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# Fighting Back: Indigenous Mobilization in the Ecuadorian, Peruvian and Brazilian Amazon

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# Fighting Back:

# Indigenous Mobilization in the Ecuadorian, Peruvian and Brazilian Amazon

by

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## Abstract

Progress, as defined by this thesis, is the continuing placement of profits over human beings. The pursuit of progress in Latin America has its roots in the colonial age when elites created a hierarchical system that served only their own interest and marginalized other members of their populations. Progress is particularly negative for indigenous people in the Amazonian region who find themselves giving up their land, resources and in turn their traditional lifestyles for the benefits of outsiders.

This framework has manifested itself in several examples: oil exploration and exploitation in Ecuador and Peru, rubber in Brazil and later hydroelectric dams. However, indigenous people have risen up and created multi-faceted movements in response to these challenges. This thesis investigates the formation of indigenous social and political movements from the 1980s onwards in the Amazon regions of Ecuador, Peru and Brazil. In particular, the linkages between indigenous movements, international NGOs and international media have been investigated.

The information gathered in this thesis is comprised of interviews in indigenous communities in Ecuador and Peru, indigenous political organizations in Lima, Peru and other secondary research materials. The general conclusion is of the lasting importance of indigenous social movements based in the Amazon and the significance of their goal to create a larger, transnational based movement.

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION: THE DARKER SIDE OF DEVELOPMENT

This thesis is an investigation of the ways that indigenous peoples have responded to the detrimental effects of progress in three different Latin American nations: Ecuador, Peru and Brazil. This Latin American model of progress can be traced back to the economic trends of the 1850s in which Latin American elites saw the export possibilities of Latin America and began exploiting resources in large numbers to achieve the technological advances their newly developing consumer culture desired. As John Chasteen states, this was just another form of colonialism, a new form of control by the elites over the marginalized sectors: "Progress (with a capital P) was the great theme of the West during the nineteenth century...Here was a new hegemonic idea to replace the old colonial version."[1] The period from 1850-1875 saw sweeping political and economic changes that emphasized progress. Progress meant greater consumption, and the money fueling it came from the Latin American export boom. In order to understand neoliberalism, it is useful to use this period of exportation and progress in the 19th century as a model especially because the mindset of Latin American elites has remained the same. Neoliberalism, which I argue is a continuation of this model of economic progress, as defined by Chasteen was widely established in Latin America in the 1980s as the most prominent economic model. It consists of structural adjustments forced upon Latin American countries by the International Monetary Fund. These adjustments always include widespread privatization, selling state-owned industries, reducing state spending in social sectors like welfare, courting foreign investors and aggressive exploitation of primary resources.[2] This thesis will use the term progress and economic development to encompass the changes in politics, economies and public

[1] Chasteen 2001: 151.
[2] Chasteen 2004: 302.

attitudes that result from neoliberalism. This thesis will concentrate on the effects of progress and the neoliberal economic model on indigenous people and the movements that they have formed in response.

Economic development has continually spelled the eventual demise of these particular indigenous populations; they are forced to transition from economic sustainability to a disenfranchised cultural community. One of the fundamental results of neoliberalism and other earlier forms of economic progress is an exponential increase in the demands for natural resources, which are commonly found within the vast Amazonian rainforest or in mountainous highland areas in Latin America. This resource depletion of the Amazon rainforest is the real reason for the invasion of indigenous territories and causes the disappearance of indigenous peoples. Examples of these invasions for natural resources, in the name of progress, will be demonstrated in each country study: oil in Peru and Ecuador, rubber and hydroelectricity in Brazil; the Amazon is pressed to meet the increasing global demand of unconstrained consumption and consumer culture. Indigenous people and their community suffer economically and socially for this global consumption with their land, lives and traditional cultures. This modern-day depletion of indigenous resources has significant parallels with the colonial history of these marginalized indigenous groups

In the case of these three countries, the national governments of each country do tend to demonstrate intentions to protect indigenous land and people through established laws but in practice government actions are the exact opposite. Despite sometimes lofty intentions of protecting indigenous people, governments often participate in and encourage exploiting natural resources. As John Bodley states: “In case after case government programs for the progress of indigenous peoples directly or indirectly force culture change and these programs in turn are

linked invariably to the extraction of indigenous peoples' resources to benefit the national economy."[3] In each of these three case studies, governments have consistently chosen to support privatizing industries and allowing unregulated use of natural resources and see this as positive shifts in society and as such view the indigenous peoples as obstacles to this development. In Peru, this conflict within societies between the indigenous and governments dedicated to progress manifested itself in Bagua, where indigenous peoples were attacked violently for peacefully protesting a law that would allow oil prospecting within their Amazonian territory. In Brazil, President Lula has begun building the Belo Monte dam, invading protected indigenous lands and re-routing important river systems. In Ecuador, oil companies have been allowed access to traditionally indigenous owned lands at the invitation of the government; despite ongoing resistance from indigenous groups who depend on the land's resources for their own livelihood. In all three cases, indigenous groups find themselves facing a neoliberal structure that exploits their resources in a way that is reminiscent of colonial times and could even be referred to as neocolonialism because of their heavy dependence on outside forces. Coining the current Latin American experience as neocolonialism critiques the involvement of foreign companies in Latin American former colonies by creating a parallel between these foreign investors and the colonial, imperialist, powers that held the power in the centuries prior to Latin American independence.[4]

Indigenous peoples across the world have a natural and fundamental difference with the global emphasis on individual development and individual progress. The indigenous people have a foundation in communalism which is central to their daily way of life and way of being and which resonates in the literature from South America: "We are Indians because we believe that

[3] Bodley 1982: 33.
[4] Chasteen 2001: 248.

the things of the world are made for everyone. It is like saying that since we are all equal, the means of living should also be equal..." [5] This demonstrates an economic egalitarianism at the core of indigenous peoples belief system leads to the inherent conflict that exists between themselves and the exploitative and neocolonial economic model that is favored and adopted across the globe. Indigenous peoples in these three countries and across the globe are fighting to continue to subsist in this egalitarian, communal manner one in which I argue sustains their cultural heritage and communal well-being while respecting the natural resources that surround their communities. Indigenous movements are the medium utilized in their effort to maintain a hold on their traditional lifestyles and keep living their long-standing beliefs. In this thesis, indigenous political movements are social movements that specifically challenge the assumptions of the dominant culture under a self-defined indigenous identity.

Processes of racialization, which are defined by Juanita Sundberg as portraying indigenous people as simple, without education and suitable only for labor is an implication of race-based legal and social exclusion which plays a role across Latin America in social, economic and environmental relations between indigenous groups (as well as other groups considered racially inferior) and the elite (whiter) groups. In the case of Amazonian indigenous groups this racialization plays its most significant role in environmental justice issues, which Sundberg sees as issues of equal access to resources, heightened exposure to environmental hazards and lack of access to environmental benefits like clean water and fertile soil. Indigenous groups experience cases of environmental *injustice* disproportionately more than other groups, making it a racialized issue.[6] One significant example is the high levels of oil spills that Chevron left during their oil explorations in the Ecuadorian Amazon from 1964-1990, where high levels

[5] Maldonado, et al. 2010: 42-62.
[6] Sundberg 2008: 26-39.

of environmental degradation were ignored because they took place in indigenous populated areas.

I also argue that this process of racialization also plays a role in formulating public attitudes towards indigenous peoples. I argue that the formulation of attitudes that consider indigenous people "simple" or "backwards" has influenced government policy and public opinion favoring acculturation of indigenous groups, for the benefit of these indigenous peoples themselves. As defined by Fernando Ortiz, acculturation is a cultural process in which one culture experiences a complete loss of their culture and the acquisition of a new one.[7] There is no sharing or transference of cultural attributes between the two. It is a complete and total loss. Bodley points out the economic consequences of such a change for Amazonian indigenous peoples. Acculturation is a policy that aims to "...destroy small-scale economies and to carefully channel their conversion into the market-oriented economy."[8] The loss is of small, subsistence style economies who then are completely replaced by a market economy. Ortiz also created a definition of the concept of transculturation, which rather then the complete destruction one finds in the process of acculturation, is a "give and take" relationship. It goes beyond the mere acquisition of new cultural norms, but rather is the creation of new combined cultural attributes.[9] Ortiz expresses this process in the form of an analogy: "...in any embrace between cultures there occurs the same as in individuals' genetic reproduction: the offspring always has something of both progenitors, but is also always distinct from each of them."[10] A culture that has undergone transculturation is different from its previous self, but consists of both new and old attributes.

[7] Hernández, et al. 2005: 219.
[8] Bodley 1982:111.
[9] Hernández et al 2005:219
[10] Ortiz 1987: 96-97.

This transformation of indigenous economies began in the colonial period with pressure on native populations for their labor and resources. Such a change introduced wage labor and production and the dispossession of resource and lands. According to Burns, the nineteenth century in Latin America was characterized by the contrasting goals of modernization and elites on one side and indigenous people on the other. This period was post-Spanish independence and the first opportunity for Latin American elites to impose their control over national identities. The result was growing control over indigenous cultures as the dependence on exports grew rapidly.[11] From 1900 to 1945 was a period of stable authoritarian regimes that fall under the neocolonialist category of growing foreign influence over Latin American governments.[12] However it was not until post-World War II that indigenous economies were subject to sweeping internal economic changes. This was a period of intensified pressure for rapid economic growth throughout the world. In the midst of this global campaign for macroeconomic growth, indigenous peoples along with other sectors of society were seen as obstacles or enemies to progress even by Marxists and populist governments.[13]

Economic changes that push indigenous people to join the market-oriented economy, or to begin to depend on importing consumer goods are resisted by indigenous groups who desire to continue their subsistence style economies and as a result hold on to their traditional cultures. Such drastic changes to their economic ways of life would result in huge shifts in their general lifestyles and undermine their ability to sustain their communities. As a result, governments commonly use different forms of pressure, some more forceful then others, to hasten this transformation. "...[Indigenous peoples'] participation in the world-market economy has often been brought about by government supported compulsion, persuasion and deliberately altered

[11] Burns 1983: 7.
[12] Chasteen 2001: 191-200.
[13] Silva 2009.

circumstances."[14] This government involvement in indigenous peoples' economic shifts is an example that is found both in historical circumstances as well as in more modern day struggles.

This economic shift may be more beneficial to populations outside of the indigenous community as products and profit benefit corporations, mass populations and governments while the inexpensive labor and natural resources are provided by indigenous people, often at a cost detrimental to the groups involved.[15] Another result of increased government influence on these indigenous groups and their subsequent shift to a more capitalist economy is also illustrated in serious environmental injustice that specifically affects indigenous people.[16] Before the Spanish invasion of Latin America, indigenous peoples created a balance with nature. They utilized what they needed to survive, but without seriously eliminating resources for the future. The lowland indigenous groups depend heavily on carefully and intelligently planned consumption of their resources characterized by an in-depth knowledge and respect of their forest habitat. They depend on their ability to not exhaust their natural resources and acknowledge the crucial necessity to continue their careful balance with nature for the well-being of future generations: Anthropologist Beatriz Huertas Castillo believes the continuing existence of highly diverse rainforest habitats demonstrates the indigenous dedication to resource conservation: "The fact that this rationale is passed on from generation to generation is reflected in the high population and biodiversity of wildlife existing in the area..."[17] Western values of consumption and economic progress which encroach upon a geographic area present a threat to this way of life. Depleting the resources of the rainforest will result in not only destruction of the environment

[14] Bodley 1982: 112.
[15] Gray 2010: 41-50.
[16] Sundberg 2008: 26.
[17] Castillo 2004: 64.

but also to the eventual demise of these groups who specifically depend on biodiversity.[18] Establishing private property robs indigenous people of this crucial balance with nature. As Vandana Shiva writes, "The creation of private property...was defined on the basis of removing resources from nature and mixing them with labor...Terra Madre was transformed into terra nullis, an empty earth to be carved out as private property by cowboy capitalists."[19]

However, it must be recognized that it is not impossible for indigenous people to change or even to voluntarily choose to participate partially or fully in export-driven capitalist development as long as they can control the production in a way they are not exploited nor are their resources depleted entirely for the benefit of others. National governments often assert that all indigenous people will not change unless forced and are always obstacles to modernization and development. In reality, some indigenous groups accept a role in the export-driven system that can be actually sustainable and is in some cases beneficial to their communities. Two examples of indigenous communities making acceptable and sustaining changes in production of raw materials for the capitalist system while still retaining control of their lands, labor and traditional ways of life are indigenous coffee growers in 19th century El Salvador as well as Altiplano wool producers in southern Peru in the late 19th century. In the case of El Salvador according to studies by Aldo Lauria-Santiago, coffee production exploded in El Salvador during the 1860s onward. What is unique about this case, was that land in rural El Salvador coffee-producing areas was largely owned by indigenous groups who raised coffee as a way of making considerable profits. One example given is the town of Tepecoyo where "...Indian peasants controlled 4,500 hectares of *ejidos* and community lands..."[20] This was the case throughout the region where there were few large farms and considerably more small holdings of coffee

[18] Huertas 2004: 64.
[19] Shiva 2006: 45.
[20] Lauria-Santiago 1999: 144.

producing land. The two groups coexisted peacefully in the area.The result was the continuation of indigenous communal land ownership, small levels of indigenous exploitation for labor and an increase in earnings for relatively impoverished communities.[21]

A similar model can be seen in the altiplano region of southern Peru where wool production has remained largely small-scaled and indigenous based, rather then being controlled by large-scale land ownerships. Wool production in the 20th century was dominated by independent Andean peasantry. In the highland regions of Cuzco, Arequipa and Puno, a vast proportion of wool remained within indigenous commercial circuits and even the wool circumvented towards the export market was largely produced by these indigenous communities and were independent of the large hacienda systems.[22] These two models reveal that sustainable, raw material based development is possible within indigenous communities, without the typical exploitation. Indigenous peoples do see worldwide demand of their products be it coffee or wool, and answer that demand, choosing to play a role in an export-driven model. However, it is only possible to avoid exploitation of their land, and of themselves, by keeping the exportation under their own control and focus on sustainably extracting and producing these resources. The Amazonian communities studied in this thesis will incorporate sustainable development into their goals as a political movement and these two examples form the model which these communities strive towards.

Indigenous peoples' involvement in the current, exploitative, economic system has been so negative because the demand for their natural resources has grown exponentially leading to the ultimate destruction of the environment. The delicate balance of nature within the rain forests is an issue that is directly related to the survival of indigenous peoples and the continuation of

[21] Lauria-Santiago 1999: 138-150.
[22] Cárdenas, et al. 2001: 159.

their traditional lifestyles. Therefore the indigenous political movement has in many cases been carefully tied to environmental causes dealing with their geographic areas, even though according to Sundberg evidence proven in some areas of Latin America they have been "...left out of decision making circles because of local and national level systems of racial exclusion."[23] Similar to environmental activists, indigenous groups realize the importance of conservation for the world's survival and that the harvesting of natural resources is moving too quickly. Indigenous activists warn against over-exploitation: "There can be no economic interest superior to the necessity of preserving the ecosystem; we do not want a bonanza today at the cost of a desolate future"[24] The indigenous peoples and the modern environmental movement share similar goals as well as some similar forms of organizing against governments and corporations who aim to force this economic shift within the Amazon rainforest that negatively effects not only the environmental balance but also indigenous peoples' traditional livelihoods.

The main similarity in all three country cases is that the indigenous peoples in Peru, Brazil and Ecuador all struggle to fight back against these obstacles and they all face historic marginalization. They lack the ability to defend their collective voice against the traditionally dominant sectors of the hierarchical society present in all three cases. "Indigenous people have been the victims of societal and institutional racism since colonial times and the denial of their rights as distinct cultures is largely responsible for the appalling state of affairs that currently exists."[25] As a result, the indigenous peoples do not have the channels with which to voice their political demands because the existing power structure, existent since colonial times, dominates as well as belittles their voice. However, indigenous peoples are beginning to overcome these setbacks as they work to form unified political groups.

[23] Sundberg 2008: 42.
[24] Carduño 1980:103-129.
[25] Power 2008: 34.

Indigenous groups in contemporary times are fighting against a spectrum of forces that are greater in power then just traditional historical and structural discrimination. Globalization has directly resulted in a larger looting of natural resources found in the Amazon, especially the petroleum that often fuels increased development. More importantly, governments in more modern times have been forced to favor private corporations over their indigenous populations because of economic greed. Development has directly led to increased exploitation of natural resources to fit into the new world economic model and benefitting only a few who are outsiders or foreigners. Therefore, indigenous peoples have to work against the traditional power structures which are exacerbated by these new factors of globalization and development. "In the face of this, indigenous peoples ask why it is always necessary to privilege profits over life, to defend the rights of corporations and not the rights of Mother Earth, and to treat nature as a resource for the taking."[26] These questions have formed the basis of indigenous mobilization throughout the Amazon region.

Although indigenous peoples are facing a variety of unfamiliar obstacles they have formed movements in which they have a collective voice to use in their effort to fight back against exploitation. The indigenous peoples are far from passive victims and demonstrated their strength during the 1970s by forming political organizations in their effort to represent their concerns. "The emergence and performance of indigenous parties indicate the political and organizational maturity of a population that had been excluded from politics or unable to overcome the efforts of non indigenous elites to dominate and manipulate its political behavior."[27] The goal of such organizations in the late 1990s, when they were truly beginning to form strong political organizations on a national level, was to reform the relationship between

[26] NACLA 2010.
[27] Rice and Van Cott 2006: 710.

indigenous peoples and the governments in their prospective countries. Previous to the 1990s the lack of political voice amongst these communities had seriously pushed back their ability to accomplish change. The tides have turned however, and unity amongst indigenous people has made their social movement one of the most crucial foes against capitalist policy norms since at least 1986.[28] "Far from fitting their stereotype as inhabitants of a region of banana republics and idealistic utopias, the peoples of South America have risen up and now stand together." [29] This demonstrates the new and developing unity and strength that has become a reoccurring theme within the indigenous mobilization; unity provides social movements with a collective voice which is empowering. In Ecuador we see Andean and Amazonian indigenous groups continually join together to demonstrate solidarity and strengthen their movements.[30] In contrast to the past where the indigenous efforts to mobilize were more fractured, contemporary movements are finding a new strength via a unified political message.

Indigenous peoples began creating localized groups in the 1980s with horizontal structuring in order to not only voice their demands but to empower their collective voice. "Today indigenous peoples are designing political structures that permit the consolidation of a power base to successfully confront states without sacrificing their egalitarian and communal characteristics."[31] These local groups are represented nationally by umbrella groups that incorporate and include all indigenous peoples by region. AIDESEP in Peru (Interethnic Peruvian Jungle Association) which was founded in 1984 and CONAIE in Ecuador (Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador) which was founded in 1986 are two of

[28] I choose the date 1986 to represent the movement of strong indigenous regional organizing because it was the year that CONAIE was founded in Ecuador and I consider CONAIE to be the best example of strong political organizing with an indigenous agenda.
[29] Guardiola-Rivera 2010: 3.
[30] Sawyer 1997: 59-70.
[31] Bodley 1982: 65.

the strongest examples of groups utilizing this umbrella structure. These national organizations have reached critical levels of success, particularly in bringing crucial indigenous struggles to the attention and notice of worldwide, international media groups. In each country case international solidarity groups have become increasingly aware, involved and sympathetic to the struggles.

