

The Transformation of Latin American Social Policy: Dynamics, Institutions and Outcomes

University of Bath, November 2014

Social neoliberalism and beyond: Ecuador's post-neoliberal development and social heterogeneity

Sarah A Radcliffeⁱ

Abstract: Key to an understanding of recent shifts in Latin America's social policy are a set of interlinked processes, including social movement activism to bring marginalized social groups into development visibility, the recalibration of neoliberalism to address specific at-risk populations, and the historically limited attention granted to intersectional disadvantages. The consequences of these processes for Ecuadorian social policy are explored in this paper, with respect to the situation of indigenous women beneficiaries. The paper will also examine Ecuador's recent turn to a rights-based 'buen vivir' social policy approach, and the ways in which the contentious politics of buen vivir relates to Latin America's shifting landscapes of social policy.

Social Policy and Development

Developmental approaches to the social heterogeneity of the countries and groups in which it primarily operates reveals the combined influences of technical simplifications of social inequality, colonial designations of the qualities found in embodied subjects, and, most recently, neoliberalism's governmental attention to social difference as conduct. What I present today is part of a wider piece of work which analyzes how development thinking approaches social diversity through colonial and postcolonial readings of social heterogeneity. Development's treatment of social heterogeneity is traced in relation to Ecuador's racialized female subalterns, namely women in two indigenous populations, the Andean Kichwa of Chimborazo province, and Tsáchila located around Santo Domingo town on Ecuador's semi-tropical coastal plain, with whom I worked collaboratively and with decolonial and participatory research methods. The paper provides some context for the arguments developed in my forthcoming book, before moving on to explore the approaches to social difference in Ecuador's rights-based 'buen vivir' development.

I now turn to looking at the commons-impoverishment paradox through development's enactment through notions of community and the social (cf. Lemke 2001; Rose and Mitchell 2008). The rise of participatory social development has been linked to neoliberal discipline, a theme which is certainly visible in contemporary development. Through the 1990s, development thinking recalibrated its macroeconomic and financial neoliberal model to create a post-Washington consensus. Retreating from unmediated neoliberalism, the post-Washington consensus was presented as development 'with a human face'. State cutbacks, labour market liberalization and asset privatization were to continue but balanced by measures to mitigate the disastrous impact on the poorest. The 1995 World Summit for Social Development organised by the UN marked the arrival on the world stage of this new agenda, and was quickly followed by the creation of Ministries of Social Development across the majority world (Lazarus 2008; Fakuda-Parr & Hulme 2011;). Termed social neoliberalism (Andolina et al 2009) or the 'new social agenda' (Molyneux 2008), policies began to target subpopulations associated with vulnerability and risks, to furnish them with the capacities to better face the challenges of neoliberal economies (Lemke 2001; Best 2013; Merrien 2013). Core to this approach is the notion of resilience, a concept adapted from ecological studies in which "resilience seeks to enhance an individual's or system's capacity to live with, or indeed prosper from, uncertainty", a

concept that has integrated with disaster management's genealogies of participation and local agency to re-craft programmes as means by which vulnerable groups can better survive neoliberal restructuring (Walker and Cooper 2011).

As a mutation of neoliberalism (Ong 2006), the social risk management approach builds upon concepts of social capital and human capital, in which poor populations are to be helped to strategically deploy their social capital and consolidate meagre levels of human capital (formal education, health) (Holzmann and Jørgensen 2000).ⁱⁱ Risks are defined inclusively to encompass social, economic, political and environmental risks (Merrien 2013: 96). Development is reconfigured as a complex field of emergent properties, in which key stakeholders – individual subjects, states, agencies and NGOs – are un-fixed institutionally and socially and are required to deal with volatility, complexity, uncertainty and ambiguity through innovation and constant adaptation (eg. Ramalingam 2013). “Not only is risk normalized, but the origins and causes of the absences and instabilities these actors hope to rectify are also obscured and occluded” (Duffield 2010: 56). Beneficiary group participation in programmes are combined with state practices of good governance and transparency, widely interpreted in the academic literature as technical, de-politicizing measures that normalize capitalist socio-economies (eg. Hetherington 2011).

