Enduring States

in the Face of Challenges
from Within and Without

Edited by
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One Step Forward and Two Steps Back: The Indigenous Movement, Democracy and Politics in Ecuador

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Introduction

In the last two decades, Ecuador has been exposed to a series of political and economic problems that have affected its democratic governance,[1] specially with regard to the full observance of human rights and the possibility of building representative, legitimate, and efficient institutions under a favorable political framework for the economic and social benefit of its inhabitants. Broadly speaking, these problems have placed in doubt the viability of an effective Ecuadorian state in the immediate future that can respect the rules of democracy, especially as they pertain to different actors of civil society and governmental authorities.

These problems continue to present themselves, albeit in different forms and shades, and constitute legacies of a not-too-distant past, to the point that some refer to the existence of a fanciful, image-based democracy [Andrade 1999]— a democracy that is found to be in constant crisis because it has not fulfilled the expectations of the population since the transition in 1979, after living for several years under military rule. Surely, the Ecuadorian democracy currently consists of a unique mix of formal democratic structures and authoritarian practices connected with traditional populist political cultures; this mix has limited, among other factors, the institutional consolidation needed to generate collective processes *vis-à-vis* democratic learning and introduce, in that sense, greater capacities of autonomous organization in civil society.

It has been mentioned that in delegate democracies with institutions that have the formal appearance of being representative, such as the Ecuadorian one, hybrid systems containing authoritarian and democratic elements are produced [Peruzzotti 2001]. Clearly, "It is not always easy to make a clear distinction between the type of democracy that is organized around the representative delegate and the ones in which the delegate element eclipses the representative one" [O'Donnell 1997a: 295]. The hybrid nature of such a political system would be evident, for example, in the weakness of its parliament, where the party system otherwise lays bare its members' characteristics and factions upon dealing with, in a dominant way, the interests of many groups—some of which are outsiders to the political sphere but which are located in regional, union, business, or even ethnic spheres. In fact, various parties are considered effective election machines that enable their sponsors direct access to power as a reward, without taking part in any vocational or collective projects that benefit the population as a group [Montúfar 2004: 88].

In general, there is agreement among researchers and academics that the growing distance between citizens and their politicians has meant that representation does not involve a true assessment of performance by which

> society can sanction the contradictions between proposals and facts, between action and ethical-political norms or a sense of general interest. The vote would be able to serve, eventually, as a subsequent sanction in the ballot boxes, but no longer is it based on facts but rather relates to an electoral agenda with a culture that places redemption as a priority. [León 2004: 35]

Additionally, the obvious matters of cronyism, client heritage, and authoritarianism in the Ecuadorian system, each of which contains a strong component of corruption, creates a negative image regarding Ecuador's ability to perform as a democracy.

From these vantages, one notes not only the incapacity of political parties to fulfill the demands of those they represent, but also the construction of the social identities therein. These identities are often in constant conflict or tension with certain traditions that have been established throughout the years, as well as with the capacity of political actors to deliver innovative solutions to the challenges of recent events, address negative experiences, and anticipate the new developments in democracy [Burbano de Lara 2003].

For the reasons mentioned above and others, it is currently difficult to deny that in Ecuador, negative political elements exist that relate to the government's constant state of crisis; civic disaffection, related to the deterioration of representation in the party system; the loss of credibility and legitimacy among many private and state institutions; the over-prevalence of corruption in several spheres; and the lack of transparency regarding accountability among authorities and public agencies. In more general terms, negative circumstances point to the fragility of Ecuadorian society in terms of its ruling logic, which is increasingly more exclusive, economically speaking; dependent on international politics; and

vulnerable in hemisphere-wide and regional areas. In fact, economic and political groups have failed to articulate a diversity of interests within an institutional system that guarantees predictable and stable regulations, because their regional branches, different international positions, and marked oligarchic character have deepened the corporate dynamics of political in-fighting. The consequences of that in-fighting are crystallized in the continuous deinstitutionalization of the state, interruptions in political developments between successive governments [Rivera and Ramírez 2005], and those circumstances that promote these actions and infringe upon the fundamental rights of the people.[2]

The presence of such political logic, as well as the results thereof, has wrought an Ecuadorian political regime that is considered ineffective in redistributing social power and promoting equal rights; naturally, such circumstances negatively impinge upon the formation of an active citizenship and a democratic society. Likewise, a deluge of crises has given rise to uncertainties, contingencies, and challenges that suggest the need for state agendas on governance, political reform, modernization, and the endowment of a welfare system. For all these reasons, the recurrent institutional instability and the economic and political exclusion suffered by the majority of inhabitants of the country often occur in contexts marked by anarchy and impunity, which form part of a vicious circle that is frequently activated through mobilizations, unemployment, protests, and blockades that prohibit legitimate and continual shifts in government. The most striking examples of instability in the case of Ecuador are those between 1997 and 2005: the country had six presidents, three of whom were ousted; a salvation meeting "mayfly" took place, chaired by an indigenous–military coalition that maintained national power, but for only three hours; and the fact that Ecuador boasts a long list of fugitive public officials that includes a former president and a former vice president.

This series of events underscores the fragility of the formal Ecuadorian democracy and its political institutions. These events have been part of alternative social dynamics and organizational processes, based on differentiated identities that have questioned, for the last two decades, the exclusive, racist, and elitist character of power groups that have governed national society. Doubtless, the way the state was handled by elites, representative entities, and public politics led directly to the political arrival of new actors and social movements that have tested the traditional parties and prevailing political culture—entities that, until recently, have denoted the bonds between society and the state.

To mobilize these new actors—mainly indigenous peoples, or afro-Ecuadorians, as well as groups of independent citizens and regional population sectors—so that they actively entered the political scene, coherence among various elements was needed, including the following: (a) a reduction in the centrality of the state in terms of integration, development, and a construction of national identities, owing to the generation of decentralized regional agendas and the dispersal of classical forms of co-optation that had been prompted for many years; in other words, the nation-state format no longer represented a supposed homogeneous community and did not have the capacity to generate unique stories related to the pluralization of identity, meaning, and sense of belonging that demanded the recognition of differential rights; (b) resolution of the crisis of representation inside and outside of the traditional political parties that had prompted the emergence of urban and rural civic movements; (c) changes in the electoral system, which had led to the participation of independent groups; (d) processes regarding the reorganization of civil society, based on specific and concrete identity demands, e.g., women's organizations, both district and communal; (e) constitutional reforms that, in some way, expanded the spectrum of human rights for the population; and, (f) the collapse of many leftist organizations—comprising basically working and rural individuals—that could not integrate emerging ethnic and social identities into their discourses and political practices; these organizations thus continued, for several years, to call for a political subject that was not represented in these organizations, as was the case with the Unit Front of Workers (FUT).[3]

In the Ecuadorian case, the combination of these and other factors made it possible for black and indigenous groups to acquire greater participation in regional and national political spheres, breaking a pattern of decades of inadequate representation that had converted them into second-class or underage citizens.[4] The social, economic, and cultural demands presented by them materialized, in part, in the form of constitutional reforms. For example, Ecuador was presented as a multiethnic and multicultural country in 1998, but without a formal conquest to suppress the exclusive and racist mentalities that continue to prevail even today, and with neither specific regulations for existing processes nor the true application of collective rights in several spheres of national society.

