

**Indigenous Political Voice and
the Struggle for Recognition in Ecuador and Bolivia**

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Introduction

Indigenous struggles in Ecuador and Bolivia provide instructive and challenging cases of the politics of (in)equity in that conditions of economic and political crisis (the “lost decade”) coincided with the emergence of striking indigenous political voice (a decade in which “Indians won” as Luis Macas put it). Ecuador and Bolivia are often described as among the more economically and politically troubled countries in the Americas. These two Andean states are sometimes called the poorest countries in the hemisphere as a majority of people in each country lives below the poverty line (Ecuador 67%; Bolivia 63%). With the more comprehensive metric of the Human Development Index, these states fare a bit better but still decidedly in the bottom half of Medium Human Development countries; Ecuador occupying the 100th place, Bolivia the 114th in the HDI rankings of 177 countries.¹ Politically, “inchoate party systems” in both countries have done a poor job of representing the interests of the excluded sectors of society and massive social protests have driven democratically-elected presidents from office (2000 in Ecuador, 2003 in Bolivia).²

Despite or indeed because of these gloomy indicators, it is remarkable to find that one area where these countries “lead” the continent is in the strength of indigenous social movements. Rightly described as the “poorest of the poor,” indigenous people in these countries have over the past three decades formed local, regional, and national organizations that have challenged their long standing neo-colonial marginalization. Mass protests and marches have forced multicultural development into the mainstream of politics; bilingual education, collective rights, and “development with identity” agendas have become institutionalized in the structures of states and

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the language of national constitutions. Indigenous people have also won representation in municipalities, regional and national legislatures, and at the highest levels of government. They have occupied cabinet ministries, the vice presidency, and have even come close to winning the presidency.³ These achievements are even more remarkable when one considers that it was not until late in the twentieth century that obstacles to universal suffrage were lifted and indigenous people were fully enfranchised.

This background paper briefly explores the common conditions that enabled indigenous people to challenge the terms of recognition in Ecuador and Bolivia as well as the contrasting contexts which have produced different patterns of indigenous political action in these states. While this position is subject to debate, this paper will suggest that indigenous organizations in Ecuador have been more central actors in the politics of “development encounters” than their counterparts in Bolivia. Much of this claim rests on the relative unity that the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE) has achieved in constituting a national actor which represents communities from coastal, Andean, and Amazonian regions of the country. Bolivian movements remain more regionally fragmented and politically divided.

This following sections will describe the trajectory of indigenous organizations and struggles in Ecuador and Bolivia, provide some explanation for the variation in movement outcomes, and finally suggest some implications for thinking about development possibilities in times of multicultural and neoliberal models. The mixed picture which emerges in both countries, where gains in indigenous political voice co-exist with durable economic inequality, suggests that there may be equity trade-offs, in that stronger indigenous protest and political gains may result in increased discrimination which keeps poverty gaps high and the returns of education low. There is some evidence to indicate that this kind of equity trade-off may be more pronounced in Bolivia than in Ecuador. However, more data and research are required to evaluate the trade-off thesis

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since a more optimistic interpretation may be found in the possibility of a lag between political and economic gains as indigenous peoples cultivate greater “capacities to aspire” in the Andes and Amazon.⁴

Building Movements: Exclusion, Organization, and Opportunity

Indigenous movements are not limited to Ecuador and Bolivia but constitute a region-wide “return of the Indian” from Chiapas to Chile. The scholarship on this resurgence of indigenous mobilization has emphasized the political and economic context which allowed indigenous communities to “scale up” protests in unprecedented ways.⁵ The organizational capacity of indigenous communities is an important background explanatory variable as the norms and practices of solidarity and trust help overcome collective action problems. The persistence of local associational networks is in part due to the unintended consequences of state policies during years of corporatist and populist approaches to what used to be called the “Indian problem.” In the mid-twentieth century governments throughout the region sought to modernize the terms of recognition by “rebaptizing Indians as peasants.”⁶ As states created local spaces for peasants to organize often in legally recognized rural unions, cooperatives, or communities, it was possible for rural people to employ a Janus-faced posture in which they showed a productive “peasant” face to a modernizing state, but inwardly cultivated local Quechua, Aymara and other indigenous identities and practices.

The experience of state corporatism, though stronger in Bolivia than in Ecuador, habituated rural highland populations in both countries to think in terms of the language of class struggles to organize in union-like organizational structures. During the 1960s and 1970s, the tactics and rhetoric of the main Andean indigenous federations--ECUARUNARI (Quichua acronym for roughly: The Awakening of the Ecuadorian Indian) in Ecuador and the CSUTCB (Sole Confederation of Rural Workers of Bolivia) in Bolivia-- were quite similar. The great

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debate among highland organizations was over how to harmonize class and ethnic identities, how to “see with both eyes,” as the Aymara leader and later Bolivian Vice-President Victor Hugo Cárdenas put it. Over time both external political events (like the fall of the Berlin Wall and the crisis of the international left) and internal ones (like the intellectual influence of radical Indianista nationalist writers like Fausto Reinaga) “Indianized” class identities and struggles.

In contrast to the class-intensive identities of the indigenous highlands, the lowlands were more hospitable to “ethnic” alternatives. Indeed, throughout the central Andean republics, “the areas where the ethnic federation has proliferated are precisely those areas which were peripheral to or outside of the integrative horizons which have swept the Andean region over the past several millennia.”⁷ What Richard Smith has called the “myth of vast Amazonian emptiness” had many negative consequences for lowland populations, yet the relatively weak presence of the national state provided indigenous people with greater room to craft political identities and organizations that were distinct from the dominant traditions of the state and the national left. The Amazon has been the crucible in which the language of indigenous “nationalities and peoples” (*pueblos y nacionalidades*) was forged in both Ecuador and Bolivia.

