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Loving to Straighten Out Development: Sexuality and “Ethnodevelopment” in the World Bank’s Ecuadorian Lending

Kate Bedford

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Abstract: Gender staff in the World Bank – the world’s largest and most influential development institution – have a policy problem. Having prioritised efforts to get women into paid employment as the “cure-all” for gender inequality they must deal with the work that women already do – the unpaid labour of caring, socialisation, and human needs fulfilment. This article explores the most prominent policy solution enacted by the Bank to this tension between paid and unpaid work: the restructuring of normative heterosexuality to encourage a two-partner model of love and labour wherein women work more and men care better. Through a case study of Bank gender lending in Ecuador I argue that staff are trying to (re)forge normative arrangements of intimacy, a policy preference that remains invisible unless sexuality is taken seriously as a category of analysis in development studies. Specifically, I focus on four themes that emerge from the attempt to restructure heteronormativity in the loan: (1) the definition of good gender analysis as requiring complementary sharing and dichotomous sex; (2) the Bank’s attempt to inculcate limited rationality in women such that they operate as better workers while retaining altruistic attachments to loved ones; (3) the Bank’s attempt to inculcate better loving in men, such that they pick up the slack of caring labour when their (partially) rational wives move into productive work, and; (4) the invocation of a racialised hierarchy resting on the extent to which communities approximate ideals of sharing monogamous partnership. Aside from providing clear evidence that the world’s largest development institution is involved in micro-processes of sexuality adjustment alongside macro-processes of economic restructuring, I also critique the Bank’s sexualised policy interventions and suggest that they warrant contestation.

Keywords: Ecuador, ethnodevelopment, gender and development, heteronormativity, sexuality, World Bank

INTRODUCTION: HETERONORMATIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT

In this paper I trace the efforts of World Bank gender staff in Ecuador to resolve a development policy dilemma by creating new models of loving partnership between men and women. I argue that the Bank is (re)forging normative arrangements of intimacy. This argument is unusual in development studies, since sexuality is often ignored in research on international political economy. In a recent paper asking “why is development work so straight?” Gilles Kleitz claims that Western narratives of the poor and underdeveloped:

(do) not seem to cover the possibility of varied sexual identities and subjectivities. The poor simply can’t be queer, because sexual identities are seen as a rather unfortunate result of western development and are linked to being rich and privileged (2000, p. 2).

Thus when “development theory and practice impose reproductive heterosexuality...as the only functional form of sex,” researchers fail to take notice. Similarly, in an analysis of neo-liberalism in the Bahamas Jacqui Alexander argues that scholarship in feminist political economy

misses many of the gendered and sexualised assumptions embedded in restructuring efforts, because it is still characterised by the “belief in naturalized heterosexuality, the belief that it lies outside of the sphere of political and economic influence” (1994, p. 21). In an attempt to avoid such errors, I explore the sexualised nature of the Bank’s development policies by utilising the concept of heteronormativity. Heteronormativity refers to institutions, structures, and practices that help normalise dominant forms of heterosexuality as universal and morally righteous (Berlant and Warner 1998, p. 548). Proponents of the concept recognise that normative forms of heterosexuality change across time and space, and become hegemonic through profoundly political interventions. They also argue that use of sexuality as an analytic concept must be extended beyond discussion of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered people to consider the currently “unmarked” status of heterosexuality and the ways in which it is (re)produced in changing forms by political actors. Many sexuality studies scholars have focused on the role of states in this respect, through research into “how the state is constituted as a heterosexual body and how heterosexual imperatives constitute citizens” (Phelan, 2000, p. 432. See also Cooper, 1995; Stevens, 1999; Smith, 2001; Carabine, 1996; Cohen, 1997. For exceptions to the tendency of sexuality studies literature to focus on state-level analyses see Wilson, 2004; Stoler, 1995; Briggs, 2003). However, there is also a supra-national dimension to this debate, especially in a global context characterised by intense discussions about declining state sovereignty and the increasing importance of international financial institutions as policy agents. Thus a key imperative of current research is to challenge the naturalisation of normalised sexuality, by examining how sexualities are actively produced by national and supra-national policy agents. In this spirit, I explore a prominent Ecuadorian rural development loan to examine the role of the World Bank in the global restructuring of intimacy.

THE WORLD BANK, GENDER, AND ECUADOR

The World Bank is the world’s largest and most influential development institution. It has been described as the “foremost international development agency” (Payer, 1982, p. 15), the “flagship” (Yunus, 1994, p. ix) and “pace-setter” (Hancock, 1989, p. 57) of development policy, with an influence that is “total and global” (Yunus, 1994, p. x). The two organisations¹ that make up the Bank give loans for development to middle and low income countries, and the institution also provides policy and research advice. Bank staff are regarded by many as the ultimate development experts and, as critical scholar Arturo Escobar puts it, the prevailing wisdom in the policy field is that “if ‘the Bank’ does not have clear answers, nobody else does” (1995, p. 160).

These answers have changed significantly in recent years. In the 1980s, the Bank moved from a basic needs focus and a commitment to state-led industrialisation efforts to a neo-liberal development approach emphasising deregulation, privatisation, trade liberalisation, flexibilisation of labour markets, and so on. However, since James Wolfensohn took over as President in 1995 the Bank has made public commitments to poverty eradication, participation, empowerment, and social development. Thus as many observers have noted

the Bank's mission is currently in flux (O'Brien et al., 2000; Mallaby, 2004; Fox and Brown, 1998; Stiglitz, 1999)², and the institution's answers to key policy questions are embedded in this context.

The policy question I interrogate here concerns the Bank's gender and development (G.A.D.) efforts. The Bank started paying attention to the inequitable effects of its development policies on women, and the need to incorporate gender concerns into lending, in the mid-1970s, and it now claims to be at the forefront of global G.A.D. efforts (Murphy, 1995; World Bank, 2001; Moser et al., 1999). Overall, the institution has

¹ The 'World Bank Group' includes five organisations. It is customary to refer to the two most prominent agencies – the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the International Development Association – as 'the Bank'.

