Rearticulating Indigenous Identity: Evolving Notions of Citizenship and Ecuador's Contemporary Indigenous Movement

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BOSTON COLLEGE

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REARTICULATING INDIGNEOUS IDENTITY: EVOLVING NOTIONS OF CITIZENSHIP AND ECUADOR'S CONTEMPORARY INDIGENOUS MOVEMENT

By

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HONORS THESIS

APRIL 2004

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Introduction

"We are indigenous people who have the same origin, a common history, our own languages and are ruled by our own laws, customs, beliefs and forms of social, economic and social organization in our territories. We fight politically for the recovery of our individual and collective rights as a people."[1]

In 1997, Ecuador's indigenous community played a leading role in overthrowing populist President Abdalá Bucaram. United beneath the rainbow flag of Ecuador's most prominent indigenous organization, the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE), thousands of indigenous men and women from across the country mobilized in Quito, the nation's capital, to depose Bucaram. The rainbow flag, an ancestral symbol of indigenous unity, diversity, and sovereignty, represented a bold statement against popular conceptions of indigenous people as second-class citizens. Indigenous men and women had been marginalized by colonizers, oligarchic elites, missionaries and government officials throughout their colonial and post-colonial histories. By organizing the coup and participating in the interim government that succeeded Bucaram, they fought to dispel the notion that Indians were passive, incapable of embracing modernity, and categorically apolitical. Over the last three decades, the indigenous community has drastically transformed what it means to indigenous in Ecuador. By framing their political identity to coincide with evolving notions of citizenship at the national level, activists rearticulated popular conceptions of indigenousness. An identity that once connoted backwardness has become a powerful tool in the indigenous community's struggle for more equitable political, economic and cultural rights.

[1] CONAIE, "Proyecto Politico de la CONAIE" (Consejo de Gobierno, 1994): 51.

Rearticulating Indigenous Identity: Evolving Notions of Citizenship and Ecuador's Contemporary Indigenous Movement is a study of the unique transformation of ethnic*and* political identity in Ecuador, as evidenced through the rhetoric and mobilization of the indigenous community. This study examines the indigenous community's struggle to redefine its political, social and cultural status in Ecuador by transforming popular conceptions of indigenousness. Chapter One, "Towards Self-Identification," delineates the historical antecedents of the movement, analyzes the aggressive agrarian reform program of the corporatist government throughout the 1960s and 1970s, and critiques indigenous activists' use of a class-based political identity. Chapter Two, "Ethnopolitics and Indigenous Mobilization," explores the marked shift in the political discourse of the indigenous movement in the 1980s, from one that highlighted class identity to one that incorporated ethnicity. It further considers the importance of the proliferation of indigenous organizations throughout the Sierra, Amazon and coast. Finally, Chapter Three, "Indigenous *Autodeterminación,*" details the expansion of the movement in the 1990s, paying particular attention to the use of both contentious and institutional political protest. The historical convergence of these factors will be used to explain the unprecedented levels of indigenous political participation in the 1990s.

It is difficult to ascertain the precise number of indigenous people that currently live in Ecuador and participate in the indigenous movement. Most figures, however, suggest that the indigenous population comprises about forty to forty-five percent of the total population. Within that population, there are eleven distinct and independent indigenous nationalities. While each of these nationalities has unique cultural, religious and agricultural practices, they also have several common characteristics. In particular, they share common beliefs in a non-

linear sense of time and have a profound connection to their land, ancestors and kin. Rejecting the capitalistic conception of individual property rights, they conceptualize property in terms of communalism. They perform syncretistic religious practices, blending traditional indigenous religious beliefs and practices with Christian rites and traditions. Because of these fundamentally different worldviews, their political platform and forms of cultural reproduction have often run counter to state-sponsored modernization programs and attempts to foster a unified national identity. The consolidation of the indigenous sector further aggravated this tension.

Many historians, political scientists and anthropologists have written studies on the emergence and evolution of the Ecuadoran indigenous movement, but few studies analyze the *historical trajectory* of indigenous political identity. Those studies that do address this issue merely discuss it in passing. They attribute the transformation of political identity to new notions of citizenship present at the national level. Although these scholars accurately identify the importance of citizenship regimes for the emergence of social movements, they fail to address other circumstances and contingencies that have faced the indigenous community under study. As this thesis will prove, other circumstances that had little to do with government programming, contributed immensely to the mobilization of the indigenous sector. With this historical framework in mind, this thesis will locate the economic, ideological, political and cultural transformations that played a part in the evolution of the indigenous struggle over the last thirty years.

Utilizing a rich collection of movement-issued manifestos, indigenous organization-endorsed political statements, denunciations of government initiatives, and ideological statements created by movement activists, I studied the emergence and transformation of the

contemporary indigenous movement. I translated many of the documents myself, the majority of which were available on the numerous websites created and maintained by formal movement organizations. They illuminate the development of institutional political strategies, the appeal to a broader constituent base and the increasingly global character of the movement. I further relied on comprehensive studies conducted by scholars of agrarian reform, peasant mobilization and ethnopolitics for my examination of the movement in the 1970s and 1980s. I extrapolated on the statistical analyses of land redistribution projects, examinations of the foundation of indigenous organizations, and assessments of political language, conducted by scholars such as Leon Zamosc, Tanya Korovkin, Amalia Pallares and Melina Selverston-Scher, all of whom did extensive field work in both the Andean highlands and the Amazonian lowlands.

Apart from winning greater concessions from government officials, consolidating more wide-spread support, and sustaining its struggle for a longer period of time than any of its South American counterparts, the Ecuadoran movement has become one of the most important social movements in Latin America. The highly sophisticated and effective use of both institutional and contentious political protest is unmatched by any indigenous movement in Latin America and its creativity has had a significant impact on social movements in general. In addition to assuming an important place in national politics, the movement has radically altered the popular construction of the Indian as traditional and non-modern. Indigenous activists have fought to erase the romanticized image of Indians, endorsed by many governments and scholars, as simple highlands peasants and savage jungle warriors. This image denied Indians the capability of mobilizing around complicated and modern issues, such as citizenship and democracy. It further defined the indigenous community as a

homogeneous group of individuals, lacking ethnic and cultural diversity. This thesis will deconstruct this conception of indigenousness. By examining indigenous activists' reappropriation of the term "indigenous" and their redefinition of its political and cultural meanings, the agency of Ecuador's indigenous population will become glaringly evident. Through this process of redefinition, indigenous activists invoke a sense of political, economic and cultural modernity by fighting for complex issues of citizenship, land reform, autonomy and plurinationality. By demanding plurinationality and autonomy, they make it clear that their community is not simply a product of homogeneity; rather, their community is a product of the heterogeneity and solidarity of its members.

Acclaimed highlands indigenous politician Nina Pacari stated that because of the quantitative diversity and untapped potential of the indigenous community in Ecuador, "we are conscious that we are an essential part of this country and that we possess a substantial part of the human potential as well as productive resources in Ecuador."[2] Articulating the new phase of indigenous activism in Ecuador, she demands that Indians be recognized as necessary and valuable contributors to the economic, political and cultural prosperity of the Ecuadoran nation. The indigenous community, she contends, has begun to dispel the stereotype that Indians are impediments to national growth. She, along with many other indigenous activists, reaffirms the potential of the indigenous community by participating in politics and remaining true to her cultural heritage. As Pacari explains, the indigenous community is attempting to spark a paradigm shift throughout Ecuador, and in turn Latin America, by rearticulating popular conceptions of the Indian and redefining the terms of its five-hundred-year struggle.

[2]Nina Pacari, "Taking on the Neo-liberal Agenda," *NACLA: Report on the Americas* 29:5 (March/April 1995), 32.

1 Towards Self-Identification

The Colonial Legacy, Agrarian Reform and the Corporatist State

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Indigenous communities have been the poorest, most marginalized and least represented group in Ecuador's history.[3] Not until the state initiated comprehensive land reform programs in the 1960s that transformed traditional land-labor relations, and the Catholic Church redefined its role in the agrarian sector did indigenous communities employ ethnicity in their modern discourse. This process allowed indigenous peoples to reconstruct their identity in line with their ethnicity and culture as they saw fit. Post-independence ascription to a peasant identity did not, however, signify a lack of political agency within indigenous communities. On the contrary, it represented a conscious effort to take advantage of government-sponsored social welfare programs and to avoid outright exclusion from the redistributive agrarian reform inaugurated in 1964. While their efforts were far less radical prior to 1973 than they would prove to be at the end of the twentieth century, indigenous peasants were by no means an acquiescent, voiceless sector of society. They were a dynamic group of individuals who framed their struggle alongside evolving notions of citizenship at the national level.

Both before and after colonization, Ecuador was multinational and comprised of diverse ethnic groups. These groups lived in the highlands, the Amazon and the coast and

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[3] Alyson Brysk, *From Tribal Village to Global Village: Indian Rights and International Relations in Latin America* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 147-148.

considered themselves to be distinct nations of people[4]. When Spanish conquistadores came to the Americas in the sixteenth century and erroneously identified the native population as *indio*, they imposed a monolithic ethnic identity on an ethnically diverse population. The "ethnically unified" indigenous population that colonizers desired did not exist; it was a construction fashioned by the Spainiards. Indigenous men and women who were officially recognized by the crown as *indios* received special legal privileges that were otherwise denied to native populations throughout the colony. Many indigenous communities accepted this identity to take advantage of these privileges, but managed to preserve their own identity in their daily lives. Indigenous communities created a dual identity: one that respected the administrative functions of the colonial government and one that remained true to their ethnic and cultural heritage. The ability to maintain a political, legal personality and simultaneously preserve their ethnic identity at the community level would prove to be essential in the framing of the movement in the late twentieth century.

Indigenous *campesinos*, or peasants, had suffered more than four hundred years of exploitation and landlessness when they mobilized in the twentieth century. Spanish

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[4] Indigenous nationalities can be found in all three of Ecuador's distinct geographical and ecological zones: the Andean highlands or Sierra, the Amazonian lowlands, and the Pacific coast. Indians living in the Sierra primarily subsist on small-scale agriculture and subsistence farming. Throughout their history, highlands Indians have experienced constant contact with Spanish colonizers, mestizo *hacienda* owners, religious organizations and government officials. Part of the Quichua indigenous nationality, they comprise the numerical majority of Ecuador's indigenous population with over three million members. The grossly unequal distribution of land that pervades the highlands has resulted in significant numbers of Quichua Indians moving to Quito or other large highland cities. They often find work in the informal economy or in other jobs in the service industry. The Amazon is home to six indigenous nationalities. Having experienced far less contact with outsiders than their highland counterparts, lowlands indigenous communities have maintained their traditional forms of community organizing and agricultural methods more effectively than most other indigenous groups in Ecuador. Living in clan-based societies in the mineral-rich Amazon River basin, they only began to experience colonization and development projects by outsiders towards the beginning of the twentieth century. Members of nationalities such as the Shaur-Achuar, Huaorani, Siona-Secoya, and Cofán, number around one-hundred thousand. Pacific coastal Indians represent the statistical minority of the indigenous population. Through their participation in export-agriculture, they have had the most exposure to outside influences due to colonial trade and maritime traffic.

conquistadores arriving in the Real Audencia de Quito[5] throughout the sixteenth century forcibly removed entire indigenous communities from their lands and laid claim to ancestral indigenous territories. The Spainiards viewed indigenous natives as the inexhaustible supply of labor capable of sustaining the Spanish mercantile economy, a mere factor of production in the fledgling empire. Consequently, conquistadores relocated indigenous populations to fit the needs of the colonial economy. Indigenous flight was common under early colonial rule. Responding to the brutal tactics employed by colonizers, many indigenous communities fled to highland territories still undiscovered by their colonizers.[6] Despite Spanish attempts to consolidate an indigenous work force, demographic shifts and peasant flight created a fluid indigenous population with a high degree of mobility.

During this period in the central Andes, the colonial economy was centered on silver mining in Potosí and other important mining areas throughout the Andes.[7] Indigenous men and women were either chosen for work in the silver mines, relegated to *forastero* communities[8], or obliged to live in *pueblos de indios*(India n communities).[9] Indians living in these *pueblos* received special legal status from the crown and enjoyed privileges denied to those indigenous populations who were not a part of the *pueblos.* These groups often lived in *forastero* communities that provided much-needed resources to the mining towns surrounding Potosí. Indigenous men and women living in both communities worked on small-scale farming projects, textile production and other associated tasks. The provision of raw materials, textiles and foodstuffs, to the mines, created an internal market among

[5] An administrative division of the Spanish Colony that corresponds to the territory defined as modern-day Ecuador.
[6] Karen Vieira Powers, *Andean Journeys: Migration, Ethnogenesis and the State in Colonial Quito* (Albuquerque: The University of New Mexico Press, 1995), 13-39.
[7] Potosí lies within the borders of present-day Bolivia.
[8] *Forastero* communities were comprised of indigenous men and women who cultivated small plots of farm land and provided food and other resources to mining cities.
[9] Powers, *Andean Journeys*, 114.

indigenous communities throughout the Andes. In addition, the movement of Spanish goods from the Real Audencia de Quito to Potosí fostered trade relationships among indigenous groups.

Along with providing obligatory duty to the crown, indigenous peasants participated in subsistence agriculture. This practice would last well into the twentieth century, when it would present considerable obstacles to the architects of the agrarian reform program. As the productivity and profitability of Potosí increased in the mid- to late-seventeenth century, the Spanish Crown looked for other ways to stimulate economic growth and generate capital. The focus on extraction of silver had delayed the establishment of large, plantation-like estates by wealthy Spaniards and colonial administrators. These estates, or *haciendas*, were the prevailing agricultural system used in other Spanish colonies throughout the Americas. Historian Karen Vieira Powers notes that the primary tactic used to stimulate growth was "a transition from a predominantly Andean economy to a predominantly Spanish economy," [10] wherein the Spanish viceroyalty sold large plots of land to wealthy Spanish nobility and then relocated indigenous communities to live and work on these estates.

Since *forastero* communities did not provide sufficient amounts of labor to support the transition to *hacienda* agriculture, landowners enlisted indigenous peasants living in *pueblos* to work as tenant farmers. The social structure born out of this unequal distribution of land favored the land owner and exploited the Indian. Indian peasants became involved in a system of debt-peonage. They were granted access to small plots of land by surrendering the lion's share of their harvest to the proprietor of the land. Landowners preferred this system because it served as a means of social control. Landless indigenous peasants were

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[10] Ibid., 123.

unremittingly tied to their landowner.[11] Malnourished, overworked, and physically abused, indigenous peasants lacked the means and effective leadership necessary to mobilize against landowners.