Thus, it should be of little surprise that it is in the Amazonian regions where the first indigenous ethnic federations in the Americas emerged in the 1960s. The first is the Shuar Federation organized in Ecuador in 1964. Amazonian organizing in Ecuador continued through the 1970s and culminated with the 1980 establishment of the Confederation of Amazonian Nationalities of Ecuador (CONFENIAE). While a regional Amazonian organization emerged later in Bolivia (in the 1980s and 90s), the Confederation of Indigenous Peoples of Eastern Bolivia (CIDOB) quickly acquired a surprising political presence given that it represented only 2 percent of the national indigenous population.

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The economic shocks of the 1980s and the accompanying structural adjustments provided a catalyst for mobilization as the old corporatist, developmentalist state quickly retreated from the countryside. The subsidies and credits that agrarian reform had made available were gone and life in the rural countryside became much harder. This economic transition, though, coincided with a political transition as the 1980s were also a decade of democratization. In the language of social movement theorists, the political opportunity structures became more permissive at the very moment that economic pressures were getting more oppressive. No longer part of corporatist mediating structures, indigenous people were able to move beyond “ventriloquist” forms of representation (subordinate to political parties, the church, or the state) and find their own national political voice.⁸ Though third parties like missionaries or NGO workers often helped indigenous people “scale up” their struggles by providing access to additional social networks, these non-indigenous allies remained “backstage,” conscious that these were indigenous movements. Over the course of the 1980s in both Ecuador and Bolivia, indigenous people built powerful regional and national organizations that began to attract increasing international attention in a post-1989, post-Berlin Wall world in which “new social movements” around identity seemed to be displacing the old movements of class.⁹

Despite the striking similarity of regional styles in both Ecuador and Bolivia, the national configurations of indigenous protest are quite distinct. In the Ecuadorian case-- something true of no other Latin American case-- the largest highland and lowland indigenous confederations (ECUARUNARI and CONFENIAE, respectively) have since 1986 been part of the same national confederation. The emergence of the national indigenous confederation, CONAIE, is essentially the convergence of two parallel organizational struggles. In Bolivia, such a convergence has not occurred and indigenous movements remain “limited in scope and fragmented in structure.”¹⁰ The three main national organizations operate in distinct geographical and ecological zones of the

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country: the labor-union-style Sole Confederation of Rural Workers of Bolivia (CSUTCB) in the highlands, the Coca Grower Federation in the tropics and valleys, and the ethnic Confederation of Indigenous People of Bolivia (CIDOB) in the lowlands.

Throughout the 1990s, CONAIE in Ecuador and CIDOB in Bolivia had the most success politically, due in part to the ability to combine “pluricultural” discourses with tactics that stressed both contestation and negotiation. As Jorge León has noted, protest in the Andes has become a part of the political system in that mobilization and negotiation are routinized and regular sites of interaction between state and indigenous leaders.¹¹ As often happens in social movement environments, other organizations appropriated the lessons that leading organizations provided in the competition for visibility, resources, and loyalty. Despite the existence of a wide range of actors, interviews with social scientists, policy makers, development practitioners, and indigenous activists reveal clear shared understandings about the representative organizations in Bolivia and Ecuador, which are summarized in Table 1 below. As Table 1 shows, what Smith would call “ethnic federations” have become the leading models for collective action.

States and Movements: Negotiating Neoliberal and Multicultural Reform

The strength of indigenous mobilization has shaped development and political agendas in some striking ways. Through these mobilizations and subsequent negotiations, CONAIE in Ecuador obtained important spaces in the national political system, gaining control of the Directorate of Bilingual Education (DINEIB), the indigenous development agency (CODENPE), the Office of Indigenous Health, and a central role in the World-Bank-supported Program for the Development of Indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian Peoples (PRODEPINE). In Bolivia, four councils of bilingual education for Aymara, Guarani, Quechua, and “Multi-ethnic” Amazonian peoples as well as a Ministry of Peasant and Indigenous Affairs (with an indigenous vice-minister) are among the spaces which have been opened since the mid-1990s by intercultural

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reforms. These state spaces have further institutionalized relationships between indigenous people and international donors including multilateral and state institutions like the World Bank, the Inter-American Bank, DANIDA (Denmark), and DFID (U.K.) as well as international NGOs like Oxfam-America (U.S.) and IBIS (Denmark).

Electorally, indigenous people have also taken advantage of state reforms and changing political conditions to gain important representation on local and national elected office. After a decade of refusing to take part in elections, in 1996 CONAIE allied with non-indigenous social movements and formed the Pachakutik Pluricultural Movement (MUPP), which has won between 6 and 10% of the national vote in elections since 1996. Several high profile Pachakutik mayors

Table 1: Types and Relative Representational Strengths of Indigenous Organizations in Bolivia and Ecuador*

<i>Representational Strength</i>	Type of Organization		
	Ethnic	Labor	Religious
High	<i>CONAIE</i> CIDOB	Cocaleros	
Moderate	CONAMAQ 2000- ↑	CSUTCB 1970s-85, 2000+ FENOCIN	<i>FEINE (1998-)</i> ↑
Low	CONAMAQ (1990s)	CSUTCB (1990s) <i>FEI</i>	<i>FEINE (1980-1998)</i>

*Ecuadorian organizations are in italics, Bolivian organizations are in bold. The indigenous organizations included here:

•**CIDOB**-- The *Confederación de Pueblos Indígenas de Bolivia* is the main organization of the Bolivian lowlands, where a minority of Bolivia's indigenous population lives. Despite these demographics, CIDOB is the organization that has greatest support and recognition from international funders and the Bolivian state.

•**CONAIE**-- The *Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador* is the leading indigenous organization in Ecuador and has become a model of social and political activism for indigenous organizations throughout the region.

•**Cocaleros**-- The Cocalero Federations of Cochabamba are nominally part of the CSUTCB (see below) but under the leadership of Evo Morales (who came in a surprising second place in the 2002 presidential elections in Bolivia), have acquired great independent strength in mobilizing protests against U.S.-backed coca eradication programs.