² The mission is now in greater flux with the departure of Wolfensohn and the appointment of Paul Wolfowitz, an architect of Bush's war on Iraq, as the new President.

prioritised efforts to get women into paid work as the “cure all” for gender inequality.³ Yet this prioritisation of employment leaves the Bank with a remaining policy problem, since it must deal with the work women already do – the unpaid labours of social reproduction. Social reproduction refers to biological reproduction, the reproduction of labour power, and social practices connected to caring, socialisation and the fulfilment of human needs (Bakker and Gill 2003, p. 4). It includes childcare, housework, subsistence agriculture, cooking, voluntary work to sustain community organisations, and so on⁴ – activities that are not counted in official statistics as work because they are seen as non-productive. Feminists have long argued that dominant models of growth overlook the economic value of these activities, disproportionately done by women (Perkins-Gilman, 1966, Waring, 1988; Folbre, 1994; Elson, 1996; Peterson, 2002; Sparr, 1994; Benería and Feldman, 1992; Bakker, 1994; Gibson-Graham, 1996) and many have criticised the Bank specifically for assuming what I call an “exhaustion solution” to social reproduction, wherein the institution does nothing to resolve tensions between remunerated employment and unpaid caring labour such that women are overburdened when they are forced, through economic necessity, to enter paid work (O’Brien et al., 2000; Wood, 2003). Curious as to whether the institution had addressed the problem posed by social reproduction I conducted fieldwork to explore the Bank’s gender policies in Ecuador,⁵ on a rural development loan called the Indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian People’s Development

³ I trace the emergence of this policy preference, and the institutional factors that explain it, in Bedford (2005).

⁴ Paid domestic labour and sex work also need to be included in debates about social reproduction (see Glenn, 1992; Bakker and Gill, 2003), although that issue is outside the scope of this project.

⁵ Ecuador is a good site since the Bank’s resident mission in Quito has been an important arena for feminist policy entrepreneurship, and staff there have collaborated extensively with domestic feminist institutions. The Latin American and Caribbean region is regarded as having the most advanced gender unit in the Bank (Hafner-Burton and Pollack, 2002, p. 368), and the Bank’s office in Ecuador put out one of the most comprehensive gender reviews of all countries in that region (Correia, 2000), highlighted as a best practice example in the Bank’s recent Engendering Development policy paper. Finally, Ecuador has long been marked as an important country for Bank gender policymakers since it was a site of Caroline Moser’s research into gender and household coping strategies under structural adjustment (Moser, 1996; 1997). This study remains noteworthy for its recognition of the importance of caring labour, and its concern that paid work responsibilities may overburden women.

Project (P.R.O.D.E.P.I.N.E.). Proposed in 1996 and closed in 2004, P.R.O.D.E.P.I.N.E. was a joint project between the Government of Ecuador and the Bank, which loaned \$25 million of the \$50 million project costs.⁶ It was intended to help alleviate high (and growing) levels of indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian rural poverty⁷, and to strengthen local ethnic organisations.⁸ In the past the problem of indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian poverty, when addressed at all, had been resolved in a classic developmentalist manner. Like many other Latin American states Ecuador's nationbuilding project was a whitening one, based on discourses of civilising Indians and constructing a path of national progress that either excluded indigenous people, or that incorporated them based on their coerced acculturation. The state policy of *mestizaje* (sometimes translated as 'blending' but involving a coerced whitening process) framed white culture as superior, and understood assimilation as an anti-poverty strategy. *Mestizaje* was inherently aimed at the erasure of indigenous existence, and it denied the

⁶ Mobilisations associated with the 1998 constitution recognising Ecuador as a multi-ethnic state pushed state actors to endorse concrete actions to alleviate indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian poverty. A successful coup in 2001 further strengthened the political hand of indigenous groups, and the reliance of the Gutierrez government on support from this sector reinforced commitment to P.R.O.D.E.P.I.N.E., at least rhetorically. That said, however, government support for the project faltered after the country's 1999–2000 economic crisis and subsequent dollarisation, and by the end the counter-part funds provided by the state amounted to just 18% of those promised at appraisal (World Bank, 2003b). Given the waning support expressed by the Gutierrez administration the Bank took an increasingly important role in P.R.O.D.E.P.I.N.E., and Ecuadorians with connections to the project claimed that the Bank provided the most consistently supportive role. I thus analyse the project, and particularly its gender activities, as Bank policy output; see Bedford (2005) for a more extensive methodological justification.

⁷ While 46% of Ecuadorians are poor according to recent national poverty measures, indigenous poverty rates are around 86%, and these inequalities have worsened as rural poverty has increased since the 1999 economic crisis.

⁸ More cynical observers have argued that the project aimed to subvert such organisations, given the threat posed to the state by the resurgence of indigenous activism in the 1990s in opposition to neo-liberal reform measures. For background see Albo, 2004; Sawyer, 2004; Treakle, 1998; Collins, 2004; Whitten, 2003. For the implications of this debate for P.R.O.D.E.P.I.N.E., see Bedford (2005).

possibility of blackness.⁹ The P.R.O.D.E.P.I.N.E. project represented a crucial shift in that development ideology. In particular, the government and the Bank believed that indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian communities offered the potential for a new, decentralised, ethnically sensitive approach to development grounded in solidarity networks and cultural traditions that could be used productively as a resource for rural improvement. This characterised the “ethnodevelopment” approach that made the project so innovative and popular within the Bank.¹⁰

The original P.R.O.D.E.P.I.N.E. loan proposal did not include attention to gender, but a gender component was added in the middle of the project due to intervention by concerned Bank staff. This component funded activities such as capacity-building training for P.R.O.D.E.P.I.N.E. employees, collection of gender-disaggregated data, and case studies on gender and ethnicity. As I expected based on prior analysis of Bank policy documents, getting women into productive work was a core objective of the institution’s gender activities in P.R.O.D.E.P.I.N.E. Several staff claimed that giving women access to income through engaging them in productive activity empowered them, for example, and the case studies of gender conducted by P.R.O.D.E.P.I.N.E. argued that getting women into work would ensure they were inserted into decisionmaking processes (Vallejo Real, 2002b, p. 22; Aulestia, 2002, p. 11). The projects privileged by P.R.O.D.E.P.I.N.E.’s gender staff were also those

⁹ As Janet Hendricks argues in an essay on the Shuar, the mestizaje ideology promoted in development programmes rests on the notion that all Ecuadorians have an Indian heritage; this eliminates, by default, the “Indian problem” (1991, p. 56). Furthermore there is no place for Afro-Ecuadorians in the mestizaje framework – they are, as Jean Muteba Rahier notes, “the ultimate Other, some sort of historical accident, a noise in the ideological system of nationality, a pollution in the Ecuadorian genetic pool” (2003, p. 300). See also Meisch, 2002; Radcliffe and Westwood, 1996; Whitten, 2003; Colloredo-Mansfeld, 1999; Larson and Harris, 1995.

