Ecuadorian Indians, the Nation, and Class in Historical Perspective: Rethinking a "New Social Movement"[1]

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Abstract: Today the Ecuadorian Indian movement is the strongest of its kind in Latin America. Such a movement may seem to indicate the declining importance of class as a category of social analysis and basis for identity, and the rise of ethnicity in its place. This article argues, however, that the gains of the Indian movement can best be understood in the context of: an historical analysis of shifting class relations and projects; a modernist state project of inclusion imposed from above (with unexpected consequences); and changing international political-economic processes, reshaping the terrain on which local struggles would be carried out.

Keywords: Ecuador, Indians, class, nation, ethnicity, social movements.

Résumé : Le mouvement indien en Équateur est aujourd'hui le plus fort parmi les mouvements indiens d'Amérique Latine. Son existence peut sembler signifier une diminution de l'importance des classes sociales comme catégorie d'analyse sociale et fondement identitaire, et la montée de l'ethnicité comme remplacement. Le propos de cet article, par contre, est que les gains du mouvement indien sont mieux expliqués dans le contexte d'une analyse historique des transformations des liens entre classes sociales et de leurs projets en voie de changement; d'un projet étatique moderniste d'inclusion imposé d'en haut (avec des conséquences imprévues); et de processus politico-économiques internationaux en mutation, qui ont transformé le terrain sur lequel les luttes locales se déroulent.

Mots-clés : Ecuador, Indiens, classe sociale, nation, ethnicité, mouvements socials.

Unlike so many areas of Latin America with large indigenous populations (such as Guatemala and Peru), Ecuador did not experience widespread civil war in the 1970s and 1980s, characterized by guerrilla movements and severe military repression. Instead, those years saw the emergence in Ecuador of a strong indigenous movement within the bounds of civil society, which since the 1990s has had a growing role in articulating the demands of subordinate groups before the state. In fact, among all Latin American countries it is, strikingly, only in Ecuador that a national indigenous federation has been established; since 1986, the Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador (CONAIE) has become the hegemonic[2] institution representing indigenous projects, proposals and problems before the state. The Ecuadorian Indian movement has received a great deal of scholarly (and political) attention recently, particularly since the broadly based indigenous uprising of 1990. Important analyses have been made of the organizational basis and forms of the Indian movement and the challenges it faces in Ecuador today. The argument presented in this article is rather different: I suggest that to understand current processes of organization and mobilization, it is essential to examine ongoing changes in class relations in Ecuador over the last century, situating Indians in relation to dominant groups.

The Ecuadorian Indian movement appears to fit into the category of a new social movement, eschewing class as its organizational basis, and demonstrating instead the importance of other forms of identity, in this case, ethnicity. However, I argue that the gains of the Indian movement today can best be understood: through an historical analysis of a century of changing class relations and projects[3]; as the result of a series of responses to a modernist state project of inclusion imposed from above (with unexpected consequences); and in the context of changing international political-economic processes, reshaping the terrain on which local struggles would be carried out. To some

extent, in Ecuador space has been generated for the partial incorporation of subaltern projects, in a way that has not occurred in many other Latin American countries. The generation of these spaces was often inadvertent, as elites pursued policies in their own interests, which then opened up unexpected possibilities for indigenous Ecuadorians.

This analysis draws on Marxist resources for an anthropological political economy in two main ways. First, I argue that while class has not proven to be the focal point for identities that inform political movements at the beginning of the 21st century, this does not mean that we should reject class *analysis* as a tool for understanding social processes (for a similar argument applied to Mexico, see Nugent, 1997; and more generally, Thompson, 1978: 148-149). Indeed as Michael Kearney (1996) has pointed out in regard to indigenous movements elsewhere in Latin America, the defence of indigenous identity (an ethnic issue) is closely linked to the protection of access to land and other essential subsistence resources (a class issue). Thus I argue that an analysis of the changing relations among classes over time (including political struggles to impose projects in a particular class's economic interests) is essential for understanding current mobilizations, even if those mobilizations do not themselves emphasize class. Second, this article proposes that we cannot understand subaltern projects in isolation. The concept of the subaltern comes from Gramsci's work (see especially 1971: 44-120), and he situates subaltern or subordinate groups always in relation to dominant groups, within a broad social field of analysis. Often when Latin Americanists have drawn on the school of subaltern studies, they have lost sight of this broader social field as they focus only on subordinate groups (cf. Mallon 1994). I would argue in contrast that neither dominant nor subordinate groups can be fully understood except in relation to each other. It is also essential to recognize the range of both dominant and subordinate groups, rather than simply imagine two basic groups, each with a coherent and unproblematic set of interests: indeed, the unity of either dominant or subordinate groups must be seen as a problem. Finally, the relations between dominant and subordinate groups should be thought of as characterized by contention, struggle and argument. Indeed, Gramsci does not equate consent to rule with ideological consensus, but rather examines a hegemonic process that can seldom be easily achieved. As Roseberry (1994) points out, a hegemonic process is relatively successful not when it eliminates struggle (which rarely occurs), but rather when it leads to the acceptance of a common language of contention.

The period since 1895 in Ecuador has seen processes of incorporation of indigenous groups, who held an important position in elite models of national incorporation. Indians themselves actively responded to these elite projects in various ways. Broad political-economic processes have provided the general context within which changes in the forms of national incorporation in Ecuador have been forged from above. However, the specific way that external processes were internalized in Ecuador clearly was a result of the arrangement of internal social relations (following Cardoso and Falleto's urging [1979] that we examine the specificities of the "internalization of the external" in distinct cases). Moreover, although broad international and national processes may create certain openings to press for inclusion from below, what subaltern groups actually make of the openings is not strictly determined—indeed, attention must be paid to both broader political-economic processes that structure and restructure the limits of the possible for elite and subordinate groups, and forms of subaltern agency. This suggests that the effects at the national and local level of broad economic processes are not pre-determined, but rather are the result of ongoing struggle and manoeuvre among social groups.

