

The 'New' Development Regime in Ecuador: Implications for the Highland Indigenous  
Movement

by

Gregory Nasmith

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*For me*

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## **Abstract**

Beginning in 2007, Rafael Correa's presidency has marked a new era in Ecuadorian politics. Correa has been a vocal opponent of the Washington Consensus and has vastly expanded social spending and development programming. In spite of his government's seemingly progressive achievements, Correa has ostracized political and social sectors whose ideals he claims to champion, most notably leftist Indigenous organizations. Using a critical modernist framework, this thesis explores how the new developmental context in Ecuador affects the political project of the Indigenous and Peasant Movement of Cotopaxi (MICC), a provincial level organization. This study focuses particularly on a conditional cash transfer (CCT) program that is emblematic of Correa's development regime and discusses the potentially threatening implications for the Indigenous movement's long-term emancipatory project.

## List of Abbreviations Used

AP	<i>Alianza País</i> (Country Alliance Party)
CCT	Conditional Cash Transfer
CODENPE	<i>Consejo de Desarrollo de las Nacionalidades y Pueblos del Ecuador</i> (Development Council of the Nationalities and Peoples of Ecuador)
CONAIE	<i>Confederación de las Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador</i> (Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador )
CONACIE	<i>Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas de la Costa Ecuatoriana</i> (Confederation of Coastal Ecuadorian Indigenous Nationalities)
CONFENIAE	<i>Confederación de las Nacionalidades Indígenas de la Amazonia Ecuatoriana</i> (Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of the Ecuadorian Amazon)
BDH	<i>Bono de Desarrollo Humano</i> (Human Development Subsidy)
ECUARUNARI	<i>Confederación de Pueblos de la Nacionalidad Quichua del Ecuador</i> (Ecuadorian Confederation of Peoples of Kichwa Nationality)
FEINE	<i>Consejo de Pueblos y Organizaciones Indígenas Evangélicas del Ecuador</i> (Council of Indigenous Evangelical Peoples and Organizations of Ecuador)
FENOCIN	<i>Confederación Nacional de Organizaciones Campesinas, Indígenas, y Negras</i> (National Confederation of Peasant, Indigenous, and Black Organizations)
FODERUMA	<i>Fondo para el Desarrollo Rural Marginal</i> (Marginal Rural Development Fund)
INDA	<i>Instituto Nacional de Desarrollo Agrario</i> (National Institute of Agrarian Development)
MICC	<i>Movimiento Indígena y Campesino de Cotopaxi</i> (Indigenous and Peasant Movement of Cotopaxi)



MIES	<i>Ministerio de Inclusión Económica y Social</i> (Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion)
MUPP	<i>Movimiento Unidad Plurinacional Pachakutik</i> (Pachakutik Movement for Plurinational Unity)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OSG	<i>Organizaciones de Segundo Grado</i> (Second-Level Organization)
SENAIN	<i>Secretaría Nacional de Asuntos Indígenas y Minorías Étnicas</i> (National Secretariat for Indigenous and Ethnic Minorities Issues)
SIDENPE	<i>Sistema de Indicadores de las Nacionalidades y Pueblos del Ecuador</i> (System of Indicators of the Nationalities and Peoples of Ecuador)
SPPC	<i>Secretaría de los Pueblos, Movimientos Sociales, y Participación Ciudadanía</i> (Secretariat of Peoples, Social Movements, and Citizen Participation)
SMO	Social Movement Organization
SUIOS	<i>Sistema Unificado de Información de las Organizaciones Sociales</i> (Unified Social Organization Information System)

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

### ***1.1 Rationale***

Political shifts in South American states over the past two decades have transformed a wide range of policies throughout the region, where the majority of national governments have generally pursued left-leaning agendas. Mainstream media tend to include Ecuadorian president Rafael Correa in the Latin American ‘pink tide,’ alongside his more renowned counterparts: Brazil’s Lula Da Silva, Bolivia’s Evo Morales, and the late Hugo Chávez of Venezuela. First, assuming office in 2007, Correa’s administration rejected the neoliberal logic of the Washington Consensus in favour of “21<sup>st</sup> Century Socialism” and regional integration. Since then, Correa was re-elected in 2009 and 2013 and has reshaped Ecuador’s political and social landscape. In a country that previously had five heads of state in 10 years, he is the first president since 1996 to complete a full term in office. Supporters laud Correa for taking greater control of Ecuador’s oil industry, investing significantly in public infrastructure and social programming, strengthening democratic institutions and regional integration, and reforming the country’s constitution (Ghosh 2012). Correa’s ‘Citizen’s Revolution’ was off to a strong start as his government ratified Ecuador’s twentieth constitution with 64% approval in a popular referendum in September 2008 (Samaniego 2008). To many, the new constitution was emblematic of a hopeful new era in Ecuadorian politics in which the needs of the country’s poorest citizens would feature prominently (BBC 2008).

In spite of its seemingly progressive achievements, the Correa regime soon ostracized political and social sectors of the Left whose ideals he originally claimed to champion. Particularly, leftist Indigenous organizations have accused Correa of

criminalizing dissent, stifling meaningful democratic participation, and disregarding aspects of the new constitution (Denvir and Riofrancos 2008; Burbach 2010). Indigenous peoples have been marginalized throughout Ecuador's history, resulting in disproportionately high poverty rates and poor health and education indicators across the Indigenous population (United Nations 2009). The Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (*Confederación de las Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador - CONAIE*), arguably the country's most prominent Indigenous organization, has voiced serious concerns regarding the constitution and the government's commitment to advancing Indigenous rights (CONAIE 2008). Moreover, critics claim that the administration's 'new' development paradigm is still fundamentally based on neoliberal policies and fueled by extractive industries, which often threatens Indigenous autonomy and undermines goals long sought by Indigenous social movements (CONAIE 2011, Lavinas Picq 2013).

Given the tensions between Correa's political agenda and Indigenous organizations in Ecuador, it is worth closely considering contentious interactions between the state and Indigenous movement. The case of CONAIE is a particularly valuable avenue for examining how the Correa administration interacts with social movement actors. A large and sophisticated organization with roots in Indigenous communities all over the country, CONAIE has been a leader in the struggle for Indigenous rights in Ecuador since the 1980s (Becker 2008a). CONAIE's organizational capacity is particularly strong in the country's highlands, where Indigenous social mobilization has a long and effective history of resistance to colonial and neocolonial rule (see Chapter 2). CONAIE organizations in the Ecuadorian highlands are therefore a

fitting milieu for evaluating Correa's impact on social movement goals. Among the highland Indigenous organizations within CONAIE's national umbrella, the Indigenous and Peasant Movement of Cotopaxi (*Movimiento Indígena y Campesino de Cotopaxi – MICC*), stands out as a well-suited case study. The province of Cotopaxi has a rural population of roughly 70 percent and a relatively high Indigenous population, with estimates ranging from 29 to 35 percent (Cevallos 2008:148). MICC and its community level organizations have a strong history of Indigenous mobilization, and prominent Indigenous leaders have emerged from their ranks.

Correa's expansion of social welfare programming has fundamentally altered the character of the Ecuadorian state and its relationship with citizens. His administration has drastically increased the scope and funding of government development initiatives, signaling a rupture with previous neoliberal policies of state withdrawal. As such, Indigenous citizens have gained increasing access to state institutions and their growing resources. While greater access to social programs may typically be considered beneficial to poor citizens, the implementation of development schemes can also have a profound depoliticizing effect (Ferguson 1994; Li 2007). To explore this idea in more depth, this project concentrates on the Correa government's deployment of Indigenous movement concepts in development discourse, and the impact of social program implementation within the Indigenous social movement in the municipality of Latacunga, Cotopaxi. In particular, this research focuses on the government's Human Development Grant (*Bono de Desarrollo Humano – BDH*), a cash transfer program that has ballooned under Correa's administration. The BDH was also a much discussed topic among leaders of Cotopaxi's Indigenous movement.

Ultimately, this thesis will argue that the expansion of state development programming under Correa has undermined the role and goals of Indigenous social movement organizations in the country's highlands.

## ***1.2 Research Questions and Structure***

The purpose of this thesis is to articulate and analyze the political implications of strengthened Ecuadorian state development programming for Cotopaxi's Indigenous social movement community. To address this central question, this study explores a series of secondary research questions. Firstly, what is the discursive context in which the state enacts its development programs, and how does this affect the political project of Cotopaxi's provincial Indigenous organization, MICC? Next, how does the implementation of particular state programs compare to MICC's approaches to the target issues? Finally, how does greater access to state resources impact local political realities, in terms of support for Indigenous organizations and their long-term goals?

This thesis begins with an overview in Chapter 2 of the historical and contemporary contexts of Indigenous resistance and Indigenous-state relations in Ecuador. The chapter focuses on interactions pertaining mainly to rural development issues, and focuses on the experiences of CONAIE and MICC in particular. To conclude, the section briefly narrates the history of the Correa presidency in light of Indigenous social movements' goals. This chapter serves to highlight the often tenuous nature of relations between Indigenous social actors and state institutions as well as the centrality of both identity and materiality in Indigenous struggles.

Chapter 3 lays out the theoretical and methodological underpinnings of this project and highlights key pieces of literature relating to the major themes. Beginning with a conceptualization of social movement theory and indigeneity, the chapter defines the theoretical framework and analytical tools employed in the collection and analysis of the data. The chapter describes how a conceptual approach combining elements of poststructuralism, postmodernism, and postcolonialism is useful in studying Indigenous-state relations in Ecuador, and goes on to explain the value of governmental analysis in this context. Additionally, the importance of combining discursive analysis with a class-based approach for this study is emphasized. As such, critical modernism is explored as a way to bridge these traditions in order to provide a more comprehensive analysis. The chapter concludes by discussing the research methodology used, namely institutional ethnography, and outlining the research methods employed.

Chapter 4 presents the study's research findings in terms of the central and secondary research questions listed above. The first section addresses the appropriation of Indigenous movement discourse by the state and the implications for the movement's political project. The next section focuses on the BDH cash transfer program, which has become a key element of Correa's poverty reduction strategy.

The thesis concludes with a discussion in Chapter 5 of the broader implications of strengthened state development programming for social movement goals and political activity, with particular emphasis on conditional cash transfer initiatives.

## Chapter 2: Historical Background and Contemporary Context

In recent decades, the relationship between Indigenous movements and the Ecuadorian state has been a rich case study for scholars of Latin American politics and social change. The Ecuadorian example provides an instance of relatively peaceful yet powerful Indigenous mobilization in a region often historically characterized by internal violence. Three Ecuadorian presidents have been forced out of office through popular protests since 1997, with Indigenous political actors often playing a pivotal role (Becker 2008a). In addition to ongoing political activism, Indigenous organizations have made significant strides in municipal and provincial governance (North and Cameron 2003; Ospina 2006).

In spite of their successes, Ecuadorian Indigenous organizations face serious challenges. Internal rifts, particularly regarding organizational leadership and electoral participation, threaten the Indigenous movement's effectiveness. Moreover, leftist Indigenous organizations face a generally hostile regime in the form of President Rafael Correa's *Alianza País* (Country Alliance – AP) government.

Given that this thesis concentrates on the province of Cotopaxi, I will not undertake a comprehensive review of all Ecuadorian Indigenous organizations.<sup>1</sup> Instead, I focus on Cotopaxi's provincial Indigenous organization, *Movimiento Indígena y Campesino de Cotopaxi* (Cotopaxi Indigenous and Peasant Movement - MICC), and its national affiliate, *Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador* (Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador - CONAIE). First, I will provide a

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<sup>1</sup> For a more thorough history of Indigenous mobilization in Ecuador, see Pallares 2002, Clark and Becker 2007, and Becker 2008.



sketch of the historical context of Indigenous mobilization in Ecuador. Next, I will trace the evolution of Indigenous-state relations during the 20th century and into the new millennium, paying particular attention to issues of Indigenous development. Finally, I will examine the contentious relationship between the Indigenous movement and the current administration of President Rafael Correa (2007-present). From land conflicts to struggles over cultural rights, this history reveals a dynamic relationship in which development policy and interventions play a pivotal role.

### ***2.1 The Shaping of Indigenous Movements in Ecuador***

Our peoples maintain their values, knowledge, wisdom, and especially their own cultural, economic, and political institutions, against all adversities (Macas 2001:xi)

While scholarship tends to examine the Ecuadorian Indigenous movement during the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, it is worth reiterating that Indigenous resistance is by no means a recent or sporadic phenomenon. Between surges of armed uprisings, mass mobilizations, and national strikes, there has been a steady current of Indigenous resistance to domination throughout history. Whether as grand actions ‘worthy’ of documentation, or as everyday acts of subversion (Scott 1989), resistance to domination has been a constant in the Indigenous Ecuadorian historical and contemporary experience. As Enrique Ayala Mora notes:

Indigenous resistance did not end with the establishment of Spanish power. Sometimes by means of rebellion or through non-violent mechanisms such as the defense of customs, community structures, land claims, fiestas, language and other forms of identity, the presence of the Indian peoples was maintained in the face of colonial power (2008:18, my translation).

Nor did resistance in the region begin with the arrival of the *conquistadores* in 1534.

Prior to the Spanish invasion, the area’s inhabitants struggled against the spread of Incan

rule, meaning that the Northern Andes experienced a hundred year-long ‘Age of Conquests’ beginning around 1450 (Becker 2008a:3).

The pre-colonial, colonial, and post-independence histories of Ecuadorian Indigenous peoples offer diverse and significant perspectives on the past, yet they are beyond the scope of this study. While recognizing that the contemporary Indigenous movement has deep historical roots, this chapter will nevertheless concentrate on the particular dynamics of recent decades.

The strength and political organization of Ecuadorian Indigenous peoples developed significantly over the twentieth century (Clark and Becker 2007). In response, the traditional ruling class’ strategies for limiting Indigenous political influence shifted accordingly. As opposed to earlier forms of direct domination based on the exploitation of Indigenous labour, policies of clientelism, institutionalization, and co-optation are more sophisticated means for maintaining social control by the contemporary elite (Petras and Veltmeyer 2005:160). Such mechanisms will be explored later in this chapter and in Chapter 4 in more depth. As Selverston-Scher contends, in the past few decades, the state’s response to Indigenous demands has generally been to incorporate Indigenous issues, institutions, and authorities into the state apparatus (2001:51).

Historically, Indigenous struggles with the Ecuadorian state can be broadly divided into two categories: economic demands and cultural demands. These demands emanate from persistent forms of exclusion of Indigenous peoples, namely cultural exclusion, the colonial devaluation of Indigenous models of societal organization, and economic exclusion, in the form of limited access to land and other economic resources (Selverston-Scher 2001:76). Yet this distinction does not always hold, as Tanya

Korovkin explains: “Land, for the indigenous peasantry, was not only an economic asset but also a territory on which they could reconstruct their social practices and cultural identity” (2003:130). The intersection of economy and identity thus made the issue of land central to Indigenous efforts for increased rights and autonomy.

The struggle for land has been ongoing since the colonial period. Following European conquest, Indians were subject to the *mitayo*, a system of forced labour that, in Ecuador, generally forced them to work on large Spanish landholdings, or *haciendas*. The *mitayo* was adapted by the Spanish from an Inca system that required tribute labour from those living under Inca rule. However, under Spanish rule, this practice was intensified and arguably abused, yielding few or none of the benefits provided in the Inca Empire. Once the *mita* and slavery were formally abolished by the Ecuadorian government in 1822 and 1855 respectively, the *concierto* system, a form of debt peonage that gave Indians a small parcel of land in exchange for their labour on the *haciendas*, became a more significant source of labour for large landowners (Pallares 2002:11). Development initiatives in nineteenth century Ecuador often invoked racialized portrayals of Indigenous peoples as traditional and non-progressive to justify the expropriation of their land and the exploitation of their labour (Clark 1998:374, 391). Continuing into the twentieth century, *mestizos*, individuals of combined white and Indigenous ancestry, who often lacked agricultural experience, received land from distribution projects over more qualified Indigenous farmers (Ibid 374). These practices were, in essence, extensions of the colonial system of domination built on racist discourse, which has framed much of Indigenous-state relations.

