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Identity Politics in Ecuador: Trapped Between Gender & Ethnicity

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Introduction

During a workshop on gender equality in Ecuador, a group of indigenous women leaders unanimously refused to self-identify as feminists. Participants were a heteroclitic group of young and old women from rural and urban areas, combining illiterate and university graduates leaders working from health to politics. There were two common denominators among them: they were all indigenous to the highlands and they were all women who advocated women rights, many becoming regional icons of gender empowerment. Yet they unanimously rejected the gender label, rather identifying their struggle with ethnic disenfranchising. What identities prevail – and when? Identities may overlap, but they also carry different opportunities. As indigenous women carefully navigate their multiple identities to negotiate political opportunities, they value strategic ethnicity over gender.

The emergence of indigenous movements in Latin America stirs widespread attention and support. From Mexico to Bolivia, ethnic mobilization fascinated scholars from anthropology to political science over the last two decades (Yashar 2005; Postero 2007; Canessa 2007; Van Cott 2008; Jung 2008). A vast literature now traces the mobilization of indigenous movements and the consolidation of ethnic parties. Ethno-politics is particularly tangible in Ecuador, where a strong indigenous movement engaged in formal politics in 1996. The indigenous party Pachakutik has become a key player on the political-stage, dominating regional governments and influencing congressional and presidential outcomes (Van Cott 2005; Becker 2008). As indigenous voices echo

claims for social justice and the redistribution of resources, ethnicity became emblematic of the long struggle against inequality.

Inequality is undeniably one of the most pervasive challenges of Latin America, and one indigenous peoples have faced for centuries. Yet, inequality is complex and multifaceted, rooted in a mosaic of factors, many of which lacking the political appeal to translate into electoral attractiveness. Whereas ethnic identities gain political momentum from Venezuela to Bolivia, gender is less used to tackle inequality. The fact that certain sources of inequality are engaged more consistently than others in discourses on social justice raises the question whether some identity markers are more valuable than others. Ethnic politics seem more attractive than gender politics, even though they both advocate equality of opportunities and the end of discrimination. Indigenous women experience both ethnic and gender inequalities, yet it is their ethnic identity they emphasize to the detriment of gender. How can we understand the prevalence of one sort of identity politics over the other, if gender and ethnicity both call for the redress of inequalities? This essay evaluates politics of identity in Ecuador. Based on the theoretical argument laid out by Coate and Thiel, I challenge conceptions of politics as fixed and cohesive to argue that identities are negotiated in multiple political geographies. Through the interaction of domestic grass-root mobilizations and international norms, identity politics acquire a global legitimacy, thus translating into international political capital.

This chapter explores the identity politics of Ecuador's indigenous women in three tempos. First, I analyze the 'glocal' making - and meaning- of ethno-politics in Ecuador, bridging a local history of mobilization with the instrumentalization of emerging global norms and opportunities. Second, I reveal the gender gap within indigenous politics, mapping how indigenous women negotiate the traps of their overlapping identities. Finally, I analyze indigenous' women's choice for ethnic identities as an intersectional feminism of their own making.

The 'Glocal' Making of Ethno-politics

The making of ethno-politics has multiple geographies. In this section, I first retrace decades of indigenous resistance and mobilization across Ecuador to account for the emergence of ethno-politics. I then recognize the role of a growing set of international norms and policies to protect

indigenous peoples in making ethno-politics valuable. While indigenous movements grasped political opportunities, they also framed their politics of identity in a context of globalizing political discourse focused on ethnicity. This in turn enabled ethno-politics to develop enough legitimacy to become a viable political strategy.

Politicizing Ethnicity in Ecuador

Indigeneity echoes centuries of immeasurable suffering in the Andes. In Ecuador, peasants were kept in debt and labor exploitation through the *concertaje* system, enduring systemic physical abuse as hacienda owners disposed of indigenous lives at will (Icaza 1934; Lyons 2006; O'Connor 2007). As a matter of fact, indigenous families were sold with land properties—just as cattle—until the agrarian reform freed them of *concertaje* in 1964. This history of structural oppression is nevertheless accompanied by one of continuous resistance and uprising (Silverblatt 1987; Stern 1987; Lucas 1992). The roots of the indigenous movements now blossoming throughout Latin America are deeper and more complex than often acknowledged.

Marc Becker (2007) traced these histories of resistance in Ecuador from the first rural syndicates in the 1920s to the elaboration of an ethno-political agenda in the 1990s. The modern indigenous movement developed through constant mobilization throughout the twentieth century with key support from the socialist party in its first phase. As peasants dispossessed of land, indigenous peoples were natural allies of the international communist movement, and Ecuador's socialist party invited the workers to join their ranks. For the first time, indigenous peasants were welcomed as political actors. Socialists engaged indigenous voices in their congresses and helped develop organizational structures, such as unions, in rural communities. The convergence of interests between Indians, who needed a political voice, and the party, who needed to side with the masses, generated a socialist discourse advocating for the marginalized peasantry. The communist legacy remains very tangible in the grammar of indigenous politics. The word "*compañero*" is engrained in indigenous vocabulary, and indigenous leader Transito Amaguaña self-identified as a communist until her death in 2009.¹ Ecuador's indigenous movement, warns Becker (2007), did not emerge from socialism. It preceded it, and survived it as well, moving away from communism to adopt ethnicity.

Agrarian reform forced the democratization of local politics, a slow and conflictive process that started in 1964 and lasted into the early 1990s (Zamosc 1994). Claims for land rights soon developed into a larger struggle for recognition, bringing ethnicity to center-stage.² The making of indigenous citizens goes well beyond the political sphere, of course, and Maria Helena Garcia (2005) illustrated the dynamic process of plural identity construction. The political right to land gave birth to ethnic contestation. Without abandoning socio-economic claims, the social movement amassed collective and cultural grievances related to the condition of peoples. By the late 1980s, ethnicity had irremediably taken over class identity as the focus of reform movement in Ecuador.

The move from peasantry to ethnicity is not specific to Ecuador nor has it gone unnoticed (Albó 1991; Bretón 2001; Jung 2008; Canessa 2008). What is specific to Ecuador is the solid process of institutionalization and politicization that proceeded. There is now an abundant literature about Ecuador's indigenous politics (Selverston-Scher 2001; Van Cott 2005/2008; Becker, Zamosc 2004; Yashar 2005; Lucero 2006b, Madrid 2005). The tipping point towards ethno-politics was the founding of the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE) in 1986.³ After decades of local organizing, all indigenous organizations of Ecuador joined efforts into one national confederation. With ethnicity as its spinal cord, the institution brought Quichua peasants from the highlands together with Shuars from Amazonia. Although language on peoples took center-stage, CONAIE kept identifying as an organization of oppressed and exploited people, calling for popular unity against imperial capitalism (Becker 2007, p. 170). Ethnicity and class proved not to be antithetical but complementary in the indigenous movement— a key ingredient to understanding the attractiveness and lasting echo of Ecuador's indigenous movement.