International market conditions have profoundly influenced social relations within Ecuador, and the country's economic history over the last century and a half has been characterized by three export booms. The first, based on cocoa exports, began in the last three decades of the 19th century. The cocoa economy encountered problems during the First World War, given transportation difficulties and the closure of European markets for non-essential goods. The export crisis was further deepened by the advent of the World Depression in 1929. The second export boom was based on bananas. Exports began to be promoted in 1948, when United Fruit and Standard Fruit turned their attention to Ecuador due to crop diseases in their Central American plantations. Banana production declined in the early 1960s when new disease-resistant crop strains were introduced into Central America. The intermediate period of the 1930s was one of inward-looking development. The third boom dates to the early 1970s with the export of oil. The two periods of severest economic crisis this century were the inter-boom years of the 1930s and 1940s, and the period of the debt crisis following the height of the oil boom, in the 1980s and 1990s.

Three key eras have been chosen for analysis, given that they marked shifts in processes of national incorporation, with implications for Ecuadorian Indians. They also demonstrate the interplay between global processes, politics, and models of national incorporation. The first is the period after the 1895 Liberal Revolution, when a model of

export-led development through cocoa production was promoted by coastal liberals. The emergence of this powerful group was based on world market conditions that favoured expansion of tropical agro-export production. The other two periods examined are moments of economic crisis in Ecuador (the 1930s-40s and the 1980s-90s), which were dealt with in very different ways. During the earlier economic crisis, there was an elite effort to forge a more national economy in Ecuador, given the difficulty of selling Ecuadorian products in international markets, and the related difficulty of gaining access to imported goods. This was associated with the strengthening of a national ideology of mestizaje (literally racial mixing, but in Ecuador the formation of a population with common cultural characteristics), incorporating Indians from above, in a way that was intolerant of difference. In the 1980s and 1990s, in contrast, the economic crisis was associated not with an interest in promoting a national economy, but rather with an unprecedented globalization of the economy. In this context, and with the weakening of the internal market, there was much less elite concern with the incorporation of subordinate groups into the imagined community of the nation. However, it is precisely in this period of economic globalization that the indigenous movement itself emerged as the articulator of an alternative imagining of the national community.

Liberalism and Ecuadorian Indians: Toward a labour market[4]

In Ecuador in the late 19th century there were two strong, regionally based dominant classes: one in the highlands, associated with *haciendas* (large estates) producing primarily for the internal market and the other on the coast, producing cocoa for the world market on plantations. The existence of these two elite groups which were rather equally matched in terms of power was fundamentally important for the particular way that labour relations developed in Ecuador, and more broadly, for the models of national incorporation promoted by elites. While during the nineteenth century the highland elite were in a position of political dominance, the liberal period represented the rise of the coastal elite. Nonetheless, this group was unable to impose a project that was exclusively in its own interests during the liberal period. This was due in part to the fact that, while the liberals were able to control elections of the executive from 1895 to 1925 (not least, through electoral fraud), it proved much more difficult to control the legislative branch, where the more populous and more conservative region of the highlands tended to dominate. This translated into ongoing conflicts between the liberal executive representing coastal elite interests and an often more conservative legislature where highland interests predominated. As a result, an uneasy working relationship developed between the two dominant classes, creating an atmosphere of competition and tension which had important implications for subaltern groups as well.

The cocoa-producing coastal elite suffered a chronic shortage of labour, given the relatively scarce population of the coastal region. After 1895, cocoa planters looked to the new liberal administration (with which many of them were directly involved) to stimulate the flow of labour to their lands, in part through a loosening of labour ties in the highlands. Liberals saw labour as artificially immobilized in the conservative stronghold of the highlands, by what the liberals saw as the forces of tradition: large landowners, the church, and local political authorities allied with them, the triumvirate of local powers seen as oppressing indigenous peasants of the highlands (see Casagrande and Piper 1969; Guerrero 1994). After the 1895 Revolution, liberal efforts to undermine the power of highland elites in order to stimulate labour migrations focussed on a series of new legal provisions made available to indigenous peasants to combat local abuses that tied them to the highlands.

From the perspective of the liberal agro-export elite of the coast, highland landowners used extra-economic coercion to preserve their control over labour, thus sabotaging the prospects for national development through export production. And indeed, during the latter part of the nineteenth century, indigenous peasants of the Ecuadorian highlands were required to provide several kinds of services to local power holders: these were obligatory labour services required specifically of Indians, outside the purview of market relations. In this context, the liberal state assumed a moral upper hand over highland landowners precisely by insisting on its own role as the protector of Indians from the abuses of both "traditional" highland landowners and the Catholic Church (which was itself a large landowner). The liberal goal of generating a labour market thus involved the development of a discourse about the liberty of contracts, and political measures to undermine highland landowners' power over labour. Importantly, given that the liberal state presented itself as the source of new freedoms,[5] articulated in contrast both to the previous conservative period and to the practices of highland power-holders, state labour policies did not involve the use of force (extra-economic coercion) to generate flows of labour or to dispossess indigenous peasants of their lands.

