Se Hace Camino al Andar / The Road is Made by Walking:
Women’s Participation in Community-Driven Development in Ciudad Sandino, Nicaragua

A thesis presented to
the faculty of
the College of Arts and Sciences of Ohio University

In partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
Master of Arts

Marina E. Islas
June 2010

© 2010 Marina E. Islas. All Rights Reserved.
This thesis titled
Se Hace Camino al Andar / The Road is Made by Walking:
Women’s Participation in Community-Driven Development in Ciudad Sandino, Nicaragua

by

MARINA E. ISLAS

has been approved for
the Department of Geography
and the College of Arts and Sciences by

Risa C. Whitson
Assistant Professor of Geography

_____________________________________________________

Benjamin M. Ogles
Dean, College of Arts and Sciences
ABSTRACT

ISLAS, MARINA E., M.A., June 2010, Geography

Se Hace Camino al Andar / The Road is Made by Walking: Women’s Participation in Community-Driven Development in Ciudad Sandino, Nicaragua (137 pp.)

Director of Thesis: Risa C. Whitson

This research seeks to explore the ways in which the women of Ciudad Sandino have participated in community driven development (CDD) and what impacts this participation has had on the gender relations between men and women. I am able to address this by using qualitative methods to conduct a case study of the Genesis spinning cooperative, which is part of the Jubilee House Community – Center for Development in Central America. I have found that for members of the Genesis project there have been significant changes in their lives due to their participation, however the implications of these changes is different for men than it is for women. Similarly, although gender ideologies have been challenged at the individual level due to participation, in this context, participation does not necessarily challenge the structural system in place which upholds societal views of gender roles.

Approved: _____________________________________________________________

Risa C. Whitson
Assistant Professor of Geography
PREFACE

“Caminante, son tus huellas
el camino y nada más;
Caminante, no hay camino,
se hace camino al andar.
Al andar se hace el camino,
y al volver la vista atrás
se ve la senda que nunca
se ha de volver a pisar.
Caminante no hay camino
sino estelas en la mar.”

“Walker, your footsteps
are the road, and nothing more;
Walker, there is no road,
the road is made by walking.
Walking you make the road,
and turning to look behind
you see the path you never again
will step upon.
Walker, there is no road,
only foam trails on the sea.”

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to convey my deepest gratitude to my advisor, Dr. Risa Whitson, whose sound guidance, patience and sincere encouragement has kept me on task throughout my graduate career. I am grateful to Dr. Kim and Dr. Wangui for their continued support and positivity. To the Department of Geography, for their support (particularly the prompt response to my perils in Nicaragua prior to my research) I would like to convey my great appreciation and particularly for granting me the Isaac Sindiga Award which assisted me in conducting my research. Also, I would like to extend my gratitude to the fine people of the JHC-CDCA for their hospitality and kindness as I conducted my research. Finally, I am forever indebted to the amazing people at project *Genesis*, the Nueva Vida Health Clinic and the women’s support group who were willing to participate in my study- thank you and good luck in all you do.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preface</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgments</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Figures</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 1: Introduction</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of Purpose and Research Questions</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 2: Literature Review</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participatory Development / Community-Driven Development</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women in Development, Gender and Development</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problematizing GAD and CDD</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 3: Nicaragua</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socio-economic indicators</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical Background</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandinista Revolution</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandinistas and Women’s Involvement</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 4: Methodology</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jubilee House Community – Center for Development in Central America</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genesis Project</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 5: Results &amp; Analysis</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s Participation</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Genesis</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1</td>
<td>Map of Nicaragua</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2</td>
<td>Political Cartoon</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3</td>
<td>Map of Poverty in Ciudad Sandino, Nicaragua</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Beneath the shade of a chilamate tree in Ciudad Sandino, Nicaragua, nine women work diligently tying pieces of rusty metal wire around large sections of rebar steel which have been cross-fitted to form a grid. This is just a small section of what will serve as the base of the floor to the 15,000 square foot spinning plant that these women and others have been building over the last few years. Their work on the base is nearly complete and within a month they will begin the arduous process of pouring cement into the floor of the plant. After working without pay for the duration of this project, it is hoped that in 2010 they will have the necessary machinery so that the spinning plant will be fully operational and their hard work will begin to turn a profit. (Excerpt from field notes from JHC Orientation, June 22, 2009)

In February 5th, 2007 a team of twenty-nine women and six men were brought together by the Jubilee House Community - Center for Development in Central America (JHC-CDCA) to take part in building a spinning cooperative from the ground-up for the purpose of income generation. In joining this cooperative, the women faced the task of completing work that is typically considered to be undertaken by men. These tasks include business management, masonry and construction work. Sara gives an explanation of some of the effects that she has experienced since first participating in this project, which is called Genesis:

…never before had I worked with anything that I have done here. Now I tell you I feel different because before I did not have this knowledge and now I have this knowledge, this capacity. As I have received this capacity also, I feel much [more important] because I feel with this knowledge I have more education and am better able to make [business] decisions. -Sara, Vice President of Genesis (personal interview July 15, 2009 translated from Spanish)

The sentiments expressed by Sara reflect how other cooperative members feel that their involvement in this form of development has affected their lives. Yet this is only the tip of the iceberg. The spinning cooperative is just one facet of the JHC-CDCA, a non-profit
organization that has spent the last fifteen years in Ciudad Sandino, Nicaragua working to address human needs created by poverty through community-driven development (CDD).

Community-driven development is a recent trend of participatory development. Critiques of policies that have traditionally implemented a top-down welfarist approach to development spawned the reemergence of participatory development practices in the 1990s (Sen, 1996; Mansuri & Rao, 2003). CDD encourages participation for the purpose of empowerment of the most marginalized groups (Chambers, 1983). Characteristic of the CDD approach to participatory development is that CDD works to give voice (ensuring that agents are heard) and choice (over what development means) to marginalized people (Mansuri & Rao, 2003). Community-driven development therefore relies on the motivation and action of community members in order to be successful. Concomitantly, due to the fact that CDD is implemented at the level of the community, these projects are highly contextualized therefore it is difficult to see the same model work in different contexts.

Although marginalized people are the intended target of CDD and participatory development initiatives, little attention has been given to who participates and for what purposes. While gender mainstreaming\(^1\) has become prevalent in development discourses and projects, policymakers continue to prioritize the needs of men while women’s voices go unheard (Kabeer, 2003). Gender and development (GAD) discourses have sought to address the ways in which development strategies have been implemented insofar as they

\(^1\) Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the strategy that recognizes the importance of including both men and women’s perspectives and needs during the planning and implementation of development programs and policies with the ultimate goal of gender equity (Momsen, 2004).
reinforce and reshape the power relations which exist within gender norms\(^2\) and gender relations\(^3\) (Scott, 1986; Momsen, 2004). Much like CDD, GAD seeks to use decentralized processes in order to more directly transform existing inequities by giving voice and choice to women involved in development projects (Cornwall, 2003). However, the outcomes of these development projects are dependent not only on the sociohistorical context in which they take place but also the goals of the development organization and the motivations of those participating in the programs.

**Statement of Purpose and Research Questions**

The purpose of this research is to explore the ways in which women have participated in community-driven development (CDD) and how this involvement has affected gender relations, particularly in Ciudad Sandino, Nicaragua (See Figure 1). It is important to understand that gender is a concept that is imbued with multiple and fluid meanings. For the purpose of this research it is understood to be a power-laden category that is used to differentiate social relations between the sexes (Scott, 1986). Similarly, the terms ‘gender relations’ and ‘gender roles’ are often used throughout this study and it is important to differentiate the two. Gender relations, for my purposes, is used to refer to the ways in which men and women interact with or perceive one another within a particular context. While gender roles refer to the socially constructed norms (i.e.

---

\(^2\) Gender norms, for the purpose of this research, are understood to mean what is considered to be appropriate behavior for men and women in specific contexts.

\(^3\) Gender relations are understood to mean the ways in which the sexes interact with one another based on socially constructed norms.
behavior, occupation, capabilities, etc.) to which men and women are ascribed based on their sex.

Figure 1: Map of Nicaragua. http://www.nicasagas.com/NicaMapsSmall.gif (accessed: 5/27/09)

To address my research goal I conducted a case study of the Genesis cooperative which is a part of the Jubilee House Community - Center for Development in Central America (JHC-CDCA). This NGO works with communities in the municipality of
Ciudad Sandino, Nicaragua. The JHC-CDCA makes significant efforts to include men and women at decision making levels to identify goals and solutions for sustainable development initiatives, as well as within the projects themselves. Gender and development research has stressed the importance of community involvement in development projects, however the impacts of women’s participation in community-driven development on existing gender relations have not been fully explored (Classen, et al., 2008; Escobar, 1995; Mansuri & Rao, 2003).

As gender mainstreaming has become pervasive over the years, community-driven development initiatives strive to include women. However, it is understood that individuals participate in development initiatives in different ways, some becoming more involved than others. Similarly, it is understood that as women are included in projects and as their roles within the community change, gender roles and relationships change. Men’s identities and roles may become challenged and relationships in the home may shift. Understanding the importance of all of these things, my research seeks to explore the effects of community-driven development on gender relations, by addressing the following questions in the context of Ciudad Sandino, Nicaragua:

1) How have women participated in community-driven development (CDD) with the JHC-CDCA in Ciudad Sandino?

In answering this question, this thesis explores the organizational structure and levels at which women are able to participate within the JHC-CDCA. Similarly, I will take into consideration whether or not the participants who work with JHC-CDCA adhere to the gender division of labor which is typical of Latin America.
2) Has incorporating women in CDD affected the way that men and women perceive gender relations within this community? If so, how?

   a. In what ways are both femininities and masculinities\(^4\) being affected?

3) How do men and women perceive the effects of their participation in community-driven development?

When thinking in terms of participation, if looking at the larger scale of the non-governmental organization as a whole, it is easy to determine how women have participated in CDD by simply looking at the development projects in which they have been involved. While I will be identifying the types of projects that women participate in to give an idea of the labor in which women are involved, for the purposes of this research I will focus on the project Genesis to determine organizational structure and the levels at which women are able to participate.

This research provides new insight on the ways in which women are able to participate in CDD and how this has affected their lives at work and in the home. As Radcliffe (1999) points out, the public and private spheres are inseparable and intertwined, therefore it is imperative to take the two into consideration when conducting research regarding the gender division of labor. Therefore, this study looks at the ways in which women have participated in masculine labor vis-à-vis community-driven development and how they have been able to renegotiate domestic labor with their husbands and family members. Similarly, I examine how men perceive women’s involvement in labor that is traditionally ascribed to men and how this has changed their

---

\(^4\) Masculinities, for the purposes of this paper, is a term which recognizes that the definitions of what constitutes a male identity to be multiple and ever-changing depending on contextual histories and social norms. Similarly, femininities refer to the socially constructed and contextual perceptions of female identity and behavior.
own behavior as well as their perceptions of women’s capabilities. I argue that although at the organizational level women’s involvement in the Jubilee House Community-Center for Development in Central America does not appear to be challenging traditionally held views of gender roles, at the project-level (i.e. Genesis) women are participating in labor that is not considered to be feminine work and this has implications on the ways that cooperative members negotiate their daily lives.

I begin this study first by exploring the breadth of literature that is available regarding participatory development initiatives (including CDD) as well as gender and development projects and relevant critiques that have arisen concerning these approaches. Next I will address the geographical context of Nicaragua. I will provide a brief history of the country and discuss the legacy of participatory democracy which, I argue, has laid the groundwork for women’s participation in non-traditional work. Following this I explain my research site of Ciudad Sandino and I justify the use of qualitative methodologies which I used to implement this study. I then discuss my results by providing specific quotes from interviews and field notes regarding women’s participation in project Genesis and their perceptions of the effects of their involvement in masculine labor. To gain a better understanding of this study, I have drawn from the wide breadth of participatory development and GAD discourses in a review of literature.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

While development discourses are complex and ever changing, a recent shift has occurred in many development organizations from a “top-down” to “bottom-up” approach to development (Mansuri & Rao, 2003). This paradigm shift has brought community-driven development, which is a form of participatory development, to the center of development initiatives, taking into consideration the important role of the participation of local actors in promoting project effectiveness. However, little consideration has been paid to who participates, why people participate, how they are able to participate and for what ends (Cornwall, 2003; German & Taye, 2008).

Over the last few decades, an increasing awareness of the importance of women’s inclusion in development projects has emerged. As gender mainstreaming is now common policy, serious efforts have been made to include a gender component in development projects, yet many organizations interpret this simply as ensuring that gender quotas are filled (Cornwall, 2007). This, however, is not sufficient for promoting equal representation at decision making levels nor does it ensure that both women and men’s needs are being met by development efforts. Similarly, as participatory approaches aim to empower the most marginalized individuals in third world contexts, these programs fail to address institutional hierarchies that serve as barriers to “empowerment.”

As this thesis seeks to address people’s perceptions of the effects of community-driven development on gender relations within the context of Ciudad Sandino, Nicaragua it is important to first grasp the theoretical concepts which influence development and gender
and development policies as well as understand the significance of community-driven development.

In this section I will identify the theoretical framework for my research which is rooted in feminist gender and development theory. Because my research uses gender analysis to examine how women have been able to negotiate their lives while being a part of community-driven development I will draw on relevant literature to lay the groundwork for this analysis. I will begin this section by introducing participatory development and community-driven development practices. Next I will explore the ways in which gender and development has intersected with community-driven development initiatives. I will then problematize the ideas of gender and development (GAD) and participatory empowerment approaches by reviewing documented effects of gender inclusion and barriers to participation in development projects. I conclude by arguing that although participatory and community-driven development approaches hold the potential to transform social relations, the likelihood of this is purely dependent on the contextual circumstances in which the development project takes place.

Participatory Development / Community-Driven Development

The term *development* became popular during the post-World War II era and was used to describe the process of transforming lesser developed nations into modern, developed countries (Parpart, Connelly and Barritteau, 2000). During this time, mass poverty had been identified as a chronic affliction for countries in Latin America, Asia, and Africa. The World Bank, International Monetary Fund and United Nations were thus created by the economic superpowers in order to alleviate the problems of poverty
through development processes (Escobar, 1995). During the 1950s and 1960s modernization theory had become prevalent in development discourse and many policy makers believed that all societies would develop following a path similar to the Western nations: moving from traditional to modern, agricultural to industry, and rural to urban (Black, 1999; Skidmore & Smith, 2005; Telfer & Sharpley, 2008). This was a theory that equated development with the process of modernization and industrialization and assumed that all countries develop in the same manner. In viewing non-Western societies as being un- or under-developed Western societies perpetuated an idea that these countries were “uncivilized” and in need of change. The approaches taken by development organizations at the time, with this in mind, served to reinforce the colonial superiority of industrialized nations over “underdeveloped” countries. As discontent with top-down, authoritarian development approaches in lesser developed nations grew in the 1950s and 1960s, participatory development emerged (Beard & Dasgupta, 2006).

Participatory involvement in development initiatives have a long history dating back to the small-scale community\textsuperscript{5} development movement in India of the 1950s inspired by Gandhi and Tagore (Classen et al., 2008; Mansuri & Rao, 2003). Gandhi saw village self-reliance through the cooperative movement to be the solution to the failures of widespread modernization and colonial forms of development. Similarly, Tagore regarded “individual freedom” as the necessary prerequisite to enriching human lives.

\textsuperscript{5} The word “community” evokes the idea of a group of people which share a social identity within a specific locale. However, in development discourse this term is a vague descriptor and highly contested, therefore is problematic in the implementation of community-driven development projects (Mansuri & Rao, 2003, 2007; Veltmeyer & O’Malley, 2001). “Community”, for the purposes of CDD discourse, is understood to be project-specific.
Drawing from the small-village movements in India, USAID helped to spread the first wave of participatory development in the 1950s (Mansuri & Rao, 2003). This first wave lasted only a decade as development agencies quickly lost interest and ceased to provide funding for organizations working in participatory development, which focused finances instead on programs that focused on the alleviation of poverty (Mansuri & Rao, 2003).

In the 1990s, participatory development reemerged as a viable approach to development. Sen’s (1985, 1999) influential work, which promoted a capacity-building approach assisted in the shift from welfare to empowerment in development agendas (Mansuri & Rao, 2003). During this time, post-colonial scholars critiqued development discourse for undervaluing the situated knowledge of the poor and further reinforcing Western ideologies through unsuitable policies and practices (Parpart, 2002). Moreover, the efforts of advocates of “participatory development” such as Chambers (1983) led to the inclusion of “participation” as an integral aspect of empowerment as a means of providing the poor with control over decision-making processes. Following these critiques and the call for participation, the World Bank and other institutions quickly began to promote the inclusion of participatory approaches in large scale development, utilizing participatory elements as central pieces of their design (Mansuri & Rao, 2003).

Participatory development refers to the active involvement of people in the planning, implementation and evaluation of projects and activities that affect them (Prokopy & Costelloe, 1999). It is characterized by decentralization policies, the employment of community-based planning strategies, and the use of participatory action.
research methods to monitor and evaluate programs (Beard & Dasgupta, 2006).

Argument for the use of participatory development has typically been dichotomized as a better route towards efficiency\textsuperscript{6} or as a means of cultivating equity and empowering\textsuperscript{7} locals (Cleaver, 1999). Significant resources have been earmarked for development projects that emphasize participation and so, as development organizations tend to tailor their plans in order to gain the funding that they need without considering the implications of a paradigm shift, it is with an unnecessary speed that NGOs have promoted these approaches (Platteau, 2004).

Participatory rural appraisal (PRA) tools, inspired by Chambers, became popular as a set of methods and techniques to be used as a means of incorporating local-level people to enhance participation and empowerment in the 1990s (Parpart, 2002). In recognizing the value of indigenous knowledge, PRA takes a step further by encouraging local people to participate in the collection and analysis of data in order to solve problems of development (Parpart 2002). Development projects have utilized a PRA approach to better understand local development priorities through programs which focus on natural resources management, agriculture, health, nutrition and food security (Chambers, 1994).

Participatory rural appraisal stresses that experience, rather than theory, is important to understanding how to approach development in that marginalized people are the most intimate with their problems and therefore know how to best solve them (Chambers 1994; Castelloe, Watson & White, 2002; Parpart 2002). However, to rely solely on the

\textsuperscript{6} Efficiency in this sense looks at participation of locals as a way to produce better project outcomes.

\textsuperscript{7} Empowerment in participatory development views “participation as a process which enhances the capacity of individuals to improve their own lives and facilitates social change to the advantage of disadvantaged or marginalized group” (Cleaver p. 598, 1999).
experience of locals without taking into account development approaches that have come before would be reckless and inconsiderate to the people that the project would seek to help (Kabeer, 2003). Also, a participatory rural appraisal approach can be problematic, in that it does not seek to include local voices at all levels of development (i.e. decision-making positions). Therefore, it has been argued that PRA is too narrowly focused on the participation of local people and fail to include local voices in the early planning and decision-making processes of development; similarly, they do not recognize that hierarchies exist at the local level so not all “locals” will have the same interests or desire to share benefits (Cooke & Kothari, 2001; Cleaver, 1999, 2001).

It is important to note that linked to the rise of participatory development is the empowerment approach to development which is intended to express the interests of the most marginalized groups while emphasizing social transformation (Kabeer, 2003; Momsen, 2004; Parpart, 2002). Numerous authors have noted the crucial role that participation plays as a means of empowerment as it facilitates the creation of spaces for disenfranchised groups to voice their needs and act politically (Agarwal, 2000; Bebbington & Perreault, 1999; Classen et al., 2008; Cornwall, 2003; German & Taye, 2008; Mansuri & Rao, 2003; Padmanabhan, 2008; Sen, 1999). The participation as empowerment approach to development is meant to facilitate social transformation by enabling people to meet their own needs through direct action, subsequently gaining self-confidence and self-esteem (Momsen, 2004; Thomas, 2000).