¹⁰ Indeed P.R.O.D.E.P.I.N.E. rapidly became a poster-child for social development concerns within the Bank associated with Wolfensohn, and it has been publicised considerably as a pioneering “best practices” example. The project is mentioned in Ecuador’s most recent Country Assistance Strategy as evidence that the Bank is responding to civil society recommendations, that it takes social development concerns seriously, and that it realises how “in the particular case of indigenous populations, it is essential to take into account cultural values tied to ancestral traditions that may differ from those of the majority population” (World Bank, 2003a). Several P.R.O.D.E.P.I.N.E. staff have been invited to international Bank events to give information on the project, and P.R.O.D.E.P.I.N.E. is mentioned in a recent Bank-wide publication entitled *Faces of Inclusion* (n.d.) as evidence of the Bank’s commitment to participatory social development.

associated with getting women into work. This was particularly evident in relation to the microcredit Cajas Solidarias programme, the emblematic “women’s project” to which I was always directed when I told people I was researching gender in the loan. The Cajas Solidarias component offered micro-loans to members – 98% of whom were women – for productive projects intended to increase efficiency and empower women through access to work, to income, and to work-related responsibility. Within the prioritisation of women’s employment in the Bank’s gender efforts, however, there was a parallel recognition of the social reproduction dilemma. Loan staff frequently expressed concern about women being overburdened through projects that failed to take into account their multiple responsibilities, and many questioned standard definitions of productivity. One staff member told me that most people considered un- or under-employed were wrongly classified since they were engaged in productive subsistence activities.¹¹ Similarly when teaching staff and organisations how to “do” gender, attention was repeatedly devoted to Caroline Moser’s triple role framework, a planning tool that highlights the importance of non-market activities (see P.R.O.D.E.P.I.N.E., 2001). Time use surveys, which record social reproduction labour as work, were also used in the loan’s case studies of gender and ethnicity. In short, then, although the gender activities undertaken in P.R.O.D.E.P.I.N.E. prioritised women’s paid work, they also recognised social reproduction issues as important – Bank staff did not ignore this tension or assume that women’s capacity to juggle multiple responsibilities was “infinitely elastic” (Elson 1996, p. 71).

“UNDERSTANDING THE UNITY OF THE GENDERS”: GENDER ANALYSIS
AS ENCOURAGING SHARING COMPLEMENTARY BALANCE

The most prominent policy solution enacted by the Bank in response to this tension between paid work and social reproduction was the restructuring of normative heterosexuality to encourage a two-partner model of love and labour, wherein women work more and men care better. This solution stemmed in large part from a definition of good gender analysis as encouraging empowering, harmonious complementarity, and as including men. Gender relations were framed as flexible, and always-already changing, ensuring that

¹¹ See also the discussion of the “invisibilization” of women’s social reproduction labour in the Bank’s evaluation of the Caja Solidaria programme (Camacho, 2002, p. 11).

P.R.O.D.E.P.I.N.E.'s attempts to change them in specific directions were not marked as political interventions. Biological sex, conversely, was presented as static and natural, and it was hereby cast into the prediscursive domain – a central mechanism through which hegemonic heterosexuality is currently forged (Butler, 1990; Laqueur, 1990; Fausto-Sterling, 2000; Terry, 1999). This foregrounded a dualistic, binarised, but complementary vision of gender in the project's activities. Coupling up between men and women was presented as functional, and driven by biological, evolutionary impulse. The Basic Document and Guide to the Theme of Gender prepared for P.R.O.D.E.P.I.N.E. opened by citing a Bank text which defined sex as biological and gender as social, changing over time (P.R.O.D.E.P.I.N.E., 2001). A gender workshop in the Amazon explained gender in the same way, tracing the term to John Money, through Robert Stollers' "clarification" of the difference between sex and gender – that sex relates to biology and reproductive organs, and is "a natural condition, immutable in time and space," while gender is about education, socialisation, and culture (Aulestia and Quintero-Andrade, 2001, p. 7). These definitions were repeated in the loan's case studies on gender and ethnicity (Eguiguren et al., 2002, p. 7), and in training workshops for local organisations.

In addition, G.A.D. work was defined as including men, and aiming at complementary balance between partners. In one of the first gender workshops organised by P.R.O.D.E.P.I.N.E. in 2000 the head of the Bank's gender initiatives in Ecuador stated that while men and women had different roles, each was of equal value and complemented the other (Velasquez, 2000). Similarly, in an NGO capacity-building workshop P.R.O.D.E.P.I.N.E. held out as its vision of the future that men and women would be recognised as different but not inferior or superior, and that they would share tasks and responsibilities. A gender workshop in the Amazon asserted simply that "men and women must share the same ideals, in order to progress with the project" (Aulestia and Quintero-Andrade, 2001, p. 7). It framed gender roles as impeding both men and women from expressing liberty as human beings: "from men (they) tak(e) the right to cry, and from women the right to participate in public life." "Understanding of the unity of the genders" was needed to overcome such limitations.