In order to identify the specificity of the Ecuadorian case, it is useful to compare it with Guatemala, another country with a large indigenous population, which was also

incorporated into the world market through agro-export production in the 1870s (Lovell 1988; Smith 1990). In Guatemala after 1871, the liberal government of Barrios began to promote coffee production in areas adjacent to the western highlands (where the majority of Guatemala's Mayan Indians lived). The drive to modernization initiated by Barrios entailed an assault on native labour. Although there are many ways to cultivate coffee, in Guatemala large estates were developed, given the speed with which land was acquired after 1871 and the means of acquisition (through personal connections to the ruling elite). Because Guatemalan coffee was produced on large estates, coffee planters required a seasonal work force during the harvest season, and that could be dispensed with in other periods. This labour was provided by indigenous migrant labourers, prodded by a series of political measures (that is, forms of extra-economic coercion). Among other things, these included a labour draft (established in 1876) levied on Indian villages, requiring them to send a certain number of seasonal workers to the plantations each year.

Ecuador was like Guatemala, in that a mono-export boom was initiated after 1870 that suffered from a chronic shortage of labour, and this took place in a zone neighbouring the highlands with its dense indigenous population. However, rather than instituting a series of political regulations to forcibly stimulate a labour flow, in Ecuador at the end of the 19th century the liberal state emphasized protecting the rights and freedom of Indian labourers. The "freeing" of indigenous peasant labour to allow it to flow to the coast thus did not occur through a violent transformation of this sector into a proletariat or semi-proletariat, but rather through a series of legal regulations (often in the form of executive decrees which did not have to be approved by the legislative branch) that gradually undermined the power of highland landowners, local officials, and the church to tie labourers to the highlands. These legal measures indeed created conditions that permitted an expansion of the migration process that had begun to occur in previous decades. My reading of the difference between Ecuadorian and Guatemalan labour policies in this era is that it may be largely due to the fact that in the Ecuadorian highlands there was an established elite trying strenuously to hold on to indigenous labour, rather than primarily autonomous Indian communities. While there were also some independent communities in Ecuador, there were proportionately fewer than in Guatemala or Ecuador's Andean neighbours of Bolivia or Peru. The struggle over indigenous labour in Ecuador thus became one carried out in part between two dominant groups, rather than primarily between Indians and an elite group.

Once legal resources were generated by the central state, they took effect principally due to the actions of subordinate groups, who called on the central state to limit local abuses, citing these laws. Given the liberal emphasis on legal measures to undermine highland elites' control over labour, it is not surprising that indigenous petitions had a heavily legalistic tone during the liberal period. Indeed local archives are full of indigenous complaints to higher authorities, claiming their right to protection from the central state, against abusive treatment by local powers. This has led Andrés Guerrero (1994) to propose that the liberal state promoted a "ventriloquist's" image of the Indian. New channels of communication were established between the state and Indians when measures were passed that undermined local powers in the highlands, with the rationale that these groups abused the rights of Indians. In response, Indians duly recreated—and sometimes stretched—government discourse as they reproduced, in their petitions to supra-local authorities, the state's image of them as requiring protection.

For instance, as the Minister of Government sternly stated in response to an indigenous complaint about abuses in local labour recruitment for public works in the highland province of Chimborazo, "The Indians are also Ecuadorians, and as such, and precisely for their miserable condition, they deserve preferential attention from state officials who have the responsibility of offering them the most effective protection, given that their ignorance and natural timidity acquired in long years of servitude prevents them from opposing the arbitrary actions of certain officials."[6] And as a group of Indians complained in 1914 to the provincial Governor (an official appointed directly by the executive rather than locally elected), "We are Indians of the parish of Tixán, Alausí canton, where, violating the constitution and the dispositions of the Law of Internal Administration, our individual rights are assaulted by the authorities of our parish, who martyr us with demands for forced labour....As you are the primary authority of the province, we beg your protection to save our miserable race from this yoke."[7] Repeatedly, Indians appropriated the discourse of the central state, and rather forcefully and cogently argued that they were timid and ignorant and thus deserved protection from the state, particularly in relation to labour issues. I have argued elsewhere that highland Indians were indeed able to use these legal provisions to limit abusive treatment by local political authorities, clergy, and landowners. Even more, in some cases, Indians actually initiated this process as their complaints to the central state resulted in specific orders sent to local officials which became part of the arsenal on which future complaints could be based (see Clark 1994 for

various examples). As these processes unfolded in the Ecuadorian highlands in the early 20th century, local subaltern groups were able to promote their own interests. While space limitations prevent a full discussion of these projects, they centrally included the ability to choose to labour on public works, in the lands or homes of clergy and local political authorities, and on haciendas, under conditions that were of their own choosing—principally, when they were paid adequately and promptly, and when these duties did not conflict with the needs of subsistence agriculture (see Clark 1998c: chapter four; and Clark 1994). At the same time, local powers were undermined, the central state achieved an unprecedented presence and legitimacy in rural areas of the highlands, and, not least, labour migrations to the coast were stimulated. The relations between Indians and the state in the liberal period can only be understood in the context of relations between the two dominant classes, and the particular importance that labour issues achieved in these elite conflicts. In this sense, the openings created for Indians—and which they aggressively pursued—can be seen as the result of the fact that the national project of the Ecuadorian liberals was also a class project.