These estates, or as they came to be known in Ecuador, *huasipungos*, defined a way of life for peasants and landowners alike. Colonial administrators required tenant farm workers of the *huasipungo* not only to harvest the landowners' vast lands, but also to provide a host of secondary services six out of the seven days of the week. In exchange for this service, landowners granted the *huasipunguero*, or peon, important resources suc h as the ability to "gather firewood or the use of the landowners' pastures."[12] In spite of these privileges, living conditions for *huasipungueros* were abominable. Indigenous families produced barely enough food to subsist, had no disposable income and lacked sufficient resources to provide for their families. Unlike "indios" who remained untouched by the *huasipungo*, the political disenfranchisement of indigenous *huasipungueros* offered them no means to contest these conditions or even attempt to improve them. Landowners, who lived in constant fear of peasant uprisings, violently suppressed peasant mobilization. Tenant farm workers were trapped in a political, social and economic dead end. Those Indians not living as *huasipungueros* suffered equally dire living conditions. The majority of these peasant workers lived in *forastero* communities, as noted above. While these Indians experienced a less sedentary lifestyle than their counterparts, they lived at the mercy of Spanish officials. They were forced to comply with exploitative demands imposed by colonial officers,

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[11] See Cliff Welch, *The Seed Was Planted: The São Paolo Roots of Brazil's Rural Labor Movement, 1924 – 1964* (University Park, Pennsylvania: The University of Pennsylvania, 1999) for a comparative study of social control through clientelistic labor practices.
[12] Charles S. Blankstein and Clarence Zuvekas, *Agrarian Reform in Ecuador* (Madison, Land Tenure Center: University of Wisconsin Press, 1974), 76. For a renowned literary interpretation of the life of a *huasipunguero*, see Jorge Icaza, *Huasipungo* (Barcelona: Plaza & Janés, 1979).

including the arduous *mita,* the mandatory duty that all indigenous men and women owed to the crown. The *mita* initially required compulsory service at the mines in Potosí, but later involved seasonal agricultural labor and work on public construction projects.[13]

Ecuador's independence from Spain in 1822 had no effect on this social structure. If anything, it reinforced the unequal distribution of land. Peasants and *huasipungueros* continued to live at the mercy of their landowners, lacking the political and economic means necessary to acquire lands of their own. Even more so, "mid-twentieth-century highland communities were characterized by a closed, corporate system," explains Sociologist Amalia Pallares, "in which haciendas ensured the social control of Indians by providing the needed goods and services that increased [peon] debt and by preventing them from seeking work in villages and cities."[14] Further strengthening these exploitative relationships, in 1812, the crown abolished the *mita*. This had serious repercussions for indigenous communities. Although the abolition of the *mita* relieved a terrible burden for indigenous peasants, it erased their unique legal status. Effectively, this law imposed a single identity on the various indigenous populations present in Ecuador and signaled a departure from the special consideration indigenous communities received under colonial rule. By mainstreaming indigenous identity and stripping them of the benefits that went along with legal identification as *indio*, the post-colonial government treated Indian political interests as exclusively peasant in nature.[15] *Forastero* communities were also affected by the passage of this reform and subsequent independence from the crown. At first, they continued to practice

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[13] C.A.A.P, *Del Indigenismo a las Organizaciones Indígenas* (Quito, Ecuador: Ediciones Abya-Yala, 1985), 125 -126.
[14] Amalia Pallares, *From Peasant Struggles to Indian Resistance: The Ecuadorian Andes in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman, Oklahoma: The University of Oklahoma Press, 2002), 11.
[15] Ibid.

traditional communal living, but on arid, unproductive lands. Barely able to meet subsistence needs of their families, many peasants went to work on *huasinpungos*.

The post-colonial nation-state organized three administrative divisions: provinces, cantons and parishes. Officials and councils were appointed at each administrative level, where monolinguistic suffrage restrictions excluded the majority of Quichua-speaking[16] Indians. Elected officials were almost exclusively *mestizo*[17] and they disregarded the traditional practices of their indigenous constituents. Consequently, "they effectively lost the right to manage their affairs within the communal boundaries without obtaining in turn a right to participate in national politics."[18] The shift in government attitudes towards indigenous communities and the treatment of indigenous interests did not go uncontested. In the early part of the twentieth century in the canton of Cayambe, for example, indigenous communities staged massive revolts on the Changalá hacienda. Apart from being recognized as the first instance of post-independence indigenous resistance, the Changalá rebellion marked an important change in the form of resistance favored by indigenous communities and their overt attempt to be recognized in national political ideology.

Under the influence of the Partido Socialista Ecuatoriano (Ecuadoran Socialist Party), or PSE, the uprising was an important first step in framing the indigenous struggle as a fight for land and representation. The PSE played an important role in organizing the uprising. It attempted to promote a social transformation rooted in a challenge to the misrepresentation of poor Ecuadorans, thereby effecting larger-scale social change. Indigenous communities

[16] *Quichua* refers to Ecuadoran dialect of *Quechua*, the predominant indigenous language of the central Andes.
[17] *Mestizo* refers to those Ecuadorans who are of mixed indigenous and European descent. *White* refers to those non-indigenous Ecuadorans who claim a purely European ancestry, free of ethnic mixing. However, it is difficult to distinguish definitively who or what constitutes a white, indigenous or mestizo Ecuadoran due to the various, localized constructions of racial ascription and identification.
[18] Tanya Korovkin, "Reinventing the Communal Tradition: Indigenous Peoples, Civil Society and Democratization in Andean Ecuador," *Latin American Research Review* 36:1 (Summer 2001): 45-6.

were an indispensable part of the PSE's platform as indigenous people were the most recognizable victims of exploitation at the hands of the authoritarian state and landed elite. Sociologist Amalia Pallares contends that the PSE was fighting against "a system characterized by the economic, political and social domination of indigenous peasants by the few landholders who owned most of the land."[19] Indigenous peasants would serve as protagonists in the struggle for a more egalitarian society.

Despite the best efforts of the PSE, it was not until the passage of the *Ley de Comunas* (Community Law) in 1937 that these "free" Indians were formally introduced into Ecuadoran political life. The law legally acknowledged the existence of distinct communities of Indians who had managed to remain outside of the peonage system that pervaded the Andes. As we have seen, legal recognition of Indians as distinct from the population as a whole was fundamentally important to the creation of an ethnically charged movement. The political and social reality of these "free" Indians, who formerly lived in forastero communities, excluded them from the "administrative divisions" of the Ecuadoran state as well as from classification as *huasipungueros*.[20] The presence of pre-existing political and economic structures in these communities spurred the government to permit them a certain degree of autonomy and classify them as individual "comunas." The state granted the community limited jurisdiction over matters of local importance, control over some local administrative processes, and the ability to organize the economy in line with their traditional agricultural practices. This policy presented Indians not living on *huasipungos* with the opportunity to work cooperatively, assume control over the administration of their

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[19] Pallares, *From Peasant Struggles to Indian Resistance*, 12.
[20] José Antonio Lucero, "Locating the 'Indian Problem': Community, Nationality and Contradiction in Ecuadorian Indigenous Politics," *Latin American Perspectives* 30:1 (January 2003): 29.

communities, and most importantly, regain their special legal status in the face of the government.

Many Indians looked favorably on the passage of the Ley de Comunas because it represented the first step in a long fight against the exclusionary politics of the Ecuadoran government. In many ways, they were right. The law was passed in immediate response to significant peasant uprisings in the Sierra, as well as the liberal rhetoric promoted by urban intellectuals and the PSE. Indigenous activists insisted that land reform take precedence over other concerns. The Ley de Comunas allowed Indians to think about their collective position vis-à-vis the political elite and made reform seem like a very real possibility. Although it recognized communal land rights, the government did not promote more progressive legislation nor did these land rights indicate new respect for the indigenous way of life. Rather, the government attempted to mold the indigenous community into one that was malleable and easily manipulated much like the *pueblos de indios* of the colonial period. The government desired a community of passive citizens willing and able to serve the interests of the state. The Ley de Comunas was a means of appeasing dissenting indigenous communities, most notably those located in Cayambe, and persuading them to comply with national policies. The rhetoric present in the Ley de Comunas called for the modernization of land-labor relations in Ecuador and the transformation of the economy by government officials. This type of intervention marked the establishment of a "corporatist citizenship regime," grounded in the endorsement of a government that actively intervened in the lives of its citizens to promote and protect their well-being.[21] Political theorist Deborah Yashar explains that corporatist citizenship regimes "created a dynamic dualism, with identities

[21] Deborah Yashar, "Democracy, Indigenous Movements and the Post-liberal Challenge in Latin America," *World Politics* 52:1 (1999): 3-5.

shifting according to the locale: for the state, Indians assume identities as peasants; within the community, peasants assume their identities as Indians."[22] Thus, after the introduction of the Ley de Comunas, Indians appealed to their class identity in order to benefit from government social welfare programs, leaving their indigenous identity at the community level.

It is important to recognize that while the Ley de Comunas was a milestone in the consolidation of indigenous communities in Ecuador and a building block for the contemporary indigenous movement, it did very little in the way of eradicating or alleviating the harsh conditions present on the *huasipungo*. Many rural Indians continued to live and work as tenant farmers, experiencing little contact with peasants living in government organized comunas. Debt-farming labor relations persisted, despite the protestation of intellectuals such as José Carlos Mariátegui, a Peruvian socialist intellectual who was influential throughout the Andean region. Mariátegui and his liberal contemporaries called for an end to the neo-feudal agrarian structure in the Highlands.[23] They insisted that the major quandary facing indigenous groups was not cultural, social, or political. Instead, the problem was purely economic, and was patently evident in the startlingly unequal distribution of land and the absence of local economies.[24] He called for a restructuring of the economy and society so as to benefit a greater proportion of citizens.

The economic program of the Ecuadoran government in the mid-twentieth century contributed greatly to indigenous identification with the peasantry. Unlike many of its South American counterparts, Ecuador did not industrialize until the late 1950s. While Chile, Argentina, and Brazil underwent rapid periods of industrial growth earlier in the century,

[22] Ibid., 4.
[23] Lucero, "Locating the 'Indian Problem,'" 30-32.
[24] José Carlos Mariátegui, *Siete ensayos de interpretación de la realidad peruana* (Lima: Biblioteca Amauta, 1928).

Ecuador's economy remained predominantly agricultural. A government not committed to modernizing the agricultural sector and the absence of an economy formidable enough to withstand the exclusionary policies associated with import-substitution industrialization[25] allowed Ecuador to remain mired in underdevelopment. Despite a significant shift towards an export-oriented economy on the coast and the resultant capitalization of many large haciendas, underdevelopment delayed mass urbanization. This trend prevented peasant participation in the urban work force and kept many indigenous men and women restrained under the repressive *huasipungo*. The startling inequalities exposed in the 1954 Agricultural Census were evidence enough to bring land reform to the forefront of the national political agenda. Presidential candidates and other politicians grew aware of the rapidly consolidating peasant and indigenous blocs and appealed to them in their campaigns.

In 1957, civilian administrator Camilo Ponce passed a conservative plan for the industrialization of the rural sector that mirrored the economic model of the rest of Latin America.[26] A continent-wide economic crisis limited the extent of industrialization, but Ponce's plan still managed to enjoy considerable success. The corporatist government in office provided indigenous communities with no other option but to identify as *campesinos* in order to benefit from state-subsidized social welfare programming. The socio-economic reality of the majority indigenous communities was that of small scale farming. Concentrated in rural areas and victims of the same type of exploitation that had

[25] Import substitution industrialization refers to the economic model adopted by the majority of South American nations that favored a closed economy, state-subsidized industrial growth and the creation of an internal economy in order to move away from the underdevelopment characteristic of years of export-oriented economic policies.
[26] Anita Isaacs, *Military Rule and Transition in Ecuador, 1972 -92* (Pittsburg, Pennsylvania: The University of Pittsburg Press, 1993), 14-17.

characterized their dynamic history, their political life was defined not by their ethnicity, but by their class.

In 1964, the first wave of land reform in Ecuador respected this class-based identification. The years leading up to 1964 were marked by the emergence of numerous local indigenous rights organizations that pressured that national government to initiate a land reform program. The leading group was the Federación Ecuatoriana de Indios (Ecuadoran Indian Federation – FEI), which was influenced by Marxist ideologies and demanded that the huasipungo be replaced with a wage labor system.[27] While these organizations were mainly composed of non-indigenous, urban intellectuals, their efforts drew attention to the gross inequalities that plagued tenant farmers. After a complicated sequence of presidential successions and coups, the military junta that assumed power in 1963 finally made land reform a priority. Under the guidance of the Alliance for Progress[28] and the Panel of Nine Committee, the Junta Nacional de Planificacón y Coordinación Económica (JNPCE) identified the inequitable divisions of land and labor in Ecuador as major factors in the faltering economy. The JNPCE drafted a ten year plan committed to the reconfiguration of the land tenure structure and the liberalization of the Ecuadoran economy. The redistributive and colonization projects of the reform were to be carried out by the Instituto Ecuatoriano de Reforma Agraria y Colonización (IERAC).[29]

The first phase of the plan consisted of several key components. The primary component was the abolition of the tenant-farming structure on the *huasipungo*. Under the

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[27] Tanya Korovkin, "Indigenous Peasant Struggles," 27-28.
[28] For a complete discussion of the birth, breadth and particular policies of the Alliance for Progress, refer to Joseph S. Tulchin, "The United States and Lain America in the 1960s, *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 30:1 (Spring 1998): 1-36; Boris Kozolchyk, "Law and Social Change in Latin America: The Alliance for Progress," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 44:4 (November 1964): 491 – 502; Abraham F. Lowenthal, "United States Policy Toward Latin America: 'Liberal,' 'Radical,' and 'Bureaucratic' Perspectives," *Latin American Research Review* 8:3 (Autumn 1973): 3-25.
[29] Blankstein and Zuvekas, *Agrarian Reform in Ecuador,* 79 81.

reform, the *huasipunguero* had the opportunity to acquire ownership over his plot of land. He could either buy the plot of land from the landowner, based on the estimated return of the plot; remain on the land without purchasing the land and receive the deed from the national government; or receive compensation for services rendered over a given a period of time and be awarded the title to the land. These different types of land transfer depended on the amount of time that the *huasipunguero* had cultivated the land prior to the ratification of the reform. In the case of large haciendas that had not previously assigned plots of land to their tenant farmers, the land was divided among the farmers by the IERAC, referring to the guidelines specified above. The redistribution of other types of land was also handled by the IERAC. These lands included poorly managed estates with significant amounts of idle pastures, unused public lands, and any territories belonging to estates that exceeded the maximum number of hectares indicated by the IERAC. In many cases, the government bought the land directly from the landowner at significantly depreciated prices. In other cases, the land was expropriated against the will of the landowner and reallocated to peasant farmers who formerly worked as *huasipungueros*. The program of redistribution was funded by three classes of bonds that "would serve as collateral for agricultural or industrial loans."[30]

This model of land reform clearly benefited some peasant communities, but it had serious consequences for others. One of the more controversial elements of the land reform was the promotion of the colonization of uncharted territories in Ecuador, ranging from the coastal region to the Sierra to the Oriente. The outcome of this program in particular is one of the first pieces of evidence that illuminates the inadequacies of the land reforms of 1964. Specifically, the reforms had negative implications for peasants living in the Amazonian region of the country. The Andean indigenous communities under examination earlier in this

[30] Ibid., 80.

chapter had a quantitatively different reality than those indigenous communities living in the Amazon. Virtually untouched by colonists, capitalists and government officials until the twentieth century, these groups had preserved their traditional cultural, agricultural and societal practices more effectively than their highland neighbors. Predominantly hunter-gatherers, these groups required large tracts of land to survive. Amazonian indigenous groups called for the protection of their environment, the prohibition of industrial advancement into the region, and further, a promise of access to their ancestral lands. Ignoring these interests under the land reform, government "colonizers" of the period encroached on the holdings of Amazonian Indians, looking to relocate landless peasants from the Sierra.[31]

An additional component of the land reform package was the exploitation of natural resources found in the rainforest. In 1964 the government awarded 1.5 million hectares of land in the northeast region of the tropical forest to Texaco/Gulf in an effort to generate revenue to fund urbanization projects, subsidize farmers, and create more extensive social welfare programs. Texaco/Gulf used this territory to extract crude oil and transport it to the coast. Precarious programs of expansion ensued, leaving many Indians without homes and forcing them to witness the contamination, deforestation and destruction of their environment. The dynamic created between Indians, oil companies and the Ecuadoran government was one that would last into the 21st century.[32] While the interests of Amazonian indigenous communities were distinct from those of Sierra Indians, government plans to colonize the rainforest contributed to the potential for unified mobilization of indigenous communities. Bound together by the shared experienced of government exploitation of their

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[31] Melina Selverston, "Pachakutik: Indigenous People and Democracy in Ecuador," *Native Americas* 15:21 (1998): 78-80.
[32] Thomas Perreault, "Making Space: Community Organization, Agrarian Change and the Politics of Scale in the Ecuadorian Amazon," *Latin American Perspectives* 30:1 (January 2003): 104-5.

territories, many indigenous groups realized that though the particulars of their situations differed and they did not share a identical ethnic make-up, their struggle was quite similar.