Strategies promoted as a means to achieve empowerment can be problematic because they may or may not actually accomplish this. Oftentimes the implementation of
these projects results in the enhancement of productivity and efficiency for development agencies through the use of local, unpaid labor (Momsen, 2004). This is exemplified through the use of unemployed villagers to conduct PRA projects in order to assess health issues in communities of Zimbabwe (Chigudu, 2007). Chigudu (2007) found that the use of participatory action research assisted in the collection of data which will facilitate in the formulation of AIDS response programs; concomitantly this supports the development organization’s mission to uphold community participation in health service delivery. Rather than identifying the needs of the marginalized people in these villages, the organization implemented a program that served goals of the program. Similarly, this program utilized the unpaid labor of unemployed villagers to implement the project, thereby saving the organization expenditure (Chigudu, 2007). Projects such as these promote agendas chosen by ‘outsiders,’ not taking into full consideration the needs (i.e. employment) of the communities, while utilizing participatory methods to achieve their own goals; this is antithetical to the participatory development goal of empowerment (Parpart, 2002).

This brings to light the politics of language within development discourses and the ways that this may affect development initiatives as the promotion of an outsider’s agenda co-opts the voices of the very people these initiatives intend to empower. It has been argued that power is not something that can be given but rather an individual must recognize power as existing within oneself (Parpart, 2002). To assume that one can give power to another is to imply that one party is in a dominant position while the other is subordinate. Such dichotomous positionality only serves to reinforce existing colonialist
relationships in which a small minority (i.e. development organizations) is in power over
the majority (i.e. poor, women or ethnic minorities) of those whom are “powerless”
(Kabeer 2003). While NGOs seek to empower the most marginalized people of society
they concomitantly risk coopting the agency of the very people they are hoping to help
(Nagar, 2006). Parpart (2002) argues that it is through an expanded self-understanding
\((power \text{ within})\) and recognition of the importance of participation in collective action
\((power \text{ with others})\) that social transformation can occur. Moreover, while participatory
development projects may hold the potential for social transformation, this will not occur
unless development organizations take into serious consideration the cultural contexts
and institutional structures that exist which impede social development in the first place.

Though participatory development approaches attempt to empower people in
developing nations they often overlook the structural hierarchies that exist both within
communities and organizations themselves. Just as it is important to keep in mind the
hierarchies of knowledge and power within communities, the institutional structures
involved in development processes must also be challenged (Kabeer, 2003). Although
participatory approaches attempt to be more inclusive of local voices in development
initiatives, they often fail to integrate local voices into the higher echelons of institutional
structures. While participants are educated and encouraged to challenge hierarchies and
subordination to patriarchy within their own communities, they are often discouraged
from questioning the authority of the organizations within which they work (Nagar,
1997). This is contradictory to the ideas of participatory empowerment approaches as
participants are excluded from understanding and progressing to higher levels of
development organizations. Similarly, while participatory development approaches attempt to leave planning and strategies in the hands of participants, a facilitator must be present at some point in order to assist in training. This perpetuates the top-down dissemination of knowledge. Also, unless the community is first consulted about what they perceive as a necessary avenue towards development an outsider will be implementing their own views and goals upon those involved. It is for these reasons that some participatory development initiatives have tried to integrate marginalized people not only in the implementation of projects but also in all decision-making processes, a bottom-up approach, which sets the ground work for the latest form of participatory development (Classen, et al., 2008; Cornwall, 2003; Mansuri & Rao, 2003; 2007).

Community-driven development (CDD) is a recent trend in development discourse that falls beneath the umbrella term of participatory development. Community-driven development is differentiated from other forms of participatory development in that it not only seeks to involve members of a defined community in the development process but rather is intended to grant direct control over key project decisions as well as the management of investment funds to the community (Mansuri & Rao, 2003). Unlike some participatory approaches, CDD works to give voice (ensuring that agents are heard) and choice (over what development means) to marginalized people (Mansuri & Rao, 2003). Community-driven development therefore relies on the motivation and action of community members in order to be successful, much like Parpart (2002) suggests in her

---

8 There is considerable overlap between community-based development and community-driven development and so for the purposes of this research, both types of studies will be looked at and will be referred to as community-driven development.
critique of PRA. Community-driven development strives to be truly community-driven by implementing: decentralized community targeting; a gradual process of development, a commitment to learn-by-doing; the hiring of external agents with adequate training; and a commitment to the community and the transparency and accountability of organizations (Mansuri & Rao, 2003).

Typical community-driven development projects include, enhancing agricultural participation and human capital (Bebbington & Perreault, 1999; Classen, et al., 2008; German & Taye, 2008); facilitating natural resource management (Agarwal, 2000; Beard & Dasgupta, 2000; German & Taye, 2008); creating microfinance groups or health services (Chigudu, 2007; Pandolfelli et al., 2008); and participation in seed exchange programs (Meinzen-Dick et al., 2004; Padmanabhan, 2008). While the literature on community-driven development continues to grow, little of this information actually takes into consideration the perceptions of participants on the process and outcomes of CDD (Chigudu, 2007). Similarly, while there are studies that critique the potential risks of community-driven development programs (Meinzen-Dick et al., 2004; Mansuri & Rao, 2003) and also those that evaluate the role of social capital in collective organizing (Bebbington & Perreault, 1999; Beard & Dasgupta, 2000; Meinzen-Dick et al., 2004; Pandolfelli et al., 2008), there is little evidence supporting the overall effectiveness of community-driven development programs (Mansuri & Rao, 2003, 2007). It has been argued that there is no justification for the speed or enthusiasm at which community-driven development projects have been undertaken (Mansuri & Rao, 2003, 2007; Platteau, 2004).
Beard and Dasgupta (2006) examine a poverty alleviation project in Indonesia which utilizes community-based planning strategies and participatory action research methods in order to monitor and evaluate development projects. The authors explore the differences between the capacity for rural communities to achieve collective action versus urban communities. In the context of development, collective action “include[s but is not limited to] collective decision-making, setting rules of conduct for a group and designing management rules, implementing decisions and monitoring adherence to rules” (Meinzen-Dick et al., 2004, p. 200). The study conducted by Beard and Dasgupta (2006) reinforces the idea that some contexts will lend themselves to the cultivation of collective action better than others and that the success of CDD is dependent on a locations potential for collective action.

It has been argued that while participatory approaches to development are helpful, they are not necessarily successful in targeting the most marginalized individuals so ‘elite capture’ within impoverished areas has the potential to occur (Beard & Dasgupta, 2006; Classen, et al., 2008; Cleaver, 2001, 1999; Mansuri & Rao, 2003; Platteau, 2004). Elite capture takes place when a development organization enters into an impoverished area and attempts to implement a project with little consideration of who is participating and the inequalities which exist within the community, resulting in certain individuals (i.e. community leaders) reaping the project benefits while the intended targets are missed. The potential for elite capture is a criticism that is most often directed at community-driven development projects (Classen, et al., 2008). Bradshaw and Visquez (2008) examine cash transfer programs which were implemented by the World Bank in
Nicaragua and find that women bear the economic and social cost of the program without actually receiving the benefits themselves. Elite capture is a problem that has the potential to occur in development projects, particularly community-driven development, unless project facilitators are trained in recognizing and ensuring that this does not take place (Mansuri & Rao, 2003, 2007).

A study conducted by Classen et al. (2008) however, shows that certain community-driven development practices may alleviate concerns of elite capture. Classen et al. (2008) examine a community-driven development initiative in Honduras. Here, farmer research teams made up of both men and women were formed within the participating communities by an international group in order to learn to plan, execute, evaluate and analyze formal experiments to resolve agricultural challenges identified by the community. This initiative eventually dovetailed into other programs such as health care, education efforts and building infrastructure (Classen et al., 2008). As previously stated, when this program was initially implemented it experienced elite benefit capture. It was not until later in the project that the development organization realized elite capture was taking place. Efforts were then made to be more inclusive of those most marginalized within these communities. It was through door-to-door contact that NGOs were able to open spaces to involve the most marginalized members of the community. Again, careful consideration of contextual circumstances, in this case who participates, is necessary in order for the benefits of CDD to reach its target.

In this particular case more than 40% of total participants in the farmer research teams’ efforts were women (Classen et al., 2008). As they became involved in
community-driven development, participants strengthened their social capital and became more integrated in their community, learning to work alongside others; they also gained a sense of identity and voice through their collective actions (Classen et al., 2008). So, in this case, involvement in a development project which actively incorporated the most marginalized people in a community was able to help participants realize their own power and capabilities. However, the problem still exists that as women enter into these agricultural practices for economic purposes they still receive criticism from men.

As this indicates, one major flaw in CDD is the lack of recognition of differences of needs and capacities of men and women. While some studies address elite benefit capture and implications of involvement in CDD there is often no explicit acknowledgement of the distribution of benefits between genders (Beard & Dasgupta, 2006; Mansuri & Rao, 2003, 2007; Sultana & Thompson, 2004). Agarwal (2000) addresses this problem in her study of forest management groups. Agarwal (2000) conducted a study in which joint forest management groups were created in the rural highlands of India as an effort to utilize community-driven development in order to manage logging projects as well as to protect the environment. While men were included in decision-making processes, the organization of these groups did not include women, therefore the rules implemented overlooked the practical needs of the women in the community; due to restrictions on wood collection women did not have access to firewood needed to address daily domestic activities (Agarwal, 2000; Molyneux, 2001).

Similar to joint forest management, some watershed management programs started by the African Highlands Initiative in Ethiopia and Tanzania have worked to
include women in decision-making processes yet the impacts of their efforts are not always considered (Varughese & Ostrom, 2001). While equal numbers of men and women representatives from villages are met through quotas this does not ensure that women’s needs are adequately voiced or met, as will be discussed further below. For a rural community development project in India, development facilitators take a participatory learning and action approach to help men understand women’s daily burden and though the project facilitators acknowledge that such transformation in thinking does not occur overnight (Biligi, 1998). As German and Taye (2008) demonstrate through several case studies, the extent to which women are actively participating and their opinions are heard in decision-making processes varies in different contexts.

The domestic sphere, practical gender needs⁹, and daily tasks are often overlooked when development programs are implemented, community-driven development also runs this risk, which is why many authors call for the involvement of women in policy making as well as a gender analysis of development projects (Agarwal, 2000; Babb, 1996; Classen, et al., 2008; Cornwall, 2003; Escobar, 1995; Molyneux, 2002; Pandolfelli et al., 2008). Creating spaces for women to be represented in policy making positions and ensuring their participatory involvement within development initiatives is an entry point through which women can address their practical gender needs.

---

⁹ Practical gender needs are understood by Moser (1993) to be an immediate perceived need that addresses the inadequacies in living conditions such as water provision, healthcare, and employment (Molyneux, 2001). Strategic gender needs are identified as the needs that exist due to women’s subordinate role and that, if met, enable women to transform the existing imbalances of power (Molyneux, 2001; March, Smyth, & Mukhopadhyay, 1999).
needs and subsequently their strategic gender needs (to challenge the relationship between men and women) (Williams et al., 1994).

Women in Development, Gender and Development

As a reaction to popular development movements which overlook the involvement of women, a variety of critical perspectives have evolved over the last four decades which are explicitly concerned with women and issues of gender. Women in development (WID) policies emerged during the 1970s with the goal of integrating women into economic development through a focus on income-generating projects for women (Momsen, 2004; Chant & Gutmann, 2000). Concern for low-income women’s needs, coincided with their role in development, which caused a shift in development approaches from welfare to equity to anti-poverty, efficiency and empowerment (Moser, 1993). The acknowledgement of these issues within the development framework, with an emphasis on the necessity for women’s equality and participation, brought the subfield of Women in Development to the forefront of USAID policies.

At this time, women’s capacities were viewed as limited to the reproductive sphere whereas men were seen as producers; therefore, while development approaches sought to build on men’s economic production, women were the passive recipients of social welfare (Kabeer, 2003). This structure of development institutions only served to perpetuate gender norms.10 Parpart & Marchand (1995) cite Ester Boserup’s landmark study, Woman’s Role in Economic Development, to argue that development projects prior to this time had deprived women from economic opportunities and status. With the

---

10 Gender norms, for the purpose of this research, are understood to mean what is considered to be appropriate behavior for men and women in specific contexts.
publication of Esther Boserup’s (1970) book, attention shifted from the popular welfare approach for women in development towards equality between women and men (Kabeer, 2003). WID proponents advocated the integration of women into the public sphere for the purposes of income generation and to address the strategic need of challenging women’s subordinate role to men. According to this literature, women’s participation in economic processes allows them to have more control over resources and thus challenges patriarchy.

During the mid-1970s and 1980s academics criticized the WID approach for placing women in an homogenous category and recognized that other social differences had significant influence on development results (March, Smyth, & Mukhopadhyay, 1999). It must be understood that even women from the same community are characterised by diverse backgrounds and it cannot be assumed that all women have the same agenda or ideas as cooptation by other women can occur in development (Cornwall p. 1330). Also, to assume that the key to women’s development is through economic advancement overlooks the importance of practical gender needs. While development programs attempt to provide solutions to women’s poverty, in some contexts the benefits of these projects may not be the most immediate necessity for those involved.

Concomitant to the critique that development organizations were imposing their own agenda onto the people of developing nations, WID was also accused of promoting Western views of feminism and empowerment onto women of developing countries (Escobar, 1995; Mohanty, 2004). While it is important to consider women’s
subordination to men within particular contexts it is imperative to recognize women’s perceptions of what type of development ought to be implemented in their communities.

These critiques of WID gave rise to the gender and development movement (GAD). Gender and development analysis focuses on the ways in which development reshapes the power relations existing within gender norms (socially created ideas of masculinity and femininity) and gender relations (socially constructed relations between the sexes) (Scott, 1986; Momsen, 2004). Rather than the “add women and stir” approach to development that WID promoted, GAD seeks to more directly transform inequities by giving voice and choice to women involved in development projects (Cornwall, 2003). Similar to community-driven development initiatives, GAD values decentralized policies and views participants as capable and active agents involved in the shaping and making of development within their own communities (Cornwall, 2003). Gender and development analysts called for a “commitment to change” in the power structures of national and international development organizations (Momsen, 2004). For Kabeer (2003) this is a call to reverse allocational priorities, meaning that development priorities ought to be set by the poor, placing “human life and human well-being at the forefront of the planning process, so that the ‘means’ of the development process are valued in terms of their contribution to this goal” (p. 83). Unlike top-down development projects in which women are merely seen as tools for implementing development, the involvement of women at all levels provides participants with the opportunity to realize their capabilities.

A bottom-up approach to gender and development is able to open up the spaces for women to demonstrate their potential as active and capable participants in
development processes. The Self-Employed Women’s Association (SEWA) in India is a good example of participatory GAD work as it integrates women into all levels of the development process (Rose, 1992; Nagar, 2006). SEWA is a women’s grassroots movement that formed as a collective struggle against financial the exploitation, physical abuse and harrassment of self-employed women in order to effect change in their lives and work (Rose, 1992). Influenced by Ghandi’s non-violent struggle, SEWA has implemented policies that address the needs of the women who have chosen to participate. Rather than imposing top-down development policies, SEWA has evolved according to what women have deemed important to their lives such as access to fair credit, education, year-round work and legal assistance (Rose, 1992). As poor working women have become involved in organizing and determing the route that development is to take in their lives, they become more aware of their own agency and capacity to address their practical and strategic needs. However, despite the fact that strategic and practical gender needs exist, all women are different and so generalizations cannot be made regarding what their interests or needs may be for these too will also be different depending on the individual context.

It is generally understood by gender and development theorists that there are gendered divisions of interests within communities in developing countries. Recognizing the differentiation between gendered interests helps in understanding the fact that differences exist at all levels (race, class, caste, age, etc.) and that neither men nor women constitute a homogeneous group (Williams, 1994). There is danger in implementing generalized policies in all development initiatives, not just GAD projects. To ignore the
contexts which make up local histories is to risk continued cooptation of situated knowledge as well as the disruption of community roles (Narayan, 1997). This brings up the idea of the gender divisions of knowledge and labor within different cultures. In some indigenous traditions, it is the women who are keepers of knowledge of plant and seed varieties (Padmanabhan, 2008; Voeks, 2007). As development organizations enter the scene they present rural communities with the opportunity to participate more economically viable agricultural practices involving new technologies and the necessity to share knowledge of plant and seed varieties. This is problematic in that it is men who are traditionally more involved in agriculture for economic purposes and typically dominate in decision making will be more likely to participate in these forms of development while women’s knowledge becomes co-opted (Molyneux, 2002; Voeks, 2007). Although the intentions of non-governmental and other developmental organizations are good, a poorly articulated approach to development within rural communities only serves to perpetuate pre-existing power structures. In order for gender inclusion to make a significant impact, development agencies need to recognize the gender roles within the community and household as well as the different outcomes of including women in development initiatives.

Problematizing GAD and CDD

While gender and development and community-driven development approaches have many positive attributes, neither of these agendas are flawless. It is important to note that as women are included within development programs, problems arise which can create barriers to their participation. For example, as Babb (1996) points out, women who
have been involved in cooperatives find themselves faced with having to balance their time between skills training, work, and taking care of their family. While the existence of social capital can assist in a situation like this (e.g. extended family members watching over children while mothers are at work) it is not a reliable solution to addressing the triple burden that women endure (Bebbington & Perreault, 1999; Molyneux, 2002). The triple burden, according to the *Oxfam Gender Training Manual* (1994) refers to women’s work roles which are characterized by productive, reproductive and community work. This workload can prevent women from participating in development projects. On the other hand, women who participate may devote less time to reproductive tasks, thereby interrupting their traditional gender roles. Time constraints due to women’s triple burden can cause non-attendance at meetings in participatory development initiatives. Men may schedule assemblies without consulting women, not taking into account women’s obligations to the home and so a meeting may occur during a time that women are busy with domestic tasks (Godquin & Quisumbing, 2008). Similarly, development may take place in spaces in which women are forbidden and so they are unable participate (Parpart, 2002). This shows not only the effects of the triple burden on women’s participation but it also points to the gender hierarchies that exist.

Similar to the dangers of elite capture in community-driven development projects as noted above, there exists the potential for dominant individuals such as men or more outspoken women to capture the benefits of development. In some cases where women are able to attend organizational meetings, it is seldom that they speak up and when they do “their opinions are given little weight.” This can be understood as cultural adherance,
in which women in some cultures are not allowed to speak when in the presence of men, or due to others dominating conversation (Agarwal, 2000, p. 286). German and Taye (2008) attribute this inability to speak up in part to the propensity of more outspoken individuals to dominate discussions while Agarwal (2000) acknowledges the existence of multiple contextual factors including pre-existing gender division of labor. In this manner these development initiatives inadvertently “reinforce the invisibility of women’s roles,” while men capture the benefits of collective action (Cornwall, 2003). While development organizations may seek to empower women by integrating them into planning sessions this does not ensure that all participants will be heard or that their needs will be met.

As some women become involved with development work there is also the possibility of meeting resistance from their family. For example, traditions such as purdah can bring family members to accuse their wives and daughters of threatening the family’s honor as they step out of the private sphere (Nagar, 2006). A lack of support from family members can be a great barrier to participation for some women while others seek alternative strategies for working around these barriers. As Kabeer (2003) notes, household responsibilities are often assigned to women and as they move into the workforce it is rare that these women are able to renegotiate these roles with husbands or family members. To compensate for extra responsibilities, women either extend their working day which requires them to cut back on leisure time or children will be withdrawn from school in order to take on these household tasks (Kabeer, 2003). Also, as women become involved in economic development and enter the public sphere they may be perceived as a threat to the masculine identities of their husbands which can cause
dissonance within the home resulting in domestic violence or divorce (Nagar, 2006; Wölte, 2002).

It is important to recognize that gender and development work and analysis are not limited to the integration of women into development but includes men as well. There are many cases in which, if a woman is involved in development, there is a man being affected by her involvement either within her household or in her place of work. The concept of masculinities have been increasingly integrated into gender and development analysis in the last decade as academics have criticized gender analysts for focusing solely on women (Chant & Gutmann, 2000). As Chant and Gutmann (2000) point out, by failing to bring masculinities into the picture, the responsibility of transforming gender relations falls into the hands of women. It is imperative to understand the roles that men play in women’s lives, both within the public and private spheres, in order to grasp to what extent gender relations and traditional roles are being challenged in varying contexts. Especially when analyzing gender relations, it is particularly important to be sure to include men’s perceptions of traditional gender roles and interactions. If a man’s concept of women’s roles is understood, for example, as being limited to the domestic sphere and suddenly his wife takes on a job outside of the household (i.e. participates in an economic development project) this sudden shift of responsibility maybe problematic to gender relations within the home. As Oxfam's Gender Team (1994) notes, women who share in the benefits of development projects are exposed to “physical violence, or the threat of it… and other forms of social control within the [private] sphere, such as mental cruelty, sexual abuse, and control of women’s bodies through denial of reproductive
rights…” (p. 31). While much literature points to the increased violence that can occur within a household as masculine identities are challenged, it has been argued that in some cases men have learned to appreciate women’s work and have even taken up domestic responsibilities as their wives move into public spaces (Frank, 2005; Momsen, 2004). Such changes in gender roles have the potential to affect perceptions of gender roles and relations beyond the level of the household especially if young children are brought up in an egalitarian home.

