The Fragmentation of the Indigenous Movement in Ecuador

Perspectives on the Tension between Class and Ethnicity

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Abstract

Since the first years of the 21st century, the Ecuadorian indigenous movement, classified as the most overwhelming social actor since its emergence in the mid 1980s, finds itself in crises, with its principal organizations marked by tensions and conflicts. With a departure in the fragmentation of the indigenous movement, the context of the study is the impact of issues related to the concepts of class and ethnicity. In order to achieve a deeper understanding of the topic, the approach is based on a comparative study of different historical periods. The theoretical part of the study mainly focuses on analysing the concept of social movement in relation to indigenous movement. By comparing different periods, the study seeks to demonstrate that the inter-relationship between class and ethnicity has changed due to the context. For example, the revival of once-impotent leftist parties and movements has altered the relations of power and the incentives that structured past linkages between the indigenous movement and the political left. Thus, due to the meteoric rise of Rafael Correa and his radical political project, the indigenous movement is confronted with a new kind of challenge. In this context, the concepts of plurinationality and interculturality have emerged and further polarized the positions both between the left and the indigenous movement and between the two indigenous organizations: CONAIE and FENOCIN. In light of these aspects, the ambition of this study is to emphasize the importance of highlighting the concepts of class and ethnicity, when analysing the cause of the current fragmentation of the indigenous movement in Ecuador.

Keywords
Fragmentation, class, ethnicity, indigenous movement, social movement, plurinationality, interculturality, CONAIE, FENOCIN, Rafael Correa, leftist wave, neoliberalism
# Contents

1. **Introduction** .......................................................... 1  
   1.1 Objective and questions ............................................. 4  
   1.2 Limits of study and periodisation .................................. 6  

2. **Methodology** .......................................................... 7  
   2.1 Interviews ..................................................................... 8  
   2.2 Organization of the study ............................................... 9  

3. **Theoretical Framing** .................................................... 11  
   3.1 Different perspectives of ethnicity and class ...................... 13  
   3.2 The "newness" of the new social movement ........................... 14  
   3.3 Indigenism and Neo-indigenism: perspectives on class and ethnicity ................. 17  

4. **Presentation of the empirical chapter** ............................... 20  
   4.1 The breeding grounds for indigenous mobilisation and organizing ................. 21  
   4.1.2 Populism and other historical structures .......................... 21  
   4.2 The road toward the foundation of FENOCIN .......................... 22  
   4.2.1 The road toward the foundation of CONAIE ....................... 23  
   4.3 Ambiguous effects of the democratisation process .................. 24  
   4.3.1 The development of the indigenous movement in a neoliberal context .......... 25  
   4.3.2 Decisive events between 1996-2006 ............................... 27  
   4.4 The re-emergence of the left: perspectives on personalist leadership ............... 28  
   4.4.1 The meteoric rise of Rafael Correa .................................. 30  
   4.5 Plurinationality and interculturality .................................. 31  
   4.5.1 Background .................................................................... 31  
   4.5.2 Definitions and points of conflict .................................. 32  

5. **Analisis** ........................................................................ 35  
   5.1 Perspectives on the role of the context to a social movement ......................... 35  
   5.2 The compatibility of plurinationality and interculturality in the present context .... 38  
   5.3 The Correa-effect: polarization versus expectations .............................. 40  

6. **Conclusions** ............................................................... 42  

7. **References** ................................................................. 44  
   Interviews ............................................................................ 48
1. Introduction

Due to the recent political transformation of the Ecuadorian society, the indigenous movement has been confronted with new kinds of conflicts and challenges. With a focus on the two indigenous organizations – CONAIE (Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities in Ecuador) and FENOCIN (National Federation of Indigenous, Peasant, and Black Organizations) - this study deals with the indigenous movement and its fragmentation by highlighting some of the tensions that emerged in the wake of this process. Ecuador has experienced several rather radical changes of political, economic and social nature during the last decades. Like most of its Latin American neighbours many of these changes are closely related to the relatively recent transition to democracy. In the midst of this context of political, economic and social turmoil, emerged the most powerful indigenous movement on the continent, and, indeed, turned into one of, if not the most, important political actor of the marginalized populace in the Ecuadorian society during this period; an actor at the national political level that the traditional parties and elite had to listen to and negotiate with. Since the first years of the 21st century, however, the Ecuadorian indigenous movement rather has been associated with epithets such as, crises and fragmentation, with its principal organizations marked by tensions, conflicts, and internal divisions. Moreover, the leftist wave that flew across the continent during the past decade resulted in a radical shift of its political landscape. The ambition of this study is to analyse in what way the recent shift to leftist government has affected said fragmentation within the indigenous movement.

Several scholars have studied this remarkable transformation of the indigenous movement, that is, how it developed from a powerful and unifying voice among the popular sectors in the society, in the 1990s, into a movement stricken with serious problems related to issues of legitimacy, credibility, populism, and, not least, internal fragmentation, in the 2000s. The majority of these studies tend to focus on the relationship between the fragmentation of the indigenous movement and the effects of neoliberal policies, within a context of political, social and economic crises. Olaf Kaltmeier (2007:195), for example, states that neoliberal governments neutralized indigenous mobilization through a strategy of ´political ethnification´, in which the indigenous organizations were given privileged posts within the state apparatus in order to separate them from the “true” political space. In light of these facts, the continuation of fragmentation in a leftist context appears to be paradoxical in view of the historically close relationship between Ecuador´s indigenous people and the political left (see, for example: Van Cott 2007, and, not least, Marc Becker 2008). An important aspect of that relationship, however, is that it has been intimately related to the contemporary context and, as such, been based on a common objective, that is: the struggle against the political regime at the time,
whether authoritarian, populist or neoliberal. Since 2006, however, as Ecuador for the first time\(^1\) elected a socialist government with an explicit anti-neoliberal agenda, that aspect has disappeared.

According to some observers, the indigenous movement in Ecuador has gone through a period of relative weakness and internal division from roughly 2004 to 2010 (Zamosc 2007). By focusing on the traditionally tight relations between the left and the indigenous people in Ecuador, this research aims to analyse how a leftist government whose agenda seems to coincide with the agenda of the indigenous movement can be linked to the issue of fragmentation. Is it, for example, possible that the shift from a neoliberal to a leftist regime, in fact, triggered tensions that previously had been downplayed for strategic reasons to arise between historical allies? The very same phenomenon can, in my opinion, as well constitute an important factor to analyse in relation to the ongoing fragmented situation within the indigenous movement itself. In that case it seems like the image of unity that, according to Lucero (2008:32), characterized the indigenous movement during the 1980s and 1990s might have been built upon a very thin foundation. That is, a unity that primarily was based on the struggle against neoliberalism, which, momentarily, smoothed down intrinsic historical and ideological differences. Through an analysis that focuses on how the fragmentation of the indigenous movement in a leftist context might be related to an increased tension between the concepts of class and ethnicity, this study does not intend to argue against the conclusions of the scholars mentioned above, but rather to be a compliment and recommendation of further inquiries on the topic in question.

As a result of the contemporary neoliberal policies, indigenous peoples – now as much protagonists as objects – were redefined from marginalized (class) subjects into “ethnical” citizens (Van Cott 2007). In this context, emerged as a more or less logical consequence the concepts of *plurinationality* and *interculturality*. In contrast to other concepts these originated from within the indigenous movement (Walsh 2009), however, in the course of the last decade the interpretation and meaning of these concepts have divided the indigenous movement, particularly as concerns the relationship between CONAIE and the second largest indigenous organization FENOCIN (National Federation of Peasant, Indigenous and Black Organizations). That is, CONAIE has emphasized the implementation of plurinationality whereas FENOCIN considers that the implementation of interculturality is more important to achieve. The concepts of plurinationality and interculturality will be more thoroughly described and analysed later on in this study.

These organizations represent two different branches within the indigenous movement that derive from their background as a class based (FENOCIN), respectively, ethnic based (CONAIE) movement. An illustrative example of this distinction is presented by what sectors in society these organizations

\(^1\) Between 1988-1992, Rodrigo Borja was president of a Social Democratic government. However, when elected president, Borja introduced the first serious neoliberal policies (see Sanín 2006:274).
aim to represent whereas FENOCIN allows a more diversified representation, CONAIE is an organization that exclusively represents indigenous communities (Becker 2008:169). The reason why these organizations are so intimately connected with either a class- or an ethnic identity, is mainly explained by contemporary contextual factors that predominated in the society in which they were founded. Consequently, FENOCIN has historically had close ties with the left, and emerged in the 1970s under an authoritarian regime, that is, in a society that, in many ways, was characterized by an ideological division of the Cold War. As a result, it became caught up in the struggles for land and social rights, thus, emphasizing a class-based focus. CONAIE, on the other hand, was founded in 1986, in a context of democratisation and neoliberalism, in which ethnic rights were a top priority at the political agenda, and, not least, leftist influence was weak.

To sum up, the democratisation process and the dissatisfaction of neoliberal policies seem to have contributed to a favourable context in which the ability to combine both a class and an ethnic perspective were incorporated into the then primary objective: the struggle against democratic deficits produced by market oriented reforms. The new political situation, however, seems to have had an obstructive effect on this ability. Nevertheless, in order to understand the current fragmentation of the indigenous movement it is important to take both old historical structures and political phenomena, as well as the recent political development into consideration. In other words, neither historical structures nor notorious concepts that traditionally have played a significant part in Ecuadorian politics such as populism and clientilism have disappeared as a result of modernization and democratisation. On the contrary, these phenomena have been able to transform and adapt to the new conditions. This parallel process of change and continuity in which the indigenous movement has emerged and evolved will constitute an important background context of this study. In other words, there are obviously different explanations as to why the indigenous movement gradually has lost its influence over national politics and therefore also to its former capacity as the principal interlocutory for both indigenous and non-indigenous among lower class sectors in the Ecuadorian society. This study argues that the tension between class and ethnicity is an essential factor for an analysis that aims to explicate the processes that have contributed to this development, both in the past and in the present.

2 The two largest indigenous groups in Ecuador are Quichua and Shuar. The Quichua’s constitute 85-90% of the total indigenous population and is mainly situated in the highlands, whereas the Shuar’s are situated in the lowlands. In addition, there are approximately 10 other smaller indigenous groups (source: Lucero in Equity & Development World Development Report 2006).
1.1 Objective and questions

The objective of the present study is to analyse the fragmentation of the indigenous movement by highlighting the aspects, and tensions, of class and ethnicity. More precisely, with a departure in the two organizations CONAIE and FENOCIN, it aims to build up a structural framework in which the interrelationship between the concepts of class, ethnicity, interculturality and plurinationality are analysed in relation to said fragmentation. Moreover, through approaching the topic of fragmentation from a different perspective, this study tries to contribute to recent research about the causes of the ongoing fragmentation of the indigenous movement. From a perspective that centres on the tension between the concepts of class and ethnicity, this study aims at elucidating why the fragmentation of the indigenous movement could proceed within a leftist context.

The fact that the emergence of the indigenous movement coincided with and was as most powerful and influential during the neoliberal period in Ecuadorian politics can, in my opinion, be conceived as both a paradox and a natural course of events. Nevertheless, as mentioned in the introduction, according to several scholars there is a clear relationship between the fragmentation of the indigenous movement and the neoliberal policies. Consequently, neoliberalism can from this point of view be attributed to both the emergence, and the fragmentation, of the indigenous movement. In light of these facts I would argue that the impact of neoliberal policies had some unintentional effects that, at least, initially benefited the emergence and unprecedented strength of the indigenous movement whereas it provided its political opponents with a clear enemy. In other words, a platform was set in which the common denominator was based on the struggle against neoliberalism, which created an objective around which different organizations and social movements could unite. Based on this context, I agree with those who claims that class and ethnicity occasionally have appeared as two faces of the same coin, and thus been converging toward a seemingly synthetic common vision (see, for example Becker 2008:15).

