

Women's Group-based Work and Rural Gender Relations in the Southern Peruvian Andes

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This article explores how gendered roles and identities are being negotiated in the context of rural development interventions, using the case study of women's group-based craft production in the Puno region of the Southern Peruvian Andes. It argues that membership of producer groups has had positive effects on women's self-esteem and, at least in some cases, on their relationships with their male partners. However, the transformative potential of rural development interventions targeting women may be limited by cultural norms that continue to define gender roles in relation to male domination and female subordination.

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The Peruvian Andes, like other rural areas of Latin America, has been affected by processes of economic transformation. Rural livelihoods have become increasingly diversified, with households no longer relying on subsistence agriculture but combining different income-generating options available in rural areas with temporary migration, mainly of male household members (Bebbington, 1999; Escobal, 2001; Mitchell, 2006).

These changes are perceived as having had an effect on gender relations in Andean communities that were traditionally based on the idea of the complementarity and interdependence of man and woman (Isbell, 1978; Harris, 1985; Canessa, 1997). The gendered division of labour is a main feature of Andean complementarity, and men and women are seen as distinct not necessarily because of their nature but rather as a result of their various occupations (Canessa, 1997). Certain productive tasks are assigned to either men or women. However, while both men and women are involved in productive activities at the household level, the area of reproduction is mainly considered a female responsibility (Bourque and Warren, 1981; Harris, 1985; Espinosa, 1993).

It has been argued that processes of economic change and the exposure of Andean people to mainstream culture have had a negative effect on women's status and have led to an uneven distribution of entitlements and power between men and women (Silverblatt, 1987; Carafa, 1993; Miles and Buechler, 1997). Different arguments have been put forward to highlight gender inequality in contemporary Andean culture.

First, scholars point to the undervaluing of women's work in economic and social terms (De la Cadena, 1995). For example, this is reflected in men's status as breadwinners linked to their wage labour generating a cash income, as opposed to women's unpaid

domestic work and contribution to subsistence farming (Collins, 1986; McKee, 1997). It has been argued that Andean women have only limited access to labour markets and that their employment has been mainly confined to low-status activities that generate low levels of income (Bourque and Warren, 1981; Andreas, 1985). Their access to economic resources equally tends to be constrained as a result of unequal inheritance practices and the effects of agrarian reform, as well as women's difficulty in obtaining credit (Radcliffe, 2002).

Second, women's subordinate role in the political sphere in Andean communities (Harris, 1985; Canessa, 1997; Barrig, 2006) has been used as an indicator of gender inequality. A woman's authority is considered to be confined to the household while the authority of her husband is exercised in the public sphere (Canessa, 1997).

Third, another issue that brings Andean gender equality into question is the problem of domestic conflict and male violence (Harris, 1985; Anderson, 1990). While men may inflict violence on women to assert male superiority, femininity is associated with the idea of being conquered and dominated (by men) (Harvey, 1994).

State-led development interventions in rural areas of Peru have tended to reinforce gender inequalities, viewing Andean women primarily as passive mothers rather than active workers and excluding them from agricultural reform processes (Radcliffe, 1993). In addition to the state, other institutions, such as non-governmental organisations (NGOs), political organisations, religious institutions and indigenous rights organisations, have carried out interventions targeted at women in the Peruvian Andes. While some also focus more on women's roles as wives and mothers, promoting health and nutrition-related training schemes, others aim to strengthen women's economic role through income-related projects or to increase their political participation, often through female mobilisation in the form of women's organisations. Some organisations draw on feminist discourse and incorporate the notion of gender equality in their work with rural women (Oliart, 2008).

However, the use of a gender equality discourse in the context of rural development has been challenged and contested. In the context of development projects in the Peruvian Andes, Barrig (2006) identifies three main areas of tensions surrounding the integration of gender analysis. First, development institutions base their policies on a social representation of Andean culture that considers gender relations as traditionally equitable. However, as argued by Choque Quispe (1998), gender relations in the Andes have long been characterised by women's subordination as a result of both colonial domination and Andean cultural norms. Second, the debate surrounding indigenous rights has led to a preference for collective as opposed to individual rights, making it difficult to acknowledge and promote women's rights. Third, there has been a conflict between the importance attributed to gender analysis by international donors and the ideology of male staff of local NGOs, who consider a focus on gender to be an imposition of Western norms. Such conflicts between Western gender discourse and indigenous development approaches have also been noted in other parts of the Andes (Paulson and Calla, 2000; Radcliffe et al., 2003).