The discussion above points to three main similarities between the indigenous movements of Ecuador, Peru and Brazil and, arguably, the social movements within these three Latin American countries also have vast global implications and significance. These similarities such as the struggle over indigenous land ownership, environmental degradation on the part of private companies and non-hierarchal structure within the indigenous organizations themselves will become clearer as the cases are more specifically discussed, but most common are the indigenous peoples' relationship to ownership, particularly in terms of land. Land ownership in the indigenous community is considered communal, not individual and land is not seen as a commodity. Rather, land that is traditionally occupied by their ancestors are considered a part of the entire community and utilized for subsistence purposes but land and its resources within are not viewed as a commodity perse, but one of communal sustainability.[32] In addition, the modern day environmental movement is closely tied with Amazonian indigenous mobilization. Environmental degradation is a theme that affects both of these causes especially in cases of deforestation, oil spills and pollution by invading companies. Unproductive indigenous land has always been under attack from the political elite but when viewed as obstacles to progress, indigenous values were frequently sacrificed. Lastly, indigenous organizations don't always utilize hierarchal organizational structures but they are instead more egalitarian.

This thesis focuses on indigenous social movements that are located in the lowland Amazon regions of Brazil, Peru and Ecuador. I argue that these movements are providing an

[32] Maldonado, et al. 2010: 87-89.

alternative to the dominant cultural, societal, political and economic accepted norms. The indigenous alternative is centered around the uniqueness of the indigenous experience and traditional aspects of their culture. Also the movements are grounded in the historical experience of these indigenous groups and significant parallels can be found between their current exploitation and the marginalization that has occurred since colonial times. This thesis will analyze the specific historic experiences of the indigenous groups as a way to provide a foundation for their continuing experience of marginalization by larger national society. Another important reocurring theme is neoliberalism. I argue that the implementation of neoliberal economic policies in each of the three countries directly resulted in increased marginalization of indigenous populations because it led to increasing encroachments upon indigenous territory and exploitation of their primary natural resources. Neoliberal policies leading to environmental degradation can be seen in specific examples in each country: oil spills in Ecuador and Peru as well as hydroelectric dams and soy farming in Brazil. In these cases, these neoliberal policies and resulting environmental degradation and territorial invasion have been the rallying causes for post-1990 indigenous organizing. These examples have provided indigenous organizers the chance to create political organizations and a social movement that is uniquely indigenous. The most important component of indigenous organizing is the *linkages* that have occurred. Local indigenous activists are increasingly working with national and international NGOs, as well as international media outlets, to raise public awareness about indigenous causes and issues. The result is a multi-faceted, far-reaching indigenous movement that is increasingly using and finding more inclusion in the larger, transnational community to counteract the short comings of an exclusive, progress-oriented, nation-state.

# CHAPTER 2

# PROTEST AND POWER:
# NATIONAL LEVEL ORGANIZATION IN THE ECUADORIAN AMAZON

## Introduction

The Ecuadorian Amazonian movement provides scholars with a successful model for other related political movements in the region. Its tightly unified direct action methods have influenced national level legislation which has resulted in positive changes for the indigenous people. The indigenous movement has achieved the recognition of Ecuador as a plurinational state and has even won a lawsuit against Chevron over oil spills. This chapter is an investigation of the development of Ecuador and its relationship with the indigenous population and the history of their consolidation as a political force in the country. The chapter opens with a breakdown of the different language and ethnic groups in the Ecuadorian Amazon in order to adequately define the multitude of groups that are involved in the Ecuadorian Amazonian movement. This is followed by an investigation of how oil exploration works as a destructive force for the Amazonian indigenous groups. The environmental degradation and the entrance of corporations into indigenous territory by oil companies directly led to a strengthening of the Ecuadorian Amazonian political movement as well as some of the most successful social action and examples of national-level of organizing and protests. The chapter closes with a specific look into the Secoya community in San Pablo, one of the areas most impacted by oil spills and a community that has participated in the noteworthy lawsuit between indigenous people and the

Chevron corporation. This chapter as a whole is an example of a positive impact made by indigenous people, and a successful change they have made on their role in Ecuadorian society.

**Ecuador: Its Land and People**

The Ecuadorian indigenous population is nearly 1.5 million people which is approximately ten percent of the total population; although a great majority (80%) of Ecuadorians are of mixed heritage with indigenous ancestry known as "mestizos" or "cholos."[33] The facts of the Ecuadorian population reveal without doubt that it is not a homogenous population, but is in fact a highly plurinational state. The following chart reveals the language and ethnic groups of the Ecuadorian indigenous population and includes the population counts of people in each group to help illustrate their plurality:

**Table 1: Indigenous Peoples in Ecuador** [34]

| Indigenous Group | Population | Linguistic Family |
|---|---|---|
| 1) Awa-Kwaiker | 1,600 | Barbakoan |
| 2) Achuala | 2,000 | Hivaroan |
| 3) Andoa | 6 | Saparoan |
| 4) Epera | 150 | Unclassified |
| 5) Kayapa | 4,000 | Paesan |
| 6) Kichua Chiborazo | 1,000,000 | Kechuan |
| 7) Kichua Imbabura (Otavalo) | 300,000 | Kechuan |
| 8) Kichua Inga | 10,000 | Kechuan |
| 9) Kichua Kanelo | 10,000 | Kechuan |
| 10) Kichua Kanyar | 40,000 | Kechuan |
| 11) Kichua Napo | 5,000 | Kechuan |
| 12) Kichua Pichincha | 7,000 | Kechuan |
| 13) Kichua Salasaca | 8,000 | Kechuan |
| 14) Kichua Saraguro | 18,000 | Kechuan |
| 15) Kofán | 600 | Unclassified |
| 16) Shuara | 31,500 | Hivaroan |
| 17) Siona-Secoya | 350 | Tukanoan |
| 18) Tsatchela (Colorado) | 2,000 | Barbakoan |
| 19) Wao (Waadani, Auca) +1 | 1,300 | Sabela |

[33] Lizarralde 2010.
[34] Lizarralde 2010.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 20) Zapara | 200 | Zaparoan |
| Total | 1,441,706 | |

The above table demonstrates the great diversity that exists in Ecuador, as well as the large number of indigenous people that live in both the highland regions (Kichua identity) and the lowland Amazonian region. These numbers represent that Ecuador is not a nation-state with a homogenous identity but rather one that should be recognized as plurinational, as the indigenous movement demands.

**The History of Oil Development**

Oil was discovered in the Amazon region of Ecuador in 1967 by a Texaco branch company; the discovery launched an oil boom in Ecuador.[35] Five years after its discovery, oil was flowing through a privately owned pipeline through former virgin rainforest to the Ecuadorian coast. From there it was shipped off to consumers in the United States, along with almost all of the profits.

Ecuador's way to capitalize on these escaping profits was to eventually nationalize the oil industry. The state slowly took over Texaco's shares until it established PetroEcuador in 1990, a state-owned sector of the oil industry. This transfer of ownership coincided with the region-wide adoption of import substitution industrialization (ISI) in Latin America. ISI was a replacement of the export oriented growth that was Latin America's development policy prior to the 1960s, when ISI was largely adopted across the region. This policy shift refocused the government to emphasize domestic industrialization and to lessen dependency on exportation of non-manufactured goods.[36]

[35] Sawyer 1996.
[36] Silva 2009.

In the midst of this economic shift in the 1960s and 70s oil remained for Ecuador the answer to increased economic development. "Those who directed Ecuador saw oil as an opportunity to modernize, a means to escape both underdevelopment and poverty and a way to build a dynamic, developed and industrialized economy."[37] The period of ISI went hand in hand with national populism, a trend that occurred throughout Latin America. Populism is defined by increasing social programs, and in the case of Ecuador was funded entirely by oil profits. "...[B]uilding national populism in Ecuador was largely the work of military governments in the 1960s and 1970s when Amazonian oil gave the state revenue and relative autonomy from coastal agricultural export elites."[38] During this period, oil profits drove the social services and national populism of Ecuador. Throughout its history oil has played a larger and larger role in funding as well as guiding Ecuador's national politics and policy. An oil export driven economic model and high levels of external debt continued after Ecuador's return to democratic governments in the 1980s and played a role in resource-driven border conflicts with Peru over gold and oil in 1980 and 1995.

Like the rest of Latin America, Ecuador experienced a recession in the 1990s that was directly related to the recently developed economic dependency on oil. Ecuador was first offered cheap credit to fund infrastructure, industrialization and further oil drilling by oil-rich banks searching for investments.[39] Oil prices fell, forcing Ecuador to furiously scramble to produce more, in order to respond to the country's mounting foreign debt. Their exploration actions tripled during this period resulting in the establishment of many new oil fields within the Amazon territory. "With a total foreign debt reaching US$ 16.5 billion...the government found it

[37] Gerlach 2003: 37.
[38] Silva 2009:149.
[39] Sawyer 2004.

difficult to resist the short term incentive of continuing to develop new oil fields..."[40] This development of new drilling continued despite acknowledgements of the negative environmental effects of oil fields. This increase in resource exploitation continued as a result of neoliberal changes in Ecuador's economy that were demanded by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The first agreements that Ecuador signed with the IMF were in 1983 and have continued almost every subsequent year.[41] Similar to its Latin American neighbors, Ecuador was promised substantial financial assistance from the IMF if it promised to adopt certain "...structural adjustment policies that demand indiscriminate privatization, orienting economies toward exports, removing labor protections and cutting government spending among other policies."[42] These neoliberal economic changes which had begun in 1982 with the collapse of national populism and were intensified from 1992-1996, occurred across the board in Ecuador, but they were especially prevalent in developing the oil export economy as a privatized, highly unregulated industry and many of the profits went directly to the military which maintained a major presence in the oil rich Amazon region that also borders Peru.

The IMF has emphasized the continued development of the private oil sector as a requisite for granting loans to Ecuador, and therefore continued neoliberal policies beyond their initial implementation in the 1980s and 1990s. For example, in April 2000 the IMF established a precondition for their $300 million loan: "...Ecuador's agreement with the IMF required the Congress to pass an Economic Transformation Law that...allowed private companies to build and operate pipelines."[43] One such pipeline that was built within Yasuni territory as a result of this law has resulted in an increase of oil development that has encroached even more into their

[40] Rival 2010: 359.
[41] Silva 2009:152.
[42] Finer, and Huta 2005: 30.
[43] Finer and Huta 2005.

traditional, ancestral land despite the land's designation as an established national protected area. The IMF played a major role in forcing the Ecuadorian state to allow international companies access to indigenous Amazonian territories, despite the known negative effects evident for indigenous peoples. It appears that the Ecuadorian state was willing to accept IMF loans despite the necessary sacrifice of indigenous lives, dignity and cultures; in a sense the Ecuadoran policy hurt the very people it purported to help.

The promise of funds from the IMF played a huge role in determining Ecuador's economic path since 1983, and has directly led to continued dependence on oil as the determining factor in whether or not Ecuador will develop. As dissidents began to more strongly voice concerns, an inherent conflict appeared. Widener directly acknowledges this conflict in Ecuadorian state economic policy, and recognizes the role of the IMF in creating this policy.

> At this time, Ecuadorian society was being pulled in two directions. One was a continued economic commitment to the anticipated benefit of oil production, endorsed by the International Monetary Fund given the nation's external debt of approximately US$18.9 billion in 2002. The alternative was economic diversification, economic and environmental sustainability, and a political commitment to higher educational, environmental, and health standards.[44]

These two different sides reveal the central issue with oil development in Ecuador, particularly after IMF encouragement of privatization and control of the economy from the 1980s onwards. The Ecuadorian government was forced to choose between a complete and total commitment to economic development and committing to their indigenous communities and surrounding cultures, both of which are negatively affected by oil development. External debt at such a catastrophic amount forced the government to steer the country towards economic development at any cost. In this case, the needs of

[44] Widener 2007: 90.

indigenous communities were deemed unimportant and inconsequential in comparison with the need to satisfy foreign oil companies and their demands. In choosing to accept IMF loans and conditions, the Ecuadorian state was alienating their indigenous communities by ignoring their demands. "By ignoring the havoc that privatization and austerity policies wreaked on indigenous peoples ... the state jeopardized what little credibility it had."[45] Adopting these policies while ignoring the detrimental effects the oil policy had on indigenous society made the state one of the discriminating forces against indigenous peoples; oil served as the catalyst for the civil disconnect between the government and the indigenous.[46]

The main problem caused by oil exploration is the negative environmental consequence of geographical degradation that is caused and how this impacts indigenous territorial sustainability. Additionally, because they the oil industry is made up largely of privatized companies, their primary focus is on profitability and as such they function without environmental supervision. The lack of social consciousness of the companies has resulted in extremely high levels of environmental destruction within the Ecuadorian Amazon:

> Operating in an essentially unregulated environment, oil companies dumped raw petrol, its by-products and processing fluids into the Amazonian river systems and clear-cut thousands of hectares of rain forest for roads and wells. In addition to the negative effects on the rainforest itself, such environmental degradation has impacted the health of the forest's inhabitants and threatened their cultural and physical survival by ruining traditional lands.[47]

[45] Sawyer 2004: 15.
[46] Sawyer 2004; Silva 2009.
[47] Egan 1996.

Oil exploration not only leads to environmental issues it also disrupts the lives of indigenous peoples who depend on the food and water sources that the Amazon provides them and is needed in order to continue their traditional lives of balance within the Amazon.

Oil and has re-written the last century of history of Ecuador's tumultuous economic and political experience. Similarly, oil played a large role in the rising external presence and influence in previously isolated Amazonian communities and eventually resulted in the formation of this political movement. They found oil exploration to be their most significant enemy but more importantly this enemy serves as the unifying force. Oil exploration became crucial for the indigenous movement for a variety of reasons. First, it was a common denominator in the indigenous experience. Almost all indigenous communities have found oil to become a part of their lives since its original discovery in Ecuador. Additionally, the negative effects of oil discovery have been almost identical in each community. Environmental degradation has been rampant including severe oil spills and has upset the equilibrium with nature that indigenous peoples have depended upon for centuries. Finally, oil discovery and its negative effects have resulted in unwanted changes in these Amazonian small scale communities. In the Huaroni community of Gareno located along an oil road for example, the introduction of oil exploration in their terrotory caused them to change their nutrition habits and become dependent on processed foods, abandon their subsistence lifestyle as well as semi-nomadic hunting patterns and expect the oil company to provide services and goods in exchange for access to their land.[48] It is against these changes brought upon them as a result of oil industry entering their domains that Amazonian political groups have rallied to fight against.

[48] Doughty 2010: 21.

Therefore, oil plays not only a destructive role in the communities but also serves as a unifying force within the movement because oil exploration is the common enemy.[49]

***Unity in the Diversity***

**Political Organizing within the Ecuadorian Amazon**

The loss of traditional ways of life, the encroachment of oil companies on indigenous land and environmental degradation threaten all Ecuadorian Amazonian communities. Ecuadorian indigenous peoples have a reason to fight; they are defending their land, their culture, their livelihood and their future. Organizing and fighting back against the oil political machine begins at the grassroots level, right inside of the very community that is directly impacted. Within indigenous communities in the Amazon people utilize a form of direct democracy similar to the *caracoles*, autonomous indigenous communities, of the Zapatista movement in southern Chiapas.[50] They are similar in that they have no hierarchal structure and decisions are made in a true democratic style. Decisions are made with each person's needs and demands weighed equally.[51]

Beyond a horizontal structure in local decision-making, the Ecuadorian indigenous movement is characterized by direct action methods such as protests, marches and sit-ins.[52] The Ecuadorian indigenous movement was first legitimized by its 1990 uprising, demonstrated uses of direct action. Beginning in 1995, indigenous communities are organized together in national-level political organizations such as Pachatutik that participate in dialogues with the Ecuadorian state and international corporations. Pachatutik is a national party established by CONAIE that

[49] Egan 1996; Sawyer 1996; Sawyer 2004.
[50] *Caracol* is the Spanish word meaning snail-shell. The Zapatistas use this word to refer to their autonomous communities in Southern Mexico because they see the spiral that is on a snail-shell to represent the revolutionary process: always moving two steps forward, one step back.
[51] Oropeza 2010: 27-38.
[52] Sawyer 2004.

has provided an alternative to the dominant political dialogue and allowed indigenous people in Ecuador to play increasing roles in national government and dialogue. The movement has continually incorporated modern techniques such as building relations with international solidarity groups, NGOs and media. Increasingly, "....the Ecuadorian peoples are harnessing the power of the US press. This kind of pressure, originating in the jungles of Ecuador but utilizing powerful advocates outside Latin America is a new kind of indigenous tactic for rights recognition."[53] This integration of traditional organization and protest with new tactics of utilizing the increasingly globalized world for their own benefit has resulted in a multi-faceted indigenous movement of alliances and solidarity. This movement of alliances and solidarity can be traced to the beginning of the 2000s with the increase in international outrage over free trade as well as a rise in concern over indigenous rights and protection.

As a response to the exploitation of their lands, Ecuadorian indigenous peoples have moved beyond local political organization and have successfully created regional as well as national umbrella political organizations that represent local interests in Quito and have expressed their demands in dialogues both with the Ecuadorian state and with transnational companies.

The main organization of the indigenous people of the Ecuadorian Amazon is CONAIE (Confederation of Ecuadorian Indigenous Nationalities), which is a national level political organization that represents all indigenous people. The indigenous people are united at a very local level depending heavily on family and community. Therefore, the foundation was set for them to begin to create regional organizations such as ECUARUNARI and CONFENIAIE which are the precursors to CONAIE which was founded in 1986. The main reasoning behind this organization was to further unify the movement. "We could see what united us and what

[53] Egan 1996: 124.

separated us. For example, languages separated us but the problems we shared united us: the lack of land, racial discrimination, lack of bilingual education and above all, the need to have our own voice."[54] The movement found unity in the similarity of the problems facing each indigenous community. This high level of unity within the movement has led directly to its high success in influencing politics at the national level.[55]

CONAIE focused on utilizing an extremely grassroots base in its struggle. Power within the organization is decentralized and consensus is reached collectively. CONAIE utilizes political "...methods that faithfully reflect our own manner of arriving at consensus. The base organizations make decisions and the leadership of CONAIE serves as an intermediary between those decisions and the actions taken."[56] This is another example of how CONAIE is using traditional aspects of indigenous communities in the political realm. Each community in the Amazon is focused on reaching consensus on important decisions and that has radiated out into the national political organizations they have formed. This decentralized structure has played a role in the success of the organization as a whole. "This capacity is facilitated by easily-accessed communication and collaboration between the decentralized grassroots base of the organization, located in small indigenous communities across the country and the elected leaders within the organization at regional and national levels."[57] Communication between the local levels and the national organization led to a highly cohesive and unified movement.

