is quite a lot of confusion about what the "marital portion" that is mentioned in the inheritance regimes of some of the civil codes.[32] This is a legal figure that dates back to Spanish colonial laws, initially designed to protect poor widows. In the civil codes that followed the model of Chile's 1855 Civil Code, written by Andrés Bello, this right was extended to both widowers and widows. However, it is a consideration that can only be claimed if the person lacks the necessary means to support themself and if the relative value of the property of the deceased and that of his/her spouse is significantly different (Deere and León 2001).[33] In our experience, the marital portion is little known and seldom claimed; furthermore, because it depends on the decision of a judge, it is not at all equivalent to the right to be in the first order of inheritance.[34]

Placing spouses in the first order of inheritance is important to strengthen the property rights of wives, because the wife is more likely to be widowed than the husband, and also because the man's individually-owned property is likely to be worth more than his wife's. This is due to the traditional male bias in inheritance and the fact that men have more opportunities than women to earn an income before they marry (and a higher income at that). Thus, the possibility that a widow can inherit her husband's individually-owned property, together with her sons and daughters, represents a potential change in the pattern of accumulation of assets in favour of married women. It might also strengthen widows' bargaining power with regard to control of the family land or business, since the part that they inherit from their husbands is in addition to their half of the community property of the couple.

There are some indications that inheritance patterns are changing in favour of widows in some countries, including some with inheritance regimes that are generally unfavourable to women, such as Mexico. In the titling programme for the *ejidos*, for example, the *ejidatarios* were required to make a will designating just one person as their heir. An almost equal share of the 14,099 cases reported designate the wife or long-term partner as their heir (38.5%), as designate a son (38.8%). Among those who designated children there was a marked preference for sons rather than daughters, with the latter accounting for just 8.8% of the cases (Deere and León 2003). The tendency to favour the wife may be related to recognition of the deterioration in traditional systems of social support for older people or, as Córdova Plaza (2000) argues, it may be associated with greater recognition of women's role as the principal farmer, given the high rates of migration abroad by men in recent decades.

31 In the countries where the spouse is in the first order of inheritance, if a person dies intestate, the spouse is also included as one of the obligatory heirs in wills. But there are differences by country. In Bolivia and Peru, the widow or widower shares the property with the children; in Chile, Venezuela, and Brazil, she/he shares it with the children as well as the parents of the deceased (Deere 2007: Table 3).

32 In Table 1 in Bórquez and Ardito (2010), for example, what the marital portion means in Ecuador, Uruguay, and Venezuela is presented in a very confusing way; furthermore, elements of the marital regime and the inheritance regime are mixed up.

33 f a man dies intestate, the countries where the marital portion represents the only possibility for the widow to inherit from her spouse if there are living children, include Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, and Nicaragua.

34 In our Ecuador study we interviewed a good number of lawyers and judges about the practice of the marital portion, and found that it was almost unknown. We only came across one female judge who had dealt with such a case, and this was only once in more than twenty years of experience on the court (Deere, Contreras and Twyman 2010).

In Deere and León (2001; 2003), our quantitative analysis, supported by the available case studies, led us to suggest that the general trend in Latin America was towards gender equity in land inheritance by sons and daughters.[35] This is based on the following factors: 1) the increase in literacy, including legal literacy, and therefore more knowledge of national laws that favour parity in inheritance by sons and daughters; 2) the move toward partible inheritance, itself linked to smaller family size; 3) an increase in migration by children of both sexes, thus reducing the number of potential heirs interested in continuing to farm, and 4) a growing shortage of land combined with a reduction in the viability of smallholder agriculture, which in turn is associated with less dependence on agriculture as the family's main income-generating activity. Clearly, much more research is needed, including qualitative case studies, in order to reach a better understanding of the factors that promote or hinder gender equity in inheritance by sons and daughters.

Finally, there is a great need for studies on rural women's level of legal literacy and the factors associated with their ability to demand compliance with their rights. Obviously for women to be able to accumulate assets such as land, it is essential that they know their rights and claim them, whether these rights refer to inheritance or to the division of marital property when separation, divorce, or widowhood occurs. In a qualitative study carried out in Ecuador, we found that patrimonial violence against women – i.e., violation of their property rights – was quite common, and the main reason for this was often their lack of knowledge of these rights or how to get them enforced; this was compounded by the high cost of lawsuits (Deere, Contreras and Twyman 2010). In this regard, it is worth highlighting the important role that women's organisations may play in sharing information and providing the support to strengthen women's bargaining power.

8. Conclusion: the major gaps in research

This essay has demonstrated that we are still a long way from knowing everything we need to know about rural women's access to land ownership, the conditions that facilitate their effective control over property, and the implications that land ownership has for rural women's bargaining power within the household. The information available does indicate that rural women who own land have a stronger fall-back position than those who do not. But, as we have seen, this comparatively stronger fall-back position does not always result in increased bargaining power or economic empowerment for rural women. Thus it is important to continue to investigate the factors that increase women's bargaining power and the inter-relationship between asset ownership, access to employment and other sources of income, the role of social capital – family or non-family support networks – and the processes that strengthen women's self-esteem.

The future research agenda should include the following topics.

As researchers, we cannot rest in our efforts in lobbying the national statistics institutes regarding needed improvements in the agricultural censuses and household surveys. For these instruments to be useful for gender analysis, it is necessary to gather gender disaggregated data on the ownership of assets, especially land, but also the principal residence, the farm animals, equipment, etc. It is crucial to take into account that an asset may have more than one owner; the possibility of joint ownership should always be left open, whether between members of the household or with non-household members. Household surveys need to collect information not only on the land owners, but also more detailed data on who is making the different farm decisions, and in both cases allow for the possibility of various people.

Only by improving the quality of quantitative data will we be able to make significant progress in understanding some of the relationships set forth in this essay, such as the relationship between women's ownership of land and role in household decision-making – whether with regard to farming or other activities, such as over expenditures or labour allocation. We have noted the urgency of studying the potential inverse relationship between women's land ownership and domestic violence – an important issue for the women's movement as well as for better public policies.

35 For a more extensive summary of studies on inheritance in the Andean countries, see Trigoso (2006).

There are still major gaps in our understanding of whether there are different degrees of bargaining power associated with a woman having individual as compared to joint ownership of land. It may be that the advantage of joint ownership is not something that can be appreciated in the short term, but rather, may only become evident when the marriage breaks up due to separation, divorce, or widowhood. Therefore, studies must not only compare forms of ownership (individual or joint), but also compare the situation of separated, divorced, and widowed women who own land with those who do not. This type of research would be very useful in informing the demands of the rural women's movement; i.e., whether it is sufficient to fight for mandatory joint titling or whether it is necessary instead to demand that women have land of their own.

Although progress has been made in the collection of gender-disaggregated data on how land is acquired, we must continue to increase our knowledge about the conditions that favour land acquisition by women. It would be very helpful if the LSMS surveys gathered information on land acquisition, to allow comparative studies between countries which have different marital and inheritance regimes. This type of information would help us to identify those regimes that most favour land acquisition by women. By deduction, for example, one would assume that, holding all else constant, women would be more likely to own land in countries with the marital regime of partial community property and the inheritance regime where spouses are in the first order of inheritance, together with their sons and daughters. But whether or not these conditions favour land acquisition by women also depends on other factors, such as how common it is for people to write a will rather than dying intestate, for example. If writing a will is the usual practice, and in countries where people can bequeath to anyone without restrictions, under what conditions do men give priority to their spouse in land inheritance, rather than their sons or daughters? It is important to have qualitative studies to answer these types of questions.

More qualitative information is also needed on the factors that influence whether a woman landowner manages her own farm, and on whether having effective control over the land leads to different outcomes for women compared with those for men, such as increased food self-sufficiency or more ecological agriculture, for example.

Finally, it is important to continue monitoring current state processes related to land redistribution or titling, and study whether the active role of women's organisations ensures more positive results for rural women. It seems that women's organisations have a particularly important role to play in the case of collectively-owned land. To what extent have these organisations been able to ensure that women exercise effective control over this land together with men? In those cases where they have been successful, we need detailed studies on how gender equity has been achieved.

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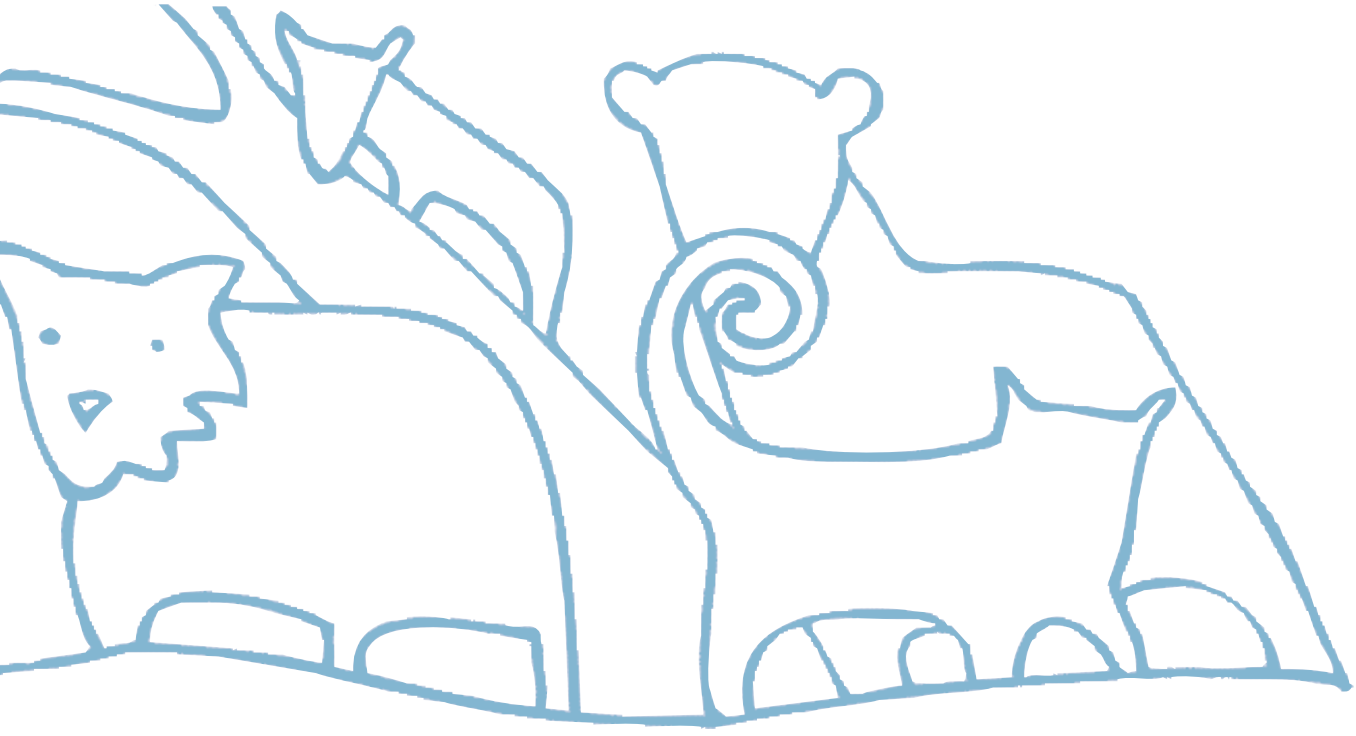
III. Building bridges: rural women, access to land and valuing territorial biocultural diversity



III. Building bridges: rural women, access to land and valuing territorial biocultural diversity

Claudia Ranaboldo[1]

1. Introduction

In this chapter I will analyse six research studies sponsored by the International Land Coalition (ILC) in 2009 and 2010. The research is based on case studies that examine different situations and experiences in Latin American countries, gathering secondary comparative information, especially with regard to legal frameworks, and using methods that are essentially qualitative. Some of these studies make it clear right from the start that a certain methodology must be applied. As Osorio and Villegas (2010: 8) point out, "the complex relationship between formal rights and actual practices regarding land 'can only be appreciated by means of case studies,' as Meertens (2006: 39) puts it. As we are well aware of these contradictions, which become more acute in the midst of armed conflict, we have chosen that methodological option for this study."