Within two decades, indigenous organizations have transgressed several organizational phases. For example, they have influenced the redesign of the Ecuadorian political field and even participated in less-than-democratic actions (i.e., they were part of a *coup d'état* in 2000), thus changing the image they had built over the previous years. Nevertheless, with all these advances and subsequent regressions, the question arises as to whether these actions—which emanated from a collective identity—have been capable of transforming the Ecuadorian political culture and the structure of state institutions, or of promoting a participatory democracy that involves different sectors of the population. To respond to that question, I formulate the hypothesis that the indigenous movement constitutes a political actor that, upon passing the phase

of mysticism and fancy, enters a process of political weakening and dispersal in an organizational sense, and that it does so to enter a sharp process of rebuilding whose results must be evaluated in the future. I associate this political and identity dynamic with the metaphor of "one step forward, two steps back," because it expresses a series of actions and situations that serve as an explanatory framework by which one can analyze the role of the indigenous movement in relation to politics and Ecuadorian democracy.

In fact, the whole of the 1990s—a period of favorable results for the indigenous movement—could be considered a "step ahead," because they were effective in recovering demands for collective rights as found in constitutional reforms, generating new organizational forms and recovering other, more traditional ones that permitted the control of various local governments. Furthermore, gains were made in constructing an ethnic discourse that changed the conventional Ecuadorian national imagination, thus making an appeal to different sectors of society that had previously been excluded from dominant groups and from those whose interests had been subordinated in the mechanisms of representation. The "two steps back" have arrived in the form of different phases of the indigenous political process, which were linked to two important contexts that have negatively affected its structure and social assembly: a) the logic of co-optation and neocorporatism, as incurred by various government administrations, and b) frugal transitions, like those between allies in power who have maintained the mandate of former President Lucio Gutiérrez and have signified a hard blow to their continuation as an alternative political option for Ecuadorian society. I will further develop these ideas in what follows.

1. Indigenous Peoples and Recent History

The history of Ecuador, similar to that of other Andean countries, is rife with both official and nonofficial stories. Among the nonofficial and recently accepted ones are those that deal with national construction; such are laden with accounts of exploitation, injustice, racism, and internal colonization, executed by racially mixed white groups that have maintained power to the present day over indigenous and black populations. Throughout almost all of the 20th century, the indigenous population was entrusted with a series of politics of national integration that had the objective of redeeming, incorporating, civilizing, educating, and making citizens of the different indigenous and black peoples that were considered obstacles to the development and progress of the Ecuadorian nation.

Throughout the decades, the state promoted a series of actions and programs to try to incorporate indigenous people into national and regional markets. The state delegated the responsibility of "civilizing" the different Amazonian and Andean ethnic groups to Catholic and Adventist religious missions, who limited the use of native languages. Furthermore, they established the mandate that Spanish and Christianity be acquired as cultural requirements for dominant society and promoted a welfare paternalism that supported indigenous discourses and cultural relativism, building a folkloric vision of "the passive Indian" that was treated as a minor or inferior being. Such racist attitudes found legitimacy in a national society that continued to think, albeit fancifully, of the Ecuadorian nation as a culturally homogeneous society, similar to European models. In addition, in the 1960s, leftist parties, mainly the Communist Party, believed that indigenous people were companions of a lesser order who should, therefore, be represented by them, given their incapacity to represent themselves [Rivera 1998].

The agrarian reforms of 1963 and 1974 hardly changed the situation of poverty, abandonment, and exploitation in which indigenous people found themselves. Although the *huasipungo*[5] and other forms of precarious work exploitation were eventually prohibited on estates and plantations, the land delivered to indigenous communities were generally located in ecological zones, such as in the low-productivity highlands. This meant that in the creation of small farms and in the presence of a growing demographic pressure, agricultural activities would develop on fragile land and with limited resources. Strangely, these agrarian reforms were executed by military dictatorships, especially around the time of the second reform, in 1974; they did so, in an effort to promote productive social relations on farms and in the country. They saw in these measures the possibility to modernize and build the Ecuadorian nation, which until the end of the 1970s had undergone serious physical, productive, cultural, and ideological problems *vis-à-vis* integration. The nationalist nature of the armed forces also helped promote the modernization of the state apparatus, by implementing a model of substitute development through importation. In addition, the aforementioned dictatorships applied banking measures and offered industrial incentives, to promote the colonization of border zones and to nationalize petroleum, which to date has comprised the main source of fiscal income.

State intervention in agriculture was relatively intense. Guilds as well as rural and indigenous communities of that period had the support of governmental apparatuses in establishing different organizational systems, without eliminating the presence of the church or of the first nongovernmental organizations that had begun to work there in rural development. This does not mean to say that conflicts over land would disappear entirely, because the pressures of

landowners, rural owners, and intermediaries continued to exist and those parties maintained both their economic privileges and local interests.

In fact, these policies encouraged an institutionalization of agricultural production that was organized racially and where wealthy *mestizo* producers could be easily found, many of whom had abandoned grain production for agricultural production that generated higher incomes. A second *mestizo* sector comprised owners of medium-sized lands who ventured into capitalist production on a smaller scale; there was also a great mass of indigenous producers who cultivated cheaper products destined for domestic and local markets. The latter comprised a minority of small merchants with sufficient productivity and land to sustain themselves and derive profits, as well as an extensive majority of small holders who had been required to sell their labor force in different markets in order to survive [Pallares 1998]. In spite of these limitations, indigenous groups had begun a local and regional organizational process that, years later, would transform them into a fundamental political actor in Ecuadorian society.

In fact, in 1972, with the support of Catholic sectors and leftist Christian parties, Ecuador Runacunapac Riccharimui ECUARUNARI[6] was formed and is considered the first national-level indigenous organization with the capacity to generate an alternative discourse regarding the nation and modernity; this discourse not only supported material demands related to fair access to land, but was related to aspects *vis-à-vis* the indigenous figure as the builder and carrier of national history. This positioning regarding cultural and ethnic identity would serve as an important political backup, so that indigenous organizations could gradually deconstruct the negative image of a subordinate rural "Indian" that had held legitimacy for decades; in the process, the existence of a racist society was revealed, anchored in routine practices that originated from an ethnic border that categorized geographically diverse populations in social and cultural terms.

Since 1976, under the direction of a new military triumvirate, the process of returning to democracy has been initiated. The crisis inside the military government had lent more bargaining power to the elites and traditional political parties, creating pressure for a return through a corporate-style constitutional assembly. In that context, the second military period applied its own transition project, which called upon representative parties, social organizations, and guilds to prepare a new constitution, a new law of elections, and policies that, built into the new constitution, sought to fortify the presidential system. This centralized planning in the elaboration of public policies ratified a development model that centered on state intervention in strategic areas such as petroleum, telecommunications, and public utilities. To a certain degree, the economic model designed by the dictatorship was expressed in another constitution that established new civil and political rights; this model looked to establish, above all, the right for illiterate (and mostly indigenous) citizens to vote, as well as extensive rights to education, health, and housing [Rivera and Ramírez 2005].