With regard to this “fusion” of class and ethnicity, José Sánchez Parga states that the political results achieved by the indigenous movement, in a historical perspective, have been intimately related to its ability to combine ethnic- and class related demands - the first made it possible to radicalise their positions and confrontations, chiefly, against the government, the second created openings of inter-class alliances as well as with other social movements (2006:87). Drawing on this analysis, I find the fusion of class and ethnicity to be closely related to a historical context that, in fact, lasted until recently. Nevertheless, the development since 2006 casts new light on this situation, that is, instead of fusion there is now what appears to be a tension between the two concepts. With a departure in the statements mentioned above, this study seeks to explain whether the transition from an authoritarian,
via a neoliberal, to the current socialist government, instead of strengthening rather have triggered tensions to resurface between former allies, as well as contributed to the recent split between CONAIE and FENOCIN.

In light of this complex and, in part, paradoxical survey of the topic, this study aims to point out the relationship between the indigenous movement and the political left, by paying specific attention to whether it has contributed to increasing tensions of class and ethnic related issues. Several writers have, in various and contradictory wordings, interpreted how this historically close relationship has influenced the development of the indigenous movement in Ecuador (see, for example: Becker 2008 and Korovkin 2007). Nevertheless, to my knowledge, there is no deeper and more detailed study that focuses on the importance of analysing whether the fragmentation within the indigenous movement, that is in a context of leftist government, in fact, could be related to said relationship. This study aims to illustrate how all of these aspects are associated with the concepts of class and ethnicity, and above all, constitute important elements that are essential in order to understand the underlying causes of the fragmentation of indigenous movement.

Thus, with a departure in the traditionally close relations between the left and the indigenous people, the hypothesis of this study is based on what, at first sight appears to be a paradox, that is, that there is a relationship between the ongoing fragmentation within the indigenous movement and the emergence of a leftist government. To sum up, the main questions of this study are:

- Is it possible to relate the fragmentation of the indigenous movement to increased tensions of class and ethnicity in a context of a leftist regime?
- In what way could the distinction between class and ethnicity be linked with the more recently emerged concepts interculturality and plurinationality?
- In what way has the emergence of leftist government influenced the approach of the indigenous movement regarding ethnic related demands?
1.2 Limits of study and periodisation

As mentioned, I have limited this research to focus on how the concepts of class and ethnicity have affected the current fragmentation of the indigenous movement. As such, it is important to emphasise that the development of these concepts not is a result of an isolated phenomenon. That is, they do not act or develop alone, but are influenced by reforms and other processes, old as well as new. Due to the limited scope of this study only some of these processes will be dealt with more in depth whereas, for example, the influence of populism, clientilism, colonial structures, and decentralization are only touched upon in general terms. Nevertheless, as this study argues that the current fragmentation of the indigenous movement is intimately connected with historical processes and policies, it will pursue a comparative analysis of three different periods ranging from the 1930s till the present, with a particular focus on the two last periods. The reason for deciding on this division is to illustrate the underlying causes of both the interconnection and the tensions that have existed and still exist between class- and ethnic-based movements, and how this, possibly, can explain the fragmentation that we are witnessing today within the indigenous movement. The first period (1930-1980), therefore, primarily aims to give an introduction of the genesis of a leftist- and ethnic-based relationship. The second period (1980-2006), is characterized by a democritisation process and unprecedented mobilization of an indigenous movement with an ethnic-based agenda whereas leftist movements for different reasons severely declined during the same period. Both these periods are, mainly, linked to a sense of respect, understanding, and fusion of interests and political demands between class- and ethnic-based movements. In other words, they had the same adversary and political enemy in common: the establishment represented by the oligarchy and the traditional political power. That is to say, although the left and the indigenous organizations, due to their mobilizing strength, undoubtedly affected the politics during these periods, they were remotely situated from the real executive power. Finally, the third period aims to explain why tensions related to issues of class and ethnicity appear to have deepened at the same time as a leftist wave flowed through the Latin American continent, which in Ecuador resulted in that a socialist president was elected in 2006.

For these reasons, I argue that tensions between class and ethnicity are important to take into account in order to understand why the indigenous movement in Ecuador (paradoxically?) has been characterized as increasingly fragmentised and debilitated in relation to when it emerged on the political scene in the 1990s. Not least, in light of the current situation, in a context of a leftist government. These statements will be discussed and analysed in the following chapters.
2. Methodology

As noted in the beginning of this study, there is a lot of material and academic research about the phenomenon and development of the indigenous movement in Ecuador, from its political breakthrough at a national level, the implications that followed as a consequence of its political institutionalisation, to its more recent characterization of being both fragmentised and debilitated. The vast majority of this material, however, has focused on the fragmentation of the indigenous movement in relation to neoliberal regimes, whereas, to my knowledge, there are very few detailed and deeper studies of the relationship between the fragmentation and the current leftist regime.

With a departure in the hypothesis that the fragmentation of the indigenous movement today is related to a new political context in which tensions between the concepts of class have been highlighted, I have chosen to pursue, mainly, two different types of approaches. First, I have chosen to compare the two organizations CONAIE and FENOCIN, whereas they represent the two most adequate cases that capture this tension and division within the indigenous movement in Ecuador. I am well aware of the fact that this division comprise a methodological problem, whereas it is not that simple that CONAIE and FENOCIN are organizations that solely are based on ethnicity, respectively class. These concepts have historically merged into each other, among other things, due to the fact that the indigenous movement to a large extent is a rural movement. In order to structure the historical case this study also pursues a comparison of different periods. Through this division of time, it focuses on how the ties between the political left and the indigenous movement has developed in relation to the political context at the time. Thus, it aims to illustrate why a relationship that was strong and more or less frictionless during periods of authoritarian or neoliberal regimes, paradoxically, has changed into a situation that is both polarized and infected since the political regime turned from right to left in 2006. On the basis of these approaches, I argue that it is essential to highlight issues of class and ethnicity in order to understand the fragmentation of the indigenous movement today.

Based on the distinction described above, this study will categorize FENOCIN as an “old” social movement and CONAIE as a “new” social movement. While the former is focused on strategy and the struggle for land and social rights, the latter focuses on identity and the struggle for recognition of cultural values. The concepts of “old” and “new” social movements will be more thoroughly analysed in the theoretical chapter. Moreover, with the aim of deepening the discussion on class and ethnicity, this study will use the concepts of interculturalty and plurinationality as examples of “modernized” expressions of class and ethnicity.
The importance of these concepts is perhaps more explicitly manifested at the local level, as old class-based movements and more recently founded movements have challenged CONAIE’S strong influence on the indigenous vote and support, through a political agenda that has emphasized interculturality over plurinationality. As Rickard Lalander (2010:506) observes, the tensions between the ethnic indigenous perspective and the ideas of interculturality are important factors to consider in light of the social and political divisions in the Imbabura province (the intellectual cradle of the Ecuadorian indigenous movement). In view of these aspects, I argue that the tension that is manifested in these concepts, in many ways, is intimately connected with the dividing-line within the indigenous movement which derives from the concepts of class and ethnicity. In what way these concepts are connected to class and ethnicity will be more thoroughly dealt with in the empirical chapter.

Finally, the selection of the literature is chosen with the aim of taking both Western and locally-based theories and point of views under consideration. Thus, in order to achieve a broader perspective and wider understanding of the topic in question, this study is based on academic studies, books, and articles written by both prestigious international writers and scholars with a clear local connection specialized in this field. Due to the fact that this study focuses on describing and analysing the development of a process in progress, the chosen literature is mainly based on empirical data. Although the literature of the theoretical chapter is less extensive, it constitutes an essential part of the study and aims to build up the framework of the complex of problems that surrounds the topic, in which certain aspects that are relevant are pointed out. Moreover, in order to achieve information of a more specific nature, I have consulted analyses of official documents as well as articles at the internet.

2.1 Interviews

Data gathered during three months of fieldwork in Ecuador in 2008, will constitute an important part of the study. That includes interviews with leaders, members and elected officials of the two indigenous organizations, as well as with specialized scholars and other informed persons on the topic. All of the interviews were of an opened ended and improvised type. With the exception of some main points that I occasionally used in order to lead the interviewee in a certain direction, my intention was to interfere as little as possible in the conversation. Initially, the interviews had a preparatory character, mainly, aimed at widening the context of the topic in general. However, more and more I tried to achieve that the interviewees centred the conversation on specific issues, with the aim of approaching the information from a variety of different perspectives. To sum up, the interviews have had two main objectives: to fill in the empirical “gaps” in the material obtained from secondary sources; to shed light upon the issue in question in more general and personal terms. All of the
interviews were recorded and carried out in Spanish (in the majority of the cases this not was the native language of the interviewee, which is important to take into consideration, with regard to the translation- and transcription process).

It was mainly practical reasons and lack of time that influenced the choice interviewees. Hence, the focus on leaders whereas they were relatively easy to get hold of on the one hand, and the fact that the position as a leader, among other things, means to speak on behalf of the organization, on the other. Nevertheless, I also spoke with several more anonymous grass-roots representatives, which indirectly have had an important impact and contributed to deepen the understanding of the topic. In addition, there is an ethic consideration connected to the choice of interviewees. That is to say, based on the fact that leaders are more accustomed to meet persons such as myself and of being interviewed, considerably reduces the risk that my identity as a “Westerner” influences on their answers. Another important aspect that should be taken into account is the methodological problem that is related to the political conjuncture in which the interviews took place. That is, it should be noted that these interviews were done during a succession of different elections. First, it was a referendum that dealt with voting either for, or against, a new Constitution; after that, the next step was to form a Constituent Assembly; and finally, a couple of months later, in April 2009, waited elections at both, national, regional, and local levels, as well as for president and vice-president to be held. As a consequence, the representatives from CONAIE, FENOCIN and the other organizations that I interviewed appeared to be more polemic and locked in their positions than usual.

2.2 Organization of the study

The study will be divided in three main parts. Part I (Chapter 3) is made up of a theoretical chapter that aims at providing a historical perspective of the complicated relationship between class and ethnicity in a context characterized by enduring historical structures and shifting political conditions. With the objective of detecting some of the origins and underlying causes of this complicated relationship, the chapter focuses on comparing different views within the field of Social Movement theory, and to describe the concept of *indigenism* from two different perspectives. In short, this study argues that in order to understand the increased tension of these concepts in the Ecuadorian society of today, it is imperative to take contextual differences and historical processes into account.