Social neoliberal development policies are hence not perceived as universal welfare expenditure but as “a means of strengthening social and human capital” (Merrien 2013: 97); conditional cash transfers CCTs are emblematic of these social policies (and are the precursors to the unconditional transfers mentioned in my introduction).ⁱⁱⁱ CCT policy illustrates the processes by which development celebrates the ‘commons’ as it decimates livelihoods and locally-contingent forms of survival.

Development and Social Heterogeneity

My forthcoming book, *Indigenous Women and Postcolonial Development: Social heterogeneity, rights and socationatures* (2015, Duke University Press), aims to provide the first systematic analysis of how and why development thinking and programs approach the socially-diverse groups the ways they do. It undertakes this analysis using the latest thinking in development studies, postcolonial studies, and social theory, to provide a framework through which to understand and critically evaluate development's failure to engage with social diversity. The book focuses in on the substantive case of Ecuadorian racialized, rural women in order to address wide themes about rights, exclusion, citizenship and public policy. I use a critical genealogy of successive development approaches and how they deal with social diversity. My argument is that in the context of postcolonial intersectional hierarchies – that is, the cross-cutting and ontologically-separate dimensions of gender, race-ethnicity, geographical location, and income – development policy and projects rely upon deeply embedded understandings of social categories, understandings which give rise to inappropriate policies, a mismatch between target and actual beneficiary groups, disjunctures between project staff and beneficiaries, and the invisibility of certain social groups. The core arguments I make in the longer work are Development approaches social heterogeneity by reducing complexity, associating beneficiary categories with values derived from colonial hierarchies, and by following implicit rules of intersectionality to determine which facets of social identity prevail over others. The existence of postcolonial intersectional hierarchies cannot be recognized within development's current institutionalization, yet determines subalterns' experiences of development programs and interventions.

Heterogeneous facets of social difference – gender, race-ethnicity, location, class – are articulated in postcolonial societies as intersectional hierarchies, grounded in colonial difference and

exclusionary citizenship forms. Intersectional hierarchies are inscribed in sociocultural meanings, embodiments and the production of space, across different scales of poor countries, and result in relational, multiscale dynamics that differentiate postcolonial subjects. Development's will to improve obscures social heterogeneity by implicitly and explicitly endorsing colonial imaginaries of social relations. Moreover postcolonial development is a process of knowledge production grounded in colonially-defined social goals. Global policy approaches to certain dimensions of social difference are re-worked and institutionalized in hierarchical national discourses and practices. The two prime examples of what I term 'single issue development' are gender and development, and ethno-development, which reflect the reworking of global development goals with postcolonial national readings of social difference. Ecuador's postcolonial history provides the social meanings and hierarchical value system that shape the country's patterns of exclusion and policies, and colonial readings of differential value of social groups.

In exploring these issues, my work analyzes various social policies that have been applied in Ecuador over recent decades, including participatory development (PD). I analyze PD in an original way as the construction of a social consensus, which relies upon development policy identifying a social group which is viewed as implicitly requiring bringing in to development decision-making. I also examine how social neoliberal policy in relation to indigenous women is strongly associated with a discourse of vulnerability and social difference. While this identification of indigenous women makes them visible in public policy, it does so in ways that pre-empt racialized women's claims to agency, equality or recognition. This is exemplified by the analysis of policy efforts to bring indigenous women into leadership positions through tackling what was seen as low self-esteem. I examine this policy in light of critical accounts of neoliberal active citizenship, (post)colonial knowledge production, and (post)colonial expectations of acceptable modern behavior in the public sphere. Close analysis of the implementation of this policy approach reveals how indigenous women are exhorted to change their social relations, forms of knowledge, and embodied dispositions in line with postcolonial hierarchies. As occurred in a leadership project for Tsáchila women, the fuzzy category of 'indigenous women' reproduced colonial tropes about abject subalterns with low self-esteem.

Another key arena in which I explore social policy and its treatment of social difference is that of sexual-reproductive health (SRH) and rights (SRR). SRH has been increasingly framed through an agenda of interculturalism that seeks to create new accommodations between western/colonial health systems and indigenous practices. Indigenous rights organizations endorse these policy frameworks in order to boost indigenous population protection and reduce maternal and infant mortality. Ecuador introduced intercultural health systems as part of broader neoliberal multicultural reforms. However despite indigenous women's active participation in ethnic federation policy, and in workshops that seek to provide services to their peers, indigenous women's interests regarding SRR differ from those presumed both by state intercultural policy and by indigenous activism. In summary, interculturalism does not provide a means by which racial-ethnic difference can be addressed in development and specifically in social policy. Indigenous women call for recognition of diversity within diversity, in part through vernacularizing rights discourses and unique articulations of the need for robust and interwoven collective and individual rights.