The *Ley de Comunas* (Law of Organization and Administration of Communes) of 1936, ostensibly implemented to ‘protect and tutor’ rural communities, in reality allowed the state and landowners to control Indigenous communities and undermine peasant organizations (Becker 2008:72). Because of the state’s support of the highland elite, which essentially held a monopoly on fertile land, Indigenous communities located on and adjacent to haciendas were dependent on landowners for access to agricultural resources in exchange for their labour (Waters 2007: 124). As such, even though the *Ley de Comunas* allowed Indigenous communities to elect their own representatives, they “had only limited ability to negotiate with landowners and almost none with the state” in the first half of the twentieth century (Waters 2007: 123). Nevertheless, the *Ley de Comunas* also provided a measure of independence for Indigenous communities from the Ecuadorian government, ultimately facilitating local cultural reproduction (Pallares 2002:42). By mid-century, most Indigenous peoples were not in direct contact with state institutions but rather only interacted with the state through the leaders of state-sanctioned community organizations and federations (Pallares 2002:11).

Between the 1960s and 1990s, state policies regarding land reform and rural development ignited significant Indigenous organization and activism (Korovkin, 2003:129). The 1964 Land Reform (*Ley de Reforma Agraria y Colonizacion* - Law of Agrarian Reform and Colonization) marked the official end of traditional land tenureship and the *huasipungo* labour system in Ecuador. *Huasipungueros* were Indigenous peasants who worked on haciendas in exchange for access to small plots of land (Pallares, 2002: 38). A *huasipunguero* and members of his extended family provided obligatory labour for four to six days a week on the hacienda, including agricultural,

construction, and domestic work (Waters 2007: 122-123). The 1964 Land Reform was intended to break the dominance of large landholders over agricultural production and usher in agrarian modernization; however, institutional corruption and a lack of funding meant that by 1980 the legislation had affected less than 15% of agricultural land nationwide (Pallares 2002:39). Nevertheless, the redistribution of land (and lack thereof) to Indigenous peasants living and working on haciendas had important consequences for Indigenous-state relations. In many of the cases where the legal land reform framework was ineffective, there was an increase in Indigenous mobilization and land occupations (Pallares 2002:39). When land redistribution was successful, the state replaced hacienda owners as the provider of resources required by Indigenous farmers for rural development. Furthermore, social and infrastructural programs accompanied the land reforms, reflecting “the military regime’s efforts to build ties with the peasantry and to solidify their basis of political support” (Yashar 2005:92). As a result, the role of Indigenous community and intercomunal organizations as avenues through which Indigenous farmers accessed state institutions became more prominent (Pallares 2002:41).

More significant agrarian reform was initiated in 1973 under the government of General Guillermo Rodríguez Lara (1972–1976). The reforms, fuelled by rising oil exports, consisted of land redistribution and rural development programming to expand rural schooling, health, irrigation, electrification, potable water, and other infrastructure, particularly in the highlands (Yashar 2005:94). The land distribution policy, however, was motivated more by efficiency and modernization than reducing inequity, as the government abolished limits on the amount of land that could be owned and promoted

agro industry (Waters 2007:126). Nonetheless, Indigenous communities did secure some land from the haciendas, albeit of generally poor quality, with more organized communities able to exert pressure on landowners and state agencies faring better in land transfer negotiations (Waters 2007:137). While initially intended to strengthen ties with rural sectors of the country, the 1973 reforms inadvertently “created a space in which indigenous communities could secure more local autonomy to sustain and strengthen local practices and authority systems” (Yashar 2005:95).

Indigenous opposition to state agrarian policy spiked in the late 1970s in response to the creation of the rural development agency FODERUMA (*Fondo para el Desarrollo Rural Marginal*, Marginal Rural Development Fund) in 1978. The new agency’s policy marked an effort to shift from addressing politicized Indigenous land claims to less transformative rural development projects with a limited scope and budget (Korovkin 2003:138-9). In other words, rather than pursuing land redistribution, the government focused on small-scale rural development projects. Furthermore, credit that was supposed to pass through FODERUMA to the poorest peasants was often channeled to large landowners instead (Yashar 2005:98). The state’s attempts to de-politicize the issue of Indigenous land tenure, along with its failure to provide adequate support to small farmers, ultimately contributed to the formation of peasant federations to increase Indigenous bargaining power (Korovkin 2003:139).

### ***2.1.1 Neoliberalism: Galvanizing Contemporary Indigenous Resistance***

In the context of weak political institutions, drastic economic measures, irrational exploitation of natural resources (frequently located in indigenous territories), and an international human rights movement that lends increasing support to ethnic minorities, the indigenous movements of Latin

America are intensifying their political demands (Selverston-Scher 2001: 3).

The neoliberal era in Ecuador greatly altered the dynamics of Indigenous-state relations. As Selverston-Scher explains above, the Ecuadorian neoliberal state simultaneously initiated direct challenges to Indigenous political spaces and reduced institutional engagement in Indigenous affairs. This context contributed to an unprecedented mobilization of the Indigenous movement and its central role in nearly every anti-neoliberal protest in Ecuador since 1990 (Jameson 2011:63).

Leon Febres Cobo's government (1984-1988) was particularly harsh in its response to Indigenous sector demands for agrarian reform. In addition to strengthening the Office of Indigenous Affairs in an attempt to counter the influence of Indigenous organizations, opposition to state policies was met with torture, arbitrary arrests, assassinations, and house burnings (Selverston-Scher 2001:44). Conversely, the centrist government of Rodrigo Borja Cevallos (1988-1992) created some political space for Indigenous organizations to advance their goals, particularly through initiatives in literacy and bilingual education (Pallares 2007:141). Though considerably more sympathetic to the Indigenous movement than previous administrations, Borja's efforts did not sufficiently address organizations' demands, notably for the comprehensive land reform, political empowerment, and recognition of Indigenous peoples as nationalities with distinct rights (Pallares 2007:142). The culmination of this discontent was the 1990 *levantamiento* (uprising), the most widespread and concerted Indigenous mobilization the country had ever seen (further elaborated in the following section). Following the Borja administration, President Sixto Durán Ballén's government (1992-1996) returned to a more conservative approach to Indigenous affairs by continuing to undercut

Indigenous interests through its trademark modernization policy (Jameson 2007:66). Proposed legislation that threatened peasant and Indigenous communities by allowing the subdivision and sale of communal land and the privatization of water was met with strong nationwide mobilization (*Mobilización por la Vida*) in June 1994 (Deere and León 2001:47-48). In spite of the successful resistance to the legislation, the government did little to resolve ongoing land disputes and further reduced dialogue with Indigenous organizations (Selverston-Scher 2001:46-7). Duran Ballén also created the *Secretaría Nacional de Asuntos Indígenas y Minorías Étnicas* (National Secretariat for Indigenous and Ethnic Minorities Issues – SENAIN), widely denounced by the Indigenous sector as a divisive tool of cooptation (Lucero 2008:144).

While neoliberal administrations of the 1980s and 1990s generally ignored Indigenous demands for land redistribution and reforming the agricultural system, they also retreated from providing more focalized rural development programming. As international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) filled the void left by state agencies, the potential for rural development to be a medium for structural reform diminished, as small-scale, donor-driven development projects became the norm (Petras and Veltmeyer 2005). Furthermore, the diminished role of the central government as provider meant that small and medium scale farmers lost access to affordable means of agricultural production that large-scale producers could still afford, such as commercial fertilizer (Martínez Valle 2003:87). Simultaneously, Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) implemented during the 1980s and 1990s in Latin America had a disproportionately negative impact on rural Indigenous peasants (Martínez Valle 2003:85). State-led agricultural modernization policies favoured export-driven



production on a large scale, as opposed to smaller scale agriculture destined for internal consumption (Martínez Valle 2003:87). The de-regulation of agricultural markets, together with trade liberalization and the privatization of resources, created a hostile economic environment for small Indigenous farmers. Given the severe consequences neoliberal policies posed for Indigenous communities, Ecuadorian Indigenous organizations mounted fierce opposition.

On the other hand, the retreat of the state provided Indigenous organizations with a political opening in the form of decentralization. During the 1990s, provincial and municipal governments were granted unprecedented levels of resources and autonomy (Ospina 2006:126). Indigenous candidates made significant inroads into local politics in the 1990s at the municipal level, and later at the provincial level. The full implications of electoral participation for the Indigenous movement will be discussed at greater length below, but in the context of early neoliberal reform, Indigenous organizations began to play a meaningful and innovative role in local governments (Cameron 2010).

Unlike Indigenous struggles earlier in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, resistance during the neoliberal era challenged the limits of the liberal universal citizenship model (Pallares 2007:141). As Henry Veltmeyer notes, Indigenous land struggles evolved into “socio-political movements that were both peasant-based and peasant-led and [...] were rooted in the struggle of indigenous communities for land, territorial autonomy, and freedom and democracy, if not social justice” (2007:124). At the forefront of this transition was CONAIE.

### **2.1.2 CONAIE and Pachakutik**

The last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the first decade of the new millennium witnessed both the strength of CONAIE as a leading national social movement organization as well as its fragility in the realm of electoral participation. Formed in 1986 but with historical roots in earlier Indigenous-leftist organizations (Becker 2008a), CONAIE came to the forefront of the Ecuadorian political landscape in June 1990 when it emerged as the voice behind a nation-wide Indigenous *levantamiento* (uprising). Lasting nine days and bringing the country to a standstill for a week, the uprising centered on demands for “land, economic development, education, and recognition of Indigenous nationalities” (Becker 2008a:166). Over the next two decades, however, CONAIE lost much of its momentum as the social movement was fractured by disastrous political alliances combined with destabilizing efforts by the state.

Since its inception, CONAIE’s core goals have been relatively consistent. The national organization seeks ‘equal but different’ citizenship for Ecuadorian Indigenous peoples within the framework of a pluri-national state, defined as “the organization of government that represents the joint political, economic, and social power of the peoples and nationalities of a country” (Selverston-Scher 2001:83). In other words, Indigenous organizations are striving for “a participatory model with the potential to lead to a more stable democratic system that accommodates the multiethnic nature of the country” (Selverston-Scher 2001:3). Far from a secessionist objective, CONAIE aims to advance a political project within an Ecuadorian state, grounded in leftist ideology and Indigenous world views.

Part of CONAIE's political project involved making inroads into Ecuador's electoral system in the early 1990s. Despite CONAIE's affirmation in 1990 to remain disengaged from electoral participation, in 1995 Indigenous activists affiliated with CONAIE formed the *Movimiento Unidad Plurinacional Pachakutik* (Pachakutik Movement for Plurinational Unity - MUPP) in order to represent Indigenous interests, as well as other popular movements, in the state realm (Becker 2011:43). There was heated debate within the social movement community regarding its entry into electoral politics. While many CONAIE activists believed that Ecuador's electoral and government systems represented the traditional ruling class and its corrupt political parties, others saw electoral participation as a potentially powerful avenue for reform (Becker 2011:44).

On January 21, 2000 an Indigenous-military alliance ousted Jamil Mahuad from the Ecuadorian presidency. Among other unpopular policies, Mahuad was proposing to replace the Ecuadorian *sucre* with the US dollar in response to the country's soaring inflation. Dollarization faced resistance due to fears over the loss of personal savings as well as macroeconomic implications. Adopting a currency over which it has no control prohibits Ecuador from diversifying its economy to develop labour intensive industries, making it dependent on exporting primary resources and importing goods (North 2013: 121). A triumvirate including Colonel Lucio Gutierrez, CONAIE president Antonio Vargas, and former Supreme Court president Carlos Solórzano assumed control of the national government. The so-called Government of National Salvation only lasted for a few hours before Gutierrez was replaced by General Carlos Mendoza, who resigned shortly thereafter. Then vice-president Gustavo Noboa became President for the

remainder of Mahuad's term and ended up implementing his predecessor's dollarization plans.

CONAIE's first attempt to have a central role in national government thus ended in failure. However, tensions would only increase between CONAIE and the Ecuadorian state. After a six-month stint in prison for his role in the 2000 coup, Lucio Gutierrez re-emerged as a candidate in the 2002 presidential elections. With the help of Pachakutik and CONAIE support, Gutierrez won the election and Indigenous leaders received ministerial positions in his administration (Dangl 2010:47). The relationship between the Indigenous movement and Gutierrez soured as it became clear that the President intended to subscribe to a neoliberal agenda (Petras and Veltmeyer 2005:158). What began as an unprecedented opportunity for CONAIE and Pachakutik turned into an unparalleled blow to the movement. Once Pachakutik broke from the government in August 2003, Gutierrez exploited divisions within the broader Indigenous movement to erode Pachakutik's support and undermine its political project (Becker 2011:87-91). For instance, Gutierrez provided considerable financial and political support to minority conservative factions within the movement, which, many contend, was responsible for the Indigenous evangelical party Amauta Yuyay's 2004 electoral success in the province of Chimborazo (Van Cott 2008:161). The rupture and ensuing fallout left deep wounds within Pachakutik, CONAIE, and their bases: "owing to attacks by President Gutierrez and the disillusionment of supporters, at the national and subnational levels, Pachakutik has undergone a painful restructuring to replace failed leaders and redefine its mission and identity" (Van Cott 2008:171). When my research began in 2009, intellectuals and Indigenous leaders continued to identify the failed relationship with Gutierrez as the

cause of many of the movement's current shortcomings. While the Indigenous movement's participation in local government has been far more successful than its national endeavours, the debate continues regarding the relationship between CONAIE and elected government office.

### ***2.1.3 The Indigenous and Peasant Movement of Cotopaxi (MICC)***

Originating in the 1960s but only gaining official status in 2001, MICC is a provincial-level Indigenous organization in the province of Cotopaxi. It is the umbrella organization for the nineteen *Organizaciones de Segundo Grado* (Second level organizations - OSGs) that represent community level organizations, called *Organizaciones de Primer Grado* (First level organizations). According to its organizational structure, MICC's authority and support are predominantly grounded in the rural Indigenous communities that form its base.

It is worthwhile noting the reality of Indigenous migration out of rural communities and into urban environments. As previously explained, MICC's authority is rooted in its rural community bases. Its mandate is closely entwined with a peasant identity and reflects concerns for agriculturally-related issues. Neoliberal policies, while expanding opportunities for large-scale producers, did not benefit the peasant economy or translate into welfare improvements in Cotopaxi's countryside (Ospina 2006:22, 24). Consequently, there are significant levels of temporary migration out of the countryside and into urban centers, which coincides with more female agricultural labour in rural areas (Ospina 2006:22). Among Indigenous individuals residing in the province of Pichincha (the location of Ecuador's capital city, Quito) who migrated from another

province before 2005, 25 per cent are from Cotopaxi (INEC 2010). Most of these Indigenous migrants live in Quito (Ibid). The implications for the functioning of Indigenous-peasant SMOs such as MICC are unclear, though potentially consequential, since even temporary migration out of Indigenous communities could destabilize the bases of Indigenous movement support.

MICC is affiliated with the regional organization ECUARUNARI (Ecuadorian Confederation of Peoples of Kichwa Nationality, *Confederación de Pueblos de la Nacionalidad Quichua del Ecuador*), which represents Kichwa<sup>2</sup> Indigenous groups in the highlands. At the national level, MICC is affiliated through ECUARUNARI with CONAIE. MICC figures prominently in national, regional, and local politics. Its former presidents Leonidas Iza and César Umajinga have headed CONAIE and Cotopaxi's Provincial Council, respectively. Cotopaxi Indigenous organizations played a significant role in the 1990 *levantamiento*, occupying two haciendas in the province and staging mobilizations in the capital, Latacunga (Pallares 2002:17). Cotopaxi Indigenous organizations also figured prominently in the 2000 mobilization that ended in the ousting of Ecuadorian President Jamil Mahuad as well as the 2001 opposition to President Gustavo Noboa's economic adjustment plans (Ospina 2006:28). Cotopaxi's Indigenous movement has also earned electoral victories, holding the mayoralty of the rural municipality of Saquisilí since 1996 and the provincial council since 2000.

