Ecuadorian indigenous youth and identities: Cultural homogenization or indigenous vindication?
Abstract

There exists a scholarly debate on the cultural impact of globalization and how and to what extent it is affecting indigenous people in particular. Three theoretical standpoints can be discerned from the debate; the homogenization-perspective which holds that globalization is making world cultures more similar, the hybridization-perspective which emphasizes that it is fragmenting cultural boundaries and the differentiation-perspective which implies that globalization is augmenting differences and making humanity as a whole more diverse. As regards the cultural impact of globalization on indigenous peoples in particular, many question marks are raised. The objective of this research is to contribute to that debate by bringing to light the perspective of the indigenous movement in Ecuador, CONAIE. An analysis is made on how they perceive globalization affecting the maintenance of indigenous identities and culture among today’s youth. That information is then used as a foundation to analyze CONAIE’s level of success regarding their main objective; to preserve Ecuador’s indigenous nationalities and peoples. The study, which has a qualitative ethnographic approach and is based on semi-structured interviews, was carried out during an eight weeks long field study in Quito and in San Pedro de Escaleras, Cuenca, Ecuador. The research has an abductive approach and the theoretical debate on globalization’s cultural impact on indigenous peoples sets the analytical frame of the study. The three theoretical standpoints; globalization as homogenization, globalization as differentiation and globalization as hybridization play central roles in the analysis of the empirical material.

The findings show that there are many elements that obstruct the maintenance of indigenous culture and identity among youth in contemporary Ecuador. There is a connection between youth being exposed to cultural globalization and that they lose cultural characteristics for the indigenous identity. Hybridization of identities due to globalization is presented as a possible factor to play a role in this. Indigenous youth tend to drop characteristics for the indigenous identity as they adopt features from the mestizo culture, in case they see no benefit in maintaining the former. This indicates that what ultimately might be at stake is cultural homogenization. Light is also shed on that CONAIE lacks strategies and possibilities to reinforce the indigenous identity among the youth that is in a process of identity change. The findings thus point at that despite efforts for cultural revival by the indigenous movement in Ecuador, the
maintenance of rigid frontiers between the ethnically diverse nationalities in the country is threatened. Seen to a larger picture, this implies that globalization’s impact on indigenous culture among youth is very difficult to counteract. It appears as if the move towards more cultural similarity in Ecuador cannot be hindered.

Key words: CONAIE, social movement, youth, plurinationalism, indigenous identities, Ecuador
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## List of Abbreviations

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<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tr>
<td>CONAICE</td>
<td>Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas de la Costa Ecuatoriana</td>
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<td>CONAIE</td>
<td>Confederación Nacional de las Nacionalidades Indígenas de Ecuador</td>
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<tr>
<td>CONFENIAE</td>
<td>Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas de la Amazonía Ecuatoriana</td>
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<tr>
<td>CODENPE</td>
<td>Consejo de Desarrollo de las Nacionalidades y Pueblos de Ecuador</td>
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<td>ECUARUNARI</td>
<td>Confederación Kichwa de Ecuador</td>
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<td>ILO</td>
<td>The International Labour Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>INEC</td>
<td>Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos</td>
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<tr>
<td>MNC</td>
<td>Multinational corporation</td>
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<td>TNC</td>
<td>Transnational corporation</td>
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1. Introduction

1.1 Research problem and relevance

Globalization processes have accelerated steadily in Ecuador since the end of the last century (Middleton, 2007:1909). Globalization refers to the continuous contemporary increase of transcontinental processes of interaction, of shifting economic, social, cultural and political characters (Held et.al, 2003).

There seems to be an agreement on that globalization is transforming the human social organization on earth (Held, et.al, 2003). But in what ways and to what extent is however unclear. A scholarly debate exists on whether globalization is making world cultures more similar, if it is fragmenting and mixing cultural boundaries or if it to the contrary is augmenting cultural differences and making humanity as a whole more diverse. The debate can thus be divided into three separate theoretical perspectives.

The first perspective holds that globalization leads to loss of cultural particularities and that world cultures are becoming homogenized (see Holton, 2000:142, Synott, 2000:29, Lauderdale, 2009:374, Berry, 2008). In other words, a global culture where people think, act and look alike is said to be taking form. Terms such as McDonaldization and Westernization use to be mentioned in these contexts, emphasizing the strong world-wide influence of American and Western popular culture and how less dominant cultures are losing their features as they come in contact with these.

The second perspective emphasizes that globalization makes peoples’ identities hybridized. It holds that globalization opens up for people to start to identify in sub-state, trans-state, supra-state or non-territorial forms, which can be compared to earlier times when people tended to identify mostly with their nation-state (Scholte, 2008:231). This is said to create a fragmentation of people’s identities, which means that people increasingly start to experience many sides of the “self”.