Part II (Chapter 4) presents empirical data on the development of the two organizations, FENOCIN and CONAIE, and of the emergence of the concepts: Interculturality and Plurinationality. With the objective of illustrating how the political rhetoric concerning the concepts of class and ethnicity have
adapted to the political context at the time, an important element of this chapter consists of describing and contrasting the socio-political changes that have occurred in Ecuador during the last decades. Thus, the aim of the chapter coincides with the preceding theoretical, in so far as it explores, from a comparative perspective, how timing, sequence of events and the current political situation have affected the development of the indigenous movement, in both a positive and negative sense. On the basis of this framework, the ambition is to show how the challenges that the indigenous movement are facing today, at least in part, are rooted in the complicated relationship between class and ethnicity. The third and concluding part (Chapter V) will, primarily, focus on the recent transition from a neoliberal regime to a socialist regime. Through an analysis of the collected data, and by going back to the questions in the beginning of this study, it aims to point out in what way the challenges that the indigenous movements are facing today, in a leftist context, not only are more complicated but also intimately related to class and ethnicity.
3. Theoretical Framing

A central point of this study is that the discussion about class and ethnicity is intimately determined by enduring as well as shifting political and social economic structures. Nevertheless, as noted earlier in this study, the most part of the twentieth century did not provide a favourable political climate for political proposals that orientated to ethnic-based demands, instead a type of strategical and contextually imposed fusion between class and ethnicity took place. As a result of the democratisation process, however, a political space was provided in which strategic alliances no longer constituted a necessary must, but rather an opportunity, and, in particular, questions of ethnicity emerged on the political arena and, once and for all, had to be dealt with among the traditional political elite. Through an analytical focus that centres on the following two angles of approach - the close relations between the left and the indigenous people, on the one hand, and the relationship (and tension) between the concepts of class and ethnicity, on the other - this chapter seeks to demonstrate the development of the processes described above from a historical perspective. With a departure in this approach, the ambition of this chapter is to illustrate how perspectives of class and ethnicity have influenced on political processes and academic theories throughout the last century and, as such, are relevant to analyse in order to understand the underlying causes of the fragmentation of the indigenous movement today.

Thus, in view of the specific characteristics that intrinsically are interwoven with the Latin American context, this chapter will point out some aspects within the field of social movement theories in order to elucidate the differences between social movements in general and more ethnic based movements. With respect to the Latin American context in general, and the issues of class and ethnicity in particular, I will focus on the two most influential social movement theories: “Old” social movement theory (Resource Mobilization theory) and New Social Movement theory. In general terms, the approach of the first-mentioned is defined by its focus on strategy, whereas the question of identity has come to define the approach of the latter. A distinction between identity-oriented and strategy-oriented approaches to social movements was first introduced in 1985, and Escobar (Escobar and Alvarez 1992:5) notes that this distinction is now “well established”. In order to avoid misinterpretations, the terms old and new are in this study used in relation to the movements, and not the theories!

The most conspicuous characteristic of a social movement is based on its ability to mobilize vigorous protest campaigns through powerful street manifestations. This characteristic is, however, not enough in order to be defined as a social movement. According to Pablo Ospina, the typical characteristics of a social movement are: it must include a conflict related to social problems which these actors consider
important; in principle, it does not exclude electoral participation, but if they do decide to act from within the political system, it cannot be categorized as a social movement any more but is then transformed into a political party, or electoral apparatus; there is an obvious relationship between a social movement and the “left” whereas its political demands require social organization and collective action in order to be materialized (2008). The indigenous movement, whether ethnic based such as CONAIE, or class based such as FENOCIN, fulfils all of these criteria and can thus be described as a social movement. Nevertheless, due to the proliferation of social movements, based on identity rather than class, which emerged in the 1980s, the concept of “new social movement” was “invented” among certain scholars.

In sum, the reason for highlighting these theories in this study is based on their differences of perspective, that is, the relationship between strategy and class on the one hand, and identity and ethnicity on the other will be analysed. With a departure in these theories that is based on the perspectives of class and ethnicity, a distinction is made between the two indigenous organizations analysed in this study. That is to say, based on the specific characteristics of these organizations, this study will rank CONAIE in the same category as a “new” social movement, and FENOCIN as an organization that is more connected to an “old” social movement.

In addition, this chapter will also touch upon the concepts of indigenism and neo-indigenism. My ambition is to illustrate how these concepts historically are related to the discussion about class and ethnicity, on the one hand, and its symbolic manifestation of how political projects, at certain specific times, have been implemented by the political elite in order to confront the “indigenous issue”, on the other. I argue that there is an interaction between demands from below and policies from above that coincides with a context of crisis, whether political, economic, social, or a mix of all of them. That is to say, the political elite has used class and ethnicity as a means to mitigate protests and demands of reform, at the same time as they have been able to maintain prevailing power structures in the society.

Finally, as an essential part of this study concerns the multi-faceted and ambiguous concept ethnicity, the chapter begins with a section that deals with different perspectives of the term, for the purpose of illustrating its complexity, on the one hand, and arguing for the approach of this study on the matter, on the other.
3.1 Different perspectives of ethnicity and class

The limited scope of this study does not permit a thorough review of all of the prevailing theories of identity. Nevertheless, in order to give an account of the ambition as concerns the meaning of the concept ethnicity of this study, it is important to shed light on some of the different approaches. Thus, I focus on three of the most influential approaches that have been marshalled in recent years to explain identity politics in general, and ethnic politics in particular, namely: primordialism, poststructuralism, and instrumentalism. Primordialists assume that ethnic identities are deeply rooted affective ties that shape primary loyalties and affinities. As such, identities are fixed, locally rooted, and often understood as immutable. According to Lembke (2004: 71) this argument was largely discredited within academic circles, but as a consequence of the rise of ethnic movements, again regained some popularity. Poststructuralists, on the other hand, see ethnicity as a social construction, that is, that identities are not given or ordered but socially constructed and evolving. Instrumentalists, finally, challenge the primordial assumption that ethnic identities as such motivate collective action, by assuming that individual have fixed preferences, are goal oriented, and act intentionally (Yashar 2005:11). In other words, the ethnic card is just one tool among many in order to achieving other goals. This approach is closely connected to the view of the “old” social movement theory on mobilization of social movements, which will be analyzed more in detail in the next section of this study.

To unravel the concept of class within the indigenous movement, this study focuses on the fusion between Indian and ‘peasant’ that generally dominated Latin-American politics towards indigenous peoples during most part of the last century. Marcus Kurtz has identified different definitions of the term ‘peasant’, the four main elements are: status as rural cultivator, ownership or control of farmland, social subordination and affiliation to a culturally distinct community (2000: 94). With the exception of the second element, I would argue that these definitions are transferable to the situation of the indigenous peasants in Latin America. Consequently, access to land has been, and continues to be, a major claim of indigenous organizations. In a historical perspective, the issue of land is decidedly the most important factor with regard to the relationship between the indigenous peoples and the political left in Latin America, not least in the case of Ecuador. According to Xavier Albó, this relationship, initially, emerged in the aftermath of the Mexican and Bolivian revolutions (1910-20 and 1952, respectively), and was further reinforced with the implementation of land reforms throughout the Andes during the 1960s and 1970s. As a consequence of those events, indigenous organizations became increasingly linked to the political left with a classist discourse and a focus on land reform (Albó 2002:20). Moreover, with the aim of erasing the divide between ethnic identity and the nation
state, both the political left and right advocated a shift of discourse in which the term “indio” was replaced by “campesino” (peasant) to describe indigenous people (ibid:20).

In sum, despite the efforts of nation-states and political parties to impose a peasant identity on indigenous peoples, the definition of a peasant in the Latin American context always includes an ethnic element. The formation of indigenous organisations emerged in a context of mutuality between class and ethnic related demands. Since the democratisation process, however, this mutuality gradually turned into a conflict of interests between two main dimensions, one involving the issue of land and the class struggle of peasants; the other a struggle of indigenous peoples to preserve their culture and recognition of their ethnic identity. Nevertheless, the relative balance of power that characterized the relationship between the two concepts could remain intact as long as the political context did not encourage a tendency to emphasise one over the other. The following chapters of this study aim to describe the importance of taking this historical relationship, and its recent transformation, into consideration when analysing the issue of fragmentation.

Finally, my focus on the strategic use of class and ethnicity, both by the elite and the indigenous movements, and its relationship with changing contexts in general, and strong linkage between the left and the indigenous movement in particular, implies an approach that draws on constructivist and instrumentalist views. However, I find that none of these approaches can be relied on individually, therefore, in order to evaluate the relationship between motives, resources and strategy with the prevailing context, I situate my research historically and comparatively.

3.2 The “newness” of the new social movement

New social movement theory largely developed as a response to what was considered an outmoded style of class analysis that was not adaptable to describe the emergence of social movements in Latin America. That is, while applying its model on Latin America, the “old” social movement theory did not take the specific political and societal realities into account. Instead, much of the writing and theorizing of social movement in Latin America (by European and North American scholars) assumed not only the presence of a dense and communicative civil society, but also liberal democratic regimes (Foweraker 1995:6). As we know, however, until the last two decades of the 20th century these conditions rarely existed in Latin America in general, and in the Andean countries in particular. On the contrary, the reality of Latin American politics during this period was rather characterized by import
substitution industrialization, populism and an authoritarian type of a corporatist state. Thus, as noted by Foweraker, as social movements have mainly emerged under authoritarian and military regimes the theory cannot be applied uncritically in Latin America (1995:35). As a result of these circumstances which both advanced labour control and restricted the reach of welfarism and political structures often embodied social or class interests unparalleled in comparison within the democratic systems of advanced capitalist nations (ibid:28).

Nevertheless, Foweraker is sceptical as to what is actually “new” about the new social movement theory by claiming that new movements also are class organizations, just like old class organizations, whereas they appeal to general interests beyond specific class interests (ibid:45). This standpoint stands close to the Resource Mobilization Theory which highlight questions of strategy, participation, organization, rationality, expectations, interests and views social movements ‘as actors obliged to interact with state agencies, political parties and civil society groups such as trade unions in order to have an impact’ (Lembke 2004:68). According to Foweraker, there are three specific developments that have had a dramatic impact on social movement activity in Latin America: the shift from rural to urban and industrialized society; the crisis of the populist and developmentalist state; and the advent of the repressive and authoritarian regimes. As a consequence, ‘the previous predominance of class-based movements was complicated by the rise of urban social movements, usually inspired by demands for public utilities, social services or access to land and water’ (1995:5).

In view of all these aspects, my general criticism is based on the, to say the least, meagre analysis of indigenous mobilization in this theory. That is to say, as noted by Foweraker, social movement theory, traditionally, has interpreted social movement activity in a specific historical context that among other things includes a developed and unrestricted civil society, and liberal democratic regimes (1995:34). Consequently, it represents a Western perspective of a class-based society that is not adjustable to the Latin American context. This is particularly manifested in the Andean countries, where the indigenous population is considerably higher than in the rest of Latin America, the industrialization process has been weak, and the question whether the indigenous people’s could be considered to represent any class at all, in my opinion, must be taken into account. In other words, I argue that it suffers from blindness to any identity besides class, a category derived from material relations of production, and thus ignores the political reality under which the indigenous people’s then lived, and, to some degree still live. In sum, it seems to represent a tendency among analysts during the twentieth century in general, that according to Stavenhagen, considered Indians as simply a special type of landless rural laborer whose best interest lay in their class organization and in forming alliances with other exploited workers (2002:25).
Consequently, for the most part of the twentieth century, social movement theory originated from a Western perspective of class analysis in which the contextual differences that predominated in Latin America often were overlooked. In addition to the notion that the mobilization of social movements mainly was an issue of social and economic development, in which the Indians would find their logical place as workers, several other things are noteworthy about the changing context for social movement organizing since the 1980s, in particular: the transition from various forms of authoritarianism to democracy and the implementation of the neoliberal model.