CONAIE's major asset has been its mobilization capacity. It gained international visibility in June 1990 by successfully blocking the roads of Ecuador with more than two million peoples. This first *levantamiento indigena* (indigenous uprising) was a milestone in ethnic politics across the Andes, paralyzing the country for more than a week and mobilizing entire communities, women and children included (Almeida 1993). Mobilization persevered, and uprisings were used to pressure governments, or oust them, as in the cases of Presidents Bucaram and Mahuad. The state was forced to acknowledge this new political constituency and sit at the table with indigenous leaders. Combining organizational capacity with legitimacy, CONAIE became one of Latin America's most effective and internationally renowned indigenous

people's organizations (Van Cott 2005, p. 99). The series of *levantamientos* in the early 1990s was crucial in two ways: it restored a sense of dignity and self-confidence to indigenous peoples and it established the indigenous movement as a new political actor in national politics.

In 1995, the creation of the political party Unidad Plurinacional Pachakutik announced CONAIE's transition from the "politics of influence" to the "politics of power" (Zamosc 2004). The party experienced a meteoric ascent to power, getting three indigenous deputies to Congress and gaining local governments from Cotacachi to Guamate in 1996 (Peralta 2006). The party helped elect President Gutierrez in 2002 and secured five cabinet seats. Ethno-politics catapulted into the state machinery in a few years time. Deborah Yashar (2005) described Ecuador's indigenous movement as the strongest, oldest, and most consequential of Latin America. The achievements were many, from bilingual education to a ministry for indigenous affairs. Perhaps the most important was the redefinition of Ecuador as a "multiethnic and pluricultural" state and the recognition of ethnic collective rights in the 1998 Constitution. Through Pachakutik, CONAIE re-asserted its central role in promoting more democratic, inclusive politics.

Ecuador's indigenous movement is genuinely rooted in a long history of local resistance. It is, by all means, an endemic, national movement. But domestic politics are never isolated from international forces, and what happens in the global arena of the U.N. inevitably affects domestic change—especially norms protecting the rights of indigenous peoples. I now turn my attention to the international making of Ecuador's ethno-political scene.

International Norms Enabling Ethno-Politics

International norms and organizations designed to protect and support indigenous peoples have proliferated over the last twenty years. The international community adopted treaties, crafted institutions, appointed special rapporteurs and even declared an international day to celebrate the almost 400 million indigenous peoples of the world. Indigenous groups, in turn, learned to make strategic use of new international tools. International actors boosted ethno-politics in three major ways:

normative empowerment, economic support and a process of socialization to international politics.

The first—and most used—international norm to protect indigenous peoples consists of the International Labor Organization (ILO) Convention 169, adopted in 1989.⁴ The political principle advanced by ILO 169 is that of self-determination: it proclaimed indigenous peoples' right to participate in the state decision-making process and be recognized as full citizens while respecting their right to live according to their own structures and traditions. ILO 169 was the first international document to explicitly state indigenous autonomy, land rights, and rights to participate in development projects and government policies. Many of the few states to sign the convention were from Latin America. This legal instrument became a powerful tool for indigenous movements advocating for collective rights in the region. In fact, it backed indigenous calls for a pluri-national state and the legal recognition of autonomous forms of administration. It was a milestone for indigenous politics to ratify the convention in the 1998 constitutional reform: Ecuador became a multicultural nation that legalized indigenous justice. Indigenous groups gained autonomy, self-government, and the right to consultation.

The indigenous movement often used ILO 169 to protect their land, notably to contest President Correa's mining projects. In 2009, CONAIE filed a lawsuit against the state alleging that the new mining law was unconstitutional for failing to consult with indigenous organizations whose territories would be affected by mining activities. According to the convention, indigenous peoples should be consulted prior to programs of exploration, participate in the benefits, and receive compensation for damages resulting from exploitation. Indigenous peoples of the Amazon often used the norm to protest oil companies exploiting their territories. In 2005, Waorani women contested the intrusion of oil giants Petrobras and Skanska within the national park of Yasuni. The failure to inform the Waorani people and the meager environmental assessments forced the state to retreat permits for oil exploration. Both cases illustrate how indigenous groups use international legislation. Even when treaties are directed at governments, they can be used to increase accountability and institutional pressure against multinational companies exploiting indigenous territories for natural resources.

The United Nations (UN) started to address indigenous issues in 1982 with the Working Group on Indigenous Populations (WGIP), which became a normative tool for the construction of indigenous identity. As the UN slowly made place for indigenous voices, the WGIP

operated as a “think-tank”, reviewing national politics and international standards concerning indigenous matters (Muehlebach 2001). It was an institutional opportunity for indigenous peoples to develop international legal standards to secure their rights, and they pushed for an International Decade of the World’s Indigenous Peoples in 1994, aiming for a declaration. The decade called for international cooperation to address problems in the areas of human rights, culture, the environment, development, education and health - ambitious and far reaching goals that met little consensus and led to a second Indigenous Decade in 2005.

The two Indigenous Decades entailed political shortcomings, but they “mainstreamed” indigenous affairs into the UN system (Corntassel 2007). Participation of indigenous organizations in the WGIP soared from 48 in 1983 to 500 by 2005 (Corntassel 2007, p. 153). Since 2002, WGIP established a Permanent Forum of Indigenous Issues (PFII) to expand the organization’s reach, meeting every May in the condition of advisory body to ECOSOC. In contrast to the elitism of most UN organs, these forums were designed with an open attendance policy to allow any indigenous person or representative to participate in the annual conferences. Ecuador’s indigenous peoples were visibly present since the start. Nina Pacari, an indigenous leader formed in the struggle for land rights and former Ecuadorian Minister of Foreign Policy, was nominated to the PFII by indigenous vote. She made CONAIE’s voice heard at the core of the UN, advocating its interests and aspirations at the highest international levels. Pacari remains emblematic of the legitimacy of Ecuador’s indigenous movement both in domestic and international politics.

These Indigenous Decades, together with the WGIP and the PFII, strengthened indigenous politics in two major ways. First, they fostered transnational advocacy networks engaging indigenous NGOs to set agendas and influence policy-making (Keck and Sikkink 1998). Second, they institutionalized ethnic politics in the international system, with the multiplication of institutions and norms for indigenous peoples. The major legal achievement was by far the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, in the works since 1985, and finally passed in 2007.⁵ Although it did not contain new provisions on human rights, it re-affirmed principles of equality and non-discrimination, interpreting how international human rights legislation should be applied to indigenous peoples. It also provided universal recognition to self-determination (Article 3) and the rights to lands, territories and resources (Articles 25 to 30)—despite heated controversy and negotiation over the issue of territorial integrity. As with all UN declarations, this treaty lacks enforcement capability. It was nevertheless the first universal legal

instrument for the human rights of indigenous peoples, surpassing ILO 169 both in terms of content and ratification.