The return to democracy in 1979 did not signify greatly beneficial changes to the living conditions of the indigenous population, even though they were now citizens with the right to vote.[7] The political establishment—who negotiated the transition with the military—decided to incorporate illiterate citizens into the electoral process, in order to expand to some degree their political citizenship. Their aim was not marked by an ethical conviction to apply and institutionalize collective rights, but rather by populist electoral calculations that sought to utilize the illiterate, rural, and indigenous people as a potential sector that could be managed as a client—and paternalistically at that—by different political parties that participated in the fight for a return to democracy. Hence, the racist rationale and paternalistic ideology that formed a certain image of indigenous people was institutionalized and further reduced the population into a mere concept.

The 1980s was marked by a strong economic crisis that affected the entire population, but it was particularly felt amongst peasants and native communities. The crisis was marked by persistent inflation; the considerable reduction in agricultural production in the coastal region in 1983 by the effects of "El Niño," which also destroyed the road system and part of the national food supply; the earthquake in 1987, which paralyzed petroleum exports, the main source of state income and the basis of the state budget; a 6 per cent decrease in the GDP during 1981–1990; and a prolonged economic recession. These, among other factors, occurred in that decade of loss; in spite of them, however, the 1980s signified an important period for a number of indigenous organizations. In 1986, for example, the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE) was established as an organic representative of indigenous people in the country.

The appearance of CONAIE marked a departure from a long phase of representations that excluded indigenous people and treated them as inferior. No longer was it a matter of encouraging discourse and practice among class-conscious groups such as peasants, who were distanced from traditional leftist and other political parties. It was now a matter of indigenous people building their own political space with a distinct identity and other ideological considerations, with a focus on the fight for land and demands for ethnic–cultural considerations that included pressures on the Ecuadorian state to implement specific public policies.[8] As this type of ethnic organization was born, a deep crisis among urban and rural union movements was under way, and they were unable to rally other social actors within the extensive public fabric.

2. The Emergent Political Incursion of Indigenous Peoples

At the beginning of the 1990s, the image of the Ecuadorian nation—i.e., culturally homogenous, territorially integrated, and socially cohesive—was broken. These representations were left to be resignified and found meaning through great indigenous uprisings that took place throughout almost all of the republic. These movements permitted a questioning of the foundation of Ecuadorian "nationality" and disclosed a series of existing conflicts that had not been attended by previous government administrations.

Citizens, especially of the coastal region, were surprised by the generalized protests, which were the fruits of organizational work that had been carried out in near-silence at the local and regional levels in previous years. Indigenous people acquired their own voice; collectively, that voice implied that from that moment, they would be taken into account as a social movement because, from a theoretical point of view, they had fulfilled the following characteristics: identity, opposition, totality, and ethics [Fontaine 2002].

The indigenous demands were condensed into 16 points, of which I mention the most important: a) a solution to land disputes, especially in the highlands, where a large number of social tensions had accumulated and constituted a "time bomb" in urban and rural zones comprising a large number of indigenous people; b) the implementation of bilingual and intercultural educational policies at a state level, which would recognize particular ancestral languages; c) compensation for economic measures that had been established in the framework and which contained constant structural adjustments that resulted in increased poverty among Ecuadorians; d) the recognition of Ecuador as a multinational state—a point that caught the special attention of armed forces and elites who had congregated in different productive and political sectors; and, e) a series of parochial and local demands destined to resolve old economic and social problems that otherwise reduced the legitimacy and functioning of the national state in those zones. The proposed idea to increase power at a grassroots level incorporated a notion of alternative local governments—one that enlarged the formal conception of democracy and sought to establish inclusive participatory mechanisms, in order to confront the weaknesses inherent in a limited citizenship.

The solution offered by the former government in response to these ethnic demands was partially and gradually undertaken; for various reasons, it was constituted as an extremely important political juncture. First, indigenous people managed to concentrate the interests of other popular organizations to such a degree that several of them were incorporated into CONAIE. Second, the "national" society was amazed by how one sector of the population—one that had remained excluded and apparently controlled by different economic and political circumstances—was capable of challenging the state. A new generation of leaders questioned traditional political sectors and started to debate central themes related to economic development and the political system; they also served to deconstruct the false image of indigenous people as subordinate beings. Third, those leaders initiated a phase of social protest that declared Ecuador a multinational state; in the years that followed, their demands served to characterize the governmental climate. Fourth, they questioned the short-sightedness and lack of dynamism of the parties and organizations of the Left, whose popular aspirations had been halted. Fifth, there were serious concerns among the armed forces, which perceived the indigenous movement as a force that could possibly lead to the destabilization of the nation-state. It was possibly at this juncture that, from the perspective of the military, the indigenous presence was considered subversive, but over time, the aforementioned concerns led to contributions from, conspiracies among, and the participation of these actors in the *coup d'état* of January 2000 against former President Jamil Mahuad.

Though the first uprising culminated in June 1990, the lack of attention paid by the National Congress, the disinterest on the part of political parties, and the priorities of productive sectors dealt a hard hand to indigenous groups who desired "national disintegration"; such circumstances gave rise to a tense climate that, on a general level, challenged the military as defenders of the established democratic order. In 1991, the armed forces announced their concerns regarding the preservation of national unity, in a clear response to demands for national plurality; in response, the armed forces established a strategy to create a greater institutional presence in indigenous communities throughout different regions of the country. That strategy

included the replacement of frequently absent teachers in rural schools, the donation of materials for small communal buildings, and training sessions for health practitioners and other occupations. This represented a substantive change in the rural panorama, which had previously been abandoned. The military strategy explicitly fulfilled the following three purposes: to obtain information about the reality of the communities in terms of its leaders, organizational structure and relationships; the warning that supposed its own direct presence; and the support of development. The latter supposed a true military takeover for state presence. [Barrera 2001: 120]

This takeover strategy quickly came to a standstill, due to the military's budgetary incapacity to attend to the many needs of people who, for decades,

had lived in a state of poverty and abandonment. Shortly thereafter, the armed forces decreased their level of intervention, but the true state of the nation was rediscovered and remained in the memories of officials and troops. From that point, their concerns were channeled toward other military areas, without losing sight of a national pluralism project that continues to test them—largely because they had come question their traditional institutional identity, which had been based on a sense of integrative nationalism.