In this context, emerged new social movement theory, which emphasizes the processes by which social actors constitute collective identities as means to create democratic spaces for more autonomous action (Escobar Alvarez 1992:5). In short, identity precedes strategy, that is, without an identity to unite around there is no possibility to form any kind of movement, and this formation is supposed to take place outside the political establishment and to be autonomous. In other words, movements cannot be defined as economic and social categories alone, but must also be seen as an activity placed in political and cultural domains. In relation to this, Stahler-Sholk, Vanden and David Kuecker observe that the intensification of social movements appears to be not only a continuation of historical resistance but is also related to the effects of the neoliberal model, however, this resistance is by no means exclusively manifested in class-based organizing (2008:2). Moreover, notwithstanding all the contextual distinctions, Judith Adler Hellman claims that new social movements in both Latin America and Western Europe do share at least one defining characteristic: a fundamental distrust of the traditional parties and formations of the left (1992:53). This statement draws on a view of the left as a paternalistic force or, worse, as an example of co-optation by politicians who opportunistically exploit indigenous communities for their own personal gain. I argue that this view of the relationship between the left and the indigenous movement, albeit pointing out some important aspects, at the same time, tends to generalize and, among other things, omits to explain the underlying causes for the traditionally strong linkage between leftist parties and the indigenous movement in Ecuador. According to Marc Becker, for example, this relationship was based on “comradeship” in a common struggle for social justice in which ‘they together tried to figure out what it meant in the twentieth century to be indian with an ethnic identity and Marxist with a class-based interpretation of the world’ (2008:10). In my opinion, this last formulation touch upon the concept of “indigenism”, a project implemented by the state with the basic objective of integration of indigenous populations into the nation (Stavenhagen 2002:27). The close relationship between the indigenista projects and the concepts of class and ethnicity will be more thoroughly described in the following section of this chapter.
3.3 Indigenism and Neo-indigenism: perspectives on class and ethnicity

As argued earlier in this study, different political policies and projects have often emerged in response to turbulent social activity within the society. For example, the way of granting (some) special rights for indigenous people’s, particularly during the 1990s, were by some scholars interpreted as a neoliberal form of indigenism (neo-indigenism), and as such a way to control the movements from above. The ambition of this study is not to review whether these measures have been well- or bad-intentioned, however, this study allows for an elite-centred view which, in my opinion, the indigenous projects is a clear example of. That is to say, the emergence of the indigenous movement in Latin America did not occur as a result of government actions, but rather in spite of government efforts to impede indigenous organization. In sum, the aim of this section is to give further details about these statements, as well as to describe the indigenous projects intimate relationship with the emergence of social movements, in general, and the concepts of class and ethnicity in particular.

The different forms of indigenism have at least two characteristics in common: they emerged in a context of crisis, and they are closely connected with the concepts of class, respectively, ethnicity. Consequently, the germ of an indigenist project emerged in the aftermath of the Mexican and Russian revolutions, whereas indigenous organizations and rebellions became increasingly linked to political parties of the left with a classist discourse and a focus on land reform (Albó 2004:20). As argued in the previous section, the most salient feature of “classic” indigenism was the integration of indigenous people’s into the nation-state as “citizens”, albeit without recognizing their distinctive ethnic origins. In other words, the principal task of indigenism was to facilitate the emergence of a “modern social class system”, in which Indians would find their places as workers. This position comes very close to the ideas of Mariátegui³, that is, that the “Indian problem” was fundamentally a problem of economics rather than one of politics, law, race, culture, or morality (Lucero 2003:23). In relation to this, Stavenhagen asserts, that during most of the twentieth century indigenismo became the domestic expression of assertive nationalism and populism in many Latin American countries, based on an ideology that, at least in the early decades, was both generous and progressive (2002:28). However, even though its proponents were convinced that they were helping the indigenous overcome their limitations even progressive regimes thought in terms of class (Indians were to transform into

³ José Carlos Mariátegui La Chira (1894-1930) was a Peruvian journalist, political philosopher, and activist. He is considered to be one of the most influential Latin American socialists of the 20th century.
peasants) rather than ethnicity. In sum, Indigenous people’s could not object to programs by claiming a different ethnic status, for that category was seen as unmodern and did not have legal standing.

Many of the ideas described above, turned themselves “unmodern”, as a result of the transition from authoritarian to democratic regimes that characterized Latin America in general, and, in this context, the Andean region in particular, during the last two decades of the twentieth century. In other words, the return of democracy was vital for the proliferation of indigenous movements and their appearance as important and constructive actors on the national stage. Hence, democracy made it possible for indigenous groups to organize openly and finally speak for “themselves”. In fact, according to Lucero, it is not until the 1990s that one organization (CONAIE) more than any other steps out of the shadows of leftist organizational efforts and speaks as an independent and representative indigenous actor (2003:32). Moreover, in the wake of the democratisation process, most Latin American countries underwent significant constitutional reforms in the 1990s within which indigenous people could advance their rights in a democratic context, for example, were language incorporated that formally recognized the identities of their indigenous populations for the first time (see Van Cott 2000 and 2006).

For these reasons, democratisation, on the one hand, and the crisis of the traditional left due to the collapse of the Berlin Wall and the end of communism in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, on the other, are important factors to take into consideration when explaining the indigenous awakening. However, when analysing state/society relations in general, and the indigenous movement within this context, yet another factor is important to point out: the impact of neoliberalism. To be sure, neoliberal policies have had a tremendous influence on Latin American societies during the last decades. For example, it is intimately related to the Latin American paradox, that is, in spite of the fact that the 1980s was characterized by a general eclipse of authoritarian rule and the re-emergence of democratic regimes, the following decade rather showed a dramatic worsening of the social and economic problems endemic to the region (Slater 2008:30). On the other hand, all of these changes in general, and neoliberalism in particular, contributed to a new type of indigenismo policy that was based on ethnicity rather than class. Nevertheless, many of the characteristics of this new type of indigenist policy, by some called “liberal indigenism” (see Bret Gustafson 2002), by others “neo-indigenismo” (see Kaltmeier 2007), are similar to “classic” indigenism. For example, according to Gustafson, the neoliberal form of indigenism, much like the original project, is not a uniform process of inclusion of previously excluded Indians, but rather based on new tactics of governance, “through which elites seek to insulate centralized power from various forms of “indigenous” and other “popular” forms of political engagement” (2002: 270). In this sense, the constitutional benefits based
on political and cultural openings, described above, appear to be rather secondary – and instrumental – to wider logics of managerial governance. A basic conclusion of these arguments is that the neoliberal model, at least in the Latin American context, not primarily is an economic policy based on the formula “more market-less State”, but goes beyond issues of economics into the political and cultural sphere. A clear example of this, is portrayed by the parallel process of neo-indigenistas and neoliberal politics in Ecuador during the 1980s that, according to Kaltmeier, was based on political tactics in order to debilitate radical movements, in general, and the indigenous movement, in particular (2003:201). The application and execution of ethno-politic measures during the 1990s, thus, was not based on a strategy of the indigenous movement, but rather a strategic measure of the elite within the state apparatus in order to confront a strong reivindicative movement that challenged the political, economic, and cultural activities of the Ecuadorian state (ibid: 203).

To conclude, in this chapter I have chosen to approach the discussion on class and ethnicity from perspectives that point out its historical relationship with social movements, as with more or less deliberate strategies adopted by the political establishment, in this case, exemplified by different forms of indigenism. In the wake of the processes described above emerged the concepts: plurinationality and interculturality. These concepts can, in my opinion, be used as a new “modernized” perspective on the discussion about class and ethnicity that during the past two decades have affected Ecuadorian politics in general, and been a dividing factor between Conaie and Fenocin in particular. The fact that the two organizations have chosen to emphasize one of the concepts over the other – that is, plurinationality in the case of Conaie, and interculturality in the case of Fenocin -is, in my opinion, intimately related to their origins of being an ethnic, respectively, class-based organization. Consequently, next section of this study, principally, seeks to demonstrate in what way class and ethnicity can be translated into the concepts of plurinationality and interculturality, on the one hand, and how it is related to the fragmentation, on the other. In short, whereas this chapter mainly has focused on the influence of external factors on the mobilization of the indigenous movement, next chapter aims to point out factors of a more internal nature that have emerged within the indigenous movement.
4. Presentation of the empirical chapter

As mentioned, the main objective of this is to describe the processes and specific circumstances that formed the indigenous movement in Ecuador, by examining the two, historically, most influential organizations: CONAIE and FENOCIN. As such, with a departure in the concepts of class and ethnicity, the chapter aims to build up an analytical framework that illustrates the contextual differences and explains the origins of the emergence, as well as the current fragmentation within the indigenous movement, through a political analysis of different historical periods. The first periods consist of a brief analysis of the political conditions and socio-economic factors in which the formation of said organizations took place. The second period focuses on how the democratisation process and the impact of neoliberal policies affected the indigenous movement.

The third and final part is dedicated to a more thorough presentation of the ambiguities that are connected with the emergence of president Rafael Correa. In addition, it focuses on analysing the concepts of plurinationality and interculturality - with the aim of describing their connection with class and FENOCIN, on the one hand, and ethnicity and CONAIE, on the other. Thus, it seeks to demonstrate that the fragmentation of the indigenous movement in Ecuador today, that is, in a context of a leftist government, not necessarily needs to be considered as a paradox. The ambition of this chapter is thus to shed some light on the present crisis and fragmentation of the indigenous movement, and to point out the importance of analysing said fragmentation in relation to historical structures in general, and increasing tensions of class- and ethnicity related issues, in particular.
4.1 The breeding grounds for indigenous mobilisation and organizing

4.1.2 Populism and other historical structures

With reference to the strong relationship between historical processes and the ongoing political process within the Andean region in general, Jeremy Adelman argues that the Andean countries, for historical reasons, consist of unfinished states, that is, issues of territoruality and legitimacy of their constitutional framework have never been fully consolidated (2006:42). In relation to this, there are several noteworthy aspects that explain why the mobilization of the indigenous movement in Ecuador, in contrast to other parts of the region, in fact became one of the most important political actors in the society. First, the division of the elite between the more liberal oriented Coast, on the one hand, and the more conservatively oriented landlords of the Highlands, on the other. This regional fragmentation proved to be a fertile ground for the emergence of forms of personalismo (personalist strong men), which in Ecuador from the 1930s to the 1970s, to a large extent, was characterized by the pseudopopulism of José María Velazco Ibarra (Drake & Hershberg 2006:8). Thus, this long tradition of populism in Ecuador, in my view, mainly emerged in order to balance and release the tensions between the two centres of power within the country. However, a more serious effect of populism under Ibarra, is evident in his motto “El mundo no está hecho para partidos” (the world is not made for political parties, my translation), that is, its influence on the erosion of political parties and absence of deeply rooted party traditions and identities in Ecuador (Sanín 2006:269). Second, the seemingly paradoxical pact between the military and peasant organizations: In other words, as a consequence of a history of regional and political fragmentation, the Ecuadorian military has been interventionist but not necessarily reactionary. For example, during the administration of General Guillermo Rodriguez Lara (1972-1976), agrarian reform was part of a project to modernize Ecuadorian society and the economy through state initiatives (Zamosc 2003: 44). Third, the relatively long tradition of local government: In the 1930s various legislative reforms were promulgated in order to provide a new level of organization to govern rural communities. According to Deborah Yashar, albeit designed to incorporate Indians into a corporatist form of citizenship, these reforms, including the agrarian reforms implemented by the populist military regimes in 1964 and 1973, also provided the tools for securing enclaves of cultural, political and material autonomy (2005:88). In addition, Ecuador, not surprisingly, was an early decentralizer compared too other countries in the region, whereas the country established direct municipal elections at the time of the shift to a democratic regime in 1979 (Van Cott 2008:35). In sum, despite several similarities with other Latin American countries, the particularities of Ecuador provided the groundwork and prerequisite of an unprecedented emergence of indigenous organizing, which later would develop into the regions most powerful indigenous movement.
4.2 The road toward the foundation of FENOCIN

Rural unions in Ecuador emerged as important pressure groups for the agrarian reforms that were passed in 1964 and 1973. The Ecuadorian Federation of Indians (FEI), founded in the mid 1940s, was arguably the first significant organization in the countryside. There are indications that FEI did initiate ethnic-based demands. Marc Becker, for example, contends that although FEI was organizing a class struggle, its political programme called for a preservation of the uniqueness of indigenous cultural identity and did not ignore, neither the presence of racism, nor the importance of ethnicity (2008:88). Nevertheless, FEI was essentially a Marxist-inspired organization strongly tied to the Communist party, and as such, according to Yashar did very little to promote indigenous identity, instead it primarily sought to awaken a class consciousness, and to create an ally of the Ecuadorian working class (2005:100). In other words, during the period of the reform (the 1960s and 1970s), the key element was the struggle for land. However, by the end of the 1960s FEI began to loose power and influence after it gained what had become its principal demand (agrarian reform), mainly, due to its inability to move beyond the issue of land that, among other things, lead to a growing reliance on outsiders, thus, providing an increasing credibility to competing organization’s claims that it was subject to non-indigenous concerns (Becker 2008:147). In this context of strong leftist currents, emerged the National Federation of Peasant Organizations (FENOC)\textsuperscript{4}, which in the beginning was internally divided by Christian Democrats and Socialists, the socialist wing, however, came to dominate the federation by the mid 1970s (Yashar 2005:102). With this move to the left and a more explicit class-based agenda focused on the struggle for land, FENOC began to present itself as a classist peasant organization, linking that struggle to the socialist ideals of the worker-peasant alliance, thus paying little attention to ethnicity as an issue in itself ((Zamosc 2003:45).