This article explores the extent to which gendered roles and identities are being negotiated in the context of rural development interventions, using a case study of women's group-based craft production in the Puno region of the Southern Peruvian Andes. The commercialisation of craft production is one option for diversifying rural livelihoods and is closely linked with the increasing ties between Andean communities and regional, national and global markets. As such, it both forms part of and represents a response to a changing economic environment. Craft production is also commonly

promoted as a development strategy targeting indigenous communities (Healy, 2001; Eversole, 2006; Radcliffe and Laurie, 2006) and/or rural women (Fernández, 1993; Francke, 1996; Humphreys, 1999). It makes use of local materials, people's existing skills and accessible, low-cost technology (Eversole, 2006), and is often linked with group-based production and marketing schemes. It is perceived as a flexible income-generating activity that can complement women's tasks at household level, such as childcare, without undermining them (Littrell and Dickson, 1999).

Even though the main focus of craft producer associations has been on promoting technical skills and access to markets, some have developed health and education programmes and others incorporate themes such as gender awareness and women's rights (see, for example, Eber and Rosenbaum, 1993; Page-Reeves, 1998; Littrell and Dickson, 1999) in cooperation with external institutions such as NGOs. Women's involvement in group-based craft production and marketing is therefore not just tied to their traditional role in the domestic sphere but may also be linked to discourses around women's empowerment and gender equity.

This case study, which focuses on two producer groups in the Puno region, examines how such discourses, combined with income-generation through group-based craft production, relate to negotiations around women's identities that are characterised by interlinkages between gender, race, ethnicity and class, and gender relations at the household level. The article focuses on how the female respondents discursively constructed their gendered identity within the context of group-based work and persisting cultural norms relating to gender relations. It argues that membership of producer groups has had a positive effect on women's self-esteem and, at least in some cases, on their relationships with their male partners. However, the transformative potential of rural development interventions targeting women is limited by cultural norms that continue to define gender roles in relation to male domination and female subordination.

Research Setting and Methodology

The Puno region is among the poorest regions of Peru, with a poverty rate of 76 per cent and extreme poverty at around 40 per cent in 2006 (Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática (INEI), 2007). The most important economic sectors in this region are agriculture, fishing and mining. Small-scale farming is characterised by a low level of productivity as a result of the continuous process of land fragmentation, the ineffective use of agricultural inputs, adverse climatic factors and the lack of irrigation systems (Arias and Polar, 1991). Diversification of income sources is considered a primary means of escaping poverty and includes the diversification of incomes from livestock and crops as well as the addition of non-agricultural sources of income and remittances received from migrating household members (Krishna et al., 2006).

Commercial craft production, such as the hand-knitting of textiles, is one of the non-agricultural sources of income in the region and has become an important feature of the rural economy since the late twentieth century. It is generally characterised by low capital investment and the use of traditional technologies and is considered to be a complementary activity to subsistence farming (Velásquez, 1988). While both men and women are engaged in different types of craft production, women tend to dominate commercialised textile production. On the island of Taquile in Lake Titicaca, for example, women have been able to generate greater economic benefits from commercialising woven cloth than male weavers (Zorn, 2004). Individual small-scale

producers usually sell their products to intermediaries or at local fairs frequented by tourists. However, the prices paid at local markets tend to be low, and many producers are therefore seeking access to international markets.

Export-oriented craft production is either carried out by businesses on a piecework basis or by producer groups that have been set up throughout the region. These groups are supported by several institutions, including NGOs, religious institutions and state development agencies, which provide technical support and access to international markets. The membership of the producer groups is mainly female, which seems to reflect the perceived role of commercialised craft production as a specific development strategy for rural women.

The data that this article is based on was collected during fieldwork for a research project on women's experiences of group-based craft production in the Puno region carried out between June 2005 and April 2006. The research explored the economic, social and political dimensions of group membership, taking into account women's multiple roles and identities and how they affected and in turn were shaped by their group-based work. While this involved studying several producer groups in the Aymara-speaking southern part of the region, using a mix of qualitative methods (such as participant observation, in-depth interviews with group leaders and key informant interviews), the findings presented in this article mainly relate to the analysis of semi-structured interview data collected for two case study groups. (All interview quotes cited in this article are based on interviews conducted as part of the author's field research in the Puno region between June 2005 and April 2006. The names of all interviewees have been anonymised.) One group is based in the rural community of Camacani, which is located in the province of Puno. The other group operates in the town of Juli, the capital of the Chucuito province. Both groups focus on the production of hand-knitted items and, in both cases, group membership is exclusively female and includes women living in the locality as well as women from several neighbouring villages.