The question arises: what factors ensued to make it possible for collective indigenous movements to receive more backing and greater legitimacy from the population, compared to other traditional political and populist actors? I consider that in addition to generating an anti-establishment discourse and considering the nation an apparently integrative historical construct, there are novel and original aspects related to those movements' capacities to articulate issues related to ethnicity, class, and the public. While the political process emerged, they created a distinct identity in the national context—that is to say, the ability to partake in issues of difference, diversity, and inequality, with the same dynamic as the struggles against exclusion, discrimination, racism, and poverty. As Burbano de Lara points out:

> Indigenous groups, create shared identifications, generate solidarity links, but also oppositions and antagonisms, presented in strategic forms of struggle and resistance. It intends to build the field of cultural and identity representations through systematic work of liberation of indigenous people from the negative stigmas that the dominant society has built with respect to them." [2005: 240]

In 1992, the failure of the government to fulfill indigenous demands motivated other protests and mobilizations.[9] This time, demands were expanded to the recognition of ancestral territory ownership—principally by the Amazonians—that implied the principle of territoriality and the acceptance of a multinational state. Again, partial and superficial solutions characterized the manner in which the conflict was approached. Nevertheless, indigenous people decided not to participate in elections that year, instead ratifying its demands to the final candidates, accumulating political and symbolic capital, and above all positioning themselves as political actors in looming struggles. They had already predicted a neoliberal government that did not hide its intention to implement several politics of structural adjustment and state reduction. In fact, in 1994, the second indigenous uprising occurred on a national level, which mobilized various urban and rural sectors of the country to reject the approval of a new agrarian law that mainly sought to modify the legal structure of land possession

in indigenous communities, especially in the Sierra. This measure also had the objective of liberalizing communal-land markets that were considered unproductive, thus putting a halt to the modernization of the country. Following arduous negotiations among leaders such as President Sixto Durán Ballén and representatives of medium and large properties, the reform that impeded the liberalization of communal lands was approved [García 2000].

As such, the logic of indigenous political action had been expanded to include confrontations and negotiations within the neoliberal state, cornering the National Congress and concomitantly strengthening the capacity for ethnic convening —a strategy that aligned with the Political Project of CONAIE in 1993. That project rested on the possibility for movements to create their own institutions; in the process, they would open spaces of power from within the state itself to develop, by two mechanisms, identity objectives that included demands for autonomy from the governmental apparatus. On the one hand, they dissented and challenged the Ecuadorian nation state; on the other, the drive to seek consensus from different popular organizations had been added to the indigenous call.

The political tension increased inside the country toward the end of 1994. An indeterminate number of protests and strikes had blocked the government and the political party system, as well as their mechanisms of representation, which were in a deep crisis.[10] The absence of response to indigenous demands would have generated unprecedented national conflict, had the war between Ecuador and Peru not started at the beginning of 1995. That event closed the subject at a national level, and indigenous people joined the general call for territorial defense. As would be expected, in the interim, the confrontation between state and indigenous people decreased ostensibly and a short-term internal truce was established. Added to the cost of the warlike confrontation that affected the economy were structural adjustment measures that once again activated the indigenous confrontational repertory.

3. The Seduction of Ethnic Party: Alone or Accompanied?

Besides the debate regarding the nature of the Ecuadorian nation's identity, there was persistent criticism of the active political system of representation. There were also calls to enlarge social citizenship, even as stubborn opposition to land liberalization projects affected the traditional figure of communal property. Finally, there were demands for the inclusion of indigenous people in various public policies. On all these matters, indigenous movements resolved to establish a long-term political strategy by obtaining local power through electoral and democratic means, to access the central government.

The call to national elections in 1996 promoted an extensive debate within both Amazonian and Sierra organizations. It was in this context and among essential leaders that an effectively ethnic orientation was planned *vis-à-vis* voter turnout. Furthermore, those who defended a strategy to create extensive alliances managed to achieve a consensus to create the Multinational Unit Movement "Pachakutik-Nuevo País"; along with other social movements, it supported the candidacy of a television journalist who, to the surprise of many, won third place in the political race.[11] Though the created party established an opening in terms of internal participation, the link to CONAIE was so strongly perceived that it is still incorrectly considered the political arm of that organization. Independent of these debates, it is clear that the aforementioned political movement put into discussion the importance of ethnicity in an environment of political institutionality and Ecuadorian democracy; above all, it brought about a new sense of identity to the *public*—a phrase that lacked true cohesion for many decades and had been utilized by populist parties in its logic of representation and games of interest to exclude and make invisible many people of ethnic categories.

From that perspective and because it was the first time that the indigenous people had participated in elections by clearly identifying candidates, their incursion in the elections process and the political party systems therein was a triumph. They achieved one national delegation, seven provincial ones, six city halls, and more than 60 local authorities in cantons possessing significant indigenous populations. Moving forward from these events, native movements have taken two routes, creating on one hand greater possibilities for success in executing multicultural policies that have been presented to the state and summarizing, on the other hand, their intention to handle power from local governments so as to accumulate experience and know-how inside the governmental apparatus and national administration. The latter strategy is what Fernando García has described and which is implied to transfer from contender politics to new paradigms of governance [García 2005].

How can one exert authority, order, and management in local government and legislative representation? This deceptively simple question implies a challenge to democratically elected indigenous peoples, since they have needed to generate a new discourse and a management model different from that used by the traditional parties managing public policies in the country. Elected indigenous peoples agreed to promote social and developmental interventions based on some fundamental aspects: the democratization of local power; the transparency of administrative management; and the local promotion of economic, social, cultural, and political inclusion that were linked to principles of equity, gender, interculturalism, sustainability, and organized participation.

In this sense, the discourse of participatory democracy took shape in municipalities where indigenous authorities were elected. Though these local governments are poor and possess few resources, the spaces of public interaction between authorities and organized social groups were invigorated democratically through the inclusion of social actors in the discussion. Furthermore, they were involved in decision-making processes related to certain areas of local politics, whose control had traditionally been in the hands of narrow political circles of officials. In some cases, the new local governmental practice sought the coordination of collective interests in designing and defining local politics, negotiating resources, and distributing public budget monies. It was a process by which public space was reappropriated through the political-administrative control of the city, by social actors that had been historically disregarded within this context [Ramírez Gallegos 2001].

While this happened in local arenas of power, the government fell under the direction of populist leader Abdalá Bucaram, who had won the election that year. Within a few months of assuming the presidency, the Department of Ethnics was created with the clear intention of using the election to divide the indigenous movements. This political strategy did not bear fruit, however, because Bucaram was overthrown in 1997 for corruption, contempt of constitutional norms, and the early illegitimacy of his government.[12]

Many indigenous organizations actively intervened in the mass mobilizations that lead to the fall of the former president, but for the short period that Bucaram held power, conditions were already put in place for processes of institutionalization and state co-optation; those processes were handled in tandem with cliental and populist objectives by the subsequent government administration.

4. Indigenous Corporatism: Temptations of Bureaucratic State Institutionalization

Bucaram's exit was characterized by strange behavior on the part of the National Congress, which in a *sui géneris* interpretation of the constitution declared him *mentally incapable* and dismissed him with a majority of votes; it delivered a mandate to the congress president, Fabián Alarcón. In other words, the political parties resorted to military commands; just days before, they had withdrawn their support from the former president and, as result, once again became referees of Ecuadorian democracy.

In fact, the non-deliberate role of some armed forces that were exempt from political dynamics seems to be part of the democracy-oriented imagination. The

mediating intervention of the armed forces, which influenced the balance of political play, gave rise to the crisis of February 1997. From this perspective, it cannot be denied that the interventions of the armed forces were also a product of their own free interpretation of their role as "guarantors" of the constitutional state and the constitution, and of the "luck of the draw" *vis-à-vis* the referees[13] that tried to bring order to the political chaos—the latter of which, according to military perception, was characterized by the gradual collapse of the capacity of formal politics to exercise governmental efficacy and coherence [Rivera 2001].