In the wake of the democratisation process in the 1980s, international institutions started to pay much more attention to the situation of indigenous people within nation-states. In this context emerged issues such as recognition, territorial claims and other rights based on ethnic grounds. Even though FENOCIN welcomed this process, it has not changed their political strategy, that is, the focus on a class-based agenda has remained intact. This emphasis on class rather than ethnicity, can be detected by their own description of the organization: ‘We are an organization that consist of peasants, indigenous and poor blacks who struggle to conquer the poverty, improve our living conditions,\textsuperscript{4} FENOC was founded 1968. Reflecting the growing importance of ethnicity, in 1988 the organization changed its name to FENOC-I (National Federation of Peasant-Indigenous Organizations), and finally in 1999 to FENOCIN (National Federation of Indigenous, Peasant, and Black Organizations).
democratise and contribute to a sustainable and just development of the country – towards the attainment of land, water, infra-structure, civil-rights and cultural recognition’ (my translation).5

4.2.1 The road toward the foundation of CONAIE

Due to the decline of the assimilationist model, by the early 1970s, emerged several indigenous organizations and discourses that emphasized an autonomous indigenous identity. In 1972, Ecuarunari (a kichwa phrase that means “to awaken the Ecuadorian Indians”) grew out of local groups that had been closely tied to progressive sectors of the Catholic Church (Albó 2004:23). Of the three federations (FEI, FENOC, and Ecuarunari), Ecuarunari was commonly seen as the most “ethnic”, as it for the first time planted specific demands that went beyond the issue of land to also emphasize the struggle for education, cultural identity, and dignity (Becker 2008: 159). Nonetheless, the organization wavered between an emphasis on ethnic- versus class-based demands. The balance between them shifted over time according to the current context. As a result, an ethnic emphasis dominated in the first few years, as it shifted to a more explicit class-based agenda in the late 1970s, when the organization defined itself as anti-imperialist, and even advocated a struggle for a socialist state (Yashar 2005:108). In other words, during this period were many of its goals and objective very similar to those of FEI and FENOC.

In the 1980s, however, Ecuarunari began to shift back to more ethnic position, thereby reflecting a growing emphasis on an “Indian” identity as a force for social justice. Finally, in 1986, Ecuarunaris increasing cooperation and partnership with Confeniae (Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of the Ecuadorian Amazon) led to the formation of CONAIE as the national organization representing all Indian groups. According to Zamosc (2003:46), CONAIE concentrated on an ethnic agenda, rather than insisting on traditional themes like the struggle for land and economic improvements. This change of emphasis from class to ethnicity is clearly manifested in their proposal to the Indigenous Affairs Commission of the National Congress, in which they argued that the government must recognize Indigenous territoriality, organization, education, culture, medicine, and judicial systems (Becker 2008: 172). Based on this, there is clear distinction between FENOCIN’s view presented above, with its focus on erasing poverty among all exploited groups in the society, and CONAIE’s focus on issues that that have an explicit ethnic character. I argue, however that the fusion of these

5 Source: fenocin @ fenocin.org
concepts remained strong during the following decade and, to a large extent, even contributed to the political achievements. In other words, the implementation of neoliberal political and economic reforms, in my opinion, favoured a combination of these concepts as it united the demands and proposals among different kinds of social movements, whether ethnic- or class-based. Thus, as a result of the effects of neoliberal policies the tensions between these organizations on the basis of class and ethnicity diminished. These statements will be further developed in the following section.

4.3 Ambiguous effects of the democratisation process

As noted in the beginning of the study, the democratisation process in Ecuador has, to a large extent, been accompanied with a turbulent political, social and economic situation. Thus, the transition towards democracy in 1979 had ambiguous effects on the society in general, and marginalized groups in particular. That is to say, the living conditions for indigenous people did not automatically improve as a result of reforms that were implemented within a democratic framework. According to Drake & Hershberg (2006:13), for example, the situation to some extent even turned out worse than before whereas the economic hardship and the decay of state capacity since the 1980s undercut many of the modest gains achieved during the previous period, and thus deepened the social divisions among classes and ethnic groups, in particular heightening the exclusion of the indigenous people. In light of these facts, several writers refer to a certain Latin American paradox, namely: despite the fact that the 1980s was characterized by a general eclipse of authoritarian rule and the re-emergence of democratic regimes, the new decade showed a dramatic worsening of the social and economic problems endemic to the region (Slater 2008: 30). In relation to this, some scholars have observed how this period is connected with the renaissance of characteristic “old” political phenomena in the Ecuadorian society. José Sánchez Parga contends, for example, that a characteristic feature of the democratic governments is that populism and clientilistic relations, not only have prevailed, but even been strengthened – among other things, as a way of reducing the threat and divide the indigenous movement (2007: 113,155). Olaf Kaltmeier, on the other hand, argues that the neoliberal governments deliberately adopted a strategy (*neo-indigenism*) in order to debilitate the indigenous movement, through co-opting both the ideas and leaders of the movement (2007:201-203). Nevertheless, although marginalized groups access to social rights reduced significantly during this period, Deborah Yashar (2006:206) observes that the shift from a *Corporatist to a Neoliberal regime* also provided these groups with political opportunities that earlier had been denied to them. For example, it provided indigenous people with a space in which they could find their own political voice and agenda that was independent of traditional corporatist forms of representation.
4.3.1 The development of the indigenous movement in a neoliberal context

Donna Lee Van Cott adds yet another factor in relation to the above mentioned aspects, that is, in the late 1980s the left was subjected to a political and ideological crisis and their support plummeted as the consequences of neoliberal policies gravely weakened its most important civil society partners, such as labour unions and peasant organizations (2007:1). Based on these conditions, powerful regional and national indigenous organizations were built in a post-1989 world in which “new social movements” focused around the concept of identity seemed to displacing “old” social movements focused on the concept of class.

For these reasons, the power relations between the left and the indigenous movement obviously experienced a radical shift over the course of the 1980s and 1990s. In other words, indigenous movements emerged as the principal interlocutory of social movement actors on the contemporary national stage, whereas traditional class-based unions and peasant movements experienced a decline. According to Hernán Ibarra⁶, these contextual changes also influenced on the development of the two indigenous organizations, CONAIE and FENOCIN, insofar as CONAIE from then onwards largely monopolized the representation of the indigenous movement, and FENOCIN declined due to the global decay of the leftist ideals (My translation; interview, November 11, 2008). Nevertheless, even though CONAIE overshadowed FENOCIN, by the end of the twentieth century, Becker contends, that it remained an powerful force for social justice in rural communities – despite the fact that it sometimes was not viewed as an explicitly indigenous organization because it worked on a national level with many different communities, which not all were entirely ethnically indigenous (2008: 159).

In this context of crisis and growing independency as concerns the relations with the left, CONAIE began to concentrate more and more on an ethnic agenda rather than insisting on traditional themes such as the struggle for land and economic improvements. Hernán Ibarra implies that the decisive moment of this move toward an ethnic-based agenda took place in the mid 1990s, then CONAIE was at the crossroads of choosing between two different options: to struggle for a new and improved agrarian reform, or, to invest in a political struggle in order to extend the collective rights of the indigenous society – obviously they opted for the latter option (My translation; interview, November 11, 2008). The consequence of this decision was that CONAIE, in January 1996, joined an independent multiethnic alliance, the Movimiento de Unidad Pluri-nacional Pachakutic-Nuevo País

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⁶ Ecuadorian intellectual and co-editor of the journal Ecuador Debate
However, one of the most respected indigenous leaders, Blanca Chancoso\(^7\), is in retrospect critical of this decision and admits that CONAIE, through their strength of mobilization, in fact, achieved more political improvements before that decision than after. In addition, she thinks that the indigenous movement was more consolidated fifteen years ago, cautiously insinuating that the institutionalization lead to a separation between the top and the base of the movement (My translation; interview, December 4, 2008).

There is no doubt that the strength of indigenous mobilization, under the explicit leadership of CONAIE, reshaped political agendas and achieved notable results. For example, it obtained important spaces in the national political system, gaining control of the Directorate of Bilingual Education (DINEIB), the indigenous development agency (CODENPE), and a central role in the World-Bank-supported Program for the Development of Indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian Peoples (PRODEPINE) (see Lucero 2006). On the other hand, James Petras and Henry Veltmeyer state that the Development Project of Ecuador’s Indigenous Peoples and Blacks (PRODEPINE) set up by the World Bank, through co-opting community leaders – and the then president of CONAIE - constitutes a clear example of the detrimental effects of neoliberal policies on the Indigenous movement, as such turning the indigenous movement away from its more radical demands as well as dividing it (2005:167). In other words, these agreements can be criticized and denounced as a sellout to the state that was designed to emasculate the contentious potential of the indigenous movement. In that sense, they constitute obvious examples of *neo-indigenism*, or neoliberal *mainstream-multiculturalism*, that is, a strategy imposed by the state rather than an idea that originated within the indigenous movement, aiming at integrating the leaders of the movements into programmes and thereby make them more easy to handle (see Kaltmeier 2007).

To sum up, much of the indigenous movements political achievements, from the late 1980s throughout the 1990s, according to Lucero, rests on its ability of constituting *the* principal political actor that unified the protest against neoliberalism(2006:6). Enrique Ayala, however, argues that the indigenous movement in Ecuador always has been divided, consequently, the so called unity is built on a myth and lie. In other words, the combination of the crisis of the left and the resistance against neoliberalism among several sectors in the Ecuadorian society, created a favourable context and a confluence of common objectives in which the vanguard of the labour movement, momentarily, was overtaken by the indigenous movement (My translation; interview, December 9 2008). Nevertheless, whether the unity was based on a myth or a consequence of a favourable context, why is it that this unity, obviously, seems to have disintegrated within a leftist context?