Semi-structured interviews were carried out with 50 members of the Camacani group and 19 members of the Juli group, as well as with 30 other members of the interviewees' households (including four sons, six daughters, eighteen husbands and two mothers) to gain their perspectives on female group membership. The first language of most respondents is Aymara, one of the native languages spoken in the Puno region. However, as a result of schooling and/or temporary migration, the majority of interviewees are fluent in Spanish and use this language to communicate with their children. Most of the interviews were conducted in Spanish, but a local research assistant interviewed fourteen older group members who preferred to communicate in Aymara. While different NGOs facilitated access to the craft producer groups, I tried to emphasise my independent role as a researcher when communicating with research participants. However, as a female Western researcher I was aware of my positionality and how it might have shaped the way in which research participants discussed issues such as domestic violence and gender relations in general, presenting themselves as empowered individuals or as victims.

Group-based Craft Production in the Puno Region

As mentioned above, different types of institutions are involved in promoting group-based craft production in the Puno region. The producer group in Juli, for example, was established by the Peruvian feminist NGO *Movimiento Manuela Ramos* as part of

MercoMujer, a commercial project targeting women who had previously participated in training on reproductive health. The aim of MercoMujer was to equip these women with the necessary skills to pursue viable productive activities. The main focus of the project has been on supporting craftswomen in developing and marketing their products. MercoMujer identifies the demand for craft products in foreign markets, establishes suitable product lines with the support of foreign designers and provides the necessary training to group members.

The Camacani group was set up in the late 1970s by a small group of community members engaged in craft production. Dissatisfied with the prices they could charge for their products locally, they looked for support with commercialising their textiles and approached a group of foreign missionaries who lived in the community. The missionaries initiated a training process aimed at improving the quality of the textiles and, through their links with the Catholic Church, facilitated the export of products to North America.

In 1997, the group became a member of the Central Interregional de Artesanos del Perú (CIAP), which marked the beginning of the group's second stage. CIAP is a membership organisation based in Lima that represents groups of craft producers. While some of its members are from marginal districts of the capital itself, most are active in the country's rural areas, particularly in the Andean region. CIAP mainly focuses on the economic empowerment of its members, promoting a 'fair trade' discourse and fighting the marginalisation of local artisans.

The Camacani group has also interacted with other external institutions. It has become a member of Arte Aymara, a programme of the Unión de Comunidades Aymaras (UNCA). UNCA has organised Aymara-speaking communities in the Puno region and seeks to promote the Aymara identity as well as supporting indigenous communities in their struggle for improved access to government resources (Yashar, 2005). One of its strategies is to promote the culture and livelihoods of Aymaras by supporting women's craft production. Another organisation that the Camacani group has engaged with is Chirapaq, an NGO that advocates the rights of indigenous people in Peru.

The different institutions that promote group-based craft production in the Puno region generally provide two main forms of support: technical capacity-building to improve the quality of products and the international marketing of local crafts. This mainly involves order-based production that tends to follow seasonal cycles and, while realising better prices than those paid locally, does not necessarily represent a steady source of income. Many group members therefore combine group-based work with production for local markets and other livelihood activities, such as subsistence farming and small businesses (tending a stall at local fairs and markets). However for some women, group-based craft production represents their only source of cash income.

While training programmes mainly focus on improving group members' technical skills, some institutions arrange other forms of training, such as on gender issues and leadership. The groups also represent spaces of social interaction and mutual support for rural women, and may provide them with leadership experience. Several producer groups are directed by a *junta directiva* (executive committee), and leadership positions tend to be made available to group members on a rotational basis. Group leaders may be given the opportunity to travel to other parts of the country and to acquire new knowledge and skills.

The following discussion first focuses on group members' views on (appropriate) womanhood and its key features before examining women's group-based work and how it relates to their gender identity and gender relations at household level.

What a Woman Should Be Like: Group Member's Views on Femininity

When asked 'what should a woman be like?', the group members in Camacani and Juli responded in terms that referred to 'how a woman should present herself' (features of her character and attitude) and 'what a woman should do' (her responsibilities).