The results of the first phase of the agrarian reform were mixed. Significant numbers of indigenous families benefited from the reallocation of property and the disintegration of large *haciendas*, by gaining access to land they were formerly denied. The abolition of the *huasipungo* was notably successful. By the early 1970s, eighty-eight percent of former *huasipungeros* had assumed ownership over their land. Despite these advances, however, the social and economic conditions that had fostered inequality for so many years remained. Prominent landowners had access to cutting-edge agricultural technology and best lands. Their productivity remained at an unnaturally high level due to their easy access to bank credit. Small farmers did not enjoy such easy access. Along with this type of disparity, many Indians were still subject to the debt-peonage farming structure, and were tied to their landowners' land. Moreover, they did not enjoy access to many of the resources to which they were formerly entitled, including, but not limited to water, firewood and subsistence farming plots. All of these resources were necessary for subsistence farming and agriculture.

Because of the resurgence of interest in and commitment to land reform in 1970, many communities had begun to think of the IERAC as ineffectual and arbitrary. In response, the second phase of reform was initiated with the passage of a more progressive agrarian reform law. The primary concerns of the law were the categorical elimination of all "forms of tenancy" and to make "all farmers landowners."[33] The law attempted to depart from traditionally inefficient farming methods and backwards agricultural techniques. The first step was to accelerate programs of land distribution and reallocation. The next step was the modernization and sophistication of farming methods. To facilitate this process, a new

[33] Blankstein and Zuvekas, *Agrarian Reform in Ecuador*, 86.

system of credit lending was implemented that enabled farmers to acquire the capital, labor, equipment, and expertise necessary to more efficiently cultivate their land. Furthermore, these handouts gave them a sense of entitlement and empowerment that would prove to be an important element in the foundation of the first indigenous organizations that were capable of wielding considerable political clout.

The second phase of reform ushered in notable socio-economic changes for many indigenous communities. Spearheaded by the ruling, corporatist military regime, the second phase sought to "bridge regional and class inequalities and to affirm national sovereignty."[34] The military regime espoused a platform committed to the inclusion of traditionally underrepresented sectors of Ecuadoran society. Peasants were an integral part of that sector. Additionally, the military played an active role in the social welfare of citizens. In its *Filosofia y Plan de Accion* (Philosophy and Plan of Action), the regime promised "'to carry out a revolutionary transformation of profound social changes.'"[35] This revolution relied on the government's active involvement in the lives of citizens and its significant intervention in the agricultural and industrial sectors. According to the military regime's rhetoric, peasants were a recognizable and important part of the local and national economy. The success of their crops was linked directly to market trends and international commodity performance.

The success of the oil program in the Amazon also allowed the government to embark on an exhaustive industrialization plan that led to modest internal migration and urbanization. The opportunity to move to the city and work in the burgeoning industrial sector meant that Indians were no longer limited to life as peasants. Not surprisingly, many poor farmers moved to large cities such as Quito and Guayaquil in search of jobs in the industrial sector.

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[34] Isaacs, *Military Rule and Transition in Ecuador*, 37.
[35] Ibid.

One of the primary means of stimulating economic growth to accommodate these major social transformations was the nationalization of some of the more lucrative industries, including steel, petroleum and fishing. Nationalizing industries allowed the government to play an active role in the strategic planning of that sector of the economy. It also allowed it to institute programs for the development of infrastructure and human capital.

While the military regime effectively identified some of the issues facing urban and rural workers, the notion of indigenous ethnicity was notably absent from its discourse. When indigenous communities mobilized, they did so with their economic interests in mind. They responded to the military regime's overt attempt to construct a peasantry that would facilitate the implementation of modern agricultural techniques by limiting ethnic identification to local politics and daily practices. According to military regime technocrats, the modernization of the agrarian sector was an indispensable step in the capitalization of the economy. Government handouts and agrarian reform packages were incentives that co-opted indigenous groups into assuming an identity crafted by the government. Yet, indigenous social and economic structures had distinct characteristics that other peasant communities did not share. Communal pastures, communal harvesting, and communal justice are a few examples of the concerns that the military regime ignored.[36]

The Catholic Church played an important role in challenging this exclusion. Thanks to important changes within the Church during the 1960s and 1970s, the clergy and Church activists became increasingly involved in the fight for land reform, equal representation, and recognition of the distinct concerns that faced indigenous populations. Liberation theology, the new strand of social teaching present within the Church, heralded the importance of a

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[36] Barry J. Lyons, "Religion, Authority and Identity: Intergenerational Politics, Ethnic Resurgence, and Respect in Chimborazo, Ecuador," *Latin American Research Review* 36:1 (Winter 2001): 14-16.

"preferential option for the poor." This belief held that the poor would inherit the Earth and that the kingdom of God was not merely something to look forward to in the afterlife, but was something to actively pursue on Earth. The Church adopted a policy of "*inculturación*," contending that "true liberation is seen to depend on the incarnation of the Gospel and the Catholic Church in indigenous forms, within indigenous culture… God planted the seeds of Christianity within every culture so that each culture has its own integrity that missionary work must respect."[37]

Motivated by these principles, Church activists encouraged indigenous groups to mobilize and assert their ethnic identity. Church activity in Chimborazo, a predominantly agricultural state located in the central Andes, serves as a perfect example of this attempt to mobilize indigenous communities. The Church aided in the organization of several provincial and regional indigenous federations, attempting to create a pan-Ecuadoran indigenous identity. Church organizers also facilitated bilingual education programs aimed at recognizing the distinct cultural reality of indigenous communities.[38] The Catholic Church replaced the PSE on the left as the prominent supporter of indigenous mobilization in the second half of the twentieth century.

Protestant missionaries also worked with indigenous communities. Focusing less on the collective struggle of indigenous groups and more on their familial and individual responsibilities, Protestant missionaries did not have as considerable an influence on the mobilization of indigenous campesinos. One of their primary efforts was to stop alcohol consumption altogether by prohibiting the celebration of certain traditional ceremonies. Protestant missionaries were more willing than their Catholic counterparts to create

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[37] Ibid., 25.
[38] Korovkin, "Indigenous Peasant Struggles and the Capitalist Modernization of Agriculture," 29-31.

pluralistic religious practices and incorporate indigenous men and women into the clergy. "As a result," Korovkin explains, "in some areas the indigenous Protestant clergy played an important role in the development of local communal organizations, concentrating mostly on community development projects."[39] Thus, Protestant missionariesenhanced the work of Catholic Church activists by contributing to the creation of formal indigenous reform organizations.

In the context of the volatile economic, social, and ideological climate of the 1970s and a government focused on economic modernization, important indigenous organizations took center stage. These organizations concentrated their collective energy on the struggle for land. The most important organization in the early 1970s was the Federación Nacional de Organizaciones Campesinas (National Federation of Peasant Organizations – FENOC). Founded in 1944, FENOC managed the land-acquisition campaigns in many of Ecuador's provinces, demanding that peasants be awarded the land that they rightfully deserved. These campaigns generally used traditional political methods, appealing to the IERAC and the Ministry of Agriculture. They did, however, occasionally employ contentious methods such as land invasions or land occupations. By establishing small squatter communities on uncultivated land that belonged to wealthy *hacendados*, indigenous peasants attempted to contest their exclusion from the rural economy.[40]

A detailed study of the emergence of the indigenous movement in Ecuador requires an understanding of the ideology of FENOC and its successor, Ecuador Runacunapac Riccharimui, (Ecuador Indians Awake, the Highlands Indigenous Federation – ECUARUNARI). Both organizations espoused a class-based ideology, effectively ignoring

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[39] Ibid., 31.
[40] Leon Zamosc, "Agrarian Protest and Indian Movements in the Ecuadorian Highlands," *Latin American Research Review* 29:3 (1994): 47.

indigenous identity. The corporatist state encouraged Indians to frame their fight for land not in terms of their *Indianidad* ("Indianess"), but in terms of their socio-economic status. Yashar attributes the choice of this discursive frame to the particular citizenship regime present within the military government. The government actively encouraged Indians to shed their indigenous identification in exchange for class identification. By eliminating varied notions of ethnicity, the population was more easily manipulated and more receptive to governmental reforms and initiatives. FENOC and ECUARUNARI embraced the political program geared towards peasant interests. ECUARUNARI, in particular, adopted this ideology and focused its political discourse on the "the struggle for land, linking that struggle to the socialist ideals of the worker-campesino alliance and paying little attention to ethnicity as an issue in itself."[41]

Waning support for agrarian reform and peasant welfare packages led to the reprioritization of government programs and the redefinition of what it meant to be a member of the polity. Neo-liberal economic policies ended the agrarian reform and paved the way for the privatization of the industrial and agricultural sectors. Citizens were no longer encouraged to identify along class lines and rely on the state for social welfare programming. Instead, they were encouraged to create their own political opportunities or to foster their own individual political identity, without the direct intervention of the national government. The innovative political language of democracy and individualism sparked a paradigm shift among indigenous communities throughout Ecuador. They began to think of their public identity not only in terms of their class, but in terms of their ethnicity as well. The identity that the government had systematically attempted to eliminate took center stage in the political language of indigenous organizations.

[41] Ibid., 47.

In his examination of campesino communities in Chinandega, Nicaragua, historian Jeff Gould studied a group of indigenous peasants that did not traditionally associate themselves with their indigenous heritage. This group eventually reconnected with that identity for political reasons.[42] Gould argues that the dynamic nature of the *indio* as "a word that combined an accurate description of the rural lower classes' ethnic extraction with racial and class hostility," allowed them to posit themselves as *el otro* while simultaneously remaining a part of the national political identity. The indigenous peasant was one that had been exploited both economically and culturally. This dual exploitation created an effective and powerful framework for challenging government policies and initiatives. By being "different," indigenous concerns could not merely be managed under the rubric of "campesino" concerns. The government needed to take into account five-hundred years of exploitation, traditional agricultural practices, and a way of life that did not necessarily coincide with government plans for agricultural modernization. Peasant communities thus adjusted their civic identity alongside evolving notions of Nicaraguan citizenship.

While Gould's study illuminates the use of indigenous identity for political leverage, the particulars of the Ecuadoran case are quite different. Ecuadoran indigenous communities had always identified themselves along ethnic lines. The initial framing of their struggle as a peasant struggle did not deny their ethnic identity. Instead, it highlighted one element of their dual-identity for political reasons. The repressive, hacienda-like social structure present in the agrarian sector until the mid twentieth century permanently tied indigenous peasants to their lands. Urbanization eluded the majority of *huasipungueros* whose life was defined by their relationship with their landowners. As such, a majority of highland indigenous groups

[42] Jeff Gould, *To Lead as Equals: Rural Protest and Political Consciousness in Chinandega, Nicaragua, 1912-1979* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 116-118.

were peasants. The peasant lifestyle was an integral part of their identity. The decision to endorse a peasant identity was a display of one fundamental aspect of their way of life. They accentuated this identity when the government launched its agrarian reform program and promoted a corporatist citizen regime, defined by state intervention and handouts. They were looking to benefit from the government's new political program. In doing so, they allowed an important part of their collective identity to be ignored by the government. The unique concerns of indigenous communities were surrendered to the Marxist ideal of a unified peasantry, one void of ethnic and cultural variation.

The portrayal of Indians as campesinos begs the question: to what extent were indigenous communities political agents and the designers of their own identity? In a sense, when they lost their position as a unique community of people within the larger nation, indigenous communities also lost political agency. By paying lip service to government officials, Indians played into the government's attempt to control them. Instead of fighting against the government that had made their exploitation possible for so many years, indigenous communities capitulated to government officials' political maneuverings. This presented indigenous communities as a defenseless and powerless component of Ecuadoran politics and a group that could be easily manipulated. After years of subjugation and exploitation at the hands of the political and economic elite, to a certain extent, they *were* powerless and defenseless. Indigenous communities had few means to contest the oppressive policies of the government. Even in those instances where indigenous communities were able to resist their exploitation through local indigenous organizations or unions of various *huasipungos*, their demands were framed along class lines.[43]

[43] Korovkin, "Indigenous Peasant Struggles and the Capitalist Modernization of Agriculture," 28.

Yet the answer is more complex. Throughout the twentieth century, indigenous communities remained committed to their cultural and ethnic heritage. Indigenous identity was still very much a part of daily life despite the best efforts of government officials to strip Indians of that identity. Before 1973, however, indigenous identification was primarily local and communal, never evolving into a national identity charged with political demands and challenges to the state. The corporatist citizenship regime desired political cleavages that were organized along class lines, not along ethnic lines. By presenting themselves as peasants, Indians were not denying themselves; they were merely highlighting a different aspect of their identity in order to strategically take advantage of government social welfare programs.

It is also important to note that the indigenous communities' public identification with the peasantry was not permanent. The transformations in the economy and significant land reform programs redefined longstanding land-labor relations between the economic elite and the indigenous population. The dissolution of the *huasipungo* afforded Indians the opportunity to create their own political space and invent their own political identity. The centrality and inescapability of the peasant lifestyle slowly disappeared. The Church facilitated the shift from identification as peasant to identification as Indian. Furthermore, the decline of the corporatist military regime and the shift towards neo-liberalism created a political opportunity for indigenous communities. Organizations such as FENOC began to incorporate more comprehensive claims into their political platform. By changing the name of the organization to FENOC I (I standing for "indigenous"), indigenous leaders repositioned themselves in the national political arena.

While the political agency of Ecuadoran indigenous communities prior to extensive agrarian reform is up for debate, they did play an important role in framing their struggle against longstanding land-labor relations. Sidney Tarrow identifies this approach as one defined by the use of collective action frames. He defines these frames as "accentuating devices that either 'underscore and embellish the seriousness and injustice of a social condition or redefine as unjust and immoral what was previously seen as unformatted but perhaps tolerable.'"[44] The experience of using collective action frames was a valuable exercise in self-identification and self-determination. By identifying as peasants, they framed their struggle in a way that would be noticed by the government. They worked with the prevailing trends present in the government to affect a change in their daily reality. This would prove to be extremely important in their future creation of one of the leading and most successful social movements in Latin America.

[44] Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998) 110-111.

2 Ethnopolitics and Indigenous Mobilization

The Emergence of Ecuador's Pan-Ethnic Indigenous Movement

The end of the redistributive land reform program in the mid-1970s and the inauguration of General Guillermo Rodríguez Lara's reformist government in 1972 marked important moments for Ecuador's indigenous community. Successful colonization projects in the Amazon and utilization of oil reserves initiated a boom in the economy and a subsequent shift in the economic plan promoted by the government. Formerly focused on the reappropriation of land and the eradication of colonial labor relations, the government began to concentrate on establishing a neo-liberal economy and mechanized agricultural sector. By encouraging privatization and proposing more efficient methods of production, Ecuador entered the second phase of its land reform project. Leaders of the military regime designed this phase as a means to prepare Ecuador's economy for increased capitalistic development and eliminate unnecessary state expenditure. These efforts, coupled with the rapid consolidation of the indigenous bloc, created a political opportunity for indigenous activists and organizers. Responding to the call for individual autonomy and responsibility and capitalizing on political acumen acquired through the fight for land reform, Indians began to incorporate ethnicity into their political discourse.

The assumption of an ethnocentric political identity required the combined efforts of indigenous groups across Ecuador's diverse geographic landscape. Indigenous organizations that had mobilized during the corporatist government, which reigned in the earlier part of the

century, unified their efforts under the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE) in 1986. Posited as the collective voice of Ecuador's Indian population, CONAIE utilized both institutional and contentious politics to challenge the exclusionary policies of the government. The distinct organizations that formed a part of CONAIE recognized the commonalities in their struggle. Despite the differences in their particular claims, the organizations united under CONAIE demanded that government reform efforts expand beyond land reform. They maintained that the indigenous struggle was more complicated than a fight for land and farming rights. It was a struggle that engaged a wide range of actors and spanned the course of their pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial histories. Infusing the movement with ethnic and cultural concerns created a richer and more dynamic struggle, one that ultimately called into question the very notion of Ecuadoran citizenship. By utilizing indigenous identity, indigenous organizations brought to light a historical consciousness that respected, not denied, indigenous identity.