In addition to norms, international organizations provide resources. The World Bank prioritizes ethnicity in its portfolio since the early 1990s, issuing reports to assess the living conditions of indigenous peoples in Latin America (Psacharopoulos and Patrinos 1994; Hall and Patrinos 2005). In 1997, the first-ever investment project supporting ethnic identity formation in the Bank was launched in Ecuador. The Project of Development of Indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian Peoples (PRODEPINE) was co-financed by the government of Ecuador and the Bank.⁶ In Guamote and Cotacachi, projects financed capacity building and ethnic governance by channeling loan resources through indigenous federations (Uquillas and Nieuwkoop 2003). Today, the Bank offers regular workshops on topics such as governance and communication technology, trying to act as a “linchpin to strengthen the voice” of indigenous leaders across the Andean region (World Bank 2003). Ethnic projects are highly controversial and criticized by indigenous leaders as “ethnic neoliberalism” (Macas 2001). Whether it was policy conditionality or investment projects, the World Bank and other multilateral donors, such as the Inter-American Development Bank, did contribute to bring ethnicity into policy agendas (Carroll and Bebbington 2000, p. 218).

Finally, international organizations provided an arena to articulate indigenous agendas, building legitimacy by filling in the crevasses of international development. They also ignited indigenous socialization to global norms. Risse and Sikkink (1999) defined the socialization to international norms as the process through which a state becomes a member of the international society. As Ecuador’s indigenous movement grew present in international forums, it brought global standards and debates back into national politics, learning to maneuver political discourses to their advantage. ILO 169 and the 2007 UN Declaration reveal how indigenous delegates were able to make strategic use of their constructed difference. Indeed, Muehlebach (2001) explored how indigenous groups instrumentalized politics of identity to present their cultural knowledge as an ally to biodiversity in a context of global environmental concern. This strategic use of discourse helped validate their nations and territories at multiple levels. It also reveals the extent to which indigenous groups are socialized with the global politics of norm-making.

The case of Ecuador illustrates the model set forth by Thiel and Coate in this book, exposing how global dynamics play a supporting role in empowering indigenous identities in Latin America. Further, it

reveals the complex interaction between grass-roots and international organizations in the construction of ethnic identity. Identity formation builds not only from the bottom-up, through indigenous struggles, but also from the outside-in, catalyzed by international norms. As in Ignatieff's "rights revolution" (2000), the consolidation of indigenous rights brings moral prescription, which in turn leads to unexpected opportunities.

Ethnicity as Political Strategy: Indigeneity for Social Justice

As ethnicity was mainstreamed into national and international politics, it was assumed and celebrated throughout the region. In Bolivia, Evo Morales took ethnicity to the highest corridors of power, redefining governmental policies and inspiring others to run for office, such as Rigoberta Menchú in Guatemala. Ethnicity was paraded in electoral language and presidential inaugurations, and indigenous leaders turned into icons of democracy throughout the Andes. As ethno-politics became more attractive, almost fashionable, more people self-identified as Indians (Canessa 2007, p. 208). In Ecuador, ethno-politics acquired normative legitimacy, becoming a viable political project across parties.

Like human rights, ethnicity is becoming a barometer for democracy. Indigenous identity is a political achievement that encompasses the world's poorest and most marginalized. Indigenous voices echo those of the most dispossessed, the underdogs of the world-Galeano's "nobodies" (1989). In the global era of post-colonialism, indigenous identity is embedded in ideals of resistance, cultural diversity, and self-determination (Niezen 2004). Canessa (2006) argued that indigenous movements are not quintessentially about ethnicity. They really are fights for social justice and the redistribution of resources. Thus when Evo Morales proclaims "we are all Indians", he is siding the indigenous struggle with that of all excluded peoples in the world. Courtney Jung (2008) sees the moral force of Chiapas indigenous claims resting not on cultural differences but on the history of exclusion that is constitutive of indigenous identity. In Ecuador too, the indigenous claims for cultural rights are woven into the fabric of the fight against inequality, with calls for socio-economic redistribution, political participation, and environmental sustainability.

Ecuador's indigenous movement is aware of the legitimacy capital that comes with politics of identity. In a 1993 political declaration,

CONAIE defined its struggle as a frontal option against the capitalist system, hegemonic, and repressive, to solve problems such as unemployment, housing and education caused by discrimination. The movement identified with the history of resistance against ethnocentrism, aimed at “reestablishing the collective political and economic rights denied by the dominant sectors of society.” Advocating “integral humanism” through “reciprocity, solidarity, and equality,” CONAIE shaped a political identity based not on cultural difference, but on the common exclusion of peoples throughout the global south. The role of international organizations became explicitly clear: CONAIE self-identified as “an alternative political force at the national and international levels, recognized by international bodies and society in general” (CONAIE 1993). The grammar of Ecuador’s indigenous movements echoes the global culture against imperialism and neo-liberalism, coalescing into aspirations towards a new humanity.

Now ethnicity sells (Comaroffs 2009). As culture becomes commodified, countries like Bolivia learn to market ethnic authenticity to the world. But the attractiveness of ethnicity goes beyond the market, reaching into the political realm. Ethnicity holds a moral legitimacy stamped by international law – and legitimacy is a scarce political capital in a region where politicians are plagued by a credibility trap (Latinobarometro, Booth and Seligson 2009).⁷ In fact, when President Correa wears ethnic shirts and speaks in Kichwa, he is not expressing support for Ecuador’s originary peoples as much as searching for legitimacy beyond them. He is in fact portraying his political legitimacy as a leader for social justice and against neo-liberalism on the global media, addressing a broad, global constituency. The symbolic presidential inauguration in Zumbahua with Hugo Chavez and Evo Morales was a show-off rather than a celebration of indigenous peoples - most of who were barred from their own town square- or their movement -since Pachakutik decided against an alliance with Correa (Martinez 2009). The ethnicized inauguration of a mestizo president in Zumbahua defined Correa’s political branding on television screens and YouTube: surrounded by the radical left and the authentic Indian, embodied in the persona of Chavez and Evo, Correa visually situated himself on the global politics of resistance.

In times of globalization, democracy expands beyond national borders, becoming a cosmopolitan and post-national affair (Archibugi and Held 2001; Habermas 2001). Indigenous peoples make strategic use of international law, as argued above, turning into expert users of e-democracy (Niezen 2005). The global media is an important platform to appeal to their international constituencies, feeding public opinion and

building political identity (Coate & Thiel). It is through the web that Zapatistas garnered most support in 1994. In the global media, ethnicity is made tangible beyond borders, turning into a “realm of memory”—the selective recovery of the past forging new political identities in the present (Nora 1992). Identities are then weaved into ethnic motifs, such as dress and language. Whereas in Nicaragua “to wear *traje* is to say we are Maya” (Hendrickson 1995), in Ecuador to wear an ethnic shirt and speak Quichua with Evo in the background is to side with the oppressed peoples of the world. Correa’s authenticity matters in the global village, sounding indigenous and diverse (Brysk 2000; Bigenho 2002).