One prominent theme that emerged was 'work'. A woman has to show herself to be 'hardworking' and 'should always work'. She needs to do and be preoccupied with 'everything', whether in the home, on the fields or in craft production. Being hardworking is generally considered an essential virtue in Andean culture. Neyra (1993), who analysed the values associated with the Andean work ethic based on the example of a migrant woman in Lima, found that work acts as both a means and an end in itself. Work is necessary to obtain money and consequently the family's welfare. Yet by fulfilling their obligations, being responsible and efficient, people also demonstrate that they possess personality traits that are highly regarded in Andean culture. Ruiz Bravo (2003) makes similar observations with regard to women in the Puno region. Work is considered on the one hand to be a means of acquiring wealth and escaping poverty; on the other hand, it serves as a focal point for women around which they establish their identity and which enables them to gain the acceptance of others.

The importance of work is also linked to a sense of duty demonstrated by women. Being responsible, reliable and honest are the main features that group members associated with womanhood. This notion of a female sense of responsibility also seemed to be reflected in the key role that women tend to play in managing household resources in Andean communities (Lapiedra, 1985; Radcliffe, 1985; Espinosa, 1993). Most female interviewees stated that their household income was either jointly administered by husband and wife or managed exclusively by the woman. Some pointed out that their husbands had to hand over their earnings, as they were not considered responsible and 'would spend [the money] in a day'.

Women are generally expected to show more responsible behaviour than their male counterparts, whether spending the limited money available, guaranteeing the functioning of the household or setting an example of appropriate behaviour. According to the female interviewees, a woman must not be selfish and pursue personal interests. She needs to be prepared to share with others, most importantly her family. Flavia (age 59), for example, argued that for a woman, the most important thing is to 'attend to her husband and children'.

This relates to the second aspect of the discourse that was identified in the interviews with group members, which places 'being a woman' in the context of relations with others, notably the husband, children and people outside the family circle such as other members of the producer group or the wider community. The women referred to characteristics that they seem to consider important for maintaining (good) relationships with those 'others'. One concern is to present oneself as 'respectable' by showing appropriate behaviour. This, for example, includes being modest and avoiding gossip – in terms of both participating in spreading gossip and provoking it by 'improper' behaviour.

Another issue that emerged in the discussion of female characteristics is women's emphasis on 'passivity'. Women should be patient and understanding with others, particularly their husbands. They should not be proud or stubborn, and should avoid conflict and arguments. Fabiana (40) maintained that 'a woman should be understanding and passive'. She needs to get along well with her partner and with other people.

The women also referred to certain social skills that are important for interacting with other people and being 'popular'. Examples that were given in the interviews included being 'cheerful', 'friendly' and communicating with others. This seems to highlight the importance of social interactions at group level, which enable the women to live up to the ideal image of female sociability. Furthermore, it may reflect the importance of women in maintaining the social fabric in Andean communities. Espinosa (1993), for example, refers to Andean women's role in 'social' reproduction, which she defines as the maintenance of intra-communal (reciprocal) relations that are central to the survival of the nuclear family.

A third theme that appeared in the women's narratives was 'knowledge'. Several group members claimed that a 'woman has to know everything'. She needs to learn about different things, whether related to her work in craft production or to her domestic responsibilities. At the same time, she should pass on her knowledge to others, such as her children or other women. Justina (70) emphasised that a woman 'should not be selfish' – she should know everything, and teach others.

The group members' views on femininity seemed to reflect 'traditional' gender ideals in relation to women's productive and reproductive responsibilities at the household level. Several of the virtues outlined above are considered important features of group membership, such as being responsible, sharing with others, being willing to learn and teaching others. However, the focus on passivity as a female characteristic does not seem to correspond to the image of the 'active' group member and, as outlined in the following section, the women's experiences of group membership appear to challenge the image of women as passive wives and mothers.

Group-based Work and Learning

The main reason for joining a craft producer group is the opportunity to access an independent source of cash income. Several group members emphasised how happy they had felt after receiving their first payment, and how this had increased their self-esteem. Valeriana (32), for example, recounted that she was once told by her husband to bring some money home. She emphasised that group-based craft production enabled her to show him that she could contribute towards the upkeep of the household and could thus share the 'breadwinner' role.