•**CONAMAQ**--The *Consejo Nacional de Ayllus y Markas de Qollasuyo* was established in the late 1990s in the highlands of Bolivia. It re-constitutes and confederates the pre-Colombian forms of highland communities that had often been ignored in time of compulsory rural union organizing. It has had some difficulties in establishing credibility despite support from prominent international funders.

•**CSUTCB**-- The *Confederación Sindical Unica de Trabajadores Campesinos de Bolivia* was the leading organization of the Bolivian highlands until internal conflicts and an out-dated class discourse generated a crisis in the 1990s. At the end of the millennium, the CSUTCB regained strength in anti-neoliberal protests.

•**FEI**-- The *Federación Ecuatoriana de Indios* was founded in the 1940s by the Ecuadorian Communist Party. While it was an important early organization, it has little support in society or state.

•**FEINE**-- The *Consejo de Pueblos Indígenas Evangélicos del Ecuador* (Formerly: *Federación de Evangélicos Indígenas del Ecuador*) is a national level organization that promotes indigenous issues and Christian spiritual development. It has been seen in the past as pro-government and opposed to protest, but since 1998, it has taken a more active place in social movement politics.

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•FENOCIN- *Federación Nacional de Organizaciones Indígenas y Negras* is a leftist, multi-ethnic, class-based rural organization in Ecuador. It was prominent in struggles over agrarian reform in the 1970 and 1980s, but recently it has been eclipsed by the ethnic-based platforms of CONAIE. Like Auki Titwaña of Cotacachi have been praised for their inclusionary, grass-roots models of municipal development.

Even after the failed coup of 2000, in which CONAIE leaders and elements of the reform-minded military forced Jamil Mahuad out of office and held power for only a few hours, Pachakutik continued to be an important part of Ecuadorian politics. In perhaps a natural follow-up to the 2000 indigenous-military coup, Pachakutik and CONAIE decided to support the presidential candidacy of one of the main figures of the coup, Lucio Gutiérrez. Gutiérrez won the 2002 elections and included two historic CONAIE/Pachakutik leaders, Nina Pacari and Luis Macas, in his cabinet. Indigenous people were at the very center of political power, but not for long. In 2003, differences over Gutiérrez's policy toward the International Monetary Fund and the U.S. resulted in public disagreements between Pachakutik and the President. After only a few months, Gutiérrez dismissed the indigenous ministers and CONAIE was once again an opposition movement, not a governing partner.

In Bolivia, the participation of indigenous people in government has had a different history. Perhaps the key difference is that political incorporation in Bolivia has come more "from above" as ruling elites have set the terms of political participation to a greater extent than their Ecuadorian counterparts who were forced to react to mobilizations "from below." For example, the ascendancy of Aymara leader Victor Hugo Cárdenas to the vice presidency was made possible by the selection of a dominant party (MNR) candidate and former planning minister, Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada. This administration (1993-1997), however, led to further multicultural openings most notably in the Law of Popular Participation (LPP) and Agrarian Reform Law (Ley INRA). President Sánchez de Lozada made many enemies when the LPP transferred state funds from regional development "corporations" to local municipalities.

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Additionally, the legislation recognized the legal right of indigenous people (as indigenous people) to participate in local governance. Local electoral contests became meaningful in unprecedented ways as municipalities, for the first time in republican history, actually had significant resources to administer. The Agrarian Reform Law (INRA) allowed the titling of indigenous territories (known as TCOs). This has allowed state recognition of indigenous political voices and spaces, though many question the effects of this kind of recognition. As Ricardo Calla, sociologist and currently the Minister of Campesino and Indigenous Affairs, MACPIO, has written, both LPP and INRA have resulted less in “state decentralization but rather in the state decentralizing indigenous and rural reality.”¹² This decentralization can either be interpreted as the empowerment of grass-roots indigenous communities who have indeed become more important in local spaces, or as the “divide and conquer” strategies of dominant power that seeks to dilute indigenous power on the local level rather than confront it in national mobilizing structures.

The incentives for working with parties in each country, then, were different. In more centralized Ecuador, national social movement activity was seen as more important than national party politics. Moreover, changes in electoral laws in the 1990s gave indigenous people the option to participate in elections as independents, keeping their distance from traditional parties. By the 1990s in Bolivia, a decentralized political system combined with stricter restrictions on electoral participation (only formally recognized parties could run candidates) pushed indigenous candidates toward “traditional” (and often clientelistic”) parties. By themselves, these laws did not determine the overall pattern of representation in each country but did reinforce dominant trends in each country: unified, autonomous indigenous protest in Ecuador, and more fragmented indigenous politics in Bolivia.

Explaining Ecuadorian Unity and Bolivian Fragmentation

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For the purpose of this paper, it is important to describe the diversity of indigenous actors, but also the reasons for the differential strength between Ecuadorian and Bolivian movements. Why has indigenous contention achieved relative unity in Ecuador and been more regionally divided in Bolivia? I argue that this difference is best understood in terms of political and cultural opportunities; these are “given” by existing political systems and rules of the game and “made” through the interaction of indigenous and non-indigenous actors. More precisely, these contrasting opportunities are visible in the regionalized nature of political power, the discursive construction of indigenous subjects, and the contrasting strategies of radical contestation and more conciliatory negotiation.

Region and Movement

To understand this difference in indigenous political geographies, it is worth considering the geography of dominant power. To make the point simply, indigenous politics in Ecuador offer a mirror image to dominant elite arrangements. While political and economic elites cluster around the poles of coastal Guayaquil and highland Quito, the Amazon for much of the nation’s history was a far-away site of war (with Peru) or a promised land of resource explorations (for oil). The relative neglect of the Ecuadorian lowlands by the state allowed indigenous actors greater degrees of freedom in consolidating regional organizations that could confront the threats of outside forces like highland colonizers and multinational oil companies. In Bolivia, lowland groups had less room to maneuver largely due to the central place of the lowland Santa Cruz in the distribution of power in the country.