As ethnicity became a viable political project, it turned into a framing process to foster electoral politics at large. Scholars analyzed the making of ethnicity as a political strategy, instrumentalized for political profit from the Andes to South Africa (Albó 2005; Martínez 2006; Comaroff 2009). In Ecuador, ethnic credentials were interchangeably used by CONAIE and Correa, blurring the borders between culture and identity. Ethno-politics reward those who prove to be “more Indian,” paying limited attention to de facto representativity (Lucero 2006a). Earlier I argued that the case of Ecuador illustrates how ethnic identity can form from the outside-in as much as from the bottom-up. The multi-uses of ethno-politics make it instrumental not only for indigenous groups themselves, but for political actors at large in quest of political capital.

Ethno-politics took on the challenge to fight the inequalities that affected indigenous peoples. By assimilation, ethno-politics became one of the main banners of social justice in the Andes, often entangled with the discourse of the New Left. Yet ethnicity is not a stand-alone source of inequality. Gender explains poverty as much—if not more—than ethnic belonging. But if overlapping identities lead to the extreme poverty of indigenous women, they are not easily “overlapable” in the game of identity politics.

The Gender of Inequality

Ethno-politics is a major democratizing force in Ecuadorian politics. However, the political discourse on social justice has not consistently translated into practice, some actors lagging behind in the process of rights emancipation. Indigenous women, in particular, suffer high levels of poverty and exclusion, and seem to marginally benefit from the

formal, collective conquests of the movement at large. The stark gender gap prevailing within indigenous groups reveals sexist and patriarchal practices contradictory with the redistribution discourse of ethno-politics. Struggling for balance at the intersection of their gender and ethnic identities, indigenous women nevertheless opt to fight for their rights within the indigenous movements, stating un-equivocal preferences in the politics of identity.

Indigenous women suffer cumulated discrimination because they are indigenous, they are women, and they live, for the most part, in rural areas. Social indicators reveal very high levels of poverty, with bigger gender gaps in relation to income and more than 50 percent of the economically active women working non-remunerated jobs (García-Aracil and Winter 2005; Vasconez 2005, p. 276). Indigenous women's access to education is alarmingly low compared to national standards (Ponce y Martínez 2005), with illiteracy rates reaching 36 percent among women and 20 percent among men (Guzman 2003). In the province of Chimborazo, female illiteracy rates (31 percent) are virtually double that of men (17 percent), and ethnically marked municipalities such as Guamote show rates of functional illiteracy above 56 percent for women (INEC 2001). Indigenous women's access to health facilities is also extremely low, leading to high levels of infant and maternal mortality (CONAMU 2005; Guzman 2005).⁸

The participation of indigenous women in politics is another indicator of stark marginalization. Since the legalization of women's right to vote in 1929 (Morales 2009), women movements actively advocated for gender equality. The pressure for political parity during the 1990s achieved quota legislation emblematic of the consolidation of democracy (Herrera 2001; Lind 2005).⁹ The 1997 labor laws and the 2000 reforms of electoral laws established gender quotas for the electoral system, causing female participation in Congress to double (Guzman 2003; Cañete 2005).¹⁰ Laws tend to be only partially implemented (Htun 2002; Ugalde 2005) and women are still underrepresented in local politics -which disproportionately affects indigenous women (Cañete 2005, p. 144).¹¹ Although indigenous women participated actively in the mobilization process, joined the *levantamientos* with their children, assured logistical success, and marched in the frontlines against police blockages, their voices were silenced once the movement gained political leverage (Pacari 1993). Indigenous women are marginalized both from national and local politics, harassed at the polls (Q'ellkaj 2005),¹² and virtually absent from political offices. According to Nina Pacari herself (2004, p. 5),

gender quotas were, until recently, “imperceptible” for indigenous women.

The political confinement of indigenous women goes beyond state failure in securing their rights. Political opinions of women are trivialized and their work delegitimized, both at the individual and institutional levels (Picq 2009). One of the most puzzling political inequalities is that while indigenous women are required to vote like every other citizen in national politics, they are often silenced in community forums, where elections are usually organized on the basis of one vote per household. Women receive little opportunities to pursue political activities, having to combine family chores with professional responsibilities and even less encouragement from skeptic or resistant family members who perceive women in politics to be “public.” Reports abound of indigenous women being harassed verbally or sexually during political gatherings, notably during the uprisings in the early 1990s. Married indigenous women in positions of power are a recent phenomenon. At the institutional level, the indigenous movement aborted the emergence of the Council of Indigenous Women of Ecuador (CONMIE) in 1996, accusing it of internal division and betrayal. Sustained harassment led some of the founding members, including Nina Pacari and Blanca Chancoso, to abandon the gender path to accept a political career focused on ethnic rights within CONAIE. Discredited since its start, CONMIE survives as a marginal and disarticulated entity (Picq 2008).

One of the most pervasive problems affecting indigenous women, however, lies behind closed doors. Domestic violence against women within indigenous families and communities is extremely common. Violence, which comes in the form of psychological, emotional and physical aggression, is indigenous women’s “daily bread” (Cucuri 2007). Psychological violence, through verbal abuse, mistreatment, and threats, undermines the already low self-esteem of women who do not believe in their inner strength and individual capabilities. Domestic abuse appears to be highest among indigenous groups, with physical and psychological violence reaching 44 and 45 percent of families respectively, and physical violence affecting 41 percent of girls (ENDEMAIN 2004). Culturally, gender violence is tolerated as a part of life. Rape is often the first sexual experience of indigenous girls, constituting a significant problem their schooling (Cucuri 2007). The saying “marido es, marido pega” (as the husband, he can beat) testifies to the permissibility of gender violence in indigenous culture rather than women’s acquiescence. Physical violence is both intense and frequent, compromising women’s physical integrity, sexual and reproductive

health, and often putting their lives at risk.¹³ These high levels of violence result in growing fear and anguish, public health problems, and the erosion of trust in social relations.¹⁴

Women's basic human rights continue to be violated on a regular basis, and their socio-economic marginalization is a major impediment for their development and empowerment (García-Aracil and Winter 2005). The poverty of indigenous women is related both to gender and ethnicity, but also at its intersection: within ethnicity, gender considerably aggravates poverty. In some studies, gender accounts for 61 percent of inequality, whereas ethnicity only 23 percent (Ramirez 2006). Although indigenous women perceive gender inequality within their communities to be a major obstacle to their emancipation, scholars have yet to express any kind of sustained interest on the issue. Sarah Radcliffe did point to women's marginal access to rights, yet she too blamed the state for treating women as "as a problem rather than a constituency in its own right" (Radcliffe 2000, p. 4). While the state is responsible for not securing women's rights, I suggest that the indigenous movement is also to blame for pursuing and legitimizing discriminatory practices.