Likewise, these studies argue that analysis of the life histories of displaced women (Osorio and Villegas 2010) or experiences of access to land and natural resources with a strong organisational component (Bórquez and Ardito 2009) implies that it is key to look in depth at hierarchies of power, relations of domination and subordination, inequalities, interests and conflicts, as well as processes of negotiation, exchanges and alliances. It is from this perspective that the researchers sought to understand the strategies deployed, both in their cultural contexts and in their material conditions. To achieve this, they concluded that a qualitative methodological approach would be the most useful.

Case studies usually have their limitations when it comes to making comparisons, developing typologies and generalising conclusions. It is therefore better to use them as inputs that exemplify previously established theories. As the collection of studies sponsored by ILC did not seem to have an explicit analytical framework, throughout this article I will try to focus on some common themes that started to emerge in subsequent readings.

Bearing this in mind, before going any further it is important to point out that it is not my intention here to compile information or analyse the general situation of rural women in Latin America. This article is not a specialised examination of women's access to land; neither does it offer a conceptual framework on the subject of equal opportunities,

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equity, gender and rights, or an analytical discussion of gender categories.

We will leave aside the subject of land tenure because it is the central theme of the research studies analysed. Knowing that the authors of the other chapters in this book have already commented on the subject of land, the focus and critical path of this article will be to look at the case studies in order to identify some common elements related to changes in rural contexts in Latin America and the territorial approach, and the relevance of both for rural women. I will conclude by pointing out potentially useful areas for establishing and linking multi-institutional cooperation initiatives in all these areas. Therefore, this is a partial and focused interpretation which does not cover everything that could be said about the studies.

To carry out this task, I will also take into account the research studies and practices I have taken forward with a large number of colleagues and partners in the Rural Territorial Development with Cultural Identity Programme (DTR-IC),[2] as well as the reflections I have shared with the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)[3] and other organisations (Ranaboldo 2010).

Finally, it should be emphasised that the article seeks to offer inputs for discussion to ILC, particularly for its areas of work related to knowledge management for change and policy advocacy. However, since there is clearly renewed interest in the specific question of rural women among research centres, government bodies and United Nations agencies,[4] the aim is also to promote a dialogue with all those who are concerned with gender empowerment and public policies.

2. Preliminary remarks: some elements that are causing changes in rural contexts

In this section I will briefly describe some elements that are causing changes in rural contexts in Latin America – elements that have been identified as relevant in the ILC studies. Given the characteristics of this article, none of them will be addressed in depth. Our concern is merely to highlight their importance in shaping new scenarios that have an impact on rural women and on the development of their policy agendas.

2.1 Food crisis, security and sovereignty

All six ILC studies reveal a concern linking access to land with food security and sovereignty:[5] as the human right to food, "the emancipatory paradigm in Guatemalan farming," as Alonso and Mingorría (2010) put it; as part of the responsibility that rural women in Latin America take on with regard to food security, for which good management of limited resources such as forests, arable and pasture land is key, as Bórquez and Ardito (2009) state; as "food autonomy" affected by the armed conflict and displacement that have a particularly severe impact on rural women and children in Colombia, as Osorio and Villegas (2010) point out; and as one of the "new discriminations" in the current context, linked among other aspects to the global food crisis and its effects on rural households, especially

2 For more information on this programme (implemented by RIMISP with funding from the Ford Foundation), see: www.rimisp.org/territorioeidentidad-cultural2. The inter-continental Biocultural Diversity and Territories Platform has been set up, together with other partners (www.bioculturaldiversityandterritory.org).

3 Now part of UN Women.

4 Since 2010, there has been a proliferation of publications, meetings, declarations of intent and initiatives to promote equity and equal opportunities for women, especially rural women, from institutions such as the FAO, IFAD, the World Bank and IDB, among others. The studies taken forward by RIMISP (Paulson and Lund Team 2011) have been completed and will be published in 2013 with the title "Masculinidades en movimiento. Sistemas de género y transformación territorial" (Shifting masculinities. Gender systems and territorial transformation). UN Women, FAO, ECLAC and RIMISP have sponsored a collection of research studies on the territorial approach for the empowerment of rural women in Latin America and the Caribbean, and these will also be published in 2013. The Nuevas Trenzas Programme (Instituto de Estudios Peruanos with support from IFAD) has focused on carrying out research on the new profile of young rural women. Several governments in the region are discussing their policies or plan to do so, some with regard to the controversial subject of conditional cash transfers and the fight against poverty, others with regard to how gender and ethnic dimensions are dealt with in policies.

5 As is well known, these two concepts are significantly different. In this article we will refer only to the way in which the ILC studies address them.

rural women, and their capacity to cope with the problems resulting from this crisis, as described by Fuentes López et al. (2010).

These concerns coincide with international analyses (FAO-IFAD-ILO 2010) which found that the financial crisis and its consequences for income and employment had repercussions on women's contribution to the food security of rural households, and particularly the relative wellbeing of those households headed by women.

The food crisis has led to an unprecedented "repositioning" of agriculture and food security/sovereignty, after decades when these issues were marginal to the policy agenda – which also has implications for the proposals women are able to put forward. In comparison with a similar crisis in the 1970s, new influential factors have been identified:

a) The magnitude and implications of the global financial crisis that coincided with the food crisis (massive job losses and wage cuts, which increased the number of people living in poverty worldwide by 12 million, and the number of people living in absolute poverty by seven million).

b) Criticism of the capacity of markets – including food markets – to self-regulate, with an increasing number of countries seeking to achieve food self-sufficiency and sovereignty.

c) The expansion of the agricultural frontier reaching its limits and the buying up of massive areas of land in third countries by China, South Korea and the United Arab Emirates, among others.

d) The impact of the rise in food prices (70% in the case of maize and 40% for soya) as a result of the incentives provided by the developed countries for the production of biofuels.

e) The huge transformations in food systems and chains as a result of rapid urbanisation, technological and organisational changes, industrialisation and "supermarketisation" (Schejtman 2010).

Questions also arise about the food coming from agroindustry, its nutritional quality, and the impact of this type of production on climate change. Proposals have been made for developing economic models based on low emissions, more extensive agriculture, reduced ploughing, organic farming and localised food systems (Chiriboga 2010). Likewise, discussions are being held about strengthening the links between production styles, food and territories, and biodiversity conservation, the implementation of validated agroecological practices, and the valuing of local identities and cultures (Fonte and Ranaboldo 2007).

2.2 Territorial dynamics and inequalities

This is an issue not explicitly addressed in the ILC studies but, as we will see later, connections can be established if the subject of land is thought of in a broad and interrelated territorial context, which produces constraints but also opportunities for rural women.

One way of understanding these dynamics is to think of them as "processes of evolution in the economic structure, the institutional framework and the natural capital of rural territories, with the concomitant changes in development results (growth, social integration and environmental sustainability)" (RIMISP 2008).

The element of inequality in these dynamics is deeply evident in the region. According to the Territorial Dynamics Programme (www.rimisp.org/dtr):

> *There are rural areas of Latin America which, with the changes that have taken place in recent decades, have become noticeably more dynamic. This is expressed in economic growth, innovation, the deepening of democracy, social inclusion and an improvement in environmental governance systems. Often, just a few kilometres away, other rural areas are still marked by backwardness, economic stagnation, environmental deterioration, the persistence of poverty and inequality, and the predominance of old forms of power based on local strongmen. These differences between regions in Latin America and within many countries feed processes of political polarisation*

> *[…]. Inequality cannot only be addressed at the level of individuals, households or social groups. Attention must also be paid to the spatial equilibrium of rural development processes.*[6]

With this aim in mind, progress has been made in the Latin American region with a rural territorial development approach which, in some cases, has also permeated public policy guidelines.

According to Taborga (2011), with regard to territorial inequalities in the region, 33.2% of the population was living in poverty in 2007, and in rural areas this figure rose to 54% (UNDP 2010). Of the municipalities in seven countries (Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru) that have registered economic growth in recent years, "only 12% of them – accounting for about 7% of the population – have generated growth with greater equity (RIMISP 2010). Furthermore, 57% of the region's GDP is generated in 9% of the territory. In several countries, more than 50% of economic activity is concentrated in just one area of the territory (ECLAC 2010)" (Taborga 2011).

Now, how are territorial dynamics and inequalities linked to the gender dimension? How can we examine them analytically?

Paulson and the Lund Team (2011: 5) state that "gender is a sociocultural system that governs, structures, and gives meaning and power to the roles and relations of men and women in each territory. It influences the construction of social actors and coalitions, the functioning and composition of institutions, and the development, distribution and use of tangible and intangible assets in the territory." Paulson and the Lund Team (2011) explain the ways in which a territorial study can be framed:

> *The first, with the conventional framework of a development study, mainly tends to address symbolically masculine domains and thus produces only a partial analysis of territorial dynamics. The second, with a framework that focuses on women, mainly tends to address symbolically feminine domains, and likewise produces a partial analysis of territorial dynamics. The third includes gender structurally in the framework, making it possible to analyse a greater diversity of actors, institutions and assets that interact to produce, reproduce and transform the territory.*

Table 1 below sets out these three ways of framing such a study.

The ILC research studies intuitively located themselves between a type 2 and a type 3 approach. This is another reason why I thought it would be interesting to look at the territorial approach in this article.

Some of the studies contribute to the debate on factors that have been insufficiently analysed in territorial studies, such as the differences created by situations of conflict and violence, as well as their effects on women. Colombia is a case in point (as described by Osorio and Villegas 2010), where the civil war has provoked a high level of forced geographical mobility which in turn tends to reconfigure entire territories based on five different potential paths that rural women's lives might take: 1) resistance in the midst of war and abandonment, in territories that are emptying; 2) forced displacement and return; 3) forced displacement and relocation in a rural area; 4) forced displacement and relocation in an urban area; 5) forced displacement, relocation in an urban area and collective access to land.

Other studies focus more on a discussion of the relationship between women and natural assets (Bórquez and Ardito 2009) or outline some of the effects of migration in the cases/territories looked at (Almeida 2009).

However, it is clear that there are no qualitative-quantitative data available that would enable a more integrated study of these dynamics by looking at the dimensions of actors, institutions and assets. All this could be studied in more depth in the future, by linking the work of ILC with other research centres.

6 RIMISP is also studying the gender connotations of this, contributing not just to a new body of information about nineteen territories in Latin America but also to an unprecedented conceptual and methodological framework on this issue.

Table 1: Framing the field of study on territorial dynamics

	1. Conventional development study	2. Study of women	3. Gender-conscious study
Actors	The so-called "economically active" population	Women in the territory	People carrying out various productive, reproductive and communal activities
Institutions	Formal institutions: local and national governments, corporations, private institutions, NGOs providing extension, credit and development services	Mothers' clubs, kinship networks, NGOs working with women, microcredit projects for women	Various formal and informal institutions that drive and organise territorial dynamics with different actors in the territory
Assets	Money, land, modern technology, labour	Cultural identity, organisations dealing with health, nutrition and education	Various physical and natural socio-economic assets, and the diversity of knowledge and technologies associated with them

Source: Paulson and Lund Team (2011: 13).

2.3 Climate change

The ILC studies analyse the relationship between land and the impacts of climate change by looking at the opportunities and constraints for women's organisations and economic initiatives that are based on the management of biodiversity and agroecology (Bórquez and Ardito 2009). More generally, the issue is addressed by analysing the changes in ecosystems, access to water, and food security for rural households, placing emphasis on the negative effects on rural women.

Climate change raises questions about the necessary reconfiguration of policy approaches and measures associated with biodiversity conservation, food production and the mix of energy sources, and calls into question the conventional development paradigms. It also makes evident the unequal power relations between countries (Kakabadse 2009). The World Bank's Human Development Report (Development and Climate Change) warns of a series of specific problems in Latin America and calls attention to the fact that "economic growth alone is unlikely to be fast or equitable enough to counter threats from climate change, particularly if it remains carbon intensive and accelerates global warming." Hence its call to "act now, act together, and act differently."[7]

As a region, Latin America is closely involved in these trends, even though each country is processing them in different scenarios of change, where the leading role now being played by formerly excluded groups (such as indigenous peoples), the restoration of the role of the state, the reigning in of the free market, and major transnational projects and investment, among other factors, are taking on differing degrees of relevance.