Conclusion

Development policies have evolved over the decades as theories emerge and fads fail. Goals for development initiatives have been fluid throughout the years and as new theories and development policies are continously explored we emerge into a more uncertain reality. As new research findings become available development organizations will alter their agendas to follow whatever trends seem to be taking place. The following quote from Timmer (2005) is demonstrative of this faddism.

Partly because so many new topics are on the development agenda, and partly because there is no accepted core of development theory and only hotly contested empirical “truths,” faddism has long dominated donor thinking about appropriate development strategy. From community development in the 1950s, to import substitution in the 1960s, to reaching the poorest of the poor in the 1970s, to structural adjustment in the 1980s, to sustainable development in the 1990s, and back to community development now (in the name of “community-driven development), the search for something “new” as the answer to poverty has actually impeded the implementation of core strategies that focus on sound governance, effective macroeconomic management, and a reliance on sustained public support for private markets (p. 28).

This faddism of participatory development has been exemplified by USAID in the past and once again, in its second wave as the World Bank and other organizations seeks to reinstate the community-driven development approach. Significant resources have
been earmarked for development projects that emphasize participation and so it is with an unnecessary speed that NGOs have promoted these approaches (Platteau, 2004). As we have seen, participatory development approaches have sought to empower the most marginalized groups of individuals in developing nations by integrating them into planning, implementation and evaluation of projects. Participatory development parallels the emergence of women in development which sought to integrate women into existing structures of development. These approaches have been criticized, however, for overlooking the power structures that exist within institutions and society.

As community-driven development shares GAD’s goal to transform people’s lives through empowerment, it holds the potential to address issues of power structures that were previously overlooked. As Parpart (2002) challenges, “…collective action will not be effective unless it considers the structural and cultural contexts in which it takes place” (p. 178). In order for CDD to truly be community-driven and to avoid the failures of past participatory approaches however, it must be undertaken gradually with a long term view towards the future (Mansuri & Rao, 2003). People who are involved in CDD require a strong ethic of learning by doing in order to implement development projects while project facilitators will need the proper training and commitment to the community in order to secure the success of CDD (Mansuri & Rao, 2003).

Just as Foucault (1980) has noted, “power is neither given nor exchanged, nor recovered, but rather exercised, and … only exists in action” (p. 89). As power exists at all levels, we should be more aware of power structures as we theorize about and participate in development. It is important to consider where power exists; for it is
imbued within race, class, gender, throughout organizations and elsewhere (Foucault, 1980). If the focus of development is rooted in empowerment then it must be recognized that it this is not something that can be given, rather it is conscientization that brings recognition of one’s own power (Parpart, 2002). Community-driven development attempts to do this by giving control over funding, planning and implementation of projects into the hands of active agents while also encouraging collective action for the greater good of those involved. As Parpart (2002) points out, “challenging gender hierarchies and assumptions requires more than simply giving voice to women or including them in development activities” (p. 174).

Community-driven development through its use of participatory activities has the potential to create a transformation of social relations if the cultural context is ripe for implementation of these strategies. Based on the literature presented above, my research explores the ways in which women have participated in community-driven development in the context of Ciudad, Sandino Nicaragua and the perceived effects of this on gender relations and self awareness. First, I must present the socio-historical context of Nicaragua to have a basis for understanding the ways in which gender roles have changed and been shaped.
CHAPTER 3: NICARAGUA

Introduction

In order to understand the ways in which women’s participation in community-driven development has affected gender relations in Ciudad Sandino, the unique historical background of Nicaragua must first be fully explored. As previously noted in Chapter 2 the effectiveness of community-driven development projects is dependent on the context in which it is implemented. Nicaragua has had an interesting history that is laden with struggles against U.S. domination and characterized by shifting gender relations within the country. It is distinctive in that women were pushed into the public sphere due to economic crisis and also actively incorporated into the Sandinista uprising during the Sandinista Revolution, setting the stage for challenging traditionally held views of women’s place in the community (Booth et al., 2006; Babb, 1996; Randall, 1994). In this chapter I will provide a look at the geographical context of Nicaragua, explaining some of the social and economic factors that characterize the country. Following this I will briefly explore the events leading up to the Sandinista Revolution. Then I will address the Sandinista legacy of participatory democracy as well as the integration of Nicaraguan women into the public sphere. I will argue that due to this distinctive history the framework has been laid for community-driven development and women’s active participation in the public sphere to occur.

Geography

Nicaragua is the largest country in Central America and is approximately the same size as New York State. It is located between Costa Rica and Honduras, bordered
by both the Caribbean Sea and the Pacific Ocean (See Figure 1). The climate is characterized as being tropical in the lowlands and cooler in the highlands. This region faces numerous natural hazards such as earthquakes, volcanoes, landslides and is extremely vulnerable to hurricanes. This country has an abundance of cultivable land, various energy reserves and significant timber and mineral resources (Nicaragua en cifras, 2008). Although Nicaragua is one of the richest countries in Central America in terms of natural resources, it is heavily in debt and has suffered a tumultuous social and economic history.

**Socio-economic indicators**

By looking at social and economic indicators I am able to demonstrate the existing conditions in Nicaragua which are pertinent to understanding women’s relative status to men in this particular context. Currently Nicaragua has a total population of 5,595,500 characterized by a nearly even male-female ratio with slightly more females. It is a country that has an infant mortality rate of 25 (21 females, 28 males) and a total fertility rate of 2.57, both of which are typical of most Latin American countries (The World Bank – Latin America & the Carribean – Data Profile, 2007; Nicaragua en Cifras, 2008). Compared to the World Bank’s estimates of Latin American literacy rates (90%), Nicaragua’s literacy rate is much lower at 67.5% and there seems to be no significant difference between the percentage of illiterate males and females (The World Bank- Latin America & the Carribean – Data Profile, 2007; VIII Censo de Población y IV de Vivienda, 2005). More than 40% of the population over 10 years of age has attended primary school while less than 36% has attained an education beyond primary school and
only 7% of the population has attended university (Nicaragua en cifras, 2008). There is a slightly higher percentage of women enrolled in university and technical institutions than there are men. These figures show that men and women are nearly equal in terms of population and literacy, however among the minority who are able to afford university, there are slightly more women enrolled.

Nicaragua is the poorest country in Central America with a gross domestic product (GDP) estimated to be $16.37 billion, a public debt of about $8.4 billion and an international debt of $4.7 billion (The World Factbook -- Nicaragua, 2009). Nicaragua is also characterized by prevalent “underemployment – an inability to find full-time work or acceptance of agricultural wage labor because of insufficient farmland for subsistence farming” (Booth et al., 2006 p 73). It also has the second lowest per capita income in the Western Hemisphere holding steady at about $2,800 (The World Factbook Nicaragua, 2009). In 2008 the percent of the total population that was economically active was 63%. While 80% of men over the age of 15 were considered to be economically active only 46% of women over the age of 15 were documented to be participating in economic activity (United Nations Statistical Division, 2008). So, while women appear to be slightly more educated (as indicated above) men are significantly more economically active. Of the population, 45% lives in poverty and 16% live in extreme poverty (UNICEF - At a glance: Nicaragua, 2004). In 1999 Nicaragua became one of the members of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative, created by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (Bradshaw, 2008). These economic conditions set the stage for the creation of free trade zones in the region.
The Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) of 2006 opened up avenues for the increased export of agricultural products and manufactured goods in Nicaragua to member states in North and Central America. Currently, Nicaragua’s export economy is dominated by secondary sector goods, particularly textiles and apparel which make up 60% of exports to CAFTA member-countries (The World Factbook Nicaragua, 2009). Nicaragua’s export economy is characterized primarily by the shipment of coffee, beef, cotton, shrimp and lobster, tobacco, sugar, gold and peanuts. Exports make up $2.344 billion of trade in Nicaragua. However imports, at $3.968 billion, exceed the value of exports which indicates that trade has a negative impact on the GDP. Rather than depending on exports for economic growth, however, over 56.9% of Nicaragua’s GDP is generated through the service sector (The World Factbook Nicaragua, 2009; Nicaragua en cifras, 2008). Of economically active persons, 51% work in the service sector while 20% work in manufacturing and 29% work in the primary sector (Nicaragua en cifras, 2008). The bleak socio-economic indicators cited above are pull factors for the involvement of development organizations in Nicaraguan affairs; however it is the historical context that laid the framework for participation of citizens in grass-roots organizations.

Historical Background

Sandinista Revolution

In September of 1821 Nicaragua gained its independence from Spain. Between 1909 and 1927, Nicaragua was tormented by political instability and civil unrest. The U.S. Marines had been invited to help in stabilizing the country due to continuous
rebellions which resulted in interventions in 1909-1910, 1912-1925 and 1926-1933 (McPherson 2006; Walker, 2003). As former Secretary of War Henry Stimson is quoted by McPherson (2006), “[Nicaraguans] were not fitted for the responsibilities that go with independence and still less fitted for popular self-government” (p. 10). So, in response to over fifteen years of U.S. occupation in Nicaragua, in 1927 Augusto C. Sandino led a resistance which neither the U.S. Marines nor the Nicaraguan National Guard could defeat (Booth et al., 2006). By 1933 the United States finally withdrew its troops. However, in 1934 Anastasio Somoza García, the first commander of the U.S. trained Nicaraguan National Guard, had Augusto Sandino assassinated (Skidmore & Smith, 2005). Using the guard, Somoza was able to seize political power from Juan Bautista Sacasa in 1936 (Walker, 2003). This paved the way for over four decades of rule by the oppressive and brutal Somoza dictatorship.

Under the Somoza dictatorship, between 1962 and 1971 Nicaragua experienced a time of remarkable economic growth with an average increase in per capita GDP of 3.9% per year; however the benefits of this did not reach the poor (Booth et al., 2006). Luis Somoza feigned the implementation of development policies as laid out in the Alliance for Progress\(^\text{11}\) agreement and while the economy grew through the export of goods this economic bounty remained within the Somoza family fortune (Walker, 2003). As

\(^{11}\) The Alliance for Progress was a ten-year plan introduced by President Kennedy in 1961 that was to bring about social and economic development which paralleled economic development policies that were implemented at the time. This charter called for an annual increase of 2.5% in per capita income, the establishment of democratic governments, the elimination of adult illiteracy by 1970, price stability, to avoid inflation or deflation more equitable income distribution, land reform, and economic and social planning. In the case of Nicaragua, the social aspects of this plan were never put into practice but merely acknowledged on paper by Somoza and his cronies (Walker, 2003).
agricultural export crops, such as coffee, cotton and beef, became increasingly important to Nicaragua’s economy, peasants were pushed off of their land. During this time the country saw a significant rise in rural to urban migration as people flocked to manufacturing sectors, causing a marked decline in agricultural production. Repression of union workers and wages, in addition to government policies, kept many benefits of economic activity from reaching the poor (Booth et al., 2006; Randall, 1995). While middle classes felt a brief increase in living standards during the 1960s, following the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) oil embargo of 1973 that escalated oil prices and drove inflation up, they suffered a sharp decline much like the poor classes (Booth et al., 2006). The economy began to deteriorate after 1974, creating a climate ripe for criticisms of the government to emerge.

As working-class wages and living standards fell across the board, union membership increased and mobilization against the Somoza regime developed. The Somoza dictatorship had deprived rural workers and agricultural producers of the possibility of organizing for better wages or rights to land (Luciak, 1987). Similarly, as Nicaraguans were living in miserable conditions, an absence of democratic legislative representation for rural peasants meant that the only possible form of resistance would be armed. In addition to the peasants’ increasing disdain for the government, student opposition to the Somoza dynasty also grew during this time. Inspired by the late Augusto C. Sandino, the guerrilla effort of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional – FSLN) emerged from the combined efforts of movements in opposition to the Somoza dictatorship. In response to the growing
support for the FSLN, the National Guard murdered several thousand suspected FSLN sympathizers. This repression drove thousands of youth to join the FSLN which resulted in the Guard targeting and murdering hundreds of those who were suspected of pro-Sandinista activities (Booth et al., 2006). Among these youth were many young women, who “made up 30% of the Sandinista army and held important leadership positions, commanding everything from small units to full battalions” (Randall, 1995 p. xii). The Sandinistas formed alliances with all anti-Somocistas thereby opening their military ranks to all opponents and increasing their forces from 500 troops in 1978 to an estimated 5,000 troops in 1979 (Booth et al., 2006). After a year and a half of heady conflict, the National Guard casually murdered ABC reporter Bill Stewart, the consequence of which was the withdrawal of U.S. government support. The Somoza regime subsequently collapsed in 1979.

Though the Sandinistas saw the end of the Somoza dictatorship in 1979 as a triumph they inadvertently inherited many governmental problems. The Somoza family fled the country and left behind significant debt, which the revolutionary government had to assume in order to remain creditworthy internationally (Walker, 1997). Although the FSLN did not wish to be under the thumb of the U.S. government, the new government maintained amicable relations between the two countries as the Carter administration offered emergency relief aid to Nicaragua (Booth et al., 2006).

One important aspect of the Sandinista government was the promotion of social programs based grassroots voluntarism (Walker, 2003). This excerpt from the Aug. 24,
1980 *Declaracion del FSLN sobre la Democracia* (FSLN Statement on Democracy) gives a clear understanding of what the FSLN aimed for in their vision of democracy:

> For the Frente Sandinista democracy is not measured solely in the political sphere, and cannot be reduced only to the participation of the people in elections. Democracy is not simply elections. It is something more, much more. For a revolutionary, for a Sandinista, it means participation by the people in political, social, and cultural affairs. The more people participate in such matters, the more democratic they will be. And it must be said once and for all: democracy neither begins nor ends with elections. It is a myth to want to reduce democracy to that status. Democracy begins in the economic order, when social inequalities begin to diminish, when the workers and peasants improve their standard of living. That is when true democracy begins, not before. . . In a more advanced phase, democracy means the participation of the workers in the running of factories, farms, cooperatives, and cultural centers. To sum up, democracy is the intervention of the masses in all aspects of social life. We point out all this to establish on a principled basis what the FSLN understands by democracy (qtd. in Luciak, 1987, p. 34).

Much like participatory development, as discussed in chapter two, the Sandinistas sought the active participation of all citizens in efforts to improve living standards for Nicaraguans. In writing up their new constitution the Sandinistas stressed the importance of creating public policies and services that were centered on the poor (Booth et al., 2006). Agricultural reform was met with little resistance as economic elites, a minority group, owned the majority of arable land. Thirty percent of large-scale estate land holdings were redistributed either to collectively run Sandinista Agricultural Cooperatives or was organized as state farms in the Area of People’s Property (Walker, 1997). Additionally, health services and campaigns as well as a large-scale literacy campaign were implemented in efforts to shape a new governmental system (Booth et al., 2006).
The Sandinistas created an atmosphere to maintain a legacy of participatory democratic processes in Nicaragua. By encouraging the formation of grassroots organizations the Sandinistas facilitated formal government representation of women, neighborhoods, youth rural and urban workers, and peasants (Walker, 1997; 2003). It was through grassroots efforts that the literacy crusades were able to be successful as they relied upon the participation of dedicated men and women to teach one another how to read (Kampwirth, 2004). By 1984 nearly half of Nicaragua’s population over the age of 16 was involved in grassroots organizations (Randall, 1995). The Sandinistas recognized the importance of involving different voices of the people in policy-making processes however, as the Sandinista government faced economic turmoil due to the Contra war, the late 1980s saw a marked decline in participatory democracy (Booth et al., 2006).

Seeking to maintain economic control of Nicaragua and spouting anti-communist propaganda, the Reagan administration implemented a campaign to destabilize and overthrow the Sandinista government through the mobilization of CIA-trained and organized contras\textsuperscript{12} (Walker, 2003). Additionally, in 1985 the Reagan administration declared an embargo on Nicaragua, causing even more strain on the already struggling economy (McPherson, 2006; Skidmore & Smith, 2005; Walker, 2003). As the Contra war grew the Sandinista government was forced to adjust their spending and directed many funds away from social and economic programs towards military expenditures. The contras targeted rural communities, damaged crops, brutalized Sandinista supporters,

\textsuperscript{12} Contras is short for contrarevolucionarios, or counterrevolutionaries (McPherson, 2006).
destroyed oil reserves and attempted to thwart the literacy campaigns\(^{13}\) (Walker, 1997, 2003; McPherson, 2006). In order to address the increasingly dire economic situation that was both resultant of pre-revolutionary policies and the Contra war, the Sandinistas had to implement structural reforms in the late 1980s (Walker, 2003). Families quickly became more concerned with working to survive and had little time to devote to organizing. Concomitantly, a shift occurred within the Sandinista government which created a more top-down approach to organizations in that grassroots groups lost much of their autonomy (Walker, 1997). As members of organizations saw their interests being ignored they were less inclined to participate, this was similarly felt in the women’s movement at the time.

With the 1990 elections came also the U.S. backed presidential candidate, Violeta Chamorro who promised to bring an end to the Contra war. While the Sandinista government had introduced some structural adjustment policies, the Chamorro administration embraced neoliberal reform (Walker, 1997, 2003; Kampwirth, 2006). What this meant was the implementation of structural adjustment programs which called for the downsizing of government, privatization of state-owned enterprise, deregulation of private enterprise and an emphasis on international free trade policies (Walker, 2003). The rise of neoliberalism in Nicaragua also saw cutbacks in government health and education programs which had negatively affected the most marginalized in society (See Figure 2) (Chant & Craske, 2003). Overall, GDP has increased as a result of structural adjustment programs, however it was a privileged minority that saw the benefits of this

\(^{13}\) Despite their best efforts to scare away the participants of the literacy crusades, the Nicaraguan people would not back down and the literacy campaign was successful.
growth while poverty rates for the rest of the country increased (Walker, 2003).
Chamorro also overturned many of the Sandinista-era gender reforms, for example “a
number of day care centers were shut down, state-funded marriage counseling,
workshops against domestic violence, and services for battered women were eliminated,
and contraception counseling was no longer offered in public hospitals” (Kampwirth,
2006, p. 79). Additionally, cooperatives that had been previously supported by the
Sandinista government found it to be increasingly difficult to get loans as preferential
treatment was given to agrobusiness (Walker, 2003). Despite these bleak reactionary
policies, the legacy of mobilization for the rights of Nicaraguans has continued as
women, union workers, environmentalists, etc. respond in creative ways in order to
maintain and gain the rights they deserve (Kampwirth, 2004, 2006).
Sandinistas and Women’s Involvement

Prior to the Sandinista Revolution in 1979 women were viewed as essential for the survival of the family. Socioeconomic factors pushed women beyond the domestic sphere and challenged traditionally held beliefs of gender roles. Due to political and economic decisions made by the Somoza dictatorship between the 1930s and late 1970s many men were faced with unemployment, poverty and financial insecurity. Wages were
suppressed and men’s identities as the ‘breadwinner’ became challenged as they found it more difficult to support their families. More often than not these men abandoned their families leaving women responsible for the household. Others dealt with resultant issues of depression and oftentimes became abusive towards women and children (Randall, 1994). Out of necessity women moved into the public sphere in search of jobs to support their families. As Kampwirth (2002) has noted, good data on family structure is difficult to obtain as studies have been incongruent; three studies conducted between 1950 and 1975 indicated that a 25% of Nicaraguan households were headed by single women while data collected in 1970 revealed this number to be 60%.

Women took any form of work they could find in order to support their families; this ranged from domestic labor, food vending and artisan crafts to prostitution. From 1950 to 1970 women’s participation in waged labor activities in Nicaragua increased from 14% to 21.9% (Randall, 1994; Randall, 1995). This involvement in the economy was comparable to women’s economic activity in industrialized nations at the time. During the 1970s roughly 75% of economically active women worked in commerce or service sectors while 19% worked in manufacturing. By the 1980s half of all women worked in the public sphere and 85% of female heads of household were salaried whereas only 50% of women with a spouse earned an income outside the home (Randall, 1994). Women adapted as they were able in order to provide for their families.