\(^7\) Blanca Chancoso is a legendary Ecuarunari leader and co-founder of the indigenous peasant-movement in Cotacachi and Otavalo, she has also held important positions in Conaie.
4.3.2 Decisive events between 1996-2006

In 1996 the indigenous movement decided to enter national electoral politics by the creation of Packakutik, an electoral branch of CONAIE. As CONAIE had expressed a general disdain for the electoral process, this decision was a complete reversal of the organizations strategy and approach (Yashar 2006:149). Consequently, this entry meant a metamorphosis of Ecuador´s indigenous movement and was, as mentioned above, not exempt from criticism within the movement. However, although the entry into formal politics was not free of conflicts, initially, it offered substantial rewards. In the Constitution of 1998, indigenous rights were enshrined and Ecuador was proclaimed a multicultural state, nevertheless it did not outline guarantees for these rights nor did it recognize the country as a plurinational state (ibid:150).

These advances were, however, intertwined with no less significant problems. For example, the contradiction between the criteria and logic of a social movement triggered by social and political protest, and that of a political party in charge of the formulation of national policies. This contradiction, moreover, tend to have caused an ambivalence between class and ethnicity in the relationship between the party and the social movement, as CONAIE is based on an ethnic rather than ideological agenda, and Pachakutik has an agenda that is rooted in an ideological left-based identity (see, for example: Becker 2008, Yashar 2006 and Gustafsson 2008).

A critical event in the history of CONAIE took place in January 21 2000, as they formed an alliance with the military and helped to overthrow the neoliberal government and then-president Jamail Mahuad. The coup failed however and an interim government headed by the then vice president Gustavo Noboa was installed, who continued with the very policies that had lead CONAIE to protest in the first place. This example highlights the problems and paradoxical situations that occurred as a consequence of the contradictory relationship between CONAIE and Pachakutik, whereby the former mobilized against Mahuad and the congress where several Pachakutik leaders were sitting as elected officials (Korovkin 2007).

Another critical conjuncture with regard to the relationship between the social movement and the state, involves the alliance with Lúcio Gutiérrez (who had played an important part in the coup 2000, as a leader of the military) during his electoral campaign and eventual election in 2002. Gutiérrez successful bid for the presidency was based on a political leftist discourse that emphasized opposition to neoliberal policies that not only had the support of the indigenous movement, but also appealed to a broad array of organizations on the left. However, his ´understanding´ with Pachakutik (and CONAIE) to turn away from the neoliberal model was violated within days of his presidency, as his government signed an agreement with the IMF that approved the formation of the Free Trade Agreement for the
Americas (Petras and Veltmeyer 2005: 151). Even though the alliance ended in August 2003, some indigenous members of parliament opted to stay in the government (ibid: 157). The unsuccessful, to say the least, alliance with Gutiérrez and his hastily formed party Patriotic Society (Sociedad Patriótica) not only debilitated both CONAIE and Pachakutik, but also triggered conflicts between them to emerge. In this context, emerged a tendency towards stronger emphasis on ethnicity which provoked an internal conflict between Indians and mestizos within Pachakutik. In 2005, as a consequence of this tendency a group of important leaders left the party, some of those today hold important political positions within the party (movement) that was formed by the current president, Rafael Correa (Lalander 2010).

In sum, the indigenous movement emerged at the political arena in a context of economic crisis and where traditional political parties lacked both legitimacy and credibility. In that context, the indigenous movement assumed the responsibility of representing the moral voice of the country, which, initially, provided them with a broad popular support. However, despite the entry into electoral politics and active participation in different governments, including a ruling party for a short time in the alliance with Gutiérrez, Pachakutik (CONAIE) has not been able to reverse neoliberal economic policies, the root cause of the political protests. This failure, together with the absence of a national political project that represents all sectors within the society, are, in my opinion, the two main causes of the current crisis within the indigenous movement. Although the legitimacy and credibility of the indigenous movement were severely damaged, ethnic issues were not erased from the political agenda. However, it created a new context in which the concept of class re-emerged as a viable alternative, thus enabling organizations and political parties with a class-based agenda to advance their positions.

4.4 The re-emergence of the left: perspectives on personalist leadership

Latin American politics in general, not least based on the political history of Ecuador, are traditionally associated with strong, charismatic (in some cases, also rather peculiar) leaders. As a result, the leader has often become more important than the political party, or movement, that he (it is most often a he) is representing. In the Andean countries, the political and economic crises of the 1980s and 1990s, among other things, lead to a transformation of the political landscape. Due to these crises, the political establishment in general, and traditional political parties, in particular, lost both legitimacy and credibility, and, in some cases, even disintegrated. This context provided an opening for a new type of leaders, who were unsullied and unallied to said establishment. As opposed to the normal mode of procedure, in which the formation of a political leader is based on a long process within a
traditional party structure, in the case of these leaders it was the other way around. That is, the creation of a political party, coalition, or movement was, first and foremost, dependent on the presence of a specific leader. Personalist leaders who differ in many respects but who share these characteristics (for example, Alberto Fujimori in Peru, Hugo Chávez in Venezuela, and Abdalá Bucaram and Lucio Gutiérrez in Ecuador), is one example of this trend. The re-emergence of the left and extraordinary rise of Rafael Correa in Ecuador 2006 should, in my opinion, be understood and analysed in light of the these facts.

The impact of the Correa presidency on the Ecuadorian society has been quite remarkable, both in a political and emotional sense. That is to say, his political line of action, and persona, attracts a lot of attention, positive as well as negative. This, alone, constitutes a typical characteristic of a populist leader whereas a populist regime generally tends to divide the society in two parts: one that is in favour of its politics; and one that is against it. Andrés Ortiz considers that Correa’s leadership to a certain degree can be compared to that of Hugo Chávez in Venezuela, that is, a sort of mixture between classic populism and neo-populism. Classic to that extent that his political project advocates an economic model that utilizes widespread re-distributive or clientilistic methods to create a material foundation for popular sector support. The typical neo-populist characteristics, on the other hand, are mainly based on its highly anti-elitist and anti-establishment political discourse (2008: 70-74). In relation to this, Jorge León Trujillo expresses concerns over the fact that the broad acceptance of the anti-establishment proposal has provided Correa with an exceptional legitimacy, which, as a result, has allowed him to ignore to pay attention to different interest groups in society such as social movements in general, and the indigenous movement in particular; in this sense, he has become almost omnipotent (2007:11). In the midst of this context, a historical rupture within the indigenous movement took place in the presidential elections of 2006, whereas FENOCIN opted to rally with Rafael Correa and his alliance, CONAIE had chosen to launch its own candidate (Báez Rivera and Bretón Solo de Zaldivar 2006: 26).

Consequently, as the indigenous movement lost the initiative of being in the forefront of the opposition, a political vacuum was created for a new radical political alternative to take over that role. In other words, an opening had been created for a leftist alternative to take possession of the place as the principal interlocutor for a change of the political system, which, as a result, polarized the positions within the indigenous movement, in general, and between CONAIE and FENOCIN, in particular.
4.4.1 The meteoric rise of Rafael Correa

Rafael Correa was before running for President relatively unknown and had almost no history working directly with Ecuadorian social movements. During a brief stint as minister of economy in a provisional government in 2005, however, he gained broad popularity for his harsh criticism of neoliberal policies. Previous experiences in Ecuadorian politics show, however, that presidential candidates – such as Velazco Ibárra, Bucaram, and Gutiérrez - have used leftist rhetoric before during electoral campaigns in order to appeal to the poor masses but once in office ruled in favour of the oligarchy. As mentioned, the decision of whether to support or vote in favour of an own candidate deeply divided the indigenous movement. In fact, during the initial phase of the presidential campaign, the leaders of CONAIE even compared Correa to those former presidents (Becker 2008:177).

Due to the fact that the CONAIE candidate, Luís Macas, achieved a miserable result in the first round of the presidential election whereas he only achieved two per cent of the popular vote, the organization decided to endorse Correa in the second round where he faced right-wing candidate Álvaro Noboa. Correa, on the other hand, picked up some long-time social movement demands, including opposition to a Free Trade Agreement with the U.S. – and he proclaimed a “citizens´ revolution”, promising to convene a Constituent Assembly to write a new constitution and to put an end to the “long night of neoliberalism” (Ospina 2008). The triumph of Correa, in the November 26, presidential elections was one of the most convincing since the transition to democracy, and meant a return of nationalist politics, as well as a reinforcement of state intervention policies (Ibarra 2006:8). The following year, Correa further consolidated his control by winning a majority of the seats for the Constituent Assembly and declared once again that this was a “citizens´ revolution” but added also to that “not one built by social movements” (Becker 2008: 173). This statement, obviously, alluded to the CONAIE, and clearly illustrates Correa´s uncompromising attitude towards social movements in general, and the CONAIE in particular. In addition, drawing on Lalander´s definition of the Citizen Revolution which comprises the idea of a ‘desectorisation’ of society that is meant to abolish social stratification along ethnic, gender, religious and class lines, it appears quite obvious that the compatibility with this idea and the concept of plurinationality is, to say the least, remote (2010:518). However, for a class-based organization such as FENOCIN, the concept of the citizen revolution constitutes an opportunity and a context in which they can move forward its positions, not least, due to its compatibility with the concept of interculturality.

To summarize, in contrast to previous presidents, Correa has not only verbally confronted the neoliberal policies but has as well designed and in fact implemented an alternative model. As a result, he cannot, easily, be accused of being tied to the political establishment and a continuation of previous administrations neoliberal policies. In addition, the majority of the proposals that the indigenous
movement have fought for during the last decades are in fact included in the new Constitution, for example: amplified rights to reclaim land from landowners, the recognition of the indigenous concept of Pacha Mama (mother earth), bilingual education, and that Ecuador is a plurinational and intercultural state. In other words, whereas neoliberalism represented a system that unified the indigenous movement, the emergence of Correa has had an opposite effect. The rupture between CONAIE and FENOCIN, is one example of how the Correa administration influenced the fragmentation of the indigenous movement by, in this case, unleashing the tension of class and ethnicity. The following section deals with this tension, by focusing on the concepts of plurinationality and interculturality.

4.5 Plurinationality and interculturality

As mentioned, a new context meant new forms of expressions in which, for example, a democratisation process together with a context of economic and social crisis gave rise to the emergence of a powerful indigenous movement. In other words, the dissatisfaction within popular sectors in society that were negatively affected by the implementation of neoliberal policies triggered the mobilization of social movements in general, and of the indigenous movement in particular. The emergence of the concepts plurinationality and interculturality coincided smoothly with the new situation and the struggle against the political system. Furthermore, the meaning and tension between plurinationality and interculturality were not only similar to those of class and ethnicity, but acted as well as their substitutes at the political arena from then onwards, which the following sections to the best of its ability will try to elucidate.

4.5.1 Background

The proposal for the plurinational state in Ecuador is not new. In 1988 CONAIE presented its conceptualisation of Indigenous nationalities that declared that Ecuador was a plurinational state in which Indigenous territoriality, organization, education, culture, medicine, and judicial system must be recognized by the state (Becker 2008: 172-173). Since then the proposal for recognizing Ecuador’s diverse nationalities as part of a plurinational state the key demand of CONAIE. Even though the proposal was modified several times over the next decade due to its radical character, these proposals met little acceptance and understanding within the political establishment. However, as Becker point out, the indigenous movement achieved a partial victory in the Constitution of 1998, whereas the politicians revised the first article to recognize Ecuador’s pluricultural and multiethnic nature, but stopped short of incorporate the contentious term “plurinational” (ibid:174). The concept
“intercultural” was officially introduced already in the Constitution of 1989, but then only as an appendage of the educational reform, ‘The State will guarantee intercultural bilingual education’ (Parga 2007: 100). Not until the latest Constitution, formulated in 2008, Ecuador formally was established as both a plurinational and intercultural state.