The regional structures of opportunity-- in terms of the existence of regional elite opposition-- were more favorable in Ecuador than in Bolivia (See Table 2). In Ecuador, strong indigenous organizations emerged first in an Amazonian region that was relatively marginal to national elites that

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were concentrated in other regions.¹³ In the highlands, indigenous organizations emerged later, especially after agrarian reform weakened landed elites that had controlled prior systems of ethnic administration. In Bolivia, in contrast, lowland CIDOB became a strong force only in the 1990s, long after the highland groups that had become prominent in the 1970s. Why? Part of the reason lies in location: CIDOB emerged in the very center of the economically strong and politically conservative region of Santa Cruz. Lowland indigenous groups, explains Kevin Healy were literally “surrounded by powerful white and mestizo cattle ranchers, large commercial farmers, agrobusinesses, and timber

Table 2 Ecuador and Bolivia: Region and Timing in Indigenous Mobilizations

	<i>Ecuador</i>	<i>Bolivia</i>
Indigenous Population (approx.% of national)	25%	60%*
Largest Indigenous Groups	Highlands: <i>Quichua</i> (85-90% of total Indian population) Lowlands: <i>Shuar, Quichua</i> (10 smaller groups)	Highlands: <i>Quechua, Aymara</i> , (98 % of total Indian population) Lowlands: <i>Guaraní, Quechua, Aymara</i> (35 other groups)
Non-Indian Elite Regional Cleavages	Coast (Guayaquil) / Highland (Quito)	Eastern Lowlands (Santa Cruz)/ Highlands (La Paz)
Indian Regional Cleavages	Lowlands / Highlands (Coastal groups weak)	Lowlands/Valleys/Highlands
Timing of Indigenous Political Organizing	1. Lowland (1960s) 2. Highlands (1970s) 3. National (1980s)	1. Highlands (1970s) 2. Lowlands (1980s) 3. Valleys (1980s)
Patterns of Indigenous	Relative Unity	Fragmentation along Regional and

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Representation

(Pan-Regional
CONAIE)**

Ideological Lines

(Lowlands: CIDOB,
Valleys: Cocaleros;
Highlands: CSUTCB,
CONAMAQ)

**Indigenous population figures are disputed and should be treated with caution. The World Bank estimates that 56.8% of Bolivians and 29% of Ecuadorians are indigenous. The Instituto Indigenista Internacional has higher estimates: 63% for Bolivia and 40 % for Ecuador. While census data reinforce the view that indigenous people are a majority of Bolivian (62%), they yield a controversially low 7% for Ecuador. Source: World Bank 1994, III 1995.

**As Table 1 suggests, there are other “national” organizations, though less powerful than CONAIE.

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enterprises whose holdings had been bolstered by government and international aid.”¹⁴ The presence of powerful regional elites created an obstacle to indigenous political participation in lowland Bolivia that did not exist in lowland Ecuador.

The relatively late entrance of Bolivian lowland groups has important implications for the possibilities of a unifying national movement. Unlike Ecuador, where lowland and highland indigenous elites were in contact for decades (the Shuar Federation had an office in Quito in the 1970s), a lowland indigenous elite did not emerge until the late 1980s. And by 1985, the successive blows of economic crisis and neoliberal economic reform had cut the legs from under the structure of the highland Bolivian left most notably in the mining sector but also in the CSUTCB. This crisis in the highlands enabled the rise of powerful movements in the valley (around the cocaleros) and in the lowlands (confederated in CIDOB), but made a national confederation less likely.

Terms of Recognition: Constructing Nationalities, Peoples, and Indígenas

There exists broad agreement that the language of indigenous ethnicity has eclipsed the old language of peasant class identity, yet what is less remarked upon is the variety of pan-ethnic indigenous subjects that have emerged in Latin America. Movements have crafted broad pan-Indian categories to unite often very different local indigenous communities and some movements are more successful than others. To cite perhaps the most obvious difference, in Ecuador the term “nacionalidad indígena” travels easily and comfortably from highland to lowland settings; in Bolivia, “indígena” is usually reserved for lowland native groups while the numerically superior Quechuas and Aymaras more often are described (and describe themselves) as “pueblos originarios” (roughly: First Nations). Space limitations preclude a thorough exploration of these discursive differences,¹⁵ but briefly it is also part of the history of regionalized contention and indigenous strategy. In creating a national organization, Amazonian and Andean indigenous elites in Ecuador and Bolivia consciously deployed

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the idea of indigenous nationalities to acknowledge the cultural distinctiveness, political equality, and aspirations of different groups (especially the smaller groups in the Amazon). In informal and formal indigenous networks, the idea of nationality was embraced by key Andean and Amazonian elites that were able to overcome regional tensions in forming CONAIE. Despite initial resistance to the idea of multiple Ecuadorian nationalities, this language later was accepted by non-indigenous elites.¹⁶ As most scholars agree, and non-CONAIE leaders lament, the hegemony of CONAIE in setting the terms of indigenous representation is striking. “Hegemony” is used here not only to highlight, following Gramsci, the cultural and political power of CONAIE, but also because various informants used this term to describe the strength of CONAIE. Often, though, the term took different hues. For rival organizations, CONAIE had an “exclusionary hegemony.”¹⁷ For multilateral development agencies, CONAIE had a “necessary hegemony.”¹⁸

In Bolivia, the relatively late political emergence of lowland *indígenas* to social movement politics meant different possibilities for discursive and organizational consensus. CIDOB is the main Bolivian lowland organization but is numerically much smaller than the highland “rural worker” CSUTCB; CIDOB has long been fearful of being swallowed by its Andean counterpart. Moreover, due to “the Amazonian bias” of international aid, CIDOB had little economic incentive to partner with the CSUTCB. With the added environmental interest in the Amazon, lowland groups are often positioned relatively advantageously in international networks. “The greening of Indian rights,” explains Brysk, “also reinforced the disproportionate international attention to Amazonian indigenous groups vis-à-vis their more numerous but less remotely situated peers [in the highlands].”¹⁹ To complete the thought about the terms of indigenous recognition, Amazonians were not only more “green” but also importantly less “red.” Hoffmeyer explains that IBIS had to make a choice about its target population; it chose indigenous people, one of the few NGOs to define its target groups in this way. Explaining why

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IBIS (Denmark) works with CIDOB, but does not work with highland CSUTCB, its director put the choice in the following terms: “Between the ethnic and class discourses, we chose the ethnic. It was with these eyes that we saw the situation and thus excluded work with the unions.”²⁰ It should also be pointed out the CSUTCB in adopting a more radical, anti-imperialist, posture is also less likely to look for funding from actors like IBIS and Oxfam. Thus it is important not only to think about the structures of opportunities but also the agency and strategy of particular indigenous actors.