It also cannot be denied that one of the constants of Ecuadorian political culture has been the presence of exclusive and optional decision-making regarding the state and public realm. Often, political and economic groups who sustained a reduction in power and had access to such processes had already imprinted the government with their unique proclivities and penchant for prebendary patron–client relations, in accordance with their interests, thus creating a greater capacity for pressure and negotiation; in this way, the party system and the levels of participation that should be present in modern and efficient institutions were greatly affected. In the process, different social movements and organized sectors of civil society have questioned the discourse, practices, and reasoning of political structures that identify and represent themselves as democratic, in order to express their own particular interests.

Related to this phenomenon is a deficiency in citizenship-building and the lack of a true constitutional state that guarantees the execution of the values of democracy (e.g., yielding of accounts, governmental transparency, consensus, and normative prosecution of conflicts as a substantial part of the rules of democracy). In fact, the existence of a client-based and corporate system[14] has deep roots in the political system, a point that has transformed and devaluated the mechanisms of participation and democratic representation [Panchano 2002]. This is due to the weights of existing patron-client relationships and corporate structures that have been constituted in *legitimate* mechanisms of political networking and exchange that, going beyond the electoral circumstances, have penetrated the whole of the political and institutional system, adapting it to suit the logic and conditions of those key players [Panchano 2002: 141].

In this context, exclusive pacts tend to present themselves, because of this kind of logic and these kinds of operations that assume insider cartels against outsiders and groups that restrict competition, complicate accessibility, and distribute benefits of power among associates. Therefore, they create a danger, wherein democracy can become a private project of leaders from a few political parties. Corporate associations also extract private benefits and protect their positions while excluding the rest of society; this, at the same time, contributes to an anemic democracy that bears the incapacity to generate alternative

participatory mechanisms [Przeworski 1998: 87].

These types of situations were expressed again during the temporary Alarcón government, opening the doors for the creation of several development entities that comprised an indigenous presence and for the execution of projects with support of various international agencies. The Council of Planning of the Black and Indigenous Peoples (CONPLADEIN) was established, as was the Black and Indigenous Peoples' Development Project of Ecuador (PRODEPINE). A new relationship between indigenous people and the state was designed through the participation of these groups' leadership in decision-making processes that affected the future of the people and regional governments.

This mechanism of co-optation somehow regulated indigenous protests not connected with CONAIE and lowered the intensity of demands, which were now being partly channeled to their respective state entities. The institutionalization occurred not only in agencies that had indigenous leadership, but also in the legislative environment and in local governments that were established via the 1996 elections. In this way, a sector of the indigenous movement entered a traditional political culture characterized by prebendary dynamics, the activation of clientele networks, and the execution of populist practices that promote corporate logic between the state and segments of the society—in this case, indigenous people.

In the end, indigenous people reproduced the determined plans of interaction created by state powers, because in Ecuador corporate and neocorporate traditions have shown great flexibility and resistance. Also, the state had become an archipelago of superimposed jurisdictions that was controlled by professional guilds, civil unions, and union entities. "In fact," states Bustamante,

> the movements and social interest groups operate from the perspective that in order to obtain a public, universal bureaucracy that is under their control and extend its private and particular jurisdiction, or to control and empower some institutional bastion that operates as [a colony] of the interest group. The legal corporativist tradition has helped, without a doubt, to facilitate this capture of the State in pieces. In this way, the possibility to create a State that operates as a guarantor of the public interest has aborted the possibility to create a State that operates as redoubt and guarantor of the public interest in the abstract. [1999: 28]

These co-optation practices influenced nonindigenous organizations that did not adhere to CONAIE, pushing them to question the state as to how its leadership was legitimized and determined. Disputes over offered resources caused an increase in the number of indigenous organizations with local assemblies, as

well as those with a functional capacity—such as the Ecuadorian Confederacy of Indigenous Evangelicals (FEINE), which brought together indigenous evangelicals, and the National Confederacy of Black, Indigenous, and Rural Organizations (FENOCIN), which was linked to the Socialist Party. Nevertheless and in spite of the fact that a corporate logic was established, nonindigenous organizations also redefined a way of managing local government and creating a foundation for new relationships to be developed among authorities and the population, through a process of democratizing public spaces.

The temporary president made an official announcement *vis-à-vis* the execution of the National Constituent Assembly of 1997; this created tensions and disputes within the indigenous movements. Popular sectors and nonindigenous social movements that had allied with Pachakutik accused the party of being the political arm of CONAIE. As was expected, debates inside the indigenous movements concerning electoral participation involved two positions. One position was taken by those who were prone to participate exclusively in regional and local spaces, in order to enlarge the legitimacy that had been obtained in management at the local level; they sought also to take advantage of the accumulated symbolic and political capital that would be destined to fortify a political project in the long term. In other words, the project would ultimately reaffirm the ethnic cultural identities associated with territorial management. The other position presented the possibility of wider participation through alliances; positioning the party and its figures on a national level was deemed necessary, and so it was time to advance an instrumental strategy that exploited the institutionalization associated with electoral democracy.

The tension generated between doctrinaires and pragmatics was resolved in an urgent manner; that tension was made evident by the events occurring in each province and in Canton [Barrera 2001], the latter of which was where both indigenous logic and strategies were being acted out.[15] The players involved were conscious of the fact that independent of ideology, there was the danger of institutionalism and corporatism, both of which could reduce the intensity and therefore the effectiveness of confrontations with governmental authorities. In any case, what was in play were presentations in advance of the following year's elections, as well as the agenda that was debated in the aforementioned Assembly; that Assembly had developed a new constitution that expanded cultural and civic rights.[16] The category of *pueblos* was recognized and the presidential figure was fortified, but these developments did not solve Ecuador's main problems. Nevertheless, the elections of 1998 served as a backdrop for indigenous peoples to participate once again in different capacities with respect to popular representation; they achieved six representatives, through the Pachakutik movement.[17]

Furthermore, the relationship between the indigenous movement and the government of Jamil Mahuad, who won the elections, began with the negotiations of the Council of Development of Nationalities and People of Ecuador (CODENPE). That Council came to bear the characteristics of a secretary of state position by the end of 1998; it depended directly on the president of the republic and had an executive secretary with a ministerial rank who was elected by the indigenous organizations that endorsed its mandate and management. This decision caused the disappearance of CONPLADEIN, making CONAIE a favorite and leaving the following two important national organizations without representation: FENOCIN and FEINE. A similar strategy arose with the National Direction of Intercultural Bilingual Education (DINEIB), whose director was also nominated by indigenous organizations. Additional agreements existed among the government and indigenous groups, to create a space for compromise that was destined to take part in monitoring and applying constitutional norms.

5. *Coup d'état*: Adventure or Political Ingenuousness?

The beginning of Mahuad's government was marked by the political errors and institutional weaknesses of its party, Popular Democracy. It was not be able to overcome the constant political blackmail of the Christian Social Party, which had supported Popular Democracy in its ascendancy to the presidency, giving rise to frequent confrontations and fights for power between the legislature and executive.