The Crisis of the 1930s and 1940s: Toward a National Economy[8]

Associated with the crisis in cocoa exports and the closure of foreign markets after 1929, was a period of steep devaluations of the Ecuadorian *sucre*, making imports much more expensive. During the 1910s and 1920s, there had been attention to one aspect of the internal market, with the expansion of food production in the highlands to provision the coastal agro-export zone, which had previously been satisfied by imported foods. In the 1920s there was also some expansion of textile production in the north-central highlands, since textiles and food had been the two largest categories of imports to Ecuador prior to the war. In the late 1920s the establishment of new textile factories in Ecuador was only partly aimed at the internal market, since there was also a profitable trade with Colombia. With the onset of the World Depression, however, that trade declined and Ecuadorian elites began to focus more attention on production for the internal market.[9] These changes occurred in a context of severe economic and political crisis. The decade of the 1930s alone saw 15 different governments. The political instability was not limited to elite circles; it also involved new forms of political organization and protest among Ecuadorian agricultural and industrial workers. This was a period of unionization among workers and peasants, with linkages to new national political parties such as the Communist and Socialist Parties. This point in time was also marked by the emergence of populist politics which drew on the support of the working class and marginalized social groups. It was as a result of economic and political crisis that the interests of industrial elites turned towards the internal market in the 1930s, and specifically, to a particular form of incorporation of subordinate groups, recasting them as potential consumers.

By most estimates at the time, Indians made up about half of Ecuador's population, and elites argued that they were not integrated into the national economy. Ecuador's Indians had little access to cash, and their resulting inability to consume the products of national industry was highlighted in many discussions of the indigenous "problem" and national development issues during this period. As the Minister of Social Welfare argued in 1936,

> Our economic misery, our disorganization, the lack of development of our industry, all of this is due, without doubt, to the fact that the Indian represents a negative factor in the national economy. How could our economy be vigorous, how could there be organization in the country, if the majority of the population remains culturally and economically marginal to the nation, forming a world apart, whose position is diametrically opposed to Western civilization? In the national market consumption is minimal; [...] if we were to be entirely truthful, the country's economy is weak because the Indian does not consume. (Ministerio de Previsión Social, etc. 1936: 14)

Here the reasons provided for the lack of indigenous consumers were twofold: Indians' economic marginality, given both their low standard of living and their emphasis on subsistence production, and their cultural marginality, often glossed in this period as the consequence of a lack of education. Given the difficulties of arriving at a consensus among elites on raising agricultural wages or the prices for peasant agricultural products in urban areas, there emerged instead an emphasis on educational projects, broadly defined, as a way to turn Indians into consumers and full members of the nation. These projects encompassed the hygienic reform of their living conditions, basic literacy, Spanish language training, and the encouragement of expanded engagement with the market in place of their subsistence orientation.

In discussions of the indigenous "problem" during the 1930s and 1940s there were two basic interpretations of its causes (see Clark 1998a). One focussed on the biological roots of indigenous degeneration, while the other focussed on their lack of "culture," defined as education. While these two explanations had different emphases,

they were closely related. The biological perspective, most clearly expressed in the work of the social hygienist Dr. Pablo Arturo Suárez and a generation of his students, emphasized not genetics to explain indigenous degeneration, but more behaviourally oriented issues such as hygiene, nutrition, alcoholism, and disease, which were seen as acting over generations. Indeed, social problems such as alcoholism were seen as racial poisons, which could degenerate the germ plasm that would be passed on to future Ecuadorians (a neo-Lamarckian notion). From this perspective, in order to resolve social problems, one must first improve the biological condition of peasants. Their economic problems could not be addressed first, since in their degenerate condition Indians would surely misuse additional resources, especially for the consumption of alcohol. The cultural explanation in turn emphasized not culture in the anthropological sense, but the lack of education (including hygiene) which prevented Indians from fully participating in the national polity. Illiterate Indians were considered to be dead weights on national progress and "passive" elements who did not participate in national life. Importantly, an element common to both explanations was the emphasis on social reform through the expansion of education, broadly defined. The focus on education was further bolstered by the fact that education was beginning to emerge in the 1940s as an important element of international development discourse, for instance in the Indigenist Institutes that proliferated in Latin America in this period with international support.

In the context of the concern with expanding the number of consumers, in addition to promoting basic literacy and aspects of civic culture, the aim of educational programs in the 1930s and 1940s was explicitly to "awaken necessities" (again revealing the need to reform Indian peasants' subsistence orientation). As one participant in the First Congress of Industrialists, held in the provincial city of Ambato in 1935, insisted:

> The Indian produces, produces, produces, but does not consume; he has no necessities because he has not been taught to take advantage of civilization and consume in order also to increase his production, to cease to be a machine that does not consume, and become a man. The day that we see Indian women wearing patent leather shoes, silk stockings, elegant dresses and hats, and strolling the streets of Ambato on the arms of well-dressed Indians, that day will be a blessing for the history of the national economy, because we will have obtained for our industry a million and a half or two million new consumers, and they will offer to us and to themselves new forms of work and of life. (cited in Luna Tamayo 1993: 114)

This quotation outlines a project of *mestizaje*, which in Ecuador was defined not as racial mixing per se, but rather as the forging of a population with common cultural characteristics. What made all Ecuadorians alike was precisely wearing the same kind of clothing, living in the same kind of dwellings, producing for and purchasing goods through the market, and so on. There appears to have been a sincere perception among Ecuadorian elites that civilization in part was defined by the economic freedom to live better through increased consumption, which of course also depended on increased production for the market.

The kinds of projects for national incorporation promoted by elites were heavily paternalistic towards subaltern groups, especially Indians. Their projects for forming a mestizo nation relied on the promotion of education for Indians, since educated Indians would by definition be mestizos, according to the assumptions of the dominant culture. Indeed, full citizenship rights depended directly on education, since suffrage was limited to the literate until 1979. More broadly, however, it was assumed that once educated, Indians would automatically leave behind their ponchos and small rural plots to partake in national, urban, mestizo culture. The events of the 1980s and 1990s would demonstrate the shortcomings of these assumptions.