Strategies: Contestation and Negotiation in the New Millennium

Indigenous people in Latin America have centuries-long traditions of both “resistance and accommodation” in terms of dominant power.²¹ Both strategies characterize Ecuadorian and Bolivian movements, often with mixed results. CONAIE, since its 1990 mobilization, has on several occasions paralyzed national roads and convoked peaceful but potent “uprisings.” These protests provided CONAIE with important political capital that it could use in negotiating a series of agreements with elites over indigenous and non-indigenous issues. As Zamosc has pointed out, over time the demands of CONAIE have become less and less “indigenous” in taking on large questions of economics (over subsidies, privatization, and structural adjustment).²² Within CONAIE, there is disagreement over the right mix of contestation and negotiation as lowland groups are often seen as more “*gobiernista*” (pro-government) and willing to go to the negotiating table when highland actors are more likely to take to the streets. As we will see the same tension exists in Bolivia, yet in Ecuador the existence of a national organization provides an institutionalized way to overcome these divisions, at least most of the time. Recently, that unity has become much more fragmented since President Gutierrez and CONAIE have ended their alliance.

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Gutiérrez has shown himself more capable of dividing the indigenous movement by reaching out to former CONIAE president Antonio Vargas who is now Minister of Social Welfare (and denounced as a traitor by CONAIE) as well as other indigenous actors including the national Evangelical indigenous federation (FEINE) and sectors of the Amazon still loyal to fellow Amazonian Antonio Vargas. Within the office of CONAIE and throughout Ecuador, which I visited in the summer of 2004, one hears worries about a severe organizational crisis that was all too obvious in a noticeably small “uprising” that CONAIE convoked at the beginning of 2004 to protest Gutierrez’s policies.

Bolivia’s indigenous movement is also entering a critical juncture at the turn of the millennium. In the period of “neoliberal multiculturalism” CIDOB was often favored by state and international actors as other actors like the CSUTCB or Cocaleros were seen as clinging to old-fashioned class-based politics, obstructionist tactics, and anti-imperialist rhetoric. Speaking of the CSUTCB, the director of IBIS suggested in 1999 that “their discourse has expired, the union says no to everything, the state is always the enemy.” Generally, one can say that international organizations and the state see CIDOB, and not CSUTCB, as the most viable national indigenous actor in the elaboration of development and conservation programs.²³ A high ranking official of the Vice Ministry of First Nations and Indigenous Peoples (now a full Ministry), himself a former CSUTCB leader, explains that CIDOB consistently outshines the CSUTCB:

In every project of the Vice Ministry, we invite organizations to a two-day seminar and say here is the proposal. When we held the last one, the CIDOB assumes ownership of the project. [They say] 'We have been fighting for this for years, marching. This project is ours, not the governments.' Not the CSUTCB, it keeps throwing rocks, but it doesn't reject the programs either.

Victor Hugo Cárdenas, when he was Vice-President of Bolivia, echoed this sentiment by declaring that the different responses that CIDOB and the CSUTCB had toward the agrarian reform law (Ley INRA) indicated who the pragmatic and responsible indigenous actors were:

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In first place come the [lowland] indigenous people because they have good leaders and advisors. They receive around 6 million hectares in titles of original community lands (TCOs). They are net winners, and I congratulate them. The second winners are the agricultural businessmen because they achieved a 60% reduction in taxes... and I myself am surprised by this victory... They also achieved positive advantages for the titling of their land.... The only sector that won nothing was the CSUTCB because of the mediocrity and incapacity of their leadership.²⁴

CIDOB may remain an important development actor, but in terms of politics, recent events have moved Bolivia from a period of neoliberal multiculturalism to one of “neoliberal backlash.” Since 2000, a series of “wars”—first over the privatization of water in Cochabamba, then over taxes, and finally over the exportation of natural gas—have changed the dynamic in Bolivia as well as views over the “incapacity” of the CSUTCB. The cycle of protests began with the ill-considered privatization plan that in some cases resulted in a 400% increase in the cost of water to local communities. This set off a wave of subsequent protests in the valley by the cocaleros led by Evo Morales, and blockades in the altiplano led by the radical *indianista* leader of the CSUTCB, Felipe Quispe. In the elections of 2002, indigenous voices were also heard loudly as the parties of Morales (Movimiento al Socialismo) and Quispe (Movimiento Indígena Pachakutik) combined won 27% of the vote, much higher percentage of the vote than indigenous parties have ever won in Bolivia.²⁵

Though Sánchez de Lozada returned to the presidency (narrowly defeating Evo Morales), his support quickly vanished as he pursued widely unpopular tax hikes and a plan to export gas through the historic national enemy (Chile). Popular discontent reached the point where hundreds of thousands of protesters took to the streets and demanded Sánchez de Lozada’s resignation. Violence from the state only made matters worse and the president was forced to step down from office and leave the country in October 2003. His vice-president (and now President) Carlos Mesa, has moved cautiously and pragmatically as cocalero leader Morales continues to position himself for another presidential run, and Quispe escalates his rhetorical assaults by calling for an

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independent Aymara state. While indigenous movements have not converged in one national Bolivian organization, they have become a powerful political force that no national politician takes lightly, especially as coca eradication and land reform continue to be contentious issues.²⁶

The year 2000 has been an inflection point for indigenous politics in the Andes. In Ecuador, an alliance between CONAIE and sectors of the military in January 2000 resulted in a short-lived junta and then two years later led to a slightly longer lived coalition between CONAIE and Gutiérrez. These failed partnerships have jeopardized a decade's worth of political capital as non-CONAIE indigenous leaders occupy spaces in the government and international programs like PRODEPINE. This may not necessarily be a negative development for the livelihood of indigenous communities; more research is needed to explore the local repercussions of recent national events. Yet, it is clear that CONAIE both as an actor in civil society and a protagonist in "ethno-development" has suffered a setback. In Bolivia, the more radical elements of the movement—the former guerrilla Quispe and the cocalero leader Morales—are now the central actors in indigenous mobilizations. CIDOB may, like CONAIE, still be relevant in the politics of development, but less central to the politics of protest.

