

Piniero, M. 2002. Biodiversity and marginality: Dilemma of economic development. Ph.D. dissertation. University of Georgia, Athens, GA.

Abstract: This study investigates the impact of economic development on women and biodiversity in two rural communities in Ecuador. The level of women's integration into the development process as influenced by age, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status, are analyzed. The effects of the economic change on biodiversity using homegardens as its indicators are also evaluated.

The gradients of integration in politics, economy, and agricultural production are examined using life histories of three women from each of the two sites. Assessment of the development impact on women's private and public spaces is examined, emphasizing how women are empowered or marginalized at various levels of integration. Using wealth ranking, women's perceptions and indicators of wealth are explored.

Women's homegarden maps of three time periods were utilized to look into the changes of plant biodiversity. The results show that women prioritized food such as grains and vegetables mainly because of the deteriorating condition of the country's economy. Comparison of women and researchers' maps demonstrates that women emphasized features of homegardens that are salient in coping to their daily needs while researchers' maps show the actual physical representation of plants cultivated in the homegardens.

Women's social networks are explored where links among women with kins and different groups illustrate the importance of informal networks in performing their responsibilities at home and in the community. The analysis shows that women rely heavily on their families and women friends for financial, social, and emotional support. Women's time allocation is also investigated, underscoring that both ethnicity and economic status affect how women spend their time. Women from the indigenous community allocate the majority of their time in agricultural activities and petty business. In terms of economic groups, high-income women allot more time in agricultural activities while low-income women allocate most of their time engaging in petty-business. Drawing on the condition of middle-income women in the two communities, issues of marginality and empowerment in connection to border theory and borderlands are likewise evaluated where women's space is viewed not just as marginal conditions but places where various negotiations take place.