The main goal of CONAIE has consistently been to construct a plurinational state within Ecuador, involving the dialogue of different ethnic groups on a national political level and acknowledging that Ecuador does not have a homogenous identity politically, ethnically,

[54] CONAIE 1992 *http://conaie.nativeweb.org/conaie1.html.,* 12 January 2009.
[55] Egan 1996.
[56] CONAIE in Dangl 2005: 45.
[57] Dangl 2005:45.

linguistically nor culturally. Although the definition of a plurinational state is difficult to define perfectly in terms of how it would affect nation-wide identity, CONAIE has formed its movement around its own definition of a plurinational state: "A plurinational state is formed when the different nationalities agree on the same constitution and same governing. The plurinational society has to be distinguished from the present system of Ecuador in which the form of governing and the constitution are formed only by the dominating class."[58] CONAIE aims to shift the power structure existent in Ecuador. CONAIE and its indigenous members are fighting to change the hold that the dominant class has over the society and in the government in particular. CONAIE is working towards opening up the national political system to include alternate voices, such as the indigenous people. "CONAIE challenges the so-called uninational state in Ecuador based on Western political concepts, which benefits mainly white elite men. In its place, activists call for a multinational state that would give greater voice to a variety of ethnic groups and incorporate indigenous political culture as well as Western values."[59] The creation of a plurinational state is the recognition of the hierarchy existent in Ecuadorian society and breaking it down and building back a more plural equality in the government structure.

The most crucial success factor of Ecuadorian indigenous political mobilization has been its ability to work as a unified front. One example of this ability to work together is the early 1990's indigenous mobilization against ARCO.[60] An analysis of this case reveals important functions of the indigenous-state relationship of the Ecuadorian indigenous movement as well as several successful aspects of the movement. This specific mobilization is considered one of the most successful cases of indigenous mobilization across Latin America. It is a unique moment of unity and solidarity amongst the greater indigenous community both within Ecuador and

[58] CONAIE.1992. http://conaie.nativeweb.org/conaie11.html. 12 January 2009.
[59] O'Connor-2007: xiii.
[60] Sawyer 1996.

worldwide and offers an example for other indigenous movements to follow as a model. This movement "...was a crucial juncture in the process of indigenous nation building. Indian leaders crafted a platform from which to voice their claims by weaving international concerns of tropical conservation and indigenous rights together with local understandings of identity and place."[61] The inclusion of environmental concerns within their demands raised international concern for the movement and foreshadows increased international solidarity for the Amazonian cause. "...[S]everal factors have combined to strengthen the Indians' position: increased unity and organizational strength among the Indians; [and] the international focus on ecological destruction of the Amazon...."[62] Although it is true that this movement was not complete in its victories, the importance of the movement is its success in unifying local, national and international forces in the struggle and forcing the Ecuadorian state to recognize the Amazonian indigenous peoples' role as a political group within Ecuador.

The indigenous mobilization against ARCO involved marches, roadblocks and dialogue sessions among the government, indigenous groups and representatives of ARCO. The unified mobilization began because of indigenous outrage over ARCO occupation of indigenous communal territory in the Saracuyo region. Letters of protest that were ignored led to unsuccessful dialogue sessions which led to harsher social action such as roadblocks in the occupied area. Out of these different forms of social action, the most successful and notable was the 1992 march from the Amazon to Quito, Ecuador's capital city. The march symbolizes a variety of successful components of indigenous mobilization. First and foremost the marches carried out events that captured the attention of the Ecuadorian state and international media. Also, the march was a moment of unity among different indigenous groups throughout the

[61] Sawyer 1997.
[62] McManus 1992. http://abyayala.nativeweb.org/ecuador/quichua_am/apr92_11.html. 20 February 2009.

Amazonian region as well as between Andean and Amazonian peoples. With a collective and united voice, the indigenous peoples were able to create and deliver a stronger message.[63]

This unity was the most successful component of the march and has continued to be crucial for continuing mobilization on the part of Ecuadorian Amazonian peoples. "...[T]he march revived dormant lowland-highland alliances and momentarily exposed the possibilities for transforming race and ethnic relations within Ecuador."[64] Traveling throughout the country on their march to the capital, Amazonian groups found themselves in agreement with highland indigenous groups. These two populations in Ecuadorian society share a common story: a history of marginalization as well as of struggle and resistance. The march provided an opportunity to reestablish solidarity amongst the two indigenous groups of Ecuador. The demands that were central to the march remain what the indigenous people are fighting for today: "Through collective action, Indians sought to reconfigure the material, political and symbolic meanings of territory, nationhood and sovereignty in Ecuador. And indeed, the march succeeded in shifting the terms of debate around these concerns."[65] This march represents the beginnings of dialogue and effectively communicating needs and demands of the indigenous to the public, to the country and to the world; as the destruction of the Amazon for oil and profit is an issue of severe global consequence. The main action of this march was to draw attention to the indigenous cause and in this sense it was highly successful. The attention the march drew to the indigenous cause led to increased unity with indigenous groups from the Andes highlands and also resulted in dialogue with the national government regarding indigenous needs and demands.[66]

[63] McManus 1992; Sawyer 1997.
[64] Sawyer 1997:66.
[65] Sawyer 1994:30.
[66] McManus 1992; Sawyer 1997.

The concrete goals and demands of this march proved very ambitious: indigenous participants demanded a complete shift in the way in which the state governed by calling for active indigenous participation within the Ecuadorian government. This appeared problematic to the Ecuadorian state which traditionally operated by ignoring these groups and the inherent conflict they represented with economic progress. The Ecuadorian state tends to support economic development even when it conflicts with oppressed groups, sustaining state-wide inequality and "democracy" remained a loose term. When expressing their demands OPIP (The Indigenous Organization of Pastaza) stated: "No longer will we accept the audacious anti-democratic attitude of this government we've always been marginalized from, the creation of laws and now it's enough."[67] This statement outlines one of the central goals not only of the 1992 march but also the overall indigenous movement in Ecuador: true, participatory democracy. Indigenous peoples want to achieve a more democratic state through actual representation of the indigenous interest within the state.[68] The first step would be recognition of Ecuador as a plurinational, multicultural state without a homogenous national identity: "...[T]he indigenous goal was to transform the nature of the present power of the uni-national, hegemonic, exclusionary, anti-democratic and repressive state and construct a new humanistic, plurinational society."[69] The goal is not to abolish the state and reconstruct an entirely new system but to reconfigure and change the way of governing and to improve indigenous voice within the system. The indigenous movement of Ecuador is not moving towards an anti-state revolution it is only asking for a voice at the table. Ecuador is a state of different and rich cultures and ethnicities that are commonly ignored and marginalized by the government. The indigenous

[67] Sawyer 2004: 150.
[68] Ortiz 1997: 37.
[69] CONAIE in Sawyer 2004: 217.

movement wants recognition of their presence and importance of their culture established within the Ecuadorian government.[70]

In addition to recognition of their rights, the indigenous people mobilized in this march in order to retake their communal ownership of their ancestral lands. This demand is not new to the indigenous movement but rather land rights have always been a cornerstone of their demands. "Long-standing demands for legal recognition of these traditional Indian lands have been thwarted by a combination of military, governmental and agricultural interests. In the face of growing development pressures, the Indians say that their culture and way of life will be ever more threatened unless they achieve legal protection."[71] As Ecuador has demonstrated its continued commitment to development plans in the name of progress, this battle will continue as a central component of the indigenous movement.

Success has not come easily to the indigenous movement in the Ecuadorian Amazon. Organizations such as OPIP and CONAIE are indeed strong and gaining national recognition as important voices within the political system. However, exploitation of their lands continues and the struggle is far from over. A new page of the struggle is continually beginning, be it because of the rise of new and different challenges, or the appearance of a new transnational group to unify with local indigenous organizations.

Today, the main struggle of the Ecuadorian Amazonian movement is against the neoliberal policy changes that have led to oil company takeover of their lands. The Ecuadorian Amazonian organization are asking the government to stop supporting economic development over the roots Ecuadorian society; to support oil corporations over all is risking the indigenous people's ability to support their communities as well as forfeiting the importance of their

[70] Ortiz 1997: 36-37.
[71] McManus 1992.

ancestral lands and heritage. The Ecuadorian Amazonian movement is one of utmost importance for the reassertion of other marginalized groups regionally and internationally showing them it is possible for such a group to gain recognition within the state. The goals of the movement are particularly crucial: the recognition of a plurinational state, representation of indigenous demands and a true democracy that does not override the rights of citizens with those of transnational companies. Although the movement itself still has large obstacles to overcome, other movements can learn from their clear unified goals and use of horizontal direct democracy structures to achieve their demands.

**Case Study: The Secoya Community**

San Pablo is a small Secoya indigenous community in the Lago Agria area of Ecuador. A sense of tranquility surrounds the community with its one wide dirt road about 10 blocks long; drab wooden houses on stilts are lined along the road. Barefoot children run along the street dressed in odd assortments of Western clothing. The community is located on the banks of the Aguarico tributary of the mighty Amazon River. The river is the center of life; women gather chattering on the banks as they wash clothing. Children splash and play all day long as canoes float by. The river provides food, cleanses the people and gives the community its life.

This peaceful community nestled in the jungle seems worlds removed from the bustling Quito, as smog and people-filled as any Latin American capital city. The journey from Quito to San Pablo helps in the feeling of isolation and tranquility of the small community: the trip requires a12-hour ride in a rickety bus to Shushifindi, the oil frontier town on the edge of the Amazon, followed by a ride with farmers on the back of a pickup and finally the last hour on foot, through the fields of African palms, until the road widens into the community. As the houses come into view, it may seem one has wandered into a haven from the modern world, but

in reality not even this Amazon community has escaped the far-reaching grasp of capitalist consumerism.

San Pablo and its surrounding jungle in the Lago Agria area is home to a devastating environmental disaster commonly referred to as the Amazonian Chernobyl. Chevron deliberately dumped 18 billion gallons of toxic "produced water" directly into waters and streams during their 26 year period of operating in the Ecuadorian Amazon (1964-1990).[72] "Produced water" is the byproduct of oil production containing high levels of toxins such as salt, benzene and pure crude oil.[73] Chevron has consistently denied this illegal action and as a result doomed thousands of indigenous people to continue to drink the contaminated water after Chevron seized operation in the area in 1990. Additionally, Chevron constructed faulty pipelines leading to 345 million gallons of pure crude oil discharged directly into the rainforest ecosystem. When Chevron was actually trying to dispose of waste, it simply built 900 unlined waste pits that are filled with sludge and covered with thin layers of dirt to hide their tracks.[74] Unknowingly, indigenous people have commonly built their homes on top of such waste pits. These actions on the part of Chevron took place while they were operating, but have largely been discovered in later years.

Within the San Pablo community, this tragic environmental degradation has clearly taken its toll. Underneath the surface of this seemingly peaceful community lies the proof of deep changes brought about by Chevron. For example, one young father in San Pablo, Wilfredo, spoke passionately against Chevron: "*Petroleros*...oil companies are our great enemies...of our community and our environment..."[75] Wilfredo's father was a local *chamane*and an expert on

[72] Hinton 2010. http://chevrontoxico.com/news-and-multimedia/2011/0405-chevron-selling-assets-to-escape-enforcement-of-judgment-in-ecuador.html. 20 February 2011.
[73] Hinton 2010. http://chevrontoxico.com/news-and-multimedia/2011/0405-chevron-selling-assets-to-escape-enforcement-of-judgment-in-ecuador.html. 20 February 2011.
[74] Amazon Defense Coalition 2010. http://upsidedownworld.org/main/news-briefs-archives-68/2522-tragic-bp-gulf-spill-casts-light-on-chevron-disaster-in-ecuador. 20 February 2011.
[75] Wilfredo 2009.

medicinal plants and had instilled in Wilfredo knowledge of the forest and the necessity to preserve the environment for future generations. He sees one main negative consequence within the community as a direct result of the Chevron environmental degradation. First, the Aguarico River bordering their homes is too contaminated from the billions of oil spilled that they are no longer able to depend on fishing as a viable food source. The fish supply has significantly diminished and illnesses in the community have led them to distrust the health of the fish coming from the river. Wilfredo showed the *piscinas de pescas*, freshwater pools where they are attempting to raise enough fish to feed the community. Although the community has been resourceful enough to find an alternative source of food the new system of fishing represents a deviation from their traditional way of life one that has been forced upon them by the oil company. The river is an organism that provides life to the tribe, by contaminating it Chevron is making a direct attack on the lives and culture of the Secoya people.

Chevron's contamination of the river has also led to severe health problems among the indigenous population in the area who continue to utilize the water for drinking, bathing and fishing. The *Yana Curi* report conducted on San Carlos, an indigenous community neighboring San Pablo, reveals that: "...Indians have reported that many local estuaries and rivers, once filled with fish, now lack aquatic life....The residents of these zones frequently complain that bathing in these waters cause itchiness and development of rashes on their skin."[76] These complaints have been ongoing since the first days of oil spills on the part of Chevron. But, this report shed light on the situation for the first time, examining the communities and scientifically assessing the effect of prolonged oil exposure. Beyond irritations such as skin rash or discomfort, this study revealed frightening rates of cancer within San Carlos. For example, a male resident of San

[76] Córdoba and Sebastián 1999: 5.

Carlos has a 130% excess risk of contracting cancer.[77] Further components of the study concretely concluded that this excess of cancer is directly related to the high level of exposure to Chevron oil byproduct within the community's territory.[78]

Yet even faced with these agonizing health problems and environmental degradation of their mother land the indigenous people in the region have become unified activists against Chevron. Wilfredo spoke of the grassroots beginnings of this activism within his community. Originally, the community saw petrol companies as a positive addition to the area. They saw it as a way to increase their income and all of the advantages that come with having more money: better food, education, more consumer goods. These desires at first overshadowed the need to protect their environment. Because of the direct democracy of the community, leaders were unable to speak out against the oil companies because it did not reflect the opinion of the whole group. Eventually Wilfredo said the community saw the ways of his words and supported his opposition to the Chevron presence.... "We all one day came together on our decision and we have stayed by our resolution..."[79] It took widespread destruction and several shocking health issues for the community to realize the importance of the jungle over possible increases in income and now the San Pablo community plays a role in the greater activism against Chevron which began taking place in the 1990s.

The movement that has grown out of the Chevron oil spills and other degradation has taken a different form than traditional direct action protest methods. Rather than solely utilizing techniques such as protests and roadblocks, 30,000 Amazonian indigenous people have filed a lawsuit against Chevron despite pressure to keep quiet about the environmental degradation beginning in 1993, diving into the charade of what has become some of "the crudest form of

[77] Córdoba and Sebastian 1999: 14.
[78] Córdoba and Sebastian 1999: 4-20.
[79] Wilfredo 2009.

power politics.[80] The documentary *Crude*, filmed in 2009, follows the slimy path of the 16 year long lawsuit (which now has dragged on 18 years).[81] This David vs. Goliath story has captured the attention of the media, the American public and even celebrities. It is exactly this new international awareness and attention that has become incorporated into the Ecuadorian indigenous movement recently and which may ultimately help the movement more than the outcome of the lawsuit itself. The director of *Crude*, Joe Berlinger, mentioned this newfound awareness in an interview when he was asked why he decided to make the film:

> I was taken to a Cofán village. As I was getting out of the canoe, I observed some regular people, just by the river making a communal meal with canned tuna fish. Here we are, deep in the heart of the Amazon forest, with water-based people who live off the river, being forced to eat canned tuna because the fish in the river are all dead.[82]

This rise of environmental awareness as well as awareness of the maligned treatment of indigenous people has resulted in work by solidarity groups worldwide on behalf of indigenous peoples. The Ecuadorian Amazon movement is an example of a movement that has been heavily utilizing the tools of international mass media to support them. They no longer depend solely on methods such as traditional protests and demonstrations. Their tactic of raising international attention has built them a team of allies so that they do not face Chevron alone and significantly increasing the power of their voice.

This use of mass media attention is a new chapter in the indigenous movement in Ecuador. The worldwide population is less accepting of environmental degradation on such a large scale. Casting light on the situation makes it far less likely that Chevron will be able to walk away without being held accountable for their destruction of the San Pablo Secoya

[80] Isikoff 2008.
[81] *Crude*. Dir. Joe Berlinger. Red Envelope Entertainment. 2009. Film
[82] Berlinger 2009. http://www.tonic.com/article/crude-documentary-joe-berlinger-interview/ 15 November 2010.

community among other communities. International attention however would never have been built without the stirrings of grassroots activists that happened far before camera crews arrived. Individuals like Wilfredo, are the silent heroes, Wilfredo who convinced his community of the value of keeping the jungle intact as well as the negative impact of oil companies were the voices who first built the foundations of this political movement.

**Conclusions**

The irony of Ecuador's situation is that oil has historically been seen by the government as a positive factor for Ecuadorian economic development, which it is, if profiteering is the sole economic indicator with no factor of opportunity cost in the equation. The effects of oil, however, were and continue to be disastrous: environmental devastation of epic proportions, disregard for indigenous territorial rights and eventually a balance shift in indigenous way of life. Ecuador, along with other Latin American nations, suffered the curse of oil: despite the high profits oil may provide it leads to greater social inequality, corruption of government, more undemocratic regimes and health and environmental problems for the most vulnerable and marginalized in a nation. The increase in oil development was exacerbated by demands of the IMF which encouraged unregulated exploration of the Amazon in search of oil. This increase in oil exploration played a role in developing the indigenous movement as a response. In the past, indigenous people and their story were brushed aside in favor of feeding Western consumption of oil. Now, however, the media and the public have their eyes on the people of Ecuador, especially because of the Chevron lawsuit, the impressive unifying protests of the indigenous and the rise of attention paid to environmental issues. The Ecuadorian state will hear the voice of indigenous people grow stronger and begin to be an even greater force in national decisions, in part because of international pressures. However, it must be remembered that the international

attention would never have occurred without the organizational, communal nature and unifying strength of indigenous political structures in Ecuador who continue to listen to the needs of groups at the grassroots and local level.

In assessing further movements in the Amazonian region of Latin America, the unity and use of media on the part of CONAIE and other indigenous organizations in Ecuador will be used as an example of a relatively successful movement. The movement can be used as an example for movements with similar goals. The Ecuadorian experience of conflict between the state and indigenous communities can be related to the global struggle of marginalized people. The next crucial challenge for the Ecuadorian movement is to extend their efforts to include other indigenous groups that may live within other countries' borders but are still a part of the communal fight. If the words of Marlon Santi are any indication this could exactly be the next page in the mobilization:

> The indigenous movement is not Ecuadorian. It is spread throughout Latin America. This movement is giving the world the opportunity to reflect upon the importance of the environment. This is the moment to give back to the environment so that we can continue our lives and the lives of our future generations. In the Amazon region, we have endured half a century of oil exploration. We are the most contaminated region in the continent. Ninety percent of our rivers are contaminated. *We cannot continue living this way.*[83]

[83] Santi 2009 http://www.lawg.org/our-publications/voices-from-latin-americavoces-de-amca-latina/70-general/758-qwe-cannot-continue-living-this-wayq. 20 April 2011. emphasis mine

## CHAPTER 3

## RESISTANCE IN THE PERUVIAN AMAZON

### Introduction

> *To understand correctly the present condition of most of the indigenous societies of the Peruvian tropical forest, one must realize that all of them, to a greater or lesser extent, directly or indirectly have undergone this process of ecological deterioration and marginalization.*[84]

This chapter is an investigation of the movement within the lowland indigenous people in Peru. As Stefano Varese[85] mentions above, to understand this current indigenous movement in the Peruvian Amazon is to recognize the struggles of the past through the days of military dictatorship which Peru experienced on and off from 1968-1980, neoliberal political reforms and extractive industries established under Fujimori in the 1990s and continuing today and especially the dark times of the Shining Path from 1980-1992. To understand the Peruvian indigenous movement one can not separate it from the Peruvian historical indigenous experience. The Peruvian indigenous movement has faced considerable obstacles in forming and gaining strength within Peru, even when compared to other marginalized groups within the Amazonian region. The Ecuadorian movement is one such example where the indigenous experience has reached nationally recognized status.[86] This is particularly significant to investigate because these three countries have definite similarities: a large indigenous population, a history of indigenous marginalization beginning with colonial oppression, and significant poverty rates particularly in

[84] Varese 1972: 6
[85] Stefano Varese is a reknowned Peruvian anthropologist who wrote the classic *Sal de los Cerros,* an anthropological work describing a salt mine in the Perene River region of the Peruvian Amazon, an important center for the Ashaninka.
[86] Yashar 2005: 225.

rural and indigenous areas. Additionally, all three countries found themselves on a path towards forced liberalization of their economies that exacerbated rates of inequality and silenced voices of the marginalized. The question that arises is what stopped the Peruvian indigenous movement from developing completely? This chapter addresses this question as I investigate the particular history of Peru in an effort to explain the lack of successful indigenous political movements prior to the 1980s.