Equity and Development Possibilities: Trade-Offs of Voice and Equity?

Despite these contrasts, it is clear that strong indigenous political organizations are having important effects in the political economies of both Ecuador and Bolivia. But what does this mean for indigenous livelihoods? In countries with significant indigenous populations, being indigenous increases the possibility of being poor (Table 3). Moreover, discrimination against indigenous people seems to be increasing, or at least not declining. A preliminary and pessimistic possibility which emerges in recent World Bank studies suggests that in both countries greater indigenous mobilization may invite social discrimination which keeps wages down, poverty gaps

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high, and limits the returns to schooling. Noting growing discrimination in Bolivia, Landa and

Fernández (2004: 15) state this possible interpretation directly:

Indigenous groups across Bolivia increased prominence throughout the 1990s, resulting in broad success in legislative elections and the effective overthrow of the President early in the following decade. That increased prominence may be associated with employers more frequently recognizing and penalizing indigenous workers.²⁷

Assuming that such a relationship may exist (though the evidence is not conclusive), given the more confrontational and violent dynamics of Bolivian indigenous politics (e.g. the “wars” of water, gas, and coca), we should expect the trade-offs between indigenous protest and economic hardship to be more severe in Bolivia than Ecuador. It is striking that at the height of its economic crisis in 1999, public opinion data revealed relatively high levels of support for the main indigenous confederation, CONAIE, even as it paralyzed the streets of the nation, ranking as the third most trusted institution, behind the Church and the Military.²⁸ In Bolivia, discrimination against Aymaras and Quechuas is high and rises as one moves from the altiplano to the more economically prosperous lowlands, and as one moves from lower- to higher-income groups (Graphs 1 and 2).

Table 3: Being indigenous increases the probability of being poor, even controlling for other common predictors of poverty

Percent increase in probability of being poor, if indigenous		
Country	Early 1990s	Latest Available Year
Bolivia	16	13
Ecuador	--	16
Guatemala	11	14
Mexico	25	30
Peru	--	11

Note: Data are the marginal effects of an indigenous indicator in a logit regression which estimates the percent by which an individual's likelihood of being poor increases as a result of being indigenous, controlling for other factors including age, household composition, region, employment status and education level. These estimates were not generated for Ecuador or Peru in 1994.

Source: Hall and Patrinos (2004)

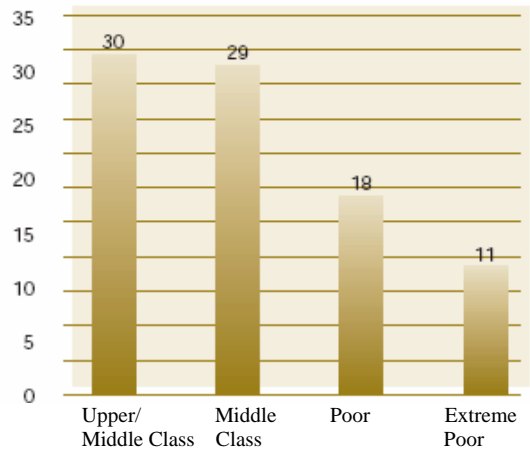
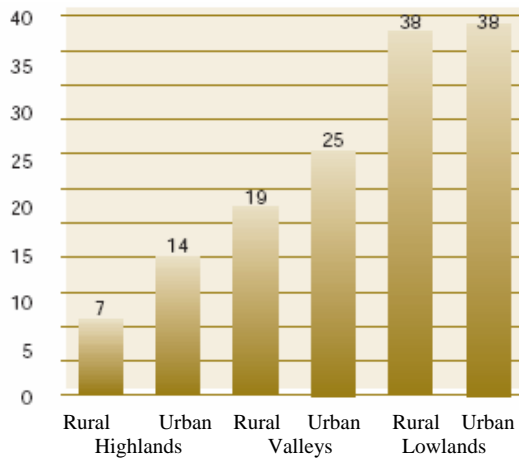
Graph 1

Percent who would NOT feel comfortable having an Aymara or Quechua business partner, by region

Graph 2

Percent who would NOT feel comfortable having an Aymara or Quechua business partner, by socio-economic group

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Source: PNUD 2004

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Bracketing for the moment the validity of the political/economic trade-off hypothesis, it is worth considering (briefly) some possible reasons for the contrast between Ecuadorian contention (seen as unusually peaceful) and Bolivian contention (seen as violent). Indeed Ecuador has long been considered an “island” of tranquility in the region having avoided the conflicts and authoritarian elements of its neighbors to the south (Peru) and north (Colombia). For Bolivia, Rene Zaveleta’s famous observation remains largely accepted: “All the nation’s centuries are marked by uprisings or rebellions, it is as if Bolivia were nothing but that which had been built between the walls of defensive barricades erected against a territory populated by the Indian masses (*la indiada*).”²⁹