Women are perceived as the guardians of indigenous culture, the keepers of tradition. They are, in the words of Margarita Caizabanda (1999), "the key to the unity and conservancy of (collective) identity, traditions, education, and overall, of the Salasaca-Kichwa culture." Women have the capacity to create, transmit, and secure culture—thus ethnic identity (Prieto 2005). As their daily practices provide meaning to the cultural reproduction of the group, women are expected to be more "Indian" than men (Pequeño 2007), and their role as culture keepers can be traced from clothing and language to work and food (Weismantel 1988). As guardians of culture, women carry the responsibility of cultural preservation, an especially critical task in times of globalization inviting hybrid, blending identities.

Yet if women bear the responsibility for the preservation of culture, they are also prey to isolationism, cultural purity often reinforcing their social, political, and economic exclusion. In an ironic twist, the guardians become the guarded. Susan Moller Okin (1999) saw an intrinsic tension between cultural practices and gender because the majority of women's time is directed towards preserving family life and because most cultures aim at the control of women by men through personal law (1999, p. 13). Ethnicity as the essentialization of cultural differences is intrinsic to the private sphere, where culture is reproduced and inequalities are inherited. If women are crucial to the conservation of culture, identity, and ethnicity, they are also silenced by these same

cultural traditions. In Ecuador too, culture is commonly associated with collective rights, and the fight for individual rights is often accused of being non-indigenous and breaking with cultural patterns within indigenous cosmovision (Picq 2008).

One of the spheres where tensions between culture and women's rights become most visible is indigenous justice. Indigenous justice systems based on rehabilitation and communal practice are extremely valuable and have been successfully advocated by indigenous groups and human rights advocates throughout the region (Van Cott 2000; Stephen and Hernandez 2006). In Ecuador, just as in Colombia and Bolivia, traditional justice has been recognized by the constitution and is part of indigenous autonomy as codified in ILO 169 and the 2007 UN Declaration on Indigenous Rights. As much as traditional justice is synonymous with local democracy, it also entails stark gender biases, revealing the patriarchal face of the indigenous movement. The cultural realm is particularly violent on women, not only because it tolerates violence against them but also because it grants them very restrictive freedoms. Although arranged marriages are less common, imposed marriages in cases of pregnancy remain frequent. Indigenous justice's double-standards leave women with little individual rights, "taken care of" in private and public spheres, subjugated both to men and the community at large.

Ethnicity can be a double-edge sword, combining liberating and oppressive aspects. Indigenous women gained visibility and self-esteem in the marches of the 1990s, represented by ethno-politics and empowered with collective strength and confidence. Yet, ethnic emancipation has yet to improve their situation as women, notably in the daily practice of culture. Multiculturalism theories need to tackle the issue of minorities within minorities more closely, paying attention to internal accountability and the restrictions imposed on members within the group (Eisenberg and Spinner-Halev 2005).

The intimate and conflictive relationship between ethnicity and gender leads women to feel trapped between selecting one of two exclusive identities: being Indian in a largely mestizo society, or being a woman within patriarchal indigenous communities. Because indigenous women suffer marginalization in different arenas—the family, the community, indigenous organizations as well as the Ecuadorian society at large—either identity only provides partial protection. It is problematic to preserve a culture that encompasses "traditions" of violence, subjects women to heavy, unpaid workloads, and silences them. There are little alternatives outside the community, where they become excluded, facing restricted opportunities because of ethnic

rather than gender discrimination. Wherever they go, indigenous women are vulnerable to exclusion, whether it is for their ethnicity in the city or their gender in the villages. This tension between ethnicity and gender generates identity and political crises as they find themselves trapped in essentializing categories, unable to assert their plural identities to protect their rights as indigenous women (Stephen 2001; Hernandez 2002).

Their situation reveals a deeper tension between identity and citizenship, individual rights and collective rights. The struggle for women rights is, quintessentially, a struggle for individual rights that advocates inclusion and redistribution. The struggle for indigenous rights, in contrast, often calls for political exclusivity, increasingly advocating for differentiated rights (Htun 2004). The promotion of women's rights is rejected by indigenous politics as foreign to indigenous values, being associated with western individualism (i.e. capitalism). Women's rights are conflictive both for symbolizing a western inheritance and for clashing with the foundational myths of collectivity, solidarity, and reciprocity in indigenous cosmovisión. By rejecting politics of difference within, however, the indigenous movement denies the co-existence of multiple identities, within and beyond ethnicity. Whereas Ecuador's indigenous leaders consistently advocate the right to difference from the UN to Congress, it has been much harder for the movement to practice what it preaches within its own ranks.

As important as ethno-politics might be in the Ecuadorian Andes, it must not be taken as an exclusive identity. Gender also matters for redistributing opportunities, and it matters powerfully (Nussbaum 2001; Sen 2006). The assertion of multiple identities, however, coexists with the pragmatic necessity of group politics. Indigenous women are thus pushed to prioritize one set of rights over the other in their political agenda. In the messy overlap of identities and oppressions, they strategically mobilize the identity politics of ethnicity.

Playing Ethnicity, Advocating Gender

Indigenous women might be discriminated against and even left behind, accumulating various forms of oppression. That does not mean, however, that they do not fight for their rights. Indigenous women do mobilize and struggle to make their voices heard, trying to access spaces they are not invited to join. Their organizing might be peripheral and

lack structure, anchored in the local and barely tangible in mainstream politics, yet two aspects of their efforts are worth noting. First, indigenous women actively use international resources, both norms and organizations, to advocate for their rights in local politics. Second, indigenous women organize as Indians, not as women, favoring the identity politics of ethnicity to advance their rights.

The first particularity of the advocacy of indigenous women in Ecuador is that it actively instrumentalizes international resources. International organizations create unique opportunities to address indigenous women issues. In fact, they are one of the most accessible spaces for indigenous women, welcoming and encouraging them to discuss their concerns. Thus, it is a favorite venue for Quechua Ana Maria Guacho from Chimborazo. This determined leader never made it to the forefront of the indigenous movement. Her long trajectory of political leadership, from the agrarian reform to the uprising of the 1990s, discredited her within the community and own family, forcing her to separate and leave to the city. Her political activism was poorly supported in regional ethno-politics, yet her voice gained a global reach through the UN system. Every year, she attends the UN PFII, and her hard-work and expertise led her to be appointed as representative for the Latin American caucus in 2006 and co-president of the Global Caucus in 2008.