In particular, this chapter looks at the particular violence and volatility of Peru in the past three decades as an obstacle to economic progress and neoliberal reforms. The dominance of the entire Peruvian left by the Shining Path played a vital role keeping an indigenous movement from developing in Peru. The violence of the Shining Path not only targeted specific indigenous groups, like the Ashaninká, it also prohibited a more moderate left movement from forming. When a movement did begin after the defeat of the Shining Path, the indigenous people found themselves faced with other enemies, such as continued strife in the ongoing quest for economic progress and neoliberal economic reforms by the part of the Peruvian state. Unlike Ecuador and Brazil, Peru has continued unwaveringly on the path of privatization coupled with constant marginalization of vulnerable groups in Peru, including the indigenous people. The result of the path towards constant economic progress is the determined destruction and consumption of the Amazonian rainforest. The amount of area dedicated to oil concessions in the Peruvian rainforest is unmatched by other countries and it is continuing to rise. In the last years, the indigenous movement with limited transnational allies has made considerable strides in the face of such momentous destruction of their territories, lives and unique cultural attributes. In short, the violence of the Shining Path targeted at indigenous groups and their dominance of the Peruvian left made indigenous organizing difficult during the 1980s. Neoliberal reforms during the

Fujimori regime in the early 1990s also directly targeted indigenous groups. It wasn't until the late 1990s that indigenous organizing consolidating and the post-Bagua unity in 2009 that was particularly impressive in terms of indigenous unity and international attention focused on an indigenous issue.

**The Population of the Peruvian Amazon**

Out of all of the countries of Latin America, Peru has the most ethnically diverse population and largest proportions of indigenous; 45% of the population is of indigenous origins.[87]

**Table 2: Indigenous Peoples in Peru** [88]

| INDIGENOUS GROUP | POPULATION | LINGUISTIC FAMILY |
|---|---|---|
| Achuala | 3000 | HIVAROAN |
| Aimara | 400000 | HAKIAN |
| Amarakaeri | 450 | HARAKMBUT |
| Amawaka | 1500 | PANOAN |
| Amoesha | 5000 | MAIPUREAN |
| Andoa | 100 | SAPAROAN |
| Andoke | 10 | WITOTOAN |
| Arabela | 105 | SAPAROAN |
| Arasairi | 165 | HARAKMBUT |
| Awano | 200 | ? |
| Awaruna | 22000 | HIVAROAN |
| Bora | 1000 | BORAN |
| Chamikuro | 150 | MAIPUREAN |
| Chayawita | 6000 | KAWAPANAN |
| Cujareño | 100 | PANOAN |
| Ese'eha | 280 | TAKANAN |
| Hevero | 3000 | KAWAPANAN |
| Ikito | 150 | SAPAROAN |
| Iskonawa (Iskobakebu) | 17 | PANOAN |
| Kechua Huánuco | 119630 | KECHUAN |
| Kechua Junín | 40000 | KECHUAN |
| Kechua Lambayeque | 16000 | KECHUAN |
| Kechua Yauyos | 18950 | KECHUAN |
| Kichua Lamista (Llakwash) | 15000 | KECHUAN |
| Kichua Napo | 8000 | KECHUAN |
| Kichua Pastaza | 2500 | KECHUAN |
| Kichua Tigre (Alamas) | 4000 | KECHUAN |
| Kokama | 10000 | TUPIAN |

[87] Albo et al. 2009: 85.
[88] Lizarralde 2010.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Kokamilla | 100s | TUPIAN |
| Konibo | 150 | PANOAN |
| Kulina | 350 | ARAWAN |
| Machigenga | 12000 | MAIPUREAN |
| Mastanawa | 150 | PANOAN |
| Matse | 600 | PANOAN |
| Matsiguenga | 7000 | MAIPUREAN |
| Máshkopiro | 200 | PANOAN |
| Meneka | 100 | WITOTOAN |
| Morumawa | 150 | PANOAN |
| Muinane | 50 | BORAN |
| Murui | 800 | WITOTOAN |
| Nomatsigenga (Atiri) | 2500 | MAIPUREAN |
| Okaina | 250 | WITOTOAN |
| Omawa | 600 | TUPIAN |
| Payawá (Maai) | 200 | TUKANOAN |
| Piro | 1500 | MAIPUREAN |
| Resígaro | 4 | MAIPUREAN |
| Sapiteri | 50 | HARAKMBUT |
| Sekoya (Pay) | 140 | TUKANOAN |
| Shapra | ?0 | KANKOSHI |
| Sharanawa | 500 | PANOAN |
| Shipibo | 10000 | PANOAN |
| Taushiro | 12 | SAPAROAN |
| Tikuna | 1500 | TIKUNA-JURI |
| Toyoneri | 20 | HARAKMBUT |
| Urarina | 2000 | SHIMAKU |
| Wachipaeri | 200 | HARAKMBUT |
| Wambisa | 5000 | HIVAROAN |
| Yagua | 3500 | PEBA-YAGUA |
| Total | 4,978,588 | |

## *Manchay Tiempo*[89]

### The Shining Path and Suffocation of the Amazonian Movement

The Peruvian Amazonian movement is several steps behind its regional counterparts, particularly the highly unified and vocal Ecuadorian Amazonian movement.[90] One of the central reasons behind the lack of the development of a strong indigenous political organization was the guerilla movement known as the Shining Path. Shining Path's violent tactics and ongoing war against the Peruvian state dominated the Peruvian left and as a result did not allow room for the

[89] Manchay tiempo is a term that is a mix of Quechua and Spanish roughly signifying Time of Fear and referring to the period of conflict with Shining Path.
[90] Yashar 2005: 225.

development of alternative political groups, such as indigenous political organizations. This section investigates the history of the guerilla group, its dominance of the Peruvian left and its particular suppression of and violence against Amazonian indigenous groups, particularly the Ashaninka in the central rainforest and the wake of distrust that exists even today as a result.

The *Manchay Tiempo*, the darkest period of Peru's history, began on Peru's election day on May 18, 1980.[91] The Shining Path announced its presence with ballot-burning in a small village, Chuschi, in Ayacucho. This day marked the beginning of the largest revolutionary assault on the Peruvian state and one of the most violent revolutions ever to be seen in the region.[92] The Shining Path came as an outright shock to the population and its origins were widely, and wrongly, constructed by the general public. In reality, the Shining Path was a carefully constructed movement founded by university professor Abimael Guzmán. It specifically did not call for nationalist pride nor did it appeal to the indigenous cause in Peru. Rather, Guzmán created a guerrilla group focused on destroying Peru's current society to create a Maoist utopia.

This sense of entitlement and righteousness as well as the necessity to destroy, before reconstructing resulted in a highly volatile and violent movement. In his most famous speech, *We are the Initiators,* Guzmán demonstrates his belief of the importance of his movement stating, "We will be the protagonists of history", voicing a feeling of justified righteousness that he in turn bestowed upon his followers and which also foreshadowed the violence that was to come, by calling upon the movement to "rise in revolution", against "imperialism and the reactionaries, seizing and garroting them by the throat."[93] It was a sense of destiny as well as inevitability of the revolution hat Guzmán instilled in his revolutionaries turning them into an impressive killing

[91] Poole and Renique 1992: 30.
[92] Starn, et al. 1996: 305.
[93] Guzmán 1980.

force. He called upon them to "cross the 'river of blood' to destroy the 'old state' and rebuild a Maoist utopia."[94] For the Shining Path, the faults of the Peruvian society (corruption, extreme poverty, inequality and racism) were too many and too ingrained to fix without a purifying revolution. From the ashes of the buildings burned to their foundations by the Shining Path, a new society would be born. Without the utter and complete destruction, their revolution would never be successful and Peruvian society would never change, in the eyes of Guzman and his followers.[95]

This violence manifested itself particularly within the Ayacucho region. "It is estimated that in Ayacucho, between 1981 and 1993 about 25,000 people were killed or disappeared and 180,000 were internally displaced (about 36% of the total population)..."[96] his demonstrated almost a complete destruction of the indigenous highland region where people found their lives permanently destroyed by the violence of the Shining Path. Additionally, because the violence was so concentrated in Ayacucho soldiers from the coast began pouring into the region. Although this civil war was technically within the borders of the same nation-state, the interaction between soldiers and indigenous people from such a different region resulted in an even more deadly encounter from two very vastly different cultures.[97] This is demonstrated in the diary of a soldier known as *Pancho* who recorded his experience fighting the Shining Path in the Ayacucho region. This soldier fit the stereotypical crude, racially and politically incorrect Limeño traveling from the coast for the first time. He describes an excuse for the alarming violence from both sides in this *dirty war*: "This is an unconventional war, it's an undeclared war, so it's a dirty war, do you understand me? Guerrilla wars are always this way, give it to him

[94] Abimael Gusman quoted in Starn, et al. 1996: 306.
[95] Starn, et al. 1996: 299-360.
[96] Pederson, Tremblay, et al. 2008: 206.
[97] Starn, et al. 1996: 340-351.

in the head, all over the world, in a dirty war anything goes."[98] The extreme violence that occurred on the parts of both the Shining Path and the soldiers sent to fight in Ayacucho resulted in a numbness towards the violence. The atrocities that occurred in the region resulted in a scarred generation of Peruvians. The violence of *Sendero Luminoso* closed the doors to creating a leftist movement in Peru that included indigenous people. The atrocities committed were so horrible they led to the populations' general rejection of left-leaning and popular groups, as the memory of The Shining Path and its destruction is alive in the nation's political memory.[99]

The Truth and Reconciliation report was an investigation that recorded and assessed the atrocities that occurred in Peru as a result of the conflict between the Shining Path and the army in August of 2008, established that disproportionately more rural, impoverished and indigenous people died as a result of the conflict. Indigenous populations were targeted by both the Shining Path and the army because they were indigenous and marginalized and even goes so far as to suggest this pattern of ethnic extermination constitutes a form of genocide. This report acknowledges the foundation of this racism and notes that it persists:

> The TRC established that the tragedy suffered by the populations of rural Peru, the Andean and jungle regions, Quechua and Ashaninka Peru, the peasant, poor and poorly educated Peru, was neither felt nor taken on as its own by the rest of the country. This demonstrates...the veiled racism and scornful attitudes that persist in Peruvian society almost two centuries after its birth as a Republic.[100]

This violence, although concentrated in the Ayacucho region spread into the central rainforest where the Ashaninka also found themselves the victims of intense recruitment on the part of the Shining Path as well as violence as a result of drug trafficking. "Unofficial estimates say as many as 5,000 Ashaninkas who resisted the Maoist recruitment and did not escape were

[98] Starn, Degreori and Kirk 1996: 347.
[99] Silva and Yañez: 80-82.
[100] Léner 2008. http://www.cverdad.org.pe/ingles/ifinal/conclusiones.php 2 May 2011.

killed by the guerillas. At the same time, drug traffickers turned them into peons to open space in the forest and build clandestine landing strips which the traffickers used for the illegal export of cocaine paste."[101] Entire communities fell prey to the Shining Path and were held captive in order to form a drug-based labor force in service of the guerrilla group. Like the soldiers and indigenous people based in Ayacucho, the Ashaninka were scarred for generations from the violence as well as the resulting displacement during this period.[102]

In order to escape the extreme violence of the Shining Path, the Ashaninka joined the large number of displaced populations during this period. Migration from the Amazon to urban areas was a trend that had occurred previously in Peruvian history, many forced to move to Lima, the capital city because of overwhelming poverty. The sprawling slums that exist today had already begun to form. However, during the 1980s this migration exploded. Many groups were forced from their traditional lands because of the conflict, violence and the persecution they faced. The central rainforest inhabitants were some of the victims of this displacement particularly in the "...valley of the Rio Ene and the Rio Tambo, populated by native peoples in particular the Ashaninka, this area of *selva* (jungle in Spanish) came under the control of the Shining Path who practically enslaved the population. Those who managed to escape (approximately 5,000) gathered around the communities that had been able to defend themselves, or fled to ...even Lima."[103] The Ashaninka fled to self-defense communities that were drastically larger than their natural, traditional community size. Additionally, some joined other refugees in the capital city of Lima, where sprawling shanty towns had begun to grow. The strong contrast between their former lives in the Amazon and their new location in the sprawling urban center of

[101] Lama 1998. http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/41/114.html. 12 January 2011.
[102] Lama 1998. http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/41/114.html. 12 January 2011.
[103] Deng 1995: 61.

Lima is obvious. This shift greatly changed their culture and ability to function as before in society.[104]

As a result of the great displacement, the Ashaninka found themselves facing serious challenges which ultimately resulted in their inability to find a political voice. They found their entire communities transplanted to a vastly different world, where the struggle for survival became their daily challenge. "The violence caused the loss of a crucial human right, defense of life, and they cannot participate in social nor political life." [105] The Sendero attack on the Ashaninka was detrimental to the community. Displacement of populations and forcing them to become internal refugees caused ongoing negative effects on a population or ethnic group. One of the direct results is that the group is focused solely on basic survival needs. The formulation of a political group becomes impossible as they focus on daily needs. Communities that are concerned only with their daily survival in the face of great violence will lose as sense of their cultural foundations and as a result do not participate in the political system; they don't trust it nor do they see the value.[106] The Shining Path violence is widely accepted as a reason that indigenous political mobilization has been less active in Peru: "...Scholars often cite the devastation of war as a prime reason for the lack of national mobilizing structures for indigenous people."[107] In Peru, the destruction wrought upon the Ashaninka kept them from organizing as a united political movement. The Truth and Reconciliation Committee also recognizes the particular vulnerability of these indigenous groups, and the higher likelihood of them becoming victims of the violence. They have found that the violence revealed the ethno-cultural inequalities in the country because 75% of the victims spoke only a native language, while they

[104] Vargas 1993: 55-58.
[105] Vargas 1993: 55
[106] Deng 1995: 59-60.
[107] Postero and Zamosc 2004: 169.

represented only 16% of the country. The victims also were disproportionately uneducated, impoverished, living in an indigenous location such as the highland Ayacucho region or lowland rainforest, and socially excluded from the Peruvian state.[108]

The Shining Path considered all groups that were not directly aligned with their militaristic goals to be enemies of their movement. Since the formation of the Shining Path, they viewed themselves as the only legitimate vanguard group in Peruvian society and specifically isolated itself from all other left-wing organizations, even organizations which traditionally held similar complaints such as labor organizations, social movements and grassroots organizations. The Shining Path pushed all radical left groups into obscurity by destroying them directly or bringing down the wrath of the state on all left-wing groups, unions and cooperatives, and advocacy groups of any sort. The space for political or civic action of any sort shrank drastically especially in the fifty percent of the country under a state of siege and military rule. Shining Path did not believe in democratic organizing and its structure was highly hierarchical, a distinction that stands out when comparing the Shining Path with leftist movements throughout history, many of which find decentralizing their structure to be a crucial goal. Essentially, to reject armed struggle was to be against Shining Path. Its exclusive emphasis on violence set the Shining Path distinctly apart from other groups. As the Shining Path newspaper, *El Diario* stated: "One side [there is] the fascist government...its right wing centre and left wing allies [and] on the other side, the PCP-Sl, the working class, the peasantry...There is no room for intermediate positions. Either you side with the people and its struggles or you side with the reaction and its repressive apparatus."[109] This excerpt demonstrates the rejection of the Shining Path of all other political groups.

[108] Léner 2008. http://www.cverdad.org.pe/ingles/ifinal/conclusiones.php.2 May 2011.
[109] *El Diario* in Poole and Renique 1992: 2.

As the Shining Path gained power and adherents, it essentially pushed other radical Peruvian left groups out of the political space, erasing the role of groups of any ideology that used the established electoral system. "Their revolutionary plan was not to reform Peru, but to destroy and by destroying extirpate every last vestige of capitalism from Peruvian soil..."[110] Within radical left political thought there has always existed this conflict between reformists and violent revolutionaries. In Peru during this time, reformists were also the enemies of Shining Path and this divide was sharp and irresolvable. The result was a delegitimization and disappearance of other left political groups in Peru: "At the beginning of the 1990s, to speak of the radical Peruvian Left was to refer to Shining Path. In effect, Shining Path had taken over the political space..."[111] Shining Path considered leftist organizations that were not aligned with them to be enemies, just as much as the Peruvian state or bourgeoisie. This was another component in the lack of indigenous political organizations during this time period. Indigenous groups across the Amazonian region tend to be born independently from other leftist groups and also tend to choose a reformist path over revolutionary action. The Shining Path would consider the development of such a group to be a direct challenge: "The mere potential for independent organization or nonaligned will was grounds enough for suspicion and hostility (...) Indeed, indigenous organizations, community leaders, and highland peasant federations almost all rejected Shining Path, its violence, and attempted to remain neutral as the civil war between the Shining Path and the state spiraled out of control. For the Shining Path, leftist and nonaligned alternatives to senderismo...constituted dangerous enemies"[112] Shining Path's hostility towards other groups and their general violent takeover of the political space played a huge role in the

[110] Kirk1997: 2.
[111] Stern 1998: 61.
[112] Stern 1998: 261.

lack of development of independent indigenous political organizations in Peru, while their counterparts in Ecuador for example were beginning to gain ground within their own borders.