For some women, craft production had been their first opportunity to generate an income, while others had already been involved in other income-generating activities. For the latter, craft production may represent a better alternative to their previous work. Maria (31), for example, maintained that group-based craft production was more secure than other sources of income. She pointed out that 'even though it isn't much, one always earns something'.

Membership of craft producer groups also provides rural women with an opportunity to learn – in terms of both acquiring technical skills related to craft production and learning about a range of issues that are considered to be of interest to the women. When asked what they would be interested in learning about as part of group-based training the women mentioned topics such as health and nutrition, which are closely linked to their role as wives and mothers. However, apart from general health, the area of reproductive health emerged as one of the main themes in relation to group-based learning. Several group members had participated in training programmes on family planning and reproductive health, such as the *ReproSalud* programme, which focused

on informing rural women about sexual health and women's (reproductive) rights. Information on these issues had previously been scarce among women in the Puno region, with women lacking basic knowledge about their body and the reproductive process (Ruiz Bravo, 2003). Some group members emphasised the positive effects of the training they had experienced, such as the ability to limit the number of children they give birth to or to influence the timing of a pregnancy.

Several interviewees were particularly interested in learning about issues relating to gender and women's rights and to building self-esteem. Rosa (34), for example, wanted to learn 'how [we] as women are marginalised' and 'what [we] can do about it'. An awareness of women's subordination was apparent in several conversations. Interviewees, for example, stated that 'we women, we are marginalised'. They perceived their 'marginalisation' in terms of not being able to make their views as women heard and being subject to male dominance. These statements may be the result of gender-related training workshops organised by NGOs, such as *Movimiento Manuela Ramos*, which attempt to familiarise rural women with gender concepts that challenge existing patriarchal structures and emphasise women's capabilities and rights.

Some members of the Camacani group, for example, had participated in training on gender issues provided by external organisations. During the first part of a two-day workshop in a neighbouring community, the women discussed male and female characteristics. They concluded that there is no real difference between women and men apart from women's role in childbearing, and that both could and should share many tasks at household level. Similarly, the walls of some buildings in which craft producer groups meet are decorated with posters showing women assuming traditionally 'male' tasks and occupations – often accompanied by slogans such as 'Yes, women can do it!'

Apart from providing opportunities for participating in formal training workshops, membership of producer groups enables women to access an exclusively female environment within which they can develop trust in others and at the same time gain self-confidence. When asked about personal changes that they had experienced as a result of their group membership, several interviewees referred to 'the ability to speak up', 'loss of fear and increased confidence', and 'newly-found happiness through social interaction'. The women often referred to the isolation and monotony of domestic life and contrasted it with the social interactions at group level that helped them, at least temporarily, to forget about their domestic worries. As many interviewees put it: 'At home we are sad, but in the group we are happy'.

Assuming a leadership position at group level is another opportunity for group members to learn new skills and increase their confidence. When asked whether she could imagine becoming the president of her association, one woman responded as follows:

Yes – having a post [is important]. If there is something you don't know, someone has to teach you. [You should] ask for training, because none of us can say that we can't [do it]. For example doing business with the bank – there you learn. So, [we should] always try to take up [a post].

While group-based income-generation, training, social interaction and leadership experience may have a positive effect on women's self-esteem, this does not necessarily translate into more equal gender relations at household level. Male partners of group members may be indifferent or hostile to women's individual empowerment and resist the renegotiation of gendered roles and responsibilities (see, for example, Nash, 1993;

Santisteban, 1994). As pointed out by Choque Quispe (1998: 21–22) in her reflections on the situation of Aymara women in Bolivia:

The process of transition, aside from the positive effects, generates a crisis as a result of the conflicting values, perceptions, and systems of ideas. [...] the emerging social change is painful because of dominant cultural norms. In this process certain persistent ideals continue to be reproduced, including that of the characteristic couple. [...] The power of tradition, even though hostility is inherent in its customs, is that it offers security. Change, on the other hand, generates tensions and uncertainties.

The female interviewees in this research appeared to similarly reproduce traditional gender ideals in their narratives. While they emphasised the confidence and new knowledge (such as about women's rights) they had gained at group level, they simultaneously seemed to assign themselves a passive role with a focus on serving their children and husbands. Even though some respondents mentioned that women should be 'strong', 'should not let themselves be manipulated' and 'can do the same things as men', they also highlighted the importance of fulfilling domestic responsibilities.