The rearticulation of the indigenous struggle by indigenous activists was in part a response to the transformation of national political ideologies. The corporatism present in national politics throughout the greater part of the twentieth century was a mixed blessing for indigenous communities. Corporatist governments and military regimes took the lead in promoting the civil rights of Ecuadoran citizens and granting peasant indigenous communities a considerable degree of autonomy. The Ley de Comunas of 1937 allowed pre-existing indigenous groups to maintain their traditional agricultural practices and allowed them to administer the organization of their communities. The government also actively intervened in the lives of rural workers and peasants, providing them with critical social services and welfare programming. Peasants were offered more advanced agricultural

technologies, benefited from healthcare programs and were targeted in literacy campaigns.[45] The most extensive work of these governments, however, was the renovation of the agricultural sector. They pioneered sweeping agrarian reform programs and searched for more equitable divisions of farm land. Many landless peasants burdened by the hacienda structure were granted small plots of land and freed from their landowners. The government portrayed itself as the great liberator of peasants from the torment of debt-peonage.

Although the government acknowledged indigenous communities that were affected by the inequitable distribution of land and *huasipungo* farming-structure, corporatist governments present in the mid 1960s and early 1970s defined their constituencies not by ethnicity, but by class. They desired citizens who had a heightened class consciousness and considered themselves part of the "ethnically homogeneous" and therefore increasingly modern nation. These governments did not advance the political rights of citizens; they framed politics as belonging only to the state and not to its citizens. Indigenous communities experienced the social benefits of corporatism through the increased welfare programming. Yet, in many ways, corporatism limited the political evolution of indigenous communities. The administration of the government by authoritarian military regimes left the political agency of Ecuadoran citizens conspicuously absent from government rhetoric and policies. Indigenous groups responded to this trend by appealing to their class identity in order to benefit from the first phase of land reform the social benefits of corporatism.

The military coup of 1972 that seated Guillermo Rodríguez Lara as the authoritarian ruler launched important changes in national political ideologies and land reform strategies. Lara was primarily concerned with modernizing the land-labor relations in rural Ecuador and

[45] Deborah Yashar, "Democracy, Indigenous Movements and the Postliberal Challenge in Latin America" *World Politics* 52:1 (1999), 80-82.

mechanizing the agricultural sector, all with the desired end of increased productivity in mind. Lara funded these reform programs by using Amazonian oil reserves as a source of capital. By leasing sizeable plots of land in the jungle to large petroleum companies, he generated enough capital to subsidize the agricultural modernization programs. He further pioneered colonization programs in the jungle, as outlined in the previous chapter. The military triumvirate that came to power in 1977 continued the work of Lara and further promoted the colonization of Amazon. Depicing the jungl e as a barren "no-man's land," desperately in need of development, the triumvirate attempted to develop the Amazon by reintegrating the economic elites who had suffered significant losses under the land reform just ten years prior. When Jaime Roldós was democratically elected to office in 1979, an election that brought down more than ten years of authoritarian military rule, he continued to neo-liberalize of the Ecuadoran economy.[46]

Throughout this complex succession of military regimes and presidents, a patent shift in notions of citizenship occurred at the national level. The state was no longer the sole provider for its citizens; citizens themselves became providers. The new concept of citizenship included the idea that the citizens, not the state, looked after civil society. The state intervened to modernize agricultural methods, mechanize farming techniques and install productivity as the golden standard by which all citizens would be measured. The first military regime spearheaded the movement towards modernization. They continued the work of Velasco Ibarra's government in the late 1960s by reforming the agricultural sector through redistribution. The integration of landless peasants was to be achieved by awarding them small plots of land and freeing them from abusive landowners. Landed elites, however,

[46] César Montúfar, *La Reconstrucción Neoliberal: Febres Cordero o La Estatización del Neoliberalismo en el Ecuador 1984 – 1988* (Quito, Ecuador: Ediciones Abya-Yala, 2000).

applied pressure on the government to rethink this method of land reform. Both government and economic elites were acutely aware of the ethnic composition of the newly landed peasantry. This predominantly indigenous peasantry represented a threat to hacienda owners and other wealthy land owners. Elites responded by identifying indigenous peasants as inefficient producers and impediments to national economic growth. This conceptualization was in line with popular racist ideas projected towards indigenous men and women. The image of the Indian as resistant to modernity and unproductive served the argument that their entrance into the agricultural sector would have caused catastrophic failure in the burgeoning economy. Elites further pointed out that by solely focusing on the interests of indigenous peasants the government was ignoring the interests of the main producers in the Ecuadoran economy. Land owners depicted *themselves* as the excluded sector of society and the indigenous peasants as the fortunate beneficiaries of government handouts and reform.[47]

When the second military regime came into power, it responded to the elites' concerns surrounding redistributive land reform. The government realized that small-scale farming was inefficient. Levels of productivity were inordinately low. Government economists decided to end redistribution and to implement a neo-liberal economic model centered on agricultural productivity. Increasing productivity and creating capitalist farming industries became the government's primary initiative. As productivity seemed to respect class and ethnic lines, the government once again excluded indigenous peasants from its discourse. Former mestizo hacienda owners became the new producers. The state promoted agricultural industries, including livestock, dairy farming and grain production. In many cases, the government subsidized the growth of these industries with the revenues earned

[47] Amalia Pallares, *From Peasant Struggles to Indian Resistance: The Ecuadorian Andes in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman, Oklahoma: The University of Oklahoma Press, 2002), 47-50.

from oil sales in the Amazon. Anthropologist Tanya Korovkin notes, "unwilling to pursue the policy of land redistribution after the capitalist transformation of the hacienda, the national government proclaimed its commitment to the strategy of rural development. … this strategy designed to upgrade and commercialize small-scale agriculture by improving rural infrastructure and services."[48]

Coupled with faltering productivity levels, there was a continent-wide economic crisis in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The state could not longer focus on social welfare programming due to lack of funding. In a desperate attempt to regain control over the economy, the government looked to multinational lending organizations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank to help fund their economic recovery. By accepting loans from these organizations, Ecuador was forced into compliance with policies aimed at readjusting the structure of the economy. The main goals of the structural readjustment policies implemented by the IMF and World Bank were the extension and intensification of capitalism into the agricultural sector and the neo-liberalization of the national economy. Farmers were encouraged to privatize all land-holdings and consolidate their farm lands. These policies made Ecuador more accessible to foreign trade partners. Consequently, Ecuador worked towards producing staple crops capable of competing in the world market. The state began to subsidize the modernization of agricultural techniques by offering new technologies to large land owners. The World Bank drafted one of the most prominent programs used to develop rural infrastructure. The Marginal Rural Development Fund (FODERUMA) was an alternative to redistributive land reform. It attempted to commercialize small-scale agriculture and create jobs for landless peasants. FODERUMA

[48] Tanya Korovkin "Indigenous Peasant Struggles and the Capitalist Modernization of Agriculture: Chimborazo, 1964 -1991" *Latin American Perspectives* 24:3 (May, 1997), 33.

and its successor, the Integrated Rural Development Program, were extremely under-funded and were the targets of many indigenous peasants' discontent. Not having consulted with existing indigenous and peasant unions, the reform programs did not respect traditional indigenous community organizing and traditional practices.[49]

Economic and political modernity in Ecuador ushered in what political scientist Deborah Yashar identifies as a "neo-liberal citizenship regime." The movement towards economic capitalism had serious consequences for citizens of the Ecuadoran state. The new focus on productivity and privatization made individual responsibility, self-sufficiency and entrepreneurialism requisites for active citizens. Whereas the corporatist governments of the late 1960s and mid 1970s heralded the importance of *social* rights, the neo-liberal governments of the late 1970s and mid 1980s valued *political* rights. Privatization of land holdings became a primary concern of economic officials at the national and local levels. Government subsidies for social welfare programming were tailored significantly and citizens no longer looked to the state as provider. The shift away from a corporatist state structure and towards neo-liberal state structure reversed much of the work of the land reform just a few years prior. This change accelerated the emergence of grassroots political activity. Cutbacks in social welfare programs forced small farmers and landless peasants to move back to large estates in search of work and look once again to the land owners for assistance.

This did not, however, represent a complete reversal. Indigenous men and women embraced their new individual responsibility and began to mobilize on a larger scale and in far greater numbers. The emergence of formal indigenous organizations at the local, regional and national level was in large part a result of this transformation of citizenship at the national level. When the state dissolved large haciendas under the first phase of land reform

[49] Korovkin, "Indigenous Peasant Struggles", 38-41.

and benefits previously offered to peasants by landowners were no longer available, indigenous peasants looked to the state as provider.[50] The end of corporatism signaled the end of the majority of state-funded social welfare programs. The individual became the new provider; to be a member of the polity, indigenous peasants had to embrace their individual responsibility and create self-sufficient communities. The political experience that many indigenous peasant leaders acquired between the passage of the Ley de Comunas in 1937 and the early 1970s prepared them for this change. Amalia Pallares notes, "Indigenous activists acquired valuable knowledge of the national government's structure and functions… they became involved in local organizations, receiving state funds, they developed negotiating skills, gained experience in assessing, negotiating and evaluating state proposals and began to demand control over the planning and execution of rural development."[51] The indigenous activists that fought for peasant concerns in the earlier half of the century transformed their political identity in correspondence with contemporary notions of citizenship and accelerated the mobilization of rank-and-file indigenous Ecuadorans.

The geographic diversity of Ecuador created a unique situation for indigenous communities with respect to their political agenda and potential for mobilization. Indigenous organization prior to 1980 was highly spatialized due to the wide range of climates and landscapes found in Ecuador. Quichua Indians in the central, highland region of the country were primarily concerned with their right to land as well as formal recognition of their traditional practices and way of life. These Indians had more exposure to government officials, state-sponsored reform programs and missionary work than their Amazonian counterparts. Located in the lowlands of the Amazon basin, the Shuar, Achuar, Secoya,

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[50] Amalia Pallares, *From Peasant Struggles to Indian Resistance,* 38.
[51] Ibid., 40-41.

Siona, Huaorani and Cofán nationalities remained virtually untouched by outsiders until the twentieth century. Their fundamental concerns were the preservation of the rainforest, the protection of their habitat and the right to maintain their customs and lifestyle. As such, indigenous community organizing often respected the spatial differences evident in the geographic landscape of Ecuador. Local, lowland organizations created regional and provincial coalitions, as highland groups did the same.

Local indigenous organizations eventually advanced their demands against the state and resisted penetration into their territories by developing networks that spanned across spatial barriers. Many indigenous leaders capitalized on political experience gained throughout the rule of corporatist military regimes in the earlier part of the century.[52] Making use of this experience, they created what social scientist Thomas Perreault defines as a "nested hierarchy in which community-based groups are affiliated with provincial-level federations that are in turn part of regional confederations." [53] The cooperation of indigenous organizations across Ecuador contributed to the incorporation of indigenous identity into their political discourse, serving as a connective structure between lowland and highland federations.

The initial proliferation of Amazonian indigenous organizations in the 1960s was a result of the influx of colonizers, missionaries and government officials that flooded the Amazon after the implementation of the Agrarian Reform Law of 1964. While Amazonian Indians had been exposed to missionaries and state-sponsored reformers prior to land reform, they remained the least acculturated indigenous population in Ecuador.[54] Their geographic

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[52] Ibid.
[53] Thomas Perreault, "Community Organization, Agrarian Change and the Politics of Scale in the Ecuadorian Andes," *Latin American Perspectives* 30:1 (January 2003): 98.
[54] Ibid., 103-104.

isolation allowed them to preserve their traditional practices and way of life throughout these encounters. Colonization projects implemented in the 1970s, however, seriously threatened the survival of these communities. Reacting to this threat, indigenous organizers mobilized support by creating indigenous organizations and demanding that the government cease to colonize the rainforest.[55] These organizations were coalitions comprised of various local organizations that worked together to confront local and national government representatives over land disputes and other indigenous concerns. They often took the lead in the fight to acquire formal titles to communal lands and to stymie colonization[56].

In 1979, indigenous activists concerned with the rapid transformation of the rainforest created the Organization of Indigenous Peoples of Pastaza (OPIP) to challenge what community members perceived to be the imminent takeover of their lands. They identified grass-roots community organization as the most effective method of preserving their way of life and retaining their ancestral lands. This sense of agency was in part a product of the neo-liberal citizenship regime detailed earlier. The neo-liberal state heralded the importance of individual responsibility and self-sufficiency. The primary concern of OPIP was the acquisition of formal, legal title to lands that had been part of indigenous communities for hundreds of years. Without legal title, these lands were subject to government seizure and colonization, as well as the sale of subsoil resources.[57] One tactic utilized by indigenous communities was the appeal to their legacy of employing responsible agricultural practices in

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[55] Suzana Sawyer, "The 1992 Indian Mobilization in Lowland Ecuador," *Latin American Perspectives* 24:3 (May 1997): 4.
[56] Melina Selverston-Scher, *Ethnopolitics in Ecuador: Indigenous Rights and the Strengthening of Democracy* (Miami: North-South Center Press at the University of Miami, 2001), 32-35.
[57] Sawyer, "The 1992 Indian Mobilization in Lowland Ecuador," 4.

the rainforest. They positioned themselves as the "protectors" of the rainforest, adding a subtext of environmental consciousness to their struggle for land.[58]

The Federation of Indigenous Organizations of Napo (FOIN) also tried to legitimize indigenous land claims in the Amazon. Working closely with the Institute for Agrarian Reform and Colonization (IERAC), FOIN served as an intermediary between government officials and community members, while simultaneously serving as a political and social actor.[59] Although their central political struggle was over land rights in the 1970s, as the movement expanded in the 1980s, these organizations also identified cultural survival as an integral part of their mission. Bilingual education became a major concern of indigenous activists, particularly those activists who were members of FOIN. They worked to establish bilingual schools that promoted the study of indigenous community organization and agricultural development, as well as the study of indigenous languages and traditional indigenous practices. Perreault notes that "the emphasis on cultural revalorization through bilingual education coincided with the consolidation of regional and national indigenous organizations and the increasing politicization of indigenous discourse in Ecuador. It is also part of a broader process of increasing indigenous participation in and control over certain state functions and programs at the local, provincial and national scales."[60] Promotion of bilingual education marked a symbolic shift in the Amazonian indigenous platform. It centered their struggle not solely on land rights and colonization, but on cultural preservation as well. Indigenous organizations incorporated ethnicity into their rhetoric and by doing so they gradually transformed their struggle into one that embraced more modern and complex

[58] Alison Brysk *From Tribal Village to Global Village: Indian Rights and International Relations in Latin America* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 6-8.
[59] Perreault, "Community Organization, Agrarian Change and the Politics of Scale in the Ecuadorian Andes,"105.
[60] Ibid., 106.

issues of representation. Adding ethnicity to their discourse was a means of garnering support from a more broad set of political actors and social movements.

In 1980, OPIP, FOIN and other prominent provincial organizations united their efforts by creating the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of the Ecuadoran Amazon (CONFENIAE). CONFENIAE set out to provide equal representation for the distinct nationalities present within the Amazon. The organizational structure of CONFENIAE directly contrasted the government's administrative divisions that misrepresented the pre-existing nations throughout the Amazon. CONFENIAE sought to provide a formal, structured framework for lowland indigenous groups to contend for government recognition of their platform. Each of the distinct indigenous nationalities was granted representatives that attended the congresses held once every two years. At these congresses, members identified issues of major importance, elected new leadership and designed their plan of action for the following two years.

Highland indigenous mobilization has been documented as far back as the Spanish Conquest. Although episodic and isolated in form, there existed an undercurrent of resistance and opposition in highland indigenous communities. As mentioned in Chapter One, community organizers in the Sierra established the regional indigenous confederations as early as 1944. The Indigenous Federation of Ecuador (FEI) was created as a formal organization designed to represent indigenous peasants with common interests and demands. FEI advocated for reform grounded in the redistribution of land and wealth throughout the Sierra. Some scholars have attributed the eventual implementation of the land reform package of 1964 to the efforts of the FEI and its affiliated organizations. The establishment of FEI mirrors that of many highland indigenous organizations, as most organizations have

been born out of several indigenous communities joining their efforts and pooling their resources to contest land disputes and conflicts.