Catholic tradition had come to represent women as passive and dependant creatures of the home, however the world around them demanded that they move beyond this image. As the Somoza dictatorship brutally attacked Nicaraguan youth, mothers and
young women became involved in revolutionary activities within the FSLN during the 1970s (Walker, 1997). Often being the sole heads of household, women were faced with insurmountable devastation as their sons and daughters were at war or in prison, they participated to defend their children’s rights. Women broke traditionally held gender norms by becoming active in the revolution. The Sandinista government mobilized women for a variety of purposes: to teach literacy, to assist in immunizations, to harvest coffee, and to broaden their political base (Kampwirth, 2006; Randall, 1995; Walker, 2003). It was during this time that a new wave of feminism reached Nicaragua and women made their first attempts at organizing as a cohesive group (Randall, 1994). These early attempts to organize, however, were ineffective in bringing women together due to their familial obligations and fear of the repressive dictator as well as receiving threats from their husbands. It was around specific issues such as denouncing Samoza’s human rights’ violations that women and men were able to mobilize together. As support for the FSLN continued to rise, women soon came to make up 30% of the Sandinista army (Randall, 1995).

Though sexism still existed during the 1970s and 1980s stereotypes were being questioned, the FSLN idealized the Sandinista woman as mother (Kampwirth, 2004). With a base of economic independence for many women and increasing participation in the revolution, women soon became conscious of their capabilities and important roles in the family. Women did not see themselves simply as housewives or as subordinates to their husbands, rather they recognized that they were the central to the family’s emotional, ideological and economic wellbeing. Jenkins (2008) notes that it was the
FSLN’s manipulation of society’s views on motherhood that facilitated widespread acceptance of challenging traditional gender roles. By changing representations of women and implementing social and health programs the Sandinistas were able to reconceptualize women’s participation in the economy and society as being necessary for the well being of the home (Jenkins, 2008). Similarly, FSLN leader Daniel Ortega encouraged and reinforced women’s reproductive role by acknowledging the necessity for women to produce “more combatants for the cause” (Randall, pg 9, 1994). This manipulation of the representation of motherhood was effective in mobilizing women.

As early as a decade before the triumph of the Revolution, the FSLN made it known that one of their revolutionary goals was the emancipation of women (Kampwirth, 2004). With the encouragement of the FSLN, Nicaraguan women created the first successful national women’s organization the Asociación de Mujeres ante la Problemática Nacional (AMPRONAC – Association of Women Facing the Nation’s Problems) (Kampwirth, 2002, 2004, 2006; Randall, 1994, 1995). Women were encouraged to join AMPRONAC regardless of their educational background, the important factor was that they held a strong commitment to combating women’s struggles (Randall, 1994). Following the triumph of the Revolution, members of AMPRONAC renamed the organization, Asociacion de Mujeres Nicaraguenses Luisa Amanda Espinosa (Luisa Amanda Espinosa Nicaraguan Women’s Association – AMNLAE) (Randall, 1994). The creation of this mass organization marked the first opportunity that women were able to voice their opinion on Nicaragua’s political situation, lending them not only a sense of agency but also a sense of duty (Luciak, 1987). However, the organization still
operated with relatively little autonomy from the FSLN and with the expectation that women were a homogenous group (Walker, 1997). AMNLAE saw some successes through the integration of laws such as the Family Code which recognized women’s unpaid labor and required men to financially support their family in the event of separation (Randall, 1994). However, the failure to incorporate a feminist agenda (i.e. recognizing differences among women and listening to women’s demands) in addition to the lack of autonomy from the government resulted in a loss of its social base (Molyneux, 2001; Randall, 1994; Walker, 1997). During the late 1980s and 1990s women worked to decentralize AMNLAE in order to better represent women at the local level (Walker, 1997). Although support for the FSLN has waned, women continue to organize within AMNLAE, workers unions and other grassroots organizations to fight for their rights.

Conclusion

Much like other countries that have been labeled as “undeveloped” by Western society, Nicaragua participated in the Alliance for Progress and implemented economic restructuring to bring the country into modernity. As a result, the economy experienced remarkable growth and the benefits were reaped by a minority of upper class individuals. However, as social reforms were not enforced and living standards for the poor and middle classes fell, discontent grew. Wages were suppressed and men were no longer able to provide for their families which led to women taking on roles of economic provision. The hard economic times in conjunction with the violent Somoza dictatorship led to the uprising of the lower classes which brought about the Sandinista Revolution which completely altered Nicaragua’s course.
Economic restructuring pushed women into the public sphere while the Revolution encouraged their active participation in new levels. Women’s activity in the Revolution and in mass organizing demystified myths about women. Their involvement resulted in a new conscientization of their own capabilities as well as of problems within their communities. Conscientization is not all that women need to solve the daily challenges that they face but it is a start. As Doris Tijerino, the only woman to reach full commandante during the Revolution, acknowledges, “it’s true, we cannot live on consciousness alone, but we cannot live without it” (Randall, 1995, p. 207). Despite the challenges faced by social movements that are comprised of women, gays and lesbians, environmentalists, indigenous people and others, they have been able to adapt in diverse ways to neoliberalism (Richards, 2003). The history that the men and women of Nicaragua have lived speaks to the current involvement and dedication that many people have to furthering development within their own communities.

By exploring the sociohistorical context of Nicaragua, I was able to demonstrate the shifting roles that women have played over time. This also shows the desire to see change for the betterment of society is embedded in Nicaraguan culture as the people were willing to fight for an improvement in their livelihoods. This review has set the stage for my research. In order to investigate the ways in which women have participated in community-driven development and the effects of this participation on gender relations I had to conduct qualitative research in Ciudad Sandino. In the following chapter I will delve into the context of Ciudad Sandino, Nicaragua and identify the methodologies that I used in my research.
CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

As I have demonstrated in the previous chapters, community-driven development (CDD) is a recent trend in participatory development discourse which does not necessarily take into account women’s involvement and the effects that this participation may have. As Nicaragua’s history is one which has been progressive in opening doors to women’s participation in democratic processes, new forms of labor and the public sphere, it is also one that has perpetuated hegemonic ideals of motherhood. For these reasons, in addition to the active involvement of development organizations due to economic troubles, Nicaragua is a site ripe for an investigation of gender roles and relations in relation to CDD. In order to address the central questions of this research, a case study was conducted of the Jubilee House Community - Center for Development in Central America (JHC-CDCA), a non-profit organization which works with communities in the municipality of Ciudad Sandino, Nicaragua. The field research for this study took place from June 22nd to August 3rd of 2009 in Ciudad Sandino, Nicaragua, as I was able to secure a position with the JHC-CDCA’s summer volunteer program, assisting with development projects. This provided me with the opportunity to become familiar with the community, as I was immersed in the culture and was able to take time to conduct interviews. Through qualitative research methods, this research uses stories shared from interviews and participant observations to gain a better understanding of the ways in which involvement in community-driven development has affected perceptions of shifting gender norms for those involved with the JHC-CDCA.
Jubilee House Community – Center for Development in Central America

I chose the Jubilee House Community\textsuperscript{14} - Center for Development in Central America (JHC-CDC), to be the focus of my research because of the unique approach this organization has taken to development. The JHC-CDC began as a non-profit organization, the Jubilee House Community, made up of five original members who worked with neighborhood communities in Statesville, North Carolina, to assist with prevalent homelessness and unemployment. After ten years of providing a homeless shelter, education, food programs and other things, the group decided that the neighborhoods community groups were capable of effectively running these development programs on their own. Due to the economic and social turmoil that countries in Central America have faced, the JHC decided to focus their efforts in this region.

\textsuperscript{14} In this sense, the term \textit{community} refers to the intentional community in which the members of JHC-CDCA have chosen to live. This intentional community is made up of the seven members of the JHC-CDCA and five of their children. Because this is an intentional community and all are responsible for a variety of tasks, including filling in when another member is ill or away, the members do not have job titles.
In 1993 the JHC was invited to Nicaragua specifically to help the people in Ciudad Sandino. As mentioned in Chapter 3, Nicaragua is a country that has historically been afflicted by natural disasters. Ciudad Sandino is a municipality in Nicaragua, located adjacent to Managua to the west (See Figure 1), that has grown as the result of multiple natural disasters which have displaced thousands over the last forty years. In 1968 Lake Managua flooded, which displaced thousands of people who lived along the Managua lakeshore. The cotton plantations surrounding Managua at the time had been doing poorly and so the Somoza government decided to divide up the land and relocated the refugees to this area which was then dubbed OPEN 3. In 1972 a massive earthquake
hit Managua and refugees again were relocated to OPEN 3. When Somoza was
overthrown in 1979, OPEN 3 was renamed Ciudad Sandino. At that time, the city’s
population consisted of about 72,000 inhabitants (Envío, 1981). In 1998 Hurricane Mitch
swept across Central America, displacing between eight and fourteen thousand
Nicaraguans whose homes were destroyed. Left homeless and unemployed, these
refugees were relocated from the city of Managua to the muddy cow pastures of Ciudad
Sandino, given only a tarp and two poles with which to make their new homes. The
population of Ciudad Sandino continues to grow through this manner of internal
displacement.

Ciudad Sandino, the most densely populated city in Nicaragua, is characterized by
cement houses and currogated steel lean-tos with dirt floors and no pumbling or sewer
systems. The dirt roads, pitted and potholed from grey water\(^{15}\) and rain, are lined with
garbage, moreso in some \textit{barrios} than others as only two neighborhoods in Ciudad
Sandino have the luxury of regular refuse collection (Ciudad Sandino en cifras, 2008).
Due to cutbacks in social spending, the government has done little to provide adequate
infrastructure for residents of Ciudad Sandino (Randall, 1994). Subsequently, this has
necessitated the involvement of NGOs in the area. As of 2006, the Nicaraguan census
estimates that the population of Ciudad Sandino was 75,083\(^{16}\) (INIDE, 2008). Currently,

\(^{15}\) Grey water is wastewater that is generated from daily domestic activities such as bathing, laundry and
dishwashing.

\(^{16}\) Other sources indicate that the current population of Ciudad Sandino could be from 80,000 to nearly
150,000 (Ciudad Sandino, 2009; Community Development, 2009; Weston Priory, 2001).
of those living in Ciudad Sandino who are over 10 years of age\textsuperscript{17}, 41% are economically inactive while only 22% are economically active (Ciudad Sandino en cífras, 2008). According to the 2006 census information, 28% of residents are considered to be living in extreme poverty while 36% are considered to be living in impoverished conditions (See Figure 3)(Ciudad Sandino en cífras, 2008). An awareness of these statistical data and the fact that 64% of the population is living in high poverty conditions, has facilitated the involvement NGOs in the development process in Nicaragua.

Upon relocation to Nicaragua, the JHC became the Jubilee House Community – Center for development in Central America. There are now seven members of JHC-CDC\textsuperscript{18}, five of whom live together in a house located in \textit{Villa Soberana}, in Ciudad Sandino\textsuperscript{18}. Although the organization is located in Nicaragua, they are still registered as a 501(c)(3) non-profit in the United States. The organization’s work is supported by donations from individuals, churches and groups, university work and volunteer projects (Center for Development in Central America, 2009). The JHC-CDC considers five avenues toward development: sustainable economic development, sustainable agriculture, health care, education and appropriate technology. As evident from these objectives, the JHC-CDC not only considers the importance of economic development but also recognizes that education, health care and implicit practical needs must also be addressed.

\textsuperscript{17} One is considered to be able to be capable of economic activity at ten years of age according to this census data (Ciudad Sandino en cifras, 2008).

\textsuperscript{18} The other two have recently had children and decided to move away for a little extra privacy but commute daily to work with the organization.
in the development process. This organization is currently working with over ten different projects\(^{19}\) in Nicaragua and Costa Rica.

While their focus is primarily on residents of Ciudad Sandino, the JHC-CDCA has been approached by groups from all over Nicaragua and Costa Rica. It is in this manner that projects are undertaken by the JHC-CDCA, a group of individuals approach the organization and sometimes they simply need assistance with gaining fair trade or organic certification or in other cases they are seeking a means of economic production and the organization assists with the formation of a cooperative. There are six agricultural cooperatives that work with the JHC-CDCA and COPROEXNIC\(^{20}\) to produce organic agricultural products such as cotton, sesame, peanuts, cashews, black beans, soy and honey. In addition to the agricultural cooperatives which are located all over Nicaragua, JHC-CDCA currently works with the spinning cooperative, Genesis, as well as a sewing cooperative, a aquacultural cooperative and the Nueva Vida health clinic which are all located in Ciudad Sandino, and also a cloth-making cooperative in Costa Rica. In the past, JHC-CDCA has supported micro-enterprise loans for individuals and cooperatives in Ciudad Sandino; has built a school in one barrio and a feeding center/preschool in another; has built three clinic health clinics including one in the newest barrio of Nueva Vida and renovated another and has provided access to potable water to every household

\(^{19}\) For my purposes, I am defining a “project” as a development activity that is undertaken by the JHC-CDCA and a group of individuals. I do not include individuals who are backed by microenterprise loans in this definition.

\(^{20}\) COMPREXNIC is a large agricultural export cooperative that works with all of the agricultural cooperatives that are associated with JHC-CDCA.
in two of the poorest barrios. These projects that were taken on in the early years were implemented after taking a survey of various barrios to identify need.

The JHC-CDCA projects include women in development work that would typically be dominated by men (e.g. construction work). Similarly, the JHC-CDCA aims to involve both men and women in policy decision-making in a business environment. These approaches to development are practiced in gender and development (GAD) projects as a means of participatory empowerment, however, the JHC-CDCA does not identify as a feminist group. While their initiatives do not focus on women directly, the projects implemented by the JHC-CDCA could be considered gender-redistributive. These projects appear to “transform existing distributions of power and resources to create a more balanced relationship between men and women” (March, Smyth, & Mukhopadhyay, 1999 p 21). The projects that the JHC-CDCA implements are meant to improve the living standards of the area as problems are identified by residents of Ciudad Sandino.

Over the last fifteen years the JHC-CDCA has made an impact on the people of Ciudad Sandino, for better or for worse. This case study is not intended to evaluate the effectiveness of the model of development used by the JHC-CDCA, rather the purpose of this research is to understand the ways in which participation in community-driven development (CDD) through the JHC-CDCA has impacted gender relations between men and women in Ciudad Sandino, Nicaragua. However, it is important to recognize that as an institution, the JHC-CDCA has the capability to produce, reproduce and reinforce gender roles. To better understand these impacts I needed to participate in CDD myself,
due to my involvement as a volunteer I was best able to learn about this by focusing on the spinning cooperative, Genesis.

**Genesis Project**

In December of 2006 a group of eighteen women from Ciudad Sandino who initially approached JHC-Casca in hopes of starting some sort of income-generating cooperative. These women saw the success of the now autonomous sewing cooperative, which was once a part of JHC-Casca, and wanted to achieve the same economic success as that group. Becoming a cooperative in Nicaragua is a bureaucratic process and so the JHC-Casca worked with these women to create a plan for building the spinning cooperative from the ground-up. This spinning cooperative, upon completion, will be part of a vertically-integrated fair trade, organic clothing production chain. The workers will take organic cotton that has been harvested by an agricultural cooperative, spin the cotton into thread. The spinning plant is not yet functioning because the cooperative members must build it and since February of 2007 they have cleared the land, built the edifice with concrete and rebar, put on the roof, poured the floor and are now (as of the writing of this thesis) waiting on the shipment of the spinning equipment in order to begin production. To see this project come to fruition the initial members needed the participation of more individuals and so they made a mass effort to promote this idea to various communities throughout Ciudad Sandino. Gaining membership into the cooperative is a process that adheres to the Nicaraguan government’s views of cooperativism which has been promoted for the purposes of economic and social development. While at first glance this cooperative in its economic nature seems exclusive only to those who are involved, the
Nicaraguan cooperative law states that a cooperative must serve its social function by reinvesting 30% of its annual profits in the local community (Renk, 2005).

Incorporation into the cooperative requires potential members to take several steps. First, one must work for at least three months within the cooperative. Then, if this person is still interested they are to write a letter to the officers in order to begin the process. The cooperative members then read the letter and discuss the implications of allowing this new person to be a part of their project as an official member. They will then write a letter of acceptance or denial and the potential member, if accepted, will have to buy-in to the cooperative by paying about $350 USD. Because the candidates for membership in Genesis do not have the financial means to be able to buy-in to the cooperative, Genesis decided to accept sweat-equity as each members’ buy-in. Value was placed on each hour worked – including construction work on the factory, hours spent in cooperativism and business trainings, and hours spent in production training. The figure agreed-upon to complete the buy-in was 640 hours of work. One of the benefits of being a part of a cooperative is having employment, in a city that is characterized by a high rate of economic inactivity for women. This employment will provide access to healthcare, the creation of an account for a retirement/severance package and will also lead to a sense of dignity. Similarly, there is a provision within the membership benefits which declares a right to a successor. If a member dies or gets sick a family member is able to take that member’s place without having to pay an additional buy-in.

---

21 About $7,388 Nicaraguan Cordobas.
There are now 36 members of Genesis, 30 women and 6 men who come from various neighborhoods of Ciudad Sandino. The Genesis spinning cooperative site is located on a plot of land that is adjacent to the JHC-CDCA in Villa Soberana. Cooperative members are all residents of Ciudad Sandino, however they live in various neighborhoods throughout the city and many must take the bus to reach the cooperative. Some have indicated that using public transportation can be a financial and time burden when they must travel from the far reaches of Ciudad Sandino with multiple stops and transfers. Cooperative members typically work half-days, either from eight in the morning to noon or from one in the afternoon to five o’clock in the evening. Many of the women involved in this cooperative are single heads of household who must work another job in order to provide for their families and for this reason the cooperative voted to limit their working hours to half-days. During the remainder of the day, some women run *fritangas, pulperias*, or sell clothes to generate income. Similarly, the women who participate in Genesis continue to have domestic responsibilities and so they must wake up at four or five in the morning in order to complete these tasks before heading to the Genesis site.

Methods

My research methods are guided by postmodern feminist theory. Postmodern feminist theory recognizes that there are multiple truths and that knowledge exists as a historically and socially dependent construct (Hesse-Biber, Leavy, & Yaiser, 2004).

22 Unlike the preceding sewing cooperative, COMANUVI, whose members live exclusively in Nueva Vida, Genesis members live in various barrios of Ciudad Sandino.
Through a review of relevant literature I hoped to unravel the sociohistorical context which has assisted in creating gender roles and hierarchies that exist in Nicaragua. Similarly, by conducting interviews and observations I sought to uncover the multiple truths regarding perceptions of gender roles and relations in regards to CDD within the specific context of project Genesis in Ciudad Sandino.

Eleven interviews were conducted of both men and women involved with the JHC-CDCA in order to understand the ways in which they perceive the changes in traditional gender roles as a result of their participation in JHC-CDCA projects. As the meaning of traditional gender roles is fluid, for this research this concept is analyzed based on the understandings of social relations between the sexes as expressed by interviewees. Interviews provide important information that cannot be obtained through participant observations, the meanings of which are constructed by me the observer, or questionnaires which would be heavily structured and therefore reflects the views and objectives of the researcher. Through the use of interviews, the informants are able to reflect on their participation in the project Genesis and share their thoughts on the experience they have had during their time working with the JHC-CDCA (Emerson, 2005; Hay, 2008). While it is true that the interview questions were constructed by me, based on my own interests, the semi-structured format allows for a more organic conversation to occur between researcher and informant, this will be discussed below (Hay, 2008).

Interviewees were selected based on interactions with people who worked with JHC-CDCA through my involvement in development projects. Because I was most often
working with members of the Genesis spinning cooperative, six of my interviews were
with members of that particular cooperative. Informants were recruited by purposeful
sampling, meaning I chose individuals who were involved with JHC-Corca projects that
worked with both men and women (Baxter & Eyles, 1997). My interviews included five
women and one man who are involved in the spinning cooperative, whose levels of
education ranged from little more than elementary education to college graduates. Of
those who were involved with the spinning cooperative, two were unemployed, two
worked part time and two worked informally selling clothing. I interviewed two salaried
workers from the JHC-Corca health clinic, one male who has a master’s degree in
education and health, as well as one female worker who has attended four years of
secondary school. I also interviewed one woman who is involved in the JHC-Corca
women’s group, who sells clothes and cakes and has a fourth grade education. I
interviewed a male part-time waged day laborer of the JHC-Corca who is currently
attending University and the projects director who is a salaried employee and has
completed his bachelor’s degree. While the informants were asked to pick a pseudonym
to protect their identity at the beginning of each interview, all chose to keep their names
available during the research (Hay, 2008). In this case, disclosure of informants’ names is
not foreseen to be harmful. It is important to note that while I had hoped to interview
more men involved with project Genesis, I was unable to due to the fact that they were
asked to not be present during the mornings that the summer volunteers were working23.