In addition, in contrast to other countries where plurinationality and interculturality have been mainly defined and managed from the state, in Ecuador these concepts mainly originated from within the indigenous movement (see Walsh 2009: 161-184). As such, these concepts reflect a bottom-up response to the ambiguous intentions and political reforms implemented by the political establishment in order to cope with issues related to the Indigenous people. In other words, in Ecuador both plurinationality and interculturality began within the indigenous movement, and have since their emergence constituted a central goal of the struggle against hegemony, colonial dominance, neoliberalism etc.

4.5.2 Definitions and points of conflict

In the Ecuadorian case, an important element to be emphasized are the close relationship between the proposal of a plurinational state and CONAIE, on the one hand, and the proposal of an intercultural state and FENOCIN, on the other. Thus, plurinationality to CONAIE is:

> The recognition of a multicultural society in the insoluble political unity of the state that recognizes, respects, and promotes unity. Equality and solidarity among all existing peoples and nationalities in Ecuador, regardless of their historical, political, and cultural differences (Walsh 2009:176).

The concept of interculturality is comparatively, at least at first sight, more difficult to narrow down and concretise. Catherine Walsh states, for example, that interculturality is a principle which is designed as a political and social project that aims at a structural transformation of the Ecuadorian state and society (2009:178). The historian Enrique Ayala Mora has a similar point of view, in that he defines interculturality as a concept that goes beyond the co-existence and dialogue of cultures, thus, it is based on a dynamic process that strives to establish a relation between them (my translation, 2005:16). In addition, Ayala points out the fact that political demands based on plurinationality easily can be connected with the concept of ethnocentricity, thus be detrimental to unification efforts and further aggravate the fragmentation between the indigenous people and the rest of the Ecuadorian society (ibid:88).

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8 Partisan and former member of parliament for the Socialist party. As a socialist intellectual, Ayala has exercised influence on the relations built between Fenocin and the Socialist party. Currently rector at the Universidad Andina in Quito.
On the basis of these definitions, plurinationality is more of a descriptive term that points to recognition within the existing society, and interculturality as something to be constructed that as such does not yet exist whereas it deals with a future vision of the society as a whole. Due to this rather idealistic nature of interculturality, CONAIE finds the term insufficient and too vague in order to resolve the issues that the indigenous people are confronted with. Nonetheless, according to Monica Chuji⁹, the concepts of plurinationality and interculturality constitute important parts of a long-term historical project within the indigenous movement that are neither incompatible nor antithetical. She claims, however, that the recognition and construction of interculturality in society only can be guaranteed within a plurinational state, thus, in order to achieve an intercultural state with normative power, it is of fundamental importance that the state declares itself plurinational whereas real interculturality can only be achieved and make a considerable impact in the society if it takes place within a plurinational state (my translation, source: www.asambleaconstituyente.gov.ec June 5, 2008).

Several scholars agree that both plurinationality and interculturality are not only compatible, but also constitute necessary components in the re-founding of a democratic society that seeks to confront historical structural problems of poverty and racism (see, for example, Acosta, Sousa Santos and Walsh 2009: 15-61; 183-184). Nevertheless, the above mentioned relatively positive interpretation concerning the integration and relationship between the two concepts, is questioned by other scholars and, not least, representatives within FENOCIN. Ramón Valarezo (2009: 125-126), for example, claims that plurinationality is a more ambiguous concept than interculturality whereas it, among other things, only recognizes diversity and not underlines the unity within that diversity, thus it does not achieve the same importance and precision for a long-term solution of the problems that Ecuador is confronted with. Pedro de la Cruz¹⁰ opinion about the same subject is also characterized by an sceptical point of view as concerns the relationship between the two concepts, which is clearly exemplified by the following quotation

> We have already achieved ethnic recognition, which was important, but despite that we continue to be poor. One must recognize that the differences within the Ecuadorian society not are based on ethnicity, but on class. The probable result of plurinationality is the establishment of Indigenous reservations, and this will not resolve the problems of inequality among the diverse sectors of mestizos, indigenous and afro-ecuadorians in society. So what is needed now in order to accomplish a true political change is a politics and an economic model which is based on ideas of interculturality and socialism (My translation; interview, Pedro de la Cruz, November 3, 2008.)

In light of these facts, the concepts of plurinationality and interculturality constitute a dividing-line within the indigenous movement in general, and between CONAIE and FENOCIN in particular. This

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⁹ Important Conaie leader, as well as ex-legislator and former secretary of communications for the Correa government.

¹⁰ Ex-President of Fenocin and since 2008 a member of the parliament for the Correa government.
polarized situation is, in my opinion, linked to their close relationship with the concepts of ethnicity, respectively, class, and thus had a significant impact on the fragmentation during the last couple of years. That is to say, through plurinationality CONAIE emphasises the idea of distinctiveness, by that it is understood that the all-embracing idea is based on the indigenous ethnic identity, and not class. FENOCIN’s emphasis on interculturality, on the other hand, is related to a kind of social revolution, that is, closely attached to the ideas of a class-struggle in which all exploited groups in society are included.
5. Analisis

With a departure in the hypothesis and questions that were drawn up in the introduction, the ambition of this chapter is to summarize and compare the facts of the different periods that have been presented throughout the course of this study. Thereby, from a perspective that focuses on issues related to class and ethnicity, it aims at pointing out the specific factors that differ between these periods. Based upon these findings, it then hopes to be able to clarify that the tension between the concepts of class and ethnicity, in a context of a leftist administration, has deepened the fragmentation of the indigenous movement in Ecuador.

5.1 Perspectives on the role of the context to a social movement

By comparing the different periods analysed in this study, this section aims to describe the development and strategy of the indigenous movement, in relation to its function as a social movement. In one way or another the state is a referent for almost all social movements. Whether it is being approached, opposed, or kept at a distance, in the end the state. On the basis of this assumption, in the period of authoritarianism and populism, the social actor was necessarily associated with the state, whereas it relied on corporatist networks and mechanisms of co-optation. The neoliberal period, in a context of both democracy and generalized crises, redefined the state’s relation with the society in general, and the social movements in particular. In this sense, social movements could act more autonomously vis-à-vis the state. It was in this context that the Ecuadorian indigenous movement emerged and indigenous people was able to reaffirm their ethnic identity. The leftist administration of Correa has once again changed the prerequisites of social movements. In view of Correa’s rhetoric and “old school” ideas based on nationalism, state intervention and stronger control, it is natural to assume that the ties between the state and the social movements will tighten.

By returning to the definition of a social movement, earlier mentioned in this study, the existence of some sort of conflict is indispensable. Thus, the conflicts that have created the emergence of social movements in Ecuador have differed due to the period. For example, in the 1970s it was the demand for land whereas it was their opposition to neoliberal policies that characterized the conflict in the
In that sense, I would argue that the social movement today found themselves in a more difficult position whereas there is no obvious conflict around which to unite. One illustrative view on how the present situation has complicated the strategy of the indigenous movement is provided by Ampam Karakras, he says: Many of our (the indigenous organizations, my remark) principal demands and proposals, that earlier united the organizations, have now been incorporated into the state. Plurinationality was the last one but it was recognized in the new Constitution. As our discourse has been co-opted by the Correa government, we need to create new discourses and objectives (My translation; interview, November 18, 2008).

According to Pablo Ospina, the Correa government provides the indigenous movement with a historical opportunity whereas it combines the social rights and benefits that existed during the populist regimes in the 1960s and 1970s with the political rights that have been implemented ever since the transition to democracy. He admits, however, that the government’s social policy does not favour autonomous organizations that pursue particularistic interests, unless there is a direct channel between the government and said organization, which, as he says, unfortunately, have certain characteristics with the corporatist and clientilistic structures of the past (My translation; interview, October 22, 2008). In short, the definition of a state with democratic legitimacy, according to Correa, seems to be based on institutions exempt from any influence or presence of particularistic interests. Thus, the series of state institutions for education, health, and development - Directorate of Bilingual Education (DINEIB), the indigenous development agency (CODENPE), and a central role in the World-Bank-supported Program for the Development of Indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian Peoples (PRODEPINE - that the movement achieved to create during the neoliberal period and that were managed directly by indigenous have no place in the state of Correa. In other words, what seems to be at stake is a process of reinforcement of state authority that implies the reduction of the participation and autonomy of social movements.

On the basis of these facts, the economist Pablo Dávalos claims that Correa deliberately co-opted the indigenous movement’s whole political discourse, in order to divide, fragmentize, and question the legitimacy of the indigenous movement, just as other presidents before him had done. In other words, Correa’s intentions are not aimed to improve the conditions of the indigenous movement. On the contrary, his rhetoric has only been a tool in order to reach the power and now only wants to reap the benefits at their expense (2006). A more moderate interpretation of the Correa effect in the indigenous movement is presented by Rickard Lalandier (2009:15), which suggests that Correa grasped the opportunity of a power vacuum and “mobilized a kind of co-optation of social organizations that had experienced political crises of representation, for instance the FENOCIN”.

Shuar intellectual and coordinator of COICA (Coordinator of the Indigenous Organizations of the Amazonian Basin).
The Correa administration has in many respects presented the social movements with an ultimatum, that is, either to accept to act within the framework set by the state, or else, choose to stay outside and be isolated. For obvious reasons, the two organizations analysed in this study have chosen different paths with respect to this ultimatum, that is, FENOCIN opted to accept the terms and CONAIE did not. As mentioned, the indigenous movement´s tactics of both contestation and negotiation, as well as its eventual participation in electoral politics, initially, offered substantial rewards. Manifested, for example, in the Constitution of 1998, in which indigenous rights were enshrined. Thus, for the first time, indigenous leaders were able to influence the functioning of the state apparatus, from within. In other words, in contrast to the situation in the 1980s and 1990s, Correa´s leftist and anti-neoliberal movement did not constitute an obvious enemy around which to unite, instead, it further augmented the fragmentation within the indigenous movement. Consequently, from the onwards, one of the main causes of conflict and fragmentation within the indigenous movement itself and between the indigenous movement and the left are, in my opinion, due to the end (temporarily?) of the fusion between class and ethnicity.

In this context, where CONAIE neither has access to the state apparatus via the institutions mentioned above, nor the same mobilization strength as before they have, in my opinion, no other choice than to turn even further away from Correa and his administration. In order to restore its status among its support base, they cannot do otherwise in view of the harsh will rhetoric that Correa has used against them since he won the elections. Consequently, whereas they cannot compete with the present administration on issues related to class, the most probable development, in my opinion, is a radicalisation of the movements´ ethnic related demands.
5.2 The compatibility of plurinationality and interculturality in the present context

The concepts of plurinationality and interculturality did not evoke strong tensions between the two organizations as they first emerged in the 1980s and 1990s. As mentioned, the context at the time contributed to a strategy in which divergences of opinions regarding political objectives, in general, and class and ethnic related issues, in particular, were subordinated to a mutually unifying incentive: the struggle against neoliberalism. In other words, although questions of ethnicity and class emerged on the national political arena as a result of both the democratisation process and the implementation of neoliberal policies, contemporary contextual aspects prevented these concepts from assuming a salient, and polarized, position. In the course of the last decades, however, the interpretation and meaning of these concepts have separated the positions between CONAIE and FENOCIN, whereas CONAIE has emphasized plurinationality, and FENOCIN interculturality.