One of the most significant predecessors of the highlands indigenous organizations that emerged in the 1970s was the National Federation of Campesino Organizations (FENOC). Organized by the Communist party in then 1960s, FENOC had similar responsibilities as the FOIN in the Amazon. FENOC organized land acquisition committees, coordinated regional federations, and applied consistent pressure on the IERAC to implement more comprehensive land redistribution projects.[61] After receiving a mixed response from the IERAC and collaborating with the Christian-democrats on the left, FENOC resorted to more contentious methods of protest. Land occupations and land seizures were used to force the transfer of lands and the dissolution of large estates. Ethnicity was notably absent from FENOC's discourse. They framed their struggle along class lines, exclusively concentrating their efforts on the fight for land. In the climate of a government that deemphasized the importance of cultural and ethnic consciousness, indigenous peasants organized their struggle in line with their rural, peasant identity, effectively concealing their *indigenismo* in their political life.

Protestant and Catholic missionaries played an instrumental role in facilitating the advent of indigenous mobilization in the Highlands. Influenced by Liberation Theology and progressive Catholic social teaching, missionaries encouraged indigenous groups to unify their efforts and create a common platform that addressed their political and economic exclusion. As noted earlier, missionaries fomented an acute political awareness within indigenous communities and overtly attempted to mobilize indigenous peasants. Catholic

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[61] Leon Zamosc, "Agrarian Protest and the Indian Movement in the Ecuadorian Highlands" *Latin American Research Review* 29:3 (1994): 45-6.

groups further attempted to withstand the threat of Communism that swept through the Andean region by mobilizing organizations committed to working within the ostensibly democratic government and resisting the onslaught of Communism. Nevertheless, indigenous peasants were skeptical of the fragile Ecuadoran democracy wrought with military overthrows and corruption. The illegitimacy of the government in the eyes of indigenous peasants predisposed them to align with Church leaders and other indigenous peasants, thus aiding in the formation of regional indigenous confederations.[62]

The apogee of Christian missionaries' mobilization of indigenous communities was in 1973 when they assisted in the foundation of Ecuador Runacunapac Riccarimui (ECUARUNARI – Ecuador Indians Awaken), the leading regional indigenous organization of the Sierra. After sponsoring a meeting of local organizations, Church activists and indigenous leaders founded ECUARUNARI. From the moment of its founding through the late 1970s and early 1980s, the organization underwent significant ideological transformations. Initially designed as an ecclesiastical organization that rejected the principles of communism, ECUARUNARI transformed into a formal indigenous federation that addressed both indigenous and peasant issues. Enjoying greater independence from Church activists, on several occasions ECUARUNARI forged tenuous alliances with indigenous peasants and workers. Despite the ideological tension present within the organization, ECUARUNARI presented itself as an "identity-based" organization that combined the uniquely peasant and indigenous concerns of its constituents under one platform. ECUARUNARI played a similar role to its Amazonian counterpart, CONFENIAE. By holding regular congresses, sponsoring elections within the directive committee of the organization and identifying the major issues of indigenous communities in the Sierra,

[62] Selverston-Scher, *Ethnopolitics in Ecuador*, 36-38.

ECUAURUNARI helped to bring indigenous identity to the forefront of indigenous peasants' fight for reform and recognition.[63]

Although both CONFENIAE in the Amazon and ECUARUNARI in the Sierra framed their movements as ethnic struggles, there was notable division between the efforts of these organizations. Responding to this division, indigenous leaders from both federations synthesized their efforts in 1980 when they formed the Coordinating Council of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONACNIE). Established in an attempt to coordinate the work of highland and lowland organizations, CONACNIE catalyzed the emergence of a unified national indigenous movement. CONACNIE embraced the diverse regional demands of its member organizations. After the first meeting in 1980, CONACNIE committed to reject the paternalism that played such a fundamental role in Ecuador's party system. Yet, the member organizations agreed to ally with international and domestic identity-based organizations that espoused similar ideologies. Two of the most significant accomplishments of CONACNIE were the legal recognition of indigenous names in the national civil registry and the expulsion of the Summer Institute of Linguistics from Ecuador, an ultra-conservative missionary group that hindered the preservation of traditional cultural practices of indigenous communities.[64]

The CONACNIE congress of 1986 gave birth to the most prominent national indigenous organization and social movement organization in Ecuador's post-colonial history. The Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE) functioned as a general assembly of all of the regional organizations in Ecuador, including the representative organizations from the Coast, the Sierra, and the Amazon: Coordinator of

[63] Ibid., 39.
[64] Ibid., 38.

Indigenous Organizations of the Coast of Ecuador (COICE), ECUARUNARI and CONFENIAE. The organization coordinated assemblies every two years in order to discuss the progress of the movement and elect new organizational leadership. Immediately after its founding, organization leaders identified the CONAIE's primary concerns, "to establish itself as an organization, balance the representation of the Sierra and Amazon, gain access to resources and establish the infrastructure necessary to guarantee its functioning."[65] CONAIE was positioned as *the* representative body of Ecuador's indigenous population and was set to utilize both institutional and non-institutional means to contest the exclusion of indigenous men and women from politics and from the economy. Throughout the 1980s, CONAIE acquired many supporters in their fight to promote indigenous issues. Anthropologists, environmentalists, international organizations and national political leaders all contributed to the expansion of CONAIE's demands and the development of its platform.

The organizational structure employed by the aforementioned indigenous organizations, CONAIE in particular, illustrated the marked shift in the nature of indigenous resistance that took place in the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s. While the organizations employed highly westernized structures, including the implementation of hierarchical power structure of presidents, vice-presidents and secretaries, they successfully incorporated traditional means of organizing. They managed to infuse their political identity with their communal identity, a feat that would have been unthinkable under the corporatist government. CONACNIE, for example, explained that its most important objective was "to reject the paternalism and manipulation of political parties, missionaries and other institutions."[66] While they worked within the system that had repressed them for so many

[65] Ibid., 40.
[66] Ibid., 38.

years, they never lost touch of their traditional roots and the distinctly ethno-cultural nature of their agenda. By creating formal movement organizations, indigenous activists were able to synthesize their regional efforts under one collective organization, an approach that respected their traditional customs and methods of community organizing.

The decision made by movement leaders to use ethnicity in their political discourse made their struggle both more dynamic and more problematic. Their new political identity represented a confluence of the historical, political and social realities of indigenous communities. By asserting an indigenous identity publicly, indigenous communities affirmed a historical consciousness that recognized their marginalization since the Spanish conquest. The assumption of an indigenous identity forced the indigenous community to negotiate with the overtly racist ideas and stereotypes present within Ecuadoran society. This decision, whilerisky , would prove to be pivotal in the future success, expansion and professionalization of the movement.

In many respects the ethnocentric political identity employed by indigenous communities in the late 1970s and early 1980s resembled their former peasant identity. Being indigenous did not exclude indigenous men and women from being peasants as well. The class consciousness of indigenous groups remained an important facet of their identity. As such, their concerns still centered on land redistribution, increased access to agricultural modernization initiatives, social welfare programming and the termination of aggressive colonization projects in the Amazon. By incorporating identity into their platform, these concerns became more multifarious and, in turn, more accessible to domestic and international advocates. Ethnicity added a face and a history to the movement. Indigenous ethnicity fundamentally asserted their status not merely as factors of production in the

agricultural sector, but as a group of people with a culture, a common set of values and the right to equal representation by the government. "The idea of community," Pallares contends, "its survival and reproduction, lent tangible meaning to indigenous peasant's struggles, enabling the framing of what mestizo bureaucrats perceived as merely material demands into cultural claims."[67] Thus, cultural reproduction was a function of the integration of indigenous peasants into Ecuadoran civil society.

While the question of land was framed as the primary concern of indigenous communities up until the 1970s, land became a part of their broader fight for recognition and the right to cultural reproduction in the face of a racist and exclusionary government, in the 1980s. There were ample plots of land available in the Amazon as a result of government-sponsored colonization of the region. Indigenous organizations, however, identified their struggle as one that was larger than the redistribution of land. Concerned with challenging oppressive social relationships that inherently discriminated against Indians, the indigenous movement's platform extended beyond land reform and agricultural transformation. Indians demanded that the government acknowledge the five-hundred years of exploitation that indigenous communities had suffered. They called for the respect of traditional ways of community organizing and living, the development of bilingual education programs, the acceptance of indigenous peoples' rights to ancestral land holdings, and finally, in distinction to many other indigenous movements throughout Latin America, the recognition of a plurinational state.

In most cases, the government was not willing to concede the bold and inherently radical demands of indigenous leaders. Respect for traditional means of community organizing meant the loss of jurisdiction over certain communities in the Sierra and the loss

[67] Pallares, *From Peasant Struggles to Indigenous Resistance*, 40.

of significant plots of mineral-rich land in the Amazon. Bilingual education would entail a pedagogical shift for sizeable numbers of young people, a shift that could very well threaten the political and economic elite. Recognition of plurinationality met the most resistance from government officials. A concept, designed by indigenous leaders working within regional and national organizations, not only affirmed their uniqueness as Indians, but as Indians of distinct nations found within the Ecuadoran state. By asserting the need for reforms that were sensitive to cultural and ethnic concerns, indigenous communities were claiming Ecuadoran citizenship in a special way. They demanded that their government respond to their concerns both as citizens *and* as Indians. This notion of citizenship resembles the dual-identity mentioned in Chapter One, that is, one identity that respected their traditional practices and way of life, and another that appealed to national identity. These identities were by no means mutually exclusive. On the contrary, they made each identity that much more powerful and that much more dynamic.

Along with governmental resistance, indigenous organizations that claimed an ethnic identity also faced ideological and cultural resistance. Perhaps the most palpable resistance was the context of exclusion that had defined five-hundred years of indigenous history. Colonizers, authoritarian rulers, and designers of the modern state all systematically denied the legitimacy of indigenous culture. To affirm an indigenous identity was to oppose *la patria* ("the nation") and undermine social stability. The combination of elites' denial of access to lucrative agricultural ventures and the incomprehensibility of capitalistic agricultural production to indigenous peasants, helped portray indigenous communities as unproductive and dependent. Political scientist Melina Selverston-Scher accurately notes the consequences of this context of exclusion for indigenous men and women, "economic and

cultural exclusion reinforced the political exclusion of indigenous people that prevails in Ecuador."[68] The denial of the economic and cultural viability of indigenous men and women portrayed them as second-class citizens, living at the whim of powerful mestizos. Mestizo elites defined notions of citizenship and forced indigenous men and women to surrender to those identities. Indigenous communities, however, were more resourceful than elites would have expected. They utilized the new notions of citizenship to their advantage by creating farther-reaching advocacy networks and more well-coordinated movement organizations.

The modernization projects of the 1970s delineated earlier illustrate this concept effectively. After institutionalizing the agrarian sector that had been historically organized along racial lines, production became highly racialized. In doing so, the engineers of the agrarian reform legitimated the inequitable land-labor relations that persisted throughout the colonial, post-colonial and modern eras. Pallares describes this dynamic as one "consisting of wealthy white and mestizo producers who abandoned domestic grain production for revenue-generating producing, mestizo landowners of middle-size plots who ventured into smaller-scale but still profitable production and indigenous peasants who produce the substantially less profitable domestic grains."[69] Centuries of depicting indigenous peasants as unproductive members of the economy and second-class citizens permitted this type of racialized restructuring of the economy.

When taking into account the numerous forces working against indigenous peasants in the 1970s, the incorporation of an ethnic identity into movement discourse organizations was both wise and risky from a tactical perspective. While they risked not being taken seriously, they were also responding to a new trend towards peasant integration. The

[68] Selverston-Scher, *Ethnopolitics in Protest*, 76.
[69] Pallares, *From Peasant Struggles to Indigenous Resistance*, 53.

assumption of an ethnic identity was the result of this gradual process of integration that began with the corporatist state in the 1960s. Land redistribution first integrated indigenous *peasants* into the economy notwithstanding the fact that the government viewed them as factors of production, not as legitimate political actors. Unequal land distribution was not solely a problem that faced indigenous communities; it was a problem that faced the national economy, one that mestizo elites were charged with solving. Integration depended on a homogenous state, devoid of racial differentiation. Thus, those indigenous men and women who were integrated into the economy were integrated because of their class. The government intended to create a tangible and mobilized peasantry, free of ethnic ascription. By granting indigenous communities land titles and institutionalizing their agricultural practices and manner of community organization, they created a space, both physical and imagined for indigenous peasants to seek, and in many cases obtain, autonomy. This directly facilitated the emergence of indigenous political leaders who heightened their understanding of political agency and identity.[70]

Many of these men and women moved to large cities such as Quito and Guayaquil where they continued their education and gained further political experience. They, along with the other indigenous men and women who had migrated to urban areas, made the indigenous struggle more dynamic. Indians could not longer be identified categorically as peasants; they were a more diverse labor force and population than corporatist governments recognized. This fledgling diversity sparked a realization that Indians needed to embrace a public identity that respected their diversity and highlighted their versatility. The ethnic consciousness of indigenous men and women was born in the context of peasant mobilization in response to the antagonistic, macrostructural reform policies of the government. When

[70] Yashar, "Democracy, Indigenous Movements and the Postliberal Challenge in Latin America," 80-82.

highlands and lowlands groups recognized the similarity in their struggle, they were able to mobilize around a new identifier, their common ethnicity. As a result of this mobilization, an ethnic consciousness slowly began to consolidate as Indians recognized the racism inherent in the government's treatment of their concerns. They then took on a historical consciousness that recognized their oppression. They enhanced this consciousness with their unique understanding of citizenship. They demanded that the state be responsive to their interests.

The political platform of FENOC is a particularly illustrative example of the indigenous response to notions of citizenship at the national level. While the organization was comprised predominantly of indigenous men and women at the moment of its founding, ethnicity was not a part of its political rhetoric. FENOC was a peasant league that contested the unequal division of land in Ecuador. The fact that the organization was predominantly comprised of Indians did not affect the political identity of the organization. Expression of culture and ethnicity was reserved for the community level. Nevertheless, the indigenous peasants who worked within FENOC gained critical political experience that later informed their careers as activists and movement leaders. It was these men and women that later endorsed the incorporation of an indigenous identity when the government presented with them with the political opportunity to do so. They further created regional and national indigenous federations such as ECUARUNARI, CONFENIAE and CONAIE. These organizations, founded under the neo-liberal state, boldly embraced ethnicity in their discourse, demanding the recognition of a new type of citizen. The focus on individual responsibility further compelled indigenous men and women to act for themselves and reconstitute the perception of Indians vis-à-vis their public identity.

Ecuador's elite used *mestizaje* ("mestizoness") as a means of social control, political leverage and economic entitlement throughout the majority of Ecuador's post-colonial history. In order to challenge this exclusion, Ecuador's indigenous community needed to not merely assume an ethnic identity, but to challenge the pre-existing notions of the Ecuadoran Indian. They needed to rearticulate what it meant to be an indigenous man or woman, not through the eyes of the oppressor, but through the eyes of the oppressed. The Indian would no longer be the unproductive, dependent peasant who endured the exploitative policies of the landed elite. Instead, he would be an active citizen and a significant member of the Ecuadoran economy. By building pan-ethnic indigenous organizations that affirmed indigenous identity and united indigenous communities across Ecuador's diverse geographical landscape, indigenous people forged a new political reality that posited them as viable political, economic and social actors.