23 All but one man had been asked to work the afternoon shift. This is in part due to the fact that one of the
younger men was making comments towards one of the summer volunteers which made her uncomfortable.
I was not present when this happened and so I am unaware of the exact details.
These interviews, which lasted between 30 to 90 minutes, were conducted in the native language of my informants, Spanish, and consisted of semi-structured open-ended questions in order to allow for individual interpretations of the impacts of their involvement with the JHC-CDCA (see Appendix A for interview schedule, Appendix B for interview schedule in Spanish). As previously mentioned, this manner in which the interview schedule is structured allows for a more ‘natural’ conversation to occur between researcher and informant (Hay, 2008). My interview schedule begins with basic informational questions regarding household structure, education and other demographic as a means to get the informants comfortable with the process. After this, I inquire about their participation with the JHC-CDCA and level of involvement in regards to daily responsibilities. My final set of questions addresses daily interactions between men and women, perceptions of these daily interactions as well as the informants’ perceptions of JHC-CDCA and the project in which they work.

Interviews were recorded with a digital audio recording device which allowed me to be more attentive to my informants and the conversations taking place. Similarly, because the interviews were conducted in Spanish, the digital audio recorder was able to ensure that the entire conversation was recorded. Notes were taken during the interviews in order to keep track of non-verbal cues such as body language (Hay, 2008). It was not always the case that recorded interviews were clear however, as more often than not the interviews took place outdoors. Wind disturbance and mechanical noises coming from the industrial park proved to be great obstacles in the transcribing process. The digital voice recordings were transcribed using Express Scribe software, and coded for analysis
via N-Vivo® qualitative analysis software. Open-coding was used on a portion of my interviews in order to identify emerging themes (Cope, 2005). The coded themes have been analyzed in order to categorize and recognize any patterns that may be prevalent in the perceptions of gender relations and their changes within the communities. While care was taken to establish rapport between myself and my informants, they were still removed from daily life in order to be interviewed. Participant observation allowed me to interact with and observe the interactions of my informants during a typical days’ work.

From June 22nd to August 3rd of 2009 I worked as a summer volunteer with the JHC-CDCA. During this time I was able to engage in participant observations in order to better understand the ways in which the JHC-CDCA is structured and functions as an organization as well as the interactions between individuals who participate in development projects. My participation included a variety of responsibilities, typically completed within four hour shifts, one morning shift and one afternoon shift. Sometimes I worked an entire day at one site or my projects were split between sites. Not every day was spent working, however, some days I attended orientational meetings24, lectures given by other NGOs or prominent speakers. I spent ten days working alongside the Genesis cooperative members doing construction work such as repello, mixing cement and tying rebar. During my time spent with the cooperative I took notes25 on how many

---

24 Orientation meetings were led by two JHC-CDCA community members, one of whom I quote in my analysis, Mike Woodard. Again, there are no official job titles for community members, however, on paper Mike Woodard is considered to be the legal representative and from henceforth he will be referred to as such.

25 It is important to note that I participated to write and did not take notes during my participation with my informants. If an orientation was being held or I was in a lecture I would take notes at that time however for the purpose of being fully immersed in my experience I saved most note-taking until the end of the day.
men and women would work within the site and doing what jobs, and interactions between the cooperative members, as well as JHC-CDCA employees and volunteers. For another ten days I worked in the health clinic in the barrio of Nueva Vida filing patient information and distributing medicine in the pharmacy and doing community-cleanup on three of those days. I kept track of how many men and women utilized the health clinic, who did what jobs and interactions between employees as well as interactions between employees and patients. I was able to attend four meetings of the women’s support group in Nueva Vida and also led one of these meetings. Finally, I participated in a civil engineering project for four days, rebuilding a road in the hillside town of El Porvenir. At the end of the day, I wrote my field notes and also reflected on my observations of the JHC-CDCA and my interactions with them. Because I lived in the situation which I studied for over a month and was able to participate in the ways described above, I was able to come to understand the daily lives of my informants through experience (Emerson, 1995).

My role as a researcher is that of observer-as-participant, however, due to my different positions in this context my role was multiple and changing. I recognize that as a college-educated researcher who is affiliated with the JHC-CDCA as a volunteer, I am positioned as an outsider in relation to my informants. As an unpaid worker, participating in activities such as masonry and construction work alongside cooperative members I am also positioned as one who is able to expedite the process of building the spinning plant. Also, as a Mexican-American, Spanish-speaking, dark-haired woman of color, I am

---

26 Because this particular project was outside of Ciudad Sandino I did not include field notes from that experience in my final analysis.
positioned as one who is more familiar with Latin culture and norms. Similarly, I am better able to establish a rapport with my informants than my white-anglo counterparts. For example, while tying rebar with a group of women cooperative members I was easily able to engage them in dialogue about the Celebration of the 30th Anniversary of the Triumph. Together, we joked about Daniel Ortega and discussed issues of the state as well as the heated situation in Honduras. Similarly, as my time working with the cooperative lengthened, I was able to establish a greater rapport with the members. This rapport was evident by the concern expressed through inquiries of my whereabouts if I was unable to work the day before as well as by the level of comfort members had in sharing stories with me. This brings up the idea of “multiple consciousness” that Hesse-Biber et al. (2004) address in their article in which researchers do not play one role within their research but instead face the complex issue of positionality in changing circumstances. In recognizing my multiple roles I hope that I am better able to present the data that I have gathered from my informants.

This study is not meant to be representative of the sentiments of all who are involved in community-driven development via the JHC-CDCA nor is it meant to be a measurement of success or failure of this organization. Because the majority of my interviews are with members of the spinning cooperative, this study is a contextual analysis of those involved in that project. While the experiences and perceptions of those interviewed in my research should not be generalized to development projects that utilize community-driven development methods, this study can add to the larger body of development discourse a new understanding of the effects and impacts of CDD on the
lives of Nicaraguan women and men. My research seeks to provide a glimpse into the perceived effects of individual involvement in community-driven development on gender relations in Ciudad Sandino, Nicaragua.
CHAPTER 5: RESULTS & ANALYSIS

The sun beats down upon us as we walk through the “industrial park,” a great-tailed grackle calls out from a nearby tree; it is a typical hot summer day in Nicaragua. Mike Woodard, a founding member of the Jubilee House Community-Center for Development in Central America (JHC-CDCA) is giving the summer volunteers a tour of the future site of the world’s first vertically-integrated fair trade zone. As we walk past the edifice of what will one day house the spinning cooperative, Genesis, I notice there are people working on the rooftop. Two of these people are men while the other eight are women and they are all members of the Genesis cooperative. To see women working in construction is not typical of Nicaragua’s gender division of labor and yet these women are working fervently at their job. Mike tells us that on February 5, 2007 a group of women were brought together with project Genesis to build a spinning plant from the ground up. Since then these women have worked over two years without pay to build the structure that spans an area of over 15,000 square feet. Initially these women were hesitant to begin this process of construction. Mike explains the women’s reaction, “We can’t do it, we’re women!” JHC-CDCA explained to the group that no one else would build the factory for them, especially if they have no money to begin with and so the women came to the consensus that they must. Mike tells us that these women have done everything except welding the superstructure of the roof and leveling the ground. With enthusiasm Mike demonstrates the women’s reaction to their work, “Wow, we did it!” (Excerpt from field notes from JHC-CDCA Orientation, June 22, 2009)

This is an effect of our culture… I have never worked in heavy labor like [construction]. Never have I worked like this. Before, I saw this as men’s work. When I came here and began to do construction work…little by little I came to understand that men are not the only ones who can do this work. Women can do it too. –Sara, Vice President of Genesis (personal interview July, 15, 2009).

These excerpts are indicative of some of the ways in which women have been involved in community-driven development (CDD) projects with the Jubilee House Community-Center for Development in Central America (JHC-CDCA) in Ciudad Sandino. When thinking in terms of the gender division of labor in Latin America, construction work is not typically considered to be women’s work. As exemplified in the quotes above, changes have taken place regarding perceptions of women’s capacities in the public sphere. For Sara, being involved in this type of labor has provided her with an
opportunity to recognize her own capabilities as extending beyond what has been prescribed to her as acceptable gender norms. In this chapter, my aim is to explore this participation at the project-level, particularly within the Genesis cooperative, and to demonstrate the ways in which this involvement has affected men and women’s perceptions of gender roles. I argue that although at the organizational level women’s involvement in JHC-CDCA does not appear to be challenging traditionally held views of gender roles, at the project level we see that women are participating in labor that is not considered to be feminine work and this has implications on the ways that cooperative members negotiate their daily lives.

In this chapter, drawing from interviews and field notes, I will address my research questions presented in chapter one. I begin by exploring the ways in which women have participated in community-driven development within my research context. I specifically focus on the spinning cooperative Genesis because analyzing participation at the project level provides a better understanding of the ways that women’s involvement in community-driven development can be challenging to traditional gender roles. The layout of this chapter begins with an exploration of the structure and formation of project Genesis. Following this, I discuss the implications of women as members and subsequently owners of the spinning cooperative on members’ perceptions of themselves and their capabilities. Similarly, I look into the effects this participation may have on men’s perceptions of women and their roles. I then address the hegemonic ideas of motherhood and its connection to the legacy of the Sandinista Revolution as this is an important factor to understanding how gender ideologies are shaped and reinforced by the
state, particularly in Nicaragua. Next I discuss the effects of participation in community-driven development on renegotiations of domestic labor. This is followed by a discussion of the perceptions of the gendered division of labor in Latin America and Nicaragua because this will assist in understanding informants’ perceptions of gender roles within project Genesis. Finally I explore general perceptions regarding women’s participation in masculine labor. I will first address the organizational structure and the origins of the Genesis cooperative in order to gain a better understanding of how women are able to participate in CDD in this context, as well as what responsibilities and duties women have at the cooperative level.

Women’s Participation

Although important, I needed to know more than simply which development projects women have participated in with the JHC-CDCA in order to answer my first question:

- How have women participated in community-driven development (CDD) with the JHC-CDCA in Ciudad Sandino?

I also needed to understand what types of responsibilities women hold in relation to the jobs or projects that they have been working on as well as the extent of decision-making power that each participant is able to exercise. To gain a better understanding of participation, in this section I will explore the organizational structure of the Genesis cooperative, within the JHC-CDCA, and will discuss the implications of this participation.

Project Genesis

It is important to know the origins of project Genesis, as this will facilitate a better understanding of the type of investment that members have in this cooperative. The
Genesis project is a spinning cooperative that began as an outreach to impoverished women of Ciudad Sandino, Nicaragua. This is an economic development project which is being built, literally, from the ground-up. Before the business can begin however, the cooperative needs a facility in which to work, spinning machinery, cotton\(^{27}\) and laborers. As indicated in chapter three, cooperatives were encouraged by the Sandinista government in the early 1980s. The Sandinistas fully supported participatory forms of democracy and therefore saw the formation of cooperatives as a viable means towards reviving Nicaragua’s economic development (Luciak, 1987; Walker, 1997). Forming a cooperative in Nicaragua now requires several steps such as filling out documents, attending capacity-building workshops, buying-in to the cooperative and meeting a set number of working hours. These steps can be considered barriers to those who wish to form a cooperative for many people in Nicaragua, primarily due to financial issues\(^{28}\). It is for these reasons (and others) that the JHC-CDCA employs Cesar, the projects director, who helps in organizing communities to become involved in projects that the JHC-CDCA may be helping to implement.

As Martha and Sara point out, the group of women who thought of beginning the cooperative, Cesar and the JHC-CDCA invited women from various neighborhoods in Ciudad Sandino to learn about the Genesis project in order to incorporate them as cooperative members.

\(^{27}\) This is being supplied by organic cotton cooperatives that are affiliated with JHC-CDCA.

\(^{28}\) Literacy is less of an issue as noted in chapter three. The literacy campaigns of the 1970s and 1980s were a great success in combating illiteracy among the poor.
The [Jubilee House] invited a group of women and presented to them the spinning plant project. So with those who attended meetings we formed a group and were able to begin on the fifth of February. -Martha, Member of Genesis (personal interview July 27, 2009)

They invited me here and I came to one of the last meetings and there were many women! Like one hundred and fifty women! But the economic situation [in Nicaragua] is very hard, so when they told us that there will be no money, we will not be paid, in that case many [people] left the company. On the fifth of February we began to clean [the field] and we began with forty-six women. -Sara, Vice President of Genesis (personal interview July 15, 2009)

All of these women were approached by community organizers, who had been in contact with Cesar, to attend the introductory meetings of the spinning cooperative. These meetings took place over the course of several days. While many people from Ciudad Sandino were invited to the initial meetings for Genesis, once it was realized that there would be no income to start, only a few people decided to join as members of the cooperative. In a similar manner to the NGOs that Classen et al. (2003) studied, as discussed in chapter two, JHC-CDCA was able to open up spaces for the increased involvement of the most marginalized members of Ciudad Sandino through the mobilization of door-to-door promotion of initial project meetings. In this manner, JHC-CDCA was able to avoid elite capture as it was made clear that this economic development project would be one of sacrifice that would require a long-term commitment before any profit would be made. Similarly, the process of becoming a cooperative member is one that is designed to ensure that applicants have a strong commitment to the project and their partners within the cooperative.
It is important to keep in mind that while these cooperative members are building the spinning plant they are not generating any income. So it is understandable that for many this project is viewed as a sacrifice:

For us to work here is a sacrifice because we do not make an income in this [cooperative]. -Sara, Vice President of Genesis (personal interview July 15, 2009)

When I entered [this cooperative] well, I left behind many things. Even though [my family has] an income it is very little. -Martha, Member of Genesis (personal interview July 27, 2009)

Cupples (2005, p. 317) has noted that “although working is economically necessary and central to family survival in Nicaragua, it is also a very important source of identity and self esteem.” Women involved with the spinning cooperative have become involved knowing that they will not see a profit until the spinning plant is up and running. These folks are already living in conditions of poverty, some are unemployed, some are single mothers, and yet they have chosen to see this project through to its end. It is interesting that when asked what type of work they are engaged in, they will indicate either some type of informal labor or that they are unemployed. Because this cooperative is not yet generating income members do not identify themselves, in terms of occupation, on the basis of their membership. Yet, in a different vein from what Cupples (2005) has indicated, involvement in this project, despite the lack of income, is in fact a means of developing self-esteem and also brings hope for the future.

This work that we do for the project, for us is a form a social capital. When we were presented with the plan for this project we were told that we would not be paid a salary but instead our hours are kept and the capital built is saved. So for us this is a sacrifice for an inheritance income for our family. Well yes what I do is a sacrifice now but in the future I can use that money for my children to attend University. So, this project is really for the future of us all. –Sara, Vice President of Genesis (personal interview 7/15/09).
While there are no immediate perceived benefits (i.e. income) as a result of involvement in this economic development project, long-term benefits are seen to exist. This goal of working towards a better future for the families of those involved is a motivating factor for participation in this community-driven development. This quote also alludes to the important role of motherhood and a woman’s commitment to her family plays within Nicaraguan culture, something that will be discussed below.

Ownership, Decision-making and the Millennium Development Goals

Participation within the Genesis cooperative brings with it varying responsibilities, one of which is that cooperative members are owners of the spinning business, an opportunity which is rarely presented to women in Nicaragua. Similarly, the cooperative is set-up in a decentralized manner which places decision-making in the hands of the women and men involved. However, due to the original inclusion of only women in the cooperative, female members far outnumber males. This has wider implications on gender relations within the cooperative which will be discussed below.

The basic principal of a cooperative, in the words of JHC-CDCA’s legal representative Mike Woodard, is that:

If you are a worker you are an owner [and] if you are an owner you are a worker.
– Mike Woodard, founding member and legal representative of JHC-CDCA
(excerpt from field notes, JHC orientation June 21, 2009)

As Mike Woodard explains, all members of the spinning cooperative are owners of this business. Becoming the owner of a business is uncommon for women in Nicaragua, particularly for women of lower economic status. Sara’s quote reinforces this:
Here in Nicaragua we always become workers and never owners ... It is interesting to me that this case is very different. We are poor women, we come from the barrio\textsuperscript{29} with difficulty and sacrifice but we are going to be managers. - Sara, Vice President of Genesis (personal interview July 15, 2009)

It is evident from Sara’s comment that being an owner of a business is not only a new experience but also a rare opportunity for women in Ciudad Sandino. Part and parcel of being a cooperative member is the necessity of making decisions.

All members of Genesis are involved in decision-making processes, as Jamileth explains:

For decisions we have a process like a meeting that I go to... here all [are] equally able to vote, we all vote so much. Then that is when we have participated in the decisions for Genesis. -Jamileth, Member of Genesis (personal interview July 16, 2009)

As Jamileth points out, members go to meetings and everyone is able to vote in order to make decisions. There is a small trailer that rests on the site of the spinning plant near the chilamate tree, it serves as a makeshift office for Genesis members. On the door to the office, which remains wide open throughout the day, there is a dry erase board with a calendar that indicates important dates such as meetings and trainings that members must attend. In this manner, members are able to keep track of their obligations to the cooperative.

For some, this process of decision-making is a new concept as it forces those involved to think of the consequences of their actions and decisions outside of themselves and their families. As Sara demonstrates:

Never [have I] made a decision as part of a group, to benefit a group. I have more responsibility than I thought for myself and for them. No longer is it just me or

\textsuperscript{29} In this context \textit{barrio} means slums however it is also often used in reference to the neighborhood.
my children or husband. Now I must think more at this time [for the group]. -Sara, Vice President of Genesis (personal interview July 15, 2009)

Because all cooperative members are owners, decision-making is a group process.

It is important to note the implications of both women and men holding the power to make decisions. Escobar (1995) and Kabeer (2003) have noted that CDD programs have a propensity to ignore issues of gender power hierarchies. Being unaware of who is more vocal during meetings can lead to certain members’ voices going unheard. Other researchers have pointed out that more often than not the unheard voices belong to women (Agarwal 2000; German and Taye 2008; Kabeer 2003). Yet in this context, women outnumber men by a significant margin (twenty-nine to six) and so, if there are issues of representation perhaps gender plays a reversed role. While it is true that greater number does not necessarily equate greater power or ability to speak up in meetings, Genesis is a worker-owned cooperative and therefore members have the right to speak their minds during a meeting. Similarly, it may also be the case that there are both men and women who do not feel that they can speak out during meetings. However, these are mere speculations as I did not have the opportunity to sit in on any meetings during my stay in Nicaragua.

Chico points out that as men are incorporated into a female-dominated cooperative, women’s status as an equal member may pose some threat to men’s sense of masculinity:

We men are affected by the fact that women are more capable, more capable than us because there is a machista culture that does not want to accept this and there is the thought that women will have a command position but it is not true. What we need to have is a society that jointly participates more in all areas and with both
genders. -Chico, Part-time wage laborer at JHC-CDCA (personal interview July 28, 2009)

Here, Chico alludes to a fear among men that is present when they are put in a working situation in which they are outnumbered by women. Women make up the majority of the participants in JHC-CDCA projects due to the belief that because women see their participation as benefiting their family they are more likely to be efficient and capable of seeing projects to completion than men.