Since its inception, MICC has pursued a set of fundamental demands: the redistribution of land; control over Indigenous education; and the respectful treatment of Indigenous peoples based on equal rights (MICC). As its name reflects, the organization

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<sup>2</sup> 'Kichwa' is the English phonetic equivalent of the Spanish 'Quichua.'

is rooted in the dual identity of the Indigenous peasantry, even though a number of its members and leaders are currently from urban centres. Pablo Ospina summarizes MICC's objective as the pursuit of respect, democracy, and development, while recognizing the internal tensions associated with each of these often ambiguously defined terms (2006:30).

In spite of its historical achievements and Pachakutik's strong showing in recent local and provincial elections, MICC found itself in crisis at the time of my research. Attendance at organization meetings was low, and collecting the mandatory membership fees was a continual challenge. There was a noticeable and often-discussed gap between MICC's leadership and the organization's base in the communities. Furthermore, tensions around electoral participation persisted. Though several years had passed, the Gutierrez debacle still framed much of the discussion within the organization.

## ***2.2 Rafael Correa: A Citizen's Revolution?***

The best way to defend democracy is to begin a true revolution that resolves the most urgent and structural questions for the benefit of the majority (CONAIE in NACLA 2011:27).

Yashar argued in 2005 that Indigenous Andeans have been able to maintain and strengthen local ethnic identities that conflict with the universal identity promoted by the nation-state because the state has been too weak to successfully impose its citizenship regimes: "contemporary changes in citizenship regimes politicized indigenous identities precisely because they unwittingly challenged enclaves of local autonomy that had gone largely unrecognized by the state" (2005:8). Between the decentralization policies of neoliberal regimes and the political turmoil of the late 1990s and early 2000s, the Ecuadorian state had limited direct intervention in rural Indigenous communities.

However, the presence and role of the state has expanded substantially with the election of President Rafael Correa in 2006.

When Correa, a U.S. trained economist and former Finance Minister under the government of Alfredo Palacio, emerged as a strong contender in the 2006 presidential elections, CONAIE and Pachakutik were more cautious with their political support. Under the banner of his self-proclaimed ‘Citizen’s Revolution,’ Correa appealed to a broad base, including the Ecuadorian left, by espousing poverty alleviation, regional cooperation, anti-imperialism, and anti-neoliberalism. Moreover, he pledged to create a new era of national politics based on popular participation, thus breaking the traditional ruling elite’s domination.

In spite of Correa’s offer to run with a vice-presidential candidate from Pachakutik, the Indigenous movement kept its distance. As Marc Becker observes, “[i]nstead of drawing on the support of rural Indigenous activists who had removed previous presidents from power, much of Correa’s base came out of the white, urban, middle class *forajido* [outlaw] movement that had played a key role in the...street mobilizations that had ousted Gutierrez” (2011:119). CONAIE finally did throw its support behind Correa, but only once Pachakutik’s presidential candidate Luis Macas was eliminated in the first round of voting and Correa’s remaining opponent was the right wing banana tycoon Álvaro Noboa (Dangl 2010:49). Once elected in 2006, Correa followed through on many of his campaign commitments. In addition to nullifying the government’s contract with U.S. oil company Occidental Petroleum, and declining to renew the U.S. lease of its military base in Ecuador, Correa declared an end to the “long neoliberal night” of the past two decades. The new administration launched a social



welfare strategy that included the restructuring of state institutions and significant investment in public development programs.

Problems between CONAIE and Correa's administration did not take long to materialize, however. Early on, Correa's "agrarian policies favored large-scale economic development and minimized aid for small farmers" (Becker 2011:119). Ideological differences crystallized when, in 2008, a constituent assembly was formed to draft the country's twentieth Constitution. Instead of actualizing the participatory values touted in his 'Citizens' Revolution,' Correa relied mainly on established political parties to contribute to the drafting of the Constitution (Dangl 2010:51). To be sure, the 2008 Constitution includes a number of novel and progressive articles, including the recognition of Ecuador as a plurinational state, the affirmation of public participation in government institutions, the rights of nature, and health and education as human rights. Yet many of the goals that had long been sought by Indigenous organizations were only superficially incorporated into the magna carta. For instance, delegates of Correa's Alianza Pais (AP) party agreed to include the recognition of Ecuador as a plurinational state, but only at an abstract level (Becker 2011:143). Though mentioned in the Constitution, articles specifically defining or guaranteeing plurinationalism are lacking. Since ratifying the Constitution, the Correa government's exclusion of leftist social movements has worsened. As Liisa North observes, "rather than encouraging popular organization and mobilization, the president blames policy failures on unions, professional associations, indigenous organizations, and ecoterrorists who protest mining projects, among others" (North 2013:125).

The management of water is a particularly contentious issue that reflects the divergence between the political projects of the Indigenous movement and the Correa administration. In September 2009, the government's proposed water law ignited fierce resistance from CONAIE, MICC, and their supporters. Firstly, what is the discursive context in which the state enacts its development programs, and how does this affect the political project of Cotopaxi's provincial Indigenous organization, MICC? Next, how does the implementation of particular state programs compare to MICC's approaches to the target issues? Finally, how does greater access to state resources impact local political realities, in terms of support for Indigenous organizations and their long-term goals? According to its opponents, however, the legislation permitted "the privatization of water, set limits on community participation in water management, prioritize[d] access for industrial users, and above all place[d] no real restraints on the ravaging of rivers and aquifers by the mining companies" (Burbach 2010).

The water issue reiterates the central role development plays in the relationship between Indigenous organizations and the state. Given the poverty alleviation and social participation platforms of Correa's election, the Indigenous movement should have had a significant role in shaping rural development programs. In practice, Correa's approach has been to bypass and actively undermine Indigenous organizations. As Catherine Conaghan observes, "Correa prefers to forge direct ties with particular constituencies rather than act through intermediaries such as CONAIE or other organizations on the left" (2008:210). By excluding significant civil society groups from the political process, Correa's government is in effect eroding a powerful form of collective representation for Indigenous peoples (Conaghan 2008:210).

With the expansion and increased funding of development programming under the Correa administration, state institutions have the potential to exert more influence in rural Indigenous communities. By extension, the deployment of government development programs in rural Indigenous communities has the potential to affect support for local Indigenous organizations and political representatives. This study examines the dynamics of development policy and practice in rural Cotopaxi as a point of struggle between the state and the province's Indigenous movement.

A cursory look at the history of Indigenous-state relations brings some key themes to the fore. First, are the centrality of materiality and cultural identity in leftist Indigenous struggles. Rather than presenting a dichotomy, these core themes are indissoluble, as noted in the case of land, and demand an appropriately blended theoretical approach for this study. This point will be taken up again in Chapter 3. Next, the history highlights the bi-directional influence that Indigenous organizations and government actors have in initiating and adapting state policy. In other words, state formation in Ecuador has been a process influenced both 'from above' and 'from below,' and has depended on a variety of social, economic, and political factors. Finally, in spite of the progress made by Indigenous organizations in achieving its demands, their relationship with the state has been fairly consistently infused with tension, distrust, and racism. Indigenous resistance in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries has coalesced around an emancipatory project intended to improve material conditions and advance cultural rights. This project has often been at odds with and undermined by the ruling class, which has sought to maintain its domination of the modes of production and state discourse. In their attempts to confront and transform the state, Indigenous social

movements have often walked a difficult line between resisting from without and reforming from within. The negotiation of class and ethnic identity, as well as the complex political interactions in which the Indigenous movement is engaged will be further discussed in subsequent chapters.

### **Chapter 3: Literature Review, Theoretical Framework, and Research Methodology**

The following chapter begins with a discussion of the key literature that informs this study. It details the central conceptual frameworks - social movement theory, the politics of representation, and Indigenous identity - that have shaped my work. I also describe the theoretical approaches I employ, which include poststructuralism and postmodernism (specifically, governmentality) as well as postcolonialism. Lastly, I sketch the research methodology and methods I used to collect and analyse my findings.

#### ***3.1 The Literature: Key Contributors, Concepts and Approaches***

Social movement theories take a variety of approaches, each teasing out particular dimensions of the complex interaction between cultural, social, political, and personal forces. As Suzanne Staggenborg notes, there is no consensus among scholars regarding the definition of social movements (2007:8). Sydney Tarrow describes social movements as embodying a 'politics of contention,' defining them as "collective challenges, based on common purposes and social solidarities, in sustained interaction with elites, opponents, and authorities" (1998: 4). John McCarthy and Mayer Zald suggest that a social movement comprises "a set of opinions and beliefs in a population which represents preferences for changing some elements of the social structure and/or reward distribution of a society" (1977:1217-18). Though not exhaustive, both definitions are useful in highlighting different aspects of the Indigenous social movement landscape in Ecuador. McCarthy and Zald describe the common conceptual underpinnings of social movements, while Tarrow's model underscores the political conflict, and action, inherent in social movements' transformative endeavours, as well as the presence of government, in one form or another, in the contentious political process (Tilly 2004:3).

In view of the historical and contemporary conflicts surrounding Indigenous-state relations, and given the overlapping spaces of Indigenous organizations and government institutions, Tarrow's approach is particularly relevant. Simultaneously, McCarthy and Zald's shared focus on the preferences of individual members that constitute a social movement brings attention to the micro level forces that influence the direction of a given movement. Based on my observations in the field, it is certainly worth noticing how these personal dynamics play out within Indigenous organizations and communities.

Though often referred to in the singular, Ecuador's 'Indigenous movement' is far from a homogeneous, harmonious entity. Rather, it simultaneously consists of individual activists, alternative governing institutions, professionalized organizations, and elected government officials. Moreover, while members of a movement share broad common goals, their strategies, values, and motivations may differ substantially. Howard Ramos remarks that a "constant obstacle for Aboriginal mobilization...is the multiplicity of indigenous peoples and their divergent interests" (2008:69).

In the Andean context, José Antonio Lucero and María Elena García (2007) point out that various Indigenous organizations stress different principles and facets of Indigenous identity. For instance, FENOCIN (*Confederación Nacional de Organizaciones Campesinas, Indígenas, y Negras* - National Confederation of Peasant, Indigenous, and Black Organizations) is an inclusive class-based organization and a strident proponent of interculturality (2007:239). In contrast, FEINE (*Consejo de Pueblos y Organizaciones Indígenas Evangelicas del Ecuador* - Council of Indigenous Evangelical Peoples and Organizations of Ecuador) is a prominent national-level movement that has focused on Indigenous identity formation in the context of Protestant

evangelism (Lucero and García 2007:219). Of most relevance to this study is CONAIE (*Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas Ecuatoriana* - Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador), which traces its roots to leftist organizations based in peasant mobilization (Becker 2008a). Over time, CONAIE's approach broadened beyond purely class-based concerns to include aspects of ethnic and cultural identity (Selverston-Scher 2001). Furthermore, CONAIE advocates a plurinational model of government, which challenges the capitalist framework of the liberal nation-state:

Plurinationalism represents the constant alternative to the existing capitalist structure, has retained its ability to rally participation, and has provided an umbrella for movement tactics [...] Most important, in recent decades its essential components have provided a basis for opposing the capitalist program (Jameson 2011:65).

Under the rubric of plurinationalism, CONAIE's goals include the nationalization of the country's natural resources, and respect from the government for the territories of the nationalities and peoples of Ecuador (Jameson 2011:65). While all Ecuadorian Indigenous organizations share some common values and objectives, CONAIE is arguable the most strident promoter of plurinationalism, which presents the greatest challenge to the current structures of the state. In neo-Gramscian terms, civil society is a space from which dominant power can be contested and society transformed into a more equitable arrangement (Cox 1999:4). In adopting this neo-Marxist lens on civil society, I chose CONAIE and its subsidiaries as the focus of this study, owing to their emphasis on radical social transformation.

Given the variety of groups that broadly form Ecuador's 'Indigenous movement,' it is also useful to note that social movement organizations (SMOs) are distinct entities within larger popular political movements (Staggenborg 2007:6). As SMOs are often conceptualized as outside of the state apparatus, CONAIE further complicates the notion

of an Indigenous movement by its close affiliation with the political party Pachakutik (MUPP), which seeks to advance Indigenous interests through electoral participation. Since, in this case, an SMO also occupies governmental political space, it is helpful to employ the concept of a social movement community to CONAIE, which “captures the idea that movements consist of networks of individuals, cultural groups, alternative institutions, and institutional supporters as well as political movement organizations” (Staggenborg 2007:7). CONAIE’s multi-dimensional network speaks to another element of neo-Gramscian theory: that, within civil society, the hegemonic order is both reproduced and challenged (Bieler & Morton 2004; Cox 2001). This concept will arise in Chapter 4 in a discussion of the influence of state development programming on local Pachakutik representatives.

Divergences within individual SMOs further disrupt the notion of a uniform Indigenous movement. CONAIE itself is a conglomeration of regional Indigenous SMOs including CONFENIAE (*Confederación de las Nacionalidades Indígenas de la Amazonia Ecuatoriana*, Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of the Ecuadorian Amazon), Ecuarunari, a highland Kichwa Indigenous organization, and CONACIE (*Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas de la Costa Ecuatoriana*, Confederation of Coastal Ecuadorian Indigenous Nationalities). Though belonging to the same national organization, the regional entities do not always see eye to eye. For instance, CONFENIAE has complained of being marginalized within CONAIE by its larger highland counterpart ECUARUNARI (Selverston-Scher 2001:35).

Like any national or provincial organization, internal divisions can also exist at the community level, where, for example, “the assumption of harmonious and



cooperative social relations often masks important inequalities in the distribution of socioeconomic and gender power” (Cameron 2003:181). Further, at a provincial assembly of the Cotopaxi Indigenous movement I attended, concerns were raised by Indigenous community members regarding what they identified as the monopolization of leadership positions in local organizations by a small cohort of Indigenous activists. In short, Ecuador’s Indigenous social movement community must be conceptualized with a keen attention to difference in order to capture its complexity.

At the heart of Indigenous resistance is the issue of identity and representation - what it means to be Indigenous, who is Indigenous, and how Indigenous reality interacts with common representations of indigeneity. A working definition of Indigenous peoples cited, though not formally adopted, by the United Nations Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) is as follows: "Indigenous communities, peoples and nations are those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing on those territories, or parts of them" (Martínez Cobo 1986/7: para. 379). Indigenous identity is far more complex, however, than this broad definition would suggest. Firstly, terminology is not employed uniformly. For instance, within Ecuador, some activists and scholars have reclaimed the colonial category of 'Indian' (Lucero 2008), while others prefer the term 'Indigenous' (Becker 2011); in Bolivia, the highland Aymara people prefer the term '*pueblo originario*' (first nation) and consider 'indigenous' to be pejorative; and in Peru and Bolivia many Quechua-speaking people self-identify as *campesinos* (peasants) (Cameron 2013). Following Marc Becker's example, in the Ecuadorian context I use the capitalized

'Indigenous' in recognition of the South and Meso American Indian Rights Center's (SAIIC) preference, as a strong affirmation of their ethnic identities (Becker 2011:xiv).