Hence it is in relation to this critical genealogy of development policy and its approaches to social diversity that I analyze Ecuador's recent adoption of Buen Vivir policy. Providing an original and up-to-date account of the country's postneoliberal development, the paper argues that social heterogeneity has been re-conceptualized in policy although postcolonial features remain stubbornly present. These contradictory features are documented in relation to

indigenous women's welcome of BV and their critiques of its failure to decolonize development sufficiently.

I Buen Vivir and new developmentalism

Arising out of a strongly rights-based and social movement-influenced constituent process, the 2008 Constitution incorporated a range of anti-neoliberal and pro-rights agendas, attempting to reposition Ecuador in the global economy while fundamentally restructuring the relationship between state, citizens and resources.^{iv} BV for many observers offered a route away from technical neoliberal solutions to a recalibrated relation between society, economy and nature. Measures such as the renegotiation of oil contracts and increased social spending are widely interpreted as examples of postneoliberal governance, as they overturn neoliberal goals of privatization, downward pressure on social programs, and free-market privilege. Ecuador's new political economy also features a strong role for the state in regulating labor markets, resource extraction, and galvanizing citizen participation. Hence, the country remains capitalist – and indeed heavily reliant on energy and agricultural exports – but acknowledges the diversity of informal sector economic activities, the role of caring and reproductive work, and envisions a form of solidary economy in which collective wellbeing, re-distribution, use values and human needs prevail. In this sense, it represents a popular push-back against the marketization of everything (Gibson-Graham 2006).^v In this context, macroeconomic policy under state oversight is designed to release resources through which to establish a more inclusive and fairer society (Escobar 2010), in which a highly-elaborate rights framework – encompassing constitutionally-grounded economic, social, political and cultural rights – creates the possibility for increasing capacities and reducing barriers to social inclusion.^{vi}

Constitutional rights in turn informed national development planning, specifically the National Development Plan for Buen Vivir. In the national development plan, buen vivir is used to refer to an environmentally and socially sustainable development objective that is strengthened and guaranteed through rights-based citizenship in which the barriers to substantive citizenship caused by impoverishment are removed. According to the plan, the goal of development is to establish Buen Vivir – hence, “development is the realization of buen vivir, and the construction ... of buen vivir is what enables this new vision of human and social development” (Walsh 2010: 19). To an unprecedented degree in the Ecuadorian context,

“the concept of Buen Vivir, good life is the direct relation between rights and the development model. It's a question of exercising these rights while living with dignity, without this implying an accumulation or competitive regime. Buen Vivir in general includes rights and institutions that grant people the conditions to effectively enjoy human rights, the rights to live in harmony with each other and with nature, for present and future generations.”^{vii}

Buen vivir development established twelve goals that encompass endogenous development including a solidary economy, recognition of unpaid – including reproductive – labor, cultural diversity, viewing nature as constitutive of and intrinsically valuable as social life, and environmental sustainability. With social rights at the core of the 2008 constitution and development thinking, the state envisions not a classic or universal welfare state, but a form of development justice committed to dealing with discrimination, labor insecurity, uneven development and income gulfs.

BV's genealogy is closely associated with Andean indigenous worldviews, as well as diverse strands of leftwing politics, environmentalism, feminism, theology, and development with identity (Cortez 2011). Arising from rich conversations between environmentalists, feminists, indigenous groups and lawyers, the rights-based BV agenda reflects a variety of influences from pre-existing policies amended to increase social inclusion (for example, the conditional cash