In the 1930s and 1940s the response of Indians to dominant ideologies about them was based not on a desire to consume, but rather on what increased consumption would require as a precondition: greater economic well-being, rooted in secure access to land, something that agricultural elites did not readily accept. Indians, in conjunction with socialist and communist labour organizers, developed an alternative analysis of economic crisis and national development problems in this era (Clark 1998b). This can be summed up as a "peasant path" of agricultural development, in which peasants argued that they were the real creators of national wealth, and that improved access to land would allow them to further contribute to national development. For instance, a group of Indian peasants from hacienda Pesillo solicited the sale of an extension of 200 hectares of estate land in the following terms: "If our petition is favourably attended...we will contribute our part to the expansion of agriculture, the increase of national production and the progress itself of the Nation (*Patria*), besides the fact that we will also be able to support ourselves and our children."[10] And similarly another group of Indians argued that "With our gigantic and intensive effort over time, we were able to render productive these lands of volcanic rock and thus contribute to the development of the agricultural economy of the

Nation. The landholders have never even visited this area. Nor can they cultivate it. Nor does it benefit them in any way!! In contrast, these solitary and sterile *páramos* (high-altitude grasslands) can sustain the lives of an entire indigenous community."[11] These quotes, drawn from petitions for land under 1937 legislation dealing with vacant lands, demonstrate that Indians had themselves adopted elite rhetoric about the importance of market production: they argued that they sought land in order to facilitate their own integration into the market economy.

In the 1940s, highland Indians also appropriated another aspect of elite discourse, by promoting education in their own huts, within hacienda boundaries (see Rodas 1989). By 1945, Indians in the Cayambe region north of Quito had established literacy classes in the dwellings of hacienda service tenants, raising the possibility that Indian children would be able to check hacienda account books. Landowner repression forced the schools to move underground soon after their founding. The response of Indians was to rotate the location of the schools, and to hold classes at night. Estate foremen learned to identify the location of schools by looking for a lit lamp in an indigenous hut. Indians resorted to lighting lamps in all of the huts while classes were in session, so that the school could not be distinguished so easily. Peasants also constructed collapsible desks, so that when hacienda employees arrived at what they thought was a school, they found a pile of boards but no direct evidence of a class. The response of the state, too, was to attempt to close down the schools, with the argument that the teachers were not licensed by the government; this culminated in declaring it illegal to use Quichua in the classroom. In contrast, the state did support the rural literacy campaign begun in 1944 by the National Union of Journalists, in which classes were held in Spanish. While we cannot rule out the possibility that this project too might have provided resources for Indians, the preponderance of monolingual Quichua speakers among indigenous peasants in the era suggests that this would likely have been less effective than the bilingual education that the Indians themselves were promoting.

Altogether, it is clear that during the 1930s and 1940s the view of Indians as potential members of the nation was based at least implicitly on a class project of certain elites, to expand the base of consumers of their products, and thus the "productive" members of the nation. It should also be pointed out that the cultural content of what would be seen as full membership in the nation was itself classed: responsible citizenship was equated, in part, with supporting the national economy through full engagement with the market.

The Indian Movement of the Late 20th Century[12]

The 1960s and 1970s saw the establishment of new forms of government intervention in the rural areas of the Ecuadorian highlands, associated with projects of national modernization carried out by the military governments in power at the time. Particularly after the 1972 inauguration of oil production in Ecuador's Amazon region, the state became an agent of accumulation as it participated directly in oil production along with the Texaco-Gulf consortium. This allowed it to greatly expand state expenditures, which soared from 13 035 million sucres in 1972 to 86 627 million sucres in 1979 (during which time the exchange rate remained stable). Revenues from oil were invested in the expansion of social policy—health, education, and housing—and resulted in great improvements of social indicators. Between 1960 and 1980, ten years were added to Ecuadorian life expectancy, death and infant mortality rates were reduced by 40 per cent, and by 1980 the vast majority of children attended primary school (Moser 1993: 177). Consistent with the nationalistic policies of the state, oil revenues were also spent on incentives and subsidies for local industry, with the promotion of an import substitution industrialization model, very much concentrated in urban areas. The rural areas in turn were affected by a model of agricultural modernization that involved two agrarian reform laws, both passed under military governments (in 1964 and 1973; see Barsky 1984).

With the advent of agrarian reform, the large hacienda in its traditional form disappeared from the countryside of the Ecuadorian highlands, to be replaced by smaller, mechanized estates with fewer but waged labourers (i.e., rather than receiving a subsistence plot in exchange for their work), alongside revitalized peasant communities with independent access to land (with great variations in the quality of land received). The land distributed was seldom sufficient for full subsistence production, particularly as it began to be fragmented by inheritance; nonetheless in political terms the disappearance of the traditional agricultural estate implied the final undermining of the system of ethnic administration through private, local powers, wherein the large landowner dominated indigenous peasants, in alliance with the priest, the local political authority, and the white-mestizo inhabitants of highland towns (Casagrande and Piper 1969). The decline of these "private" forms of ethnic domination, in haciendas, public markets and the homes and lands of white townspeople, created a power vacuum in the rural areas of the highlands (Guerrero 1995).

From the 1960s to the present, this power vacuum has gradually filled with indigenous grassroots organizations. This occurred with the increasing establishment of indigenous communities (rooted in and facilitated by the 1937 Ley de Comunas), as well as cooperatives, associations, village improvement committees, women's groups, students' groups, and so on (Carrasco 1993). Overall, the period dating from the first agrarian reform has been characterized by both the legal registration of existing indigenous organizations of all kinds, and a multiplication of new organizations in areas that are predominantly indigenous, in comparison with those that are predominantly white-mestizo. This can be seen in part as a direct result of the practices of governmental and non-governmental organizations.