Because women are so concerned with the future of their family there is an assumption that they will be more dedicated to the development projects in which they are involved. Similarly, there is an understanding that women, due to their abilities to manage the home well, are better organized and able to conduct business. As Henry demonstrates:

Women are great managers in their homes and very business oriented. Since they need to take capacity building courses as managers of a business, they know how to be managers, what they need are basic elements like technical math, this is better. - Henry, Doctor at the Nueva Vida Clinic, Ciudad Sandino (personal interview July 21, 2009)

Although Henry expresses women’s potential to run a business is great, women in Latin America only made up about 19.7% of administrative and managerial positions in 2008 (Amlinger, 2008). Yet, because JHC-CDCA primarily works with cooperatives and as I have previously noted, being a member of a cooperative means that one is also an owner, women who are cooperative members have the opportunity to be managers of their own business. Being a part of a cooperative is an endeavor that is promoted by the Nicaraguan government and the JHC-CDCA embraces cooperative formation as an effective process of development. While JHC-CDCA is able to provide support, it is understood that once
the cooperative is fully functional it should be able to run independently of JHC-CDCA. So, in providing women with the opportunity to become owners of a business such as the Genesis spinning cooperative, JHC-CDCA is challenging the gender division of labor and gender roles. All of my Genesis informants have expressed a greater sense of import in this regard:

I feel much [more important] because I feel with this knowledge I have more education and am better able to make [business] decisions. -Sara, Vice President of Genesis (personal interview July 15, 2009)

The implications of this involvement are that as women take on responsibilities of a business they are participating in activities that reach beyond those which are socially ascribed to them. Through this experience women are able to recognize the “power within” which can improve their ability to negotiate resources and decisions within the home (Kabeer, 2003).

Motherhood

As Radcliffe (1999) asserts, the gender division of labor cannot be analyzed without understanding household, community and economic relations, as all are intertwined. So, because the ideas of motherhood play a significant role in the Nicaraguan household, in this section I will explore the linkages of motherhood and women’s gender norms in Nicaragua. As previously stated, women are more often involved with informal labor apart from the JHC-CDCA, typically in such areas as selling clothes or makeup, running a *pulperia*\(^{30}\) from their home or selling baked goods. Part of the reason that women hold jobs outside of the cooperative is to provide for their family.

\(^{30}\) A small convenience store.
As Mike Woodard states, “women do whatever is necessary to keep the family sustained,” explaining that they will sell tortillas in the morning and work as a prostitute at night. Danelia points to the necessity of women participating in economic activity:

We have to work in order to bring food to the house. -Danelia, Community Coordinator/ Nueva Vida Clinic, Ciudad Sandino (personal interview July 21, 2009)

In many cases, in Ciudad Sandino, women are heads of the household. The neoliberal economic restructuring that occurred in Latin America “is paralleled by restructuring of social relations, including gender relations” (Radcliffe, 1999). Part in parcel of restructuring in Nicaragua was the eradication of thousands of jobs as outlined in the structural adjustment programs, this led to the unemployment jumping from 4.5% in 1986 to 23.5% in 1994 (Chant & Craske, 2002). Concomitantly, as the Contra War came to an end, Sandinista soldiers were demobilized and sent home. Many men were forced to migrate outside of their home countries in search of work. This sudden loss of jobs and women’s shift to the public sphere as the new breadwinners threatened the hegemonic masculinities of Nicaragua. Some men sought refuge in drink and friends and sometimes took out their frustrations on their families and wives through violence (Chant & Craske, 2002; Cupples, 2005). Others simply abandoned their families and homes.

In part due to men’s migration, increasingly more women have become heads of households in Nicaragua and out of necessity have taken jobs where they are able in

---

31 Quoted from Mike Woodard, founding member of JHC-CdCA, excerpt from field notes June 22, 2009.

32 As Kampwirth (2002) notes, good data on family structure is hard to come by but according to some, women’s status as the head of the household is much higher in urban areas and though the statistics are variable in 1984 it was estimated to be around 60%.
order to provide for their families (Chant & Craske, 2002; Kampwirth, 2002). Another
factor in women’s visible shift into the wage labor force (formal and informal) is the
creation of the new international division of labor (NIDL). The NIDL is the process in
which secondary sectors of labor (manufacturing) have relocated to developing countries
where labor is cheap and the workforce is typically constituted by a majority of low-
skilled young women as opposed to more-skilled, middle class men in more developed
countries (Chant & Craske, 2002; Radcliffe, 1999). While women’s participation in wage
labor has shifted, vertical segregation and inequalities within the gender division of labor
still persist. Women who work in manufacturing are more likely to be low or semi-skilled
whereas women in white collar jobs are more represented in clerical positions rather than
in administrative positions (Chant & Craske, 2002). While these assertions may be true
for some women, my informants, whose enterprise falls within the secondary sector,
indicated that they held a wide variety of educational backgrounds and skills. Moreover,
as women become involved with the Genesis cooperative they continue learn new skill
sets that they would have never been exposed to in other circumstances. Contrary to the
majority of women’s positions within the NIDL, Genesis members are taking part in a
manufacturing business and they are owners.

Despite the fact that some of the women involved with Genesis are single mothers
they are actively choosing to cut back the hours that they devote to their paid work in
order to participate in this cooperative. As Sara explains:

I believe that all of those here… came to work here for a better future for our
children… My vision is that I will dedicate part of my income so that I can pay
for University for my children and for them to be neatly dressed… I believe this is
a vision for many of the members that are here [in the cooperative]. -Sara, Vice President of Genesis (personal interview July 15, 2009)

Sara speaks for the other cooperative members from the position as a mother. Here it is clear that her participation with Genesis has much to do with providing a better future for her children. As previously indicated, although she is not getting paid now, when the spinning plant is functioning she will generate income and for now she has, at the very least, the benefit of healthcare to give to her family. Even though there are some women whose children are much older, women appear to be participating in this cooperative in order to make a better life for their families. For most of Latin America and Nicaragua, most certainly, motherhood is an identity to which many women strongly relate that is imbedded within their culture and history. It is important to note that motherhood is a role which many women in Latin America perform in their lifetime (sometimes over the course of generations). Through state enforcement and popular discourse motherhood has come to define women’s roles within the public and private spheres. It should be understood that motherhood, even in Latin America, is an identity which has been constructed by hegemonic discourse (Chant & Craske, 2002; Cupples, 2005; Whitson 2010).

In the context of Latin America there are hegemonic ideologies of what makes a good mother or a bad mother. The good mother is understood to be a woman who is married, unemployed and stays at home, therefore is fully available to the needs of her children and husband (Cupples 2005). A bad mother is then considered to be the opposite: either a working single parent or a married woman who is employed (Cupples, 2005). The idea of engaging in activity outside of the private sphere while in wedlock is
typically frowned upon because time devoted to household responsibilities, to the children, and to one’s spouse would be compromised. Martha, a member of Genesis, when asked about renegotiating household labor refers to her own daughter as “bad” for having a child out of wedlock:

For example my bad daughter, the one who has the little girl, will sometimes help me a little when she is able to put down her load. -Martha, Member of Genesis (personal interview July 27, 2009)

Martha appears to view her daughter as being “bad” for being both unmarried and with child. It is interesting that, for a woman who is involved in a women’s support group and Genesis, she seems to perpetuate the good/bad mother, virgin/whore ideologies in her own family. Again, when thinking in terms of hegemonic identities the ideal good mother is simply that, an ideal which is widely accepted but to which few people subscribe.

Similar to the Post WWII, Western “career woman” as noted by Bordo (2009), despite women’s vital role during the Sandinista Revolution, should a mother choose to pursue a life that deviates from the accepted normative behavior she will face social sanctions.

During the Sandinista Revolution the hegemonic ideologies of motherhood were quite different. At the time it was not unheard of to see propaganda depicting a mother with a child in her arms and a gun slung over her shoulder (Jenkins, 2008). Representations of women in this manner both reinforced their participation in the war as well as emphasized the value of their reproductive role as mothers. Through this propaganda women were encouraged to have more children in order to provide future soldiers for the war. Yet women’s responsibilities during the Sandinista Revolution were both within and also extended outside the home. Henry, a veteran from the Sandinista
Revolution, shares his memories of women’s involvement in the war during the 1970s and 1980s:

Because the youth, the young men and women, were at the [frontlines] it was not possible for [mothers] to stay in the home. And so all the mothers organized and would go to their companions or brothers who lived at the front… Many women participated in the fronts. In many cases they were better than the men in the war because of their good discipline, good understanding and more than anything their dedication. – Henry, War Veteran, Doctor at the JHC-CDCA Clinic in Nueva Vida, Ciudad Sandino (personal interview 7/21/09).

Henry continued to explain that women’s involvement in the Revolution and during the Contra War was not limited to providing Nicaragua with more soldiers (via motherhood) or preparing meals and providing care for other soldiers. Rather, women involved in the war became pilots, combatants, gunners, doctors, politicians and battalion leaders; they engaged in roles that were typically dominated by men. Martha, who also fought in the Revolution, shares her thoughts on the impact of women’s participation in the war:

I believe that the participation of women in organizing in the Sandinista Front was very important first because she was one more person to hold a rifle. Second, because she is one more person to organize the community. Third, because she was given the opportunity to demonstrate that she has the same capacity as men, [in this aspect] she was given the liberty of equality… This was when the awakening of women came. Women awoke, were invited to demonstrate their capabilities, really… and I see that here in Nicaragua, the participation of women is very competitive, because they worked a lot in the war. -Martha, Member of Genesis (personal interview July 27, 2009)

Martha describes how participation in the war opened up new doors for women “to demonstrate their capabilities” and she attributes women’s competition in the workplace that we see now to the war. As Kampwirth (2002, 2004) notes, whether intentional or not, women’s involvement in the Sandinista Revolution brought women into the public sphere and there is no turning back. This participation has set the stage for the changes in gender
performativity that would follow. I will further explore this concept of gender performativity and gender division of labor below.

Renegotiating Domestic Labor

As women participate in community-driven development with the JHC-CDCA, just as any form of labor outside of the home, they must somehow deal with their burdens of domestic labor. While this is not necessarily the case for all women involved in Genesis, many are finding increased support as their time becomes constrained and they must now renegotiate domestic tasks. Researchers have noted that it is often the female children that take over household responsibilities when the mother takes on employment outside of the home (Kabeer, 2003; Molyneux, 2002). This renegotiation of domestic labor within the home, due to CDD involvement, has wider implications on gender relations within the household. Sara explains that a renegotiation of domestic labor has occurred since her involvement with Genesis:

My family responded very positively. They supported me very much. My daughter was a great help when her father returned to work, she helped cook the food. Sometimes, my husband would work with the mototaxi and he had access to return home. Many times he would arrive a little early and cook, give the children lunch and take them to class and he would return to work. When he works late my daughter makes food for the little ones. My boys support me a lot because also, they share responsibilities in the home. Their duties are at the very least to sweep the patio, pick up the kitchen, wash dishes… and things like that. I have a lot of support. –Sara, Vice President of Genesis spinning cooperative of JHC-CDCA (personal interview 7/15/09).

Sara’s time has become more limited as she participates in project Genesis and so family members have taken up different tasks in order to manage the household. In this case we

---

33 A small three-wheeled motorbike with passenger seating that is typically used as an alternative to a taxicab.
see not only the daughter taking up responsibilities but the husband and the younger boys are also performing household tasks. While all of the informants indicated that they received some sort of support from their family with domestic labor, not all are able to renegotiated labor with their husbands or sons. Sara’s case, however supports the argument that some researchers have presented which states that as women take on employment outside of the home men have taken up household responsibilities to ease the burden on their wives (Frank, 2005; Momsen, 2004). Kabeer (2003) notes that this renegotiation of labor with one’s spouse as women enter the workforce is a rare occurrence and so it is interesting that as these women enter into unpaid labor they are capable of renegotiating. Further implications of this renegotiation of labor within the household are that as Sara, and others, have also included their children in taking on responsibilities they lay the groundwork for raising young men to be more aware of a necessity to appreciate women’s domestic labor.

Just as the women in the Genesis cooperative must renegotiate their household labor, so too do other women who are involved with the JHC-CDCA, as Danelia comments:

My daughter, after she finishes her homework, helps my mother make *gallo pinto*\(^{34}\) in the afternoon. Aside from this my sister cleans the house in the morning and watches my little boy. My partner, he works and when there is time he helps but not much. There are husbands that help a lot but him, mostly no. *laughs* It’s rare… but he likes to shop! He shops and I cook. *laughs* -Danelia, Community Coordinator/ Nueva Vida Clinic, Ciudad Sandino (personal interview July 21, 2009)

\(^{34}\) *Gallo pinto* is a traditional Nicaraguan dish, served with nearly every meal, which is cooked over a wood fire and consists of red beans and rice spiced with cilantro, onions and peppers.
Unlike Sara, Danelia receives little help from her husband with domestic tasks while her daughter and mother are able to take on tasks that she cannot accomplish with her limited availability. Still, as she has come to be involved with the JHC, first as a community coordinator and now as a waged worker in the Nueva Vida Clinic she has found it necessary to call upon her family members to take on burdens within the household. It is interesting to note, that Danelia is the only female waged worker that I interviewed at JHC and her husband is characterized as being less willing or able to help with domestic tasks.

For Martha, whose children are now adults but still living at home, these domestic responsibilities seem to have been negotiated some time ago rather than as a result of her involvement with Genesis.

They support me [in my decision to join Genesis] primarily because I don’t have little children, really. Secondly, because my responsibilities in the family, for example washing, ironing, making food, cleaning the house, my children are able to do so there is less for me. Because they are grown, I do not have little ones, there is no one to care for my daughters who are unemployed so they manage the household situation. They help me wash, iron, cook and look after the house. - Martha, Member of Genesis (personal interview July 27, 2009)

As women in Nicaragua have moved into the labor force and men have lost their jobs, working women have found themselves needing to negotiate their gender roles within the household. All of these comments are indicative of the agency which these women hold as they move into a new working environment. In these instances there is a great deal of support coming from the family, despite the fact that their involvement is considered to be a sacrifice. Although Jamileth has indicated previously that her husband is supportive

---

35 I understand this to mean, considering her earlier comment about the “bad daughter” who has a child, that these daughters are not married and therefore have no one to care for them.
of her decision to be a part of this cooperative she tells me that he does not have time to help with domestic tasks.

My husband arrives at home at night, now he arrives around nine or ten at night. Right now no, he does not help much [with responsibilities in the home], but when he has time he helps me sweep or take out the garbage… he helps me with these things. – Jamileth, Genesis spinning cooperative member (personal interview 7/16/09).

As households in Ciudad Sandino are much more likely to consist of extended families rather than nuclear families, in this context it is not uncommon to see more than one person taking on the burden of household responsibilities or caring for children. Jamileth explains this renegotiating of labor among her family members:

In the beginning the person who had helped me the most was my mom because she helped me with my children. …I get up at four in the morning and before I leave I fix up the food for the day so that I don’t burden my mother more. There, my mom has food and is taking care of my children all day until my daughter is done with her classes. – Jamileth, Genesis spinning cooperative member (personal interview 7/16/09).

While Jamileth completes some household tasks before leaving for the cooperative, other family members take on responsibilities to off-set the burden of domestic work. Her mother watches over the children, her daughter will cook dinner and clean, and when her husband is not working he will wash dishes or help where he is needed. This story is similar for many of the cooperative members, as exemplified by the other comments above and in each case there was someone at home who could take on responsibilities in the home. Although it is important to keep in mind that each family is different in terms of how domestic labor is divided among family members. It is not always the case that men will be
willing or able to help but neither is it always the female family members who take over domestic burdens.

Rather than bearing the typical double or triple burdens that result from women’s involvement in development projects, these women are able to renegotiate and therefore lighten their workload within their homes. While this renegotiation of domestic labor has been documented by Cupples (2005) in the context of Matagalpa, Nicaragua, the women she refers to are in fact being paid whereas the majority of women whom I interviewed are working without pay. It is unclear for what reasons these women are able to enact such agency in these situations. I would posit that these women stand strong on a foundation built from dedication to their families and confidence within the goals and possibilities of the Genesis project.

Gender Division of Labor

Individual projects which are affiliated with the JHC-C'DCA are not necessarily designed to challenge traditionally held gender roles. Yet it is important to recognize how participation in particular projects may reinforce or unintentionally challenge gender roles. For example, community cleanup is an activity that is organized by Danelia, a health promoter and employee at JHC-C'DCA’s health clinic, which occurs nearly every weekday in Nueva Vida. If community members participate in cleanup activities they receive a bono which allots the participant a free visit to the clinic. Typically, those involved in community cleanup are not those who participate in the cooperative Genesis. Only one or two cooperative members live in the Nueva Vida barrio and community
cleanup tends to take place during the morning hours which is when cooperative members are working. However, despite the manual labor involved it is evident from my field notes that this is a gendered labor.

This morning we worked doing community cleanup with people in Nueva Vida, a neighborhood in Ciudad Sandino. The dirt roads were lined with heaps of garbage that had been collected during the previous days. Someone brought in a tractor and trailer which we would use to transport the garbage to the landfill adjacent to this barrio. There were eighteen Nueva Vida community members working with us in total: three adult males, seven adult females, five male children and three female children. Each one of us either had a pitchfork, shovel, rake or broom to use for moving the garbage from the side of the road to the trailer. As we figure out ways to move the most amount of garbage at once, wedging two pitchforks together while someone with gloves holds on to the heap, large cockroaches scurry from beneath the filth over our feet and deeper into the garbage. The young boys stand on top of the trailer using rakes to keep the piles from falling off the edge. The men use the pitchforks to toss the garbage onto the trailer while the women mostly bring the garbage closer to the trailer so that the men can haul the loads more efficiently... When we finished loading up the trailer the volunteers, a few men and male children sat ourselves on top of the garbage and rode to the landfill to dispose of our labors’ fruits. (Excerpt from field notes, community cleanup in Nueva Vida, June 22, 2009)

There were significantly fewer men helping with community cleanup on this day and subsequent cleanup opportunities. When asked about the participation of men versus women in community cleanup, Danelia responds, “Women work more than men… the men have their own work in other places like construction and so they aren’t at home very much. If we promote a community cleanup the men will help us if they do not have a job.” While fewer men were involved in this community-oriented labor it was apparent that the tasks that women took on were far less heavy than those taken on by men. It is apparent from this example and those previously cited above that the gender

36 Danelia, Community Coordinator/ Nueva Vida Clinic, Ciudad Sandino (personal interview July 21, 2009 translated from Spanish)
division of labor plays a significant role in understanding the ways in which women participate in community-driven development and daily activities. When asked how many women participate in cooperatives within the JHC-Corca, Cesar says:

The majority [of participants] are women. Well, normally in agriculture the proportion is more men than women because work in the countryside is very heavy [labor] although there are women that work in the countryside but the majority is men. Assembly, spinning, health… there are women, and in this aspect we are promoting the participation of women because in many cases, in the majority of the cases they are single women with children. So we focus the work in this sector since the women have an attitude of being able to learn like men in this aspect. We focus our strength in these sectors although we work with men also, in the projects there are many women. In all of the projects there are more women than men. - Cesar, Projects Director at JHC-Corca (personal interview July 30, 2009)

Cesar’s comments are representative of women’s involvement with JHC as a whole. It is interesting to note Cesar’s acknowledgement that women do not make up a significant proportion of participants in agricultural development projects. Such a division of labor, in a Latin American context, perpetuates what are considered to be a traditionally held gender division of labor in which men will be the main participants in agricultural wage labor. Women’s involvement in assembly-line work, spinning and health projects not only reinforces the NIDL vis-à-vis assembly work (nimble fingers) but also places women in roles that are considered to be feminine labor (Chant & Craske, 2002). At a larger scale, it can be said that women’s participation in these development projects within the JHC does not challenge traditionally held views of gender roles. Jamileth alludes to the rigid views of gender roles in Nicaragua:

If we try to work [men will say,] “Go work in a bakery! Not in this work here, this is men’s work.” -Jamileth, Member of Genesis (personal interview July 16, 2009).
Here Jamileth acknowledges that there is a commonly held perception of women’s place in terms of labor. Women are associated with wage labor that extends from their domestic responsibilities. When thinking in terms of the gender division of labor, women are stereotypically associated with the domestic domain whereas men are more associated with the public sphere (McDowell, 2007). By this I mean, for example, spinning, baking and health are extensions of responsibilities that women already have (or traditionally had) within their home and these skills are now being applied to wage labor.