transfer), subaltern policy demands (for example, measures against discrimination and racism), and socialist agendas around work and labor (for example, improved conditions for low-paid formal sector workers), and so on. The minimum wage rose by about 40 percent in real terms from 2007 to 2012. Ecuador's social budget saw a rise in the late 2000s relative to the 1990s, reaching the historically unprecedented amount of US\$40 billion. Yet as I have written elsewhere (Radcliffe forthcoming, Chapter 2), Ecuadorian minimal social spending was historically low and highly skewed towards certain recipients and remained at lower levels than other Latin American countries. Recent rises are spectacular in the Ecuadorian context but remain low in the regional context. Social programs moreover continue to be targeted at low income groups, children and families, and food and nutrition programs, as well as the construction and maintenance of community centers, although the extent and nature of the programs often shift as discussed below. In line with post-neoliberal experiments elsewhere in South America, Ecuador's *buen vivir* agenda places the state firmly at the centre of the management, regulation, and operationalization of development and political economy, and crucially as the arbiter in development disputes as "without an efficient state development is impossible." A strongly developmental state reflects the "socialism of the 21st century" agenda as well as popular demands for redistributive and egalitarian politics. In this sense, the anti-state rhetoric associated with neoliberalism has been reversed, as the state assumes responsibility for redistribution and guaranteeing rights for human subjects and nature.

Given its unprecedented concern with rights and social spending, BV promises transformations for those most marginalized and stigmatized by previous policy approaches. As discussed below, Kichwa women in Ecuador discussed *buen vivir* with me on buses and in meetings in ways that vividly conveyed their sense of connection to a more inclusive concept that, exceptionally, was granted official recognition. Kichwa women expressed perspectives on current government policy in ways that were exceptionally detailed, critical and insightful. Needless to say however, *buen vivir* development faces the challenge of dealing with entrenched institutionalization of social difference and a persistent failure to tackle colonial legacies, another dimension that *indigenas* were quick to identify. The paper turns now to explore *buen vivir*'s engagement with social heterogeneity, and indigenous women's articulation of their positionality to *buen vivir* development, a response that reflects neither policy formulations nor ethnic rights agendas, neither governmentality nor culture.

II Buen Vivir and social heterogeneity

"[Buen vivir development aims at] promoting social and economic inclusion with the addition of gender, intercultural and intergenerational goals to ensure equal opportunities. It is one of the most up-front policies in the country which has been put into the National Plan. And within that, we must work to make equality between men and women, as well as the plurinational state and interculturalism. Another policy talks about recognizing and respecting sociocultural diversities, [and] eradicating all forms of discrimination – whether of gender or sexual preference." Indigenous woman, employed in state planning secretariat, speaking at public meeting in March 2010

Continuing a long process of recalibrating development's approach to social heterogeneity, *buen vivir* set in motion a set of institutional, conceptual and programmatic transformations to address the underlying question of social difference. The national *buen vivir* development plan is committed to equal rights for all people, what it terms 'equality in diversity', and promote equality, cohesion, inclusion and social and territorial equality. Diversity is recognized in relation to gender, sexuality, race-ethnicity, (dis)ability, generation, migrant status, and identities. Naming these aspects of social heterogeneity, BV policy abolished the historic single-issue development

councils (for women, indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorians) and replaced them with a set of inter-related equality councils charged with mainstreaming policy related to “gender, ethnicity, generation, interculturalism, disability and human mobility,” dealing with diverse social groups including women and men, children and adolescents, nationalities and pueblos (indigenous, Montubio and black populations), and disability issues. Under the umbrella of the National Planning Secretariat, mainstreaming and intersectionality would be coordinated inter-sectoral coordination, an arrangement that placed little emphasis on specialist appointments. Working closely with state institutions pursuing human rights, the transition commissions became constitutionally responsible for the formulation, monitoring, and evaluation of public policy.

From the perspective of BV advocates, “buen vivir is inseparable from the category diversity,” as it was designed to address socioeconomic exclusion and its material and symbolic dimensions. Accordingly, diversity was no longer to be associated with lack or passivity but with potential, capacities, strength and recognition. In light of coloniality’s persistence in developmental understandings of social heterogeneity, the key questions remain whether BV’s recognition of diversity successfully shifts powerful postcolonial social hierarchies, and addresses the second generation challenge of working creatively with crosscutting differences.