Political relations with the various population sectors were also affected, but the logic of distribution and co-optation that had characterized the governments of recent years remained. Thus, while these dual relations were developing between indigenous people and the government, the country's economy began to deteriorate and entered a state of instability, due largely to Mahuad's inability to confront the challenges that had resulted when he took over as the proxy and adopted anti-popular measures that were meant to alleviate the crisis.

Among the measures announced by the state in 1999 were the following: a controversial decision to suspend, temporarily, external-debt payments, which isolated the country internationally and generated a negative image among foreign investors; increases in gasoline prices and the annual costs of gas required for domestic use; the lowering of subsidies for electric power among the poor; and increases in prices among various public utilities. The most serious decision to have harmful consequences for the government was the gradual freezing of checking and savings accounts, as decreed in March 1999, which expressed a lack of political will to halt the corruption that had permeated large parts of the

banking system.[18] The country suffered the worst crisis of its history and the GDP of its inhabitants fell 9 per cent in a single year. The crisis was essentially a banking one, resulting from a financial liberalization in 1994 that reduced controls, thus resulting in a weak banking system, financial problems, errors of economic policy, and negative confrontations with external players, from 1995 onwards [Correa 2004: 12].

The events that subsequently took place are easy to imagine: riots, strikes resulting in fatalities, national state-of-emergency decrees, and widespread instability. A large popular protest also took place that, once again, placed the indigenous movement at the front of civic demands; it did so by creating multiple alliances with sectors of different political and ideological stripes. Within such a volatile context, the government tried to utilize in subsequent months a strategy that featured expanded dialogue, but the crisis—especially in terms of finances and banking, the galloping inflation rate, and successive devaluations—continued its own course to the point that the state opted, in January 2000, to renounce the national currency—the *sucre*—and to dollarize the economy as a means of saving itself economically and politically.

This government decision was unilaterally applied within a context of political, financial, social, and economic crisis. That decision was polemic, due to the social tensions that existed at the time; the social and economic imbalances caused by the sharp banking crisis, which were in turn associated with the effective absence of control regarding the national financial system; and to pressures of interest groups [Falconi and Jácome 2002]. Regarding governance, Mahuad generated instability within a few months of his ruling, because he did not possess the capacity to articulate his politics, and also because he was either unwilling or unable to halt client and corporate demands and tackle private and public corruption.

These factors, occurring together, impacted in such a way that on January 21, 2000, a sector of the military associated with popular sectors and natives ousted President Mahuad, thus establishing a triumvirate. Comprising an indigenous leader, a general of the army, and a representative of the *civil society*, it lasted only a few hours. In the early morning of the following day, they communicated to the country that power was now in the hands of the constitutional successor, Vice President Gustavo Noboa.

What happened in those few hours of uncertainty and tension? What were the real reasons behind the triumvirate being so fleeting and never having the possibility to develop a concrete mandate? Until now, these and other questions has not had credible answers, because there exists a multiplicity of interpretations and versions of those events that include, for example, an American denial of its involvement in an overthrow and/or pressure to proceed democratically

according to the Ecuadorian constitution. The select group of generals responsible for the conspiracies that took place prior to the overthrow used indigenous leadership and colonel ringleaders from the military uprising; secret agreements among indigenous leaders, as well as various colonels, to take power and establish a different government; exhaustive planning among natives and leftist parties, to ally with the military and put an end to the corrupt government; and disagreements and fights among various military factions, since several units were not involved in the overthrow. This final factor, in particular, carried great weigh, because it posed the danger of a confrontation with incalculable consequences. A series of suppositions, fictions, and interpretations regarding the events of January 21, 2000 continue to be debated until today.

Independent of these discussions or truths, it is clear that due to the involvement of military and indigenous leaders in the *coup d'état*, an image of public acceptance[19] that enlarged the symbolic and political capital of the ringleaders was promoted, in spite of the anti-democratic behavior involved. In fact, indigenous leadership was harshly criticized for deviating from its principles and convictions and being contradictory in terms of their discourse versus their practice.

The *coup d'état* produced various external and internal effects. On an international level, Ecuador had acquired the image of a split country; this image was due to the instability and risk recurrent in several crises of governance that had produced two former presidents in exile, one of them accused of corruption. Of course, underlying parts of that image were some Ecuadorian armed forces that had gone from being tutelaries of democracy to participants in a *coup d'état*, and the fact that so many tensions and uncertainties were blocking any possibility of foreign investment. On a domestic level, the democratic consolidation and the future of the country was thrown into question. In turn, the army declared that its traditional cohesion and credibility had been wounded on account of its participation in those events. Furthermore, the tension inside the army continued for many months, due to a series of sanctions, judgments, and imprisonments leveled against several of the *coup d'état* ringleaders. Among those leaders was the colonel Lucio Gutiérrez, former president of the republic, who was imprisoned for a few months and later pardoned.

Once again, Ecuador sought to alleviate this period of institutional instability by simply moving forward politically, with a new leader. Vice President Noboa was named first in command; his term of office came and went with few surprises in the area of relations between indigenous people and the government. The tone of the time was marked by a series of agendas, *status quo* corporate practices, and internal disputes that distanced the government from various allies connected with social movements and the Popular Front. Also, the uprising of

February 2001—against economic measures adopted during a period of persistent structural adjustment—sought to capitalize internal power, appease dissidents, and call together sectors that opposed the governmental measures. All this took place while the 2002 electoral process was under way.

6. The Central Government's Frugality: Political Costs and Organizing Crisis

The process of internally defining indigenous movements during the electoral process of 2002 demonstrated the existing tensions between Pachakutik and CONAIE. A portion of the leadership decided to go with their own candidates, while others formed alliances; the first option was ultimately rejected, because of the insurmountable problems arising from the fact that one of the leaders participated as a candidate of FEINE and had become a rival of CONAIE. The second option materialized in the form of an alliance with Patriotic Society (PSP), a new party founded by colonel Gutiérrez who, through arduous work, took advantage of the good image of the past military. That alliance's discourse coincided with the indigenous platform: the fight against corruption and neoliberal politics; political reform and social inclusion; opposition to the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas; and distance with respect to American positions *vis-à-vis* Plan Colombia.

Surprisingly, colonel Gutiérrez—who had participated in the *coup d'état* —was a finalist in the first electoral round, with 21 per cent of the votes; in the second round, he was the winner. Why did he win? There are several interpretations, but the most popular hypothesis is that the electorate gave its approval because of his sympathetic alliance with the natives in their struggle and for having confronted traditional powers. The votes obtained were won partially because of organized rural and urban voting, which brought into the fold sectors that had previously supported leftist parties. The votes, in general, denoted anti-establishment sentiments among those who identified traditional political parties as accomplices in the worst crisis to have taken place in the country. As such, indigenous groups and their allies seized power by means of formal, democracy-based procedures; two years previous, they had been criticized for their dangerous support of a *coup d'état*, but following Gutiérrez's victory, those negative criticisms gave way to surprise and admiration.

The happy marriage between indigenous people and PSP, however, was not to last. Within a few months of having assumed power, Gutiérrez established mechanisms that more closely aligned him with the right-wing Social Christian Party (PSC), as he sought to appease the early opposition that arose in congress.