In this context, analyses and initial proposals are emerging from organised women's networks, as in Central America. Castillo (2010: 4) reflects on:

> *[the risks and also the opportunities involved in] developing a paradigm that sees women not as vulnerable individuals but as subjects with rights, capacities and abilities […]. The solution requires a new social contract in which the care economy and social and human reproduction are responsibilities shared with the state and society as a whole […]. Climate change is not an exclusively environmental issue; on the contrary, it affects every area of life – economic, political, social and cultural – and requires an integrated and supranational approach that includes us all with our contributions and needs and in our diversity.*

As the reader will have noticed, explicit references to assets and diversities are emerging in this area too.

7 Main messages, p. 1 at: http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTWDRS/Resources/477365-1327504426766/WDR10-Main-Messages.pdf

2.4 Other key factors generating changes

At least another three factors emerge from the ILC studies. To a certain extent, these are inter-related and imply substantial changes in rural scenarios, with consequences for access to land in Latin America and the diversification of sources of employment and income for rural women:

a) Intergenerational changes: who is staying in rural areas, how, why, and with what prospects and strategies.

b) Migration and remittances, with their changing routes of geographical population movement and flows of cash resources.

c) Conditional cash transfers as poverty alleviation tools and the questions being asked about whether they are really able to drive development processes that are more sustainable and inclusive for women.

The studies do not offer an exhaustive analysis of these issues because their key theme is land. But it is positive that these factors are emerging as matters of reflection and concern. They point to the need for more in-depth studies, perhaps in partnership with other institutions, because they are echoed in other scenarios.

For example, for other regions of the world, the 2010 FAO-IFAD-ILO study identifies aspects such as the following as relevant for gender analysis in agriculture and rural employment: the segmentation of employment into agricultural and non-agricultural work; the lack of access, control and security with regard to different assets; international trade and the diversification of rural activities; migration, and the feminisation of these activities.

In the initiative taken forward by IFAD and the Institute of Peruvian Studies (IEP) with young rural women,[8] it is stated explicitly that these women have experienced significant changes in their capacities (with universal primary education and the expansion of vocational training), in their access to decision-making and political participation, in their income-generating strategies, and in their relations with institutions and sectoral and social policies. The new conditions and different profiles of young rural women are redefining the economic, social and political dynamics in which they are involved. However, if we look at public policies and development projects, particularly those that focus on poverty reduction, we find an out-of-date, rigid and uniform view whereby all rural women are portrayed as victims who are isolated, poor, lacking in resources and powerless.

In the territorial arena, it is not possible to find any synergy between initiatives to promote political participation, social inclusion and economic development. It almost seems as though these three dimensions were separate in women's lives. This tendency is even more evident in the case of indigenous and African-descent women (IEP 2010; Solana and Ranaboldo 2008; Urrutia 2007; Ranaboldo, Cliche and Castro 2006).

This is why it is important to update the existing body of information with regard to gender. There is also a need to develop new views and initiatives in the field of policies for farming and the main actors involved in it.

3. A cross-cutting reading of the studies: analytical axes for a territorial approach

Staying with the reading of the six ILC studies and maintaining as the backdrop the discussion about the elements that are changing rural contexts, in this section I will highlight some common analytical axes – all of them associated with the territorial approach – which will be discussed by drawing also on other studies and experiences.

3.1 Territory as the point of reference

Territory, understood as a social construction, is not an "objectively existing" physical space. Instead, it is seen as a set of social relations that give rise to – and at the same time express – an identity and ideas shared by multiple public and private agents. It is this identity that gives meaning and content to a development project for a given space, based on a convergence of interests and attitudes.

8 Institute of Peruvian Studies (IEP): *Young Rural Women (YRW) in Latin America in the Twenty-First Century*, 2011.

In most of the ILC studies, territory is a key point of reference; firstly, with regard to indigenous peoples. Bórquez and Ardito (2009: 15) quote Manríquez (2008):

> *Indigenous peoples share a common territory and maintain a social and mythical relationship with it, because it is not just a means of production but also the site of their collective memory, their history and their labour, where they perform their rituals of life and death; it guarantees their subsistence and their future survival as 'peoples.' Consequently, the territory is the natural space where indigenous peoples project their identity and their development, and connect with their ancestors and with future generations.*

Convention 169 of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) places emphasis on guaranteeing rights and opportunities. In the case of indigenous peoples, this is directly related to protecting their ancestral territories of origin and their own ways of life. In this context, it tends to be highlighted that the indigenous worldview considers land as much more than a material asset or resource that should be fairly distributed.

This view is immediately relevant with regard to women. As Bórquez and Ardito (2009: 28) state:

> *In a first look at the experiences documented here we can affirm that women's connection to the land and its resources is deep and complex; in other words, it goes beyond purely legal ties (land titles) and comprises a series of dimensions involving the use of the land, the natural resources – especially water – associated with a territory as a substantive component of it, and the construction of collective and individual identities around these territories and their resources.*

Diez Hurtado (2010), who studies the case of Huancavelica in Peru, underlines the direct relationship between land and natural resources (irrigated land, pasture land, rain-fed land). The availability of these resources locally and their use influences rural women's access to land. Together with other factors, this helps to shape women's personal and collective life journeys, in which the generational factor is also important.

Even in the studies which focus more on legal aspects, it is argued that:

> *The historical construction of ideas about property rights does not necessarily reflect the views that women have about land […]. Beyond being a physical setting, the importance of land for rural women lies in the arenas of production and reproduction. It acquires a profound and multi-faceted dimension which, by giving the place value and meaning, gives value and meaning to life itself, family life and everyday life. Thus, over and above land there is the construction of a territory and the consequent shaping of socio-cultural, political, subsistence, productive and environmental relationships.*
> *(Fuentes López et al. 2010: 58)*

Where the appeal to territory is surprising and, for the same reason, very suggestive, is in the studies that refer to a country with a high level of conflict and displacement – Colombia:

> *Local territories are constructed in the process of living in a place, a notion that includes dynamics of cooperation and also of conflict, which are necessary for the construction of any society. To live in a place is a process of territoriality that enables a sense of ownership of the territory to develop, through the necessary social relationships and exchanges between people and between them and the place. Thus, the ties of security, protection and trust are forged, but also those of pain, terror, prohibition, etc. (Osorio and Villegas 2010: 9)*

As we indicated in the previous section, because of their different life paths, women are a clear expression of new and forced processes in the shifting meaning of territories. The Colombian case also shows the limits of thinking about the territory from the solely "rural" perspective. "It is clear that the rural goes beyond demographic dimensions. Forced displacement is precisely what suggests multiple continuities of belonging and ties to the rural world, even when people are living in towns and cities," Osorio and Villegas (2010: 20) affirm. These new territorialities oblige everyone – but particularly displaced women – to engage in different processes of coexistence and reconciliation, revealing new and diverse conflicts

as well as the need to reconstruct economic strategies; at the same time, they reinvent multiple forms of knowledge and practices. In the midst of all this, their status as women and their family, community and political ties also take on new characteristics.

This centrality of the territory as a core referential unit that arises from the ILC case studies is highly consistent with other cross-cutting threads found in studies based on the territorial approach (Schejtman and Berdegué 2004), the intimate relationship between the territory and the construction/reconstruction of identities (Fonte and Ranaboldo 2007; Ranaboldo 2009) and the gender approach in relation to territorial dynamics (Paulson and Lund Team 2011; UNIFEM-MYDEL 2009; García and Gomariz 2004).

Why territory?

Because it enables us to think about coherent and inter-connected cultural, social and economic spaces rather than supposedly neutral areas defined by administration, politics, geography or public norms.

Because it enables us to actually visualise spaces made up of individuals and collectivities who recognise themselves as "belonging," and networks of relations that are not immune from conflict or manifestations of inequality and power.

Because a feeling of identity takes shape, and this is what defines the scope and limits of a territory. In many cases, this scope and these limits go beyond permanence and residence. This is precisely what is demonstrated by the "comings and goings" of migrants; the new markets for "nostalgia products"; people's desire to invest in their native soil; and the reshaping of identities and territories as a result of tragic events such as wars and episodes of violence.

3.2 Identities and biocultural diversity as territorial assets

Biocultural diversity

Biocultural diversity is the sum total of the world's differences, regardless of their origin. The concept includes biological diversity at every level and cultural diversity in all its manifestations, from individual ideas to complex cultures and, above all, the interaction between them all.

Biocultural diversity derives from the thousands of ways in which humans have interacted with their natural environment. Their co-evolution has generated local knowledge and knowledge systems: a significant wealth of experiences, methods and practices that help different societies to manage their natural and cultural resources.

The loss of biocultural diversity affects local communities' ability to adapt to global changes.

Once again, the ILC studies offer inputs for reflection on this issue. Osorio and Villegas (2010: 8-9) point out that:

> *Land and territory cannot be thought of outside the cultural and symbolic tapestry that includes language, the beliefs from and with which social reproduction processes are produced and maintained, and how a society is regulated. The uses of the territory make up a substantial part of everyday life and give the place value and meaning […]. With spatial practices, we build our own individual and collective meanings and significances, depending on our motivations and intentions. The relationship with the place is established through the concrete and symbolic loci of human practices. We are speaking, then, of agricultural practices, rituals, festivals, domestic practices, etc. This is where our group identities, areas of trust and distrust, collective memories and histories are shaped.*

For rural women, the importance of the place where they live goes beyond the physical setting. It is the source of life and a production factor. This profound and multi-faceted dimension gives meaning to their lives and their role in the family group, constituting their identity. "Thus, reconstructing the social fabric and life projects requires stability and emotional recovery at the individual and the collective level. […] It is necessary to take forward the reconstruction of social and political networks that provide points of reference for the sense of belonging with regard to cultural and neighbourhood identities" (Osorio and Villegas 2010: 67).

The identities expressed by indigenous peoples, such as the q'eqchi in the Polochic valley in Guatemala, are undergoing reconstruction processes – following massacres and military repression – based on the need to form communities and institutions that can support and protect people facing upheavals or changes in the socio-environmental and political context (Alonso and Mingorría 2010).

Outside of the acute conflict scenarios, Fuentes López et al. recognise that in Latin America "rural women are bearers of a series of skills and knowledge that can be considered an important asset in their favour. In several countries, women's organisations have taken forward experiences that enable them to take advantage of their knowledge and cultural assets, strengthen their organisations and create favourable conditions for the exercise of their rights" (2010: 73).

The same practices of access to land and control over its use by women in Mexico's *ejidos* are defining different types of identities, depending on whether they are full *ejido* members (*ejidatarias*), landholders with informal rights (*posesionarias*) or residents (*avecindadas*), and this in turn influences their varied livelihood strategies (Almeida 2009).

The information on the different strategies shows that access to land can undoubtedly be a key factor in the construction of citizenship and the empowerment of rural women as holders of rights and the protagonists of changes. However, it is not sufficient to look at control – in legal or customary terms – over land as a resource. It is also necessary to take into account control over other resources, particularly natural ones. Thus, land is seen as "a right linked to other assets" that enable it to acquire a real value for improving women's living conditions and strengthening their capacities as social actors. This triggers new processes of personal and collective identity affirmation (Bórquez and Ardito 2009).

These statements connect with a school of thought which postulates that sustainable development processes will be more sustainable and inclusive if the identities and biocultural diversity present in rural territories are recognised and valued.

Latin American studies (Ranaboldo and Schejtman 2009) emphasise precisely this "wealth in diversity." Our cultural and natural heritage in Latin America is what makes us different. In fact, many poor territories in the region are endowed with a rich, abundant and distinctive cultural and natural heritage, which is expressed in many forms, both material and non-material. What stands out particularly are the knowledge and practices of rural communities, from South America (Argentina, Chile and Brazil, with territories influenced by different waves of migration from Europe) and the Andes (Bolivia, Peru and Ecuador with their indigenous legacy), to the Caribbean and Mesoamerican region, including the Atlantic coast of Colombia, Honduras, Guatemala, Costa Rica and southern Mexico, with their African-descent population. This mixture of peoples suggests that one of Latin America's most potent strengths may be precisely its diverse *mestizaje*.