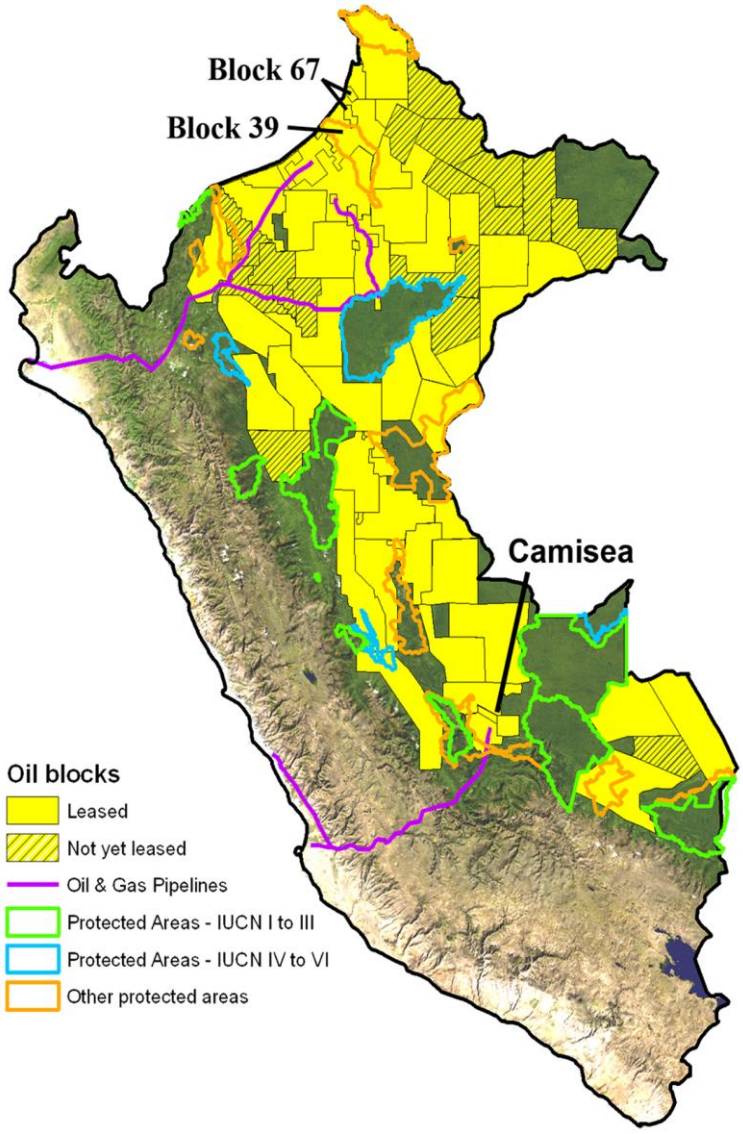
## *Oro Negro*[113]

### Neoliberalism and the Rise of Peruvian Extractive Industries

One of the primary consequences of worldwide development is the exponential increase in the consumption of fossil fuels in Western industrialized societies. Technological and economic growth in many cases can be directly attributed to this increase in consumption.[114] However, the uglier parts of this consumption tend to take place far away from the members of Western society. The vast Peruvian Amazon, rich in diversity of flora and fauna, is also home to considerable expanses of petroleum. Worldwide economic development manifests itself in the Peruvian Amazon as encroaching oil prospecting and developing increases at an alarming rate: in the past seven years, active hydrocarbon concessions have encompassed 41% of the Peruvian Amazon. This number is up from just 7% in 2003. The reality is that this number is not stagnant, but rather ever increasing. In fact, in the next few years 70% of the Peruvian Amazon will be covered with oil concessions.[115] Looking at Figure 1 demonstrates the overwhelming expanse of oil concessions that exist in the Peruvian Amazon, the yellow areas encompass almost the entire figure, in some cases overlapping with supposedly "protected areas."

[113] Black Gold: An allusion to the high prices of oil and its destructive force for the indigenous population
[114] Bodley 1982.
[115] Finer and Martí 2010: 60.

Figure 1: Indigenous Territory and Oil Concessions 2008




Finer, Matt, Clinton N. Jenkins, Stuart L. Pimm, Brian Keane and Carl Ross. *Oil and Gas Projects in the Western Amazon: Threats to Wilderness, Biodiversity and Indigenous Peoples.* (Stanford, 2008).

The story of oil can be traced back to 1911 when the first petrol exploitation occurred in Ashaninka territory, which is located in the central rainforest of Peru.[116] The cycle of privatization and nationalization in the oil industry reads essentially the same for Peru as the rest of the oil producing countries of Latin America. Private investment dominated the industry through the 1940s-1950s, during which profits were flowing to the United States in astronomical numbers. Profits were at their highest in 1974, before the industry was nationalized in 1975 and the state oil company, Petroperu, was established. This involved seizing and expropriating the International Petroleum Company which was a subsidiary of New-Jersey-based Standard Oil. [117]

The move to nationalize, under President Juan Velasco from 1968-1975, was widely popular in Peru at the time and fit under the wave of populism occurring throughout Latin America: "Across the region, populist politicians criticized globalization, markets, competition and capitalism and argued that in order to improve social conditions and reduce poverty the role of the state had to increase."[118] President Velasco fit under the appeal of populism during the time period and attacked oil companies as a way to increase his popularity and utilized populist policies.

State intervention in the economy did not remain a Peruvian policy forever. Dictator Fujimori strongly supported neoliberal shock reforms, demonstrated by the privatization of Petroperu in 1996, part of a wave of the sale of some 220 state industries.[119] This was a year after he carried out a self-coup and re-wrote the constitution to facilitate this and other reforms. Since this date Peru has reinforced the institutional structures for neoliberalism and continued to limit state involvement in the economy and increased the private role of companies within the oil

[116] Dandler 1998: 38.
[117] Varese 1998:29.
[118] Edwards 2010: 165.
[119] Carrion 2006: 135-137.

sector.[120] The result is a lack of regulation of the companies and a higher risk of social and environmental costs for Peru.

In response to the encroaching oil companies, Peru is one of the countries that has ratified the Convention 169. Convention 169 concerned indigenous and tribal peoples and was convened in Geneva in 1989 in order to put into international law protections regarding these cultures. This Convention resulted in a set of laws that are some of the most advanced human rights documents, particularly in regards to indigenous peoples. The main idea behind the Convention is "...recognizing the aspirations of [indigenous] peoples to exercise control over their own institutions, ways of life and economic development and to maintain and develop their identities, languages and religion..."[121] It gives indigenous people the right to freely and totally retain control over their rights.

In adopting these laws, Peru was agreeing to allow for indigenous peoples to continue to develop without intervention. More specifically, "...The peoples concerned shall have the right to decide their own priorities for the process of development .... in the lands they occupy or otherwise use... they shall participate in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of the plans and programs for national and regional development which may affect them directly."[122] In application to oil development, this would force the Peruvian state to consult indigenous communities before allowing private oil companies to enter and utilize these lands for oil extraction.[123]

[120] Carrion 2006: 105-107.
[121] OIT 2007.
[122] OIT 2007.
[123] Soria et al. 2008: 1.

This law allows indigenous people to form communities that must be recognized by Peru as social units with a high level of autonomy.[124] It gives these communities the right to retain their local customs and their land. However, although this exists in theory, in reality oil companies continue to exploit, unregulated in territories that now have legal protection in the name of indigenous people. In part, this can be blamed on the lack of supervision in indigenous territories. The law exists far away from the actual indigenous territories and small-level administrators may lack the authority or desire to enforce these laws.[125] Beyond this, there is the reality that the Peruvian government, although in theory it protects indigenous people, in practice this is not the case. The quest for economic progress, privatization and increased oil profits drives government policy. These tensions explode in the massacre of Bagua.

***La Selva no esta De Venta!***

**Resistance in Bagua and Its Significance for the Future**

In practice, Peru has been recognized as a country that has continually favored economic progress over indigenous rights. This policy has translated into an inherent conflict between private oil companies and the livelihoods of Peru's indigenous inhabitants. Since the 1990s the Peruvian state has continually promoted and supported private development in replacement of the former state monopoly of the petrol sector.[126] This support reveals the conflict in Peruvian policy: "This dual advancement that represents on one side the promotion of the private sector and on the other recognition of ancestral territorial rights of these communities results in inevitable tensions..."[127] There exists a blatant contradiction between Peru's law and its activities towards indigenous communities.

[124] Brown, et al. 1991: 206.
[125] Carlos Soria personal communication. Summer 2009.
[126] Silva 2009.
[127] Noejovich et al. 1998: 65.

In the case of Bagua, these inherent tensions did explode into conflict. There is no doubt that the fifth of June 2009 was a day of tragedy for all the indigenous people of Peru and for all the people of the world that support human rights. Bagua, an area located in the Amazon, was covered in blood by the massacre. This tragedy occurred when indigenous Awajun and Wampis in the area were protesting the Law of the Jungle, a law that would allow for an opening of indigenous territory to increased encroachment by oil companies. In the early morning of June 5th, protestors were huddled by a stretch of highway known as the Devil's Curve, where they had been blocking the road for two months. On June 5th, Garcia had ordered security forces to clear the area, in order to counteract the Congressional appeal by Peruvian Nationalist Party member Ollanta Humala to repeal the Law of the Jungle. The siege began at 5:30 in the morning, when some 500 security officers swarmed onto the road with automatic weapons and tear gas. The violence escalated, with defensive responses from the indigenous protestors and their allies, and Garcia called upon the army to swarm the area with helicopters and even hunt down some indigenous individuals.[128] No one knows exactly how many people were killed but estimations are between 30 and 100 deaths.[129]

The massacre of Bagua demonstrates a divide that exists within the Peruvian population between indigenous and non-indigenous people. The most alarming component of this massacre was the attitude and stance that the government and media took against indigenous peoples. Statements by government officials clearly placed the indigenous people as secondary citizens within Peru and were seen as obstacles to the ever coveted economic development and progress. A Cultural Survival journalist, Frederique Apfell-Marlin, was present during the Bagua massacres and wrote about the portrayal of indigenous peoples on the part of the state and the

[128] Schmall 2011: 111.
[129] Shepard 2009. http://www.nature.com/nature/journal/v460/n7254/full/460457c.html. 2 April 2011.

media: “Indigenous peoples were characterized as primitive and ignorant savages standing in the way of progress for all Peruvians” [130] Officially, laws in Peru support the establishment of native communities, but in action this is rarely protected. In order to justify their hostilities towards indigenous communities, the Peruvian state presents the people as obstacles who stand in the way of development and economic progress for all Peruvians; almost as if they were the enemies of the state. At this time, economic development is seen as privatization. State intervention is not widely accepted and mobilizing industry into the private sector is seen as a form of progress. Once again, indigenous peoples’ demand for state protection and their battles against private oil companies to protect their way of life is seen as an obstacle to progress. “Indigenous peoples are extortionists, the media said, because they prevent making these lands profitable and productive which can only happen by privatizing them through selling them or giving them in concessions to transnational companies” [131] This demonstrates the commitment of Peru to progress over all other goals as well as the view that privatization is the correct way to achieve this progress.

This opinion presented by the media post-Bagua was shared by the Peruvian state, demonstrated through the statements made by President Alan Garcia after the massacre. In his op-ed piece in *El Comercio*, Garcia famously called the indigenous people “dogs in the manger.”[132] He found them to be uneducated and lazy for allowing the Amazon to remain “idle” and unexploited. The indigenous people, in his eyes were standing in the way of exploiting oil and minerals for the benefit of the whole nation, not just those living in the lands. Garcia expressed his beliefs that the indigenous people are acting as obstacles to development and in doing so are acting as if their needs came before the rest of Peru. President Garcia is forgetting

[130] Apfell-Marglin 2009: 26.
[131] Apfell-Marglin 2009: 28
[132] Garcia 2007. http://elcomercio.pe/edicionimpresa/html/2007-10-28/el_sindrome_del_perro_del_hort.html. 15 April 2011.

that indigenous people depend on their land to survive. His political policy and commitment to neoliberalism and foreign oil investments on is pitted against the indigenous who are viewed as barriers to his own political goals. In the eyes of Garcia, the indigenous are less than citizens because they stand between him and progress; based on the exploitation of their land for his economic benefit, believing indigenous demand for their land "...will lead us into irrationality and a backward primitive state."[133] Garcia is characterizing the indigenous way of life as 'primitive' in an attempt to push all Peruvians into accepting his neoliberal ideology without question and to accept his model as Peruvian progress. Attention on the wording of his statements reveal the negativity of Garcia's policy as well as neoliberalism in general. "The recent repression laid bare Garcia's naked slavishness to foreign capital investment and his double-talk of feigning negotiation and dialogue..."[134] The words from Garcia have made the public aware of his true opinions and have raised alarms regarding his policies and actions against the indigenous people, such as the police massacre in Bagua.

The atrocities that occurred in Bagua caused the general public to become aware of the indigenous political movement, their struggles and the forces fighting against them. Essentially, it resulted in the realization by the greater Peru that the lowland indigenous people were playing a role as new political actors. Even the conservative Lima newspaper, *El Comercio* recognized their role: "It is undeniable that the events of Bagua made us rediscover another world, the world of the Amazonian communities, which had been historically overlooked. This is how we had noticed that we are a nation under construction, with an identity that is far from being inclusive and unifying."[135] Despite the tragedy of Bagua, the indigenous groups should be pleased about this message arriving to the conservative people of Peru, recognizing their faults and the need to

[133] *Democracy Now.* 2009.
[134] Renique 2009. nacla.org/node/5879. 10 February 2010.
[135] Editorial. *El Comercio.* 2010.

develop a space for the indigenous people within the sociopolitical structures of Peru. This clear recognition of past marginalization of indigenous people as well as the need to restructure Peru makes Bagua a catalytic event in providing momentum for the indigenous political movement.

**Organizing in the Face of Adversity:**

**Indigenous Unity After Bagua**

> *The peripheries are emerging, they are looking for a more inclusive nation, in which all the excluded nationalities are not only included but also respected.*[136]

Only a few months after the tragedies of Bagua, the offices of CONAP. CONAP has been empowered by the events in Bagua to unify with similar organizations and consolidate their demands in order to present them to the national Peruvian government. The organization utilized the public and international interest to gain support and momentum for the movement, using this to press their demands to the government. This unity was represented by a televised meeting they held in which representatives from each Amazonian indigenous ethnic group were present. The discussions they held surrounding Bagua were then presented by the press to the public, raising international awareness of the issue. Bagua was a unifying force for the indigenous organizations and helped CONAP and other organizations to formulate their ideas about plurinationality, land rights and work together as a group to create their demands for the government

Anibal Francisco Coñivo, representative of the Pasco indigenous people, explained that Bagua had been an important unifying force and had allowed CONAP to act more forcefully in forming their demands. According to Coñivo the central demand was to grant indigenous people full citizenship rights and that "...our country is a pluriethnic country."[137] Much like the status

[136] Manuel Burga in Alimonda, Hoetmor and Saavedra 2009: 70.
[137] Coñivo 2010.

that Evo Morales has recently given Bolivia, CONAP wishes for official recognition of Peru as not a homogenous country but one with a variety of ethnic and indigenous identities.

CONAP is a national umbrella organization that represents 35 federations of indigenous people in the Peruvian Amazon which was established a mere 24 years ago in 1987.[138] Their main goal is to achieve dialogue with the national government in order to achieve indigenous demands and protect indigenous human rights as well as their territory. These demands are presented in their Political Proposal, a pamphlet developed as part of their series of meetings post-Bagua: A political definition of indigenous people in the state; An indigenous political institution; A judicial process to protect indigenous rights; A sustainable development plan for the indigenous communities.[139] These four central demands created the foundation for subsequent protests, media coverage and dialogues in which CONAP participated.

These demands expressed demonstrate that indigenous organizations although they want change, want a change within the system. They are not aiming to deconstruct the national state, such as the Shining Path desired, but rather to gain recognition within the national government. As Coñivo mentioned, "We want a change...a reform to the constitution that recognizes indigenous peoples."[140]

According to AIDESEP, another umbrella organization representing indigenous interests in the Amazon, the largest indigenous issue is that of land: "The relation between the indigenous person and their territory is vital, because it provides their nutrition, livelihood and it allows them to keep their culture. Without land, there is no life."[141] Land is crucial not only to the livelihood but the culture of indigenous communities. The Peruvian government has been

[138] CONAP nativeweb.conap.org/historia/about. 23 February 2009.
[139] CONAP 2008.
[140] Coñivo 2010.
[141] AIDESEP 2009.

invasive to the territories of indigenous people through privatization and foreign investment that has especially resulted in widespread oil drilling in their country. Keeping their territory has been the rallying cause of all indigenous organizations.

**Conclusion**

The Peruvian indigenous people have a long history of marginalization. Colonial days began the construction of a system of exploitation that kept indigenous people in their marginalized state. Ecuador and Brazil have a similar shared history. However, unlike these other two cases, Peru was slow to construct an indigenous leftist movement in response. The Shining Path guerrilla movement and the resulting violence dominated the left in Peru.

The post-Shining Path period was one of increasing liberalization of the economy, and a jump of oil concessions in indigenous territory. In the face of the loss of their lands and livelihoods, indigenous groups have unified forces under national-level organizations. There were considerable tensions that existed between an increasingly neoliberal Peruvian state and indigenous peoples because of unregulated oil companies entering and using their land. These tensions exploded and resulted in the massacre at Bagua. Bagua was the culmination of anti-indigenous sentiment and actions within Peru. Although there is no doubt this was a tragedy, the aftermath was an unprecedented flurry of unified action and mobilization. I had the opportunity to be in Peru shortly after Bagua doing a project with CONAP offices. There was so much activity and indigenous leaders were all traveling to Lima with the intentions of both mourning the losses in Bagua and fighting back; to prevent another similar tragedy from occurring. This demonstrated unity and a focus on national organizing as opposed to local organizing. Together, representatives from the different ethnic groups of the Peruvian Amazon have joined to establish their demands of their government. Like other indigenous groups, the Peruvian Amazonian

peoples wish for the recognition of their place as Peruvians and of their rights as full citizens, a change to the constitution and to defend their land. To achieve this they have formulated four different ways to dialogue with the state: judicial, political, sustainable development and institutional.

This is an exciting time for the Peruvian indigenous movement. The tragedy in Bagua, and the recognition by many sectors of society of the tragedy may have been the push needed to set indigenous demands on the national stage. Unlike Peru, the Brazilian indigenous story has played a constant role in the national consciousness. The move to protect indigenous groups began early, although flawed, at first, linked with the desire to integrate indigenous people into a homogenous indigenous identity. It was the challenge therefore of indigenous groups to break free of this conception, and create their own political movement.

# CHAPTER 4
# THE STORY OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE IN BRAZIL

## Introduction

In Brazilian history there is again this emphasis in government policy and public attitudes on the "civilization" of indigenous groups. Throughout this country's history, the Brazilian society and government sought to push indigenous peoples into modern society. The result in Brazil was particularly atrocious for the indigenous groups. The twentieth century involved an onslaught of massacres funded by cattle ranchers and rubber tappers invading indigenous territory. Government involvement in the Amazon often meant near-enslavement of indigenous groups in the Amazon as forced laborers with massive debts. Since the mid-twentieth century, when its extinction was considered inevitable, the Brazilian indigenous population has made an incredible recovery. They have built a political movement based on crucial coalitions and transnational cooperation. They have constructed a network of NGOs and activists based nationally and internationally working closely with indigenous groups themselves.

To achieve all of this, important shifts have occurred in Brazilian history in the relationship between indigenous people and modern Brazilian society. It all began with rubber in the late 19th and early 20th centuries which introduced the massive atrocities within the Amazon all in the name of progress for Brazil as a whole. The extraction of rubber was catastrophic for the indigenous peoples who experienced large scale invasion of their territories for the first time. Eventually in by the mid-twentieth century, the Indian Protection Service (IPS) emerged as a protector of the indigenous peoples, its significant faults as an organization, and eventual

transformation into modern-day FUNAI. The faults of these institutions resulted into a lack of true indigenous rights protection. The state viewed indigenous people as children, and the indigenous groups struggled against discrimination and their inability to gain citizenship. Into the vacuum left by flawed indigenous protection agencies, stepped local indigenous activists. The Yanomami and their resistance against gold mining in their territories is as an example of the formation of an indigenous based political movement and the role of indigenous activists in affecting their own future. Indigenous activists have linked with international rights organizations to organize against recent environmentally damaging projects like the Belo Monte Dam and the increase in soy farming.