By looking at JHC-CDCDA at the level of an individual project, however, we can see the challenges to hegemonic ideologies of gender roles. In the case of building Genesis, women are involved in various types of labor to which they had not been previously exposed. As Kabeer (2003) notes, “men are found in large numbers in traditional heavy industry… they also dominate senior management positions” (p.60). Members of Genesis are required to perform a variety of tasks in order to build the spinning plant; some of these duties include participating in work that typically would be considered as masculine labor. This involvement Sara explains:

> We work differently because there are various areas. When we were putting on the roof there were only six of us women who were able to go up there. The others didn’t because they were afraid. But the others were able to work here down below, with their capacity they are able to work… because some learned to plaster well and they plaster much faster than others, others work mixing the cement and it’s different for each one. -Sara, Vice President of Genesis (personal interview July 15, 2009)

Some of the responsibilities that are required of the cooperative members include building the roof of the spinning plant, plastering the walls, mixing cement, tying together rebar and making cement blocks. The women of Genesis had to learn these work
skills through capacity-building workshops and some excelled in certain areas more than others. Sara, like Jamileth inferences that the rigid gender roles embedded within Nicaraguan culture are responsible for her previous lack of experience in construction work:

We work in construction with reinforced steel, building the roof, plastering, all types of work that I had never done before. I have only worked in the Zona Franca37 and as a pensioned clothing worker. This is the impression of our culture… [women] do not work in heavy labor. -Sara, Vice President of Genesis (personal interview July 15, 2009)

For Sara, working in this type of labor was a new experience. Previously she had worked in areas that were more closely associated with feminine labor practices such as assembly-line work and as a seamstress. Here, she asserts that it is a widely held belief that women do not work in heavy, manual labor such as construction. In the following section I will discuss, more in-depth, the implications of women’s involvement in masculine labor on the perceptions of those involved in the Genesis cooperative.

**Perceptions of Gender Relations**

Involvement in Genesis required recognition of one’s own strengths which challenged the ideas that only men could participate in construction work. It was not long before participants realized that they were not bound to their traditionally held ideas of femininity and masculinity. In this section of the chapter I will focus my analysis on the perceptions that are held by those who participate in community-driven development regarding varying topics, all of which address my second main research question:

- Has incorporating women in CDD affected the way that men and women perceive gender relations within this community? If so, how?

Cesar explains the widely held perceptions of women’s capabilities in Nicaragua:

37 A free trade zone/export processing zone that is located within Ciudad Sandino
In general our country, like many countries in Latin America, we are very *machista*\(^{38}\). There are times that we do not accept that women are able to do things that we can do. But in this case we (Jubilee House) promote that women are able to learn. Although there is *machismo* there we promote that the women have to learn. - Cesar, Projects Director at JHC-CDDCA (personal interview July 30, 2009)

The Jubilee House Community, like other NGOs, holds the idea that women should be involved in the development process. Although Genesis was initially meant to be a women-only cooperative, the members voted to allow for the inclusion of men, as Sara demonstrates:

> They always tell us that we [men and women] are equal… [We began] as a women’s cooperative but we accept men into it because we see how this cooperative has supported us women. So we invited men as men because they always say that there are more opportunities for women than men. Here we are, we have men in the cooperative so that we can be equal. -Sara, Vice President of Genesis (personal interview July 15, 2009)

For the women of the Genesis cooperative the inclusion of men was a logical step towards gender equality. These women recognized that economic restructuring has limited the opportunities available for men, not only within the economic sphere but within NGO processes as well. A critique of focusing only on women in the development process is that men and the roles that they play within the community and home are overlooked (Chant, 2002; Chant and Gutmann, 2000). Yet as Sara indicates women are

---

\(^{38}\) *Machista* is an “adjective pertaining to actions, attitudes or persons (male or female) who display traits of (or who subscribe to ideals of) *machismo*” (Chant & Craske, 2002, p. xi). *Machismo* is a “cult of ‘manliness’ emphasizing bravery, strength, sexual potency, and power over women and other men [that is] often associated with exaggerated masculinity, male chauvinism and/or a male supremacist ideology” (Chant & Craske, 2002, p. xi).
aware of men’s disadvantaged position in society\textsuperscript{39} and have taken it upon themselves to include them in their economic development project.

Both members of Genesis and JHC-CDDA acknowledge that in the context of Nicaragua, despite the inclusion of women in the Sandinista Revolution, they face challenges of machismo. So for everyone, the incorporation of women into new forms of labor is a learning process. Sara explains that regardless of the equality law that exists within the cooperative women still face some ridicule from the men:

There have been many women who work on the roof, plastering and for others it is difficult and some men laugh at them. It is difficult and we have no desire to compete. We teach the [men] to understand that we women support one another a lot. There are men here that see that if we cannot [complete a task] they will do it. There is a lot of support from the men. –Sara, Vice President of Genesis (personal interview 7/15/09).

As previously addressed, people involved in Genesis have varying degrees of skills and here it is evident that some negotiation of labor must be done in order to get a job done. However, men’s views of women’s capabilities continue to be limited and are expressed via mockery which is rooted in machismo.

While I worked doing repello\textsuperscript{40} with another female volunteer, two male wage laborers approached us and engaged us in conversation. While observing our work, one man asked me if I had ever worked with repello before and I told him no, he was surprised. They both chuckled and asked about my colleague, who had been quiet for some time. She was struggling with the trowel, cement splattering at her feet, but was

\textsuperscript{39} Men are considered to be disadvantaged in the sense that development organizations often focus on women

\textsuperscript{40} Repello is plaster; repellar is to plaster or stucco.
determined to keep working until she got it right. The men made a few comments about her work, until she finally piped up, explaining that she was fluent in Spanish. At that point, embarrassed, the men offered to teach her how to *repellar* “properly”. While we were two *gringa* volunteers doing men’s work, this is indicative of some men’s views of women who attempt to participate in labor that is not typically feminine.

While some men mock women who are unable to complete a task, thereby reinforcing shame or embarrassment for attempting to do “men’s work,” other men are supportive and willing to help when needed. During my time working with the Genesis cooperative, men and women seemed to work quite well together tying rebar, working with *repello* and finishing the roof. While I conducted an interview with Pablo, one woman interrupted us and asked him to help her cut a bundle of wires with bolt cutters, without hesitation he helped her and returned to me.

Despite the potential for harassment, the women of the cooperative continue to work towards their goal of seeing their project completed. As Cesar demonstrates, women have a different attitude than men in this sense:

> Between man and woman, the case of the woman is distinct in these projects because she has more dedication. Not so much strength it is more like dedication. She is more responsible. [Women] are visionaries. They have a little more vision and hope than we men do.  - Cesar, Projects Director at JHC-CDCA (personal interview July 30, 2009)

Again, we see that there is a perception of women having more dedication to development projects than men. While they may not have the brute strength that men have they have the vision and dedication to get their jobs done. This idea of dedication
stems from the perception that women are working for the benefit of their family. Therefore, it is expected that women will perform accordingly.

Despite women’s own views of being capable of doing manual labor men may not share these same ideas. Chico shares his own perceptions of women’s capacities in heavy labor when asked what is different about working with women, he responds:

Working with women? Yes it is different. The difference is when there is work to be done is that women, with their feminine condition, cannot work in [labor] which requires one to have strength. But our method of work [at the JHC-CDCA, believes] women to be in equal [capacity] as us. -Chico, Part-time wage laborer at JHC-CDCA (personal interview July 28, 2009)

Chico maintains the idea that women are weak despite the fact that Sara has demonstrated that she and a few other women are capable of working at the same pace as men. As Sara explains:

I enjoy seeing that I have the same abilities as [men]. If he lifts a pail, I can also lift it… when we sling cement I’m at an equal pace with the men, I am equally dirty… this doesn’t bother me. I love working like a man. We demonstrate that we women are also able to… we have the same, almost the same, strength. Yes I’m small … but yes, we’re able to work like [men]. –Sara, Vice President of Genesis (personal interview 7/15/09, translated from Spanish).

Sara’s experience working with the Genesis spinning cooperative exemplifies the ways in which women’s participation in a form of labor that is typically dominated by men can change perceptions of traditional gender roles. However, this change in perceptions concerning women’s capabilities seems to be among women more so than men.

Despite the fact that JHC tries to incorporate women in development projects and promotes the idea that women are able to learn to perform the same tasks as men, women are still perceived in terms of traditionally understood roles. In this case, as exemplified by Chico’s reference to the “feminine condition,” women are still viewed by the men as
weak and dependant on the men to complete duties. This viewpoint will likely continue to be held outside of the Genesis cooperative, as Jamileth astutely observes:

If I go look for work, they will not give work to a woman in masonry but we can do it… so I don’t know, it may always be that a woman cannot, only men. - Jamileth, Member of Genesis (personal interview July 16, 2009)

Jamileth brings up a valid point. When thinking about the implications of women learning work skills that are typically associated with men it cannot be expected that just because women are capable of men’s work that they will necessarily be given jobs doing men’s work outside of the sphere of the development project. While JHC-CDCA is able to teach these women new labor skills this knowledge will most likely not be applied in the context of searching for jobs outside of the cooperative. So, while these women’s participation in Genesis has challenged their own perceptions of women’s capabilities, this does not confront the structures which exist that perpetuate the existing gender division of labor. Also, these skills and this labor is leading up to the final goal of running a spinning cooperative which, again, falls within the realm of feminine labor. Despite these observations, cooperative members hold JHC-CDCA in close regards for the opportunities they have been provided through working with them.

All of the interviewees expressed a sense of gratitude towards JHC-CDCA for giving them an opportunity to become involved in a cooperative and for the chance to start a business of their own. Sara expresses her gratitude and sense of commitment to the organization:

They gave us an opportunity to work, they are confident in that we have the faith and the confidence that in the future we will pay them back. This is the idea that we hold true. They gave us the money to make the spinning plant, to be managers of this business. –Sara, Vice President of Genesis (personal interview 7/15/09).
Again, for women in Latin America, the opportunity to be a manager of a business is rare. Similarly, by assisting in the process of forming a cooperative, JHC-CDCA has made access to creating this spinning cooperative easier for members involved. While participation in community-driven development has not explicitly challenged men’s perceptions of gender roles it has had an effect on self-perceptions for cooperative members and wage laborers alike. Sara expresses her changed perceptions:

One of the advantages that I have… demonstrated is that yes, I am able to live with [the other cooperative members] and I am able to live with them outside… I have come to understand that we are all equal, in the cooperative and in my community and we must help one another. –Sara, Vice President of Genesis spinning cooperative of JHC (personal interview 7/15/09).

For Sara, her involvement in the cooperative has helped her to understand the necessity of helping one another both within the cooperative and in her community. By participating in a project which requires every member to take on an equal share of responsibilities and to work as a team Sara has learned how to think outside of the context of her thinking about herself and her family alone. This has provided her with the opportunity to be reflective in her decisions and actions. Jamileth echoes similar feelings:

I have learned many things… to live together with many people and different characters of each person. It is a great impact. - Jamileth, Member of Genesis (personal interview July 16, 2009)

Learning to negotiate situations that involve a variety of personalities is not all that has been gleaned from experience with the cooperative. While it is evident from Chico’s previous comments that he still holds traditional ideas of gender roles, to some extent his thoughts and perceptions have evolved since his involvement with JHC-CDCA.
I did not believe before that men and women were equal, now I do. In my house, always the housework was done by my sister. Now I help with many things. I don’t have a problem now doing things in the house. There is more tolerance on my part, before I did not have this tolerance. Now I am like a helpful person, this is the change that I have had. It’s very significant, very strong. It is a better way of thinking about people. -Chico, Part-time wage laborer at JHC-CDC (personal interview July 28, 2009).

Chico explains a very significant change in his way of thinking and acting since his involvement with JHC-CDC. As Radcliffe (1999) has pointed out, economic and household relations are not separate endeavors, what occurs in the public sphere has the potential to effect what occurs in the private sphere and vice versa. In this case, by working alongside women in a context gives women equal rights as men in work that would typically be considered to be taken up by men, Chico has subsequently come to value women and their labor more. In addition to his proclamation of now viewing women as equal his actions show that he has become more aware of women’s burdens, particularly within his own home and he is now more inclined to help when he is needed.

Conclusion

For both men and women in the Genesis project, significant changes have taken place in their lives regarding their perceptions of gender roles. It is important to keep in mind, however, that the context of Nicaragua is unique in that women have historically, as noted in chapter three, been active in the public sphere and invited to participate in non-normative gender roles. In the context of those involved in project Genesis in Ciudad Sandino, spaces have been opened to include women at an equal (if not higher) footing as men as owners and decision-makers within the cooperative. However, as Sharp et al. (2003) note, “empowerment is more than participation in decision making; it must also
include the processes that lead people to perceive themselves as able and entitled to make decisions” (p. 283, emphasis in original). Through their participation, women and men have invested significant time and energy into the end goal of building this spinning cooperative and have come to recognize the power they hold within. In terms of recognizing capacities, Cesar appears to be well aware of what is going on within the cooperative.

Look, what happened in the case of the cooperative which we formed and now women participate, is that for the majority of them it was a new experience. Because many of these women did not know involvement in this type of work and here they are. At the very least the women never knew how to make concrete or how to make a block. Basically they have learned things they did not know. Also, this force has motivated this sacrifice to stay and to be content in the project although may not be easy. -Cesar, Projects Director at JHC-CDC (personal interview July 30, 2009)

It is obvious for Cesar and others involved at a peripheral level with Genesis that the women involved with Genesis have learned many new skills which they would not have had access to learning before. Yet as these women have demonstrated the effects of their participation is much deeper than simply learning “men’s work.” Women who have come to be involved with Genesis have garnered a greater sense of self-efficacy not just in performing masculine tasks but in reaching outside of their own familiar spheres. These women have realized their own strengths and weaknesses and have learned to negotiate labor in both the public and private sphere.

Women’s involvement in community-driven development occurs at a level that cannot challenge gender ideologies that exist in society. However, in participating, the Genesis women are able to recognize the “power within” (as discussed in Chapter 3) and use that power within to achieve the goals that they have set; the goals that, if met, will
benefit all of those involved. As Kabeer (2003) asserts, an institution is able to reinforce, reproduce and produce social difference and inequality. For the JHC-CDCA, there was never any intention of promoting a radical feminist agenda but simply that of recognizing that women are human beings that are capable of many things and are deserving of being valued equally as men. In this endeavor, JHC-CDCA was able to affect the men involved, not radically changing their mentalities but at the very least these practical lessons touched their thoughts and actions outside of the organization. For those involved in this project, the Genesis spinning cooperative, there have been significant changes over the course of the last three years and though the plant is not yet up and running and the cooperative members are still working without pay, they press on towards their goal. As every day passes and the cooperative comes closer to achieving their dream they learn new things about themselves and about each other; these experiences are not isolated within the working sphere but follow the members to their homes and affects their daily lives.
CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS

To say that women’s participation in community-driven development (CDD) alone was able to change the ways in which men and women viewed traditional gender roles would be naïve, as Nicaragua is unique in its history and there are more factors at play in this context. The legacy of the Sandinista revolution has not only facilitated a climate of collective organizing but also one that is more accepting of women in the public sphere. Women’s involvement in the Sandinista Revolution opened the doors for the transformation of gender relations in Nicaragua yet the existence of a clear gender division of labor and *machismo* is pervasive (Kampwirth, 2002, 2004). For members of the Genesis project in Ciudad Sandino, as demonstrated above, there have been significant changes in their lives due to their participation in this cooperative. These changes are not limited to the CDD work environment, rather, they have reached beyond those spaces and into the home and community. As I have previously noted, the household, community and economic endeavors are interconnected (Radcliffe, 1999). It is important to note, however that participation in CDD has differing affects on men than it does on women in terms of perceptions of gender ideologies. Similarly, while this participation has affected cooperative members at the individual level, this does not challenge the structural system that is in place which upholds societal views of gender roles.

The purpose of this research project was 1) to explore the ways in which women have participated in community-driven development, through the Jubilee House
Community-Center for Development of Central America (JHC-CDCA) in Ciudad Sandino, Nicaragua, and 2) to determine how this involvement has affected gender relations for those involved. By conducting interviews and participant observations with members of cooperatives and projects that are affiliated with JHC-CDCA I was able to address the aims of this study. Rather than looking at each of the projects in which the JHC-CDCA is involved, I focused mainly on the activities of the Genesis spinning cooperative. I argued that although at the organizational level women’s involvement in JHC-CDCA does not appear to be challenging traditionally held views of gender roles, women’s involvement in community-driven development has had unintended transformatory effects. At the project-level we see that women are participating in labor that is not considered to be feminine and this has implications on the ways that cooperative members negotiate their daily lives. However, it was important to first understand the socio-historical context in which my research was rooted.

Nicaraguans have a history of mobilization for the purposes of improving their living situation and combating the injustices of their government (past and present). The Sandinista’s encouragement of collective organization and support for the formation of cooperatives created an environment ripe for participatory involvement in development projects. Nicaraguan communities, through the formation of neighborhood block groups, women’s support groups and other community organizations, have been able to collectively organize in efforts to see their needs met. This is particularly true for Ciudad Sandino whose residents have mobilized in order to improve their living situation (for example, to gain access to running water). In the case of project Genesis, this legacy of
collective organizing within Ciudad Sandino and Nicaragua has facilitated the formation of the cooperative and is conducive to the implementation of CDD practices. While CDD may be more easily implemented in Nicaragua, this may not be the case in another context which does not have a history of collective organization.

Since the Revolution, numerous non-governmental organizations have entered Nicaragua and attempted to work towards development in a participatory manner. However, it is important to recognize that although community members are willing to participate in development, organizations should be aware of the dangers of participatory and community-driven development in order to avoid mistakes of organizations past. Participatory and community-driven development initiatives are not without their flaws. There exists both the risk of overlooking the needs of women and the potential for elite capture within the community. The JHC-CDCA, in their efforts to promote a community-driven development approach, has recognized the importance of including women’s voices in decision-making. In the case of project Genesis, it was women who approached the JHC-CDCA with the hopes of starting an income-generating project and so this cooperative was formed. The rules of the cooperative are constructed so that all members (both men and women) are to attend meetings and decisions are made through democratic vote. This process is meant to be inclusive of all members, however, having not been present at meetings I am unable to report the full extent of which members voices are “heard.” Future research could include observations of cooperative meetings to gain an understanding of cooperative member dynamics in decision-making processes. In regards to elite capture, the manner in which cooperative members were recruited ensured an
equal opportunity for participation, as evident by the differences of membership (i.e. young, old, university educated, little-to-no education, etc.). However, while there was an “opportunity” for “all” to participate in this cooperative, there may have been barriers to participation present which kept certain less-privileged individuals from participating. So, elite capture may still exist to some extent in project Genesis and other JHC-CDCDA projects. Interviews of non-participants would be necessary in order to identify the barriers to participation and to understand the differences between participants and non-participants. While the identified problems of CDD may be present in this case, it cannot be denied that the JHC-CDCDA has had far-reaching effects on the participants of project Genesis.

Development projects such as Genesis that have been implemented through JHC-CDCDA which have directly targeted women do not, at first glance, seem to challenge traditionally held gender roles. Projects such as the spinning and sewing cooperatives, health clinic, and community clean-up reinforce the typical gender division of labor as feminine work. Yet to look at the details of how projects are implemented as women work as managers and participate in the construction of the facilities in which they will work, it is apparent that their involvement in community-driven development has challenged traditional gender roles. As demonstrated above, women’s participation in Genesis has significantly affected their perceptions of their own capabilities. Interviewees have indicated that through their involvement in the construction of the spinning plant and as managers they have come to realize that they have greater capabilities than they had previously expected. As stated before, women are not typically given the opportunity
to be owners of a business in Nicaragua, so for the Genesis cooperative members this involvement has brought recognition of the power they hold within (Parpart, 2002). Women are seeing that they have new capacities and are able to function in the workplace, completing tasks that are not traditionally ascribed to them as women such as heavy labor or managing a company.

Although practical and strategic gender interests have been dichotomous in the literature my research shows that the distinction between the two is not so clearly delineated (Moser, 1993; Molyneux, 2001, 2002). In addressing the practical issue of economic necessity, the women of Genesis have been able to transform the existing structures of power within the context of their workspace and in some case their homes. This supports the argument posed by Hays-Mitchell (1995) that these terms represent a false dichotomy and therefore should be reconsidered in the application of such strategies with development projects.

While examining community-driven development, in the context of the project Genesis, I have shown that there is a potential to challenge gender ideologies at the individual level. It is important to note, however that while women have experienced profound changes in their perceptions of their own capabilities through their involvement with Genesis, the effects of this participation has affected men to a lesser degree. As evidenced by my results above, men continue to hold perceptions that women are weak and that they are less capable of working in hard labor. This is different from women’s perceptions of themselves as a result of their participation. Yet, by working alongside women as equals in Genesis, my male informants indicated that they now view women
differently and this has affected their relationships with women outside of the context of the project. It is important to recognize that integrating men in participatory development projects alongside women will have different outcomes for men than women. The implications of this are that if a development organization incorporates men into a development project for the purpose of changing their viewpoints, as White (1997) suggests the results may be less effective than anticipated. As Biligi (1998) notes, however, men’s views have the potential to change but the process is one that requires time. While the inclusion of men in gender-redistributive projects creates a space in which men and women are able to question their behavior, in order to create a larger impact, the social structures and institutions which perpetuate inequalities of gender, class and race must be analyzed (White, 1997).