This is a region that has the opportunity to look at itself and be looked at from outside not just because of its gas, its oil, its monocrops of soya, fruit and flowers, or because of the incursion of large logging companies or multinationals farming salmon. In Bolivia, for example, interest in the alternative use of natural resources has recently awakened, seeking to get away from the historic pattern of development based on the unsustainable extraction of raw materials (UNDP 2008). Also, with the new constitution, there are seemingly favourable political scenarios for valuing diversities (Ranaboldo 2009).

Opportunities are emerging linked to the fact of being different, of not necessarily having to submit

to the standardisation of tastes and smells, or the cultural dynamics of globalisation. Paradoxically, it is in globalisation that these diversities can find their raison d'être, and where they can expand and increase their value: crafts, music, festivals, gastronomy, archaeological sites, churches and historical monuments, areas of natural beauty, scenery and rural communities' ways of life, but also typical local products such as quinua and wine, potatoes and cheeses, *quiwicha* and ham. Much of the "gastronomic boom" in Peru is linked to the building of a connection between biodiversity and food security, creating new sources of income and employment in a multiplicity of value chains, fuelled by a national identity and regional identities forged by the love of food.

In a region that is not just a hotbed of violence and street crime, authoritarianism and chaos, but a multi-diverse space with enormous social capital, women and men are fighting for a life characterised by more dignity and respect; and they have their own, decentralised and autonomous forms of collective governance and citizen participation.

As Ranaboldo and Schejtman (2009: 9) point out: "significant potential has been identified in relation to the linking of cultural assets with natural resources, based on innovative strategies for valuing the territory, involving the native population and their knowledge, without being limited to a solely conservationist approach. Some of these territories are located in globally strategic sites of biodiversity, in or very near national parks and nature reserves."

The relevance of these issues has been demonstrated recently in international settings as well.[9] Consideration of the cultural and biological diversity of a territory implies using complex approaches that must take into account a multiplicity of actors, roles and forms of knowledge. Managing this diversity requires mobilising local actors and involving them in identifying local assets and in decision-making (not just consultation) throughout the process, right from its initial phases.

In this framework, increasing the value of human capital also means confronting the problem of gender inequalities to liberate women's human, business, cognitive, organisational, social and relational capacities. Certain guidelines need to be taken into account when thinking about new ways to undertake territorial development. These include: avoid thinking in terms of the same solutions for every territory, failing to take biocultural diversities into account; refuse to let ourselves be guided only by the concept of per capita income; and cease to see rural areas as suffering from deficits – cultural deficit, knowledge deficit, human capital deficit – or as territories that are "an empty sack to be filled with technological and bureaucratic solutions planned from outside the territory" (Fonte 2010). This is also linked to recent analyses of the connections between poverty and biodiversity (Tekelenburg and Ríos González 2009) and sustainability as the legitimisation of a new value (Da Veiga 2011).

3.3 Developing inclusive territorial strategies

Valuing biocultural diversity

The recognition and valuing of biocultural diversity refers to:

1. Material and non-material heritage and its multiple expressions.
2. The practices, traditional knowledge and innovations of rural communities in combination with inputs from outside.
3. The opportunities that exist for linking cultural and natural assets in rural territories.
4. The development of a distinctive brand for rural territories to position their products and services in different markets.

9 At the conference entitled "The territorial vision in agricultural and rural policies: an international exchange," held in Rome on 4-5 November 2010, organised by INEA and DTR-IC/RIMISP. The dossier is available at: http://www.rimisp.org/proyectos/seccion_adicional.php?id_proyecto=188&id_sub=575. Also at the International Forum on Sustainable Territorial Development, organised by EPAGRI and a set of Brazilian institutions with DTR-IC/RIMISP and INEA, held on 21-24 November 2011 in Santa Catarina. http://www.foro-santacatarina2011.org/

5. The connection between public and private actors, networks and enterprises, and between the rural and the urban, paying particular attention to the role of medium-sized towns.

It is interesting to note that half of the ILC studies we are analysing refer specifically to initiatives closely linked to the valuing of identities and cultural and natural assets – in short, to different forms of biocultural diversity – that are already under way in Latin America. These experiences already exist and are multiplying all over the continent.

Bórquez and Ardito (2009: 88-89) state:

> *In the experiences studied, the ability to develop alternative livelihoods linked to the territory represents a strategy that has been shown to be broadly effective. What is relevant in these cases is the capacity to link sustainable economic initiatives at the territorial level and the ability to forge alliances with government bodies and non-governmental organisations that can provide access to funding, training and market opportunities consistent with the social, cultural and economic expectations of women, their families and their communities. In particular, agroecological production with cultural identity and community tourism based on the valuing of the territory's cultural and natural assets are activities that can turn out to be relevant in achieving gender equity and effective access to land by rural and indigenous women.*

In the words of Bórquez and Ardito, much of this is linked to the development of "a specific territorial project."

Fuentes López et al. (2010) describe processes that are focusing on strengthening rural women's organisations and culture. A case in point is the Regional Support Programme for Rural African-Descent Communities in Latin America (ACUA), which works in seven countries in the region (Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Panama, Peru and Venezuela) to contribute to the valuing of the cultural assets of African-descent communities in Latin America, and especially those of women. There are also economic enterprises, developed locally with public support, that seek to promote tourism and give value to various natural and cultural attractions in territories recovering from civil war or where displaced women live (Osorio and Villegas 2010).

In Latin America, cultural heritage and natural resources are often paradoxically associated with segments of the rural population – such as women, indigenous peoples, African-descent communities and smallholder farmers – considered poor. Why is this "wealth" not leading to a substantially better standard of living for all of them?

Territorial research and practices (Ranaboldo and Schejtman 2009; UNIFEM-MYDEL 2009) reveal processes that are still in the fairly early stages, with some unresolved situations, particularly with regard to women. It has been observed that the discourses coming from the state, development projects and even territorial actors themselves are often characterised by conservative, immobilising positions that seek to preserve the status quo. We are still hearing the old discourse about "women who are close to nature being responsible for transmitting cultural values." There is a tendency to magnify women's enterprising nature with the aim of enhancing the value of culture and the environment.

There is undoubtedly a great deal of activism around the production of craft objects, the management of tourism and other types of services, the development of production and post-production chains around traditional, locally-sourced products, and hundreds of other initiatives in which women are playing the leading role. Women's ways of organising and taking decisions are also highlighted, placing emphasis on their tendency to act collectively. Sometimes, there is a guarantee of higher incomes and an increase in employment opportunities for the workforce, the diversification of risks, raised self-esteem as a result of knowledge being used well, and growing levels of organisation.

However, this does not always or automatically translate into an equitable redistribution of domestic roles, greater collective power, public recognition of women's knowledge and

capacities, etc. On the contrary, the payback from business success is often an unacceptable overload of work; conflicts within the family, and violence exercised on multiple levels; political participation only at times of all-out struggle; archaic forms of male and female leadership; traditionalist organisations, etc.

To resolve these and other contradictions is a strategic matter, because they can cancel out the potential of a development thought of in terms of territory and biodiversity. One key factor is how young people can be placed centre-stage in these changes.

4. Building bridges

In this article I have assumed from the outset that access to land by rural women is the core issue, in the belief that this asset is key when it comes to analysing certain factors that are generating change in the rural context, such as the food crisis, territorial inequalities and climate change. At the same time, we cannot avoid referring to the issue of land when we consider inter-generational rural change and certain strategies that rural people tend to practice (such as migration), or public policy measures (such as conditional cash transfers and ways to combat poverty).

The essential point made in our discussion, however, has been that a territorial approach based on inclusive strategies to value identities and biocultural diversity can make a valid contribution that complements demands related to access to land and control over its use in the case of rural actors and, in particular, women. It is not a question of choosing between one approach or another, or between one area of emphasis or another. Instead, they should be linked together from the synergetic viewpoint offered by the concepts of "territory" and "territorial development."

The convergence between the six studies sponsored by ILC[10] and other sources allows us to think about new pathways that imply closer connections between research, capacity-building and influencing public action, on the one hand; and strengthening inter-institutional collaboration, on the other.

The following areas of "convergence" were thought of initially as part of a discussion with UNIFEM (Ranaboldo 2010), now part of UN Women, the United Nations agency for gender equality and women's empowerment. I believe that the initiatives of this agency and others mentioned previously, together with the work promoted by ILC, offer an important opportunity for these new pathways.[11]

4.1 The relevance of applied research: useful and influential knowledge for informed decision-making

The current international and Latin American context and the challenges that arise from it imply the need to consider certain issues that were indicated in the first section of this article as relevant for women's political and factual agenda, together with access to land and control over its use. In order to combat poverty and promote sustainable development, it is particularly urgent to find policy responses to food sovereignty issues, local production systems, and multiple strategies to cope with climate change. Thus, a broader, more integrated, territorially-based approach is proposed. Among other aspects, this then implies thinking again about women's organisations and enterprises and their links with economic development, environmental sustainability and social inclusion, on the one hand; and making connections between local settings and the spaces in which the international policy agenda is defined, on the other.

To systematise and produce useful and influential knowledge, what is needed is a solid body of information and consistent and critical analyses emerging from applied research that is based on: 1) a demand for this type of knowledge, which

10 These are the conclusions that arise from the author's personal reflections after analysing the ILC studies. Many links can be found between these studies, but their aggregation and synthesis – as a proposal for the future – are the author's sole responsibility.

11 Some of these topics have been taken up again recently in the above-mentioned study on the territorial approach for the empowerment of rural women in Latin America and the Caribbean, to be published by UN Women/FAO/ECLAC/RIMISP in 2013.

should be prepared and fed into right from the start with different actors and spaces; 2) a cross-disciplinary and innovative conceptual and analytical framework; 3) a body of territorial experiences that are suggestive and feasible to systematise and measure based on a few relevant qualitative and quantitative indicators; 4) the capacity to design potent messages and transmit them constantly throughout the research process to different arenas of decision-making and action (at local, national and regional levels), clearly showing the strategic value that the research may have. In particular, there is a pressing need to update the way we look at young rural women, bearing in mind the factors that are influencing the emergence of new territorial scenarios where they can play a much more proactive role than previous generations.

The approach of valuing biocultural diversity seems to be the most suitable one, both in order to "come down to earth" in territories through the idea of potentials rather than deficiencies, and to make connections with thematic areas that are being worked on today in Latin America – competently and with a gender focus – by various organisations (access to land and control over its use by ILC; identities and cultural heritage by the DTR-IC/RIMISP Programme and the inter-continental Biocultural Diversity and Territories Platform; young rural women by IEP and a set of research centres and universities; the territorial approach and empowerment of rural women by UN Women, ECLAC, FAO and RIMISP, to mention just a few examples). This implies making connections between different organisations, some of which are focusing on gender issues and others that are part of wider networks.

Research on its own does not automatically make proposals or contribute to influencing public action. Therefore, the development of advocacy capacities and platforms is a key element in a combination of factors that should be interwoven. In this framework, the communication factor (what is being communicated, to whom, for what purpose, and how) is perhaps the fundamental stimulus for processes that seek to trigger a virtuous circle from the micro to the macro, and vice versa.

Research on the territorial experiences that are under way should show their results and effects and use these to reflect on their real potential for scaling up. Applying a small set of relevant indicators that measure women's empowerment in its different dimensions could become good and exemplary practice in development projects and programmes with a gender focus.

This sort of research and these bridges cannot come from just one institution. The essential starting point is to set up consortia or partnerships between different institutions with different skills, approaches, and areas of influence. It is necessary to "positively infect" gender-specialist studies and organisations from other areas, and vice versa. Today, gender studies alone are not seen as forceful or consequential unless they are able to engage in dialogue with other networks. Equally, rural, territorial, economic, and other similar studies are wasting huge opportunities by not engaging seriously in reflection inspired by gender variables.