**Modern Brazilian Indigenous Population**

The indigenous population of Brazil as of the year 2000 is 734,127 out of a total national population of 169,872,856. There are 241 distinct indigenous groups that make up this population coming to a 0.4% of the total Brazilian population.[142] These numbers are significant because they demonstrate the largest number of different indigenous groups in Latin America, therefore demonstrating a great ethnic diversity in Brazil. At the same time .4% is by far the lowest percentage of indigenous people especially when compared with Ecuador and Peru with indigenous populations at 10% and 45% respectively. Despite their low percentage of the total population, Brazilian indigenous groups are a powerful symbol of nationalism and play crucial roles within the national consciousness.

[142] Albo et al 2009: 68.

## Table 3: Indigenous Peoples in Brasil [143]

| Indigenous Group | Population | Linguistic Family |
|---|---|---|
| Aikaná | 80 | WARIAN |
| Akuawa (Asurini do Toncantins) | 131 | TUPIAN |
| Amanayé | 50 | TUPIAN |
| Amawaka | 220 | PANOAN |
| Anambé | 61 | TUPIAN |
| Apalaí | 135 | KARIBAN |
| Apányekra | 274 | JE |
| Apiaká | 65 | TUPIAN |
| Apinayé | 508 | JE |
| Apurinã | 3000 | MAIPUREAN |
| Arapaso | 258 | TUKANOAN |
| Arara (TUPIAN) | 92 | TUPIAN |
| Arara Parirí | 72 | KARIBAN |
| Araweté | 136 | TUPIAN |
| Arikapú | 15 | JABUTIAN |
| Atikun | 1300 | unclassified |
| Atroarí | 350 | KARIBAN |
| Avá-Canoeiro | 101 | TUPIAN |
| Awaeté | 53 | TUPIAN |
| Awetí | 36 | TUPIAN |
| Bakairí | 448 | KARIBAN |
| Banawá (Banava Jafi) | 80 | ARAWAN |
| Barasana (Yeba Masa) | 43 | TUKANOAN |
| Baré (Balé) | 23 | MAIPUREAN |
| Bendyapá (Txunhuãn Djapá) | 37 | KATUKINAN |
| Bororo | 752 | BORORoAN |
| Boto | ? | ? |
| Chikão | 107 | KARIBAN |
| Chukahamãi | 346 | JE |
| Cinta Largas (Nzap) | 953 | TUPIAN |
| Dení | 560 | ARAWAN |
| Desana | 960 | TUKANOAN |
| Diahoi | 13 | TUPIAN |
| Emerillõ | 60 | TUPIAN |
| Fulnió | 4000 | FULNIO |
| Galibí | 897 | KARIBAN |
| Gavião | 220 | TUPIAN |
| Gorotire | 1030 | JE |
| Guajajara | 6776 | TUPIAN |
| Guajá | 240 | TUPIAN |
| Guató | 220 | JE |
| Hãhãhãi | 1270 | MASKAKALIAN |
| Hishkariana | 308 | KARIBAN |
| Hupda | 1431 | PUINAVEAN |
| Ingarikó | 459 | KARIBAN |
| Iranshe | 137 | IRANCHE |
| Jabutí | 41 | JABUTIAN |
| Jamamadí | 450 | ARAWAN |

[143] Lizarralde 2010.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Jaminawa | 357 | PANOAN |
| Jarawara | 120 | ARAWAN |
| Javae | 383 | KARAJA |
| Jeral (Nheengatú) | 3000 | TUPIAN |
| Juma | 9 | TUPIAN |
| Juruna | 126 | TUPIAN |
| Juruti | 35 | TUKANOAN |
| Kadiweu | 850 | WAIKURUAN |
| Kaimbé | 1400 | unclassified |
| Kaingang | 10426 | JE |
| Kainguá (Pai Tabyterá, Ava) | 7000 | TUPIAN |
| Kalapalo | 191 | KARIBAN |
| Kamayura | 207 | TUPIAN |
| Kamba | 2000 | unclassified |
| Kambiwá | 350 | unclassified |
| Kampa | 235 | MAIPUREAN |
| Kanamantí | 130 | ARAWAN |
| Kanamarí | 647 | KATUKINAN |
| Kanibo | ?0 | PANOAN |
| Kanoé | 20 | KANOE |
| Kapinawa | 260 | unclassified |
| Karajá | 1194 | KARAJA |
| Karapaná | 49 | TUKANOAN |
| Kararaó | 26 | JE |
| Karipuna | 672 | TUPIAN |
| Karipuna | 150 | PANOAN |
| Karitiana | 109 | TUPIAN |
| Kasharari | 110 | PANOAN |
| Kashinawa | 1997 | PANOAN |
| Kashuyana | 198 | KARIBAN |
| Katawishí | 10 | KATUKINAN |
| Katukina | 253 | KATUKINAN |
| Katukina | 353 | PANOAN |
| Kawahib | ?0 | TUPIAN |
| Kayabí | 620 | TUPIAN |
| Kayapó | ?0 | JE |
| Kénkateye | ?0 | JE |
| Kirirí | 1800 | KARIRI |
| Koayá | 7 | INDEPENDIENTE |
| Kobéwa (Cubeo) | 7 | TUKANOAN |
| Kohoroxitari | 622 | unclassified |
| Kokama | 411 | TUPIAN |
| Kokraimoro | 120 | JE |
| Korubo | 500 | unclassified |
| Krahó | 894 | JE |
| Kreen Akarore | 83 | JE |
| Krenak | 70 | AIMORE |
| Krenjé | 30 | JE |
| Krikatí | 325 | JE |
| Kubenkrangnotí | ?0 | JE |
| Kubenkrãkeng | 361 | JE |
| Kuikúru | 221 | KARIBAN |
| Kujubí | 50 | CHAPAKURAN |
| Kulina | 2437 | ARAWAN |
| Kurripako | 4672 | MAIPUREAN |
| Kuruayá | 52 | TUPIAN |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Latundé | 95 | NAMBIKWARAN |
| Makú | 2211 | PUINAVEAN |
| Maku Bara | ? | PUINAVEAN |
| Makuna | 46 | TUKANOAN |
| Makurap | 215 | TUPIAN |
| Makushí | 15287 | KARIBAN |
| Mamorí | 12 | unclassified |
| Mandawaka | 24 | MAIPUREAN |
| Maniba (Pato Tapuya) | 135 | MAIPUREAN |
| Maniteneri (Piro) | 530 | MAIPUREAN |
| Marinawa | 50 | PANOAN |
| Marubo | 499 | PANOAN |
| Marworna | 860 | KARIBAN |
| Mashakalí | 500 | MAXAKALIAN |
| Matipuhi | 40 | KARIBAN |
| Matis | 141 | PANOAN |
| Matse | 609 | PANOAN |
| Mawé | 3000 | TUPIAN |
| Maxineri (Piro) | 345 | MAIPUREAN |
| Mayá | 135 | PANOAN |
| Máku | 10 | MAKU |
| Mbüá | 2248 | TUPIAN |
| Mehinaku | 95 | MAIPUREAN |
| Meken | 50 | TUPIAN |
| Mekrangotí | 285 | JE |
| Miranya | 457 | WITOTOAN |
| Mondé | ?0 | TUPIAN |
| Mudjetire | 101 | TUPIAN |
| Mundurukú | 1460 | TUPIAN |
| Mura | 1340 | MURAN |
| Münkü | 34 | unclassified |
| Nahöb | 300 | PUINAVEAN |
| Nahukuá | 83 | KARIBAN |
| Nambikuara | 730 | NAMBIKWARAN |
| Neenoã (Miriti Tapuia) | 49 | TUKANOAN |
| Ntogapíd | 95 | TUPIAN |
| Nukuini | 238 | PANOAN |
| Numbiai | 50 | unclassified |
| Nyandeva | 4900 | TUPIAN |
| Ofaye | 23 | OFAYE |
| Omawa (Kambeba) | 240 | TUPIAN |
| Palikur | 561 | MAIPUREAN |
| Pankararé | 1800 | unclassified |
| Pankararú | 4000 | PANKARARU |
| Parakanã | 297 | TUPIAN |
| Parakatege | 173 | JE |
| Paresí | 631 | MAIPUREAN |
| Parintintin | 118 | TUPIAN |
| Patasho | 1762 | MASHAKALIAN |
| Paumarí | 280 | ARAWAN |
| Pemón | 220 | KARIBAN |
| Pirá | 618 | TUKANOAN |
| Piráhã | 200 | MURAN |
| Potiguára | 4000 | TUPIAN |
| Poyanáwa | 227 | PANOAN |
| Pukobyé | 306 | JE |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Ramkókamekra | 718 | JE |
| Rikbaktsá | 466 | RIKBAKTSA |
| Sabané | 20 | NAMBIKWARAN |
| Salumã | 154 | NAMBIKWARAN |
| Sanemá | 462 | YANOMAMAN |
| Satere | 4000 | TUPIAN |
| Shakriabá | 3500 | JE |
| Shambioá | 102 | KARAJA |
| Shavante | 4413 | JE |
| Sherente | 850 | JE |
| Shetá (Xetá) | 5 | TUPIAN |
| Shikrín | 469 | JE |
| Shokleng | 634 | JE |
| Shokó | 170 | SHOKO |
| Shokó Kariri | 700 | unclassified |
| Shukurú | 3000 | SHUKURU |
| Shukurú Kariri | 900 | unclassified |
| Siusi (dialecto Maniba) | 400 | MAIPUREAN |
| Surirá | 10 | TUKANOAN |
| Surui | 340 | TUPIAN |
| Suyá | 114 | JE |
| Tapayuna | 31 | JE |
| Tapeba | 200 | unclassified |
| Tapirapé | 202 | TUPIAN |
| Tapuia | 30 | JE |
| Tariana | 1583 | MAIPUREAN |
| Tembé | 410 | TUPIAN |
| Tenyarín | 256 | TUPIAN |
| Terena | 9848 | MAIPUREAN |
| Tikuna | 18000 | TIKUNA-JURI |
| Tingui | 800 | unclassified |
| Tiriyó | 329 | KARIBAN |
| Torá | 256 | CHAPAKURAN |
| Tremenbé | ?0 | unclassified |
| Truka | 375 | unclassified |
| Trumai | 71 | TRUMAI |
| Tukano | 2635 | TUKANOAN |
| Tupari | 56 | TUPIAN |
| Tupinikin | 582 | TUPIAN |
| Tushá | 500 | TUSHA |
| Tuyuka | 465 | TUKANOAN |
| Umutina | 160 | BORORoAN |
| Uruak (Awaké) | 17 | ARUTANI-KALIANA |
| Urubú Kaapor | 494 | TUPIAN |
| Urueuwauwáu | 215 | TUPIAN |
| Urupá | 150 | CHAPAKURAN |
| Waimiri | ?0 | KARIBAN |
| Waiwái | 922 | KARIBAN |
| Wanána | 555 | TUKANOAN |
| Wapishana | 5122 | MAIPUREAN |
| Warekena | 338 | MAIPUREAN |
| Wari (Pakaanóva) | 1147 | CHAPAKURAN |
| WarikIana | 300 | KARIBAN |
| Wariva | 180 | PUINAVEAN |
| Wasu | 1250 | unclassified |
| Waurá | 130 | MAIPUREAN |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Wayampí | 291 | TUPIAN |
| Wayana | 150 | KARIBAN |
| Wayoró | 40 | TUPIAN |
| Witoto | 261 | WITOTOAN |
| Yabaana | ?0 | MAIPUREAN |
| Yahup | 300 | PUINAVEAN |
| Yanam (Ninam) | 466 | YANOMAMAN |
| Yanomama | 8000 | YANOMAMAN |
| Yawalapiti | 135 | MAIPUREAN |
| Yawanawa | 196 | PANOAN |
| Yebá Masã (Barasana) | 55 | TUKANOAN |
| Ye'kwana | 200 | KARIBAN |
| Zoró | 175 | MONDE |
| Zuruahã (Zaruahã) | 130 | unclassified |
| Total | 207,593 | |

**The Rubber Boom:**

**The Brazilian Amazon's First Taste of Extraction**

Extraction of natural resources has had great consequence and effected the indigenous populations of all three countries presented in this study. Natural resource harvesting is one of the largest shifts in relations between indigenous people and other sectors of Brazilian society and is the main negative factor that is the foundation of the indigenous cause of the Brazilians. In Brazil, this extraction first began centuries ago during the rubber boom. The rubber boom provides a lens through which to examine the treatment of indigenous peoples that results from resource extraction.

Long before organized industry was established in the Amazon, indigenous groups had discovered and used rubber: "The South American aborigine had discovered the tree today called *Hevea brasiliensis*, the tree that today and for decades past has been the chief source of the world's supply of *caoutchouc*-rubber in the raw."[144] For centuries indigenous groups had been using rubber in the making of balls, bags and other purposes. When it was discovered by society not native to the region, exporting rubber from the area was not a reality because of the difficulty

[144] Wolf 1936: 5.

in transportation the rubber from such a remote area. The establishment of the Amazon Steam Navigation Company in 1853 introduced steamships to the region and cut the journey from Pará to Manaus from 3 months to 8 days.[145] This made rubber extraction and exportation feasible and established the rubber industry in Brazil. The result was a short term domination of the world's rubber market by Brazilian Amazonian rubber. An influx of rubber tappers, known as *serenguieros* in Brazilian Portuguese flooded into the region searching for and tapping the *Hevea* trees, which could not be domesticated.[146]

Despite the relatively ineffective Amazonian industry because *Hevea* trees could only be found in the wild, many involved in the rubber boom believed Brazil would forever be the world supplier of rubber. All seemed convinced of its everlasting superiority in the market: As Kent, a member of the Amazon Steam Company wrote in 1904 at the height of the rubber boom: "Expert opinion points to the Amazon rubber being undoubtedly an exclusive product, which need not fear the competition of any rival."[147] The rubber barons who depended on the continuing dominance of the market by Brazil to fund their lavish lifestyles saw the rubber boom as impenetrable. The main problem behind the Brazilian rubber industry was that the wild *Hevea* tree was never domesticated. The Brazilians were unable to establish plantations but rather continued to search for more trees in the wilderness of the Amazon "...and ironically it was the Hevea kidnapping by the British India Office in 1876 that formed the basis of the plantation industry that ended Brazil's dominance of rubber production."[148] The result was the establishment of British-funded rubber plantations throughout East Asia and the eventual crash of the entire rubber industry. The inefficiency of the Amazonian industry could not compete and

[145]Randolph 1977: 343.
[146] Randolph 1977.
[147] Kent & Co. 1904.
[148] Randolph 1977: 342.

never recovered from the crash, which began in 1912.[149] Although rubber continues to be extracted by tappers today in small numbers, it has never reached the peak of the early 20th century.

The end of the boom was good news for Amazonian indigenous groups as Indigenous groups had found themselves to be the victims of the rubber industry: "The rubber industry was responsible for much enslaving, uprooting, unrest and death among Indian populations forcibly engaged in latex extraction."[150] Indigenous groups were suddenly forced into subordinate positions to the rubber tappers or serengueiros (in Brasilian Portuguese). The serengueiros were never friendly to their neighbors, the indigenous peoples: "...these tough backwoodsmen were no friends to the Indians. Ignorant and frightened they tended to shoot any Indian on sight."[151] The result of the rubber boom was largely disastrous for the indigenous groups. A combination of disease, violent attacks and invasion and use of their traditional territories pushed some groups into nomadic lifestyles ensconced deeper into the Amazon and others to disappear entirely. The result was the eerily quiet rainforest missionary Kenneth Graub observed in 1920: "These rivers are silent today, except for the lap of the waters along some deserted beach... The past has gone, with its peoples in central Amazonia, leaving only a bitter sense of impotence."[152] The indigenous peoples were never to recover from the drastic changes wrought upon their society by the rubber workers.

This disastrous reality was brought upon the indigenous peoples for three main reasons. First was widespread disease; for many indigenous groups contact with the rubber workers was their first contact with the outside world. Their immunity systems, much like older indigenous

[149] Randolph 1977: 342.
[150] Ramos1998: 81.
[151] Hemming 2003:
[152] Graub, Kenneth in Hemming 2003:53.

groups who died in droves across early America after the European conquest, were not able to successfully combat modern diseases. Therefore, diseases like the measles proved to be catastrophic. Secondly, the rubber tappers were indiscriminate in their killing of game, depleting indigenous sources of food. Lastly, and most tragically, were the outright massacres of many indigenous groups marking one of the darkest pages in Brazil's history. Rubber tappers saw indigenous peoples as less than human and many considered hunting them a necessity or even a sport. The result was widespread devastation of people and of communities. Rondon, founder of the IPS and well-known explorer of the Amazon, was appalled by this devastation: "What innumerable atrocities! Raids were the rule bringing death to all the malocas[153] ...Wandering helpless tribes could scarcely recognize the site of their former forest dwellings such was the devastation!"[154] This widespread destruction by the rubber tappers wrought fear on the indigenous people. This fear resulted in a system of exploitation in which some indigenous peoples were used by rubber tappers either for forced labor, or even unsolicited sexual relations due to the lack of women within rubber tapper communities.

The massacres committed during this period are largely unrecorded in national histories and national awareness but their legacy lives on within the indigenous communities. These rubber tappers, pushed into the great unknown, lived under the lawlessness that occurs in any frontier situation governed by "men with guns" and the law of "get rich quick." Their insatiable desire for indigenous land and belief that indigenous people were inferior manifested itself in the darkest way possible: in the form of massacres of indigenous people. "A long history of violence and mistrust exists among Indians and seringueiros. During the rubber boom, rubber barons organized corridas in Acre - seringueiros were sent on expeditions to massacre indigenous

[153] malocas are the large communal dwellings of Amazonian indigenous groups
[154] Rondon in Hemming 2003: 5.

communities or drive them out."[155] The goal of such atrocities was to capture their land in order to increase the rubber barons' territory. It was also to terrorize them and control them and their resources.

The massacres that occurred during the rubber boom in Brazil were not isolated events, but rather demonstrate a strong parallel with the terrible abuses and devastation that have occurred in indigenous communities across Latin America. In Peru for example, rubber tapping forced indigenous communities to flee deeper into the forest away from river ways that provided them with their livelihoods. These groups were then hunted by rubber tappers, forcing ethnic groups and families to split up in order to survive and escape detection. Capitalist extraction favored slavery based upon racialization, as well as the complete destruction of indigenous people and their environment. This is the repetitive history of modernization in Ecuador, Peru and Brazil, where indigenous peoples do not have the luxury to have the amnesia of the national elite classes and international promoters of exportation, exploitation and development. Indigenous people can not forget because they are the victims of genocides caused by rubber tapping and by post-colonization. Gold-mining in Yanomami territories in Brazil and Venezuela is significant in indigenous historical memories, because it is reminiscent of these earlier genocides.