“Formal and material equality are founded in the valuation of existing differences in society, which takes them into account not in order to oppress and subordinate, but rather to release potential and favor personal and collective development. This conception goes beyond understanding equality as creating assimilation or comparisons as the latter do not guarantee the eradication of discrimination.” (Transition Commission 2010: 3)

Under the 2008 constitution, gender planning was re-institutionalized. In 2009, a presidential decree abolished the Conamu National Women’s Council and it became a transition commission, preparing for its ultimate re-foundation under the umbrella of equality councils. Women’s movements successfully lobbied the constituent assembly to recognize economies as hyper-diverse and comprising care activities, reproduction, and diverse economies, in ways that echoed global conversations about the need to re-imagine capitalist economies in more diverse ways. In its working document, the gender transition commission presented a Fraserian triple agenda of redistribution, recognition, and representation on behalf of women, based upon participatory and pro-democracy goals of raising women’s political, social, cultural and territorial representation. Additionally the commission prepared background documents to inform the Buen Vivir Development Plan on gender equity and gender violence, while policy conversations began on issues of gender and ethnocultural difference. Like its predecessor Conamu (National Women’s Council), the transition commission was staffed by women from mestiza, urban women’s movements, although under its brief to foster civil participation in policy formulation, it consulted with various groups including representatives of indigenous groups, the disabled and children.

In practical terms, the transition commission focused its efforts on four thematic areas, including institutional mainstreaming, rural women, diverse sexualities, and gender violence. Regarding rural women, the Transition Commission continued mainstreaming work with ministries and multilateral agencies such as FAO, expecting that food sovereignty policies, the recognition of unpaid domestic labor, and government agendas to promote land distribution would combine for the successful “rehabilitation of rural women’s work.” Yet the 2010 law of food sovereignty contained no affirmative action for women, although it did place emphasis on small producers and female heads of households. However the lack of consensus in the gender transition commission scuppered attempts to build empowerment into rural policy. In the end, the Rural

Women's Support Program focused on microcredit provision via *cajas solidarias* and measures to eradicate violence against rural women through the ordinary justice system. Such steps offered little new to rural *indígenas* whose microcredit organizations had already surpassed this neoliberal model (Radcliffe forthcoming, Chapter 7), while activism put gender violence firmly into the interface between statutory and community justice systems. In this sense, the transition commission's policy for rural women continued to excise postcolonial intersectional concerns and had limited practical impact on racialized rural women.

The commission's approach on violence and on diverse sexualities also utilized frameworks through which colonial racialized relations were reproduced, albeit on new policy foundations. In a single mention of *indígenas*, the transition commission working paper recommended that older women go into Hispanic schools to share 'ancestral knowledge,' a suggestion that reproduced colonial tropes of *indígenas*' non-coevalness with modernity. In another policy initiative, the transition commission's media campaign against gender violence illustrated the persistence of racialized thinking around indigenous masculinities. Adverts depicted diverse racial-ethnic men from across Ecuador, and were premised on the argument that gender violence "doesn't have a poncho," an intervention that reaffirmed associations between indigenous masculinities and culturally-driven violence, even as it sought to undermine the same associations. Moreover adverts downplayed *indígenas*' agency in tackling postcolonial positionality and their agendas of customary justice. With social difference 'whitened out' in this way, the power relations of postcolonial hierarchies remained unquestioned, as illustrated by legislative measures to recognize sexual rights. Building on the 2008 constitution, laws recognizing queer sexualities granted status and visibility to racially unmarked (white, *mestiza*) subjects who are most vocal in claiming these rights, while legislative agendas failed to acknowledge struggles that are associated with racialized subalterns. According to Amy Lind (2012: 541), the constitutional and policy recognition of diverse sexualities meant that

"in this [policy] imaginary, LGBT*TI* individuals are linked to progress and respectability; water [an issue that mobilized rural and racialized women], in contrast, is linked to race and poverty."

In this politics, liberal individualist rights are awarded higher status consistent with colonial hierarchies in contrast with 'collective' racialized priorities concerning resources such as water. Coloniality's framing of relational values of race, gender, location and class is highlighted in these examples. Such policy agendas are consistent with the transition commission's decision to firmly endorse individual rights as, although the commission recognizes constitutional collective rights, its policy framework explicitly records that (racialized) collective rights should only be recognized to the extent that they do not threaten individual rights. As Engle (2010) argues, the indigenous collective rights often contain provisions to limit full enjoyment of those rights – what she terms the "invisible asterix" -- provisions arising from western epistemologies and geopolitical concerns that pre-empt *indígena* agendas of decolonization and self-determination.