4.2 Capacity development: recognising and valuing local talents and knowledge systems

Territorial experiences reveal a wealth of different approaches, mechanisms and tools that are useful for combating poverty and for territorial development with equity; these approaches are being validated or have already proven their worth in practice. Several experiences have great potential to become flexible and user-friendly models that can be deployed in other contexts. The question is: how do we reach those other contexts, in a short space of time, with a reasonable amount of resources, in an agile way, and with a view to scaling up? It is necessary to get beyond the level of micro pilot projects, those few "fortunate islands," to consolidate scenarios where the changes are far-reaching and influence public policy orientations.

Furthermore, there clearly are programmes and projects which, in terms of capacity development, are no longer limited to scattered and unconnected training activities but have equipped themselves to facilitate and accompany local systems of innovation with a focus on women. A good example of these is the one offered by Ardito and

Bórquez (2009), who describe the learning routes promoted by PROCASUR on issues that concern women.[12]

It is true that this range of good experiences and good tools is scattered and not easily accessible, but no desk-bound inventory, appraisal or systematisation has so far solved the problem of "knowledge that travels." We need to be more pragmatic and find shared spaces in which we can build a proposal for capacity development that manages to combine more academic online and face-to-face methods with lived experience and territorially-based analysis. It is with this in mind that DTR-IC/RIMISP has been promoting diploma programmes on these themes with different Latin American universities. These are spaces in which local teachers and academics can come together and discuss the concepts and the literature, based on territorial experiences. They also enable women and communities with fewer opportunities to obtain an academic qualification based on their accumulated knowledge, without prior study necessarily being a requirement. We could also think about the usefulness of a common platform for design and implementation that reciprocally "pollinates" itself, acquiring greater added value from the synthesis thus obtained.

The question of the recognition, valuing and accreditation of local talents and knowledge is a challenge that cannot be evaded and represents a strong criticism of the status quo. For this same reason, it must not be left to spontaneous processes, especially if women are the main stakeholders.

4.3 Building advocacy platforms based on inter-institutional synergies and collaborative work

It is necessary to develop an approach to public action that is not limited to merely technical or legislative matters or to state policies alone. The aim should be to achieve political and institutional changes that involve multiple actors and settings, reversing the factors implicated in inequality, exclusion, and the distribution of power and assets.

The time of structured and formal networks has left space for other types of collectives, based on intense flows of information, shared interests, trust that develops gradually, and joint investment. This does not require assembly meetings, steering committees or rigidly structured mechanisms.

There is evidence that the most powerful platforms are those that help to build territorial, national and international coalitions which are able to position an approach or an issue and committed to finding resources and ways to address it, in this transition from micro to macro, involving both the public and the private sector. Women's movements have a lot to teach others, especially in the international arena, with their lobbying capacity and their policy proposals. Various coalitions that are emerging from territories will be able to promote substantial changes if they include women in a much more structured and sustained way.

Another idea that is taking shape is that of making connections between different regions of the world in a new form of South-South cooperation, and building bridges between specific regions, such as Latin America and Europe, that involve peer-to-peer exchanges to influence new political scenarios.

An organisation like ILC, with its focus on the exercise of rights, knowledge management and policy advocacy, could become a strategic ally of UN Women and other institutions whose mandate is to achieve gender equity and women's empowerment.

This is where the challenges lie. To paraphrase the maxim of the initiatives to counteract the threats resulting from climate change, it is time to "act now, act together, and act differently."

12 For example: the routes organised in previous years on political participation (UN-INSTRAW and PROCASUR), and rural territorial development with cultural identity (DTR-IC/RIMISP, PROCASUR and multiple partners in Latin America, Europe and North Africa).

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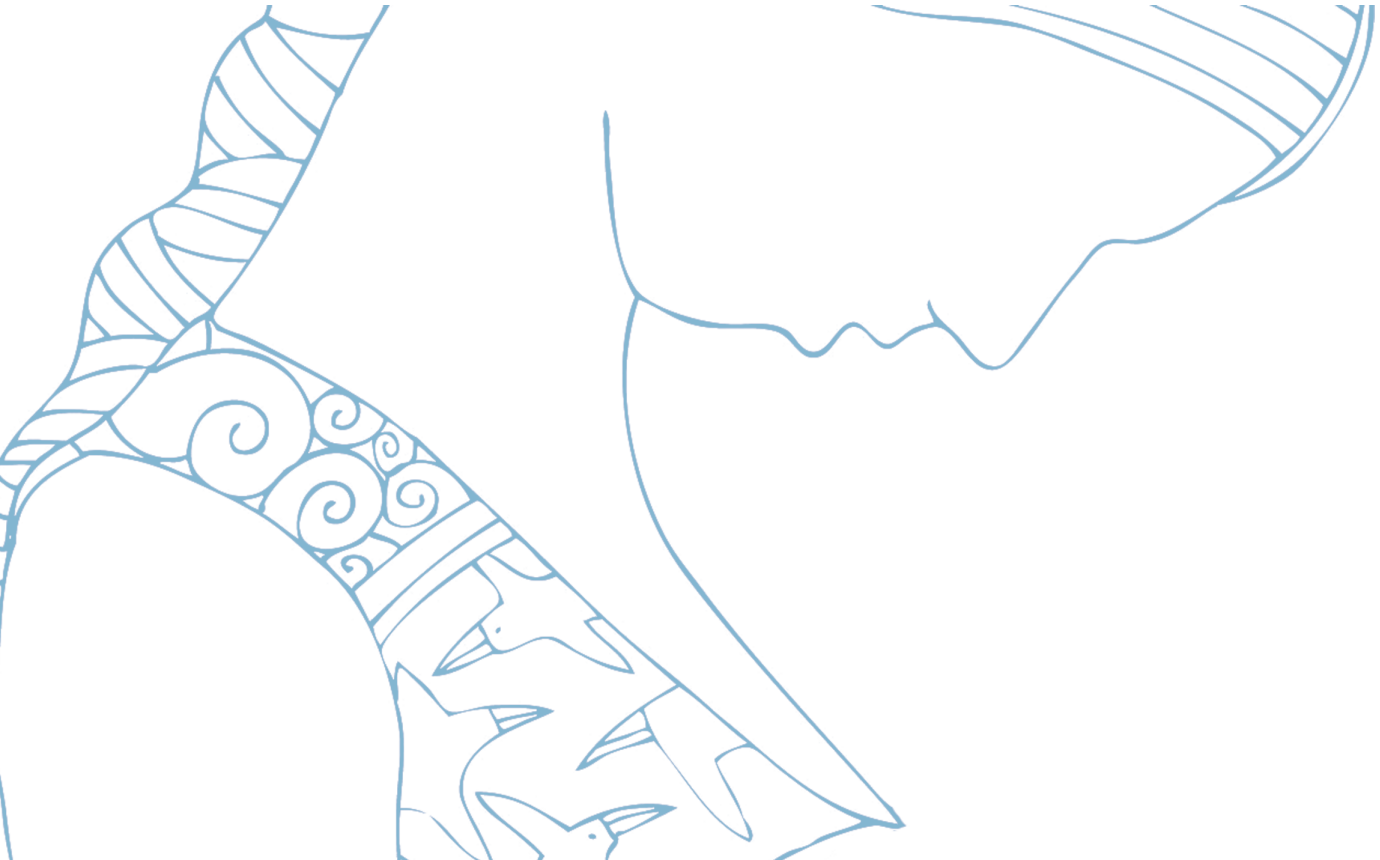
IV. Latin American discussion forums: weaving reflections, experiences, and alliances



First Latin American Discussion Forum "Rural women: rights, challenges, prospects"

For three days, 7-9 July 2010, in the city of Bogotá, more than 65 women from ten countries in South and Central America and fifteen departments of Colombia – the host country – participated in a series of talks and discussion panels about women's access to land and control over its use, the promotion of women's rights in the rural context, the presentation of risk reduction strategies, productive and economic enterprises run by women, and the links between women's land rights and their emancipation process.

The event that brought them together was called the International Discussion Forum on "Rural women: rights, challenges, prospects," and it was organised by the *Centro de Investigación y Educación Popular - Programa por la Paz* (CINEP- PPP), together with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the International Land Coalition (ILC).

Its purpose: to enrich knowledge about the processes whereby women who live in rural areas emancipate themselves from poverty and exclusion, and draw up an inventory of policy and technical tools that enable women to eradicate discrimination and exercise their civil, economic, social, and cultural rights.

What follows is a summary of the contributions made in the discussion forum's different activities.

Talks on "Women's access to land and control over its use in Colombia and Latin America"

Magdalena León, an academic from the National University of Colombia, presented a general overview of gender inequality in Latin America. She pointed out that there is a series of male preferences in inheritance practices and that inheritance is still the way women most often gain access to land in the region. She also stated that women are at a disadvantage compared with their male peers in accessing the land market due to gender differences in employment and pay, which weakens their ability to save and their potential creditworthiness. She described the male bias that exists in the use of land, with various discriminatory usages and customs that hamper women's effective use of land. Finally, she stressed that although land ownership is an important element that gives women more bargaining power in different aspects of their lives (decisions in the household, about money, etc.), agrarian reform processes have not benefited women and, paradoxically, most awards of land to women took place after the reforms.

Gilma Benítez, from *Marcha Mujeres Campesinas*, addressed the issue from the perspective of Colombia's small farmers' movements, which are noticing how their economy is becoming weaker due to the free trade agreement between Colombia and the United States and the policies to support large shopping centres to the detriment of small-

scale agriculture, despite the important role it plays in food production at the regional level. Finally, the activist pointed out that the requirements for accessing awards of land are not consistent and make this process difficult for women.

Ana Paola Tinoco, a consultant with the Presidential Council for Equity for Women in Colombia, described how her office has been working on gender issues and the exclusion that results when people are displaced. Through the Colombian Rural Development Institute (INCODER), the official said, subsidies have been provided to small producers so that they can acquire land for the displaced population, especially women displaced by the violence.

Panel I: "Promoting women's rights in the rural context"

In the discussion on promoting women's rights in rural contexts, held on 8 July, participants presented various experiences involving information, education, and respect for rural women's rights, and the work of grassroots organisations that are defending those rights and campaigning for access to justice.

Patricia Rojas from Argentina presented the experience of the Legal Support Group for Access to Land in Argentina (*Grupo de Apoyo Jurídico por el Acceso a la Tierra de Argentina* - GAJAT), an organisation that runs a programme to strengthen indigenous leaders and provides legal support to groups defending their rights to ancestral lands. Rojas said that access to land is the right that is most often infringed in Argentina, due among other things to the fact that it does not form part of government policy. She pointed out that the challenges for women to exercise their rights to land include: knowledge of their rights, bringing a political dimension to their demands, and getting organisations to coordinate their work effectively. Finally, she commented on the process of land moving into foreign hands (when large areas of land are bought up in the name of foreign owners) and the reduction in family farming that the country is experiencing. According to the panelist, these situations are leading to the resurgence of struggles for land by indigenous and rural communities.

Lea Montes, a representative of the Nicaraguan Institute for Applied Research and Local Development Promotion (*Instituto de Investigación Aplicada y Promoción del Desarrollo Local de Nicaragua* - NITLAPAN), presented the experience of a land fund supported by her organisation which has enabled rural women – under pressure from high rates of emigration and land grabbing processes – to acquire land they can work. She also stressed that the state should take responsibility for ensuring that land policies are designed and applied, rather than leaving it to civil society organisations. She also said that many women who have managed to access land have then been obliged to sell it and have lost their land due to the many different problems they have to deal with in their households and communities, which prevent them from working their land effectively.

Claudia Erazo, from the "Yira Castro" Legal Corporation in Colombia, described the experience of 19 families from the community of Chibolo who were displaced by the paramilitaries in the 1990s. When they went back to their land, they found that the people who had expelled them were now the new owners. Nevertheless, the community got organised to defend their land rights by means of a judicial protection action. In the end, the families managed to return to live on their old land.

Panel II: "Risk reduction strategies"

This panel analysed the situation of vulnerability experienced by rural women in the region and discussed public policies aimed at reducing risks. Some successful experiences in this area were also presented.