Analysis of the disastrous effects of rubber tapping on the indigenous peoples gives a foreshadowing of the further environmental and societal degradation to come with the continued invasion of Amazonian territories based on the historical reality of the treatment of indigenous people. The actions of tappers and barons alike present the ongoing conflict between invaders and indigenous people. "From the sixteenth century to the present, Indian decimation and displacement in Brazil have resulted from continued attempts to attain economic development at

[155] Schwartzman 1986: 26.

the expense of the country's Indian inhabitants."[156] The goal of economic gains in the form of rubber overshadowed and sense of the human rights and territorial claims of indigenous people. These themes presented are constants in the story of indigenous people in Brazil. From rubber tapping to gold mining to hydroelectric dams the situation remains unchanged. In the name of progress, indigenous peoples' rights will continue to be violated.

***Protectors or Violators?***

**A Look at Indigenous Governmental Organizations**

This section looks at the history and role of government institutions designed to protect indigenous people in the Brazilian rainforest. The subsequent corruption, inefficiency and abuse of indigenous people have are unparalleled in history. Therefore these organizations are not shining examples of indigenous protection or positive steps ahead for the general indigenous movement. However, looking at the development of these organizations provides a perspective on government policy towards indigenous people, as well as demonstrates the particular vulnerability of the Brazilian indigenous population.

The first governmental organization related to indigenous issues was founded in 1910 by General Rondon and known as the Indian Protection Service (IPS). Two things were positive about the early days of IPS: its initial establishing of law and its founder Colonel Rondon. The main purpose of the policy was to protect indigenous people from mistreatment by outside and/or external forces. This is clearly demonstrated by the organization's mission statement: "to provide protection and assistance to the Indians of Brazil, guaranteeing the natives' lives, liberty and property, defending them from extermination, rescuing them from oppression and exploitation and sheltering them from misery..."[157] The service was revolutionary in its dedication to

[156] Ramos 1984: 84.
[157] Hemming 2003:1

protecting indigenous land and refusing to work with the missionaries to convert the indigenous people, demonstrating a dedication to protecting their unique cultural traditions, at least in its theoretically moral mission and subsequent legal statements.

This revolutionary law protecting indigenous people was the result of the work of Colonel Rondon, who through his life experiences had become a champion for indigenous people and for nonviolent treatment of indigenous groups. Rondon was an army engineer whose assignments revolved around the construction of a telegraph line to the most remote parts of Brazil over 30 years in the late 19th century across Mato Grosso and the Amazon Basin.[158] His experience exploring new parts of the Amazon led him to meet, understand and appreciate as well as respect the various indigenous peoples who in turn befriended him. This led to his development of a "policy of non-retaliation" explaining to his soldiers that indigenous groups in the moment of first contact often react violently because they "'...are defending their lands and families, within their just rights.'"[159] The most important policy that Rondon made was not reacting violently, even when attacked by indigenous groups. It was Rondon who made the motto of the IPS: "Die if you must but never kill" His desire to protect and respect indigenous people was built upon fifteen years of working in their territory, often as the first person from outside society to be in contact with indigenous groups. Unfortunately, his vision and goal were distorted by the actions on the ground by IPS workers.

The reality of the IPS is alarming, despite the good intentions displayed by its founding values the organization was modeled upon. Corruption was widespread and lawlessness reigned throughout the Amazon region. Many IPS workers took advantage of this despite their role as "protectors" of the indigenous people. Workers murdered indigenous people or used force or

[158] Diacon 2002: 158.
[159] Hemming 2003: 11

intimidation tactics to get the indigenous to vacate their land so the IPS workers could either incorporate it into their own property, or sell it to cattle ranchers cheaply. "In only two years of service, the government claimed former IPS Director Luis Vinhas Neves (1964-66) committed 42 separate crimes against the Indians--including collusion in several murders, torture, and the illegal sale of land; he also raked in more than $300,000."[160] This director is just an example of many who performed illegal actions when supposedly working to support and help the indigenous population of Brazil.

The extent of IPS violations of indigenous people was revealed in a 1967 report known as the *Figuiredo* Report which had evidence of massive atrocities and crimes including massacres of entire communities, takeover of indigenous land, murders and abuses.[161] The result was the official dissolution of the IPS. This report was alarming and eye-opening for the entirety of Brazilian society as well as the international community, particularly for human rights organizations. The realization came that even those who were put in charge of protecting indigenous people and their territory in Brazil often considered these groups inferior and consistently violated their rights and dignity, even their right to life.

It took ten years for another government institution to be established: FUNAI in 1967 established by the military dictatorship of the time. FUNAI unfortunately did not even live up to the goals of Colonel Rondon, but rather drowned indigenous issues in red tape in the maddening bureaucracy of Brazilian government ministries. The main goal of FUNAI was to open up the Amazon resources to exploitation, for exports and to provide raw materials for Brazilian industrialization to relieve explosive social and population pressures in southern cities and from

[160] "Brazil: The Vanishing Indian." 1968. http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,841251,00.html. 11 February 2011.
[161] Survival International 2001. http://www.survivalinternational.org/about/funai survavalinternational.org., 13 January 2011.

failing coastal agricultural regions in the North East. Prosperity was going to be built upon exploiting the Amazon and using it to pay for massive international loans for infrastructure In the 1980s even with a return to democracy, it fell to its lowest level as not only bureaucratic but downright corrupt: "FUNAI has long been drowning in red tape and suffering corrupt presidents who plunder indigenous resources with impunity...In short either through outright criminal action or through omission the Indian foundation has become part of the problem more often then the solution."[162]

The failures and abuses by the governmental organizations devoted to indigenous issues reveal a vacuum in indigneous protection. This vacuum has had to be filled by transnational groups and NGOs that sometimes focus on specific issues at a very micro level or focused on the more general goal, albeit lofty goal, of protecting all the Brazilian indigenous people. In the section discussing specific modern day challenges on the part of indigenous people, the functions and work of these newer groups will be examined and investigated.

**Indigenous Relations in Brazil**

This section is an attempt to review the plethora of conditions that make up "indigenism" in Brazil. Despite the smaller numbers of indigenous people in Brazil, they do play a crucial role in the national consciousness. Brazilian Indigenous are the subject of international criticism of the Brazilian state in their creation of interethnic inequality. This brings up discussions in countless arenas of study: the question of sovereignty of a nation if another culture exists within in it living separately, the role of a minority in national politics, the idea of "integration" and "acculturation" of indigenous groups. This section provides the theoretical concepts of citizenship, land rights and paternalism that face indigenous people in Brazil and can be applied to the indigenous experience of Ecuadorian and Peruvian groups.

[162] Ramos 1998: 81

Indigenous people, as demonstrated through Brazilian legislation, have been viewed more as a child in need of protection: "...indigenous societies appeared as infantile forms...which should be guided by means of guardianship toward the civilization of our society"[163] According to Brazilian law, indigenous people are considered incapable of protecting themselves, much like a minor, and in need of assistance and protection from the state, representing a remaining 'endemic racism' towards indigenous people.[164] Included in this state assistance is the right to retain control over communal indigenous land. However, once indigenous people are incorporated into the larger Brazilian society and no longer considered in need of a protected status, they lose their right to the land. This shaped official indigenous policy which "...openly pursued accelerated integration and 'emancipation of the indigenous communities into the national fabric and the integration of their lands into the expanding national economic frontier."[165] This demonstrates a paradox for indigenous people: their incorporation into society would mean the loss of their traditional livelihood, their land and their ability to sustain themselves. Fighting for recognition of their equality within Brazilian society would counteract one of their most important goals: retaining the rights to their much sought after land.

Running parallel with this discourse and ideal of the Indian as a child in Brazil is the idea of the "civilization" of indigenous people; that they are something wild which must be tamed. At the heart of this discourse is the undeniable inferiority of indigenous people in the eyes of the rest of Brazilian society. In the beginning of indigenous-Brazilian relations (post-Portuguese conquest) this "taming" took the course of forced enslavement. During the rubber boom, massacres were excused by the viewed inferiority of indigenous people, and the economic benefits that resulted from taking over indigenous peoples' land. A century later, the same view

[163] Ramos 1998: 114.
[164] Survival International. http://www.survivalinternational.org/tribes/brazilian
[165] Carvalho 2006: 465.

is held by many who see the use of cattle ranchers, loggers, and construction on indigenous land to be more beneficial than the preservation of such 'uncivilized' cultures.[166]

Although the manifestation of the civilization discourse does not always look identical the rhetoric behind it has remained largely the same: "Indianness is a temporary undesirable condition and must be eradicated from a country such as Brazil that is trying to make it into the community of civilized nations"[167] Two ideas are crucial here: the obvious inferiority of indigenous peoples or *undesirability* of their ethnic reality. Second is that the unarguable goal of civilization or progress which should be desired by and for indigenous groups. This integration of indigenous people into larger society can even be seen in the work of the IPS which "...aimed to protect Indians by bringing them into 'mainstream' national society, thereby eliminating cultural diversity and freeing up their lands."[168]

This desire to acculturate indigenous people was so accepted and widespread that it was the unquestioned goal of the very organization designed to protect them. Setting the widespread corruption and abuses of the IPS aside, its stated goal demonstrates prevalence and importance placed on integrated indigenous people into Brazilian society and homogenizing the culture. This desired integration of indigenous people should not be considered positive as the process itself ignores the crucially important contribution of their unique cultural attributes and denies the indigenous their right as citizens to be true to their history and remain their own peoples: "It is rather a way of not recognizing the Indian nations and their territories and as a consequence of precluding their self-determination and their capacity to establish their own pace and means of development within their territories."[169] This is a way of others imposing their ideals of

[166] Hecht, Cockburn. 1990.
[167] Ramos 1998:76.
[168] Survival International 2001. http://www.survivalinternational.org/about/funai. 13 January 2011.
[169] Carlos Frederico Marés in Ramos 1998: 75-77.

civilization on other groups without recognizing or appreciating their ability to make decisions about their future for themselves.. The action of integration and process of blending not only reiterates a sense of perceived inferiority but also deems the indigenous as almost *childlike* and hence incapable making rational decisions for themselves as well as their community.

However, this project and discourse dedicated to civilization reveals another paradox in Indian policy: "the effort to wipe out Indianness while closing the doors to citizenship."[170] Within Brazilian society there exists a desire to integrate indigenous people into larger society by mandating a relinquishing of the unique indigenous components of their culture. However, taking the next step and allowing them full citizenship rights continues to be denied. In this middle ground, it has become the role of indigenous people to define the place they wish to hold in society, which in turn has empowered their collective voice. Increasingly, in response to the denial of full citizenship rights within their prospective nation-states, indigenous people are calling for the deconstruction of such an idea of citizenship and instead allowing for membership into a larger, transnational space: "These new forms of citizenship should guarantee the political, economic, social, cultural and linguistic rights of a new hemispheric--and world--resident who is no longer the subject in exclusivity of a particular nation-state..."[171] This deconstruction of the traditional concepts of a nation-state would allow indigenous peoples full membership of a new form of inclusive society. The indigenous groups could keep their cultural integrity, without sacrificing full rights under the banner of an exclusive nation-state.

The role of the indigenous person in Brazilian national consciousness is unique and has led to the opening of many debates revolving the role of an indigenous person in society and their membership as citizens. However their rights and role should be defined not by the

[170] Ramos 1998: 77.
[171] Varese 2010: 259.

government or public opinion, but by and for indigenous people themselves. In recent struggles, indigenous activists have risen up against specific indigenous issues and causes but their actions and demands in these cases can be used to create a definition of the place in society indigenous people strive to occupy.

**The Role of Indigenous Activists:**

**Yanomami Organizing Against Gold Mining**

At the turn of the twentieth century, the Yanomami was the largest indigenous nation to have escaped acculturation. This is largely due to their few contacts with the outside world because of their extremely isolated location deep in the northern Brazilian rainforest. Their isolation, continued cultural integrity and uniqueness from other indigenous groups have captured the attention of anthropologists making the Yanomami one of the most researched and studied indigenous group worldwide. As a result, many aspects of Yanomami culture have shaped the international image of indigenous attributes. Unfortunately, in more recent decades the Yanomami has captured attention because of their tragic circumstances. Atrocities associated with the Brazilian gold rush within Yanomami territory have made this group the center of the international dialogue revolving around interethnic inequalities.

In the early 1980s when gold was discovered, miners trickled into Yanomami territory, despite its protected government status under consideration for an official reserve. By 1987, the gold rush that would draw more than 40,000 unwanted gold miners into Yanomami land had exploded.[172] Initially, gold miners arriving were of the minority and tried to buy the goodwill of the Yanomami through gifts of tools, small manufactured goods and food items. The Yanomami were yet to truly feel the impact of this invasion of their territory and saw this gift-giving as the

[172] Early and Peters 2000: 263.

miners' way of establishing friendly and neighborly relations. The miners felt inferior and fearful of the Yanomami at this early stage, but this power struggle would soon shift drastically.[173]

When the level of miners increased to surpass the number of Yanomami within the territory, the indigenous group began to feel the tense effects of the rapid deterioration of their society in terms of health and livelihood. The gold miners, known as *garimpeiros* in Brazilian Portuguese, introduced both malaria and tuberculosis into the community; a walking death sentence for the Yanomami. Like many indigenous groups the Yanomami had no built up resistance to these diseases which resulted in the loss of fifteen percent of their population between 1988 and 1990, the worst years of the gold rush.[174] Beyond immediate degradation of their population, the environmental effects of gold mining would affect Yanomami people for generations to come. Mercury use is common to all types of gold mining and was used throughout the territory. Mercury contamination of the water can continue for decades and finds its way into the water systems of the Yanomami people through their drinking water and their consumption of fish from the now polluted rivers. Consuming mercury can lead to serious, chronic illness and in the most extreme cases may lead to unconsciousness and even death.[175]

Beyond the measurable effects of gold mining, the Yanomami found their traditional society destroyed and their cultural uniqueness suffering. Previously the Yanomami depended on gardens of bananas, manioc and yams supplemented by fishing in their nearby rivers and hunting expeditions. They lived together in villages of *yano* or large communal houses.[176] But gold mining destroyed their vegetation and contaminated their rivers. Significant population loss led to the demoralization of their population and serious disruption in their normal subsistence

[173] Albert 1993: 2.
[174] MacMillan 1995: 48.
[175] MacMillan 1995:50.
[176] Hemming 2003: 483-484.

routines. The result was "...a deadlock: the Indians became dependent on the prospectors just when the latter no longer needed to buy the former's goodwill."[177] This represents a power shift that marked the beginning of the destruction of the Yanomami culture. The Yanomami were no longer in control of their territories. The result was an open and unapologetic takeover of their deep rainforest territories. In the late 1980s, anthropologist Alcida Ramos visited Yanomami territory only to find it fundamentally destroyed and "apocalyptical". The gold miners had

> ...turned the once placid Paapiú into a deafening and unrelenting pandemonium. This mud airstrip...continuously plowed up by airplanes, trampled by interminable waves of garimpeiros, by bosses of airplanes and mining sites, traders, prostitutes and Yanomami of both sexes and all ages, was the stage of the most tragic chapters in the short history of Yanomami contact with the outside world [and] ... made one congressman gasp: 'This is a Vietnam!'[178]

The shift that the world witnessed within the Yanomami community is one similar to the disaster struck by first contacts. Never did modern anthropologists dream such degradation to a culture and territory could occur in the twentieth century. The scene described by Alcida Ramos above marks a decidedly different territory than the pristine rainforest the Yanomami had inhabited prior to the 1980s. This is yet another example of economic development trumping environmental and cultural protection. The gold rush represents an unregulated free for all that led to the entire destruction of the Yanomami territory.

From this tragedy there have risen activists for the Yanomami cause both from within the indigenous community itself and the international arena. Both platforms are dedicated to keeping illegal gold miners out of the geographic area in an effort to protect the remaining Yanomami territory and culture. However, the case of the Yanomami has especially involved local indigenous activists who have taken a stand to define and defend the demands of the indigenous

[177] Albert 1993:48.
[178] Ramos 1995: xvi.

movement. This is a particularly significant step because of the vacuum that exists within Brazil: despite the construction of indigenous protection agencies, groups such as the Yanomami find their rights continually violated by these very organizations. The leader of the Yanomami, Davi Kopenawa has spoken to the ability of the indigenous people to speak and have their own voice, they do not need external organizations to speak on their behalf: "But we are people, just like you: people with blood and mouths to speak. I am a Yanomami who struggles, who suffers many dangers to confront...to win land for my people to live in."[179]

Particularly in Brazil it has been the role of the burgeoning indigenous movement to define their goals themselves and depend on indigenous activists such as Kopenawa to lead the way. Kopenawa has traveled abroad to spread the message of the Yanomami plight against the gold miners who have contaminated their water, taken their land and cut down their trees.[180] In response he has emphasized the uniqueness of the Yanomami and that they themselves must form their own future. In describing the Yanomami and their differences from the rest of society he stated: "I can tell you our way of living and teach you our language, but we have a different way of thinking. We think as well as speak differently. It's difficult for you to understand."[181] With these words, Kopenawa makes it clear that it should be the unique indigenous peoples who step into the vacuum that Brazil has created in terms of protecting indigenous rights.

The result of indigenous activism has been the creation of localized groups that have established unity amongst themselves. There exists 109 of such local groups whose leaders are activists much like Kopenawa himself. The umbrella organization, CAPOIB, attempts to coordinate the various organizations without the power to implement centralized decisions. This decentralized structure more closely parallels the actual structure of Brazilian Amazon groups.

[179] Kopenawa 1991. http://www.aaanet.org/committees/cfhr/rptyano5.htmlivepage.apple.com. 13 February 2011.
[180] Kopenawa 1992. http://multinationalmonitor.org/hyper/issues/1992/09/mm0992_12.html. 13 February 2011.
[181] Davis 2009.

"The pattern of multiplying entities appears to more closely echo the social reality of indigenous Brazil: a profusion of small societies, living relatively independent lives, with few common concerns apart from the underlying predicament of being Indian in a country which strongly favors cultural homogeneity."[182] The national organization is an attempt to add structure to the many independent organizations that exist within the indigenous political resistance organizations.

**Modern-Day Challenges and New Transnational Resistance**

The increase in awareness of indigenous issues in the international arena has changed the game for indigenous political and social movement groups. Historically, these groups have unsuccessfully depended upon government institutions such as FUNAI which are more focused on acculturation and integration of indigenous groups, hence defining the Indigenous as institutionalized in the political, economic and social realm as inferior than the larger society. The opening of the political space in the 1980s, post-military dictatorship, shifted the attention to local NGOs and the eventual internationalization of the indigenous issue. There has been a rise in international involvement and presence in indigenous communities. The result has been the construction of a middle ground, a new space for communication between international actors and indigenous groups: "...pragmatic, mutually constructed accommodations that do not fit a simple rubric of domination, subordination, and acculturation.... It is instead a political space, an arena of intercultural communication, exchange and joint political action."[183] The discourse surrounding indigenous protection has shifted from acculturation to joint communication and decision-making in an effort to be a collective voice for the sustainability and respect of the indigenous way of life..

[182] Ramos 2007: 7
[183] Conklin and Graham 2009: 696.