3 Indigenous "*Autodeterminiación*"[71]

Pachakutik and the Institutionalization of Ecuador's Indigenous Movement

While the political mobilization of indigenous communities throughout the 1980s incited greater concessions and recognition by the national government, indigenous activists' efforts to reconstitute their place in Ecuadoran society fell short. By incorporating indigenous ethnicity into their political discourse and responding to evolving notions of citizenship at the national level, they attempted to create a political space, both literal and imagined, that embraced indigenous concerns. "This reconstruction of an identity," asserts political scientist Catherine Walsh, "defined for its ethnic-cultural and epistemic difference and conceptualized as collective and political calls into question the notion of a 'national identity' and the colonial difference it has traditionally sought to mark and control."[72] Successful implementation of their agenda would have legitimized their status as both Ecuadoran citizens and as Indians. In certain respects, they did succeed. They mobilized the indigenous sector and created a highly visible political profile. The government could no longer categorically ignore the indigenous bloc. Government leaders even made conscious efforts to reach out to the indigenous sector in their policies. Yet, latent racism present within Ecuadoran politics and society hindered the indigenous community's ability to create this

[71] Translated as "self-determination," the indigenous community defined this concept as "the right that nations have to elect their own juridical-political system and model for economic, social, cultural and scientific growth, in a territory geographically defined within the borders of the new plurinational state." CONAIE *Proyecto politico de la CONAIE* "Definiciones para entender el proyecto politico" (Consejo de Gobierno, 1994), 52.
[72] Catherine E. Walsh, "The (Re)articulation of Political Subjectivities and Colonial Difference in Ecuador" *Nepantla: Views From the South* 3:1 (2002): 69.

political space. The pluralist recognition they desired could not circumvent the adversities they had been clamoring against for over thirty years. There was a major divide between what the indigenous community identified as inclusion and what government officials identified as inclusion. The newly "integrated" indigenous population, so-defined by the government, remained economically, politically and culturally marginalized.

For many indigenous men and women, the governments' acknowledgment of the pluricultural nature of the Ecuadoran state was both disingenuous and inadequate. Efforts to promote indigenous cultural reproduction throughout the late 1980s signified the folklorization of "indigenousness" and not its political authentication. Though the government did identify indigenous men and women as having concerns unique to the rest of the polity and as citizens that government initiatives often ignored, those efforts rarely corresponded with what indigenous leaders envisioned for their constituents. Policies concerning indigenous issues were imposed from the top-down. Countless land disputes remained unresolved. Bilingual education was implemented arbitrarily and with limited funding. Racism continued to be an oppressive institution in all areas of Ecuadoran public and private life. The expectations of greater access to political and social institutions were merely blind promises made by government officials. The government left indigenous leaders out of the reform process, a process from which they were intended to benefit.

In a political move unprecedented in South American indigenous movements, Ecuadoran indigenous leaders combined their grassroots tradition of contentious political protest with sophisticated movement organizations and institutional political action. They created a formal political party, issued radical manifestos, organized nationwide mobilizations and uprisings, fought to modify the national constitution, garnered the support

of international advocates, and engaged government officials in an ideological debate concerning the nature of indigenous identity. Movement leaders boldly proclaimed that indigenous political modernity was not an oxymoron; rather, it was an existing reality. This strategy led the indigenous movement not only to fight for pluricultural recognition, but for plurinational recognition as well. They sought self-determination within the Ecuadoran state as a means to gain greater control over the administration of their communities. Empowered with this new concept of indigenous autonomy, the indigenous movement reached an unparalleled level of cultural and political legitimacy that generated extensive ideological and institutional reform. Moreover, it contributed to the establishment of Ecuador's indigenous movement as one of Latin America's most prominent social movements.

Sociologist Amalia Pallares identifies this shift as one that addressed the dissonance between two different notions of indigenous nationalism: pluriculturalism and plurinationalism. Government officials did make a guarded effort to recognize the pluriculturalism of the indigenous community with respect to their unique ethnic concerns. Nevertheless, as the government began to address distinctively ethnic concerns, bilingual education serving as the most conspicuous example, they began to slowly regress from previously implemented class-based initiatives. Pallares explains, "while this new pluricultural policy was being pursued, economic and land policies that did not publicly address Indians, but greatly affected them in detrimental ways, were being pursued. Land reform cases diminished noticeably when the budget of the IERAC was slashed. In addition, colonization in the lowlands was increasing at drastic speed, leading to the dispossession of

several lowland groups."[73] As such, the government was still not willing to accept the multifaceted character of the indigenous community. Pluricultural recognition was a way to dodge fully tackling the question of indigenous representation. Indigenous leaders, however, refused to allow the government to co-opt them into accepting this partial representation. They sought a more comprehensive and complete representation that valued them as both Ecuadoran citizens and members of their respective indigenous nations.

The Rodrigo Borja administration that assumed office in August of 1988 utilized a pluricultural approach to handle indigenous issues. Early in his term, Borja established the Presidential Commission of Indigenous Affairs to serve as the official, legal representative of the indigenous community. The Committee arranged weekly meetings with CONAIE leaders and established a dialogue to discuss the relationship between the indigenous sector and the national government.[74] Ostensibly, this effort opened a space for indigenous leaders and government officials to design a workable reform program. In practice, this space was fictitious. Borja and his administration were merely paying lip service to the indigenous community and not actually committing to reform. CONAIE consistently complained that the Commission was unreceptive to indigenous demands and concerns, while the Commission labeled CONAIE demands as entirely unreasonable. Borja's promises were merely political maneuverings that offered expectations and initiatives that his government never realized. This experience left something to be desired for the majority of Ecuador's indigenous community. It provided them with the opportunity to think more carefully about their political identity and how to frame their struggle.

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[73] Amalia Pallares, *From Peasant Struggles to Indian Resistance: The Ecuadorian Andes in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman, Oklahoma: The University of Oklahoma Press, 2002): 189.
[74] Melina Selverston-Scher, *Ethnopolitics in Ecuador: Indigenous Rights and the Strengthening of Democracy* (Miami: North-South Center Press at the University of Miami, 2001): 62-63.

The monumental indigenous mobilization in June of 1990 was a direct response to this experience of co-optation. CONAIE and ECUARUNARI planned the uprising in April of 1990 at their biannual congress meeting and spread word to their constituents through their complex network of organizational affiliates. Thousands of indigenous men and women from the Sierra, the Amazon and the coast joined forces in Quito, where they occupied the Santo Domingo Cathedral in the colonial center of the city and staged a ten-day hunger strike. Indigenous people blocked major highways and roads throughout Ecuador and cut off the main water supplies to Quito. They refused to go to market, effectively dismantling the local economy. Dressed in traditional attire, indigenous men and women evoked a sense of combining the old with the new, the traditional with the modern. Wearing traditional attire did not signify backwardness; it signified the creation of a new and a sophisticated political identity. The contentious disruption caused by the uprising pressured government officials to support more comprehensive institutional reforms. The scale of the mobilization would never have been possible if not for the existence of formal movement organizations. The groundwork constructed by movement leaders throughout the 1970s and 1980s facilitated the wide-scale mobilization in 1990. The sheer number of indigenous men and women passionately engaged in what was a risky venture, both politically and legally, was evidence of the profundity of this uprising for the indigenous movement.

When members of CONAIE and the leaders of the mobilization issued a manifesto that delineated the sixteen concrete demands of Ecuador's indigenous community, a new phase of the movement began. Having captured the attention of national politicians and influential government leaders, they engaged in a debate, both ideological and legal, over the status of Ecuador's indigenous population. The first of the indigenous demands detailed in

CONAIE's mandate was the "declaration of Ecuador as a plurinational state."[75] The importance of this first and most controversial demand cannot be underestimated. Plurinationality, for the indigenous community, meant something more far-reaching and comprehensive than formal recognition of their culture. It implied changing the constitution to recognize the autonomy of indigenous nations within the larger Ecuadoran state. Indigenous communities wanted legal recognition of their special status within the state and greater control over the management of their communities. They called for the government to make juridical, economic, pedagogical and cultural reforms. One of their primary petitions was for the government to reconceptualize the notion of indigenous citizenship in national politics. Being indigenous was not merely part of an individual's personal or ethnic identity, but rather part of his or her political identity as well. This new indigenous citizen would become legitimate if the government took legal steps to support that identity.[76] The manifesto insisted that the government recognize the plurilingual, pluriethnic, pluricultural and plurinational character of Ecuador. It further sought to replace the objectification of the Indians with a vision of the indigenous community as an active subject in national political discourse. Indigenous people wanted to be treated as active members of the polity that participated in the construction of their own development.[77]

Other demands touched on land disputes and economic concerns, such as the "return of lands and the legalization of territories for the indigenous peoples, without costly legal fees." The fact that land disputes were framed in terms of recuperating and returning land was extremely important. It recognized the historical consciousness that the indigenous

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[75] CONAIE "Demands to the Government, 1990 Uprising: The Plurinational Mandate" *Ethnopolitics in Ecuador* (Miami: North-South Center Press at the University of Miami, 2001): 135.
[76] CONAIE "Indigenous Plurinational Mandate" (Quito, Ecuador: Casilla Central, November 1992).
[77] Pallares, *From Peasant Struggles to Indian Resistance,* 188.

movement had incorporated into its struggle. That is to say, that the land had been taken from them at the hands of oppressive governments and that they would not stop fighting until it was returned. They called for "debt pardon for all debts indigenous communities have incurred with government ministries and banks… immediate delivery of funds and credits currently assigned to the indigenous nationalities… unrestricted import and export privileges for indigenous artisans and merchants of artisan crafts." These specific economic mandates intended to grant indigenous nationalities equal access to privileges that non-indigenous Ecuadorans had enjoyed for years. CONAIE's platform touched on cultural concerns, in its words, "creation of long-term financing for bilingual education programs in the communities… national support for the practice of indigenous medicine… national legislation and enforcement of strict protection and controlled exploration of archaeological sites under the supervision of CONAIE." These well-thought-out and carefully stated concerns expressed the dynamism of the indigenous struggle and how it sought to reconstitute what it meant to be indigenous in Ecuador. Again, indigenous activists created a unique dialectic between the traditional and modern.

The uprising of 1990 was an important success for the indigenous movement. After a week of protests, market closures and blockages of principal water supplies, the government sat down to negotiate with CONAIE and other leaders of the mobilization. Rodrigo Borja's decision to open a direct line of communication with CONAIE after the uprising marked a significant achievement for the movement. It made evident the success of the uprising and what appeared to be the creation of a political space for the indigenous community in national politics. After this meeting, and subsequent ones with members of the Borja

administration, CONAIE officially called off the uprising.[78] Although the indigenous community did manage to establish a dialogue with the government, it was obtained through contentious protest, not through institutional politics. No legitimate, institutional avenues of reform opened after the 1990 negotiations with Borja and his advisors.

The end of the uprising and subsequent negotiations did not signify the end of the indigenous struggle. The year 1992 was an epic one for Ecuador's indigenous movement. Responding to the international commemoration of the quincentenary, the five-hundredth anniversary of the Spanish Conquest, Ecuador's indigenous population joined indigenous men and women from across the hemisphere in opposition to this celebration of exploitation and genocide at the hands of European colonizers. As Mexican anthropologist Hector Díaz-Polanco emphatically contends, "a festive commemoration of these events would be the equivalent of celebration the domination by force of the weak by the powerful (colonialism, imperialism), extolling genocide, ethnocide and unlimited exploitation, and exalting intolerance of ethnic and social cultural diversity."[79] Instead of celebrating the conquest, Indigenous men and women chose to celebrate the rich cultures that flourished before the arrival of the Spaniards. Ecuador's Ministry of Education and Culture sponsored a commemoration of the art of the pre-Colombian era, inviting dance troupes, artists and music groups from throughout Latin America to perform in Quito. Acclaimed Ecuadoran artist Oswaldo Guayasamín, famous for his melancholic portrayal of the hardships endured by Ecuadoran Indians, commented that the purpose of this initiative was "not to celebrate but to

[78] Selverston-Scher, *Ethnopolitics in Ecuador,* 59.
[79] Hector Díaz-Polanco and John F. Uggen, "Indian Communities and the Quicentenary" *Latin American Perspectives* 19:3 (Summer 1992): 6.

protest, to integrate America, to realize once more the memory of what America was before the Spaniards arrived."[80]

Not all of Ecuador's indigenous population focused on the eminence of pre-Colombian culture as a way to oppose the quincentenary. Some Indians chose to focus instead on condemning the abusive conditions that colonialism left behind. Members of CONAIE claimed that the same oppressive conditions that existed under colonial rule continued to afflict the indigenous community. While contemporary government leaders disguised the abuse of indigenous men and women with democratic rhetoric, Indians were still slaves to the economic and political elite. In an effort to denounce any celebration of the event or veneration of the *conquistadores*, CONAIE issued a statement demanding that "the government, the National Congress and the Supreme Court of Justice…express their lack of accord with the commemorations of the quincentenary, and ask an indemnity for damages of the Spanish government and the European Economic Community, which should be used for the benefit of he indigenous people and popular sector."[81] The only real way for the indigenous community to be emancipated from the shackles of neo-colonialism was for the government to award indigenous communities plurinationality and to accept their unique ethnic concerns. This would signal an important step towards legal recognition. Furthermore, it would mark a movement towards legitimizing their place in Ecuadoran politics and society.

Along with the refusal to celebrate the quincentenary, CONAIE and OPIP staged a march on Quito in 1992. Similar to the march organized in 1990, Indians marched from Puyo, the capital of the Pastaza province in the Amazonian lowlands, to Quito where they occupied a central plaza in the colonial party of the city. Members of OPIP protested the

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[80] Oswaldo Guayasamín and Frank Murphy, "Latin America Faces the Quincentenary: An Interview with Oswaldo Guayasamin" *Latin American Perspectives* 19:3 (Summer 1992): 102.
[81] CONAIE, "Indigenous Plurinational Mandate," 1.7.

government's premature termination of negotiations surrounding self-determination in Pastaza. For OPIP, self-determination meant legal recognition of the "law of customs," which existed in practice but lacked formal acknowledgement by the government. Without a constitutional change acknowledging their right to self-determination, indigenous activists claimed that the government was denying the legitimacy of these laws and the indigenous community as a whole. The government, on the other hand, feared that indigenous self-determination would negatively affect oil-extraction programs in the Amazon, threaten military presence in the region and compromise the already fragile democracy. OPIP and CONAIE activists assured government leaders that their participation in the planning of the extraction and transport of crude oil would not hinder economic development. If anything, it would enhance profitability for both the indigenous community and the government. They also guaranteed that they would not resist government and military presence in Pastaza; they wanted to work with the government to establish policies that were more favorable for all parties involved.[82]

The termination of negotiations was a slap in the face of the indigenous community and a setback in the progress achieved just two years earlier. While the government was willing to engage the indigenous community rhetorically, it refused to discuss indigenous sovereignty at the national level, or even to take indigenous political aspirations seriously. The fact that the dispute took place in Pastaza generated further indigenous indignation. Pastaza, home to the Peruvian border, held an important place in Ecuadoran national identity and pride. After Ecuador lost nearly half of its territories in the 1941 Peruvian invasion, Pastaza was the last bastion of Ecuador's Amazonian holdings. With no formal political backing for OPIP, CONAIE, and the numerous other regional indigenous federations in

[82] Pallares, *From Peasant Struggles to Indian Resistance,* 212.

Pastaza, indigenous leaders' ability to effectively negotiate with the government was seriously compromised. For this reason, indigenous men and women resorted to their grass-roots tradition of political protest. They arrived to Colonial Quito flaunting bright plumage, distinctive face paint and traditional attire, depicting themselves as the defenders of the rainforest and as instrumental elements of Ecuadoran national identity. Straddling the Peruvian border, their territory *was* an integral part of national identity. To deny the Quichua, Achuar and Shuar Indians the land to which they were historically entitled was to deny Ecuadoran national identity as well. Anthropologist Suzana Sawyer also notes that by "drawing momentum from the anti-Columbus quincenterary campaign and the environmental movement, they forged alliances with diverse sectors of the Ecuadoran and international community."[83] OPIP and CONAIE leaders highlighted Pastaza Indians' historical connectedness to and protection of the rainforest and in doing so, were able harness the support of domestic and international environmental groups, including Cultural Survival, the Natural Resources Defense Council, Wildlife Conservation International, the Sierra Club, the World Wildlife Fund and the Rainforest Action Network.[84]

This support proved to be extremely important. IERAC agreed to award the indigenous community 1,115,175 of the 2,000,000 desired hectares of land, while the government agreed to continue bilingual education programs, and even to recognize their right to traditional indigenous community organizing. Sovereignty, however, was an entirely different question. The "Indian" with which the government was willing to negotiate had no desire for autonomy. The government perceived indigenous men and women as passive

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[83] Suzana Sawyer, "The 1992 Indian Mobilization in Lowland Ecuador" *Latin American Perspectives* 24:3 (May 1997): 17.
[84] Alison Brysk, *Form Tribal Village to Global Village: Indian Rights and International Relations in Latin America* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000): 74-75.

peasants who were incapable of embracing modernity. The paucity of political representatives who were willing to accept the *real* Ecuadoran "Indian" was a formidable obstacle, one that incited serious strategic changes in the indigenous struggle. Grass-roots mobilization alone could not contend with the political hurdles that accompanied the fight for self-determination. The 1992 March on Quito helped bring indigenous self-determination to the forefront of national political debates and help realign the trajectory of the indigenous movement over the next five years.