Social policy likewise demonstrates continuity with existing colonial-modern expectations around female subjects, as *buen vivir* social spending remains deeply entangled in "maternalist, heteronormative understandings of the family and women's rights." In this respect, the human development bond (*bono de desarrollo humano*), a cash transfer program that was expanded under *buen vivir* development. As in conditional cash transfer programs found across the world, small amounts of cash are paid to mothers of children under 16 in the poorest 40 percent of the population. Under *buen vivir*, the monthly payment was doubled from \$15 to \$30, and then raised to \$35, and women's access to this resource facilitated. Buses now run to remote villages in Chimborazo to save women time and money going to their nearby urban center to collect the *bono*, measures described as a "technical improvement." Under *buen vivir*, female *bono* recipients are defined as those in precarious forms of work and without a regular income, and

outside social security or work-related benefit systems. While perpetuating a socially conservative and economically instrumental use of women's time and social reproductive labor (Molyneux 2002), seemingly without reference to constitutional provisions to acknowledge and reward unpaid and caring work, the *bono* relies upon a normative model of a white-mestizo maternal subject, economically able to depend upon spousal income and move unhindered across space to attend clinics. For racialized women in agricultural work or washing clothes in an urban neighborhood, this policy paradigm creates as many obstacles as it removes, as Kichwa and Tsáchila women's experiences show.

Hence *buen vivir* policy speaks extensively about the importance of diversity and interculturalism and the need for social inclusion, and work across institutions. In the gender transition commission however, a pre-existing equality plan (the Plan de Igualdad de Oportunidades, PIO) was re-used and little critical reflection given to postcolonial hierarchies. *Buen Vivir's* diversity hence remains embedded in ways of thinking which rely upon colonial presumptions about the social. *Indígenas*, including the Conaie women's office, were not party to sustained discussions about *buen vivir* gender policy. Ethnocultural difference was raised and not pursued so that the commission's working document positioned indigenous – as well as black and rural – women's knowledges firmly in the past.

*

“[Plurinationalism represents] not unity in order to become western through development and economic growth. It's a unity to be what we want to be beyond reductionist, predatory and inhumane forms, and with respect for our differences.”
(Codenpe AECID 2011: 21)

Under the same process impacting gender policy, the indigenous development council Codenpe similarly saw its remit change, shaking up its institutional structure and radically undercutting its broader legitimacy within Ecuador's development landscape. Slated to become the National Council of Equality for Nationalities and Pueblos, Codenpe's attention to social heterogeneity continues to be assigned the role of adapting policy for the recognition and rights of diverse persons, communities and pueblos and nationalities, reflected in initiatives to devise 'life plans' for each nationality. Within this, ethno-development formally recognizes the need for projects to include women, family and intercultural concerns, as well as deal with women's triple discrimination (in production, reproduction and unpaid community labor) by means of increasing their participation in public policy design and providing formal and informal education and leadership opportunities. The reformed council's conversations focus on four central themes -*sumak kawsay* (a kichwa term, often translated as *buen vivir* [see below]), interculturalism, the plurinational intercultural state, and the living earth Pachamama. Each of these policy fields continuously refers back to women's central role and the need for an approach different to *machismo* and feminism; no staff are assigned exclusively to women's issues. Within discussions too, women are metaphorically linked to Pachamama, evidenced in a summary of its post-2008 objectives:

“Codenpe has ... new jurisdictions, but there isn't one specifically for women. However, there are those associated with the protection of Pachamama through our worldview [cosmovisión] and we have the guarantee of collective rights.”

Clarifying its position regarding collective and individual rights, Codenpe declared that if there were to be a conflict between collective and individual rights, the former would be granted primacy (Codenpe-AECID 2011: 86). Moreover, as discussed below, indigenous women continue to articulate the problem from their standpoint in ways that replicated neither state-led development nor indigenous agendas. In light of the gender transition commission's prioritization of individual rights, the historical standoff between multiculturalism and gender

politics that shaped Ecuadorian development for decades continued into buen vivir development and 'postneoliberal' approaches to social heterogeneity.

Development's reorientation away from neoliberal towards broadly anti-neoliberal, state-led definitions of buen vivir in Ecuador reflects an attempt to re-think social heterogeneity through new forms of institutionalization, and the prioritization of interculturalism and cross-sector coordination. Buen vivir places great emphasis on social inclusion and rights; both collective and individual rights are constitutionally embedded. Nevertheless, the professional stand-offs and handy social categories appear to be stubbornly rooted in Ecuadorian development thinking, meaning that social heterogeneity continues to be strongly influenced by longstanding postcolonial expectations. Buen vivir development has not yet held an extensive conversation around intersectionality.