International organizations present in Quito constitute a steady source of support for indigenous women. The Andean branch of UNIFEM, based in Quito, has an office solely dedicated to indigenous issues. In 2007, UNIFEM organized a regional conference bringing indigenous women together to discuss traditional justice. Women from Guatemala to Bolivia had a unique opportunity to exchange and generate knowledge regarding indigenous justice (UNIFEM 2009). Gatherings like this are key political spaces for women to engage in debates that are either inaccessible or taboo within the indigenous movement. In 2009, UNIFEM also embarked on a project with Ecuador's Association of Women from Rural "Juntas Parroquiales" (AMJUPRE) to encourage their use of information and communication technologies and thus strengthen their advocacy networks.

The mainstreaming of gender *and* ethnicity in international organizations means that portfolios prioritize indigenous women projects. It is in that context that the indigenous women's association Nueva Vida (New Life) benefited from the UNDP Small Grants Program in 2002. It is also in that context that it became one of five projects in the world to be awarded the 2007 global 'Seed Award' by the UN Environment Program (UNEP), UN Development program, and the

International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). The award, which supports sustainable development projects, was granted to a small group of Quechua women in Lupaxi for recovering native tubers through organic agriculture to foster food security and counter migration to the cities.

The most interesting case of indigenous women organizing is perhaps the advocacy for gender parity within indigenous systems of justice during the 2008 Constitutional reform. The Network of Quechua Women of Chimborazo, a grassroots organization of less than one hundred peasant women, mobilized to advocate for a new law codifying gender parity in the administration of indigenous justice in Ecuador. Without the support of the national women's movement and despite the resistance of indigenous politicians, the group articulated gender claims within the ethno-political agenda. They searched for inspiration in the newly reformed Bolivian Constitution- to no avail. Cristina Cucuri researched international documents and found legitimacy to their claim for gender parity in Article 44 of the UN Declaration for the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the only to mention gender equality: "All rights and freedoms recognized herein are equally guaranteed to male and female indigenous individuals." Women traveled to the lowlands of Monte Christi for more than six months, engaging politicians in charge of judicial reforms within the constitutional assembly. Development funds from Canada were used by CEDIS to support some of the traveling costs, and indigenous women relayed themselves to secure a regular presence during the eight months of negotiation. Their efforts paid off. Article 171 of the new constitution guarantees women's participation and decision-making in the implementation of indigenous justice. Indigenous justice is formally recognized in art 171 of the Ecuadorian constitution- although the language frames the limits of tradition with gender parity and international human rights.

It is no coincidence that indigenous women put international norms to good use. Ethno-politics refer to a political stand - formed through constant resistance to the state- rather than a cultural identity. If ethnicity reiterates cultural difference it is to better claim self-determination over autonomous territories. More than engaging a dialogue with the state, ethno-politics contest state sovereignty, navigating international norms and opportunities the best they can. The very grammar of indigenous rights instrumentalizes international language to advocate rights to land and autonomy and challenge state boundaries.¹⁵ Ethno-politics in the Andes are therefore intimately embedded in international relations, revealing bargaining games between the local/marginal and the global/hegemonic. Indigenous

identity is intrinsically “glocal” (Brysk 2000) as it articulates local claims in international spheres of authority. Ethno-politics challenge traditional conceptions of citizenship (Postero 2007) as much as it calls for the re-invention of the state, seeking to redefine the social contract rather than extend it. In that sense, ethno-politics are as much about entering the state as surpassing it- in some sort of ethnic, post-national constellation (Habermas 2001). By joining international actors, indigenous women are locating themselves both within the Ecuadorian state and beyond it. Indigenous women voices echo cosmopolitan democracy as much as the constructivist momentum, in which politics of identity shape a “world of our making” (Onuf 1989). Ethno-politics are much more global than often admitted in our literature, becoming as salient to scholars in international relations as well as in anthropology.

This leads me to the second striking consideration about indigenous women’s advocacy in Ecuador: their preference for ethno-politics. In their overlapping identities, they can choose among a diverse set of political allies. Indigenous women strongly advocate for their rights as women, as illustrated in the examples above. Yet, when it comes to politics, they emphasize cultural and collective rights, promoting ethnic self-determination. Indigenous women are traditional allies of the national women’s movement. Pictures show indigenous leader Transito Amaguaña siding with the leaders of the national women movement in the 1940s. Indigenous women participate at meetings organized by CONAMU, contributing and challenging the agenda. They count on the support of women groups, at the local and national levels, to advance their causes. Gender solidarity exists, despite the many shortcomings of the women’s movement and their inability to produce a more diverse discourse. Indigenous women are aware of the discrimination they endure as women, within the communities in the indigenous movement at large. They are well-aware of the *machista* practices of indigenous leaders and often call for the solidarity of their counterparts in women’s organizations.

And yet, indigenous women favor ethnic over gender identities. They keep a solid dialogue with the national women’s movement, but they identify as indigenous before identifying as women, and their loyalty goes to the national indigenous movement. Their coalition building is weak, and their interests are not truly represented by either side. But indigenous women are unambiguous on the politics of representation. Just as Rigoberta Menchú chose to follow ethno-politics in Guatemala, indigenous women in Ecuador chose to follow CONAIE politics of ethnicity. From Nina Pacari and Lourdes Tibán, who silence gender to gain positions of power within CONAIE, to Cristina Cucuri

and Ana Maria Guacho, who contest the gender inequalities prevailing within the indigenous movement, all indigenous women abide to the politics of ethnicity. Indigenous women consistently advocate gender rights, overtly or behind the scenes, but always from within the movement, never siding openly with politics of gender. When indigenous women need to advocate gender inequalities, they do so from within the indigenous movement, not siding with Ecuadorian feminists. In fact, indigenous women claim that they are not feminists even when they actively advocate for women's rights.

As indigenous women consistently opt for politics of ethnicity, advocating gender equality only from within, we wonder why they prefer to capitalize on ethnic identity as a political strategy. If both gender and ethnicity are sources of discrimination, why is one favored over the other? Are some political identities more valuable than others? After analyzing the double making of ethno-politics in local and global politics and the advocacy strategies of indigenous women, we now turn our attention to the intersectionality of identity politics in Ecuador.

Intersectional Politics

The reasons why indigenous women favor ethnicity over gender are complex and multifaceted, buried in a kaleidoscope of politics and culture. The cross-cutting and hegemonic dimension of gender identity leads indigenous women to craft a political identity of their own at the intersection of gender and ethnicity.