This approach to gender analysis as focused on loving, sharing partnerships was also central to a booklet on sex education for indigenous adolescents produced by P.R.O.D.E.P.I.N.E. The booklet taught a biological two sex model, with the cover photograph showing a diagram of male and female bodies. Within this approach, however, a complementary model of gender relations was endorsed in which romantic love and the inclusion of men were particularly important. For example adolescence was described as involving:

the stage of attraction for the other sex, (in which there) exists an intimate desire to be liked... To this (are) added sexual fantasies, which have an erotic and romantic character. (Adolescents) are curious to learn about their sex, the changes in their body, masturbation, erotic feelings, physical sexual attraction initiated with various manifestations of sexuality such as falling in love, where they start to interact with people of the other sex. (These) initial meetings are of short duration and are limited to kisses and caresses" (Conejo 2002–3, p. 15).

Each chapter opened with a quote from the Lacanian psychoanalytic theorist Françoise Dolto, and many of these waxed lyrical about love

and its ability to unite men and women. For example, the module on (highly communicable) sexually transmitted diseases opened with the claim: “what happens in a relationship of authentic love is mysterious and incommunicable” (p. 37). The module on family planning began “true love is one of the most powerful forces that exists, stronger than time, death, or law. It is found identically in all places and all times” (p. 46). It is clear, given such ubiquitous references, that the readjustment of intimacies was a key concern of P.R.O.D.E.P.I.N.E.’s gender efforts.

THE ATTEMPT TO INCULCATE LIMITED RATIONALITY IN LOVING WOMEN

The vision of ideal gender analysis used in this loan – as including men, as focused on intimate interactions in the household, and as aiming at complementary relations within loving couples – had profoundly material influences on project activities. In particular, P.R.O.D.E.-P.I.N.E.’s attempt to inculcate loving partnerships between men and women involved an explicit effort to increase women’s rationality as workers, although in limited ways. Women were still understood to be necessarily, and altruistically, linked to the people they loved in this model of changed gender relations. Indeed a key aim of the Caja Solidaria programme was to improve family well-being based on the assumption that women would share the benefits they gained through productive activity with those they loved. One evaluation stated that the programme aimed “to promote family and communal integration, strengthening solidarity and self-help” (Gua´man, 2003, p. 5). There was no recognition that self-help and family integration may clash.

Rather gender activities rested on a tension-ridden definition of empowerment for women as “autonomy with necessary attachment” – women were rational enough to work but their labour was understood to be motivated by love. Similarly the loan’s guide to gender insisted that, along with projects to further women’s rights over their physical autonomy, body, and sexuality, there was a parallel need to promote “masculine co-responsibility in sexuality and reproduction” (P.R.O.D.E.P.I.N.E., 2001). There was no sense that this “co-responsibility” may conflict with women’s right to sexual autonomy.¹² Crucially, however, P.R.O.D.E.P.I.N.E. also recognised a need to teach limited rationality to women in order that their empowerment through work would benefit those they loved – a need to cultivate market mentalities even as it asserted their universal naturalness.¹³ P.R.O.D.E.P.I.N.E. staff felt that they needed to help women develop successful microenterprises by suggesting ideas to them; contrary to assurances of local ownership given in formal evaluations these activities rarely seemed to be community-driven.¹⁴ In addition, staff intervened to salvage failing productive projects by trying to socialise women into rational market action. Specifically, women marked by their poverty, rural location, and ethnicity as particularly backward were understood to need socialising into a culture of savings in order that their incorporation into productive activity succeeded as an empowerment strategy. One regional report on the microcredit programme insisted that P.R.O.D.E.P.I.N.E. must help communities promote a culture of savings (Gua’ man, 2003, p. 5) “understanding that saving is one of the fundamental pillars for the development of

¹² Indeed the emphasis on loving heteronormative partnership within the loan resulted in a persistent refusal to deal with conflict between men and women, even when it affected project performance. Clear tensions existed in the Caja Solidaria programme between the emphasis on male inclusion and the orientation of the micro-credit initiative towards supporting women. I visited a project in which the leaders were all men and the female ‘president’ told me she has been appointed because they needed a woman for the forms. Such outcomes did not prompt a response from P.R.O.D.E.P.I.N.E. staff, in part because they regarded the inclusion of men to be a goal of the Caja Solidaria initiative.

¹³ See also David Williams’ (1999) account of Bank attempts to actively (re)produce market behaviour subsequently naturalised in policy texts.

¹⁴ One evaluation stated that: “there was no technical intervention that helped the producers to promote their initiatives” (Camacho, 2002, p. 44). Yet I found many examples of ideas suggested by staff, including bingo; community dances; community shops; gambling on volleyball matches; baking and selling bread; selling fish and icecream; starting a sewing cooperative; and buying cheap sheets and towels from Quito to sell back in the community.

families, companies, and nations” (p. 25). A more extensive national evaluation noted that the Cajas Solidarias had achieved particularly poor results in the Amazon, due again to a perceived lack of savings culture (Camacho, 2002, p. 34). The consultant thus underlined the importance of requiring savings as part of the Caja Solidaria project, arguing that although it would take time this rule would eventually help women learn market principles (p. 38).¹⁵

Field staff shared these opinions. At the project level, no one believed that getting women into productive activity would achieve all it was supposed to unless development agencies intervened first, to promote a savings culture, a mentality of work, and the ability to force debtors to pay up. One Caja Solidaria coordinator told me that many women were confused over the meaning of ‘credit’, not understanding that they were expected to pay the money back. Thus she needed to help socialise people as part of her work, by forcing them to save. Similarly, I visited one Caja Solidaria initiative with a P.R.O.D.E.P.I.N.E. staff person wherein cooking stoves had been given to women to start productive activities. The meeting degenerated into a general fight over who had received money, who attended meetings, who had defaulted on loans and so on. In response, the Caja Solidaria coordinator made the women promise to meet every week, and she gave the defaulters one month to pay before P.R.O.D.E.P.I.N.E. would take their stove back, throw them out of group, and report them to the police. She also reiterated that they needed to save small amounts to get accustomed to the practice, and she urged them not to get depressed. Such interventions aimed to empower women as semi-rational workers, still necessarily tied to those they loved in order that their employment would succeed as a general poverty alleviation measure.