While a complete exploration of this contrast is impossible here, we can signal some possible avenues for future research. First, the military in Ecuador has a more consistently populist and pro-poor record in Ecuador than in Bolivia. During the military-indigenous coup of 2000, one colonel argued that 2000 was the culmination of the July revolution of 1924, another anti-oligarchic military uprising. While Bolivia did have some populist military leaders like the Quechua-speaking Barrientos in the 1960s, it also had repressive military dictators like Bánzer in the 1970s and corrupt narco-dictators like García Mesa in the 1980s. Second, the political economies of conflict have been distinct as mining in Bolivia produced radicalized and even revolutionary miners who were the main force of the revolution of 1952. Later as the legacy of 1952 gave way to the reforms of neoliberalism and mines were closed or privatized, many miners were “dislocated” to the tropical valleys where a different export, coca, gave rise to a new round of conflicts fueled by a U.S.-sponsored (and mandated) war on drugs. In Ecuador, the main extractive industry, oil, certainly fuels its share of conflict but in a more sparsely populated Amazonian region. Finally, the existence of a national confederation in Ecuador, and the lack of one in Bolivia, helps account for differences in indigenous radicalism. While there are certainly indigenous leaders in both countries who prefer confrontation over negotiation, having a

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relatively unified central indigenous confederation (CONAIE) internalizes the negative externalities of indigenous radicalism. In most times of crisis, indigenous leaders debate within CONAIE before taking to the street and are able to negotiate with the state a retreat from the streets. In Bolivia, competing movement and government strategies to divide organizations (by pacting with some and not others) provides greater political space for confrontational tactics. Finally, it should also be noted that neoliberal structural adjustment came to Bolivia earlier and more aggressively than it did in Ecuador.³⁰ Thus the emergence of recent “wars” in Bolivia may reflect in part the longer and deeper structural pains of crisis and reform in that country.

Equity through Voice?

It is important to point out that the emergence of strong indigenous movements may also have net positive effects in terms of equity over the medium and long term. The opposing thesis discussed above, that stronger voice invites stronger discrimination, is troubling not only for its family resemblance with a kind of “blame the victim” logic, but also because it neglects the increased opportunities that indigenous struggles have forged. Politically, the presence of indigenous representatives on all levels of government is itself a substantively important achievement in securing public attention to indigenous concerns that were often invisible. Perhaps more fundamentally, the emergence of indigenous people as political actors carries the promise of challenging what Appadurai (2004) calls the “terms of recognition” (by analogy with the terms of trade) in which the dominant cultural descriptions of certain groups are themselves part of the structures of subordination and poverty. Challenging these constraints involves cultivating what Appadurai calls the poor’s “capacity to aspire,” which he describes as a kind of megacapacity which enables the poor to work on increasing other capabilities by envisioning alternative political and economic horizons, an idea that bears some resemblance to Gramsci’s call to “dream with our eyes open.”

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Reading accounts of the mobilizations of indigenous people in the Andes, one can sense (though not measure) such dreaming and note shifts in the capacity to aspire. Indigenous people, who were often prisoners of neocolonial social hierarchies, were often forced to occupy (literally) subordinate spaces at the back of buses and in marginal spaces of cities and towns. The uprising of the 1990s which often took main plazas, cathedrals, and other public spaces allowed a re-consideration of the “proper places” of Indians which now includes parliaments and presidential palaces. Moreover, ordinary indigenous people have a sense of possibility that was unknown before the 1990s. “I didn’t know there were so many of us” was a common expression in the historic 1990 uprising in Ecuador.³¹ Subsequent mobilizations have increased the political visibility of indigenous people and their political and economic concerns.

The establishment of initiatives of transnational “ethno-development” initiatives like PRODEPINE where indigenous actors are involved at various levels of policy making may also help expand the horizons of the possible for indigenous people. That said, in order to gauge the impact, in terms of equity, that such programs may have it is important to address important critiques about ethno-development efforts. First, there is the skepticism raised by critics like Victor Bretón and others that PRODEPINE is simply an “analgesic” meant to silence more radical questioning of dominant neoliberal orthodoxy. According to the social-capital methodology of PRODEPINE, the crucial indigenous actors involved are not the national level actors discussed here, but rather the intermediate “second-level organizations” that link local communities and national confederations. Choosing these organizations may make sense in looking for the densest layer of associational life capable of carrying out development programs, yet, using social capital as a guide to policy intervention may also mean that paradoxically the areas that get the most help are not ones with the greatest needs, but rather with the greatest

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abilities. Operating at the “second-level” and away from the more politically vocal “third-level” (national) organization also keeps important policy questions away from political debate.³²

Second, there is a critique that comes from several indigenous leaders who argue that PRODEPINE is a good start but that picks the wrong “terms of recognition” in terms of development strategies and tactics. Strategically, many indigenous leaders argue that the program should recognize indigenous people not as “organizations” (that reflect the contingencies of politics and place) but “nationalities and pueblos” (that reflect aspirations of autonomy and self-governance). Thinking more in terms of the Spanish models of plurinationality than Eastern European ones, several indigenous leaders I have interviewed saw this as the most important long term political project to alter the structures of inequality.

Additionally, there is some concern that the new phase of PRODEPINE will cut back on some of the successful local strategies regarding communal savings (*cajas solidarias*) administered by indigenous women. The terms of recognition regarding gender are in serious need of greater attention by both indigenous organizations and international actors and indigenous leaders. It would be disappointing if Phase Two of PRODEPINE would signal a decrease in attention to this theme, as some indigenous leaders fear.

These critiques are worth taking seriously as the Bank continues to formulate new strategies for poverty reduction and enters the next phase of ethnodevelopment thinking. As we move to conclude with some recommendations, though, it is worth keeping in mind Appadurai’s reminder that meaningful change in terms of equity is often slow. As he notes, one of the great paradoxes and resources of the poor is that in conditions of urgency and emergency, they are capable of great patience. “In helping to negotiate emergency with patience, the capacity to aspire guarantees an ethical and psychological anchor, a horizon of credible hopes, with which to withstand the deadly oscillation between waiting and rushing.”³³ Thus, perhaps the best provision

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answer to the “perversity thesis” that greater indigenous political voice may invite great economic exclusion may lie in the nurturing of the (meta)capacity to aspire which over-time can strengthen indigenous people’s ability to rectify over 500 years of dramatically disadvantageous terms of recognition.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Over the last three decades, movements in Ecuador and Bolivia have grown increasingly powerful and made great gains in political voice. Different structures of opportunity in each country, however, have made Ecuadorian indigenous movements more unified than Bolivian ones. Bolivian movements, while more fragmented, have been more contentious as conflicts over water, taxes, and coca have given new life to more “radical” contestation. Despite the increase in voice, indigenous people face severe socio-economic conditions. As Hall and Patrinos (2004) note, gaps in health, economic opportunity, and education continue to separate indigenous and non-indigenous people. In order to narrow these persistent gaps both sustained research and action is required. In conclusion, I offer three possible avenues.