Although the women involved with project Genesis recognize their own capabilities, their participation in community-driven development does not change the way that they are perceived by those outside of this process. By this, I mean that just because these women are able to do construction work or manage a business does not mean that they will be given the opportunity to demonstrate these capabilities outside of the context of project Genesis (or their households). These types of projects do not challenge the social structures in place that perpetuate hegemonic gender ideologies or power divisions at a larger scale. When thinking in terms of gender-aware community-driven development, these results can mean different things based on the type of project that is implemented. Certainly, if the project focus is for economic development, as was the case of project Genesis, the likelihood that this will type of action will challenge the
institutional structures that guide gender norms is limited. However, I would not make the assumption that such change is impossible. As Parpart (2002) points out, the possibility of a project to succeed depends on the motivations of the community. However, if such a project were to succeed in challenging power structures, perhaps the development organizations would see a sudden shift away from participatory development to a new (old?) paradigm.

Women who are involved in the Genesis cooperative have a surprising ability to renegotiate labor within the home despite the fact that they are not gaining any sort of income. This is contrary to the assertions of Kabeer (2003) who says that it is a rarity to find women who are able to renegotiate household labor when they move to the public sphere in efforts to gain income for their families. Similarly, for the women involved in the Genesis cooperative, as domestic tasks are divided up among the family, it is not only the female family members who take on responsibilities, but husbands and sons as well. Men’s participation within the household in this aspect has wider implications in that it hints at the ability for men’s perceptions of women’s labor to change. Similarly, children who grow up in an egalitarian household are able to see the ways that their parents negotiate household labor and daily chores, which have the potential to break the cycle of the machista lifestyle in which children are brought up today. This research points to the need to conduct further studies which would include interviews with household members of those involved with a community-driven development in order to gain a better understandings of the implications such participation may have on gender relations and perceptions of gender roles within the household. Future research could more closely
examine the family unit, giving voice to different family members through interviews in order to understand the ways in which renegotiation of daily labor takes place.

Due to the limited scope of this thesis I was only able to focus on a small fraction of those involved with community-driven development in Ciudad Sandino. Future research could focus on the residents of Ciudad Sandino who are not involved with JHC-CDCA and the reasons that these individuals chose not to participate. This could bring to view a more complete picture of whether or not elite capture is taking place in addition to the barriers to participation that may exist. Similarly, future research could emphasize the perceptions of men and their involvement with JHC-CDCA. This could shed light onto the extent of which men’s participation alongside women in CDD has affected their perceptions of women outside of the context of the cooperative. As different voices such as the men and non-participants are included, new narratives may emerge.

Women’s involvement in community-driven development, in the context of project Genesis, does not challenge social structures. However it has affected the way that they view themselves and their own capacities. Just as women’s involvement in the Sandinista Revolution started a process of women’s involvement in the public sphere, Genesis cooperative members have begun a process that has changed the course of their individual lives. The poem by Antonio Machado, as presented in the epigraph, is a fitting analogy for the work that the women of project Genesis have undertaken. It is through their own motivation that they will be able to build the spinning plant and see this cooperative to production. Similarly, the phrase, “se hace camino al andar” (literally, the road is made by walking), which is a Nicaraguan proverb, is particularly fitting in that
since no particular model works as a magic bullet for development, the members of the cooperative must learn for themselves what will work in their own context. As they move forward and realize their own capacities to do different types of labor and as they take on new responsibilities, these women leave behind their old selves. However, as they continue on their journey they do not leave behind “trails of foam” but rather pave the road towards a brighter future for their families and for themselves.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE (ENGLISH)

| I. Demographic Information | 1. How old are you? | 2. What is your level of education? | 3. Do you have any children? If yes, how many? | 4. How many people live in your household?  
-Who are they (mother, father, children…)? | 5. What is your occupation? Are there other things you do to earn money? |
|----------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| II. Participation          | 6. How long have you been working with the JHC-CdCA? Can you remember the date when you started working with the JHC? | 7. How did you come to be involved with the JHC-CdCA?  
(possible probe: How did you hear about JHC-CdCA?) | 8. What role have you played in the JHC-CdCA?  
-OR- What is your job title?  
-Have you been working as a _______ the entire time you have been involved with JHC-CdCA? | 9. What are your main responsibilities as a__________?  
(possible probe: Describe a typical day spent working as a_______.) | 10. Have you worked on a similar job before? What was it?  
- Is this a task that you would do at home? | 11. How many hours a day/week would you say you work with the JHC-CdCA? | 12. Are you paid for the work you put into these projects? Or is this completely voluntary? | 13. Before you began working with the JHC-CdCA, what would you have done with the time that you now have set aside for the JHC-CdCA? | 14. Do you find it easy to dedicate your time to the JHC-CdCA? If not, why not? | 15. Is there anything that gets in the way of your involvement in the JHC-CdCA?  
(possible probes: Family obligations, occupation, ability to perform a task…?) |
| III. Organizational Structure | 16. How did you come to be involved in this particular project?  
-Is that similar to how most people in Ciudad Sandino get involved with the JHC? | 17. How was it decided that this project was worth pursuing? | 18. Who decided this? | 19. Were you involved in the decision making process? | 20. Do you have a voice in deciding whether other projects are...?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21. Do you work with a team or individually?</td>
<td>(if with a team) Who is on this team? Is everyone involved from your neighborhood?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(if names aren’t specified) How many males and females work on this team?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- What are their responsibilities?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(if part of a diverse team of m/f) How does being a woman/man affect your participation in daily tasks?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(possible probe: Do you act differently than how you would if your group were all men/women? Do you find yourself holding back when there are men/women around? Do you pick up the slack?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. If problems arise during a project, how are these problems resolved?</td>
<td>(possible probes: Say there is a dispute over the use of materials… You have run out of cement… A water pipe broke…)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Agricultural Co-op: You work on this land- Who did this land previously belong to before the JHC?</td>
<td>- How did the JHC acquire this land?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Who owns this land now? Whose name is on the title?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A lot of places it is more common to see that only the husband’s name is on the title to land, is that the same here?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Is credit easily accessible for you? Are you able to take out a loan if your family needs the money? Where? How?</td>
<td>- (if not) Is there anyone in your family who can access credit?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Are you familiar with the process behind this? Can you explain it to me? What are some of the barriers to accessing credit?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Do you have the same access to these resources as a man/woman of similar status?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Do you or your family members have access to health services?</td>
<td>- (if so) Who provides these? How do you access these services? (possible probe: Do you walk down to the clinic? Is there someone that you can call to get help if you or a family member is really ill?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- (if not) What do you do when you or a family member gets sick? What are some of the barriers to accessing health services?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Do you have the same access to these resources as a man/woman of similar status?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Do you or your family members have access to educational services?</td>
<td>- (if so) What type of services are they? Who provides these</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
services? Who takes advantage of these services? What has your experience been with this?
(if not) What are some of the barriers to accessing education?
- Do you have the same access to these resources as a man/woman of similar status?

27. Are you familiar with the staff at the JHC office? Are these people from Ciudad Sandino or are they from elsewhere?
- Do you interact with people in the office often?

28. Do you believe that the JHC is well run? Could you imagine ways in which it could be run differently?

29. How do you feel about the JHC in general?

| IV. Perceptions | 30. How has your family responded to your involvement with JHC-CDCA?
|                 | (possible probes: Have they been supportive? Have they taken up additional responsibilities at home to help you? Do they criticize you for your involvement?)
|                 | 31. How have things changed in your life since your involvement with the JHC?
|                 | - Which of these changes would you attribute to the JHC?
|                 | 32. Do you feel that working with the JHC has made an impact on your life?
|                 | (if so) How?
|                 | (possible probes: Do you feel more confident in your actions? What is it that makes you feel more confident?)
|                 | - Are there disadvantages to being involved with the JHC? |
APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE (SPANISH)

| I. Demographic Information | 1. Cuántos años tienes?  
2. Qué es tu nivel de educación?  
3. Tienes hijos?  
   - (If yes) Cuántos?  
4. Cuántos personas viven en tu casa?  
   - Quiénes? (madre, padre, hijos…)
5. A qué te dedicas? Hay otra cosas que haces para ganar dinero? |
| II. Participation | 6. Desde cuándo estabas trabajando con el/la JHC-CDCA? Recuerdas la fecha cuando emezaste trabajar con la JHC?  
7. Comó pudiste estar participando con la JHC-CDCA?  
   (possible probe: Comó hacía escuchar sobre la JHC-CDCA?)  
8. Qué rol habrías desempeñar en la JHC-CDCA?  
   - OR- Qué es tu título de trabajo?  
   - Desde hacías trabajando como un/a _______ por todo el tiempo que estabas participando con la JHC-CDCA?  
   - Hacías participando en otros proyectos con la JHC?  
9. Cuáles son tus responsibilidades principales como un/a______?  
   (possible probe: Por favor. Describas una día típico hacías trabajando como un/a _______.)  
10. Trabajaste en un trabajo similar antes? (if so) Qué lo fue?  
   - Es una tarea que hacías en tu casa?  
11. Cuántos horas por día/semana trabajabas con la JHC-CDCA?  
12. Estás pegando para la trabajo pones en estos proyectos? O es completamente trabajo voluntario?  
13. Antes emezaste trabajar con la JHC-CDCA, qué habrías hacer con el tiempo que ahora tienes guardar para el JHC-CDCA?  
14. Te parece fácil para dedicar tu tiempo a la JHC-CDCA? If no, Por qué no?  
15. Hay algo que te mete en el camino de tu
| III. Organizational Structure | 16. Como puedes estar participando en este proyecto particular?  
   - Es similar como los demás de las personas en Ciudad Sandino que pueden estar participando con la JHC?  
17. Como lo decidió que este proyecto tiene valor para perseguiendo?  
18. Quién lo decidió?  
19. Estuviste participando en la proceso de hacer decisions?  
20. Tienes una voz cuando decidiendo si otras proyectos estaban emprendiendo?  
21. Trabajas con un equipo o solo/a?  
   (if with a team) Quién es en este equipo? Toda quién estan participando son de tu barrio?  
   (if names aren’t specified) Cuántos hombres y Mujeres trabajan en este equipo?  
   - Cuáles son sus responsabilidades?  
   (if part of a diverse team of m/f) Como hace estar una mujer/hombre afecta tu participación en tarea diario?  
   (possible probe: Te parece que actas diferente como hacias si tu grupo estaba todo/a hombres/Mujeres. Te parece que detenías cuando hay hombres/mujeres por ahí? Te parece que continuabas el lento para otros? “pick up the slack” ? ? ?  
22. Si hay problemas que se levantaba durante un proyecto, como hacía resolviendo estas problemas?  
   (possible probes: Si hay una disputa sobre materials… Hacía te quedaba sin cement… Se rompio una conducto de agua…)  
23. Agricultural Co-op: Trabajas en esta campaña – Quién hacia tenido la campaña antes de la JHC?  
   - Como hacia adquirido este campaña la JHC?  
   - Quién tiene esta campaña ahora? Quiénes nombre es en el título?  
   En muchas lugares es mas común para ver que solamente el nombre del esposo o un hombre tiene su nombre en el título de la campaña, as la misma cosa aquí? |
- (if not) Hay alguien en tu familia quién puede tener acceso a crédito?
- Estás familiar con el proceso para tener acceso de crédito? Por favor, puedes explicarmelo?
- En tu opinión como están las barreras para tener acceso de crédito?
- Te parece que tienes el mismo acceso as estos recursos como un/a hombre/mujer con estatus similar? Estatus diferente?

25. Tienes tú o tiene tu familia acceso de servicios de salud?
- (if so) Quién provee estos servicios? Como puedes tener acceso a estos servicios? (possible probe: Caminas a el clínico? Hay alguien que puedes llamar para tomar ayude si tú o alguien en tu familia está enfermo?)
- (if not) Que puedes hacer cuando tú o tu familia está enfermo?
- En tu opinión como están las barreras para tener acceso de servicios de salud?
- Te parece que tienes el mismo acceso as estos recursos como un/a hombre/mujer con estatus similar? Estatus diferente?

26. Tienes tú o tiene tu familia acceso de servicios de educación?
- (if so) Cual tipo de servicios eran? Quién provee estos servicios? Quién estan usando estos servicios? Cuál es tu experiencia con este?
- En tu opinión como están las barreras para tener acceso de servicios de educación?
- Te parece que tienes el mismo acceso as estos recursos como
<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 133 | un/a hombre/mujer con estatus similar? Estatus diferente?  
27. Estas familiar con el personal en la oficina de JHC? Adónde son estas personas, de Ciudad Sandino o de otra lugar?  
- Interactuas a menudo con las personas en la oficina?  
28. Te parece que la JHC funciona bien? Puedes imaginar como puede funciona diferente o mejor?  
29. Como te sientes sobre la JHC en general? |
| IV. Perceptions | 30. Como había respondido tu familia a tu participación con la JHC?  
(possible probes: Había estado sustentador? Había tomado más responsabilidades para ayudarte en la casa? Hacia te criticando para tu participación?)  
31. Como había cambiado cosas en tu vida hasta el comienzo de tu participación en la JHC?  
- Cuáles de estos cambios habría atribuido a la JHC?  
- Te parece que tu participación con la JHC ha hecho un impacto de tu vida?  
- (if so) Como?  
(possible probes: Te parece que tiene más confianza en tus acciones? Qué hacía sientiendose más confiado?)  
- Te parece que hay desvantajas para estar participando con la JHC? |
APPENDIX C: INFORMED CONSENT FORM (ENGLISH)

Ohio University Consent Form
Understanding Gender Relations and Community-Driven Development in Ciudad Sandino, Nicaragua
Researcher: Marina Islas

You are being asked to participate in research. For you to be able to decide whether you want to participate in this project, you should understand what the project is about, as well as the possible risks and benefits in order to make an informed decision. This process is known as informed consent. This form describes the purpose, procedures, possible benefits, and risks. It also explains how your personal information will be used and protected. Once you have read this form and your questions about the study are answered, you will be asked to sign it. This will allow your participation in this study. You should receive a copy of this document to take with you.

Explanation of Study
The purpose of this research is to explore the ways in which women have participated in community-driven development (CDD) and how this involvement has affected gender relations in Ciudad Sandino, Nicaragua.
To answer my research questions, I would like to conduct interviews with organizational directors and group members.
If you feel uncomfortable or unsure at any point during this interview, you may 1) refuse to answer a certain question 2) ask for the tape recorder to be turned off or 3) ask to end the interview.

Risks and Discomforts
No risks or discomforts are anticipated.

Benefits
Even though there are no immediate benefits for you, your participation is valuable and important. You can help researchers and governments better understand the nature of participatory development programs in communities such as your own.

Confidentiality and Records
For anyone who wishes, I will provide a pseudonym instead of using actual names. Any information that you may wish to keep confidential will not be made public. While I will NOT release this information to anybody else, it is important for you to know that my advisor will also have access to this data. Any notes and audiotapes will be secured in my residence.
Additionally, while every effort will be made to keep your study-related information confidential, there may be circumstances where this information must be shared with:
* Federal agencies, for example the Office of Human Research Protections, whose responsibility is to protect human subjects in research;
* Representatives of Ohio University (OU), including the Institutional Review Board, a committee that oversees the research at OU;

**Contact Information**
If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact Marina Islas (616) 308-3547 or mi388008@ohio.edu

You may also contact my thesis advisor, who also speaks and understands Spanish: Dr. Risa Whitson at (740) 593-1144 or whitson@ohio.edu

If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact Jo Ellen Sherow, Director of Research Compliance, Ohio University, (740) 597-1267.

By signing below, you are agreeing that:

- you have read this consent form (or it has been read to you) and have been given the opportunity to ask questions
- known risks to you have been explained to your satisfaction.
- you understand Ohio University has no policy or plan to pay for any injuries you might receive as a result of participating in this research protocol
- you are 18 years of age or older
- your participation in this research is given voluntarily
- you may change your mind and stop participation at any time without penalty or loss of any benefits to which you may otherwise be entitled.

Signature __________________________________________ Date __________

Printed Name _______________________________________

Version Date: 05/24/09
APPENDIX D: INFORMED CONSENT FORM (SPANISH)

Consentimiento Informado de la Universidad de Ohio
Entendiendo las Relaciones de Género y el Desarrollo Generado por la Comunidad en Ciudad Sandino, Nicaragua
Investigadores: Marina Islas

Usted está siendo invitado a participar en una investigación. Para que usted decida si quiere participar en este proyecto, usted debe entender de qué se trata el proyecto, así como también conocer los posibles riesgos y beneficios para así tomar una decisión informada. Este es el proceso conocido como consentimiento informado. Este formulario describe el propósito, procedimientos, posibles beneficios y riesgos. También explica cómo su información personal será usada y protegida. Una vez que usted ha leído este formulario y sus preguntas acerca del estudio sean respondidas, se le pedirá que lo firme. Esto permitirá su participación en este estudio. Usted debe recibir una copia de este documento para llevarlo con usted.

Explicación del Estudio
El propósito de esta investigación es explorar las maneras en las cuales las mujeres han participado en el desarrollo generado por la comunidad (CDD) y cómo este envolvimiento ha afectado las relaciones de género en Ciudad Sandino, Nicaragua. Para responder las preguntas de mi investigación, yo deseo conducir entrevistas con directores y miembros de organizaciones.
Si usted se siente incómodo o inseguro en cualquier momento durante la entrevista, usted puede 1) negarse a responder una pregunta 2) solicitar que la grabadora de voz sea apagada, o 3) pedir que la entrevista termine.

Riesgos e Incomodidades
No se anticipan riesgos ni incomodidades.

Beneficios
Aunque no hay beneficios inmediatos para usted, su participación es valiosa e importante. Usted puede ayudar a los investigadores y a los gobiernos a entender mejor la naturaleza de los programas de desarrollo participatorio en comunidades como la suya.

Confidencialidad y Records
Para toda persona que desee, puedo proveer un seudónimo en lugar de nombres reales. Cualquier información que usted desee mantener confidencial no se hará publica. Aunque yo NO compartiré esta información con otras personas, es importante que usted sepa que mi director de tesis también tendrá acceso a estos datos. Todas las anotaciones y grabaciones de voz serán resguardadas en mi residencia. Adicionalmente, aunque se harán todos los esfuerzos para mantener confidencial su información relacionada al estudio, habrán circunstancias cuando ésta información deberá ser compartida con:
* Agencias federales, por ejemplo la Oficina de Protección de Investigación Humana, cuya responsabilidad es proteger los sujetos humanos en investigación;
* Representantes de la Universidad de Ohio (OU), incluyendo el Comité de Revisión Institucional, un comité que supervisa la investigación en OU.

**Información de Contacto**
Si usted tiene preguntas sobre este estudio, por favor contactar a Marina Islas al (616) 308-3547 o mi388008@ohio.edu

Usted también puede contactar mi director de tesis, quien también habla y entiende Español:
Dr. Risa Whitson al (740) 593-1144 o whitson@ohio.edu

Si usted tiene preguntas sobre sus derechos como participante de la investigación, por favor contactar Jo Ellen Sherow, Directora de Cumplimiento de la Investigación, Universidad de Ohio, (740) 597-1267.

---

Firmando abajo, usted está de acuerdo en que:
- usted ha leído este formulario de consentimiento (o el mismo ha sido leído para usted) y ha tenido la oportunidad de hacer preguntas
- los riesgos conocidos para usted le han sido explicados a su satisfacción
- usted entiende que la Universidad de Ohio no tiene ninguna regulación o plan para pagar por heridas que usted podría recibir como resultado de su participación en este protocolo de investigación
- usted tiene 18 años de edad o más
- su participación en esta investigación es voluntaria
- usted puede cambiar de opinión y terminar su participación en cualquier momento sin penalidad ni pérdida de los beneficios que podría haber tenido

Firma________________________________________ Fecha________

Nombre________________________________________

Version Date: 05/24/09