THE ATTEMPT TO INCULCATE LOVE IN LAZY MEN

Importantly, however, men were also addressed within P.R.O.D.E.P.I.N.E.’s attempt to change loving relations between couples. Indeed

¹⁵ These efforts rested on the notion that people did not understand the market, a curious claim. Microcredit programmes have been in operation in the Sierra, from which many of these examples were taken, for decades and the region has been tied to capitalist market activity for centuries (Meisch, 2002; Kyle, 2000; Colloredo-Mansfeld, 1999). People did not seem confused about the wonders of compound interest to me; they had stolen the money, or they could not pay it back (perhaps not surprisingly – in the Amazon, for example, Caja Solidaria interest rates could reach 30% a month, leading one P.R.O.D.E.P.I.N.E. employee to refer to the initiative as acting like a loan shark).

men were understood to be the major problem to which the loan's gender efforts were directed, in another example of the need to focus on masculinity in development studies (Cleaver, 2002; Jackson, 2001). A gender consultant for P.R.O.D.E.P.I.N.E. stated this directly, claiming that gender activities needed to be focused on men because:

We're not working with women here, right? We're working more with men, because the problem is the men (laughing). The problem isn't the women, the problem is the men. You have to be working with them.

Most commonly, men were a problem for P.R.O.D.E.P.I.N.E. because they were not sufficiently integrated into the domestic sphere. Specifically, they did not do enough housework, and did not show enough love to their families. This critique of men's lack of caring was particularly evident in the case studies on gender and ethnicity put out by P.R.O.D.E.P.I.N.E. Despite frequent references to broader social and economic contexts, these case studies ultimately became descriptions of micro-level gender roles, focused on the need to make men work more in the house. For example, the case study on the Chachi (an indigenous group in the North West) identified several social and economic challenges faced by the community, including clashes with Afro-Ecuadorians over land and natural resources, deforestation and environmental destruction, poor health, high illiteracy, and so on (Eguiguren et al., 2002, pp. 16–18). However the report focused on who did what within the household, and on the fact that “men...must assume reproductive tasks that permit them to fulfil new roles within the home” (p. 36). Identical framings were evident in the loan's case studies of Afro-Ecuadorian and Sierran gender relations (Vallejo Real, 2002a, b). Men were also a problem for P.R.O.D.E.P.I.N.E. because they were seen to have abandoned their responsibilities, imposing heavy burdens on women. Unemployed men were seen as particularly prone to violent, drunken irresponsibility, given the loss of status associated with their inability to provide for their families.¹⁶ Male migrants – a

¹⁶ In their proposal to work with P.R.O.D.E.P.I.N.E. Bank gender staff claimed that “for men, unemployment threatens their role of family provider and creates problems of self-esteem and depression – which may have other possible negative effects such as violence” (P.R.O.D.E.P.I.N.E., 2000). This reinvokes a discourse evident in all contemporary Bank gender policy, in Ecuador and elsewhere, wherein unemployed men are framed as particularly violent and drunken, their wounded masculinity causing a pathological mistreatment of women that is less likely to be enacted by their wealthier, employed brothers. I examine the troubling class and race based nature of this claim, and the lack of evidence to support it, in Bedford (2005).

large sector of the population in some parts of Ecuador (Kyle, 2000; Meisch 2002)¹⁷ – were also frequently criticised for abandonment. For example, the case study on the Kichwa of Toacazo (a Sierran group) noted that women had been left to run credit services when men migrated, causing problems when men returned and drank the money intended for community saving and investment (Vallejo Real, 2002b).

This framing of male irresponsibility and lack of love persisted despite ample evidence to the contrary. Consider, for example, the discussion of gendered spaces in an Afro-Ecuadorian community in San Lorenzo. P.R.O.D.E.P.I.N.E. staff identified women's spaces as shop fronts, porches, river sites where they wash, and mangroves where they collect shells (Vallejo Real, 2002a, p. 20). Men's spaces, in contrast, were bars and porches where they play cards. The case study made it clear that men worked mainly in male-only spaces in the oil and wood industries.¹⁸ However those working spaces were not identified as male spaces. One was instead left with a sketch of men drunkenly gambling while women oriented their activity to productive work. Similarly, as men noted in the workshops on gender, "they migrate to bring money" (Mun˜oz Consejal, 2002, p. 6), out of a sense of family responsibility that they apparently fulfil – in 2000 remittances became Ecuador's second most important source of foreign currency, representing about 10% of G.D.P. (North, 2004, p. 203). Without meaning to romanticise anyone's masculinity, these realities are simply inconsistent with a portrait of poor rural Afro-Ecuadorian and indigenous men as lazy, irresponsible, drunken, unable to love, avoiding family obligation, and needing to work harder.

Importantly, however, again P.R.O.D.E.P.I.N.E. was involved in attempts to reform the behaviour of such men; indeed this was a core concern of gender staff. During a period of widespread festivals throughout the Sierra a (male, mestizo) P.R.O.D.E.P.I.N.E. staff member told a group of indigenous men gathered at a meeting to celebrate the community's Caja Solidaria programme that they should give love to their children, that they should not come home and fight

¹⁷ Some estimates suggest 25% of the country's total population has emigrated in the last two decades, most frequently to Spain, Italy and the U.S. (North, 2004, p. 203). Many highland indigenous and coastal Afro-Ecuadorian communities have experienced particularly high migration rates since the 1999 economic crisis, and men have been more likely to leave than women.