From the third perspective globalization is said to lead to increased cultural differentiation, meaning that characteristics and deviances between different groups of peoples become strengthened (Gardell, 2002:142, Held et. al, 2003:43, Giddens, 2003:28, Rowntree, 2003:10, Bauman, 2006:18). This point of view is based on the idea that globalization often encourages strong responses among local people to embrace what is theirs and praise their own cultural particularities as they get conscious about other ways of being. Advocators of this perspective point at counter-globalization
processes, such as indigenous movements’ revolts against the elimination of their cultural heritage as support for their viewpoint.

During the last two decades, indigenous movements revolting and struggling for vindication of indigenous peoples have indeed arisen at many parts in Latin America (Bowen, 2011:1). These movements, characterized by having the indigenous label as main social identity, have in many countries become important political actors (Martí, 2010). Ecuador has an indigenous movement that due to its strong mobilizing capacity often is described as one of the most powerful indigenous movements in the Latin American region (Becker, 2010, Jameson, 2011). Its name is CONAIE, Confederación de las Nacionalidades Indígenas de Ecuador (Confederation of the Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador) and it represents all Ecuador’s indigenous nationalities, peoples, communities, centers and associations.

Ecuador has 14 officially recognized indigenous nationalities and 18 indigenous peoples which populate the Ecuadorian coast, central highlands and the Amazon. No statistical agreement exists as on what part of the population these constitute, and the percentage range from everything between six up to 45 by different estimates (IFAD, 2012:1). The indigenous nationalities and peoples have their own typical cultural characteristics, such as way of clothing, traditions, religions and forms of social organizations, and apart from the Spanish, twelve different indigenous languages are spoken in the country.

CONAIE was founded in 1986 and has since its official recognition in 1990 struggled to improve the social situation for the indigenous people, as the livelihood situation for these still does not reach that of the mestizo-part of the population (UNHRC, 2006, Bowen, 2011). The various indigenous economic, social, and human development indicators remain below the national average. Recent surveys shows that 61% of Ecuador's indigenous live below the poverty line, compared to only 29% of non-indigenous people (HDR, 2010).

CONAIE has since the 1990’s mobilized several popular uprisings and protests against the Ecuadorian regime’s policies - with significant results. Among the various accomplishments, important milestones are the 1998 re-writing of the Ecuadorian Constitution for the inclusion of collective ethnic rights such as bilingual education and the 2008 constitutional reform whereby Ecuador was formally declared a Multicultural and Plurinational state (Lupien 2011, De la Torre, 2006).
As of now, the movement runs a political struggle on the national arena concerning the practical realization of Ecuador as a plurinational state. The struggle aims for the recognition of the existence of various national identities and the creation of social equality among these. In practice, that means the construction of the state in a way that allows the indigenous people to “continue to be indigenous”. Thus, all nationalities must be able to continue with their particular economic, political and cultural practices and by no means be forced to acculturate or assimilate into the dominant society (CONAIE, 2011).

Connecting to the debate on the consequences of globalization on world cultures discussed in the beginning; among advocators of the perspective that holds that globalization leads to increased differentiation, CONAIE could be seen as an example supporting that point of view. However, advocators of the other two perspectives claim that cultural development takes another direction, despite this kind of cultural revival-initiatives (Lauderdale, 2008).

These three different lines of thinking can also be traced when the focus is narrowed into the discussion on indigenous peoples in particular, and the cultural impact globalization is said to have on these. Some authors are critical about the situation and state that today’s globalized societies force indigenous people to assimilate into more dominant cultures (see O’Sullivan, 2012, Lauderdale, 2008 and Synott 2000). On the opposite corner are authors who emphasize that globalization favors differentiation since it yields tools and opportunities for indigenous groups to revitalize traditional cultures (see Bhawuk, 2008, Hall and Fenelon, 2008 and Werlhof, 2008).

To take this one step further, it has been argued that the cultural consequences of globalization, whichever these are, are extra evident in youth culture (Hopper, 2007:93). This is simply because young people for various reasons often are the most exposed to it. Having established that there are many possible ways in which globalization can affect the culture and identities of indigenous people, and that the youth in particular is in a sensitive zone for this impact, the research problem is starting to be framed.

There is not much research done on Ecuador’s contemporary generation of indigenous youth, and where they stand in the middle of all these opposing forces. On the one hand there are globalization elements that some argue are provoking cultural hybridization or homogenization of identities, and on the other hand there is CONAIE as an element of cultural differentiation trying to prevent that this happens. A research gap can be identified concerning how the indigenous youth and the way they identify
and relate to their indigenous heritage is affected by these contrasting forces. The importance of establishing that information draws upon the fact that what is happening with today’s indigenous youth has consequences for the eventual fulfillment of CONAIE’s objective to preserve the cultural diversity in the country.