One of the immediate responses to why indigenous women reject gender identity might lie in its Western value, at once foreign and hegemonic. Feminism is anchored in Western ideals of liberalism and individual empowerment, making history in the suffragette movement and the sexual liberation of the 1970s. Gender followed western institutionalization, evolving into an indicator that ranks societies' development. Indicators such as the gender development index (GDI) and the gender empowerment measure (GEM) determine the development policies of international organizations. Gender symbolizes the individualism of the West as well as its political and normative hegemony. It refers not just to the role of women, but also that of men, their relation to women, and the feminization and exclusion of indigenous identity (Weismantel 2000; Berger 2004; Canessa 2008). It is because gendering was embedded in colonizing methodologies that

Amrita Basu (1995) problematized global feminism and L.T. Smith (1999) engaged traditional knowledge's as a counter-practice of research. At the 2009 Encuentro de Mujeres de America Latina e del Caribe, in Mexico City, indigenous women issued their own declaration, proposing a broader political agenda that encompassed collective rights and environmental resources. The pluralism of women voices increasingly complexifies the mainstream agenda, white and urban, with other feminisms (Roth 2004).

Gender is too crosscutting of an identity, hardly making it an indicator for interest-based agendas and thus carrying limited political significance. There are also profound inequalities of class and race among women. Some women are extremely privileged, cumulating political, social and economic power while others lay at the very bottom of society, deprived of rights as they are exploited in factories, raped in brothels, or isolated in rural highlands. Not only are there differences among women, but women themselves practice racism, discrimination, and exploitation against other women, which explains by indigenous women do not identify with gender as much as with ethnicity. In fact, prioritizing ethnic identity is a way to emphasize a shared reality of exclusion. Hence, Bolivia's union of domestic workers allied with Morales' MAS rather than the national women's movement, finding more resonance to their struggles in the Aymara quest for social justice than in gender calls for sexual rights.

Indeed, ethnicity can hardly be interpreted as a pure cultural marker. Scholars of ethnicity in Latin America have repeatedly questioned ethnicity as an identifier (Martinez 2006; Corntassel 2003; Canessa 2007). One cannot really tell the percentage of Indians in Ecuador. In government censuses, which include ethnicity since 2001, seven percent of the population identifies as indigenous. According to that same census, 13 percent speak a primary language other than Spanish at home—which implies an indigenous background. Many anthropologists and social organizations give a higher estimate of 25 percent indigenous population. The International Labor Organization gives a figure of 43 percent, and CONAIE raises the estimate up to 45 percent (Van Cott 2005, p. 101). Who, exactly, is indigenous in Ecuador? As in Bolivia, “indigenous” rights are codified in the constitution but the term is open to interpretation (Canessa 2007), perhaps contributing to the varied population statistics.

If ethnicity is an accessible, fluid identity, it is also quintessentially political. Ethnicity is constructed from the outside, through the orientalization of the other (Said 1979). It relates to the otherness of culture—an essentialized (and romanticized) otherness that never is.

Indigenous peoples do not self-identify as Indians.¹⁶ They are Kichwas, Saraguros, Shuars, and Huaoranis. Ethnic identity is incredible diverse - just as much as gender. It is also variable, and ephemeral. It is used as a dress, worn for the occasion, revived according to the political context that needs to be navigated.

Feminist scholars themselves contest the capacity of feminism to speak for all women, and its historical disregard to racial, ethnic, class, and sexual differences. While Black women destabilized the notion of a “universal woman,” women from the global south accused its western framework. The trouble with identity politics is not that it fails to transcend difference, but rather the opposite: it often ignores intra-group inequalities. The violence women experience is shaped by overlapping marginalities, such as class and ethnicity. Crenshaw (1989) coins the term intersectionality to account for the ways in which racism and sexism converge to build systems of domination. The experience of gender-based violence by women of color is qualitatively different from that of white women. Because the intersectional experience is greater than the mere sum of racism and sexism, argues Crenshaw (1989), intersectionality is key to address the particular manner in which black women are subordinated. Taking the unique epistemological position of marginalized subjects into account contributes a nuanced conception of identity.

Political intersectionality is key to address the complex disempowerment of indigenous women. Indigenous women have an intersectional political agenda of their own - as illustrated in the advocacy for gender parity within indigenous justice. Political strategies based solely on the experience of women, with no focus on ethnicity, will be of limited help to indigenous women. In fact, Mala Htun (2004) noted that if identity politics of gender and ethnicity both pursue equality, gender calls for equal rights and integration, whereas ethnicity calls for exclusive rights and differentiation. Disentangling gender and ethnicity into distinct identities only confines the agenda, increasing the competition for resources for diverging goals. The politics of gender and ethnicity both fail indigenous women: they do not account for the specific location of their identity nor provide adequate strategies to redress their marginality. Intersectionality is a key concept to understand the location of indigenous women both within overlapping systems of subordination and at the margins of mainstream politics of gender and ethnicity in Ecuador.

The interests of indigenous women have not gained center-stage in the national feminist agenda. Ecuador’s women movement boosts a long trajectory of mobilization and contestation (Herrera; Goetschel 2006;

Rodas 2009). Yet the concerns of indigenous women have generally been marginal- lost in the minority of numbers or class. Women organizations have recently been more aware of economic and racial divides, and tried to pay greater attention to indigenous women. Ecuador's CONAMU created an office for indigenous affairs and supported grass-root organizing in rural areas. Yet ethnic-based interests tend to get diluted in the overall agenda and disappear from sight. In 2008, for instance, indigenous women participated in the National Women's Assembly to design a gender memorandum to the newly elected constitutional assembly. However, indigenous interests were watered down, diluting ethnic specificity into a universal gender-based agenda. Thus, gender equality was requested in the justice system at large, not in indigenous justice in particular.

Indigenous women do struggle for gender rights, but their gender is inexorably tied to ethnicity. Intersectionality is rooted in the causes for oppression as much as in the political opportunities available. From a causal perspective, indigenous women are concerned with more than just female marginalization - they fight for collective land, cultural justice, and bilingual education. From a strategic front, indigenous women have access to ethnic normative and political frameworks gender actors cannot access. There is therefore an opportunity structure in using ethnicity for coalition building.

The intersectional critique asserts the utility of identity politics. Discourses about identity can only be effective if they acknowledge how identities are constructed through the intersection of multiple systems. In that sense, identity politics can be thought as coalitions that build (on) opportunity structures to consolidate their agendas. Intersectionality enables a more complex understanding of the practice of identity politics. Indigenous women are intersectional subjects, and this chapter underscores the need for greater attention to variation and diversity within women and indigenous experiences. This case identifies intersectional practices of identity politics, acknowledging the messiness of subjectivity through a concrete case-study bridging gender and ethnicity.

Perhaps we should read indigenous' women's choice for ethnic identities as a form of intersectional feminism of their own making. This analysis explains under which conditions organizing as "women" or "indigenous" makes sense, understanding how identity politics are used to organize according to the oppressions at play and the political opportunities available. Analyzing the processes by which subjects mobilize particular aspects of their identities according to context and opportunities, this chapter maps the organization patterns of indigenous

women in Ecuador. In the process, it offers insights into the larger patterns of coalition-building among different identity politics in Latin America. Further, this analysis invites us to imagine points of intervention- and articulate more adequate political responses - to redress the multiple oppression marginal groups face in the Andean region.