Just as Indigenous identity in Ecuador is a nebulous concept, statistics regarding the Indigenous population are somewhat murky. Government census data from 2010 puts the Indigenous population of Ecuador at seven per cent of the country's total (INEC 2013). However, as of 2003, CODENPE (*Consejo de Desarrollo de las Nacionalidades y Pueblos del Ecuador* – Development Council of the Nationalities and Peoples of Ecuador) estimated the number to be between 30 and 40 per cent (Wibbelsman 2003:376). A more conservative estimate places the figure between 10 and 20 per cent of the national population, which also reflects SIDENPE's (*Sistema de Indicadores de las Nacionalidades y Pueblos del Ecuador* - System of Indicators of the Nationalities and Peoples of Ecuador) findings from 2000 (Mijeski and Beck 2011:45). According to Indigenous intellectual Luis Maldonado, the relatively low 2010 census results are likely due in part to inadequate cultural affirmation campaigns launched by organizations and public entities leading up to the data collection (2012). Recent Ecuadorian census questions have relied on self-identification for determining ethnicity. Mijeski, Beck, and Stark (2011) suggest that the ethnicity of the census-taker impacts respondents' answers regarding self-identification (114). They argue that the high proportion of *mestizo* census-takers tends to discourage ethnic minorities from self-identifying as such (Ibid). This may be the result of a historical distrust of government officials that continues to lead Indigenous peoples to believe it is not in their best interest to identify themselves to state officials as Indigenous (Becker 2008a:10). Comments by President Correa leading up to the 2010 census characterizing Indigenous leaders as “insignificant crackpots

representing only 2% of the population,” also raise questions about the willingness of individuals to self-identify as Indigenous to the state (CAOI 2012:8). As such, Mijeski, Beck and Stark have suggested that self-identification may not be a sufficient method for accurately calculating the Indigenous population, even though Indigenous SMOs advocate the practice (2011:114). The census controversy has prompted demands from Indigenous organizations such as ECUARUNARI to have more control over the census-taking process in Indigenous communities and territories (CAOI 2012:23). The debate over the size of the national Indigenous population points to the complex and politicized nature of Indigenous identity in Ecuador.

Critical studies of social transformation in the Andean Indigenous context draw on a variety of theoretical approaches. James Petras and Henry Veltmeyer (2005) work from a class-based analysis to argue that ‘development’ in Ecuador diverts attention away from Indigenous social movement goals of redressing underlying structural inequalities. In their view, while development is presented as a means to empower civil society, in reality, it acts as a method of social and economic control, maintaining the neoliberal ‘New World Order’ and limiting popular movements seeking radical social transformation. The authors are wary of postmodern theorizing that characterizes social movements as having a “heterogeneous social base and a concern for non-class issues ranging from the defense of human rights, protection of the environment, democratic development, [and] women’s rights” (2005:140). Emphasizing such a wide array of issues, they argue, further detracts from what Petras and Veltmeyer believe is the fundamental purpose of social movements: profound social change through class-based struggle. While their analysis of the development apparatus and social movements in

Ecuador is useful, Petras and Veltmeyer's exclusive Marxist framework is limiting. As will be explored in greater depth later in this chapter, I argue that given the fluidity and multiplicity of Indigenous representation, reducing Indigenous social movements to a class struggle overlooks many of their complex dynamics, while omitting an explicit interrogation of materiality can be equally restrictive.

Conversely, Deborah Yashar (2005) examines the emergence of Indigenous social movements specifically as ethnic movements. What this means is that while Yashar recognizes the important role that poverty and inequality play in shaping Indigenous movements, she posits that structural factors "alone cannot explain the contemporary and continental-wide rise in indigenous mobilization in Latin America or elsewhere" (2005:15). Yashar's stance reflects a growing trend in the literature that recognizes both class *and* ethnicity as being key elements in understanding Indigenous social movements (Becker 2008:13-14). As elaborated below, my theoretical framework strives to incorporate material and discursive concerns.

While Yashar's emphasis on the multiplicity of Indigenous social movements is helpful, she also asserts, through an analysis of changing citizenship regimes, that the initial context for the development of identity politics is essentially dictated by the state: "in the era of the nation-state, it is the state that fundamentally defines the public terms of national political identity formation, expression, and mobilization" (2005:5). Although Yashar tempers this by recognizing the agency of Indigenous actors in responding within the parameters established by the state, this approach is an excessively rigid and causal interpretation of Indigenous-state relations. Missing from this analysis are the ways in

which movements influence the state's formation and institutionalization of national identity. As Clark and Becker (2007) contend,

highland Indians have been central to the processes of Ecuadorian state formation, rather than simply the recipients of state policy. At times, their actions led to the generation of new laws or government orders, and their political strategies sometimes affected state policy by stretching the meaning of government discourse, and in the process, transforming it (4).

The state is not solely responsible for setting the framework in which interaction with Indigenous peoples unfold. As Pallares notes, "Indians are not merely recipients of state policy but central participants in state formation" (2007:154). By contesting not only the terms of their relationship with the state, but also the very nature of the state itself (Van Cott 2000:9), Indigenous social movements in general, and CONAIE in particular, influence from below the formation of the national political identity promoted by the state. While state institutions certainly bear more weight in defining the landscape of citizenship regimes, Indigenous movements' impact on the state's formation of a national identity cannot be discounted, particularly in light of their increased engagement with, and presence in, government. The inclusion of concepts fundamental to the Indigenous movement in the 2008 Constitution, though not unproblematic, is emblematic of the movement's ability to shape, rather than simply respond to, state discourse. Indeed, Indigenous demands for new models of citizenship have become "a necessary part of the state's agenda and cannot be easily cast aside" (Pallares 2007:154).

There is also a need to integrate a more dynamic model of citizenship negotiation that takes into account the multidimensional character of the political interactions between the Indigenous social movement community and the state apparatus. In his work on the representation and articulation of indigeneity, José Antonio Lucero stresses

the fluidity of Indigenous representation, contending that "indigenous ideas and subjects are constantly being connected and reconnected, depending on both political conditions and strategies" (2008:21). In other words, the political and cultural identities bound up in the Indigenous movement are not fixed, but rather responsive to changing political landscapes. Lastly, addressing identity formation from a postcolonial perspective, Homi Bhabha also describes a more fluid process of identity construction:

What is...politically crucial, is the need to think beyond narratives of originary and initial subjectivities and to focus on those moments or processes that are produced in the articulation of cultural differences. These 'in-between' spaces provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood – singular or communal – that initiate new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation, in the act of defining the idea of society itself (1994:2).

During my fieldwork, I observed how rich and active these 'in-between' spaces are, which I describe in more depth in the following chapter. The central issues present in the literature I have outlined above - resistance, agency, identity, multiplicity, fluidity, complexity, marginalization, and materiality - have all informed my theoretical framework.

### ***3.2 The Theory: Drawing on Poststructuralism, Postcolonialism, and Governmentality in a Critical Modernist Framework***

Centered on the writings of French theorists and philosophers including Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, and Giles Deleuze, poststructuralism is often conflated with postmodernism, though the former pre-dates the latter. Postmodern thinking relies heavily on poststructural theory, such that debates about one often apply to the other (Sim 2001:ix). Therefore, for the purposes of this brief discussion, the terms will be used interchangeably.

Poststructural thought originated in the notion that language defines reality (Benton and Craib 2001: 163-4). It locates meaning in the use of language itself, as opposed to focusing on the structural and conceptual significance of text. Foucault applies this notion to argue that identity and subjectivity are formed at the intersection of various discourses (Benton and Craib 2008:164). At the heart of postmodern thought is the rejection of the universalistic tendencies inherent in the 'Enlightenment project' associated with Western modernity (Sim 2001:vii). What follows is an emphasis on difference and the “constant deconstruction of claims to knowledge and truth...the critique of the positive, the critique of domination, and the rejection of meta-narratives” (Benton and Craib 2001:170).

Due to its opposition to universalizing approaches and its discursive focus, postmodern theory is typically faulted for its overly relativist stance and disconnection from material realities. Lloyd Spencer notes that the core vocabulary used to critique postmodernism includes, “nihilistic, subjectivist, amoral, fragmentary, arbitrary, defeatist, willful” (2001:162). One way to address some of these criticisms is by looking more carefully at discourse analysis, the central method of postmodern theory.

Though often cast as an abstract textual method, the purpose of discourse analysis is in fact to "relate discourse not to a thought, mind or subject which engendered it, but to the practical field in which it is deployed" (Foucault 1991a:61). As Foucault elaborates, "I do not question discourses...about the contents which they may conceal, but about the transformations which they have effected" (1991a:60). In probing the limits of discourse, Foucault further reveals the breadth and depth of this line of analysis:

What individuals, what groups or classes have access to a particular kind of discourse? How is the relationship institutionalized between the discourse,

speakers and its destined audience? How is the relationship of the discourse to its author indicated and defined? How is struggle for control of discourses conducted between classes, nations, linguistic, cultural or ethnic collectivities (1991a:60)?

Closer examination reveals that poststructural analysis, though originating in linguistic theory, offers valuable insights into complex lived realities. This is one aspect of poststructuralism that I find particularly useful, and in my findings chapter, I look specifically for the ways in which discourse actively shapes material realities, which I return to below.

Poststructural theory is also useful in examinations of identity, which, as I described above, is central to understanding issues of Indigenous representation as well as Indigenous-state relations and interactions through the lens of development programming. As Yashar posits, by “refocusing on the local, analyzing discourse, and highlighting identity as a social construction, poststructural studies have heightened our sense of context, complexity, and the dynamic process by which agents (re)negotiate their identities” (Yashar 2005:13). Chandra Talpade Mohanty also highlights the importance of the local and the material in discerning the universal. She describes herself as holding a “firm belief in the importance of the particular in relation to the universal – a belief in the local as specifying and illuminating the universal” (2002:503).

Poststructuralists work against essentialization and static notions of identity through an insistence that identity is a dynamic, fluid, resisted, constructed category that allows people to inhabit multiple spaces simultaneously, as well as Bhabha’s (1994) ‘in-between’ spaces referenced above. This understanding of identity informs my analysis in the following chapter of how the category is mobilized on the ground. Given that poststructuralism interrogates the intersections of knowledge and power, it provides a



critical framework for investigating the ways in which development programs in Ecuador are framed, deployed, and contested.

In this case study, I use the concept of governmentality, an element of poststructural theory articulated by Michel Foucault. Foucault traced the origin of governmentality, or governmental rationality, to the emergence of a “complex form of power, which has as its target population, as its principal form of knowledge political economy, and as its essential technical means apparatuses of security (1991b:102). The key point I take from Foucault’s concept of governmentality is the framing of a population as "a datum, as a field of intervention and as an object of government techniques" (Foucault 1991b:102). This highly technical conception of state intervention is picked up by James Ferguson (1994) and Tania Li (2007) and applied in the context of development programming. For Ferguson, the principle of governmentality in development assumes that “the main features of economy and society must be in the control of a neutral, unitary, and effective national government, and thus responsive to planners’ blueprints” (1994:72). Li expands on this notion, adding that “[p]lanned development is premised upon the improbability of the 'target group' but also posits a boundary that clearly separates those who need to be developed from those who will do the developing" (Li 2007:15).

Li's governmental analysis addresses "how programs of improvement are shaped by political-economic relations they cannot change; how they are constituted, that is, by what they exclude" (2007:4). In other words, the way in which particular development 'problems' are framed is inevitably defined by the 'corrective' action the developers are willing or able to take. Development interventions are consequently designed with an

achievable and measurable outcome in mind, a process Li defines as 'rendering technical' (2007). A development 'problem' that is rendered technical is also made non-political (Li 2007:7). As Ferguson elaborates,

[O]utcomes that at first appear as mere 'side effects' of an unsuccessful attempt to engineer an economic transformation become legible in another perspective as unintended yet instrumental elements in a resultant constellation that has the effect of expanding the exercise of a particular sort of state power while simultaneously exerting a powerful depoliticizing effect" (1994:20-21).

This facet of governmentality captures a decidedly technical, state-dominated approach to government (and development) that privileges particular 'solutions' to 'problems' that are deemed solvable. As I will elaborate in Chapter 4, the governmental rationality at work in the Ecuadorian state development paradigm promotes a particular kind of development that is at odds with many of the provincial movement's goals. Furthermore, many of the strategies devised by the state necessarily overlook and depoliticize key structural issues identified by Indigenous organizations.

Scholars also highlight that governmentality is a way of managing the 'conduct of conduct,' meaning the process by which subjects are influenced to behave (or not) in a particular manner through a variety of encounters. In their approach to governmental analysis, Peter Miller and Nikolas Rose (2008) probe the assumptions and impacts associated with government interventions: "What understandings of the people to be acted upon - whether implicit or explicit - underpinned these endeavours, and how did they shape or reshape the ways in which these individuals understood and acted on themselves?" (1). In the Ecuadorian case, state action towards Indigenous peoples has typically been infused with a (neo)colonial racist discourse. The authors also allude here to the Foucauldian notion of self-discipline inherent in governmentality, in which "one

might be urged and educated to bridle one's own passions, one's own instincts, to govern oneself" (Rose 1999:3). The conduct of self is an important component of my case study, which I explore in Chapter 4. First, the provision of government resources often influences the behaviour of potential beneficiaries. Additionally, elected officials affiliated with the Indigenous movement may feel inclined to switch between competing discourses regarding a state program depending on what is politically expedient.

Another important note about governmentality is that its effects are not simply imposed by state institutions. Nancy Postero (2007) wisely remarks that governmental encounters "may be formally rationalized through programs, laws, or policy, but [...] may also be less formally articulated within a variety of practical rationalities within particular types of practice" (166-167). For instance, clientelistic relations, though far from official policy, are pervasive in Ecuadorian politics. While recognizing governmentality's value in explaining "subalterns' seeming consent to ideas put forth by dominant sectors," Postero acknowledges its potential limitations if scholars overlook the ways in which subalterns modify and resist these ideas (2007:187). Li also acknowledges that state conduct itself "is a response to the practice of politics that shapes, challenges, and provokes it" (2007:12). Far from being passive recipients of development programs and other government initiatives, Indigenous individuals, communities, and organizations have mounted sustained opposition to schemes that undermine their goals and values.

Nevertheless, as Postero observes in her case study of a Bolivian NGO, governmental rationality can have an empowering effect when the encouraged conduct provides access to resources, so that governmentality is experienced primarily as empowerment rather than domination (2007). This point highlights a real tension of my

case study. On one hand, Indigenous citizens and political actors certainly stand to benefit from receiving increased government support. On the other, there are broader implications for the Indigenous movement associated with the government's development interventions. From her research in Indonesia, Li observes that the 'target populations' "clearly understand the relationship between their current insecurities and the defects of the improving programs carried out in their name" (2007:2). Similarly, many individuals engaged in Indigenous resistance in Cotopaxi are aware of the inherent deficiencies of government development policy towards Indigenous peoples. In spite of this, the attraction to the state resources has penetrated the social movement community with profound consequences. Applying the concepts of governmentality discussed above to the effects of government development programs on the Indigenous social movement community in Cotopaxi provides a promising approach to this case study.

An unavoidable limitation of poststructuralism is its Eurocentric genealogy. Theorists such as Foucault confront issues of knowledge, power, and discourse in Western society, but tend not to apply these questions to the colonial context, despite the fact that Western nations were shaped in the context of colonial exploitation. As such, including a postcolonial perspective in my theoretical framework is vital to this study. Influential postcolonial scholars that inform this work include Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, Chandra Mohanty, and Rumina Sethi.

Sethi uses the term postcolonialism to refer to "a condition of living, a practice, a political belief or set of political beliefs that come into effect in a situation of oppression or marginalization, and that can help counter that oppression through protest, resistance and activism" (2011:6). Here, Sethi points to a central focus of post colonialism -

resistance. The politics of postcolonialism engage and embrace resistance in a way that postmodernism often does not. As David Jefferess notes:

Resistance is a continual referent and at least implicit locus of much postcolonial criticism and theory...the concept of resistance functions as an amorphous concept in postcolonial studies, identifying a diverse range of modes, practices, and experiences of struggle, subversion, or power (2008:3).

The focus on resistance is important to my study because it reflects both the oppression and agency of Indigenous peoples. A postcolonial approach centred on resistance situates the contemporary struggles of Indigenous peoples within a historical context of marginalization and emphasizes the ways in which power dynamics have been shaped.