In the 1970s, with the resources generated by the oil boom and the aim of the military government to modernize the countryside, there was a proliferation of development projects in rural areas. This was part of a project to integrate the Indians through creating direct linkages between state agencies and the emerging indigenous grassroots organizations. The social spending by the military government of the 1970s was clearly designed as a form of incorporation from above, where the population affected was meant to be the passive recipient of an authoritarian paternalism. Nonetheless, in the emergence of grassroots organizations, the importance of various educational services offered by the state, as well as by the church and non-governmental organizations, should be recognized. The state, through its investments in rural education, unwittingly promoted the formation of local indigenous organizations (although it had always been assumed that education, equated with modernization, would lead to an abandonment of indigenous identity). In some cases, projects directed by non-governmental organizations incorporated important elements of cultural revitalization. In others, the decision to use Quichua in educational programs for pragmatic reasons had the effect of encouraging cultural pride (Carrasco 1993; Muratorio 1980). Another important influence was the establishment of development programs that created a demand for local interlocutors to promote and even administer these projects. The strategy of the progressive church was particularly important in this regard, because it identified the indigenous community itself as the preferred unit of intervention (Carrasco 1993). Altogether, these processes resulted in the generation on multiple fronts of local indigenous leaders, educated and with increasing experience in dealing with both governmental and non-governmental institutions.

With the economic crisis of the early 1980s, triggered by the debt crisis (associated, among other things, with the rapid rise in interest rates during the U.S. economic recession), state investment in rural areas of the Ecuadorian highlands was paralyzed: as elsewhere, so too in Ecuador the retreat of the state meant especially a retreat from the countryside (Lucero 2002). The result was not that the incipient indigenous organizations disappeared, but rather that they became more autonomous, as they began to mobilize to claim the development promises—especially for basic services—that the state had made in the 1970s. The proliferation of grassroots organizations since the 1960s was complemented in the 1980s with the emergence of important regional and national indigenous organizations. Rather than the definitive disappearance of indigenous identity that both the right and the left had expected to come with "modernization" in Ecuador, indigenous identity has been strengthened through these processes. This strengthening is seen not only in the increasing importance of indigenous organizations and leadership, but also in the increasing indigenization of the countryside itself.

Although, at the national level, there was a net decline in the indigenous population during the last three decades of the 20th century (due to assimilation), as well as a net decline in rural population compared to urban population, nonetheless the rural areas of the highlands that are predominantly indigenous have grown (Zamosc 1995). That is, in a context of widespread rural-urban migrations, the population of indigenous areas of the highlands migrates less than does the population of white-mestizo areas. While the populations of provincial capitals are growing, the populations of cantonal and parish seats are declining. There seems to be increasing migration of white-mestizo townspeople to cities, combined with an increasing stability on the part of indigenous peasants in the countryside—moreover, some peasants have returned there. Indeed, indigenous peasants have often engaged in temporary labour migrations within Ecuador, or semi-proletarianisation, precisely in order to buy additional land in the countryside, resulting in re-peasantisation (Carrasco 1990). Contrary to all expectations, the data suggest that the specifically rural population of the Ecuadorian highlands is becoming more rather than less indigenous.

Given the processes of formation of indigenous leadership at the grassroots level and the indigenisation of the countryside, it is not surprising that the leadership of resistance to legislative changes undermining the situation of peasants in Ecuador is increasingly undertaken by indigenous organizations rather than mestizo peasant groups. In June of 1990 a massive civic strike erupted in the Ecuadorian highlands, led by indigenous groups, to

protest a number of issues including the effects on their communities of the economic crisis and the structural adjustment policies promoted by the International Monetary Fund. Mestizo peasant groups also joined the movement in some areas, under the leadership of CONAIE.

In July, 1994 indigenous leadership of these issues was even more powerfully represented in the image of Indian leaders entering into direct and prolonged negotiations with the national government and agricultural elites over proposed changes to the Agrarian Law, which would have turned back the clock on many aspects of the agrarian reform. This struggle was related to policies of structural adjustment, which in some cases have benefited Ecuadorian elites directly, especially through cheap credits for the production of high-value export products (with the goal of generating foreign exchange for debt payments, one of the principal goals of structural adjustment programs). Non-traditional agricultural exports, such as the new rose plantations that proliferated in the northern highlands of Ecuador in the 1990s, need relatively small amounts of land, but large amounts of inputs, including water. One of the central issues in the new Agrarian Law was that water was to be privatized in the interests of increased production of non-traditional export crops, and at the expense of peasant production. During negotiations over this law, indigenous leaders, in indigenous dress, negotiated with representatives of the national government on the behalf of both indigenous organizations and other peasant groups, and succeeded in holding the line against some of the worst of the proposed reforms. The negotiations were followed closely by the television, print and radio media.

For the first time in the 1996 national elections, politicians from across the political spectrum actively courted the indigenous vote and listened to their proposals. Among these, the Indian movement proposed that limits should be placed on the indiscriminate privatization of government services and industries, despite the proddings of international lending institutions. Then in January, 2000, in a dramatic move, the indigenous movement precipitated a change of government in Ecuador (see Gerlach 2003), when it allied itself with progressive military officers to oust President Jamil Mahuad, who among other things presided over an economic crisis where real salaries declined by well over 50%, and oversaw a national banking collapse while doing little to ensure that the bankers involved took responsibility for their contributions to this crisis. Mahuad's vice-president was almost immediately installed by Congress in Mahuad's place, and continued many of his predecessor's economic policies. Two years later, however, retired Colonel Lucio Gutiérrez, a leader of the 2000 uprising, was elected President of Ecuador, the first time that a recognized political ally of the indigenous movement has held such a post. One of his first actions upon assuming the presidency in January 2003 was to name Nina Pacari—a leader of CONAIE, Ecuador's first Indian lawyer, a prominent figure in the 1994 negotiations over the Agrarian Law, and in 1998 the Second Vice-President of Congress—as the Minister of Foreign Relations, and Luis Macas, former president of CONAIE, as the Minister of Agriculture. Thus the indigenous movement has succeeded in producing not only organic intellectuals within indigenous society, who have been instrumental in analyzing indigenous problems in a way that has facilitated mobilization of the Indian population and in articulating indigenous demands before the state, but also public intellectuals at the national level in Ecuador, who intervene much more broadly in discussions of national problems. The fact that the Indian ministers have since resigned from the government does not change the fact that the Indian movement has clearly achieved an unprecedented presence in national politics.