Conclusion

Quechua leaders contest feminist politics by claiming that one does not need to label herself a feminist to act in protection of women's rights. Indigenous women in Ecuador might be trapped in multiple systems of discrimination, but they strategically channel their struggle for emancipation through the politics of ethnicity. In this chapter, I analyzed the construction of ethno-politics in Ecuador, focusing on the situation of indigenous women and their identity strategies.

The analysis illustrates the theoretical model developed by Coate and Thiel, showing how ethnic identities are utilized for political capital in regional politics and how international norms reinforce indigenous identity. International legislation and the global media are a catalyst to ethno-politics in Ecuador and throughout the Andean region. Without a doubt, indigenous movements are made in the local, but they efficiently instrumentalize international structures to consolidate their moral legitimacy and political visibility. The political climate growing supportive of ethnicity, ethno-politics are becoming a source of political capital, appealing to indigenous groups and beyond. Indigenous women lie at the intersections of competing discourses on gender and ethnicity, navigating the politics of identity in the attempt to maximize their political capabilities. They too instrumentalize international norms, challenging state sovereignty and engaging human rights discourses to negotiate their rights as Indians and as women. The celebration of ethnicity in international politics has brought some recognition to indigenous movements in the Andes. However, the analysis of indigenous women suggests that the discourse on social redistribution does not always trickle down to address peoples at the margins within minorities. Indigenous peoples in Latin America continue to live at the margins of society, disenfranchised from the nation-state and

increasingly so from the indigenous politics. Ethno-politics has yet to address the violence that affects indigenous women in Ecuador and acknowledge their voices and concerns. While the power of ethno-politics is clear and sound, most indigenous peoples remain powerless, living in precarious conditions. The strongest commonality between Shuars, Quechuas, and Cofanes is exclusion rather than culture. Can the indigenous movement seize the political momentum to secure permanent rights for the peoples it claims to represent? Is it willing to tackle social hierarchies at large, including patriarchy, to promote social justice?

There has been a stark crisis of legitimacy within Ecuador's indigenous movement, with the emergence of ethnic parties competing with Pachakutik, such as Amauta in Chimborazo, and the migration of indigenous votes to non-ethnic parties, notably Correa's Alianza Pais. The politics of ethnicity are here to stay, anchored in the regional political establishment. It remains to be seen, however, if ethno-politics can succeed where traditional parties have failed—that is in generating lasting, genuine public support for parties and for democracy itself. So far, ethno-politics seem to play party politics as usual navigating electoral politics rather than engaging in the risky business of tackling structural inequality.

¹ Transito Amaguaña participated in the indigenous uprisings of the 1920s in Pesillo, Cayambe, made famous in the indigenista novel *Huasipungo* (1934) by Jorge Icaza.

² In 1979 the universal right to vote gave citizenship rights to most indigenous peoples.

³ CONAIE represents peoples in the Amazon region (Shuar, Achuar, Siona, Secoya, Cofan, Waorani, Zapara, Shiwiar, Andoa y Kichuas), in the coastal region (Tsachila, Epera, Chachi, Awa, Manta y Wankavilka) and in the highlands (Palta, Sarakuru, Kañari, Puruwà, Chibuleo, Tomabela, Salasaca, Kisapincha, Waranka, Kitukara, Kayampi, Otavalo, Karanki, Natabuela y Pasto).

⁴ The first international legal instrument to specifically address indigenous peoples was ILO Convention 107, adopted in 1959. At the time, however, member state conceived the protection of indigenous peoples through policies of integration and assimilation. ILO 107 was condemned as assimilationist and racist by indigenous peoples, international jurists, and human rights advocates around the world. Indigenous peoples called for the revision of ILO 107 to recognize their collective and cultural rights of autonomy and self-determination.

⁵ Negotiations lasted over 11 annual sessions to reach consensus, and the only four countries to oppose it were Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the U.S. Adopted by 144 countries, the Declaration was the first legal document dedicated to indigenous rights in the UN system.

⁶ The government and the Bank contributed USD 10 million and USD 40 million, respectively. The Bank's contribution included funds from other organizations, such as USD 15 million from the U.N. International Fund for Agricultural Development.

⁷ Ecuador is particularly unstable, with no president-elect remaining until the end of his/her mandate since 1996, and populism is a growing political alternative (Carlos de la Torre).

⁸ Women living in rural areas take twice as long to reach health establishments as women in urban areas, and almost half of these women recur to a midwife or family members for giving birth (CONAMU 2005: 47, 53).

⁹ Ecuador was the first country to grant the vote to women in 1929, and subsequently the first Andean country to establish electoral quotas for women following the 1995 Beijing World Conference.

¹⁰ The 1997 "Ley de Amparo Laboral" reformed electoral laws to set gender quotas on electoral lists at 20 percent, which were later expanded to 30 percent and subject to a progressive increase of 5 percent in each electoral process until reaching 50 percent (Ugalde 2005:171).

¹¹ In 2002, women's presence in Congress barely surpassed 15 percent (Ugalde 2005). The law of alternation and sequence has been partially implemented by the Electoral Supreme Court and left up to the interpretation and goodwill of political parties after complaints and legal pursuit from the women's movement.

¹² In monitoring discrimination at the polls, the Q'ellkaj Foundation concludes that most discriminatory practices are directed at indigenous women, in the form of verbal, psychological, and even physical aggression (Q'ellkaj 2005).

¹³ Although most women do not have recourse to a police station, the First Police Station for Women and Families in Riobamba recorded an average of 11 victims per day in January 2006. (Data collected by author.)

¹⁴ The few victims of physical and sexual violence who look for institutional support contact *Comisarias de la Mujer* (3.7 percent), normal police stations (2.5 percent), churches (1.2 percent), health institutions (0.3 percent), and women organizations (0.2 percent) (ENDEMAIN 2004).

¹⁵ In fact, territorial integrity was the most contested issue in the UN Declaration on Indigenous Peoples, and member states only agreed upon it once Article 46 clarified that the text could not be interpreted as "authorizing or encouraging any action that would dismember or impair, totally or in part, the territorial integrity or political unity of sovereign and independent States." States thus support self-determination as far as it is consistent with their sovereignty. In other words: the Declaration is not about providing new rights to indigenous groups, but bringing indigenous individuals as full citizens within the state.

¹⁶ Indigenous is a colonial identity that is contested silently in daily practice and aggressively in academia, which favors the terminology of "originary peoples." The groups that gather under the banner of indigenous peoples are extremely diverse, belonging to different cultures and speaking different languages, and gather in specific political contexts only.