Further, postcolonial perspectives on representation offer a valuable approach to the politics of identity. As Bhabha explains, "[p]ostcolonial criticism bears witness to the unequal and uneven forces of cultural representation involved in the contest for political and social authority within the modern world order" (1994:245). Additionally, postcolonial analysis works to make visible the power dynamics at work in the construction of cultural difference within postcolonial contexts (Bhabha 1994). Bill Ashcroft notes that postcolonial theory has "expanded to engage issues of cultural diversity, ethnic, racial and cultural difference and the power relations within them, as a consequence of an expanded and more subtle understanding of the dimensions of neo-colonial dominance" (2001:10-11). While embracing difference, postcolonial analysis, like postmodernism, rejects static identity formations inherent in (neo)colonial discourses that continue to sustain oppressive hierarchies.

As intimated above, characteristics of postcolonial theory point to its affinity with postmodernism. Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin argue that the central projects of the two theories are closely related: "the major project of postmodernism – the deconstruction of

the centralised, logocentric master discourses of European culture, is very similar to the post-colonial project of dismantling the Centre/Margin binarism of imperial discourse” (1995:117). In other words, postcolonialism offers a framework for interpreting the complex relationship between the colonial ‘self’ and the colonized ‘other’ in colonial discourse. Far from being fixed categories, postcolonial theorists argue that ‘self’ and ‘other’ are in a constant state of mutual formation. Mohanty (1991) argues that the process of ‘Othering’ maintains the identity, assumed superiority, and/or control of those who represent the ‘Other.’ She writes, “it is not the center that determines the periphery, but the periphery that, in its boundedness, determines the center” (Mohanty 1991:73-74).

Postcolonial theorists apply anti-essentialism to complicate the binaries such as colonizer and colonized, citizen and stranger, and oppressor and victim. Such narratives are embedded in and strengthened by dominant (neo)colonial discourses, making discourse analysis a central tool for postcolonial theory and resistance. As Bhabha contends, “[p]ostcolonial perspectives intervene in those ideological discourses of modernity that attempt to give a hegemonic 'normality' to the uneven development and the differential, often disadvantaged, histories of nations, races, communities, peoples” (1994:245). Its attention to discourse, postcolonialism, again, dovetails with postmodern approaches.

Together, these approaches facilitate an analysis of the interplay between Indigenous and state actors as a continual negotiation and struggle to define Ecuadorian national identity. As will be discussed at greater length in the following chapter, Ecuadorian state initiatives, including development programs, are rooted in both modernist and colonial ideologies, promoting an Ecuadorian national identity that is at

odds with the Indigenous movement. Connected to this, I will also explore how development institutions contribute to the construction of “the colonized as a population of degenerate types on the basis of racial origin, in order to justify conquest and to establish systems of administration and instruction” (Bhabha 1994:101).

While I have made clear that postcolonial theory owes much to poststructuralism, it cannot be subsumed by it, and is arguably the more helpful framework in this case, because of the postcolonial legacy which very much shapes present day Ecuador. Indigenous peoples in Ecuador live in a postcolonial reality insofar as they experience “the persistence of colonial tendencies in terms of a continuing imperialism” (Sethi 2001:5). The highly racialized social and economic structures that oppressed Indigenous peoples during the colonial period continue to permeate governmental discourses in Latin America (Van Dijk 2005; Wade 1997). As Lucero explains, “[t]hroughout Latin American history, the Indian problem was a political problem produced by the imposition of postcolonial (liberal) political structures over colonial (illiberal) foundations” (2008:6). Indigenous peoples in Ecuador continue to experience disproportionately high rates of poverty and low levels of education (United Nations 2009). The Indigenous Ecuadorian experience is also strongly impacted by neocolonial forces associated with globalization, as evidenced by the mass Indigenous mobilizations against a proposed free trade deal (TLC) with the United States among other neoliberal policies (Martínez Valle 2003).

A shortcoming often attributed to postcolonial theory by Marxist scholars is its disengagement with postcolonial materiality (i.e. Petras and Veltmeyer 2005). Somewhat ironically, postcolonial scholars often lobby the same criticism at poststructuralism. Sethi

remarks that the "triumph of globalization over labour and the nation, categories that were quintessential to decolonizing struggles, has led the opponents of postcolonial studies to object that there appears to be no historical or materialist trajectory in such writing" (2011:113). Furthermore, postcolonial studies has been criticized as a discipline based in Western academic institutions and underpinned by Eurocentric philosophy (read: postmodernism), making it essentially divorced from postcolonial realities (Sethi 2011).

Just as Marxists critique postcolonialism's reliance on poststructural theory some postcolonialists caution against elements of postmodernist thought. As touched on above, there are several common postcolonial critiques of postmodernism, including that postmodernism's focus on difference can tend toward extreme cultural relativism or become an instrument of power or imperialism itself, that the theory can be Eurocentric, apolitical, and ahistorical, and that it is not securely rooted in material reality. Taken together, these criticisms set a challenge to postcolonial theory to be more rooted in and relevant to current and ongoing postcolonial resistance. Sethi acknowledges that if "postcolonial studies is to be relevant today, it must [...] theorize about movements against globalization, rather than becoming part of its grand design" (2011:26).

A central tenet of postcolonial theory is its objection to essentialism (Spivak 1990; Mohanty 1991; Said 1978). As mentioned above, by rejecting the static binary of colonizer and colonized, postcolonial theory can articulate a more nuanced and fluid picture of (neo)colonial dynamics, in which the agency of those oppressed or marginalized is recognized and brought to the fore. Yet, paradoxically, decolonizing struggles are often built on a strong sense of national identity. Edward Said explains that



to “become aware of one’s self as belonging to a subject people is the founding insight of anti-imperialist nationalism” (1994:214). The challenge to postcolonial theory, then, is two-fold. Firstly, how can postcolonial national identity be reconciled with anti-essentialism? Second, how do postcolonial struggles based on nationalism avoid reproducing colonial systems of oppression? Said addresses both questions, I believe, in the following passage: “resistance, far from being merely a reaction to imperialism, is an alternative way of conceiving human history. It is particularly important to see how much this alternative reconception is based on breaking down the barriers between cultures” (1994:216). Rather than framing anti-imperialist nationalism in binary terms as a reaction to colonialism, Said conceptualizes it as a process entwined with resistance. He also highlights the alternative nature of postcolonial reconceptions of national identity. While recognizing that there “is no guarantee that the nationalist functionaries will not replicate the old dispensation” (1994:214), Said notes a “pull away from separatist nationalism toward a more integrative view of human community and human liberation” (1994:216).

Said’s thoughts on nationalism are particularly relevant to the Ecuadorian Indigenous landscape. With the emergence of ethnic identity politics within the Indigenous social movement, the concept of plurinational citizenship has become a focus of the Indigenous political agenda. As Maria Elena García explains, the concept “represents a dialectical move to synthesize the (colonial) recognition of ethnic difference and the (populist) policies of national inclusion, but without the hierarchies that both implied” (2005:12).

The deeply entrenched socio-economic structures shaped by neocolonial histories are inextricable from the contemporary struggles of Indigenous peoples in Ecuador, as

elsewhere. This reality has led me to include postcolonialism in my theoretical approach, which, as much as possible, is linked to the political activism of those at the forefront of postcolonial resistance. In doing so, I seek to continually question: what about my research or actions (re)produces (neo)colonial patterns of oppression, marginalization, or inequality?

While the discursively inclined theories outlined above are by no means divorced from materiality, the subject matter of this study also demands an approach that devotes explicit attention to class-based realities. Given the leftist struggles of the Indigenous SMOs examined in this thesis, along with the economic nature of the cash transfer program chosen as the case study, a Marxist-inspired critique is worth integrating into my analysis. Critical modernism is a development theory that combines many of the concerns of the ‘posts’ while being firmly rooted in materiality. As Richard Peet and Elaine Hartwick explain, “critical modernism entails a critique of capitalist power systems in socialist terms of class ownership of productive resources, in feminist terms of male dominance, and in poststructural terms of elite imaginaries and discourses” (2009:281). Critical modernism has parallels to critical realism, which is rooted in Marxist theory. Critical realism accepts the modernist tenets of a knowable independent reality and the transformative potential of knowledge, which theorists apply towards emancipatory social transformation (Benton and Craib 2001:122, 140). Though valuing particular modernist ideals developed in Western contexts, such as democracy and equality, critical modernism ultimately privileges the voices of oppressed peoples without romanticizing them (Peet and Hartwick 2009:281). In the context of this study,

critical modernism offers a framework in which the identity and class-based dimensions of the Indigenous SMOs in question can be equally investigated and emphasized.

### ***3.3 The Research Methods and Methodology***

To explore the effects of state development programs in the municipality of Latacunga, I employ an approach inspired by elements of institutional ethnography, framed within a critical modernist analysis as described above. I pay particular attention to discourse, the relationship between the state and its citizens, the location of power, and the importance of materiality, agency, and resistance. I attempt to frame my research in relation to the lived experiences of rural Indigenous groups and individuals while simultaneously capturing the complexity of the social and institutional discourses that influence these experiences. As Dorothy Smith explains, “ethnography is introduced to commit us to an exploration, description, and analysis of...a complex of relations, not conceived in the abstract but from the entry point of some particular person or persons whose everyday world of working is organized thereby” (1987:160). With its attention to both social relations and everyday experience, a methodology infused with key institutional ethnographic concepts lends itself well to this research.

Institutional ethnography is particularly relevant to studies of governmentality, as the former brings “the organization of the trans- or extra-local ruling relations – bureaucracy, the varieties of text-mediated discourse, the state, the professions, and so on – into the actual sites of peoples’ living where we have to find them as local and temporally situated activities” (Smith 2002:19). Miller and Rose advocate governmental analysis that is not limited to the state as locus, but rather begins with government

practices, in an attempt to "map out the multiple centres of calculation and authority that traverse and link up personal, social, and economic life" (2008:20).

Contrary to the logic of governmentality, institutional ethnography's object of study is not a population. Instead, it samples an institution from a particular point of departure or standpoint (Smith 2002:26). I chose CONAIE's provincial level Indigenous organization affiliate in the province of Cotopaxi (*Movimiento Indígena y Campesino de Cotopaxi*, Cotopaxi Indigenous and Peasant Movement, - MICC) as the starting point for my ethnographic study. My objective was not to conduct an exhaustive institutional ethnographic analysis of the organization itself in an anthropological sense. Instead, MICC was the locus from which I could begin to map the sites at which the influence of governmental programming was impacting the broader Indigenous movement.

Through colleagues working at an Ecuadorian NGO, I received an invitation to use the offices at MICC's headquarters in Latacunga as a base for my research. For roughly two months, I frequented the MICC offices, meeting and speaking with the staff and Indigenous leaders who passed through. I was also able to attend meetings of Indigenous movement leaders from the local, provincial, regional and national levels. Based on the time spent with MICC's leaders and representatives at the organization's headquarters and at various locations in the municipality of Latacunga, I identified the issues and linkages that appeared most relevant to their organization in relation to state development programming. From there, I expanded my inquiry to incorporate a constellation of other individuals and institutions including Indigenous community members, political representatives, government officials, and program beneficiaries.

Institutional ethnography lends itself to a poststructural framework, because, as Smith argues:

Every local setting of people's activity is permeated, organized by and contributes to social relations coordinating activities in multiple local sites. The work of the sociologist is to discover these relations and to map them so that people can begin to see how their own lives and work are hooked into the lives and work of others in relations of which most of us are not aware. (2002:18).

Smith does not suppose that a researcher is meant to supplant others' knowledge and reality with one's own (2002). Rather, the ethnographer must acknowledge his or her activity and position within the context of the social relations being investigated. In keeping with postcolonial theory's anti-essentialist insistence on the interdependence of Self and Other, I recognize the colonial tendencies inherent in the categories 'researcher' and 'researched.' In this case, it is helpful to return to the poststructuralists and heed their approach to scholarship:

The intellectual's role is no longer to...express the stifled truth of the collectivity; rather, it is to struggle against the forms of power that transform him into its object and instrument in the sphere of 'knowledge,' 'truth,' 'consciousness,' and 'discourse.' In this sense theory does not express, translate, or serve to apply practice: it is practice. But it is local and regional...and not totalizing. This is a struggle against power, a struggle aimed at revealing and undermining power where it is most invisible and insidious (Foucault and Deleuze 1977:207-208).

This demand to recognize the power of the researcher and, concurrently, to struggle against it informs my research conduct and analysis. Throughout my fieldwork, I strived to maintain a reflexive perspective, continually interrogating my own assumptions and motivations while paying close attention to the perspectives and experiences of those who participated in this research. Finally, I also keep in mind my innate limits as a scholar. Smith wisely notes that the "lived world can never be exhaustively described or

enumerated. It is always more and other than anything that can be said, written, or pictured of it” (Smith 2002: 23).

I conducted field research for this study between July and September 2009 in Quito, Ecuador, and the municipality of Latacunga, the capital the highland province of Cotopaxi. In spite of the elapsed time since the research was conducted, this case study remains relevant. In January of 2013, the Correa government announced that the *Bono de Desarrollo Humano* (Human Development Subsidy – BDH), the main social development program examined in this thesis, would be increased from \$35 USD to \$50 USD per beneficiary per month. Therefore, it is likely that whatever political impact this program had on Indigenous organizations in Cotopaxi will be amplified. Furthermore, CONAIE and the Correa administration remain at odds over a number of significant issues ranging from the control of water to the repression of political dissent (Lavinás Picq 2013). Lastly, as left-leaning governments are now prevalent in the region, it is important to continue discussing the roles and rights of Indigenous peoples living in this political environment.

Qualitative data was collected through 16 semi-structured interviews with key informants within Cotopaxi Indigenous organizations affiliated with CONAIE, in addition to government functionaries involved in the implementation of the development programs under consideration. I also interviewed a small number of beneficiaries of specific development programs in the parish of Pastocalle, part of the municipality of Latacunga, along with elected parish officials with ties to the Indigenous movement. I used a snowballing technique to identify and engage participants in the study.

Compared to municipal governments, parish councils in Ecuador hold little political weight and have relatively miniscule budgets. Nevertheless, parish-level politics can be quite revealing of the issues at play in a given locality, and their elected councils have the potential to offer insights into local realities that may be overlooked by higher-level institutions. As a conglomeration of communities, parish institutions arguably offer a unique glimpse into the purported base of the Indigenous movement – community-level organizations (*Organizaciones de Primer Grado*). Simultaneously, parishes are the most micro level at which national political parties, including CONAIE’s Pachakutik, compete for election. As such, they represent an intersection between national, provincial, municipal, and community politics. I chose the parish of Pastocalle as a case to examine more closely in order to get a better sense of the local impacts of state-led development programs. In the previous elections, Pastocalle residents elected two Pachakutik representatives to the parish council, one of whom received the highest number of votes to become the council President. As an agricultural community with a council controlled by Pachakutik, Pastocalle provided a valuable example of local level Indigenous politics.

All the interviews were conducted in Spanish and audio recorded with the participants’ consent. I transcribed and translated the portions of the interviews relevant to this study. Observation took place during formal events, such as Indigenous organization assemblies, meetings, and conferences, and in less formal instances, including the daily operations of offices of government services and local elected officials. A combination of poststructural, postcolonial, and materialist approaches provides a relevant theoretical backdrop and conceptual and methodological tools that best enable me to analyze the data I present in the following chapter.