V Concluding thoughts

By starting from the postcolonial intersections of race, gender, location and income that produce the contingent and precarious lives of indigenous women, my work explores the responses of successive policy approaches to the dilemma of difference. The objective is to examine the situation of racialized female rural subalterns as a means to analyze development – global, national, modernization, neoliberal, post-neoliberal – treats the issue of social heterogeneity. Examining development from the perspective of indígenas in different contexts of development and coloniality reveals that this is not merely an empirical discussion as it provides an x-ray of development's blind spots, complacent readings of social difference, and the ways social neoliberalism attends to subjectivity shorn of intersectional positionality. Through the genealogy of Ecuador's development history, indigenous women are either excessively visible or invisible in the metrics of projects and programs. Largely invisible in modernizing rural development, most GAD programs, and in participatory development, the specific concatenation of intersectional exclusions characteristic of indigenous women were erased from development concerns as the social categories and qualities mobilized were, according to policy presumptions, already covered and included in rural households, women, and a cohesive community. The continued invisibility of indigenous women's structural and relational position within these policy formulations speaks to the enduring power of hegemonic understandings of need, voice and authority.

Neoliberal governmentality's capacity to work with and indeed instrumentalize social difference has been extensively noted (Lemke 2001; Hale 2002; Andolina et al 2009; Asher 2009). Close examination of Ecuadorian development dynamics between policy and beneficiary extends this discussion in new directions, first through postcolonial analysis of different policy areas influenced by neoliberalism (health, participation, 'indigenous women in development' and so on), and its steady focus on indigenous women's experiences in postcolonial intersectionality's interaction with development, and finally in its comparison of neoliberal dilemmas of difference and the 'postneoliberal' policy emerging in recent years. In each case emplacing neoliberal social policies firmly within a colonial present reveals how colonial templates and stereotypes provide enduring rules of interaction and shorthand models of gender, race-ethnicity, location and poverty that are picked up on and re-tooled by neoliberal interventions. Household head, farmer, mother, and active citizen are categories not merely bound into neoliberal governmentality, powerful though this is, as they re-work the social expectations about embodied agency, unrealized entrepreneurialism, and conformity to existing statistical categories laid down through decades of postcolonial development. In this sense, the 'market' is not a neutral arbiter able to transcend or cast aside the importance of social difference (specifically postcolonial intersectionality). Postcolonial political economies and nation-building produce the hierarchically organized and intrinsically *social* markets, binding together colonial epistemologies of freedom, the market and social difference.

Addressing development within a broader comparative analysis reveals that single issue foci (exemplified by gender policy and ethnodevelopment) rely heavily upon what I term 'rules of intersectionality,' that is colonial-inflected assumptions about configurations of gender and household relations, or how culture encapsulates ethnic development. Taking social heterogeneity as an intrinsic problem for the will to improve permits an original analysis of single issue development (rural poverty, gender, racial inequality) by drawing comparisons across these policy fields that are so frequently considered as if they are discrete areas of scholarly and policy concern. Whether single issue interventions seek to empower women or alleviate poverty, they call upon and redeploy already-designated social categories whose characteristics are viewed through colonial eyes with its inbuilt tendency towards "probabilistic truths and predictability" (Bhabha 1990: 87). Hence, populations associated with subaltern difference are expected to transform into modern, non-subaltern subjects or become placed under the powerful "invisible asterix" which erases qualitatively significant social characteristics associated with subalternity. Although seeming to start from a distinct agenda, participatory development refers back continuously to homogeneously-conceived social identity which is used as the basis for consensus. This presumption disciplines beneficiaries around development's institutionalized categories and – in some cases – in the name of the nation-state, and disregard the interlocking forms of exclusion and epistemic violence that go into making single issue development and postcolonial statehood.