Curiously, that same party, which had been a perpetrator of refusals during the electoral campaign, asked to change a blockade[20] so as to execute the demands and projects that Pachakutik had intended to develop as a co-governor. Months went by, and indigenous people found themselves not being taken into account; indeed, they were often ignored. No indigenous leaders were appointed to important departments, with the exception of foreign affairs and agriculture, nor were they invited to make vital decisions with regards to the country at large. The president's circle of power became closed-off, to the point that their environment was referred to as "endogenous."

In August 2003, Pachakutik abandoned the government alliance and joined the opposition, but its frugality with regard to government power had incurred high political costs. At present, natives of the CONAIE party are sustaining a serious organizational crisis. Gutiérrez was very skillful in favoring the rebellion, through populist politics that were based on client networks and supported by certain departments. In the end, the political capital he accumulated also served to develop corporate mechanisms that incorporated native sectors had become disenfranchised with CONAIE and Pachakutik.

In contrast to previous years in which indigenous mobilization was strong and caused national paralysis, in recent years, the assembly has failed and its political capacity to apply pressure has decreased in intensity. Various elements explain these changes: (a) the brief period of indigenous leadership in the government had, paradoxically, eroded their strength and produced divisions among organizations in different regions of the country; for example, the leaders of the highlands became radicalized, while some Amazonians remained in the Gutiérrez government; (b) there was a distancing between the leaders and their previous supporters that had, up to that point, remained unresolved; for example, there was a failure to announce the national uprising in March 2004 against the government; (c) the ability of the government to divide indigenous organizations through populist reasoning and the strategic delivery of resources—also known as a patronage system; (d) the lack in congress of an opposition block featuring active participation from indigenous representatives; indeed, some had even been co-opted by the government; (e) the growth of other indigenous organizations— especially evangelical ones—with whom the previous government negotiated and which fuelled its populist contingent; and (f) a distancing between indigenous entities and certain military sectors that had been previously closed.

As such, in the immediate climate, one cannot consider the indigenous movement a decisive actor that altered the order and stability of Ecuador. Its process of organizational recovery will be delayed, as they need to recompose their external and internal alliances and rethink the viability of their political projects. The indigenous participation in the elections of October 2004

demonstrated a loss of electoral force and political appeal; additionally, other indigenous organizations—such as FEINE and FENOCIN—have experienced important surges of growth that challenge the CONAIE leadership and have been used by the government to retain followers with well-known corporate practices. The political cost incurred by the indigenous movement—as articulated to Pachakutik and the CONAIE—are obvious; after all, for a new political actor, CONAIE has had many successes, but it has also paid high political costs that will make leaders think more carefully about strategic changes in the short and long term.

As we have seen, in the Ecuadorian case, indigenous people are the exact opposite of the old image of the subversive "Indian" of the 1960s. Presently, they occupy a fashionable position, due to their great power; through its institution of unilateral policies and the natural course of worldwide globalization, however, indigenous groups have tended to be reductive about a diversity of situations, using a set of very questionable criteria that produces hatred, intolerance, and fundamentalism. This last point is especially important in clarifying that the political action of indigenous groups is very far removed from the image that has recently been circulated by certain American military circles that consider "radical populism" and "nativism" dangerous factors that pose risks to regional stability and security.[21]

Finally, only with time we will be able to define which roads Ecuadorian indigenous organizations should take in the short term. I believe that today—in an environment characterized by a tendency to secure several sectors of society, the economy, politics, and culture, and whose perverse effects give rise to a lack of transparency and a scarce yielding of accounts by the authorities, all of which negatively affect democratic regimes—it is necessary for indigenous groups to distance themselves from positions that try to relate to ethnic or popular movements. This is because these supposed politics of subversion, also known as "armed action," are politics that seek to destabilize and counter democratic governments.

Conclusions

The Ecuadorian indigenous movement has endured a number of crucial moments in its organizational undertakings, and several players therein have instituted a logic that helped carry out their political agendas. Marked by a strong protagonist orientation sustained by identity issues, the appeals and mobilizations of indigenous groups have surpassed those of other organized sectors of society; as such, they collectively stand as one of the central speakers of the state in

moments of high socio-political conflict. Nevertheless, the questions that arise from their recent political acts present some points of reflection and debate.

It is not unreasonable to the state that ethnic political action has passed the point of being a legitimate, specifically indigenous demand and has become one of corporate negotiation involving the various government leaders of the day. This process has made political interests a visible representation in public opinion; most such interests are also attached to economic resources for sector that request differential treatment. Therefore, the tensions that have occurred within the leadership of CONAIE and Pachakutik—products of aspirations and disputes of such personal visibility on the part of some leaders—have promoted a climate of serious friction and distancing. Nonetheless, such conditions have also generated changes in indigenous organizational management and strategy; such events makes us consider whether indigenous reasoning is really as unique as was believed, or if they are simply another part of the Ecuadorian political culture, complete with all its deficits, errors, and depravities. In answering this question, we need to leave aside certain fancies that have overexaggerated certain dimensions of the indigenous movement and that still circulate as established truths in Ecuadorian society.

In either case, in recent years, the traditional parties and the Ecuadorian political scene have had to reconsider the presence of organized indigenous groups. If, at the beginning of 1990, the indigenous people were guests and passive observers of the decisions being made outside of their demands and interests, since the middle of that decade they have became important political actors in Ecuador. In this sense, their demands for national plurality should not be assumed to indicate a separation or division from the Ecuadorian state; rather, they should be seen as part of a strategy to strengthen their collective rights in the democratic state.

In spite of achievements that brought about modifications to the state structure and established new fields for human rights demands, the Ecuadorian indigenous movement presently seems to be in a disjunctive state, oscillating between strategic political pauses and a diminished role as a mere historical subject. In effect, successes obtained during electoral processes, all of which opened a space through which to drive various local governments, have helped promote new guidelines of governance and serve as an example to the other, traditional parties. They also constitute a challenge to consolidate and sustain its organizations in the face of political erosion and rebellion, both of which generate within the public the perception that the Ecuadorian state is being deinstitutionalized.

From another field of analysis, indigenous discourses have also suffered a detrimental metamorphosis when it went from a critique of the formal system of democracy and its forms of representation toward a discourse of coordination

that has featured certain corporate traits. Is it for this reason that the question arises, about whether multicultural policies prompted by this social actor in the last decade have had the capacity to represent the claims and demands of the rest of the nonindigenous population? The answer is not simple; there have been moments in the Ecuadorian political dynamic that this representation has been extensive and inclusive, and other moments when indigenous organizations have prioritized its corporate logic, which has in turn produced a distancing from the intention to represent the population at large.

From this perspective, there are positions that assess the negative or nondeliberate effects of the multicultural policies instituted because of the indigenous movement. Since the constitutional reforms of 1998, these policies have had as a counterpoint the approval of other norms that consecrate a type of governance that concentrates more power among the oligarchic groups of the country, gives more power to the presidential figure, and truncates true reform within a political system that continues to establish mechanisms of control in relation to social participation and democracy. This situation is called "neoliberal multiculturalism," because though new political spaces of participation have been opened to indigenous people, they failed to reduce the real power of the hegemonic groups and the pressures of international monetary agencies [García 2005]. It is because of this failure that the construction of a truly multicultural citizenship, such as the one presented at the beginning of the alternative political project, continues to exist as an unfinished task of both the indigenous movement and other social movements.