The success of the 1990 and 1992 uprisings set the stage for yet another indigenous mobilization in 1994. Utilizing a similar strategy of relying on the regional federations to mobilize their constituents, indigenous men and women participated in road blockages, staged market closures, and marched to Quito. They mobilized in protest against two recent developments in national politics: the passage of the Agrarian Development Law and government plans to privatize the oil sector with the help of a $20 million World Bank loan. The World Bank's loan intended to spark further exploration programs in ten new regions of the Amazon. By privatizing the oil industry, private companies would have greater incentives to locate, extract and refine the rich oil reserves hidden beneath the dense jungle floor. Indeed, privatizing the oil industry in Ecuador would lead to increased development and exploration programs, but at a high cost for Amazonian indigenous communities. Threatened with the loss of their homes, destruction of their territories and disruption of the delicate balance of the rainforest ecosystem, Indians united in opposition to the privatization program.

Congress' approval of the Agrarian Reform Law in May of 1994, further exacerbated indigenous ire. The law carried many negative implications for the indigenous community. Its primary aim was the sale of communal land holdings in hopes of inciting higher

productivity levels. It also intended to consolidate the small parcels of land that the majority of highlands Indians cultivated. The government identified these plots of land as being far too small to be efficient and set out to create more expansive private land holdings. These measures outraged Sierra Indians. Having been denied access to arable lands since colonization, they argued that the lands that the Agrarian Reform Law would have reallocated had little prospect for increased productivity. Furthermore, as indigenous farmers provided seventy percent of the nation's food supply, consolidating their lands would have resulted in a terrible food shortage. The law would have also privatized the public water supply. This measure was particularly relevant to those farmers who worked in the cut-flower industry, one of Ecuador's leading export-industries. Nina Pacari, an important indigenous activist and politician, commented that the Agrarian Land Reform was both "counter-agrarian reform" and "reminiscent of colonial times."[85]

After the uprising, the government agreed to sit down with the indigenous organizations and discuss possible reforms to the Agrarian Reform Law. The government established a commission that was set to negotiate the proposed reforms. Committed to guaranteeing full disclosure of the proceedings and exposing the governments' intentions with the passage of the Law, CONAIE demanded that the proceedings be broadcast over public radio without commercial interruption. Indigenous activists also intended to dispel the fears that certain members of CONAIE were co-opting the indigenous community and siding with the government. Although the government did further privatize the oil industry, the indigenous community achieved significant reforms thanks to the negotiations that took place. Most importantly, the government consented not to touch communal land holdings and

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[85] Nina Pacari, "Taking on the Neo-liberal Agenda," *NACLA: Report on the Americas* 29:5 (March/April 1995), 28-32.

privately owned plots of farm land. They also agreed to "recognize the diversity of actors in the rural sector and the state's obligation to respect their cultures, forms of organizing and technologies."[86] Finally, the government formally acknowledged that water was a public resource that could not be privatized. "The uprisings illustrate," explained Pacari, "that our demands are beyond a concern for agrarian issues. The movement is focusing on the historic necessity of changing the rules of the political game: how resources are distributed, how the state is structure and how policies are formed."[87] These achievements put the indigenous community on the offensive and further demonstrated their ability to apply contentious pressure on the government.

Capitalizing on the political opportunity created by the reforms, CONAIE issued a formal movement document in 1994 delineating the extensive demands of Ecuador's indigenous population in no uncertain terms. Entitled "Proyecto Politico de la CONAIE" (CONAIE's Political Project), this fifty-page political statement was a powerful tool for the indigenous sector to redefine their regionally differentiated grievances as an interconnected, all-or-nothing collection of demands. That is to say, indigenous activists were not willing to accept partial reforms that touched on *some* of their grievances; rather, they wanted complete reforms that touched on *all* of their grievances. Activists ardently demanded that the government not pick and choose which reforms to implement. They refused to stand by idly while the government chose to address only those reforms that were convenient for their own political careers.

The document sets out by outlining the historical antecedents of modern indigenous oppression. It states that despite their "marginalization, oppression and exclusion," they have

[86] Ibid.
[87] Ibid.

still managed to recuperate a "political space that was usurped in 1492."[88] As stated earlier, the notion of recuperating instead of seizing a political space, or a given territory, was not merely a matter of semantics. Instead, it was a conscious effort to invoke a sense of theft of something that was rightfully theirs. The indigenous community was not fighting for land to which they had no title; they were fighting for land that that belonged to them centuries ago and that the Spaniards had violently stolen. The political platform of CONAIE defines the indigenous movement as "anti-colonial, anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist and anti-segregationist."[89] By taking this stance, they demanded the equal development of all sectors of the society and economy, and denounced the singular development of privatized industries or international agro-industries. They wanted to create a break in the cycle of domination that began with colonialism.

Indigenous leaders use the language of indigenous nationhood in their "Proyecto Politico" where they intended to provoke the "construction of a new state model and a plurinational nation."[90] The platform sought to redefine the Ecuadoran state as a nation of nations. CONAIE argued that the socio-economic state of indigenous affairs was mired in a neo-colonial order and needed significant restructuring. They maintain that the political institutions of the state were not tools used to ensure the representation and integration of indigenous communities, but rather tools used to subjugate and dominate them. They also use the language of the Ecuadoran constitution in the statement of their grievances by defining "equality, liberty fraternity and social peace" as fundamentals of Ecuadoran democracy. They furthered this statement by insisting that these ideals eluded Ecuador's indigenous

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[88] CONAIE, "Proyecto Politico de la CONAIE" (Consejo de Gobierno, 1994): 5. Translation by author.
[89] Ibid., 12.
[90] Ibid., 1.

population. They claimed that these ideals could never be reached without the formal recognition of a plurinational state in the Ecuadoran constitution.

The indigenous community recognized its reality as one very different from that of the rest of Ecuador's population. The specific circumstances that faced indigenous communities put them in a unique category of "citizens" that belonged to both the Ecuadoran nation and their respective indigenous nations. As independent nations, they worked to exact the right to "freely exercise and elect their own political system and model for socio-economic and scientific, cultural growth."[91] What mattered was transforming government power, not usurping it. The declaration of a plurinational state would create a more inclusive society, a society that did not solely cater to the interests of oligarchic elites. They identified their principal political ideologies as humanism, communalism, plurinationality, communal democracy, diversity, autonomy, sovereignty, independence and international solidarity. In utilizing classical philosophical, democratic and revolutionary ideals, they situated themselves and their struggle among history's great thinkers and intellectuals, working towards a more sophisticated political strategy.[92]

CONAIE's "Proyecto Politico" indicated a significant break with former conceptualizations of reform programs and representation by indigenous activists. Prior indigenous political declarations outlined the indigenous platform and stated the indigenous community's central concerns, but left indigenous men and women out of the reform process. Such declarations charged the government with the task of creating and implementing reform packages. The "Proyecto Politico" changed this drastically. In the third section of the document, "Plan of Action," CONAIE posits the indigenous population as important actors

[91] Ibid., 13.
[92] Ibid., 11-14.

in the reform process. After laying out the specific complaints of the indigenous community and describing the historical trajectory of indigenous oppression in the first section of the document, this section presents solutions created *for* Indians, *by* Indians. CONAIE offered a blueprint for the reconstruction of the political, economic and cultural landscape of Ecuadoran society. It expounded on each of the particular demands of the indigenous community with respect to indigenous political representation, economic stature and cultural reproduction. The laundry list of complaints found in the document do not simply state indigenous complaints, but offered solutions to those complaints as well.

The idea that indigenous men and women would be a part of the reform process and actually design the reforms themselves was a novel one. Indigenous activists took a leading role in fostering their own agency. While previous reform efforts engaged the indigenous sector politically, their agency ended at the level of the protesting their political, economic and cultural discrimination. By protesting, they made their voice heard in the national political arena. Yet, little was done to rectify the injustices around which they mobilized. Borja's Commission of Indigenous Affairs was a perfect example of this type of activism. Although the foundation of the Commission was a direct and positive response to indigenous mobilization in Quito, it did little in the way of solving the problems facing indigenous peoples. The "Proyecto Politico" was a departure from this type of activism. It combined their tradition of emphasizing their historical discrimination with an offer of concrete measures that would end that discrimination.

The final section of the document, entitled "Definiciones Para Entender el Proyecto Politico" ("Definitions to Understand the Political Project") is evidence of the movement's effort to redefine the status of the Indian in Ecuador. Racism and discrimination was so

deeply ingrained in the national political culture that CONAIE needed to redefine the language with which they discussed their struggle. Fearing that *castellano*[93] might not accurately represent their demands, they amended their political platform with a glossary of important terms. The definitions presented in this section affirmed indigenous culture and agency. For example, when defining indigenous nationalities, they state "we are the indigenous peoples that have the same origin, a common history, our own languages and that are governed by our own laws, customs, believes and forms of social, economic and political organization in our territories. We fight politically for the recovery of our individual and collective rights as people."[94] They empowered themselves by redefining the language employed, not simply relying on popular understandings of the terms. By creating a new lexicon to complement the new conception of what it meant to be indigenous, CONAIE took a step towards rearticulating indigenous identity both politically and culturally.

The formation of the indigenous movement's first formal political party, Movimento de Unidad Plurinacional Pachakutik – Nuevo País (Unified Plurinationality Movement – Pachakutik New Country), had a similar objective. The name, meaning "new country" in Quechua and Spanish respectively, was a bold statement against the political reality of the nation. Indigenous activists attempted to create a new nation that respected the political and cultural rights of indigenous peoples. It further invoked a sense of "returning to the good times" that existed prior to the conquest.[95] Serving as the political arm of the movement, Pachakutik – Nuevo País set out to work within the institutional framework of Ecuadoran politics to fight for more comprehensive representation and a return to the freedom and

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[93] The Spanish language is commonly referred to as c*astellano* throughout Ecuador and much of Latin America.
[94] CONAIE, "Proyecto Politico", 51.
[95] Luis Macas and Pablo Dávalos, "Documento de base ideológico política del Movimiento de Unidad Plurinacional Pachakutik Nuevo País" II Congreso del MUPP, July 2001. www.pachakutik.org.ec/archivos/congreso1.htm: 5.

equality that indigenous peoples once enjoyed. Pachakutik united indigenous people, peasants, unionized workers, Afro-Ecuadorans, environmentalists and even embraced women's and youth groups. As Walsh maintains, "this new ethnic alliance, begun with Pachakutik, placed an emphasis on shared social, economic, political conditions and used cultural identity politics in a strategic way that not been previously seen in the country or in the region." [96] It committed to building an electoral base at the local level and to steadily working its way into the national political arena. Pachakutik defined one of its primary goals as the "search for consensus as a new form of constructing democracy."[97] The principle of consensus was an important one for the indigenous community that dated back their pre-colonial legacy. They argued that without consensus, a community could not exist.

The delay in indigenous participation in electoral politics until 1996 was largely due to the pervasive fear of becoming involved in the bureaucracy and corruption of Ecuadoran politics. Yet, important alliances with influential mestizo and white elites that indigenous activists solidified in the early 1990s made the institutionalization of the movement a more attractive and feasible alternative. In 1996, CONAIE backed its first candidate under the Pachakutik – Nuevo País ticket, Luis Macas. Macas, the then leader of CONAIE, won a seat as national deputy (the equivalent of a US Congressman) thanks to the broad support of the indigenous sector. Macas represented a new breed of indigenous activists. He, along with other members of Pachakutik including Nina Pacari, worked within the institutional framework of Ecuadoran politics to fight for more comprehensive representation. University educated, politically experienced and internationally renowned, these leaders would bring the movement to a new level of political sophistication and organization. Familiar with other

[96] Walsh, "The (Re)articulation of Political Subjectivities and Colonial Difference in Ecuador," 71.
[97] CONAIE, "Proyecto Politico," 7.

social movements fighting for autonomy throughout Latin America, the Zapatista case in particular, Macas and other party leaders carefully planned the steps of the indigenous movement with the international community in mind.[98] Macas explained that the difference between indigenous representatives and traditional Ecuadoran politicians was that, "[indigenous] proposals come from the people…they are a collective effort, a collective force. They are the result of uprisings, struggles, the marches of our people. This then transforms itself into a political proposal, into a government program."[99] Macas spoke of the unique combination of institutional and grassroots politics employed by the indigenous movement and how Pachakutik represented the collective voice of the indigenous sector. Highland, lowland and coastal Indians were all represented under the Pachakutik ticket.

While the creation of Pachakutik – Nuevo País left many of the national indigenous federations with a dearth of effective leadership, it made a serious impact on indigenous participation in electoral politics.[100] Aside from increased electoral participation in the 1996 elections and victories in all but one of Ecuador's twenty-two provinces, the creation of Pachakutik – Nuevo País marked the polarization of the indigenous and non-indigenous voting blocs. The "indigenous sector" became both more important and more identifiable to national politicians. What was once a loosely defined group of individuals with similar cultural practices and a common ethnic heritage, transformed into a powerful voting body. The political space created after the 1990, 1992 and 1994 uprisings was expanded in 1996 with the creation of Pachakutik. The indigenous sector successfully combined its legacy of

[98] Luis Macas, Interview by Oswaldo Leon. Fourth Congress of CONAIE Decmeber 15-18 1993. http://conaie.nativeweb.org/conaie.html
[99] Luis Macas, "Self-Determination and Territory – Pachakutik-Nuevo País; Breaking New Ground in Ecuadoran Politics – Interview with Luis Macas." Interview by Abya-Yala News. *Abya Yala News* 10:2: 18.
[100] Melina H. Selverston, "Pachakutik: Indigenous People and Democracy in Ecuador," *Native Americas* 15:2 (june 1998): 21.

contentious protest with a sophisticated, institutional strategy of challenging mistreatment by the government and by politicians. This strategy of utilizing two vastly different forms of activism simultaneously added to the already unique character of the movement. The dual-identity of the indigenous population as both Ecuadoran *and* indigenous was enhanced by the dual-character of the movement as one that utilized both grass-roots*and* party politics. The emergence of Pachakutik was an unprecedented political opportunity for the indigenous sector to gain leverage in both local and national politics.

Pachakutik, with the help of CONAIE and other national indigenous organizations, played an important role in overthrowing crooked president Abdalá Bucaram in 1997. Bucaram, the child of indigent Lebanese immigrants, took advantage of Ecuador's long history of populist presidents and won the favor of the working poor. Political scientist Carlos de la Torre commented that "in interviews and televised public appearances, Abdalá Bucaram present[ed] himself as a new Messiah, arguing that belief in him [would] bring redemption."[101] Bucaram spoke of the tension that existed between the working classes and the oligarchy, appealing to the resentment that his audiences held for the landed elite. Naturally, this discourse was quite attractive to the indigenous sector. He painted a picture of the rich as having lost their *machista* identities, succumbing to the effeminate, europeanized lifestyle. His virility as both a man and a politician was well received by the poor. After winning the election, Bucaram did little to challenge the oppressive social relationships that he condemned throughout his campaign. Capitalism, although "evil, immoral and antinational,"[102] was never directly challenged by Bucaram or by his government. Bucaram alienated many of his supporters with his peculiar antics and romanticized rhetoric. Feeling

[101] Carlos de la Torre, "Populism and Democracy: Political Discourses and Cultures in Contemporary Ecuador," *Latin American Perspectives* 24:3 (May 1997): 16.
[102] Ibid.

betrayed by Bucaram's false promises and rampant corruption, indigenous activists helped consolidate the indigenous sector, the working class, and other disgruntled Ecuadorans to depose Bucaram and his government.