Nevertheless, the “image” of unity lasted more or less intact until 2006, as the Ecuadorian people elected Rafael Correa as their president. As a result, the rules of the political game changed radically due to the fact that the principal motive of establishing a united front, obviously, ceased to exist. Moreover, an important consequence of the election of the Correa-government is, in my opinion, that it unleashed the tensions of the concepts class and ethnicity, thus, contributing to a rupture between CONAIE and FENOCIN. In this context, the concepts of plurinationality and interculturality emerged as two of the main protagonists and, as such, became intimately related to the fragmentation - whereas CONAIE and FENOCIN differed regarding which of the two concepts they preferred, and Correa only could see that one of the concepts could fit into his political project.

After a long debate, the governing party finally reached a consensus in which both terms, plurinationality and interculturality, were included in the Constitution. But some of the demands of the first seem to have been somewhat diluted. That is, according to Correa, plurinationality was accepted as a term, but the sovereignty of the state supersedes territorial autonomy, and special representation of indigenous nationalities beyond regular democratic representation is not accepted (Ospina 2008: 16). The much less infected relationship between “FENOCINS’ concept” interculturality and Correas political project is exemplified by Alberto Anrango12 whereas he connects interculturality with the concept launched by Correa during his successful presidential campaign: la revolución ciudadana (the

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12 Co-founder of UNORCAC, the local organization of Fenocin in Cotacachi. In 2009, Anrango defeated the very popular and internationally well-known candidate of the Pachakutic party (the political vehicle of Conaie), Auki Tituaña, and became the new Mayor of the canton Cotacachi for UNORCAC.
revolution of the citizen). Thus he describes how both of these concepts, through active form of participation, aim at achieving a mutual respect of the diversity, culture, language, and identity of all the ethnicities in the country, whether indigenous, black, mestizo, or white (My translation; interview, Alberto Anrango, October 9, 2008). Moreover, the principle of interculturality is based on a cultural, economic and social interrelationship, where differences among Ecuadorians are respected and recognized within the one space they have in common: the Ecuadorian nation (My translation; FENOCIN’S Extraordinary National Assembly, February 16, 2008).

To be sure, we are dealing with different interpretations of the concept of class that briefly is rooted in an analysis of a peasant struggle from below (FENOCIN), and a national project that encompasses the whole nation from above (Correa). I argue, however, that both of these concepts of class coincide with the concept of interculturality, which by both Correa and FENOCIN stands for an emphasis on universality rather than particularity, on the one hand, and is related to a kind of social revolution attached to the ideas of a class-struggle in which all exploited groups in society are included, on the other. Furthermore, as mentioned earlier in this study there is yet another fundamentally important aspect which is intimately connected with the statements above, that is, that interculturality in fact is highly compatible with Correa’s vision of a ‘citizen’s revolution’ based on the idea of abolishing all social stratifications in society.

In sum, as class, ethnicity, plurinationality and interculturality were intertwined and had a more or less similar status during the neoliberal period, the Correa government has implied a shift towards more emphasis on class and interculturality. As a consequence of this, the concept and meaning of a plurinational state is not compatible with the present context whereas it is based on ethnic identity and emphasises the idea of distinctiveness, as such it questions the essence of Correa’s political project, which is the foundation of a uninational state. Interculturality, on the other hand, is a much more compatible concept in this respect whereas it embraces said character of a uninational state, which not is based on autonomy of indigenous peoples in their own territories, but on inclusion and equality in diversity that pervades all institutions of society.
5.3 The Correa-effect: polarization versus expectations

Ecuador´s indigenous movement emerged in close interaction with – occasionally also in opposition to – the peasant movement controlled by the left. Prior to the transition to democracy this relationship gave rise to an interchange of political proposals and ideological elements, in which a more or less voluntary fusion of class and ethnic related demands was agreed upon. After the transition to democracy, however, the indigenous movement was able to strengthen their position vis-à-vis the political left. Nevertheless, due to the historically tight connections between the left and the indigenous movement, the fusion of class and ethnic elements prevailed to a great extent during the 1980s and 1990s. With the emergence of Correa, however, the division within the indigenous movement increased, among other things, due to the fact that a leftist administration contributed to unleash the tension and differences concerning class and ethnicity.

In addition, there is no doubt that in order to carry out his political vision, he has taken advantage of the political demands and proposals that the indigenous movement has put forward during the last two decades. In addition to pursue issues closely associated to the indigenous demands, Correa also distinguished himself by wearing traditional clothes and to speak Quechua (the native language of the majority of the indigenous population). As mentioned, this strategy did not only prove to be successful at the ballots, as a large segment of the indigenous population instead of voting for its own candidate voted on Correa.

To be sure, whether it has been intentional or not, all of the above mentioned actions have been both appreciated and vehemently criticised in society in general, and in the indigenous organizations in particular. Nevertheless, it is an illustrative example of the contrasting points of views that Correa evokes among persons and organizations alike, and in that respect it is also intimately related to the fragmentation and polarization of both the Ecuadorian society and the indigenous movement.

When Ecuadorians, in September 2007, approved a referendum convening the Constituent Assembly, Monica Chuji\textsuperscript{13} asserts that social movements, including CONAIE, were cautiously optimistic, as it was perceived as a chance to make gains on pressing social, economic and foreign policy issues (My translation; interview, October 10, 2008). Despite these expectations, in May 12, 2008, the relations between Correa and CONAIE arrived to a breaking-point as. Then, CONAIE officially broke its ties

\textsuperscript{13} Important Conaie leader, as well as ex-legislator and former secretary of communications for the Correa government.
with the Correa administration, accusing the President of continuing neoliberal economic and racist social policies. The rupture focused on the concept of plurinationality. In its statement CONAIE asserted that, although the term plurinationality had been included in the Constitution’s text the meaning had not, as a result, it just represented a symbolic gesture.\[14\]

The following quotations aim to serve as an illustration of the impact that Correa has made among Ecuadorian citizens, indigenous as well as mestizos.

The democracy that they (the Correa government, my remark) are establishing is an intolerant, arbitrary, authorative, and anti-environmental type of democracy. The part of the indigenous movement that has chosen to stay independent and not to ally with with the president, can at the very best achieve two members at the parliament. This implies that we once again marginalize a large part of our population, as if they did not exist. But they do exist! (My translation; interview, Juan Fernando Terán\[15\], December 4, 2008).

There is no other alternative! We had an unique opportunity but we did not take advantage of it. If they (Conaie) do not enter in an alliance with the Correa government now, the movement may not recover and, perhaps, even cease to exist. Why should we not enter in an alliance with Correa government, it is left and promotes participatory democratic tendencies? At this moment an alliance with Correa is the only viable option! (My translation; interview, Miguel Angel Carlosama\[16\], October 27, 2008).

These two examples illustrate how deep the impact of the phenomenon of Correa has affected both scholars and grass-roots representatives. On the one hand, the concern and emotional devotion to the matter expressed by the scholar, and the initial expectation and subsequent disappointment by someone who has been involved in the development of the Indigenous movement (CONAIE) since the beginning, on the other.

In conclusion, after more than a decade of uprisings and political participation, the communities have not seen enough change. That is, ethnicity is a strategy that hitherto seems to have benefited indigenous leaders, but much less communities and the grassroots. This is yet another reason for the grassroots to be attracted by Correa’s political project. It still remains to be seen, however, if his political project will improve indigenous people’s economic mobility, or if he rather will be known for having caused the disintegration of the Ecuadorian indigenous movement. One thing is certain, though, Correa is surrounded by both high expectations and ominous predictions.


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\[16\] Ex-leader of Ecuarunari and CONAIE.
6. Conclusions

The ambition of this study has been to analyse the fragmentation of the indigenous movement from a perspective that has focused on its relationship with the concepts of class and ethnicity. By comparing the two main indigenous Confederations, CONAIE and FENOCIN, it has seek to demonstrate that these issues have been important factors in the course of the development, as well as the fragmentation, of the indigenous movement in Ecuador. Moreover, through an analysis of different historical periods, this study has tried to illustrate how the complex of problems, and tensions attached to this topic, have changed over the course of time.

Due to the historically close relations between the left and the indigenous movement, class- and ethnic related issues did not provoke any major problems for the most part of the twentieth century. The reason for this was that both the left and the indigenous movement had a confluence of similar ideas and objectives. The principal objective that they had in common was the pursuit of a different political system. On the basis of the different periods that this study has examined, the existence of a common enemy has been a fundamental element of the fusion of class and ethnicity. As soon as that enemy ceased to exist, however, the illusion of said fusion abruptly disappeared.

In other words, in a context of an authoritarian or neoliberal regime there was no evident tension between class and ethnicity. On the contrary, due to the political context these concepts often appeared as two faces of the same coin. However, in lieu with the contemporary political currents issues related to class and ethnicity re-emerged in the form of new concepts, thus appeared the concepts of plurinationality and interculturality on the political agenda. Subsequently, in a context of a leftist government these concepts caused unprecedented conflicts, not only between the political left and the indigenous movement, but also within the indigenous movement, between the class based organization FENOCIN and the ethnic based organization CONAIE. Consequently, the fusion of these concepts which had been an essential aspect of the close relationship between the political left and the indigenous movement in the struggle against the political system, whether it was oligarchic or neoliberal, changed abruptly as soon as a Correa and his administration assumed the political power. For example, it then became evident that the concept of plurinationality hardly was compatible with Correa’s political project of a citizen’s revolution in which no particularistic interests by any social movements could be allowed to break with the vision of a uninal state.
In light of the facts that have been presented in this study, it is thus possible to give an explanation to the seemingly paradoxical question: why is a leftist government whose agenda seems to coincide with the agenda of the indigenous movement and other social movements in so many ways so intimately related to the ongoing conflict and fragmentation? Thus, the traditionally close relations between the left and the indigenous movement, on the one hand, and an often shared antipathy against the prevailing system, on the other, contributed to a political discourse that combined the concepts of class and ethnicity. In relation to this, it is important to point out the fact that the power relations between the left and the indigenous movement shifted in accordance with the prevailing political context, which in turn affected the power-balance between the concepts as well. Nevertheless, as this study has shown, it was the ability to combine class- and ethnic related demands against a common enemy that both reduced the tensions between the two concepts and contributed to the rise and political achievements of the indigenous movement, particularly conspicuous in the 1990s. The transition from authoritarianism to democracy and the dissatisfaction of neoliberal reforms, thus, contributed to a favourable context in which these demands were incorporated into the then primary objective: the struggle against the democratic deficits and precariousness produced by the market oriented reforms.

In that sense, the most impressive and significant manifestations during the 1990s and the beginning of the following decade, spearheaded by the indigenous movement in general, and CONAIE in particular, were not primarily directed towards the amplification of ethnic rights, but rather against the political system as a whole.

Rounding off, the Ecuadorian indigenous movement is challenged by a radical political project in a moment of its relative weakness regarding its organizational and mobilizing strength. President Correa’s political project has carried out some progressive reforms for the benefit of indigenous rights like the constitutional recognition of plurinationality and interculturality, affirmative action, anti-discrimination, and the rights of nature. However, constitutional principles are contradicted by executive decrees and ambiguous practices of government. Consequently, the high expectations of change once again seem to have been defused by the resurgence of political phenomena from the past.
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Interviews

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- Blanca Chancoso. Interviewed in her office in Quito the 4th of December 2008.
- Ampam Karakras. Interviewed in his office in Quito the 18th of November 2008.
- Monica Chuji. Interviewed in her home in Quito the 10th of October 2008.

People linked to FENOCIN:

- Pedro de la Cruz. Interviewed in his home in Cotacachi the 3rd of November 2008.
- Enrique Ayala Mora. Interviewed in his office in Quito the 9th of December 2008.

Researchers and others:

- Pablo Ospina. Interviewed in his office in Quito the 22nd of October 2008.
- Juan Fernando Terán. Interviewed in his office in Quito the 4th of December 2008.