¹⁸ Day labour for palma plantations is also male dominated, although this is not mentioned in the report.

with their wives, and that they should not drink too much during the fiesta period. Of course these discussions of alcohol are embedded in a broader cultural and historical context in which indigenous men have been pathologised for centuries as “drunken Indians,” making the comments at best insensitive. However what interests me is the sense that they were considered relevant to P.R.O.D.E.P.I.N.E. activity in the first place, since this reveals much about the perceived need to teach poor, ethnically marginalised men temperate loving responsibility.¹⁹ Similarly a workshop on gender in the Amazon cited as one negative consequence of existing gender roles that men were outside of reproductive responsibilities, and it suggested men’s cultivation of “family love” in response (Aulestia and Quintero-Andrade, 2001), while a 2002 report on participatory gender planning stated that P.R.O.D.E.P.I.N.E. should try “to incorporate men into domestic work” (Aulestia, 2002, p. 45). A frequently cited (and nowhere documented) success of the Caja Solidaria programme was that it had integrated men into the home in this way, with one P.R.O.D.E.-P.I.N.E. staff person joking that “men are cooking in the houses of Caja Solidaria projects.” On this basis several policymakers affirmed that the Cajas have had “a very positive gender impact.” In short, men were rendered legible to G.A.D. staff as drunkards, work-shirkers, and potentially free sources of social reproduction labour. They were targeted for reform in an attempt to create two earner, two lover models of partnership wherein they were taught to love their dependents better while their wives worked with limited rationality in the productive sphere. In this way reformed couples could navigate the complexities of the work-social reproduction nexus in a neo-liberal context. The social reproduction dilemma was resolved here because it was reprivatised, because it was heteronormalised, onto the backs of men and women who were then framed by staff as liberated.

RACIALISED HETERONORMATIVITY: SEX, LOVE, GENDER AND CULTURE

I wish to close this discussion of heteronormativity within P.R.O.D.E.P.I.N.E. by exploring the interaction between gender

¹⁹ I am indebted to Karin Roseblatt’s work on Chile for much of this analysis. Indeed in many respects the efforts of P.R.O.D.E.P.I.N.E.’s staff appear to parallel those of Chilean popular front leaders in the 1930s and 1940s to change working class men – to make them more reliable providers, more clean, responsible, sexually restrained, sober, and temperate, and to instill “above all, love of family” (Roseblatt, 2000, p. 4).

policy, sexuality, and ethnicity in greater depth. At this point it is important to note that P.R.O.D.E.P.I.N.E. was oriented to three categories of people: indigenous groups in the Sierran highlands; indigenous groups in the Amazon; and Afro-Ecuadorians who are concentrated on the coast. Figure 1 below should make these distinctions easier to understand.

P.R.O.D.E.P.I.N.E. produced this graphic, in which a map of Ecuador was overlaid with faces representing the target groups of people. These communities have been integrated into the Ecuadorian state's developmentalist project in distinctive ways. There has long been a distinction made between "model (Highland) Indians" who worked hard and were neat and sober, and "savage" Amazonians (Meisch, 2002, p. 29). Some Highland communities were chosen by Ecuadorian elites to represent noble, progressive Indians; they were consciously used by "nationalist image makers" to represent the new nation (Kyle, 2000; Colloredo-Mansfeld, 1999). However not all indigenous people were given space within such "official views of appropriate Indianness" (Crain, 1996, p. 136). Specifically, Amazonian groups were framed as being more traditional and backward than highland groups, and less able to integrate themselves into national ideologies of development.

The continuing salience of these perceived differences is confirmed by the racialised and sexualised distinctions made by P.R.O.D.E.-P.I.N.E. gender staff. Gender relations in all communities were assessed based on their approximation to an idealised norm of loving partnership. Non-monogamy was framed as a marker of ethnic identity, and it was the yardstick by which gender relations in a community were measured; more equal communities, wherein women were more empowered, were ones in which men were monogamous. Thus there was a clear hierarchy operating within the project's gender efforts, with polygamous Amazonian men and serially unfaithful Afro-Ecuadorian men regarded as particularly oppressive.

Although P.R.O.D.E.P.I.N.E. did not overtly criticise polygamy in its genderworkshops in the Amazon, Amazonian men's non-monogamy was identified as the region's core "gender problem" in several conversations I had with staff – a mixture of mestizo/as and indigenous people from the Sierra. I was repeatedly told that gender relations in the Amazon were particularly "complex" or "complicated," and this always hinged on the fact that men there were polygamous. As one employee put it when speaking of the difficulties of P.R.O.D.E.P.I.N.E.'s gender work among indige-

nous groups in the Amazon: “their culture is more, er... (pause)... cultural.” Polygamy was the key manifestation of this culturality, confirming yet again the complex links between post-colonial framings of indigeneity, culturality, gender, and sexuality (see Povinelli, 2002 in particular). As another interviewee explained, gender work was hard in the Amazon because:

X: ...of the socio-cultural, geographical, and educational situation basically, because they are, if you like a little isolated geographically, the populations, and there is no permanent social contact...And above all it is a machista society, well machismo is very complicated in the Amazon...For example in the Shuar and Achuar nationalities in the South of the Amazon there they have polygamy. You know what polygamy is, yes?

Bedford: Yes.

X: A man with lots of women. Well in this sense to develop the theme of gender is very complicated.

The same point was made by several others – ultimately, as one P.R.O.D.E.P.I.N.E. employee put it, the biggest problem in the Amazon was that men have two or three wives.

In other conversations, men's "serial polygamy", unfaithfulness, and promiscuity were repeatedly framed as a problem of Afro-Ecuadorian gender relations. Unlike with Amazonian communities, these discussions were relatively open, and were sometimes conducted in the presence of men from the marked ethnicity. While discussing ethnicity and gender relations with me on a coffee break during a meeting, a P.R.O.D.E.P.I.N.E. consultant (a Quichwa speaking person from the Sierra) turned to two Afro-Ecuadorian men sitting at the same table, laughing, and said that the compañeros just needed to keep to one wife. Concerns over Afro-Ecuadorian men's non-monogamy also made it into printed texts, with the Bank's gender review on Ecuador noting disapprovingly that:

it is relatively common for rural men in the Costa to simultaneously maintain more than one common law union (compromiso). So-called 'visiting unions', in which the male partner resides only temporarily with one or several women – who may themselves live permanently with extended natal family members – are a frequent residential pattern in this region. The implications of these types of unstable and multiple unions for economic activity patterns and income distribution are not well understood" (Correia, 2002, p. 41 emphasis added).