The biggest step forward for Brazilian indigenous groups has been the integration of the international environmental protection with native rights protection. The worldwide conservation movement sees the indigenous movement as overlapping in goals and methods. The result has been social action that includes international awareness campaigns that "...had the effect of bringing international attention to the plight of indigenous people in Brazil and along with it international pressure, placing the issue on the policy agenda."[184] On the ground local indigenous groups use protest to bring urgency to the issue and heighten national and international awareness. The fundamental understanding that has resulted because of the joining of these two movements is that environmental degradation also has social costs, particularly related to extractivism within indigenous populated areas. The environmental movement has concluded that "...extractivism is ecologically destructive and keeps the countries of the global South in misery, dependence and underdevelopment."[185] Not only does this extractivism have negative effects for biodiversity but it also has severe social costs that are specifically felt by the lower echelons of the world's societies.

The resulting movement is one that has joined environmental activists with native rights activists and centered on specific, media catching causes. One of the rallying issues that have captured international attention to the indigenous cause is the construction of the Belo Monte Dam in the Xingu River area of Brazil. The project of the dam was first brought up during the military dictatorship in 1975 and its original plans would have flooded a total area of 22,000 km2 and affect 12 indigenous groups. In the case of the Paquicamba, their entire territory would be flooded.**[186]** This overwhelmingly negative impact has resulted in a wave of indigenous activism joined by international NGOs in a lobbying campaign to stop the dam project. Most notably are

[184] Carvalho 2000: 467.
[185] Ruiz-Marrero 2011.
[186] Carvalho 2006: 257.

the Kayapo Indians, whose territory lies in the affected Xingu River Basin. In 1989, "...the Kayapo led a great rally of 40 indigenous nations at Atlamira against the scheme...The five day rally was extensively covered by national and international media and succeeded in persuading the World Bank to withdraw its planned loan for the construction of the dams."[187] This is a representation of the joining of forces of local indigenous groups with transnational groups with similar goals and views, marking a successful component of the Brazilian indigenous movement.

One of the newest developments in Brazil is its entrance into the commercial soybean production market which has quickly become a large export for Brazil. "Soybean production in Brazil has grown rapidly in recent years, and soybean exports have grown accordingly. Production grew from 18 million metric ton (mmt) in 1987-88 to 51 mmt in 2002-03."[188] This high increase in exports was facilitated by free trade government policies such as the lifting of export taxes on all soy products, free government land tracts in Mato Grosso for soy production and the reduction or elimination of almost all trade barriers.[189] The Brazilian government has encouraged, since the 1990s, the establishment of soy production farms throughout the Matto Grosso tropical region. The benefits are clear: cheap production, high export rate which brings in foreign currency and boosts the Brazilian economy, all in the name of progress. In reality, the increase in recent years has resulted in detrimental effects felt strongly in local areas populated by indigenous groups. As one indigenous Brazilian leader, Aritana Yawalapiti of the Alto Xingu spoke out: "The soy farmers use poison that is washing into the river. The poison ends in the water and more soil as well because in the rainy season the exposed soil falls into the river...This is a huge concern for us"[190]

[187] Turner 2006: 3.
[188] Flaskerud 2003: 3.
[189] Flaskerud 2003: 15.
[190] Sommer 2006.

The Xavante people who have been particularly affected by soy farming have had protests and even begun an organization to demand the exit of soy farmers from their area. They cite the environmental and social costs of soy farming of being extremely negative. Soy is largely responsible for the disappearance of flora and fauna diversity in the region which in turn is detrimental to the Xavante who depend on this diversity for their livelihoods: "In addition to physical nourishment, the natural environment is fundamental to indigenous spiritual and ceremonial life."[191] Not only does the loss of diversity negatively affect their diet, it will lead to the end of important ceremonies and rituals.

Soy farming and the Belo Monte dam are examples of Brazil's commitment to economic progress even when it means environmental degradation and the destruction of their native inhabitants' traditional cultures. The movement that has risen in opposition is a response that focuses more heavily on indigenous activists then other counterpart movements. The vacuum that exists in the national arena for indigenous rights organizations is filled by localized groups who have formed their own communal alliances with transnational groups and individual foreign activists.

**Conclusion**

Forced acculturation has been the reoccurring theme of the Brazilian indigenous story. The Brazilian Indian has been seen as a "child"or a lesser member of modern Brazilian society that must be barred from full membership in the form of citizenship. This idea was manifested by the IPS which publicly supported and practiced the civilization of indigenous people. This left a vacuum in the political space for the protection of indigenous people. Brazilian indigenous groups are more diverse and occupy a significant space of territory, making it difficult to form

[191] Graham 2006.

the kind of national, unified movements found in Ecuador in the form of CONAIE and Peru with AIDESEP.

In contrast with these other countries, the Brazilian indigenous movement has been centered around issue-based, transnational organizing. These issues: gold-mining in Yanomami territory, the Belo Monte Dam and most recently, soy farming in Mato Grosso have formed the backbone of indigenous organization and demonstrate what that means in a Brazilian context. These indigenous causes draw international attention and lead to partnerships between NGOs, transnational groups and local indigenous activists. They are centered on fighting against encroachment on indigenous territory in the name of economic progress, which places profit above all else. Economic progress, is just another form of forced acculturation. Although such policy is no longer officially endorsed by government sponsored departments, such as the IPS, it is the true policy of the government's dedication to modernization, progress and development in the Amazon region. In fighting against these specific cases of economic progress, the indigenous people have used their partnerships with international NGOs as momentum to broaden their demands and are working towards finding citizenship in a new transnational state, not limited or defined by an exclusive nation-state.

## CHAPTER FIVE

## THE EFFECT OF NEOLIBERAL POLICIES ON INDIGENOUS PEOPLE IN ECUADOR, PERU AND BRAZIL

The overlying theme of this thesis has been revealed to be indigenous people acting against the negative forces of progress, in its many different forms. This constructed idea of progress has been incredibly destructive in Latin America by playing a role in destroying entire indigenous societies. Progress has become a tool in imposing a unique civilization as the only path towards economic development, and general improvement of society. Indigenous people, who exist outside this particular vision and form of social organizing are considered backwards.[192] This has given rise to a government policy of acculturation, particularly demonstrated by FUNAI policy in Brazil, the idea that indigenous people must move forward by integrating themselves with the rest of modern society. This reinforces the idea of indigenous people as being "backwards" or somehow lesser than other sectors of society and reveals the thought behind their historic and structural marginalization. In order to better their position and gain a more prominent role in society indigenous people are expected to join and accept the values associated with modernity: economic progress, increased value placed on commodities, consumerism and homogenization. This policy of acculturation not only ignores the uniqueness and value of indigenous cultures but reveres modern society as better.[193] This idea of modernity places the most value on economic development and progress, which has consistently been proven an enemy of traditional indigenous cultures, lives and livelihoods.

[192] Bruckman 2011: 603.
[193] Ramos 1998.

This forced acculturation and practice of imposing external society on indigenous groups is not a new phenomenon, but rather a continuation of the policies that existed during the colonial period. When the Spanish first controlled Latin America, the oppression and marginalization of indigenous people was direct and obvious. In Ecuador, Indians had to pay tribute to the Spanish up to the year 1857 in a glaring example of their lack of equal rights with the rest of society.[194] Indigenous people were often exploited for their labor, in addition to their payment of tribute. They occupied the bottom rungs of society in a highly hierarchal, status-based colonial society. This construction of a hierarchy based on racial identities and discrimination of indigenous people in colonial times created the precedent for continued racial tensions in the following five decades of history in Latin America.[195] Indigenous people, because of their racial background, were consistently considered lesser than other sectors of society. Moving up in society or becoming more "modern" was directly related with achieving a different racial status. This upper movement is of course a form of acculturation. Indigenous people were expected to desire to integrate themselves with higher racial status people if they wanted a better economic and social status. What this hierarchal structure did was create an important precedent for the indigenous people: societal expectation that indigenous people would desire to modernize and give up their traditional cultures and land as a way to progress and move up in society.[196]

The obstacles faced by indigenous people in the three countries examined in this thesis have their basis in common colonial history. The colonial structure did give way to the construction of individual nation-states but while the process was full of rhetoric focused around Western ideals such as equal rights, liberty and freedom, this did not extend to marginalized

[194] O'Connor 2007: 5.
[195] Galeano 1997.
[196] Bruckman 2011: 603.

indigenous people.[197] The construction of a nation state is founded upon creating a national identity that is relatively homogenized. In Ecuador, Peru and Brazil, the indigenous population was an actual obstacle to the creation of this unified identity. These populations were proof that these nations were not uni-national but actually had large populations that fit into different ethnic and racial categories and even had completely different life styles and value systems than other sectors of society. These countries have dealt with these paradoxes in a convoluted often contradictory manner. In Brazil, this manifests itself int the fact that while government policy officially endorses acculturation of indigenous people, they are barred from full citizenship.[198] In Peru, this has manifested in an even more extreme scenario. President Alan Garcia has angrily called indigenous groups "backwards" people who are intentionally obstructing economic progress for Peru. He has manipulated the national consciousness to see indigenous people as lesser people, who should join the rest of Peruvian civil society in their desire to develop and achieve economic progress.[199] In reality, this very development will only truly benefit the upper echelons of Peruvian capitalist society.

It is in response to this notion of the Latin American nation as a uninational, homogenous society that each of the three indigenous movements examined have focused on demanding recognition of their countries as plurinational. Rather than projecting an image upon the indigenous population, they desire to create a new society in which diverse identities have a place and a role. This creation of a plurinational state, which is the cornerstone of movements in Peru and Ecuador, is a deconstruction of the nation-state and in doing so contradicts and rejects modernity. Instead of desiring to acculturate or integrate themselves into a uninational, homogenous society, indigenous people want the nation to recognize there are more than a single

[197] O'Connor 2007: 5-7.
[198] Ramos: 1998.
[199] *Democracy Now* 2009

identity within their society.[200] Such a recognition is a considerable step towards the inclusion of all ethnic identities in a society as having equal rights and is a positive step towards protecting indigenous groups.

The creation of the unilateral nation-state foreshadowed the disaster to be struck by neoliberalism, a period in which indigenous rights were particularly violated. Indigenous people joined other sectors of society in marginalized, forgotten positions as neoliberalism exacerbated the inequalities of society. The trend in Latin America during the 1970s was a push towards a new neoliberal order, which defined the political, economic *and* social spheres by free-market principles.[201] The spread of neoliberalism meant the privatization of Latin American industry, the disappearance of government-funded social services and, most importantly, a free and clear path for U.S. companies to invest in Latin American economies.[202] The result was a general opening up of the Latin American economy. State-owned industries were practically gifted to private, foreign investors. In the case of Peru, the liberalization of the economy under Fujimori ushered in the catastrophic oil concessions that we see today in the Peruvian Amazon.

The creation of the IMF began the policing of Latin American economies, who found themselves in serious imbalanced trades and mountains of foreign debt. In Ecuador, this mounting debt reached $18.9 billion in 2002. The IMF can therefore use this debt as a tool for manipulating the Ecuadorian state to continue to endorse unregulated oil exploration. Foreign investors can continue to reap large profits from Ecuadorian oil. In one specific case, the IMF refused to continue loaning money if Ecuador did not agree to creating an oil pipeline: a pipeline that runs directly through Yasuní territory.[203] The IMF continually states development of the

[200] AIDESEP: 2009; CONAP: 1992.
[201] Silva 2009: 16.
[202] Chomsky and McChesney, 1999: 76.
[203] Finer and Huta: 2005.

private oil sector as a prerequisite for their loans to Ecuador. This did not bode well for indigenous people, whose lands has already fallen prey to the unregulated companies seeking their resources. National governments, because of their mounting debt were forced to exploit and over-exploit in order to tackle debt, attempt to grow their economies, and even as a way to tackle poverty in this neoliberal system.[204] As a result, even as some oil companies found their way back into national hands, exploitation didn't stop but rather continued in a desperate attempt to fulfill a country's duties in an already lost game. It is for this reason that many governments, even those touting a leftist pro-indigenous stance, find themselves forced to compromise in situations which, in the eyes of the indigenous, are truly not comprisable. Lula, former president of Brazil for example has been lauded as a leader of the New Socialist Latin America. He is a leader who held a middle position in a polarized continent. His worker party background and social democrat policies allowed him to gain and retain popular support. At the same time, he didn't completely join the Chavez anti-US camp and kept up relatively good relations with the world's superpower. Many on the left and center-of-left accepted and embraced him. However, Lula, like so many before him, chose to compromise on one of the most crucial issues facing indigenous people in his country: the Belo Monte Dam. This dam proposes a flooding of an area in the Xingu River basin, a protected indigenous territory and home to the Kayapó indigenous people. This flooding would not only force them from their territory, but force them to abandon their current lifestyles.[205] Lula's turn from leftist president to supporter of the dam project is an example of the reality of Latin American politics. Often, the states are forced to make choices that are more focused on pleasing external forces such as foreign investors or the IMF rather than answer to the most oppressed members of their society: the indigenous population.

[204] Finer and Huta: 2005.
[205] Turner 2006: 2-16.

The response to neoliberalism has been a wave of popular uprisings and mass mobilizations. This is because in reality market society does not lead to stable social order. Its very foundation invites social tensions that can explode into mobilizations and popular uprisings that unite against the destruction that is wrought upon a society by an unregulated market, where humans are reduced to the dimension of commodities.[206] Neoliberalism naturally invites social tensions because its instatement is a painful process which exacerbates inequalities. Neoliberalism simultaneously deconstructs important social services that serve as the safety net for the most impoverished sectors of the society and creates opportunities for the wealthiest to increase their profit margins. The indigenous movements in the Amazon play a crucial role in the midst of other uprisings in the region which have similar agendas. Their solutions, direct social actions and protests can serve as examples, or even models, for other anti-neoliberal social movements particularly in the region.

While the neoliberal policies were implemented across Latin America, and mass mobilizations in response can be seen across the region, the story reads differently for each individual nation-state in the region. Each has its own manifestation of this shift towards more free-market principles and each chapter explains this very relationship through the lenses of a different example. While a theoretical criticism of neoliberalism is at the foundation of each chapter in this thesis, it is veiled by a discussion of specific cases of neoliberal modeled industries acting with impunity.

In Ecuador this neoliberal model is the oil industry. Ecuador's government sees oil as the answer to all its economic problems. The oil industry does have a high revenue-generating status and for that reason Ecuador has leaned heavily on the profits to sustain social services in the country. The result has been highly unregulated exploration and invasion of indigenous territory.

[206] Polanyi 2001.

The government is blinded by the profits it generates and sees no other option. Indigenous people laying claims to the territory or lodging complaints about the oil companies are seen as obstacles to the economic progress that could be attained from increased oil exploration. This situation culminated in the oil spills wrought upon the Amazon by Chevron: the subject of the current lawsuit against Chevron-Texaco by the part of the Ecuadorian indigenous population. The Ecuadorian government allowed the company to function unregulated in the Amazon and Chevron took full advantage. They felt they had to answer to no one and there were no structures available to check on Chevron's actions in the area. The result was widespread oil spills and catastrophic environmental damages. Those who suffered as a result were the people of the community: Wilfredo who saw his beloved forest swallowed by contamination in the name of profit.

In Peru, the result of such free reign for the oil industry resulted in an even bigger tragedy: the massacre at Bagua. Indigenous people, who have already seen enormous portions of their rainforest disappear into the hands of oil companies, were peacefully protesting a law that would allow for even more exploration--without indigenous approval. These protests escalated into violence and then death. This massacre by the hands of the Peruvian government represents the measures the state will go to to keep the status quo. The profits generated by the oil found in the Amazon outweigh the protection of the lives and dignity of their indigenous population.

These examples are the backbone of this thesis. Through chronicling the specific atrocities wrought upon the indigenous population, the inherent flaws of neoliberalism in Latin America can be seen. Deregulation leaves no one accountable for the actions of companies who see the pursuit of profit as outweighing everything else. The basic rights of indigenous people to land, their lives, clean water and sufficient food are essentially ignored and even violated. In this

vacuum left by governments who do not protect indigenous people, it has been up to indigenous people to form movements and organizations to begin to keep powerful companies accountable for their actions and to counteract the negative effects of neoliberalism. In the face of such adversity, these indigenous movements have truly ushered in a new period of anti-neoliberal mobilization and allude to continued movements in the future.

The Amazonian indigenous movement overall has experienced considerable action in recent years and has captured the attention of governments, the public and international organizations. This growing political mobilization and continued successes are largely the results of alliances between indigenous activists and various sectors of the larger civil and political society. Indigenous activists work closely with their allies, commonly international activists themselves, sometimes as mediators with the national government or even international forces (such as the United Nations or the media).[207] In the case of the Chevron oil spill, as the documentary *Crude* shows, the incredible success of the Ecuadorian indigenous groups is largely due to the alliances they have made with lawyer activists, and alternative media sources who have revealed the story to the general public. The public outrage that has been generated plays a part in holding Chevron accountable for their actions.[208] With the issue reaching national, and even international levels of attention, they are no longer able to hide their mistakes. In this case, and in others, the alliance between local indigenous leaders and activists in the international sphere are absolutely crucial to the successes that have been made.

Beyond allying with larger forces, there exists the possibility for increased collective action on a transnational level by creating more alliances at the indigenous level. Indigenous groups have similar attributes and their movements have similar goals beyond the local level.

[207] Fischer 2009: 30.
[208] Hinton 2010; Córdoba and Sebastian, 1999: 14-20.

Indigenous movements have the opportunity to collectively act. There is a need and a possibility for increased *unity.* Indigenous groups face similar adversaries and occuppy a similar, oppressed, position in society. It is crucial to remember that underneath the trappings of their different stories, lies a common goal, a shared history.

The three indigenous movements focused on do indeed come together at some points, diverge, and come together again. While it is impossible to qualify their work as a movement and determine the significance for the future, it is overwhelmingly clear that indigenous movements that come from the Amazon will continue to play a role in alternative politics and social movements in the years to come. Indigenous peoples provide a counterbalance to the foreign investors and unregulated industries that find their way into their territories. They are an alternative to modern society and to capitalism. The very core of their society conflicts with the values of our own world. What we see is a different value system: they choose subsistence over consumerism, human life over commodities. They see nature not as something separated from themselves either as something that must be conquered or protected, but rather as a part of themselves. This very quality of unity and balance with nature was the reason that indigenous societies have continued, offering an alternative. "Harmony with nature and a communal approach to life ensured the survival of ancient indigenous values despite five centuries of persecution and contempt."[209] It is the strength of these indigenous cultures in providing alternatives to modern society, alternatives in reality that we all seek, that have allowed them to survive in the face of adversity and to form such a significant social movement.

For those of us who see the indigenous path as an alternative to the faults and downfalls of modern society, it is important to guarantee the survival of the groups and to support their efforts as a political movement. They are struggling to be seen and recognized. As the years pass

[209] Galeano 1997: 34.

they continue to be acknowledged and now play a dominant role in social movements throughout Latin America. These indigenous movements through their shared history show us what it means to have a true collective identity. Although we may not all share a common history with indigenous people, we share a common goal and a common vision for the future and we are therefore encompassed by the movement. It is fitting therefore, to end with Zapatista leader, Commandanta Ana María's statements on indigenous unity:

> ...Behind us are the same simple and ordinary men and women that are found in all ethnic and racial groups, that paint themselves in all colors, that speak in all languages and that live in all places.
>
> The same forgotten men and women.
>
> The same excluded people.
>
> The same people who are not tolerated
>
> The same people who are persecuted

We are the same as you. Behind us is you.[210]

[210] Ana María 1996: 23-4.

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