1. **More research on possible equity trade-offs:** While some argue that the increasing protest of indigenous movements may increase discrimination and thus have a perverse effect on equity, it is possible that the opposite may be true if increased indigenous voice can challenge the terms of recognition that have fueled discrimination against indigenous people for centuries. In order to understand these relationships, though, better economic and ethnographic data are needed to identify broad trends and understand cultural and social mechanisms.
2. **Include “pragmatic” and “radical” voices.** State and transnational discourses and practices have further reified distinctions between “pragmatic” and “radical”

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indigenous actors, which may be counterproductive. Development and governance agendas work best when most inclusive. Conversely, extreme indigenous demands, like the Aymara separatism of Felipe Quispe, have the greatest audience when political and social orders are most exclusionary. Thus, strategies which reach out across the “radical/pragmatic” divide have the most promise for long term gains in productive political voice.

3. **Re-think Terms of Recognition, Collectively.** More efforts should be provided to cultivate indigenous peoples’ capacities to aspire in ways that respond to local conditions and not external agendas. One of the ironies of PRODEPINE with a social-capital focus is that it ends by privileging “external” criteria (social-capital indices) over local alternative (e.g. nationalities and pueblos). While there are good reasons behind these choices, there should be greater opportunities for a wide range of indigenous people, from various ideological and organizational traditions, to collectively deliberate over the terms of recognition. Greater efforts should also be made to identify some terms of recognition (like gender) that may be underemphasized in current debates. These kinds of deliberations may themselves enhance the (meta)capacities and capabilities of indigenous people to participate in the forging of more equitable alternative futures.

NOTES

¹ UNDP 2004: 140-141.

² On party systems see Conaghan (1995), Gamarra and Malloy (1995) and Van Cott (2003). On the overthrow of Jamil Mahuad in Ecuador see Lucero (2001).

³ In Bolivia, Victor Hugo Cárdenas was Vice President in the mid 1990s under Sánchez de Lozada and Evo Morales almost defeated Sánchez de Lozada in the 2002 elections.

⁴ The “capacity to aspire” is Appadurai’s (2004) argument for the importance of voice. More on this below.

⁵ This explanation has been most clearly articulated by Yashar (1998, forthcoming). See also Albó (1991) and Zamosc (1994).

⁶ The phrase is Xavier Albó’s (1987).

⁷ Smith (1984).

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⁸ Guerrero (1994).

⁹ That an “old” (500 years +) “Indian” identity could be part of the rise of “new social movements” is one of the many paradoxical characteristics of movements and the literature about them.

¹⁰ Whitehead (2001: 11).

¹¹ León (2000, 2004).

¹² Calla (2003: 256). Additionally, lowland indigenous organizations were seen as benefiting more from INRA than highland groups who rejected the law.

¹³ This is not to say that Amazonian indigenous peoples in Ecuador faced no adversaries, quite the contrary. Oil and timber companies were powerful and disruptive forces. But as a classic enclave setting, these opponents were targets against which to mobilize as opposed to the more pervasive webs of local elites like those that existed in the Bolivian lowlands. In Gramscian terms, there were more trenches in lowland Bolivia than Ecuador to block collective action.

¹⁴ Healy (2001: 75).

¹⁵ A more thorough discussion, from which I draw upon here, can be found in Lucero (2002) and Lucero ND.

¹⁶ Compare for example, reactions to nationality in the national media in 1990 with the place of nationality in an executive decree of 1998:

El Comercio June 9, 1990

And you, politicians, historians, where do the so-called indigenous nationalities come from? Where do they come from? Did they, perchance, spend 500 years stuck in the magician's bottle, in the marvelous lamp of Aladdin? Show us!

Executive Decree 386, December 11, 1998

It is the duty of the National Government to promote the harmonization of the secondary laws and institutional structure of the State with the existing Political Constitution guaranteeing the exercise of the collective rights of the nationalities and pueblos ... Exercising the powers provided by the current Constitution, [the President of the Republic] decrees...the Creation of the Council for the Development of the Nationalities and Pueblos of Ecuador.

¹⁷ Pedro De la Cruz, FENOCIN, Quito, Ecuador, Interview, 1998.

¹⁸ Juan Pablo Pérez, Fondo Indígena, La Paz, Bolivia, Interview, 1999.

¹⁹ Brysk (1994: 36).

²⁰ Hoffmeyer, Interview, La Paz, Bolivia, 1999.

²¹ A useful long-term look is provided in the essays collected by Stern (1987).

²² Zamosc (2004: 139).

²³ Interviews with Hoffmeyer, 1999; M. Perez, 1999; J. Perez, 1999; Scurrah, 2000 and 2001.

²⁴ *La Presencia* 10/10/96, cited in Condo 1998.

²⁵ See Van Cott (2003).

²⁶ CIDOB accepted the agrarian reform law and the promise of territorial recognition it promised; the highland CSTUCB and cocaleros rejected it and saw it as insufficient at best. See Kohl (2003, 2004); Gustafson (2002).

²⁷ Landa and Fernández (2004: 15).

²⁸ “In which institution do you have the most trust?” Church (28.44%), Military (25.97%), CONAIE, (12.66%), Government (2.6%), Labor Unions (2.3%). *El Monitor de la Opinión Pública*, *El Hoy* January 2, 1999, Ecuador

²⁹ Zavaleta ([1977] 1998: 81).

³⁰ Conahan and Malloy 1994.

³¹ León (1994).

³² Breton (2002).

³³ Appadurai (2004: 81-82).

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