## **Chapter 4: The Correa Development Regime's Impact on the Indigenous Movement**

Analyzing my findings using elements of poststructuralism, postcolonialism, and critical modernism orients this chapter towards an interrogation of the nexuses of knowledge, power, discourse, representation, and materiality. Specifically, this chapter seeks to provide insight into what happens at the intersection of state and Indigenous movement interests in the context of development programming. This chapter turns to the central research question of this thesis: what are the political implications of strengthened Ecuadorian state development programming for Cotopaxi's Indigenous social movement community? In order to address this question, I first examine some noteworthy examples highlighting the current discursive and institutional context of state-Indigenous relationships in Ecuador. The instances discussed point to an atmosphere in which the state is displacing Indigenous SMOs from political spaces and undermining their transformative goals. I then focus on a case study of the *Bono de Desarrollo Humano* (BDH), a particularly pervasive government social program, to investigate the encounters between state programming and local Indigenous political representatives, Indigenous SMOs, and program beneficiaries in the province of Cotopaxi. Framed by the aforementioned political and discursive climate, the expansion of the BDH under the Correa administration exhibits a significant governmental influence over local actors and contributes to the destabilization of Cotopaxi's Indigenous movement community.

### ***4.1 The Ecuadorian State's Depoliticization of Indigenous Movement Discourse***



Since Rafael Correa became President in 2007, there has been a conspicuous institutionalization of concepts central to the Indigenous movement into state discourse. In particular, a number of key Indigenous terms appear at the heart of state legal and policy documents, including the 2008 Constitution and the 2013 National Development Plan. In 2007, Correa also created a government body called the Secretariat of Peoples, Social Movements, and Citizen Participation (*Secretaria de los Pueblos, Movimientos Sociales, y Participación Ciudadania*, SPPC), which was designed in part as an avenue for Indigenous participation in political decision-making. Some instances of institutionalization are less overt, such as the government's intensified land titling campaign, which acts as a substitute for long-sought demands for land reform by Indigenous SMOs. Taken together, these examples provide a revealing sketch of the Correa government's approach to institutional interactions with Indigenous SMOs and citizens.

The most prevalent example of the state's discursive appropriation is its use of the Kichwa term *Sumak Kawsay*, translating to 'el Buen Vivir' in Spanish and 'living well' in English. As Ecuadorian economist Pablo Dávalos explains,

Sumak kawsay is the voice of the kechwa [sic] peoples for good living. Good living is a conception of life far removed from the most cherished elements of modernity and economic growth: individualism, the search for profit, the cost-benefit relationship as a social axiom, the use of nature, strategic relations between human beings, the total commodification of all spheres of human life, the inherent violence of consumer selfishness, etc... Good living incorporates a human, ethical and holistic dimension the relationships of human beings, not only to their own history but with their natural surroundings" (2009).

Thanks in great part to efforts by representatives of the Indigenous movement in the Constituent Assembly, the body convened to draft the new constitution, *Sumak Kawsay* was included in Ecuador's 2008 Constitution, appearing in its original Kichwa five

times, and 21 times in its Spanish equivalent (Constitución de la República del Ecuador 2008). In fact, an entire chapter of the document details the rights associated with *el Buen Vivir* (Ibid). Furthermore, Ecuador's most recent national development plan is centred on the concept: "Ecuador, as an Andean country, builds its human, social, cultural, and environmental rights on a concept and vision of the world originating in the ancient societies of the South American Andes region: 'living well' is *Sumak Kawsay*" (Consejo de Planificación 2013:16, my translation). *Pacha Mama*, another Kichwa term meaning 'mother earth' also appears in the 2008 Constitution, albeit only twice. It signifies humans' reciprocal relationship with the natural environment and is a central tenet of CONAIE's vision. Finally, and perhaps most significantly, the 2008 Constitution's first article characterizes Ecuador as a plurinational state. Plurinationalism is fundamental to the CONAIE's struggle for greater Indigenous rights within the Ecuadorian state:

In Andean politics, plurinationalism has emerged as a way of reconceiving the nation-state, positing a departure from a liberal multicultural framework for constructing state-society relations to a conceptualization of the state as the composite of multiple nations to which greater rights are extended. At plurinationalism's core, proponents advocate for the broadening of collective rights to peoples whose existence precedes the advent of the colonial and republican state (Tockman and Cameron 2014:46).

In one sense, the inclusion of such terms in official state documents represents a victory for Indigenous SMOs, as the movement has long sought greater legal recognition of their demands. It is important to recognize the significance of this democratic achievement in the traditional nation-state model, however, critical modernism urges us to also interrogate the elite power structures underpinning such systems. As Donna Lee Van Cott points out, the state's adoption of Indigenous demands does not guarantee concrete advances in practice: "[i]f the reforms themselves originated elsewhere in society, it is

always the state that coordinates the implementation of a constitutional reform” (2000:23). Given Van Cott’s assertion that “[c]onstitutionalism is about limiting the power of the state” and that “indigenous organizations seek to delineate a sphere of autonomy where state power cannot penetrate” (2000:1), it is not surprising that Indigenous SMOs indicated that the final constitutional draft tabled by the government fell short of their political vision. ECUARUNARI issued a tempered statement of support for the document, recognizing the advances made but emphasizing the need for a popular campaign to educate citizens on the constitution’s “political and judicial limitations” (ECUARUNARI 2008, my translation). This statement reflects the importance of also considering what the 2008 Constitution does not contain. As Tanya Li (2007) reminds us, concepts that are at odds with the logic of the state tend to be absent from policy and programming. For instance, the inclusion of Kichwa and Shuar as official languages of inter-cultural relationships was a last-minute addition by Correa’s government that skirted Indigenous demands to enshrine them as official state languages along with Spanish (Becker 2008b). As Becker remarks, “it is easy, of course, to make minor cultural concessions rather than fundamentally changing the political landscape that would create more inclusive social and economic systems” (Becker 2008b).

The co-optation of Indigenous discourse by the Ecuadorian state has the potential to dilute the language of radical social transformation, as the appropriation of once radical concepts works to create a consensus around policy initiatives. As Cornwall and Brock (2005) argue, so-called buzzwords should be regarded as “fuzz-words,” as “their propensity to shelter multiple meanings makes them politically expedient, shielding those that use them from attack by lending the possibility of common meaning to extremely

disparate actors” (1056). Petras and Veltmeyer go a step further, proposing that co-optation by the state functions as a method of social control by subverting and neutralizing revolutionary ideas (2005:160).

Historically, Indigenous people have achieved rights through collective action, rather than state-sanctioned reform. Efforts by the Ecuadorian state to institutionalize Indigenous issues have typically worked against the movement’s goals (see Chapter 2). While the Correa administration liberally employs the language of the Indigenous movement, it remains at a fairly abstract level. That is to say that Indigenous concepts incorporated into the Constitution appear to carry little weight in state development interventions. Alberto Acosta, a former member of Correa’s government and the initial president of the Constituent Assembly, contends that “the very government that actively drove the ratification of the new Constitution ... remains tied to neo-developmental visions and practices, which do not guarantee true development and which, moreover, are in permanent contradiction with the spirit of *el Buen Vivir*” (2010:38).

Foucault would have us turn our attention away from the hidden intentions of the state, however, and return to the more pertinent question of *how* appropriation by the state works and what its impacts are (Foucault 1991:60). One such mechanism is the Secretariat of Peoples, Social Movements, and Citizen Participation (SPPC). The Secretariat, which was created by Correa's administration in 2007 and reports directly to the President, is “responsible for designing, developing, and implementing a series of steps and actions to stimulate, bring about, and consolidate citizen participation in the key decisions that affect those who have until now been marginalized from the political arena” (Presidencia Constitucional de la República 2007, my translation). In practice, the

SPPC "is limited to publicizing the regime's social policies without developing any consultation with the organizations, which only results in socialization workshops with decisions that senior bureaucrats made" (Jijón 2013:66). The SPPC has intervened in local participative budget processes in order to "promote transparency in the spending of municipal funds; generate positive relations between municipal authorities and the citizenry; promote citizen participation and empowerment in public policies" (Presidencia de la República 2008). Such goals read very well, but belie an inherent tension in local Indigenous contexts, where SPPC citizen oversight initiatives may encroach on political space typically occupied by community SMOs. The official mandate of the SPPC is quite telling of the model of state-Indigenous relations being promoted by Correa's government. It subverts the existing structure of Indigenous organization by attempting to funnel indigenous political activism through the state apparatus and silos social movements in a constructed political space. When I visited the provincial office of the SPPC in Latacunga in 2009, it was staffed by two enthusiastic young functionaries, neither of whom self-identified as Indigenous, who were keen to show me photos of workshops in nearby Indigenous communities. Since conducting my field research, the SPPC was dissolved in May 2013 and integrated into the National Secretariat of Political Governance, where it is now divided into sub-secretariats named 'Peoples and Interculturality', 'Citizen Participation', and 'Coordination with Social and Political Actors' (Secretaría Nacional de Gestión de la Política 2014). The term 'social movement,' however, is notably absent from the new organizational structure.

A further move by the state to institutionalize Indigenous social movement activity is Presidential Decree No. 16 (2013), Administrative demands by the state

include extensive financial reporting, providing personal information of key organizational leaders such as home addresses and national identification numbers, and documentation supporting that the organization is fulfilling its objectives. An organization's statute must be submitted to the government for approval along with any subsequent reforms. Should the government deny an application, the organization has only 20 days to address the issues flagged by officials and re-submit. Decree No. 16 is being challenged by Indigenous SMOs and international human rights NGOs (Saiz 2013). According to its detractors, including ECUARUNARI and Human Rights Watch, the decree gives the state the power to regulate an organization's membership, approve reforms to its mandate, and dissolve the organization altogether if it interferes with public policy or affects the public peace (Ibid). For instance, article 7.10 of the decree states that an organization "cannot deny entry to individuals who have a legitimate interest in it" (Presidencia de la República 2013, my translation). Operating under the guise of inclusivity, this regulation on membership would undermine SMO autonomy by forcing organizations to incorporate individuals who may be at odds with their mission and values.

Furthermore, Decree No. 16 places a formidable bureaucratic burden on organizations to receive and maintain legal recognition through the Unified Social Organization Information System (*Sistema Unificado de Información de las Organizaciones Sociales – SUIOS*), intended to "guarantee and promote the right of persons, communes, communities, peoples, nationalities and collectives, to associate with pacifist ends in any form of free, egalitarian, and legal organization in society" (Presidencia de la República 2013, my translation). In MICC's case, based on my field

observations, such a process would be highly taxing on a staff that is already stretched thin by its current activities. The SUIOS demands would certainly divert time and attention away from the struggles to which MICC devotes its energy.

By applying a critical modernist lens, state initiatives justified by modernist values such as inclusion, equality, and universal rights appear as potential obstacles to the emancipatory project of Indigenous organizations. The SPPC and Decree No. 16 are processes that work to co-opt, depoliticize and constrain Indigenous SMOs by confining them to a framework controlled by the state. In response to such overt attempts at conducting their conduct, SMOs must divert resources from their political projects to resist state interference.

As discussed in Chapter 2, Ecuador's land is distributed inequitably along ethnic and class lines - a holdover from the colonial era. Historical land division schemes continue to impact Cotopaxi's Indigenous population. About one per cent of agricultural producers own over one third of the province's agricultural land (see Table 1). Furthermore, large monoculture producers, largely not Indigenous and focused on exporting cash crops to markets in the Global North, consume the majority of the agricultural resources:

One percent of landowners (large growers of bananas, cacao, coffee, and flowers) have captured 67 percent of irrigation water, while small producers (Indigenous, peasant associations, cooperatives, small farmers) which are 86 percent of producers have access to only 23 percent of the water (Jijón 2013:57).

In the highlands, export-driven flower enterprises are, for the most part, owned by urban entrepreneurs that rely on local Indigenous wage labour (Soper 2013:131). As of 2010, Cotopaxi accounted for 25 per cent of Ecuador's flower export production, second

only to the province of Pichincha (Cotopaxi Noticias 2010). MICC has long struggled for a more equitable distribution of fertile land. Ecuador’s last major land reform was in 1973 and was, on the whole, an ineffectual response to glaring ethnic disparities in land ownership (Pallares 2002).

**Table 1:** Distribution of Productive Agricultural Land in Cotopaxi, 2011

	Percent of Total Producers	Average Size of Land per Producer	Percent of Total Productive Land
Small Producers (< 20 hectares)	94%	2.6 hectares	36%
Medium Producers (20-100 hectares)	5%	39 hectares	28%
Large Producers (>100 hectares)	1%	323 hectares	35%

Data source: Ministerio de Coordinación de la Producción, Empleo y Competitividad 2011.

One of Correa's approaches to land reform and development is land titling, a system which works to formalize mainly individual ownership of property. A division of the Ministry of Agriculture, (*Instituto Nacional de Desarrollo Agrario*, National Institute of Agrarian Development), was tasked with the titling process. Once an individual is granted legal tenure, they can access credit schemes and agricultural development programs (Inter-American Development Bank 2013) and also legally sell their land. Even though small-scale Indigenous farmers could stand to benefit from receiving legal land tenure, MICC is wary of land titling, advocating instead for widespread land redistribution with an environmental and communal focus. One elected parish official from the Pachakutik party commented:



Many people did not have any land and the state, through INDA, gave them titles, and this has helped people...but the state, through INDA, has gone into the *paramo* where they should not be because the *paramo* is under protection of the state since it is a source of water...it should not be divided and subdivided into properties.... There is a lot of neglected land on haciendas, the government should buy this and give it to a particular community, a particular group, so that they can cultivate it (Nelly 23/09/2009, my translation).

Again I turn to Li (2007), who encourages scholars to ask, what is left out in the framing of a development ‘problem’? The prioritization of land titling depoliticizes rural development by side-stepping MICC’s goal of more equitable distribution and access to arable land. Land titling promotes a particular kind of relationship between the state and Indigenous citizens, in which individual property owners can have greater access to government resources once they complete the legal process. Since access to credit is no doubt beneficial to farmers, the conduct of rural inhabitants is arguably steered toward its acquisition rather than pressuring the state for more radical land reform. As such, Indigenous organizations may find their peasant bases less concerned with broader social movement goals than with receiving government support. Meanwhile, as North argues, “Ecuador seems to be slated for more of the same traditional patterns of social exclusion and deprivation because the government has no land project, nor is it taking consistent action to favour labour or peasant organization” (North 2013:120).

Furthermore, Correa’s government clearly favours industrial-scale agricultural production over agrarian reform that includes small producers. As Pablo Ospina argues, “according to [President Correa] ... the small rural property goes against efficient productivity and the reduction of poverty. In his humble opinion, redistributing a large property into many small ones amounts to redistributing poverty” (2011, my translation). By invoking terms such as ‘efficient productivity,’ Correa’s administration is rendering

technical a political and historical issue rooted in colonial inequalities, and thereby depoliticizing a demand sought by the Indigenous movement for decades.

In this section, I have highlighted how the Correa administration has undermined central goals of the Indigenous movement's political project through institutionalizing, co-opting, and de-politicizing demands at the heart of the Indigenous struggle. In so doing, the central government has fostered an environment in which Indigenous SMOs are decreasingly the avenue through which communities and individuals have their needs met. Instead, direct interaction with the state is promoted as the means to improving one's welfare. By appropriating the radical language of Indigenous organizations on one hand, and increasing its role as provider to rural communities on the other, the state has positioned itself to take the place of Indigenous SMOs without fulfilling any of their transformative goals. The examples provided here are not intended as an exhaustive review of the Correa government's marginalization of Indigenous SMOs. Nevertheless, taken together these cases suggest an environment in which state programming takes on new significance for Indigenous organizations and communities.

Given the overarching context described above, it is worthwhile examining in more depth and detail how a particular government program operates in a local setting. The subsequent section provides a case study of such a program and its implications for Indigenous SMOs in the province of Cotopaxi.

#### ***4.2 The Bono de Desarrollo Humano (BDH): A Critical Analysis***

During the course of my field research in Cotopaxi, the *Bono de Desarrollo Humano* (Human Development Grant - BDH), a monthly cash transfer program, emerged

as the focal point of the study. As my ethnographic inquiry expanded within Cotopaxi's Indigenous movement, the BDH was a recurring topic in organizational meetings I attended and interviews I conducted. Various members of the movement identified the subsidy as a particularly strong source of state influence within Indigenous communities. Although it is by no means the only government program having an impact on rural Indigenous communities in Cotopaxi, it is certainly the most extensive. As such, the BDH became the case study for examining how the strengthening of state development programs affects the dynamics within MICC and the Indigenous movement community in Cotopaxi.