The loan's case study on Afro-Ecuadorian gender relations also focused heavily on the fact that most couples did not formally marry, that "both men and women engage(d) in various conjugal relationships throughout their lives" (Vallejo Real, 2002a, p. 84), that people were in "free unions," and that women were attached, one by one, to numerous men in between whom they head families alone (p. 18). Men thus engaged in "serial polygamy," having two or three women sometimes in the same village, "in the same neighborhood or even in the same house" (p. 18). Women tolerated this behaviour "to get a roof, food, and protection for children" (p. 34), but the system was understood by gender staff to lead to negative consequences for children, since:

in a structure of female family headship, the mother assumes a strong character. (She) takes the place of ...a masculine authority figure for her children (p. 26).

Absent was the critique of the wood, palma, and oil industries to which many men migrate to find work for wages insufficient to

provide for human dependencies; absent was the critique of the shrimp industry for destroying the ecosystem on which the region depends for food subsistence; absent was any caution about defining sexual morality solely in terms of heterosexual married monogamy. Ultimately the core gender problem here was racialised sexual irresponsibility – Afro-Ecuadorian men’s inability to be faithful and to properly love their families.

In this critique of non-monogamy the Bank did not claim to follow the articulated needs of project participants, who often, at least in the case studies used by P.R.O.D.E.P.I.N.E., refer to problems of low wages, ecological destruction and so on rather than to men’s serial unfaithfulness or to overly masculinised mothers. The critique did not appear to stem from the communities in which non-monogamy is common, but rather was articulated most clearly by others, particularly by those who celebrate an alternative model of heteronormativity considered culturally authentic in other communities.

Notably, P.R.O.D.E.P.I.N.E.’s gender policymakers argued that some indigenous cultures were based on models of harmonious, complementary gender relations. Thus the discourses of sharing and male inclusion so central to the Bank’s gender efforts were framed as culturally authentic for some groups, and attempts to restructure intimacies in this direction appeared in-keeping with principles of ethnodevelopment. Loan staff hereby intervened to shore up certain normative models of partnership marked as culturally authentic while pathologising communities with alternative arrangements of sexuality as hyper-oppressive to women.

In particular, the apparent presence of sharing couples was the basis upon which Andean groups out-ranked others in the hierarchy of good gender relations. As Gioconda Herrera notes in a recent overview of gender research in Ecuador, some scholars argue that gender relations in some Andean communities are characterised by a harmony and equity not found in mestiza communities. Sarah Hamilton’s book *The Two Headed Household* epitomizes this approach; her research on an Andean community found an “extraordinary degree of economic, social, and political gender-egalitarianism” (1998, p. 8, see also Meisch 2002, p. 9). However not all academics (or activists) share this perspective. Herrera (2001) argues that dichotomous arguments which posit inequality as absent or which ignore variation in gender roles are largely unhelpful, and that more nuanced approaches would seem merited, while Marisol de la Cadena (1995) challenges recent ethnographic work claiming relations of complementarity between

Andean men and women. These discourses are sites for struggle, and they certainly do not represent fixed authentic “truths” about ethnic groups.

What interests me is the importance of this discussion for P.R.O.D.E.P.I.N.E., since the Bank’s policy texts on Ecuador repeatedly argued that Sierran households are more egalitarian with respect to domestic work. This claim surfaced in a discussion of gender in the recent economic crisis written by the head of the Bank’s Latin American and Caribbean gender unit (Correia, 2002) and the Bank’s Ecuador Gender Review cited Hamilton’s claim that the Sierra is characterised by gender equality (Correia, 2000, p. 40). The gender material put out by P.R.O.D.E.P.I.N.E. also frequently referred to Andean communities as offering a model for complementary, harmonious gender relations from which new loving partnerships between men and women could be built. Bank gender staff wrote that one of the aims of P.R.O.D.E.P.I.N.E.’s gender workshops was “to recuperate the principles of ‘equality’ ‘duality’ (and) ‘harmony’ of Andean culture and to enact development with identity” (Herna´ ndez Bastante, Date, p. 2) in a clear demonstration that “ethnodevelopment” was understood to involve the promotion of apparently “authentic” traditions of sharing partnership.

In short, then, the Bank’s critique of polygamy appeared to reinforce a racialised hierarchy in which poor Afro-Ecuadorian and Amazonian men were framed as more oppressive to women than men whose arrangements of heteronormativity seemed more, for want of a better term, familiar. As is clear from the previous discussion of P.R.O.D.E.P.I.N.E.’s attempt to inculcate autonomy with necessary attachments in women, the extent to which the institution’s critique of polygamy is likely to broaden the availability of chosen intimacies is, at least, questionable. In this loan, the Bank’s gender policy did not aim at the opening up of autonomy for women such that attachments to men were no longer required – in contrast normative coupling up was a condition for survival in a neo-liberal context. In these ways the Bank’s poster-child “ethnodevelopment” initiative appeared to run counter to the need to secure space for people to live respected, dignified lives free from coerced attachments, even as staff condemned such attachments when they appeared in non-normative form.

To clarify, in critiquing P.R.O.D.E.P.I.N.E.’s racialised celebration of loving partnership and its condemnation of polygamy I am not staking a counter claim that polygamy is necessarily more

liberatory than the Bank's model of loving monogamy, or that it provides a more culturally authentic basis from which to contest existing gender relations.²⁰ I do not dispute that non-monogamous arrangements of heterosexuality may be experienced as oppressive, or as coerced, although the Bank did not prove that in this loan. Rather, I am troubled by the way in which this discussion frames gender oppression in a completely binarised fashion: it is apparently absent in communities wherein monogamous love is understood to be hegemonic, but it is always-already, pathologically present when nonmonogamous relations are considered emblematic of the group. This misdiagnosis of the policy problem may reaffirm existing racist and class-based stereotypes regarding the savage, irresponsible, uncaring nature of certain brown men.

Finally, on a more practical level, this racialised framing of normative and deviant sexuality caused multiple problems for staff.

