

Mothering for Neoliberal Times. Mazahua Women, Poverty and the Cultural Politics of Development in Central Mexico

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[1]

Year of publication: 2017

Book/ journal title: Polish Sociological Review

Abstract

This paper presents the results of fieldwork concerning local development programmes addressed to poor Indian women and the social changes they effect in the marginalised Mazahua communities in central Mexico conducted from 2011 to 2015. By analysing the operation of a women's cooperative I show how neoliberal ideology, which is at the core of development schemes, incorporates both the feminist ideas of gender equality and empowerment of women, and the Mexican tradition of politicising maternity in a crisis to establish new social hierarchies, subjectivities, and power relations, promote individualistic attitudes and a new, "market-oriented" morality, and reinforce political clientelism, leading to profound and usually detrimental (for women and local gender relations) changes in the functioning of native communities.

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