Applying a governmental analysis framed by critical modernism to the BDH defines the mechanisms through which the Ecuadorian state shapes conduct at the local level. The intervention embodies a state-centred, depoliticized approach to poverty reduction that reinforces a power imbalance between the national government and Indigenous citizens. The result is the reproduction of a colonial relationship and the hindering of the Indigenous movement's emancipatory goals.

#### ***4.2.1 The Implementation and Expansion of the Bono de Desarrollo Humano***

The BDH is a conditional monthly cash transfer program designed to ease the burden of poverty for the country's most impoverished. The Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion (*Ministerio de Inclusión Económica y Social* - MIES) responsible for the program articulates the BDH's objective with the following words:

[T]o increase human capital and break the cycle of poverty through direct monetary compensations given to families who find themselves below the poverty line established by the Ministry of Social Development Coordination in

accordance with results obtained from the Social Registry (MIES 2009, my translation).

There are child health and education conditions to which families receiving the BDH must adhere. A minimum level of school attendance and certain health care requirements must be met for a family to remain eligible.

The qualification process for the BDH is technical and highly centralized. A government assessment is completed regarding the social and economic conditions of an applicant's household through a census-like process called the Social Registry. A government official visits each potential beneficiary's home to evaluate the economic situation based on a set of established criteria. The data collected in the Social Registry is then processed centrally by MIES in Quito to determine the applicant's eligibility, and ultimately to decide who receives the payment.

As part of his campaign pledge of poverty reduction, Correa considerably increased funding for social programs. Indeed, from 2006 to 2009, social welfare spending more than doubled, and the BDH has figured prominently in Correa's social development strategy (Ray and Kozameh 2012:12). In January 2007, his first month in office, the President doubled the monthly BDH payment from \$15 USD to \$30 USD. The administration subsequently raised the subsidy to \$35 USD in August 2009, and increased the number of beneficiaries by an unprecedented 400,000 (Ecuador Inmediato 2009). From 2006 to 2011, BDH coverage increased from 1.1 million to 1.9 million beneficiaries (Ray and Kozameh 2012:16). In Cotopaxi, the number of mothers receiving the BDH totaled a little more than 42 000, amounting to more than ten per cent of the provincial population (MIES 2013:8).

**Table 2:** *Bono de Desarrollo Humano* (BDH) Annual Public Spending, Ecuador 2007-2012 (USD)

2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
\$341 mil	\$378 mil	\$490 mil	\$649.5 mil	\$709.8 mil	\$790 mil

Data source: Bonilla, 2013.

Put into context, BDH spending in 2012 accounted for 16% of all government subsidy spending, and was the second largest single subsidy program after diesel fuel, which exceeded one billion dollars (Bonilla 2013:33).

Evidence indicates that poverty has lessened under Correa. Between 2006 and 2011, the national rural poverty rate fell by roughly 10% to 50.9% (Ray and Kozameh 2012:15). While Ray and Kozameh are enthusiastic about the BDH's impact on school attendance, they concede, "gaps in completion rates among students remain high. Students from the poorest quintiles still attend school for only 6.7 years on average, while those from the most affluent quintile attend school for an average of 14.2 years" (2012:19). Furthermore, the BDH appears to have had little effect on school enrollment, another one of its objectives (Oosterbeek and Ponce 2008). A more recent study expands on this conclusion, finding that the BDH has had variable impacts on school enrollment along an urban-rural divide. While the subsidy appears to have significantly increased school enrollment in urban areas, it has had no significant influence on enrollment in rural regions (RIMISP 2011:14). Given that more than three quarters of the Indigenous population lives in rural areas (INEC 2013:13), it is not unexpected that huge disparities persist in education between Indigenous and non-Indigenous citizens: "Only 4.9 percent of the Indigenous population has some level of higher education, and only 4.1 percent of

Indigenous women, while for the population self-identified as white, the rate is 25.4 percent and 21.5 percent for mestizo" (Jijón 2013:57). Furthermore, 20.4 percent of Indigenous Ecuadorians are classified as illiterate, a number that rises to 26.7 percent for Indigenous women (Maldonado Ruiz 2012). The wide education gap is indicative of the broader inequality present in Ecuador, where the average monthly income in the poorest quintile is 120 dollars, while the wealthiest quintile's average monthly income jumps to 1,859 dollars (Bonilla 2013:15). As Valencia Lomelí echoes, "increased enrolment in education does not address...the translation of education into employment opportunities" (2013:185).

In spite of the mixed results in education, the national government reports that, due to social development programs like the BDH, Indigenous poverty rates have decreased between 5% and 10% from 2007 to 2012 (Telegrafo March 5, 2012). However, a substantial discrepancy persists when poverty rates of Indigenous citizens and non-Indigenous citizens are compared. Based on income, the Indigenous population had a poverty rate of 60.1% in 2010, compared to 21.3% for Whites and 23.5% for Mestizos (Jijón 2013:58). According to Humberto Cholango, then president of CONAIE, poverty rates in Indigenous communities continue to surpass 60% (America Economía 2012).

#### ***4.2.2 Implications of the BDH for Cotopaxi's Indigenous Movement Community***

Despite the BDH's apparent success in reducing poverty, Indigenous SMOs remain skeptical of the program, citing a number of concerns. For instance, the Correa government relies on revenues from high international oil prices to finance its expanded social programming (Jijón 2013:63). Crude oil exports finance a quarter of Ecuador's

fiscal budget (El País 2013). In addition to having detrimental environmental impacts, oil extraction is considered an unsustainable source of funding. As a provincial leader of the Cotopaxi Indigenous movement argued, “these projects will disappear. They are not sustainable, nor are they designed for the long term” (DMI 04/09/2009). Furthermore, oil extraction can spark conflicts around Indigenous territorial rights. Recently, Correa's administration approved the exploitation of oil fields in the Yasuní National Park, despite fierce opposition by CONAIE, CONFENIAE, as well as environmentalists throughout Ecuador (Ane 2013; Hill 2014).

In order to compare the discourse emanating from MICC with the local, individual impact of the BDH, I spent an afternoon having discussions with four women living in San Juan de Pastocalle parish, located near Latacunga. They believed that, while the stipend had been increased to \$35 per month, it was not enough to make a significant difference in the economic well-being of the families receiving it. The women who were BDH beneficiaries were certainly grateful for receiving the additional income, yet most agreed that the amount was insufficient (‘María,’ ‘Alejandra’ 15/09/09). According to María, a mother of five, who previously received the subsidy and was eager to get back on the recipient list, the subsidy “should be \$50...if you have to buy something expensive one month it’s not enough to get by” (‘María’ 15/09/09, my translation).

The Ministry discourse, however, does not recognize the limits of the \$35 USD stipend, and presents a different narrative to María’s. María and her five children lost the BDH, yet she continues to consider herself in great need of financial support. In an internal document I obtained from a MIES functionary, client service instructions were provided in the event that a mother loses her status as beneficiary: “Thanks to the BDH,

your family little by little has come out ahead...Now, this same subsidy that greatly helped you live better, will help another family more in need than yours..." (MIES 2009, my translation). Those recipients of the BDH who I spoke with did not support the government's claim that the subsidy had either greatly improved their living conditions or helped their family 'come out ahead.' Rather, their situation appeared consistent with then President of MICC, Abrahán Salazar's, argument: "we need to work to survive, so only collecting a subsidy every month should not be the government's policy...when you take away the subsidy there is nothing left" (09/23/2009).

In spite of its perceived shortcomings, I observed no shortage of demand for the BDH among community members in the municipality of Latacunga. A steady stream of mainly Indigenous families passed through the MIES office in Latacunga inquiring why they had not been chosen to receive the BDH. They were instructed by a functionary to wait for the subsequent Social Registry and sent off with a 'better luck next time' attitude. Due to the centralized nature of the allocation process, there is little that local officials can provide in terms of explanation or transparency. As such, the allocation of the BDH seemed arbitrary to many community members. Ostensibly, families like María's could be granted the BDH only to subsequently lose it, regardless of remaining in the same economic circumstances. Concurrently, Pachakutik representatives at the parish level knew of community members who needed the subsidy urgently and had not received it. Conversely, some individuals who they perceived as financially secure were BDH beneficiaries. As Lomeli observes across Latin America, a lack of understanding regarding selection of cash transfer recipients inevitably causes tensions within a



community (2013:182). Kasselli and Kuffner provide an illuminating anecdote regarding this confusion:

Some households "graduated" from the system because their incomes rose above the threshold. However, Chaluisa claims she was dispossessed of the voucher despite losing her \$200 (£125) a month job as a temporary primary school teacher, which she says was barely enough to feed her family. "There's people with just one child and a car who do get it," she says. Chaluisa has not been able to resolve the issue because the regional office in Latacunga, the provincial capital, tells her she would have to travel to Quito, the capital, to discuss the matter in the ministry – a 12-hour round trip by bus (2012).

In addition to inconsistencies in subsidy allocation, MICC worried that the BDH divides individuals and families from their communities, thereby fracturing the community bases of Indigenous SMOs. As MICC's president Abraham Salazar stressed, "the government is using various strategies to divide the communities, especially with the creation of the bonos" (09/23/2009). A provincial leader of the Cotopaxi Indigenous movement elaborated:

The projects and programs of each ministry, they are important, but they are not focused on solving problems, but rather they create more problems. Why? Because as large as the projects may be, they do not reach everyone. So a division between the groups who benefit and the groups who do not benefit arises. And so a power rift appears within a community, within a neighborhood, within a parish (DMI 04/09/2009).

Since the BDH is administered entirely by central state institutions, local governments are not involved in any aspect of its delivery. This compounds the Indigenous movement's concern that the program weakens its bases because it bypasses local elected officials, where MICC has its strongest government presence in the form of Pachakutik representatives. Pachakutik parish representatives and MICC leaders agree that decisions regarding government resource allocations such as the BDH should be decided locally. In their opinion, communities are better able to identify which of their residents are most in

need of the subsidy as opposed to centralized ministry officials (Salazar 09/23/09; Nelly 23/09/09).

The logistics of distributing the BDH further bypasses local institutions by diverting resources away from communities. The transfer of cash is delegated by MIES to banking institutions outside the communities and parishes. Residents of rural communities, like Pastocalle, who qualify for the BDH, have to travel by bus to a municipal center, in this case, Latacunga, in order to collect their stipend. In addition to the cost of travel and the time lost from working, either in a job or in the community, one Indigenous leader I spoke with from the neighbouring municipality of Pujilí expressed concern that the income collected in the municipal centers often does not make it back to the community to support local enterprises and initiatives (17/09/09). For instance, during my field research I visited a small credit cooperative in the parish of San Juan de Pastocalle. Those managing the co-op were concerned that too much capital was leaving the community. Supporting this, another leader of a community-level organization commented that people tended to spend a good deal of the subsidy on manufactured goods, rather than on food staples that could be purchased within their communities (Indigenous community leader 21/09/09). The convenience and the variety of products available in Latacunga means that the cash transfers are reportedly often spent in urban centers rather than in the communities. The BDH is primarily aimed at families, with the direct recipient being mothers. As Samaniego and Tejerina (2010) note, women make up the vast majority of the beneficiaries, the prevailing logic being that women will spend household income more altruistically than men (14).

Whether or not this gendered assumption is accurate, the travel associated with collecting the BDH every month places an additional burden on women, depending on their proximity to an appropriate banking institution. Furthermore, while some argue that designating mothers as beneficiaries serves as a form gender empowerment, it also entails considerable state influence over the gender norms of poor citizens:

CCT programs do appear to encourage women to become active agents in improving the welfare of their families, but only within the restrictions of traditional gender relations, thus raising questions about the extent to which these relations limit the potential of women to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty. Without a program design that confronts and overcomes maternalism and familism, women will continue to have serious difficulties integrating themselves into productive employment in less precarious ways that are less conducive to continuing the reproduction of poverty (Lomeli 2013:180-181).

Critics further argue that CCTs often operate without other support services in other sectors that could help to advance gender equity (Martínez and Vooren 2008).

Even though the BDH is not administered locally, perceptions and actions at the local level would indicate otherwise. Local politicians want it to appear as though they can influence how the BDH was allocated. In the parish of Pastocalle, an informant working in the parish council office recounted to me that in the 2009 local elections, representatives of Correa's political party, Alianza PAIS, made a clear link between voting for their party and receiving the BDH (see Figure 1). The informant recounted that community members came to the parish council office after the election expecting to receive the BDH and other government benefits in exchange for their PAIS vote (15/09/09). A newly elected Pachakutik representative on the parish council confirmed the story:

This happened at all levels...they said ‘elect a local member of PAIS because the President is also PAIS, and this will open the doors’... they made use of the housing bonos, of the increase in the bono, they even took down names of the people who would receive the *canastias* [food box]...they used all of this in the political campaign (Nelly 09/23/09).

There is no evidence to suggest that this was a central directive from Correa’s party, but it is clear that PAIS representatives took advantage of the community’s confusion about the administration of the BDH to leverage political support. As seen in Figure 1, taken a few months after the 2009 provincial, municipal, and parish election, the side of an Alianza PAIS parish office still bore the words “Everyone vote 35: Housing and Human Development Grants.” The number 35 is the official party number of Correa’s Alianza PAIS.

**Figure 1:** A local Alianza PAIS (35) office in the parish of San Juan de Pastocalle.



**Photo:** Greg Nasmith 2009

As discussed above, whether decentralized administration of the BDH would ease its governmental influence would likely depend primarily on accountability structures. Yet in spite of its national administration, given community members’ desire for the cash

transfer, local politicians felt its impact regardless of their party allegiance. One compelling example stands out. Twice, I interviewed a Pachakutik representative who was the president of a parish council near Latacunga. During the first interview I conducted, a provincial leader of Cotopaxi's Indigenous movement was also present. As we discussed the state's development programming in the community, including land titling and the BDH, the president was openly critical. He reiterated the discourse coming from MICC leaders, asserting that state initiatives often fractured Indigenous communities, and were an unsustainable model of development (DP 09/11/09). The second time I interviewed the participant, we were alone and spoke at greater length. During this discussion, when the aforementioned state development programming came up, he was far less critical. No longer in the presence of the regional leader, the President disclosed that he was inclined to believe that some of the projects were important and beneficial to the community (DP 09/11/09).

These interviews provide a prime example of how governmentality shapes the local political landscape. Although the BDH in many ways contradicts the vision of Pachakutik and the broader Indigenous movement he represents, the parish president was nevertheless influenced by its tremendous political clout. He, like other local officials competing for electoral support, wished to be associated with the provision of state resources, even though he had no control of programs like the BDH. This encounter also highlights an important facet of critical modernism in conducting research. Prior to the interviews with the local politician, I had been immersed in MICC's discourse, absorbing the high-level ideals and goals of the leadership. As such, my initial reaction to the Pachakutik representative's comments tended towards skepticism. Surely the opinions of

this newly-elected official could not have the same validity as seasoned Indigenous activists. Reflecting on the tenets of critical modernism, however, gave me the opportunity to recognize my inclination to romanticize a particular vision of the Indigenous movement. Bringing a critical lens to its discourses revealed another dimension of the Indigenous social movement community at the local political level, namely the tensions and competing interests at the intersection of Indigenous SMOs and state institutions.