Gender Relations at Household Level

While some of the male informants had experience in craft production, they were not involved in the activities of the two case study groups, which had an exclusively female membership. When asked what they knew about the producer group their wife participated in, several of the husbands of group members claimed that they were unable to provide any details on how the organisation operated. Nestor (46), for example, claimed that he did not know anything about the craft producer group his wife participated in. He regarded it as a 'women's thing' and did not enquire about his wife's work with the group.

Most of the male interviewees seemed to view their wives' group membership in a positive way and stated that they were in favour of women's continued work in group-based craft production. When questioned about problems they associated with women's group membership, most maintained that they were not aware of any difficulties. Some, though, at least indirectly, referred to the issue of women's disposable time that had to be split between working in the group and fulfilling domestic obligations. Roberto (55) commented that he was already used to his wife attending a meeting of her group once a week. However, he got annoyed when she returned home late, because then there would not be enough time for her to do other things, such as preparing dinner. This suggests that women's group-based work is acceptable as long as it does not affect their reproductive role.

Some group members pointed to problems they had initially experienced with their husbands after joining the craft producer group. Yet once their partners had become aware of the economic benefits of women's group-based work, they started to support their wives. Women's work in craft production was generally considered by their husbands as an important contribution to the household's income. Luis (30), for example, maintained that it was important that his wife 'works and participates in the organisation'. The earnings from craft production either complement the husband's income or sustain the family in times when he has no work.

Even though economic benefits, such as better prices and access to foreign markets, were considered by both the women and their husbands as the most important features

of group membership, there are other aspects of group-based work that may affect household relations. The partners of group members tended to acknowledge that their wives had the opportunity to learn new things whilst working in the group. Francisco (28), for example, emphasised that women have the 'intellectual capacity' to learn. He argued that they could equally well 'perform an electric installation' and just needed to be taught how to do it.

However, the men mostly referred to technical skills related to knitting when asked what their wives had learnt through participating in the group. Some husbands, though, indicated that group membership has not only the potential to support women in their role as craft producers but also to affect their lives in more profound ways. Luis (30) pointed out that by talking to other women, his wife 'gets new ideas'. He wanted her to attend training workshops in other places and to learn as much as possible.

Most men recognised that group meetings provide a space for women to get together, talk and relax. A few male respondents also talked about some changes they had noticed in their wives' attitude and character, such as increased confidence and the ability to talk in front of others. Yet generally the men claimed that they were not aware of any transformations.

However, more profound changes in household relations may require more than women's personal and economic empowerment. Santisteban (1994), who noted difficulties faced by members of women's organisations in Lima as a result of male jealousy, points out that men usually do not participate in gender awareness training. Women may be sensitised at group level but are not able to put their knowledge into practice because of male resistance at household level. One member of the Camacani group similarly voiced her concern about the one-sided experience in 'gender' training and argued that her husband should also attend the workshops she participated in.

When the *ReproSalud* programme was initiated by *Movimiento Manuela Ramos* in the Puno region, some women experienced difficulties with their husbands and had to stop attending the workshops. However, the programme later changed its approach and started to include men in the training process. Men's involvement in the training on reproductive health was pursued as a strategy for changing male attitudes with a view to improving women's health and promoting their participation in community projects. This shift was a result of both women's demand for male participation in the training workshops and men's interest in finding out first-hand what their wives were taught as part of the *ReproSalud* programme. The latter included topics such as 'women's and men's tasks and rights', 'reproductive physiology' and 'learning to live without violence' (*Movimiento Manuela Ramos*, 2003).

A few members of the Juli group related that their husbands had participated in the workshops, and highlighted the positive impacts this had had on household relations. The men had changed their attitudes and become more responsible and understanding partners and fathers. Adriana (29), for example, claimed that her partner had changed after taking part in the *ReproSalud* training. He did not beat her anymore and there were fewer arguments between them. Cornelia (42) related that in the workshops she had participated in she was taught about women's rights and duties and that 'men and women have to do the same work'. Her husband had also participated in training sessions and, as a result, now helped more with the housework and did not mistreat the children.

These two cases reflect two aspects of gender relations at household level that might be influenced through gender-related training and/or group-based work: domestic violence and the gendered division of labour. The data collected in the Puno region is not sufficient to assess the level of domestic violence and the ways in which it may

be influenced by women's work in craft production groups or gender-related training. While in the literature domestic violence tends to be considered common in Andean communities, women may not necessarily want to share their personal experiences with others, particularly foreign researchers. In the interviews, only a few group members admitted having suffered from male violence. Others talked about 'fights' as a general problem of (other) couples. Edith (30), for example, talked about wives who 'are crying in the street, while their husbands look for other women'. Rosalia (58) explained that she did not like the way that 'in other homes they fight each other'.