Epsy Campbell, from the Afro-Costa Rican Women's Centre, pointed out that rural women in the region are a vast and diverse group that includes categories such as indigenous, *campesina*, African-descent, and *quilombola*, among others. She mentioned some of the aspects involved in rural women's situation of vulnerability: 1) inequality in access to land and security of tenure, 2) little recognition of women as producers, 3) not having identity documents, which restricts access to credit, advice, and markets, 4) the fact that women

work in productive activities that generate less income than the work done by their male peers, and 5) women's productive and reproductive responsibilities, which mean that they have a longer working day. She also pointed to some key areas of work that could be considered in future strategies: strengthening women's organisations, promoting their participation in political settings, and support for processes to strengthen public institutions that address the situation of rural women and promote rural development.

Veruschka Silvetti, from Fundación Capital, commented on the risks that rural people are exposed to when they are unable to exercise their rights as citizens due to the lack of identity documents, irregularities in family income, or capital depletion due to unforeseen events. She argued that connecting people to the formal financial system through savings accounts and access to low-cost micro-insurance policies are ways to help them to manage risk more effectively.

Olga Zapana shared her experience in the Sierra Sur Project in Peru (an initiative supported by the Peruvian government and IFAD), where women form savings and self-help groups and receive basic financial education. "To start with, our husbands didn't want us to save. 'They'll only steal it from you,' they said. But not any more. We have our own savings accounts in the bank and we take money out when we need it," the panelist said.

Dorina Hernández, a representative of the community of San Basilio de Palenque in the department of Bolívar in Colombia, recounted the experience of the self-help groups in her community. These are based on the principles of solidarity and people organise them spontaneously. They collect contributions from the members of the group so that money is available when needed to cope with illness, death, or other adverse events.

Rosmilda Quiñones talked about the experience of the Association of Traditional Birth Attendants in the Pacific coast region, a Colombian women's organisation that draws on ancestral cultural knowledge and traditional medicine practices, providing a basic service to mothers in isolated rural communities when it is difficult for them to reach state health services.

Talks on "The rights of rural women in Colombia"

This session focused specifically on discussing the situation in Colombia, with representatives from government institutions and leaders of women's organisations. The presentations discussed experiences involving access to land and other natural resources, displacement due to the armed conflict, and processes related to identity demands.

Donny Meertens, from the Javeriana University, talked about women's land rights in Colombia in the context of the conflict in that country. She argued that territory is a key element for the security of both men and women, and that with the armed conflict and the violent takeover of land that has been taking place for several decades in Colombia, women have suffered intensely from displacement processes. Because of all this, said Meertens, abandoned or usurped land needs to be restored to displaced women and their families as a means to tackle their situation of marginalisation and exclusion. She also pointed out that looting and the accumulation of power by local armed groups affects women's rights and empowerment, and weakens their organisation processes in rural areas.

Edilia Mendoza, a representative of the Colombian Rural Women's Committee, highlighted women's role as producers, both in the region and worldwide, and reminded participants that smallholder farmers' fight for their rights has the backing of various international human rights treaties. Mendoza stated that the challenges the small farmers' movement is facing today include: the campaign for regulations to be enacted on the Rural Women's Law, the fight for land, the protection of biodiversity and ethnic and cultural wealth, the integrated agrarian reform law, and the defence and protection of territories.

Yira Andrea Lozano, from Colombia's Interethnic "Chocó Solidarity" Forum, commented on a study on the problem of land tenure and the violation of the rights of communities in the Chocó region. The experience sought to make grassroots civil society organisations active agents in bringing the problem and the alternatives for addressing it to public attention. She emphasised that the worst

affected aspects were rights to territory and land, food security, women's lack of opportunity for gaining access to political power, and the high rates of violence within the family.

Alba Lucía Zuluaga, coordinator of the protection area of the Project to Protect the Land and Property of Displaced People in Colombia, said that land and territory are a vital resource for people's material and cultural survival, and also enable them to safeguard and recover their heritage.

Panel III: "Access to and control of land and other natural resources by women"

This panel discussed the subject of women's participation in community decisions about the management of natural resources, as well as tools and strategies for recognising women's rights and the equitable redistribution of resources.

Patricia Costas, the representative of ILC-Latin America and Fundación TIERRA from Bolivia, presented the results of research carried out by ILC on the problem of women's access to land. One of the things that stand out in these studies, she said, is that women's work and contributions go unrecognised and the spaces where they can participate are still limited. This is related to access to land through inheritance, a system that still maintains that women require less land to work than men – on the assumption that they are not the household's *main providers* – and they therefore inherit less. The studies discussed by the panelist emphasise that although property rights are fundamental, they do not guarantee access to land and other resources. Thus, titling processes are key for defending communal property from outsiders, but this is not sufficient. In order to guarantee women's rights to resources, it is necessary to think about strengthening their capacity to exercise agency. Costas added that the studies provide evidence that effective control of resources has a positive impact on women's decision-making capacity and that empowering rural women – politically, legally and economically – is essential if they are to participate in society under equal conditions.

Javier Medina, CINEP-PPP representative, presented a general overview of the obstacles that are currently limiting women's access to land and effective control of its use. Some of the general obstacles he mentioned are the problem of land distribution, the lack of knowledge of suitable types of land use, the lack of constitutional and legal recognition of rural women's rights (in some countries), and the failure to draft regulations to accompany the laws, in the countries where they exist, or to apply them properly. Other constraints are associated with the lack of knowledge of legal mechanisms for claiming rights or that these do not work, informality in tenure, and the difficulty of accessing credit systems. The specific obstacles mentioned by Medina include legal frameworks and public policies that do not adequately address the problem of women's access to land, the scarcity of reliable, up-to-date information and databases on the situation of rural women, and the failure to recognise the role they play in society. To tackle these obstacles, he said that there is a need to strengthen rural women's autonomy and capacities, and set up legal assistance projects.

María Teresa Fernández, from the Nicaraguan Rural Women's Coordinating Committee for the Right to Own Land, described the process taken forward to push for the enactment of the Law to Create the Fund for Buying Land with Gender Equity for Rural Women. She said that this law was approved as a result of campaigning by women's organisations. It was enacted in May 2010, after some modifications were made to the initial proposal, and after the organisations had managed to collect more than 10,000 signatures from people in rural communities. This experience is a noteworthy example of a mechanism to enable women to buy land with better conditions than those offered by the banks.

Panel IV: "Economic rights and productive economic enterprises set up by and for women"

This panel sought to identify the opportunities and challenges women face in markets, as a setting for competition and full self-development. The discussion looked at the existing scenarios and heard about successful experiences in Colombia and Latin America.

Carmen Julia Palacio and Emperatriz Arango shared the experiences of the Concheros de Nariño Association (ASCONAR) and the Afro-Colombian Cultural Assets Programme (ACUA), respectively. Participants heard how ASCONAR is taking forward a project to collect and market shellfish. Women entrepreneurs are participating in this project and the aim is to enable them to become protagonists of change and active businesswomen. Emperatriz Arango shared the experience of ACUA, which works to revalue identity through empowerment, in order to contribute to development in the territories of African-descent communities, strengthen their identity by means of their cultural, social, and economic assets, and boost their social capital.

Andrés Silva, a representative of Colombia's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MADR), presented the "Opportunities" Project, which seeks to support the economic and productive initiatives of rural people, especially women, with a gender focus. Silva pointed out that women are currently participating more in craft-making and tourism activities, because of the profit margins that these businesses generate. He also said that the large number of women participating in the project is evidence of the strategic role they play in their communities by developing micro-enterprises, as well as their role in boosting the household and local economy. This potential should be taken advantage of and encouraged, so that they can contribute more actively to public policies that aim to achieve equity.

Emperatriz Román, from the Lebrija Municipal Association of Rural Women (*Asociación Municipal de Mujeres Campesinas de Lebrija* - AMMUCALE), talked about the opportunities and difficulties women have when entering the market, emphasising how difficult it is to compete with the large-scale producers who sometimes sell products at extremely low prices. She described the successful experience of women coming together in her community to breed and sell organic chickens, and mentioned how important it is to work with economic but profitable products that can be sold to low-income consumers. Finally, she pointed out that there is currently a growing tendency to try to make rural activities increasingly competitive and business-oriented, which restricts and hinders access by low-income people.

Delfina Arteaga, from the Nariño Rural Women's Federation in Colombia, commented on women's difficulties in gaining access to land and their struggle to do so, while Gregoria Rojas, from the umbrella organisation of women from the high valleys of Cochabamba in Bolivia (*Coordinadora de Mujeres del Valle Alto de Cochabamba* - COMUVA) presented her organisation's experience in maize production, processing, and marketing. She stressed the importance of maize in the diet of rural Bolivian families and natural production which encourages the use and care of local resources.

Conclusions of the Discussion Forum

Flor Edilma Osorio, from the Javeriana University, presented the results of one of the studies supported by ILC and CINEP-PPP: *Uno en el campo tiene esperanza. Mujeres, territorio y políticas públicas*, which describes land access, tenure and use by women in the locality of Buga in Colombia. She emphasised that the armed conflict and forced displacement have had a decisive impact on rural areas of Colombia, giving rise to a process whereby people are forced to leave rural areas and adapt to the urban environment, which is transforming their lives.

Osorio described how, in response to the conflict, women and their families in rural areas tend to take one of five paths: live in the midst of war, return to their community, relocate in a rural area, relocate in an urban area, or relocate in an urban area with collective access to land. Each of these paths in turn creates new situations and difficulties for them. Osorio also stressed the importance of land and territory in linking elements of identity, by providing a sense of place to people in rural communities, as they are not seen merely as the site of work but as dynamic spaces where different aspects of life converge.

Gaby Cevasco, from the "Flora Tristán" non-governmental organisation in Peru, reiterated the main issues addressed during the three days of the discussion forum. She pointed out that farming has a significant capacity to boost development, although this is not reflected in current rural development policies in the region's countries. With regard to the current situation of rural women, she argued that

traditional cultural patterns reduce women's ability to achieve integrated development. These patterns have a concrete impact on domestic and productive work and in other dimensions of women's lives. The working day is getting longer for women, and this has negative effects on their physical and mental health, as well as preventing them from participating in other social and community initiatives. While these rigid structures still predominate, men continue to enjoy privileges within the household and refuse to accept that they should share responsibility for domestic tasks. This situation also leads to less recognition of women's productive work and their contribution to food security and development in our countries.

To take forward the emancipation of rural women, which is understood to be a process, it is necessary to build strategies to strengthen their organisations and promote their autonomy. It is therefore extremely important to encourage women to participate in politics and hold decision-making posts, with the aim of positioning their voices and discourses on the public stage. The ultimate aim of spaces for women to meet and reflect should be to strengthen women's autonomy in their own communities, but also in dealings with political parties, non-governmental organisations, and international cooperation agencies, so that they re-position themselves as interlocutors with these institutions and manage to find the right paths that will lead to their emancipation.

The discussion forum's final speaker was Patricia Chaves from Brazil's *Espacio Feminista*. Chaves said that one important challenge for women is to occupy spaces of power, both in public institutions and decision-making settings, and in civil society organisations and social movements. Changing policies so that they benefit women implies that they must be involved in decision-making about these policies.

Making links with other organisations and social movements is an urgent challenge for rural women, Chaves said. This would imply forging links with other organisations such as those of urban women, women workers, landless or homeless women, and working together to combat all the forms of discrimination and exclusion they face. The challenge is therefore to set up and strengthen networking. It is also necessary to intensify joint work and alliances with other organisations and institutions such as universities and research centres, where knowledge is produced and reproduced. Such partnerships give women's organisations better tools for understanding reality, while also enabling the institutions to find out at first hand about the problems and social conflicts they are trying to analyse.

Main challenges

As a result of the in-depth discussion about the challenges faced by rural women in their emancipation process, the following key areas of work were identified:

The importance of exercising civil, social, political, economic, and cultural rights. For women, rights are *linked together in a chain*, and only the full exercise of all rights will enable them to emancipate themselves from discrimination, exclusion, and poverty. The individual and collective stance of women's organisations varies from the *defensive* to the *constructive*, as a result of their achievements in the exercise of their rights. Only women who have eliminated the obstacles in their civil, cultural, and social life manage to have a possibility of taking forward an economic enterprise.