Employees critical of P.R.O.D.E.P.I.N.E.'s gender efforts claimed that they were not necessary, given reigning cultural ideals. One employee replied to a question about P.R.O.D.E.P.I.N.E.'s gender activities by stating:

well, the first priority of P.R.O.D.E.P.I.N.E. isn't necessarily the focus on gender, because in the indigenous world there is not this discrimination against women like you see in the mestizo sector. So here, rather, the nuclear family is very united.

Moreover, many of the communities with which the loan worked used the language of complementarity and balanced sharing to stake their own claims for gender equality – claims gender staff found hard to counter. Although associated by P.R.O.D.E.P.I.N.E. staff with Andean communities, the notion of culturally authentic gender relations involving sharing reciprocity was also invoked by some indigenous groups in the Amazon when interacting with the loan's gender efforts. Reference to complementarity hereby became a racialised trump card demonstrating the uselessness of gender analysis, one vied for by leaders in many communities considered by P.R.O.D.E.P.I.N.E. staff to be on the outside of sharing models. Even assuming polygamy to be an unambiguously oppressive practice, then – a claim this loan did not prove – the discourse of authentic complementary and balanced sharing did not succeed in undermining it. In a report on what appears to have been a disastrous gender workshop in the Amazon in 2001,

²⁰ This clarification was prompted by the thoughtful comments of an anonymous reviewer.

participants refused to accept figures provided by facilitators on gender differences in Ecuador in relation to wages, literacy rates, and so on, arguing that they reflected an urban, mestiza, feminist bias, and did not take into account Amazonian reality. This reality was characterised as based on complementary relations between men and women, meaning “that the display of charts of men and women paves the way for the division of families and does not respect cultures” (Aulestia and Qunitero-Andrade, 2001, p. 2). The first suggestion given for how to improve the workshop was thus “to start the analysis (of gender) from the principles of Amazonian philosophy – complementarity, reciprocity and binarity” (p. 7). The facilitator argued that men and women share roles in the Amazon, and that:

gender relations...are complementary, therefore they are neither inequitable nor discriminatory. To build capacity and discuss subjects of equity between men and women is not useful for these nationalities (emphasis added).

I raise this issue not merely to register – albeit briefly – counter-hegemonic appropriation of dominant development discourse, but also to pre-emptively counter an assumption that this approach to gender dominates Bank practice because, on a simplistic level, it “works” in a project context. The attempt to resolve the social reproduction dilemma embedded in P.R.O.D.E.P.I.N.E.’s gender efforts by restructuring heteronormativity was far from trouble-free, and the difficulties it caused Bank staff in this project were obvious. By defining policy success as balanced inclusion of men and women, shared roles, and complementary partnerships, G.A.D. policy makers found themselves confronted by a number of non-monogamous communities arguing that complementarity was an always-already defining feature of their ethnic identity – and staff found those very arguments difficult to navigate.²¹

CONCLUSION

On the most basic level, this article argues that the world’s largest and most influential development institution has answers to the social

²¹ Staff could of course argue that those communities were wrong – as when the report on the Amazonian workshop noted that three women present claimed inequalities did exist regarding political participation and decision-making. However this is a perilous approach, appearing to silence community self-definition and impose external “expert” diagnoses on indigenous problems in ways that run counter to principles of ethnodevelopment.

reproduction problem – this is of interest to scholars who expect, based on existing literature, an exhaustion solution to be the default policy option. Moreover, I suggest that the Bank's attempt to (re)privatise caring responsibilities by adjusting loving partnerships between men and women is often overlooked due to the persistent refusal of scholars in development studies and feminist international political economy to denaturalise heterosexuality. My project reveals the limitations of this refusal to apply the insights of sexuality studies to critical development studies, and it demonstrates the necessity of taking sexuality seriously as a category of analysis in international development research. Adjusted heterosexuality is a linchpin of the Bank's current attempts to secure the continued provision of caring labour in a neo-liberal context, but this policy preference is often invisible, because of a general failure to accept that initiatives playing with normative family formation are sexualised interventions aiming to produce real world effects.

By overlooking such references to sexuality we miss a key policy solution to the social reproduction dilemma enacted by the Bank, and we thus fail to critique it. The broader failure to acknowledge the crucial reframing of the Bank's approach to social reproduction leaves us unable to contest the concrete policy solutions that emerge from it – solutions that threaten to become hegemonic in international development policy and which have troubling implications. In P.R.O.D.E.P.I.N.E. the Bank's solution to the policy dilemma rests on and reinforces a definition of good gender analysis as requiring sharing, balanced partnership, a profoundly privatising conceptualisation which leads to privatising policy solutions fixated on microadjustments in loving partnerships. The conflicts likely to stem from these adjustments are overlooked. Rather, evidence of sharing at the intimate level becomes evidence of emancipation in a way that reinforces certain compulsory types of partnering. In addition, the solution rests on a tension-ridden definition of empowerment for women as 'autonomy with necessary attachment', and it requires multiple interventions to teach supposedly natural market mentalities to people already marked by their rural location, poverty, and ethnicity as particularly backward. The effort also invokes pathologising portrayals of poor, ethnically marginalised men who are offered liberation through compulsory domestication, with P.R.O.D.E.-P.I.N.E. staff repeatedly trying to teach them to love better. For multiple reasons, then, the promotion of restructured heternormativity is a profoundly dangerous response to the tension between

paid labour and unpaid care that warrants serious feminist contestation. Although the Bank's gender staff have solutions to the social reproduction dilemma, they are not the right ones. This analysis has resonance far beyond Ecuador, given that P.R.O.D.E.P.I.N.E. is held up as a good practices example of ethnodevelopment and gender mainstreaming within the Bank more generally. Indeed I suggest that the ways that the social reproduction dilemma are resolved here are the ways the Bank will try to resolve them everywhere its gender policy entrepreneurs can secure institutional space. Frankly, that is an alarming hypothesis. Paying closer attention to international actors as shapers of sexuality – particularly in its heteronormative forms – would allow that hypothesis to be more easily tested, but more importantly such attention would also highlight the detrimental effects of the policy preference, perhaps helping to render them contestable.

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Department of Women's Studies
Barnard College
3009 Broadway
New York 10027
USA
E-mail: bedford@ohio.edu
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