In light of these observations, it is worthwhile considering the concept of *proyectismo* (projectism), which is essentially a project-oriented approach to development and political governance. *Proyectismo* is driven by the rationale that the more demonstrable projects a leader can obtain for their constituency, the more effective and popular the leader. According to Ospina, the persistence of small projects is rooted in a leader's desire to satisfy all constituents, and a constituency's expectations for tangible gain, even if it is not in a priority area (2006:65). As a result, political success for community leaders can depend on the provision of tangible and immediate provisions for the community, even if they are short-lived. As Manuel Cocha, the Vice-President of MICC explained, "Indigenous peoples are fighting for a large scale project...when you talk about a project...this refers to giving communities minimal support. This lasts for a week, for fifteen days, but it will not support a lifetime of needs" (MC 27/08/2009).

*Proyectismo* is a common phenomenon in Ecuadorian politics, particularly at the local level. During my field research, I observed its impact play out at an annual meeting of one of MICC's *Organizaciones de Segundo Grado* (Second-Level Organization - OSG), a conglomeration of community-level Indigenous organizations that make up the

movement's base. During the assembly, leader after leader spoke about what they had accomplished for their individual communities. In most every case, the leaders' speeches were devoted to detailing the projects they had secured. One provincial Indigenous leader bucked this trend, emphasizing instead the core values and principles of the movement, such as environmental sustainability, the importance of solidarity, and the struggle for collective rights. I was eager to speak with him at the conclusion of the meeting, and he shared his concern that the organizations' preoccupation with obtaining projects and short-term economic benefits could derail the movement's long-term goals (DMI 14/09/09). Significantly, as a provincial political organizer, he was not under the same pressure to procure projects as the OSG leaders.

Prior to attending this OSG meeting, I had spent roughly four weeks at MICC's offices. The prime concerns there were broader, long-term goals, including the sustainability of the state's development programming, environmental interests, and building community capacity. This experience was fresh in my mind at the OGS meeting, so the apparent disconnection between the priorities of the provincial and local organizations was cast in sharp relief. These observations have profound implications, as the OSG leadership is much closer to Indigenous community bases. The experience of attending the OSG meeting and *not* seeing the core values of the Indigenous movement reflected in its' base exemplified the crisis within the movement. In my view, this culture of *proyectismo* highlights the potential for programs like the BDH to overshadow alternative approaches to development in Ecuador. Even though the BDH is not administered locally, and should therefore not be impacted by local *proyectismo* pressures, it is a very tangible and desirable resource for community members that distracts from the larger struggles and

demands of the Indigenous movement. As is explained later in this chapter, the BDH shifts attention within the Indigenous social movement community away from structural inequalities towards depoliticized, technical goals promoted by the state.

Generally, Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) programs are designed to bypass local political intermediaries in an effort to curb clientelistic relations (Levy and Rodriguez 2005:177), the logic being that centralized bureaucrats are less susceptible to the pressures of local political environments. This raises the question of whether local administration and allocation of the BDH would in fact worsen clientelistic patterns. The governmental effects of administering the BDH could quite possibly coopt local Pachakutik representatives and community leaders responsible for its distribution. Valencia Lomelí argues that a “political illusion has been created in the concept of a direct relation between individuals and the state ... to prevent the discretionary use of CCT programs by politicians” (2013:185). However, as elaborated above, centralized state control of the BDH has apparently not prevented politicians from manipulating its desirability, nor has it insulated local SMOs from the effects of the subsidy’s power. As such, an alternative may be to expand program accountability to multiple levels and institutions in order to curb opportunistic implementation.

Drawing on postcolonial analysis, I contend that Indigenous peoples are effectively ‘Othered’ by the Ecuadorian state through development programming. The BDH contributes to the framing of Indigenous citizens as poor and the state as provider. Counter to the constitutional obligation of a plurinational Ecuador, the BDH advances a binary system in which a strong power dynamic reinforces the omnipotence of the traditional state and the dependence of Indigenous peoples. As Luis Tuiza observes,



“Indigenous people access the benefits offered by the government in virtue of their condition of poverty, rather than as Ecuadorian citizens” (2011:146, my translation). Given the uncertainty surrounding the administration of the BDH, the possibility of losing the transfer was a concern among the women I interviewed in Pastocalle. They felt pressure to continue to appear ‘poor enough’ to maintain their eligibility. ‘Alejandra’, a BDH recipient and mother of two from the parish of Pastocalle, affirmed that she would lie about her economic circumstances in the next census in order to continue receiving the payments (15/09/09). This precarious position can also promote a sense of obligation to the state, which has a strong depoliticizing influence. “Given that it is a favour being received,” opposing or questioning the government “runs the risk of being left on the margin of presidential providence” (Tuiza 2011:146, my translation).

The othering of Indigenous citizens as poor recipients of state development is further entrenched by the centralized, technical nature of the BDH. The program’s assessment process is carried out by government functionaries using criteria established by the central ministry; eligibility for the subsidy is decided by ministry officials in Quito; local ministry functionaries and bank personnel with whom beneficiaries interact are typically not Indigenous. The fact that state development institutions tend to only employ technocrats with higher education means that Indigenous peoples are severely underrepresented, if not entirely absent, from the bodies that carry out interventions in their name (Tuiza 2011). There is a clear separation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous throughout the development encounter with the state. This is a common phenomenon in much development programming and administration, which sustains the ‘cult’ of the expert. This works to concentrate authority in the modern/Western state

(Ferguson 1994; Parpart 1999; Kenny 2008; Escobar 1995). As Parpart argues, development experts “continue to be...essential to the development enterprise, as development policies and programs are largely predicated on the assumption that development problems can be reduced to technical, i.e. ‘solvable’ problems which involve the transfer of Western technical expertise” (1995:225). The outcome of this development discourse is that it “can make certain ideas/discourses unthinkable” (Parpart and Veltmeyer 2004:52). The consequence, as Kate Kenny contends, is that development discourse and practice “through colonial ways of knowing that persist in social, cultural, and even linguistic epistemologies” can result in the “confinement of the non-West into categories of the West’s own making” (2008:73). Similarly, though programs like the BDH, in conjunction with broader strategies of depoliticization, Correa’s regime advances a neocolonial system in which the state is the bastion of knowledge and progress. In order to access its benefits, Indigenous citizens must enter as subordinates rather than equals.

Employing a technocratic approach to development in an environment infused with *proyectismo* ensures that power continues to unevenly reside with the state. The resultant governmental process imposes a self-disciplining effect that discourages the kinds of structural challenges championed by MICC and other Indigenous SMOs. As Tuiza posits, the “rationality of projects in exchange for loyalty disagrees with the principles of rights, democracy and social inclusion. In this perspective, Indigenous people are considered the poor who wait for the benevolence of those who hold power...” To receive their gifts, they must demonstrate “their adherence to the rules of the game imposed by the regime” (2011:148, my translation). Given the high rates of poverty in

rural communities, it is easy to understand why, at the individual level, political decision-making is so susceptible to immediate material concerns. In the parish of Pastocalle, I asked a woman who was currently receiving the BDH how the subsidy might affect how she votes. She answered matter-of-factly that if she stopped receiving the BDH, she would vote “for the other guy” (‘Alejandra’15/09/09).

At its core, Correa’s project upholds what Bhabha (1994) terms a ‘hegemonic normality’ to uneven development in Ecuador, while simultaneously eroding collective Indigenous organization. In the face of the state’s powerful governmental influences and extensive discursive co-optation, it appears that the Indigenous social movement in Cotopaxi and the organizations within CONAIE risk increasing political marginalization. As the Ecuadorian state reasserts its presence in rural development, political support for the Indigenous movement in Indigenous communities may wane. While Indigenous SMOs will likely continue to function as local providers as long as financial opportunities from NGOs exist, their ability to influence local, regional, and national politics on behalf of Indigenous communities is at risk. In many ways, MICC and CONAIE find themselves in crisis. Nevertheless, dedicated communities, activists and organizations continue to struggle for their vision of a plurinational state. As discussed in the previous chapter, Indigenous citizens are not merely passive recipients of state policy. The relationship between state actors and Indigenous citizens and organizations is a continual negotiation that involves shifting identities and evolving strategies of resistance. Although the governmental pressures detailed in this chapter are present within development interventions, Postero (2007) astutely notes that dominant ideas can be resisted and modified to subalterns’ advantage. I am reminded of the counsel that

Humberto Cholango, then head of ECUARUNARI and current President of CONAIE, gave at a MICC assembly: “accept these gifts if you wish, but don’t sell your soul to this government” (21/08/09, my translation).

## Chapter 5: Discussion

The notion that CCT programs constitute a new form of social contract between the state and beneficiaries is apparent in the use of the term *co-responsibilities* (instead of conditions) in a majority of programs (Fiszbein and Schady 2009:10).

In the eight years of Correa's presidency to date, the political environment in Ecuador has undergone tremendous changes. It would be a misnomer, however, to characterize Correa's government as radical. Although Ecuador has experienced welcomed political stability, Correa's administration falls short of the revolutionary discourse it so readily employs. Nevertheless, as described in Chapter 4, the regime's investment in social welfare programming is unprecedented, and national poverty rates in Ecuador are decreasing. The emergence of the state's prominent role in development initiatives has significantly altered its relationship with Indigenous social movement organizations (SMOs), and shaken SMOs' connection to their community bases. With the retreat of the central state during the height of the neoliberal era, Indigenous organizations ironically had more influence over local development initiatives funded and implemented primarily by international non-governmental organizations (NGOs). While international aid activities are still a central part of development in Ecuador, and come with their own complexities and problematic agendas (Petras and Veltmeyer 2005), the state's development apparatus now occupies social and political spaces previously dominated by civil society. As a result of Correa's substantial expansion of state social assistance program, many more rural Indigenous citizens have come into direct contact with state institutions.

At the heart of Correa's poverty reduction strategy is the conditional cash transfer (CCT) program, the *Bono de Desarrollo Humano* (Human Development Grant – BDH).

It would be very difficult to argue that the BDH is inherently bad; the transfer provides a much needed monthly influx of cash to the country's poorest families and promotes health and education among children. Broadly speaking, evidence suggests that CCT programs in Latin America and beyond are proving to be effective development tools for national governments (Fiszbein and Schady 2009). Proponents argue that targeted cash transfers are a more efficient method of redistributing resources to the most vulnerable individuals of a population (Johannsen et al. 2009). Furthermore, over the long-term, CCTs are designed to increase human capital and reduce poverty and its intergenerational transmission (Lindert et al. 2006). Scholars also report a degree of increased gender empowerment among women CCT beneficiaries in Mexico and Brazil (Escobar and González de la Rocha 2009; Veras Soares and Silva 2010).

Despite their growing popularity in Latin America (Samaniego and Tejerina 2010), CCTs present a number of problems as a development strategy. Valencia Lomelí (2013) remarks that CCTs have been a central component of post-Washington consensus national development planning (163). However, rather than breaking with neoliberal doctrine, CCTs seek compatibility with market logic by assuming that poverty is “the result of poor decisions made by the heads of poor households, and that the solution therefore is to adjust the behaviour of the poor instead of change the system” (Lomelí 2013:164). Lomelí argues further that CCTs in isolation of universal welfare services are insufficient for eliminating poverty (2013:164), while Renee Sewall (2008) observes that compliance with health and education conditions are difficult to monitor and enforce among program beneficiaries. As such, governments can potentially reap the political benefits of CCTs without addressing structural inequalities at the root of poverty.

The manipulation of CCT programs for political gain is not a novel concept in Latin America. Sewall contends that national governments in Mexico and Brazil have employed CCT programs in electoral campaigns to influence voters (2008). However, aid agencies and scholars have focused mainly on the technical challenges and outcomes of CCT interventions. Informed by a critical modernist perspective, this thesis provides an alternative approach by examining how the discourse and implementation of a CCT program, in the context of unequal material conditions, influence the local dynamics of a social movement community. As demonstrated in Chapter 4, the BDH's influence is keenly felt among community members as well as local government and civil society actors in Ecuador.

As CCT programs receive more funding and become more widespread, it will be important to take notice of the political disturbances they create in existing civil society networks. Long-term struggles and political projects that challenge liberal state logic are at particular risk of losing support as a result of governments manipulating CCT delivery. As the case study of Cotopaxi reveals, a desirable government benefit like the BDH can undermine a social movement's political project. Delivered as it is, couched in appropriated radical discourse, the BDH has the power to influence political allegiances and erode support for the structural transformations sought by Indigenous SMOs. Confusion regarding the administration and allocation of the subsidy allows local state representatives to create an illusory clientelistic relationship with voters, while the program's individualized focus distracts from community-based initiatives.

The question remains whether the beneficial outcomes of the BDH can be reconciled with its undermining consequences for social movements. By design, CCTs

target poor individuals, which conflicts with the basic unit of corporatist organization: the community. Mainly rural, and often poor, Indigenous communities comprise the base of SMOs such as MICC. As Laura Rawlings observes, “[t]hrough the provision of cash grants directly to poor households, CCT programmes allow the national government to forge a one-on-one relationship with the target population” (2005:144). If corporatist organizations and local institutions are to remain on the sidelines of CCT allocation and delivery, perhaps at the very least they can provide input into the process. For instance, more distributed oversight in the form of local committees staffed by community representatives could buffer the political influence of the state through CCTs. Ensuring compliance with the health and education conditions of the cash transfer could also be broadened to incorporate local organizations, who could potentially mobilize established community networks to achieve these outcomes. Similar mechanisms are not without precedent and are not immune to governmental influence. In Brazil, local Social Control Councils (SCCs) have been fairly ineffective at ensuring CCT compliance due to the financial incentives and political pragmatism of falsely reporting high rates (Sewall 2008: 179-180). In Ecuador, the substantial political currency infused in the BDH makes the continued state monopoly of the program’s administration likely. Furthermore, the Correa government’s acrimonious relationship with CONAIE does not lend itself to cooperation with SMOs like MICC.

While the state under Correa has taken a much more active role in reducing poverty, it has concurrently undermined corporatist Indigenous SMOs working toward a long-term plurinational project. This has occurred, as argued in Chapter 4, through the state’s marginalization of more radical leftist Indigenous organizations, its co-optation



and de-politicization of their demands, and its simultaneous provision of short-term material benefits to rural communities. By institutionalizing and diluting potentially transformative development concepts like *sumak kawsay*, the state effectively weakens the discursive power of the Indigenous movement's emancipatory project. Through legislative and administrative means, including Presidential Decree No. 16, the Secretariat of Peoples, Social Movements, and Citizen Participation followed by the National Secretariat of Political Governance, the Correa regime has sought to regulate and influence the membership, effectiveness, and role of popular organizations. The administration's focus on individual land titling programs encourages peasant farmers to formalize land ownership in order to gain access to state credit. Meanwhile, the government actively promotes industrial-scale agriculture and has yet to address demands for structural land reform. The *Ley de Aguas* threatens to erode community autonomy and organizational capacity by centralizing the control of water. The expansion and increase of the BDH has strengthened the relationship between the central state and rural Indigenous citizens, and arguably reinforced the local political culture of clientelism and *proyectismo*. In sum, while chipping away at the core struggles of the Indigenous SMOs seeking structural change, the state has directly and tangibly improved, albeit in a minor way, the material conditions of Indigenous citizens.

As CCTs grow in popularity in Latin America and more progressive governments take root in the region, a critical approach to state poverty reduction strategies is needed. Critical modernism offers a perspective that does not dismiss the goals of the liberal nation-state outright, but interrogates and explores the ways in which initiatives are framed and pursued. Efforts to improve the material conditions of the country's poorest

citizens are not inherently bad, but they must be considered within larger political contexts and historical structures that act as barriers to achieving greater social justice. Moreover, the ongoing unequal distribution of productive resources, chiefly land in the Ecuadorian Indigenous case, calls for a mode of inquiry that contests the dominant capitalist framework being promoted by the state. Critical modernism provides such a challenge, without overlooking the significance of more subtle discursive contexts that are crucial to understanding the dynamic relationship between Indigenous and state actors. In the new political reality since Correa's election, the coming years will be crucial in determining whether MICC and other Indigenous SMOs can continue to adapt to a more socially conscious Ecuadorian state while remaining relevant to their community bases and maintaining their emancipatory soul.

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