The need to *put an end to the invisibility of rural women*: women do not figure in agricultural censuses, in production projects, or in the implementation of agrarian laws, etc. More effort needs to be made to carry out research, create disaggregated data and document emblematic cases relevant to the current debate.

Forging alliances: despite the adverse situations in which they find themselves, it is important to develop alliances and forge links between the continent's women as a strategy for them to get out of their situation of vulnerability – common to many regions – and turn those elements into constructive tools.

It is important to *support grassroots organisations and leadership by women* who can influence the political life of the collectivity. *Differentiated policies* are required to respond to women's real needs.

Women need to be political actors in order to generate change.

The purpose of the discussion forum's final panel was to identify possible scenarios and pathways for rural women's emancipation processes. "Emancipation" refers to the process through which women achieve the full guarantee of integrated human rights, recognition and respect for their subjectivity, the elimination of all forms of discrimination, being valued as citizens, and the possibility of being recognised as political actors by society as a whole. For rural women, this implies one basic condition: access to and control of land.

List of participants

Name	Institute	Name	Institute
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Brígida Muñoz	ADUC	Sandra Apaza	ILC
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Emperatriz Román	AMMUCALE	Bienvenida Vizcaíno	Luz de la Esperanza
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Manuel Rodríguez	CINEP-PPP	Carol Fernanda Galán	Servicio Jesuita a Refugiados
Sergio Coronado	CINEP-PPP	Olga Zapana	Sierra Sur-Perú
Javier Medina	CINEP-PPP	Adriana Fuentes	SISMA Mujer
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Ana Betulia Forero	FEDEMUC	Patricia Costas Monje	Fundación Tierra-Bolivia
Marlen Alfonso	FEDEMUC	Ana Iris Martínez	FUNDE
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Teófila Betancur	Fundación Chiyangua		

Websites on the discussion forum:

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Second Latin American Discussion Forum "Rural women in production processes: value creation and distribution of the benefits"

From 27 to 29 October 2010, the Hotel Balmoral in San José, Costa Rica, was the setting for the second international discussion forum. The event was held thanks to the joint work carried out by the Afro-Costa Rican Women's Centre, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and the International Land Coalition - ILC.

This second discussion forum followed up on the first one held in Colombia in July that year. Therefore, the starting point was to hear about the results of the first discussion forum in order to include them in the discussions and work on recommendations for governments, support organisations and inter-governmental bodies.

The objective of the discussion forum was to "talk in the way we like – among women," as one participant put it. Thus, it represented a space and a time for talking about and sharing experiences of women's participation in production processes and identifying the common and specific situations, problems, and opportunities that women face at the different stages of the value chain. One new activity as part of the meeting was a field visit, where participants were able to find out about experiences of forming associations and organic production.

About 80 people from 14 Latin American countries participated in the discussion forum. 95% of them were women: rural producers, professional researchers and representatives of organisations fighting for the rights of women producers. Public officials from different countries in the region and representatives of international organisations also attended the event.

Several working groups were organised to share and analyse tangible and intangible production-related experiences involving women, and there was also a plenary discussion. The field visit provided inputs for the discussion and enabled the recommendations to be made more specific.

The concerns

The event's opening speeches summarised the causes and consequences of discrimination and the insufficient valuing of women in society, as well as the challenges that this implies.

The main complaint is summed up in this statement by one of the participants: "We are women who work for our families, carrying out unpaid activities with little recognition from society, such as looking after and bringing up children, cleaning, and housekeeping. Meanwhile, the productive work, which often requires more physical strength, is assigned to men. And this work is not only highly valued and well paid, but also generates power, authority, and social status."

Discrimination was also analysed from the position of the businesswoman, who has to cope with the threat of her husband taking her income away from

her. What often happens is that once the husband sees his wife earning her own income, he withdraws his contribution to the household with the argument that it is no longer necessary. As a result, the woman spends all the income from her business on supporting the children, and is then unable to reinvest properly in her business. The business's active capital may then disappear.

The conclusion reached was that the real challenge lies in making family structures more democratic through the fair distribution of responsibilities – both economic and childcare tasks – in a harmonious partnership that is free from violence, both within the family and in the community as a whole. This key challenge necessarily requires a cultural revolution to break with the traditional patterns in indigenous peoples' way of life. This can be compared with the evangelisation process they underwent 500 years ago, and the positive results cannot be expected to become evident in the short term.

It was also acknowledged that the growth of businesses run by women is restricted by the unequal power relations within the household. This manifests itself in the division of labour by gender and the control that men exercise over the domestic economy. Because domestic tasks are almost always allocated to women, they have to divide their time between these tasks and their business activities, with a negative effect on the business because women are unable to devote enough time to it.

Access to land: the first step in empowerment

Once again, the dialogue provided evidence of women's situation of disadvantage compared with men in access to land and natural resources, and the benefits generated by such access. This is so despite the fact that women are the main producers of food in the Latin American region and responsible for the food security of their households and communities. Even though progress has been made in legislation to protect women's access to land, one major inequality persists: land ownership continues to be in the hands of men. This is partly explained by customs, the bias in favour of men in state programmes and training, and the difficulties women have in accessing the land market, among other factors.

Access to land and the productive assets associated with it leads to an increase in productivity and a rise in the income earned by women and their families. Secure access to land and other natural resources is therefore a key element in women's empowerment and emancipation, and contributes to women having greater decision-making power and independence in the family and community setting. But the importance of access to land goes beyond this. It is a right in itself and particularly relevant for women due to the discrimination and exclusion they have historically had to face in society. Access to land as an asset also has transformatory power: it works on a woman's subjectivity, contributing to an increase in her self-esteem and her sense of dignity and motivation. This in turn leads to greater recognition of women's rights and, therefore, their empowerment.

The need to recognise women's productive work

Although it is true that access to land – in ecosystems as diverse as the mangroves, the coast or the forest, in the case of Costa Rica – and to other natural resources is a key aspect in women's emancipation, it does not in itself guarantee that poverty and dependence can be overcome. It is a first step that is necessary but not sufficient. To put an end to economic and social inequalities, it is necessary to end women's invisibility as agents of change, recognise the contribution they make at different stages of production processes, and acknowledge the benefits that correspond to them for that contribution.

Full recognition of rural women and their participation in value chains implies knowing what stages they are involved in, what they do within the chain – their tangible and intangible contributions – and the constraints they face. Women's role is not merely to provide help; they are the protagonists in these processes.

The scarcity of information and statistical data, compounded by the criteria used to gather information – as evidenced in the indicators that mainly take into account men and the categories they have traditionally been associated with, such as the head of household – all help to keep women invisible.

This is why it is important to develop indicators that are meaningful for women and effectively reflect the feminine dimension of agriculture. Gender-disaggregated official information is therefore key for public policy formulation. In response to this vacuum, different ways to build information need to be explored (such as cross-referencing the available sources and looking for complementary studies).

A field visit

"I can get by without my husband, but I can't do anything without my glasses!"
(Hannia, rural producer in Costa Rica)

It is six in the morning in Costa Rica. This is the second day of the discussion forum and a bus is waiting to take us to see where it all happens: the fields that the women producers described to us the previous day, where they have created production processes or worked in value chains to develop their lives. After quickly drawing lots, I will be in the group going to visit the organic farm run by Hannia Villalobos. Hannia is a very extrovert woman, with a great sense of humour and a huge commitment to what she is doing. This characteristic may have been given to her by sociology – the degree she studied – but it was undoubtedly also given to her by her beloved land, her farm, her seeds, and her animals.

While we travel to her farm, Hannia acts as the tourist guide, pointing out her country's most important sites to us. This tells me that our dear farmer-sociologist's knowledge is multi-disciplinary. Although she recognises that she does not know a lot of things that she should know in her line of work, she is aware that women must always be learning new things and keeping up-to-date with "the latest fashion as far as production processes are concerned," as she puts it. "If we don't learn the technical side, it will all go to pot," says Hannia. For her, learning technical things brings greater added value to what she produces, as she is able to inform consumers about the nutritional value, properties, and characteristics of what they are about to eat.

As the visit progresses, I observe that the joke about the glasses being more indispensable than her husband really is just a joke for Hannia. Rodolfo, an economist who left his job at the bank to launch into farming together with Hannia, is her life companion. Rodolfo is responsible for the numbers side – keeping the accounts and calculating the costs in the family's organic farm. It's a good combination: sociology, economics, and nature together have led to the understanding that the important thing about the farm is not the money. When things are done well and you sell high quality cabbages, squash, coriander, beetroot, spinach, tomatoes, and onions, and when you work the land with love, the money to live on simply arrives.

Hannia and Rodolfo's farm is part of APROZONOC, an organisation working on organic vegetable production. Their farm has the necessary certification and is an oasis of life in the area known as Tierra Blanca de Cartago, as it stands out in the midst of onion plantations sprayed with agrochemicals. Once the produce is harvested on Hannia's farm, it is sold at the farmers' market in San José on Fridays. Hannia and Rodolfo have have had the same regular customers for many years, and the quality of their produce has meant that those customers have become their friends. An architect who buys their vegetables, for instance, designed their house; the manager of Nissan, also a customer, helped them to get a good credit arrangement so that they could buy a new car. These friends of many years know them so well that the produce they put on sale at the market is all gone in just three hours.

Hannia always thinks that one of the factors in their success is having links with organisations, as this enables them to use resources more efficiently and avoid the duplication of effort. She also points out that you need to set up and consolidate networks: production networks, yes, but also mutual support networks, where you can share everything from opinions to seeds. This is in fact what solidarity means, she says.

Seeing Hannia in action somehow makes you envious because of the way she presents her products. She gives away the seeds she has collected in the seed bank she built up herself. This is her passion because it generates food sovereignty and security, and allows her to exchange produce with the other women members of her organisation.

The field visit enabled us to see the organic farm, admire its produce, and enjoy the delicious food we were offered by our hosts. But as well as breathing in nature and admiring the greenness of the land and the organic technology of its fertiliser, we noticed the love that Hannia and Rodolfo feel for each other. And it occurred to me then that everything done with love is successful. Hannia is one of those rural women who have found a meaning to their life and with whom it is a pleasure to share all sorts of opinions. These rural women are the ones who are clear about how they understand themselves in the territoriality of their space. But they also have the capacity to put themselves in the place of others, and that is what thinking from the true gender discourse means. They resolve it easily, because they are living it; but they are also aware that we need to keep working for those women who, even though they own their plot of land, are unable to enjoy their land, their family, or their world.

(Lucía Valverde, MIES-IEPS, Ecuador)

Pending challenges

More participation in discussion and decision-making spaces

Promoting women's participation in spaces for dialogue, training, exchange, and decision-making is a pending task. Having more of a presence in these spaces would enable women to make their voices heard and participate more actively in formulating proposals and influencing public policies, encouraging the establishment of strategic alliances.

Information and training on key issues

To achieve further development in farming activities and involvement in markets, it is essential for women to get organised and strengthen their capacities. Women need to receive information about their rights and training on various different aspects ranging from organisaton and production to new technologies, combining new and traditional knowledge.

One interesting experience is that of FEMUPROCAN, a union organisation that works to enable rural women to achieve their productive potential in the framework of an integrated development that links the building of different capacities in the arena of production and marketing with policy advocacy, leadership training, and empowerment processes.

Rights must be seen in an integrated way

Rights are not rigidly compartmentalised, and only if they are all exercised together will change be possible. Access to and control of natural resources and land rights must go hand in hand with access to credit systems and training, in order to boost rural women's production capacities effectively.

Networks and strategic alliances

One of the aspects on which most emphasis was placed during the discussions was the importance of creating networks and alliances between different organisations and institutions. Networks that come alive due to the active participation of their

members may become effective platforms for the exchange of information and experiences, as well as making it easier to take advantage of opportunities.

As a result of the discussion forum, an online network of organisations committed to the defence of rural women's rights was set up. The participants themselves will put the energy into this network, with the aim of following up on and giving continuity to the processes initiated in the two international discussion forums held in 2010.

In the future, it is hoped that a meeting in the form of a continental fair can be held between rural women, women producers, indigenous and African-descent women, and women smallholder farmers, so that they can exchange knowledge, products, experiences, and smiles.