Ecuadorian development also reveals key moments at which racialized rural women were singled out as a high priority target population such as in neoliberal political agendas of 'indigenous women in development', in biopolitical concerns, and ethnic interculturalism. At these points, indigenous women enter policy remits as at risk and vulnerable subjects whose disposition and behaviors became subject to micromanagement and discourses of belonging. Maintaining a steady analytical focus on development genealogies hence provided a means by which to uncover the forms of power that push and pull racialized female subalterns in and out of policy dealings with social heterogeneity. A postcolonial critique of development's selective optics revealed how postcolonial intersectionality remains outside the purview of varied initiatives, as again and again projects and programs mobilize social models that deny and misrecognize diversity within diversity. Throughout each of these forms of development one of the most invisible dimensions continues to be indigenous women's persistent and widespread exclusion from dignified, secure and adequately-remunerated economic options. Indigenous women are national citizens, women and racial-ethnic subjects, yet the social qualities that development thinking associates with each of these categories in turn are qualities that indigenous women – because of their position in intersectional hierarchies – cannot lay claim to. In a politics of presence, indigenous women demand to be interlocutors whose social reality deserves to be considered.

Disillusioned by international aid's ineffectiveness and over-reliance on standard procedures, some in development studies have begun to explore the value of complex adaptive systems thinking, in which blueprints and ten year plans are overturned in favor of more open-ended, innovative strategies which build local capacities, bolster iterative learning, and create flexible, change-responsive and incremental outcomes. Ecuador's Buen Vivir development illustrates well the grounded, learning-based and open-ended process celebrated in these debates, recombining as it does local capacities and endogenous knowledges. However what the steady focus on Ecuadorian development histories reveals is the 'stickiness' of postcolonial stereotypes, colonial-era assumptions and implicit models of social relations that endure regardless of changes in policy headlines. Although at one level, Ecuador got rid of its single issue development institutions replacing them with a council charged with taking into account intersectionality and multiple axes of social (dis)advantage, in practice institutional and society-wide relations lagged

behind these promising visions. Development scholar Ben Ramalingam (2013) suggests that self-organizing adaptive systems break up sclerotic routines and deliver synergistic goals required in education, health and disaster planning. The Ecuadorian case cautions against the expectation that complex adaptive systems can jettison so easily the modes of abandonment and exclusion that forge everyday realities for millions across the world. Whereas male internet entrepreneurs deploy flexible micro-systems relying upon desperate individuals willing to trade their time for internet access, the entrenched postcolonial nation-state and its co-constituted lopsided society continue to put raced, rural and impoverished individuals into precisely the position where such options appear welcome. The issue is not a positive individual freedom constituted as if unmired in imperial-colonial custom “a domain of habituated non-freedom” but to explore “practices of social coordination.”^{ix}

Notes

ⁱ Department of Geography, University of Cambridge sar23@cam.ac.uk

ⁱⁱ Merrien (2013) traces a fascinating genealogy for social protection and social risk management policies, finding their origin in the International Labor Organization Convention of 1952 endorsement of social security coverage for state employees and formal sector employees. Based upon a puritan ethic of productivity, the geographies of these early programmes were highly uneven, being widespread in North Africa, Brazil and Argentina, and minimal in sub-Saharan Africa. After state cut-backs and market restructuring, these programmes were de-legitimized and covered ever smaller numbers.

ⁱⁱⁱ As well as conditional cash transfers, social neoliberal protection includes public and private social insurance programmes for formal sector workers (Ballard 2012; Merrien 2013; on South Africa's debate on the Basic Income Grant, Ferguson 2010; Barrientos et al 2013).

^{iv} Ecuadorian postneoliberal development and buen vivir has been approached from a variety of perspectives, see Becker 2010; Escobar 2010; León 2010; Radcliffe 2012; and on post-neoliberalism, Peck and Brenner 2009; Goodale and Postero 2013.

^v Given neoliberal cultural politics, it remains an open question “the extent to which the processes under way have changed those imaginaries and desires that became more deeply ingrained than ever during the neoliberal decades – eg. the ideologies of individualism, consumerism, the ‘marketization’ of citizenship, and so forth” (Escobar 2010: 8).

^{vi} Rights are those defined by international human rights conventions and political theory, and are shaped and guaranteed in the context of social, active, participatory and communitarian state, and the connectivity between individuals.

^{vii} Full references to interviews, grey literature and other sources is provided in Radcliffe (forthcoming, 2015).

^{viii} LGBTTI stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, *travesti* and intersex.

^{ix} Povinelli (2005: 158, 163).