It should be noted that the Indian project of the last decade draws explicitly on a rejection of some aspects of the 1930s state project for the incorporation of Indians. Underlying much of the 1930s project was the assumption that if Indians were only educated (and hence more "rational"), they would automatically accept the values of the dominant society. As Galo Ramón (1993) has pointed out, however, it is precisely the most educated Indians who became the organic intellectuals of the indigenous organizations of the 1980s and 1990s. Indeed, in some ways the more educated these leaders are, the more "ethnic" they have become. Moreover, among the 16 points of the indigenous program presented during massive mobilizations in June of 1990 was the rejection of the increasingly consumeristic values of the dominant society, and a call to live a simple life in line with indigenous values. While the 1990s Indian project may reject the suppositions of the 1930s and 1940s state and elite projects of incorporation, it may well be that the current movement has its roots in precisely those kinds of projects, although in unexpected ways. Most importantly, the emphasis over several decades on incorporating Indians into the nation through the expansion of education provided the basis for the eventual emergence of indigenous leaders at the local, regional and national levels.

Before concluding, I also want to emphasize here the political power of an organizational focus on ethnicity, both in a changing international context and internally within Ecuador.[13] From an international perspective, in the post-1989 period, support for class-based mobilizing has

been on a decline, while indigenous rights have become an important focus of international funding and mobilizing. Indeed, in 1989 the International Labour Organization (ILO) passed resolution 169, stressing the obligation of governments to protect the rights of indigenous peoples. The United Nations has become increasingly active in this area since the early 1980s, declaring the year of indigenous peoples in 1993, and then the decade of indigenous peoples from 1995-2005. The World Bank itself has used ILO 169 to develop a policy to require informed participation by indigenous peoples in its projects, insisting that they must benefit from the Bank's operations (somewhat paradoxically since so many of the Bank's policies have undermined the living conditions of the poor, among whom are surely the vast majority of indigenous people worldwide). At the national level, within Ecuador itself, the emphasis on ethnicity, in the form of indigenous *nacionalidades* (nationalities) and *pueblos* (peoples), may well be what has allowed the emergence of a national indigenous federation in Ecuador in the first place (see Lucero 2002). One of the specificities of the early history of indigenous movements in Ecuador is that mobilizing began first in the Amazon region in the 1960s, where there were not strong regional elites who might have crushed these early organizational efforts. Instead, the presence of foreign oil companies and religious missions in the region provided clear targets for mobilization, which facilitated the early development of organizational networks among the various Indian groups in the zone. In the Amazon, given the very different social and economic organization of the indigenous population (compared to the highlands), the emphasis has been on ethnicity (rather than class) and territory (rather than land). In the highlands, in contrast, there was a greater emphasis on class issues, due both to links with national political parties of the left, and the pressures associated with land problems. When the highland and lowland (and less important coastal) organizations joined to create the umbrella organization CONAIE in 1986, the relative strength of the Amazonian groups facilitated the adoption of the concept of indigenous nationality as a basic organizing unit. The class-based organizing of the highland movement had little appeal in the Amazon, and the emphasis instead on ethnicity came at a propitious time given the international changes to come in the post-1989 period. Over time, this concept has been transformed to encompass both nationalities and peoples, since the many different Indian nationalities of the Amazon would otherwise overwhelm the single, but numerically much larger, highland nationality of the Quichua. (As a result, in the highlands the Quichua nationality has been divided up into several different peoples, including the Otavalos, the Cayambes, the Saraguros, and so on, each with the same weight as the various Amazonian nationalities.) Thus CONAIE, through often heated internal debate and negotiations, has succeeded in arriving at a unit of indigenous representation that can encompass groups from different areas with different concerns, through its adoption of the organizing concept of nationality. Given the direct participation of Indian leaders in the popularly elected 1997 Constituent Assembly that wrote the new constitution, Ecuador's constitution itself now recognizes and institutionalizes the rights of the Indian nationalities and peoples of Ecuador. Lucero, in his thorough-going comparison of Indian movements in Ecuador and Bolivia, determines that the focus on ethnicity, in the form of nationality, has allowed the Ecuadorian movement to develop a structure that can encompass all regions (unlike the much more fragmented movements in Bolivia), and thus has strengthened it considerably.

A focus on nationality—on ethnicity rather than class—has allowed the Ecuadorian movement to navigate potentially divisive internal differences and to draw on international support. Their growing strength then allows them to negotiate more successfully to protect resources and livelihoods. One example is the success encountered in the mid-1990s in securing title to territories in the Amazon for indigenous nationalities. Another is the achievements of the 1994 negotiations over the Agrarian Law. And another comes in the highly paradoxical image of Nina Pacari, one of the important critics of economic globalization and structural adjustment in Ecuador, poised in 2003 to engage in direct negotiations of the external debt in her role as Ecuador's Foreign Minister. While in the end the alliance of the Indian movement with President Gutiérrez did not survive the realities of his first year of government (leaving the movement again in an oppositional role where it frankly seems most comfortable), again I emphasize the high level of influence the Indian movement has achieved, and that it is using to press for more inclusive economic policies for Indians and the Ecuadorian poor in general.