Indigenous participation in the interim government after the removal of Bucaram from office was proof of the significant ground that the indigenous movement had gained throughout the 1990s. After the dissolution of the Office of Indigenous Affairs and the Ethnic Ministry by the interim government, members of Pachakutik and CONAIE helped to conceive of and implement the commission that replaced both agencies, the National Council of Planning and Development of Indigenous and Black Peoples (CONPLADEIN). [103] Many members of CONAIE and other regional indigenous federations held important seats in CONPLADEIN. One of the most significant achievements in the creation of CONPLADEIN was the right to conduct direct negotiations with the World Bank and Fondo Internacional del Desarrollo Agrario (International Agrarian Development Fund – FIDA). While this did not ensure more favorable World Bank and FIDA policies, it was a certainly a step in the right direction. It contributed to the nascent legitimacy of the movement and further strengthened the political space that Pachakutik had secured in national politics.[104]

Developments in the international arena also contributed to the progress of Ecuador's indigenous movement in the 1990s. Since the movement's beginnings in the 1970s, indigenous activists looked to form alliances with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and intergovernmental organizations, while simultaneously forging direct relationships with European governments. These entities provided the movement with critical financial resources and international recognition. Belgium, Italy, Denmark, and Switzerland became

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[103] Walsh, "The (Re)articulation of Political Subjectivities and Colonial Difference in Ecuador," 71.
[104] Ibid., 72.

some of the most important allies for the indigenous movement, providing aid either directly to movement organizations, the majority of which was allocated to CONAIE, or to NGOs that worked with movement initiatives. Those governments that provided direct financial support to the indigenous movement, sponsored bilingual education programs and facilitated the expansion of movement organizations themselves. Some governments, such as the Belgian government, identified with Ecuador's indigenous population and its struggle to achieve plurinationality. "Belgian foreign aid throughout the world," explains Political Scientist Alison Brysk, "emphasizes the promotion of ethnic minorities, a mission based on Belgium's own national identity as a pluricultural state and its commitment to international standards of indigenous rights."[105] This mutual understanding was extremely beneficial for the indigenous sector. Throughout the 1990s, the Belgian government provided Ecuador with an average of $10 million annually. About half of that aid assisted indigenous organizations and movement initiatives. Another important alliance that the movement formed was with the Danish NGO Ibis. Receiving 95 percent of its finances from the Danish government, Ibis provided direct support to indigenous organizations such as CONAIE and OPIP. In cooperation with the European Union, Ibis supported the development of movement organizations, sponsored bilingual education programs and funded several movement publications.[106] Brysk notes that, "the largest aid programs tend to be self-consciously apolitical and project-based and to seek development rather than empowerment."[107]

The UN's creation of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations in 1982, had a different aim. The Working Group proved to be extremely important in the framing of the movement. It designated 1993 as the "Year of Indigenous Peoples," responding to the

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[105] Brysk, *From Tribal Village to Global Village*, 121.
[106] Ibid., 122.
[107] Ibid., 124.

widespread protests against the quincentenary just one year prior. After the declaration, they issued a draft of the "UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples." This document, while still in draft form, was an ideological triumph for Ecuador's indigenous population. It provided the movement with a framework that defined their struggle as a fundamental question of human rights. In turn, their struggle became part of a global struggle that indigenous populations around the world experienced. It situated their movement in an international context of exclusion and discrimination. In Part One, Article Two, the document stated, "indigenous individuals and peoples are free and equal to all other individuals and peoples in dignity and rights, and have the right to be free from any kind of adverse discrimination, in particular that based on their indigenous origin or identity."[108] This statement lined up nicely with movement rhetoric, allowing indigenous activists to link their platform to a formal, internationally recognized political document issued by the United Nations. The document also mandated that "indigenous peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development."[109] As discussed earlier, one of CONAIE's primary objectives was to change the Ecuadoran constitution and award indigenous communities plurinationality, thereby granting them self-determination. The "Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples" was an important stepping stone to that end.

The indigenous community finally received constitutional plurinationality in 1997 when the interim government agreed to modify the constitution. The government directly

[108] United Nations Commission on Human Rights, "Discrimination Against Indigenous Peoples," *Report of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations in its Eleventh Session*. www.cwis.org/drft9329.html, Part One, Article Two.
[109] Ibid., Part One, Article Three.

addressed the status of the indigenous community as autonomous and plurinational and granted them the right to self-determination. The modification of the constitution in 1998 was the indigenous movement's most significant victory since the movement's inception in the 1970s. Section Five of the new constitution officially granted the indigenous community many of the rights for which they had mobilized throughout the 1980s and 1990s. The first article of Section Five granted indigenous communities the right to "define themselves as nationalities of ancestral races" and that they would contribute to the formation of the "Ecuadoran state, united and indivisible."[110] This statement attempted to reroute the course of the treatment of indigenous peoples in Ecuador. It sought to include and embrace the indigenous sector as vital parts of national identity and national citizenship. The unique confluence of ethnicities, cultures, and histories made the indivisibility of the Ecuadoran state possible.

In addition to being awarded plurinationality, the indigenous community gained a group of "collective rights" that touched on cultural, political, ideological and educational demands. Culturally, the indigenous community was guaranteed the right to "maintain, develop, and fortify their spiritual, cultural, linguistic, social, political and economic identity and traditions." [111] This clause legally legitimized the right to cultural reproduction among Ecuador's indigenous nationalities and marked a revalorization of the importance of indigenous culture to Ecuadoran society. This right vowed to protect the traditional medicinal practices of the indigenous community and respect their titles to their sacred and ritual territories. This marked an explicit acceptance of the importance and validity of these

[110] "Constitución Política de la República de Ecuador, 1998." www.georgetown.edu/pdba/Constitutions/Ecuador/ecuador98.html. Chapter 5, Article 83. Translation by author.
[111] Ibid., Article 84.1. Translation by author.

practices and, at least legally, dispelled some of the stereotypes that indigenous practices were primitive and ineffective. The indigenous community was also ensured the right to be "consulted about plans and programs" dealing with the use and exploitation of renewable and nonrenewable "natural resources found on their lands."[112] Primarily a concern of Amazonian indigenous groups threatened by large oil companies and other developers searching for rich mineral deposits, this right would make certain that the government consider the well-being of indigenous communities before recklessly destroying their territories. They were also guaranteed the right to "conserve and promote their traditional forms" of community organization. The 1990 March on Quito staged by CONAIE and Indians from across Ecuador was an attempt to receive this recognition formally. As noted earlier, the "law of customs" was not sufficient. They demanded full, constitutional self-determination. Finally, they were guaranteed the ability to "participate, through representatives, in the official organisms that determine the law."[113] This clause of the constitution legitimized the political space created by Pachakutik as well as by the various contentious political mobilizations that took place over the course of their struggle.

The 1990s was a decade of significant advancements and political transformations for Ecuador's indigenous movement. New conditions that arose from increased access to political institutions, agrarian reform efforts, international alliances, controversial oil-extraction programs and the proliferation of formal indigenous organizations led to the sophistication of the indigenous movement's strategy. Local struggles over issues of racism and discrimination were translated into the language of national citizenship and international human rights. The 1992 march on Quito illustrates this dynamic effectively. Plans for

[112] Ibid., Article 84.3. Translation by author.
[113] Ibid., Article 84.13. Translation by author.

increased government presence in Pastaza aimed at implementing oil exploration programs and the refusal to grant indigenous communities self-determination forced OPIP to stage a protest. Challenging the traditional belief that being indigenous was inconsequential to citizenship, Indians insisted exactly the opposite. For them, being a citizen *was* being an Indian. Furthermore, being an Ecuadoran required harboring a respect for the indigenous community and its rights. Indigenous activists transformed indigenous identity into a political weapon, speaking in terms of their stature as protectors of the rainforest and inhabitants of the last frontier of the Ecuadoran Amazon. They reconstituted what it meant to be indigenous in Ecuador as something that embraced modernity and demanded equal representation.

The emergence of Pachakutik and its eventual electoral successes further illuminated the ground gained by the movement in the 1990s. Influential indigenous thinkers attempted to legitimate a new political identity for the indigenous community that combined their longstanding tradition of grassroots protest with participation in institutional and electoral politics. By creating a political identity that the government legally acknowledged and that occupied its own justifiable political space, they solidified their own identity as one that was compatible with modernity and Ecuadoran citizenship. Indigenous issues became important for the stability of Ecuador's democracy and to the prosperity of its economy. The modification of the constitution and declaration of plurinationality was the result of the pressure that the indigenous community was able to apply with their newfound political agency. Plurinationality represented the marriage of the material and cultural demands of the indigenous community. It further represented their centuries-long struggle for equal rights and self-determination that began in the Spanish colony, resurfaced in the 1970s, gained ground in the 1980s, and redefined citizenship in the 1990s. The marriage of the cultural

with the material made their struggle one worth fighting for *and* one capable of rewriting history.

Conclusion

Over the last thirty years, indigenous activists have radically modified the popular conception and status of indigenousness in Ecuador. Capitalizing on the shift away from corporatism and towards neo-liberalism in national political ideologies, they defined their struggle alongside these evolving notions of citizenship. By working within both the institutional framework of the Ecuadoran government and applying contentious pressure by staging massive indigenous mobilizations, they emphatically challenged the government to take indigenous demands seriously. In doing so, indigenous activists created a space that legitimated indigenous modernity and promoted indigenous cultural reproduction. Throughout the fight for agrarian reform in the 1970s and 1980s, the foundation of indigenous organizations throughout the 1980s, the struggle for more comprehensive bilingual education programs, and the entrance into national politics in the 1990s, indigenous men and women have asserted their political modernity along with their rich cultural heritage. Ecuador's indigenous community stands as one of the few indigenous populations in South America capable of combining the traditional with the modern.

Although Ecuador's elite historically used indigenousness as a means of social control and oppression, Ecuador's indigenous community reapproriated the term and challenged this racist conception of the Indian. By participating in national politics and founding Pachakutik – Nuevo País, they presented a picture of the Indian as an active citizen who played an important role in politics. The electoral victories of influential indigenous leaders confirmed the success of the movement in terms of indigenous political representation. In fighting for

land reform and the preservation of the rainforest, Indians posited themselves as important players in the Andean, Amazonian and coastal economies. They formed pan-ethnic indigenous organizations to protect their economic interests and highlight the heterogeneity and solidarity of the various indigenous nationalities that live in Ecuador. The modification of the constitution in 1997 and the subsequent redefinition of Ecuador as a plurinational state was the result of the pressure that the indigenous community applied with its newfound political agency. Plurinationality, a political ideology that combined both the material and cultural demands of the indigenous community, was one of the great triumphs of the movement, the culmination of centuries-long struggle for more equal representation.

Ecuador is not the only nation in South America that is home to a substantial number of indigenous peoples, nor is it the only nation that has had an indigenous movement. Bolivia, Perú, and Brazil, to name a few, have had significant indigenous mobilizations throughout the second-half of the twentieth century. In each of these cases, the indigenous sector mobilized along class, ethnic and partisan lines, reminiscent of their Ecuadoran counterparts. They, too, contested their exclusion from national politics. They, too, fought for autonomy. Yet, while these have been important social movements in their own right, they did not have as significant of an impact on the national political economy as did the Ecuadoran movement.

The question then proceeds, what set Ecuador's indigenous movement apart from other movements? Why is the indigenous movement in Ecuador of such monumental importance for indigenous communities throughout Latin American? For one, the results of indigenous mobilizations in other nations were far less transformative and long-lasting than they were in Ecuador. Whether because of repressive military regimes, lack of effective

leadership, or the absence of the political opportunities necessary to garner wide-spread support, these movements did not transform their governments and cultures to the degree that Ecuador's indigenous community did. Moreover, no movement has accomplished such radical governmental reforms, plurinationality serving as the most extraordinary example, and attracted as much international attention. The long legacy of populism in Ecuador, albeit corrupt, made wide-scale mobilization a feasible alternative for indigenous people. Indigenous activists capitalized on the pluralism present within partisan politics to create an institutional avenue for reform. Without the threat of violent military repression, as has been in Guatemala and for the most part Bolivia and Perú, there has been a very real and feasible opportunity for Ecuadoran Indians to mobilize in the halls of congress *and* in the streets of Quito. The movement in Ecuador has been highly organized, relying on a complex network of regional and national indigenous federations. The near-statistical majority of Indians that comprise the Ecuadoran population helped make this possible. Numbers alone, however, do not explain the depth and breadth of the movement. The indigenous community's ability to capitalize on its diversity led to its successes. Home to eleven nationalities with distinct ethnic, cultural and economic concerns based on the geography of their regions, their struggle had a more far more diverse and multifarious face. Appealing to human rights groups, environmental groups, and inter-state organizations, they were able to take advantage of this diversity.

Although Ecuador's indigenous movement has made remarkable progress over the last thirty years, its struggle is far from over. After winning seventeen out of the one-hundred congressional seats up for election in the 2002 national elections and many more seats at the local level, unprecedented numbers of indigenous men and women from across Ecuador

assumed office. The alliance formed between Pachakutik – Nuevo País and the left-leaning Partido Sociedad Patriotica (PSP – Patriotic Society Party) led to what seemed to be yet another victory for the indigenous community, the election of the leader of the PSP, Lucio Gutiérrez. Once Gutiérrez assumed office, however, his election proved to be anything *but* a victory for the indigenous community. He reneged on many of the promises that he made to the indigenous bloc throughout his campaign, including a firm commitment to the platforms of Pachkutik – Nuevo País and CONAIE. His unexpected alliance with the right-centrist Partido Social Cristiano (PSC - Christian Socialist Party) further outraged the indigenous community. Reminded of their experience of cooptation by Abadalá Bucaram in 1997, indigenous leaders refused to allow the government to take advantage of its indigenous citizens. They responded to Gutiérrez's false promises in the summer of 2003 when they broke their alliance with the PSP, condemned Gutiérrez's government and vacated their seats in national congress.

Their exit from Congress, a dramatic move intended to send a bold message to Gutiérrez and the indigenous movement's allies is a *prime* example of the political strategy that has been so successful for Ecuador's indigenous community. The combination of institutional political protest with contentious protest, modern demands with traditional means of contestation, has kept the government on its toes. Unfulfilled promises and attempts to placate indigenous organizations are no longer effective means of addressing indigenous demands. The ability of the movement to transform its stature in the face of the government is promising.

Appendix: Acronyms

COICE	Coordinator of Indigenous Organizations of the Cost of Ecuador (Coordinadora de Organizaciones de la Costa Ecuatoriana)
CONACNIE	Coordination Council of Indigenous nationalities of Ecuador (Consejo de Coordinación Nacional de las Naciones Indígenas)
CONAIE	Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (Confederación de las Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador)
CONFENIAE	Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of the Ecuadoran Amazon (Confederación de Nacinoalidades Indígenas del Ecuador
CONPLADEIN	National Council of Planning and Development of Indigenous and Black Peoples
ECUARUNARI	"Ecuador Runacunapac Riccharimui" (Ecuador Indians Awaken – the
FEI	Indigenous Federation of Ecuador (Federación Indígena del Ecuador)
FENOC	National Federation of Campesino Organizations (Federación Nacional de Organizaciones Campesinas)
FODERUMA	Marginal Rural Development Fund (Fondo de Desarrollo Rural Marginal)
FOIN	Federation of Indigenous Organizations of Napo (Federación de Organizaciones Indígenas del Napo)
IERAC	Ecuadoran Institute for Agrarian Reform and Colonization (Instituto Ecuatoriano de Reform Agraria y Colonización)
OPIP	Organization of Indigenous Peoples of Pastaza (Organización de Pubelos Indígenas de Pastaza)
Pachakutik	Unified Plurinationality Movement: Pachakutik New Country
PSE	Ecuadoran Socialist Party (Partido Socialista Ecuatoriano)

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