Finally, the democratic challenges assumed as the general responsibility of the country but especially of the political system and its different actors need to be oriented toward the attainment of various legitimate and legal environments that guarantee governance and peaceful coexistence, especially within a democratic setting. In this sense, they will be required to build credible political and institutional spaces that will resolve the fights for redistribution and against corruption that have generated so much damage. Furthermore, these spaces will facilitate the creation of representations of diverse identities and recover a legitimate foundation for negotiation, tolerance, and consensus—democratic values that Ecuadorian society aspires to possess in the near future.

Notes

1. Though the concept of democratic governance has been undertaken as processes of institutional efficiency and are similar to adequate mechanisms of social articulation, there are factors that refer to fulfilling the population's

needs, creating citizenship as a right, and the relationship of both to the political system. The existence of this scenario requires three conditions: political–institutional development, social and economic development, and an integration of the population. There exists general agreement within the literature about the multidimensional of this concept [FLASCO Chile 2003].

2. Until I wrote this chapter and after several months of political instability, Ecuador has not been able to name a Supreme Court of Justice, a Constitutional Court, or a director for the Treasury Inspector's Office—all essential agencies that establish legitimacy and order in a political system and in a society in general. It is because of these lacks that Ecuador's version of democracy has various social, legal, and institutional deficits.

3. The indicated concurrent factors are only some of those that have been present during the emergence of these social organizations; they do not repudiate the presence of other explanatory dimensions. In fact, if we examine them from a more internal perspective, we can say that in the process of organizing themselves politically, these population sectors played an important role: several international entities intervened in areas of ecology, alternative development, and communication, and in support of strengthening popular, ethnic, regional, and local identity projects.

4. In Ecuador in 1979, and as part of the agreements for returning to democracy after eight years of military dictatorship, the illiterate population could obtain the right to vote in elections. It is noteworthy that at that time, the illiterate portion of the population greatly comprised indigenous and rural people.

5. In the Quichua language, *Huasipungo* has two meanings, depending on context: "door of house" and "house of the servant." This term often refers to the endowment of a land surface or plot inside the landowner estates on which indigenous families live, in exchange for the "right" to work the land and retain part of the production obtained therein.

6. In Ecuador, *Runacunapac Riccharimui* means "the awakening of indigenous Ecuadorians."

7. One should note that at that time, there was no specific prohibition against the indigenous vote; rather, illiterate individuals were excluded, including members of several important indigenous groups that had no access to formal education. We do not imply that all illiterate people were also indigenous: in 1974, the illiterate population aged fifteen years and older comprised 25.8 per cent of the national total (Social System Integrated of Indicators of the Ecuador, version 3.5, 2003).

8. One of the consequences of the indigenous pressures was summarized in the creation and institutionalization in 1988 of intercultural bilingual education. In that year, the National Direction of Intercultural Bilingual Education

(DINEIB) was established inside the Department of Education, with its own functions and attributes. This event is important, because it was then that the indigenous people saw the former national director of DINEIB be elected from a list of three candidates presented for its own representative organizations.

9. In the same year, the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of the Ecuadorian Amazonian (CONFENIAE)—a subsidiary of the CONAIE—organized a march from its region to the city of Quito, in order to demand the legalization and delimitation of the territories of different peoples and indigenous nationalities of the Amazonian region. The state recognized 3,959.578 ha. of territory in the Amazonian and coastal regions during the Rodrigo Borja administration.

10. A momentary solution to this crisis came in the form of the approval, by part of the National Congress, of the participation of independent political movements and civil-society organizations in the elections of 1996, without being subordinate to the traditional supporter structures that maintained the *status quo* representation monopoly.

11. In the process of shaping Pachakutik, the themes of plurinationality and interculturality were debated. A political movement should not be restricted to the indigenous people; at the outset, it should undergo the processes for the inclusion of other sectors. For this reason, an alliance with the movement was made, creating the New Country Political Party—which, by then, represented various social sectors. This explanation is necessary to clarifying confusion that surrounds CONAIE and Pachakutik. The first one was formed exclusively by the people and indigenous nationalities, whereas the second was formed by both indigenous and nonindigenous people [García 2000].

12. In this process, the armed forces acted autonomously, to protect the country when they decided to withdraw support for President Bucaram, respecting the formalities of democracy and nonintervention in civil matters. Also, interpretations exist that argue that a greater political conflict had been set loose, without any counteractive actions. In any case, one must concede that between the armed forces and former president Bucaram, relations were very bad from the start of his rule.

13. In the crisis of February 1997, with the "hasty" exit of former president Bucaram to Panama, the armed forces expressed in practice—although they deny it—that they were guarantors of the constitutional state and decided who is a legitimate president. Because they were assumed to be repositories of constitutionality and the final figure in the balance of power, the Ecuadorian soldiers executed their otherwise veiled capacity to interpret constitutional and legal problems.

14. In terms of a useful and extensive definition for "corporatism," Schmitter offers that it is "an observable, complex, and general system of representation of interests, that is compatible with diverse types of regimes, that is to say, with different systems of parties, varieties of dominant ideology, levels of political mobilization, diverse ranges of public politics, etc." [Schmitter 1998: 74].

15. Pachakutik, in alliance with the Socialist Party and the Movement of New Country Citizens, obtained 15 per cent of the votes for the president of the republic and 9.22 per cent of those for the parliament's national members.

16. The chosen indigenous representatives for the Assembly were fundamental to the approval of the multicultural and multiethnic character of the Ecuadorian state, the collective rights of indigenous people and afro-Ecuadorians, legal pluralism, and the creation of indigenous territorial districts.

17. The chosen parliament in that year ratified Convention 169 of the International Labor Organization (ILO), bringing about one of the central aspirations of the Ecuadorian indigenous movement.

18. In March 1999, several days were decreed as "banking holidays," to stop the imminent bankruptcy of several financial companies and banks. One of them, the Bank of Progress, contributed, through its executive president, millions of dollars to Mahuad's electoral campaign. In that process, various nearby public officials of the executive withdrew funds despite the fact that doing so was prohibited. Days later, accounts were frozen nationwide; thousands of people fell into poverty and otherwise miserable conditions.

19. The acceptance of the population was channeled quickly into the section elections of that year, in which 27 city halls and five prefects were obtained. These were important increases, because in 1996 Pachakutik achieved six city halls.

20. These blockades were heavily laden with strongly racist overtones. The clearest example of was that generated around the presence of Nina Pacari, who had been named minister of foreign affairs. It was the first time that an indigenous woman became a high-ranking official of an institution characterized as endogenous, exclusive, and regionalist.

21. In the report of general James T. Hill in March 2004, the US Senate was notified of the presence of radical and indigenous factions that could generate anti-American sentiment. The former leader of the South Command also associates these "dangers" with the anti-drug and anti-terrorist discourse in the region. For greater detail, see "Testimony of General James T. Hill, United States Army Commander, United States Southern Command, Before the House Armed Services Committee, United States House of

Representatives" (http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/congress/
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