Conclusions

Current processes in Ecuador must be analysed in the context of changing forms of national incorporation over time, which themselves have been forged through the intersection of global processes—both changing market conditions and more recently, changing development discourses—and specific local histories of social relations. This requires examining the "internalization of the external," as local elite and subordinate groups respond in various ways to the restructuring of local

possibilities due to global changes. The latter did not determine events within Ecuador, but did change the terrain—the structures of opportunity—on which local struggles have been carried out. In this article an effort has been made to move between elite projects and the ways in which subaltern groups responded to them. In addition, attention has been paid to the unexpected consequences of elite projects: the current situation is the result of what indigenous groups have made of various elite and state projects over the last century, which provided them with some of the political resources to deal with threats to livelihood today. In Ecuador, the fact that there was a relatively inclusive (in comparison with many other Latin American countries), although heavily paternalistic model of national incorporation, allowed the formation of spaces that could be used for the promotion of subaltern projects, within certain limits. It is in this sense that we can conclude that a hegemonic process has been successful, to the extent that it channels conflict within the bounds of civil society, which it has done by at least partially accommodating certain subaltern projects. The material presented in this article can also be read as a series of struggles over competing definitions of modernity, as Indians have incorporated some elements of elite and state discourse into their own political struggles, often stretching their meanings. However, a shared but contested language—a language of contention—clearly does not imply that there is an absence of contestation from subordinate groups over the form that national incorporation should take.

During the liberal period, Ecuadorian Indians used new legislation and channels of communication with the state to resolve some of their most immediate, everyday problems, such as abuses by local officials in regard to labour issues. This was enabled largely by the specific forms taken by conflict between the two dominant social groups. Then, in the 1930s and 1940s, with the onset of the World Depression, certain industrial elites began to argue that at least one way the economic crisis could be dealt was through undertaking policies that would increase indigenous consumption. Clearly, if there was a project of national incorporation in that period, it was very much tied to elite interests. During the crisis of the 1930s, elites had a national project to which indigenous peasants responded in various ways (Clark 1998b), but which did not originate with them. Indeed the struggles in which indigenous peasants engaged, in conjunction with socialist and communist labour organizers, focussed on local issues such as wages and access to land. Only recently has the indigenous movement directly engaged national and global processes. In part this comes as a response to the effects of globalization on their communities, including the economic crisis in general, structural adjustment policies, and the promotion by international financial agencies of non-traditional agricultural exports, which often generate conflicts with peasants. Nonetheless it is even more important to recognize how the paternalistic forms of incorporation over time in Ecuador, focussing on education and new channels of communication between Indians and the state—especially since the 1970s, but clearly based on earlier processes—have allowed for the gradual generation of public intellectuals among Ecuadorian Indians. It is in this sense that the Indian movement of today must be seen as the product of the ongoing rearrangements of social forces in Ecuador over at least the last century.

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Notes

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2 I use the term hegemonic here in the political sense emphasized by Gramsci (1971: 44-120), indicating the importance of both *leading* and *dominating*. CONAIE has clearly succeeded in leading Indians and their local organizations from many areas of the country, by including their projects in its own, but no less importantly it has succeeded in dominating some of the alternative organizations, such as the evangelical indigenous federation. Space limitations prevent a more detailed discussion of this issue, but see Lucero 2002 for an interesting analysis.

3 By class projects I mean the ways that social actors come together to pursue projects rooted in livelihood and production issues, which have been some of the most important sites and forms of mobilization and contention over the last century (and indeed, longer).

4 This section draws on arguments presented at greater length in Clark 1998c: chapter 4.

5 There were forms of extra-economic coercion—rather than strictly market forces—through which labourers were tied

to coastal plantations as well, but the important point here is that the liberal state *represented itself* as a source of new freedoms and as promoting the "natural" functioning of market forces so that labour could flow to areas where better wages were paid.

6 In governor of Chimborazo province to the political administrator of Alausí, Riobamba, Nov. 13, 1913, Archivo de la Jefatura Política de Alausí (AJPA).

7 In governor of Chimborazo province to the political administrator of Alausí, Riobamba, Nov. 10, 1914, AJPA.

8 This section draws on some of the material presented in Clark 1998a and 1998b.

9 To say that there was a shift in priorities towards production for the internal market is not to say that no production occurred for the external market: indeed, sugar and rice export production expanded on the coast in this era. Nonetheless, it is fair to say that the balance between the efforts devoted to production for the internal versus the external market shifted in these years, in the context of changing global market conditions.

10 In Subsecretario del Ministerio de Previsión Social y Trabajo to Director de la Junta Central de Asistencia Pública, Quito, Jan. 29, 1943, Archivo de la Asistencia Pública/Museo Nacional de Medicina (AAP/MNM), Libro de Comunicaciones Recibidas (LCR) 1943-I h. 679-681.

11 Petition from the Indians of Pucará to the Ministro de Previsión Social, Quito, Feb. 2, 1943, AAP/MNM LCR 1943-I h. 707.

12 This section draws on part of the argument presented in Clark 1997a, as well as on a large literature on the indigenous movement, including: CEDIME 1993, Cornejo 1991, Field 1991, Guerrero 1995, León Trujillo 1994, Lucero 2002, Pacari 1996, Pallares 2002 and Zamosc 1994.

13 The following paragraph draws extensively on the analysis presented by Lucero 2002.

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