List of participants

Name	Institute	Name	Institute
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Javier Medina	CINEP-PPP, Colombia	Patricia Mayela Arroyo Moraga	AMPROACO, Costa Rica
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Name	Institute	Name	Institute
Damaris Rodríguez Fallas	APROZONOC-Asociación de Productores Orgánicos de la Zona Norte de Cartago, Costa Rica	Neida Mollinedo	PRODEVER-FIDA Guatemala
Grettel Fernández Amador	TERRAFEM, Costa Rica	Gloria Tujab	Asociación Nueva Esperanza, Guatemala
José David Salazar	Red de Mujeres Rurales, Costa Rica	Alba Leticia Ochoa Camacho	Green Development Foundation, Honduras
Carlos Reiche	Proyecto FAO-PCT/ 3210 Diseño Estrategias Financieras MCT, Costa Rica	María Alicia Calles	Unión de Mujeres Campesinas Hondureñas
Ana Cecilia Escalante Herrera	Proyecto Estado Nación/ Consultora, Costa Rica	Annalisa Mauro	International Land Coalition
Carmen María Escoto Fernández	Magistrada de la Sala I Poder Judicial, Costa Rica	Maija Peltola	FIDA
Damaris Vargas Vázquez	Poder Judicial Costa Rica	María del Carmen Maciel Cruz	PRODESNOS-FIDA CONAFOR, México
Mauren Lizano Jiménez	TERRAFEM Costa Rica	Cecilia de los Ángeles Uh Jiménez	Escuela de Agricultura Ecológica de Maní, México
Rosmery Rojas Mena	Red de Mujeres Rurales de Cariari, Costa Rica	Julio Enrique Barrios Manzanaros	Nitlapan-UCA Nicaragua
Lidiette Hernández Navarro	UNAG Unión Nacional de Productores Agropecuarios Costarricenses	Ángela Olfania Mena Aguirre	Federación Nacional de Cooperativas-FENACOOP RL, Nicaragua
José Arze Carrión	IICA- CR Costa Rica	Gusnara Bustos Hurtado	Federación Nacional de Cooperativas-FENACOOP RL, Nicaragua
Edith Villanueva Reyes	ACOMUITA Costa Rica	Blanca Lila Torres Cárdenas	FEMUPROCAN, Nicaragua
Claudia Rodríguez	Red de Mujeres Rurales, Costa Rica	Patricia Lindo	RUTA, Nicaragua
Ana Carmona	PNUD-Programa de Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo, Costa Rica	Mary Adilia López	Nitlapan-UCA, Nicaragua
Alan González Figueroa	Mecanismo Mundial de la UNCCD, Costa Rica	Anabel López de Álvarez	Proyecto de Desarrollo Participativo y Modernización Rural, Panamá
Carlos Hernández Porras	COKOMOL, Costa Rica	Cirina González Pérez	Proyecto Ngobe Buglé, Panamá
Lidietthe Madden Arias	Asociación Andar, Costa Rica	Regina Guex de Ramírez	Proyecto Paraguay Rural (MAG- FIDA)
Lucía Chaverrí Madden	Costa Rica	Georgina July Campos Delgado	Proyecto Sierra Norte Perú
María Luisa Arroyo Méndez	COPROALDE, Costa Rica	Leny Delgado	Proyecto Sierra Sur Perú

Name	Institute	Name	Institute
Kattia Fijeac Chaves	Asociación Mixta para el Desarrollo Productivo del Asentamiento El Vivero de Coyolar Orotina, Costa Rica	Sandra Apaza	International Land Coalition
María Solano Quirós	APROZONOC-Asociación de Productores Orgánicos de la Zona Norte de Cartago, Costa Rica	Blanca Gutiérrez	Consultora Independiente Venezuela
María Eugenia Gonzales	Finca Orgánica Agrícola San Luis y Asociación de Mujeres ASOMAG, Costa Rica		

Websites on the discussion forum:

http://americalatina.landcoalition.org/ii-conversatorio-mujer-rural-2010
http://ifad-un.blogspot.com/search/label/gender
http://ifad-un.blogspot.com/2010/10/yo-puedo-valerme-sin-mi-esposo-pero-no.html
http://ifad-un.blogspot.com/2010/10/mujeres-con-muchas-voces-que-no-se.html
http://ifad-un.blogspot.com/2010/10/yo-puedo-valerme-sin-mi-esposo-pero-no.html

APPENDIX

List of International Land Coalition (ILC) publications on "Women's Land Rights"

ILC publications on Latin America

Almeida, Elsa: *Ejidatarias, posesionarias, avecindadas. Mujeres frente a sus derechos de propiedad en tierras ejidales de México*. Mexico: Centro de Estudios Mexicanos y Centroamericanos (CEMCA) and International Land Coalition (ILC), 2009.
(http://americalatina.landcoalition.org/sites/default/files/ILC_CEMCA_Ejidatarias%20posesionarias%20avecindadas.pdf)

Osorio Pérez, Flor Edilma and Holmes Villegas Caballero: *Uno en el campo tiene esperanza. Mujeres rurales y recomposición en el acceso, tenencia y uso de la tierra por el conflicto armado en Buga, Colombia*. Bogotá: Centro de Investigación y Educación Popular (CINEP) and International Land Coalition (ILC), 2010.
(Http://americalatina.landcoalition.org/sites/default/files/ILC_CINEP_Uno%20en%20el%20campo%20tiene%20esperanza.pdf)

Diez Hurtado, Alejandro: *Derechos formales y derechos reales. Acceso de mujeres campesinas a tierras de co -munidades en el marco del proceso de formalización de la propiedad en comunidades de Huancavelica*. Lima: Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas, Económicas, Políticas y Antropológicas (CISEPA-PUCP) and International Land Coalition (ILC), 2010.
(http://americalatina.landcoalition.org/sites/default/files/ILC_CISEPA_Derechos%20formales%20y%20derechos%20reales.pdf)

Bórquez, Rita and Lorena Ardito: *Experiencias activas de acceso a la tierra: estrategias de empoderamiento y ase -guramiento de derechos desarrolladas por organizaciones de mujeres campesinas e indígenas rurales*. Santiago de Chile: Corporación Regional PROCASUR and International Land Coalition (ILC), 2009.

(http://americalatina.landcoalition.org/sites/default/files/ILC_PROCASUR_Experiencias%20activas%20de%20acceso%20a%20la%20tierra.pdf)

Alonso Fradejas, Alberto and Sara Mingorría Martínez: *Mujeres q'eqchí ante el capitalismo agrario flexible: afrontándolo desde las economías campesinas del Valle del Polochic, Guatemala*. Guatemala City: Instituto de Estudios Agrarios y Rurales (IDEAR), Coordinadora de ONGs y Cooperativas (CONGCOOP) and International Land Coalition (ILC), 2010.
(http://americalatina.landcoalition.org/sites/default/files/Mujeres_sob_aliment_Guatemala-VFF.pdf)

Fuentes López, Adriana Patricia; Javier L. Medina Bernal and Sergio A. Coronado Delgado: *Mujeres rurales: nuevas y viejas exclusiones. Estudio exploratorio sobre el marco jurídico y los obstáculos para el acceso y control de la tierra de las mujeres en Centroamérica, Colombia, Venezuela y República Dominicana*. Bogotá: Centro de Investigación y Educación Popular (CINEP), Centro de Mujeres Afrocostarricenses and IFAD, 2010.
(http://americalatina.landcoalition.org/sites/default/files/librocartilla_0.pdf)

ILC publications on other regions and global issues

- *Cómo utilizar la CEDAW como una herramienta para la incidencia*
  http://americalatina.landcoalition.org/sites/default/files/cedaw_preguntas%20y%20respuestas_Q_A_SPA_Web.pdf (2009)

- *Caja de herramientas para actividades de incidencia* (2010)
  http://americalatina.landcoalition.org/node/2096

- *Gender in Agriculture Sourcebook. Module 4 Gender Issues in Land Policy and Administration* (re-print) (2010)
  http://americalatina.landcoalition.org/sites/default/files/ILC_IFAD_Reprint%20Module%204%20Gender%20Issues%20in%20Land%20Policy%20and%20Administration%20Sourcebook.pdf

- *Update 2010: Rural women, land and CEDAW* (2010)

- *Rural women's access to land and property in selected countries. Progress towards achieving the aims of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)*
  http://www.landcoalition.org/sites/default/files/publication/1028/CEDAW_Update_2010_ILC.pdf

- *Gendered impacts of commercial pressures on land* (2011)
  http://www.landcoalition.org/sites/default/files/publication/902/MOKORO_Gender_web_11.03.11.pdf

- *Policy Brief: Strategies to get gender onto the agenda of the "land grab" debate* (2011)
  http://www.landcoalition.org/sites/default/files/publication/1010/6_PBs_mokoro.pdf

- *ILC, IFAD & FAO: Rural women, land and CEDAW* (2004)

- *Rural Women's Access to Land and Property in Selected Countries. Progress towards Achieving the Aims of Articles 14, 15 and 16 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*
  http://www.landcoalition.org/sites/default/files/publication/941/cedawrpt.pdf

- *Innovations for securing women's access to land in Eastern Africa* (2011)
  http://www.landcoalition.org/sites/default/files/publication/953/WLR_13_Gaynor_Innovations.pdf

- *Assisting Kayole widows in gaining control to family land. A special focus on widows married in Rachuonyo and Siaya Districts in Luo Nyanza* (2011)
http://www.landcoalition.org/sites/default/files/publication/951/WLR_10_YWAP.pdf

- *The social, political and economic transformative impact of the Fast Track Land Reform Programme on the lives of women farmers in Goromonzi and Vungu-Gweru Districts of Zimbabwe* (2011)
http://www.landcoalition.org/sites/default/files/publication/958/WLR_8_Zimbabwe.pdf

- *Women's access to land and household bargaining power: a comparative action-research project in patrilineal and matrilineal societies in Malawi* (2011)
http://www.landcoalition.org/sites/default/files/publication/959/WLR_9_Malawi.pdf

- *Voices of women's aspirations over land and land matters: the case of Kibaale District* (2011)
http://www.landcoalition.org/sites/default/files/publication/957/WLR_7_URDT.pdf

- *Differentiation of women's land tenure security in Southern Africa* (2011)
http://www.landcoalition.org/sites/default/files/publication/955/WLR_12_Gaynor_Differentiation.pdf

- *A field not quite of her own. Single women's access to land in communal areas of Zimbabwe* (2011)
http://www.landcoalition.org/sites/default/files/publication/954/WLR_11_Gaynor_A_field.pdf

- *Complementing the state: the contribution of the watchdog groups in protecting women's land rights in Gatundu District* (2011)
http://www.landcoalition.org/sites/default/files/publication/952/WLR_4_GROOTS.pdf

- *Experiences of women in asserting their land rights: the case of the Bugesera District* (2011)
http://www.landcoalition.org/sites/default/files/publication/956/WLR_5_Rwanda.pdf

This book presents the reflections of three specialists on agrarian issues who discuss six research studies on women's access to land in Latin America, carried out in 2009 with the support of the International Land Coalition (ILC).

The book is divided into four sections. The first offers a reading of women's rights to land in communal territories. Following a regional reflection on the structure of land tenure in Latin America, it analyses how traditional practices and agrarian laws have changed in Bolivia and Guatemala and what impact this has had on women's rights with respect to collectively-owned land.

The second section demonstrates the problem of the scarcity of gender-differentiated statistical data on the distribution and use of agrarian property in Latin American countries. It analyses aspects that are important for women's economic empowerment, such as land ownership, the control of assets, and the multiple factors that determine increased bargaining power within the family and the community.

Section three looks at the problem from a broader point of view, by including the perspective of rural territorial development. It argues that, within territorial dynamics, access to land is still vital for women's empowerment. It suggests the need to understand the territory as the main point of reference, with identities and diversities as key assets, in order to envisage the possibilities and obstacles in a new rural development that is more inclusive and integrated.

The final section is a summary of two discussion forums held in Colombia y Costa Rica. These events were designed to be public spaces for dialogue and the sharing of ideas and international experiences around land, territory, and rural women's production and deliberation capacities.

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