Frustration and anxiety caused by lack of money appeared to be a main factor causing marriage disputes in the households of the interviewees. Women's income-generation through craft production and contribution towards household sustenance may thus have a positive impact on their relationship with their male partners. However, women's access to economic resources might also challenge men's status as breadwinners, and men might therefore seek to reaffirm their dominant role by resorting to violence. This is linked to the idea of 'thwarting', which Moore (1994: 151) describes as 'the inability to sustain or properly take up a gendered subject position, resulting in a crisis, real or imagined, of self-representation and/or social evaluation'. The link between women's work and domestic violence therefore needs to be placed in the context of masculinities and the ways in which these masculinities are defined and redefined.

However, the main focus of most organisations working with craft producer groups in the Puno region is on strengthening women's economic role, and even when organisations apply a relational approach to gender their efforts may be met by resistance based on persisting cultural norms. In the case of *ReproSalud*, for example, male participants who changed their attitudes and behaviour were subject to ridicule from their peers under the continuing influence of hegemonic masculinities (*Movimiento Manuela Ramos*, 2003).

A redefinition of the gendered division of labour at the household level might be another outcome of women's group-based work and/or gender training. Most of the group members in Camacani and Juli maintained that their husbands helped at least occasionally with housework, specifically with preparing meals and doing the laundry. Often this support was provided when the woman was occupied in group-based craft production. Men's contribution to domestic work may thus reflect the value that they attach to women's economic contribution. Some men also seemed to acknowledge the double or triple burden that most women face and the need to share tasks at household level – productive as well as reproductive. This is reflected in the following statement made by Luis (30):

The man should help the woman, so that it's easier for her. The woman has more work. She is with the baby; she is in the kitchen; she looks after the animals. She works more than us [men]. We go to work and return home in the evening to relax. We don't have to cook – nothing. When we help her, we share the work more – in the house, everything.

It is not clear whether these men represent exceptional cases or whether they are examples of a general redefinition of masculinities and the gendered division of labour within households in the Puno region. Studies in other regions of Latin America have noted a 'feminisation of responsibility and obligation' (Chant, 2007), with women taking on greater responsibility for income-generation without being able to reduce their domestic work burden (see, for example, Chant, 2007; Maclean, 2010).

Conclusion

This article examines how gender identities and relations are negotiated in the context of development interventions targeting rural women. Focusing on women's group-based craft production in the Puno region in the Southern Peruvian Andes, it discusses how group members discursively constructed their gendered identity, how they experienced group-based work and learning and how this relates to gender relations at household level. Membership of producer groups provides rural women not only with access to an independent source of income but also with opportunities for participating in gender-related training and developing leadership skills, which can have a positive effect on their sense of self-worth and increase their awareness of their rights and capabilities.

The article identifies different effects that women's group-based work may have on gender relations at household level. It may, on the one hand, provoke domestic conflict if it is perceived by men as leading women to neglect their 'traditional' roles and reproductive responsibilities at household level. On the other hand, it may raise women's status as a result of the contribution they make towards increasing the household's cash income in addition to their involvement in other productive and reproductive activities. The value attached to women's income-generation may be reflected in men's willingness to take on more domestic tasks previously labelled 'female'.

However, group members' narratives in relation to their views on womanhood emphasised their roles as wives and mothers and highlighted female qualities that are linked to traditional notions of Andean femininity. This may be tied to a reproduction of dominant gender ideals and resistance to women's empowerment in the context of prevailing cultural norms.

As highlighted by several of the female respondents and by other research relating to gender analysis in development, men need to be included in the process of gender-related training and awareness-raising. It is important to focus not only on femininities but also on masculinities, and how they may be redefined to promote gender equality within a particular cultural context.

Finally, it is important to note that changes in gender ideologies and relations in the Puno region and elsewhere are likely to be the result of various factors. Migration to urban areas as well as gender-related images disseminated by educational establishments and national media, which are increasingly reaching rural areas, are examples of other factors that may shape gender relations. Women's group-based work combined with gender training represents only one potential driver for change.

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