It can be argued that in order for CONAIE to succeed with their objective of conserving the indigenous nationalities and peoples and their cultures in their original forms, it is required that they succeed with counteracting elements that eventually cause the youth to lose or change their indigenous identities and cultural particularities. Thus, a making sure of that the indigenous identities are transferred to the new generations. Hence, in order to fill this research gap, it first becomes necessary to understand what strategies CONAIE is using in order to pass over the indigenous identities to the young generations. Then can be explored what obstacles linked to globalization CONAIE activists identify to this work. In order to increase the credibility of those findings, it is also necessary to turn directly to a group of youth in an indigenous community, to see how well CONAIE’s descriptions of the situation match their perceived realities. Through research on a group of youth it is expected to be possible to trace how globalization elements affect the way they identify and to what extent they maintain the indigenous culture of their community. It is noteworthy that the perceptions of a specific group in no ways can be generalized across all indigenous youth in Ecuador, but it might give an arbitrary hint of some general patterns.

The aggregate information of research on that topic is expected to point at current tendencies as regards what cultural impact globalization has on indigenous youth, their identities and culture. The next step of the research is to use that background information as a foundation for the evaluation of the prospects that CONAIE will succeed with their objective of preserving cultural diversity in the country.

The relevance of the study draws upon the fact that it will contribute to the debate on the impact of globalization on indigenous cultures from the viewpoint of whom it concerns: indigenous people themselves. That will enrich the debate which else tend to be dominated by the perspectives from a restricted number of researchers: mainly male scholars from the USA and Europe (e.g. Giddens, Robertson, Waters, Bauman, Beck, Held). Moreover, by concentrating on a specific indigenous social movement in a specific country, the research will yield an up-to-date example of what consequences globalization-related cultural impact can have for indigenous youth.
Important is also the fact that it will increase our understanding about the struggle of CONAIE and the chances that they will succeed with their objective. It will hence point at long-term consequences for the entire indigenous population. Furthermore, the research yields an authentic narrowing about a particular social movement, but the results are expected to be generalizable to other similar indigenous movements operating in similar contexts. The study can thus also be useful for other indigenous social movements as a way of sharing experiences and dilemmas, recognizing that organizations similar to CONAIE exist all over Latin America. At last, the focus on youth yields information about the generation that is expected to carry on the indigenous cultures to the future. Ultimately, what is at stake and of great concern is the survival of ancient indigenous cultures.

1.2 Research objective and research questions

The research objective is to analyze Ecuador’s indigenous social movement, CONAIE’s struggle to preserve the indigenous nationalities and peoples in Ecuador within the context of contemporary globalization, with particular focus on youth and globalization’s impact on indigenous identities and culture.

The following research questions were developed out of this objective:

- What are CONAIE’s strategies and how do they work for the preservation of the indigenous identities among today’s youth?
- What elements can be identified by indigenous leaders as threatening the maintenance of indigenous identification among youth, and how can these be linked to the impact of globalization?
- What can we learn from youth living in an indigenous community, as concerns their respective ways of identifying and maintenance of indigenous culture, and what role the impact of globalization might have on this?

1.3 Methods and theoretical frame

This qualitative study is based on semi-structured interviews carried out during a field study in Ecuador within an eight weeks long period of time in November and December.
2012. Interviews were made with CONAIE leaders in Quito, CONAIE activists and indigenous youth in the community of San Pedro de Escaleras outside of Cuenca. The debate on globalization and its cultural consequences for indigenous peoples is used as a frame for the study. Within this debate there exist three conflicting points of views that are used for the analysis of the empirical findings. These are globalization as homogenization, globalization as hybridization and globalization as differentiation, as described by authors such as Gardell (2002), Held & McGrew (2003), Giddens (2003), Rowntree and Scholte (2008).

1.4 Limitations and delimitations

The study is delimited to explore the tools used within, perceived obstacles to, and seeming prospects of the struggle of CONAIE and explain that. The study thus is restricted to examine the impact of globalization from CONAIE’s point of view. Moreover, it does not involve any moral dimension of whether the indigenous nationalities should or can be conserved, how that ought to be managed and reasons for that. The study does not cover indigenous people in all age groups, but be limited to youth between the ages of 15-30. The choice of youth as target group for the research was made because they belong to the generation on which the survival of the indigenous nationalities depends. It was for practical reasons not possible to examine a sample of youth of equal geographical distribution throughout Ecuador. Awareness exists about that the limited amount of interviews prevents the study results from counting for all Ecuadorian indigenous youth, but since the intention is to grasp general patterns, a careful selection of interviewees was considered to make possible rough generalizations.

As regards limitations of the research, one barrier was that interviews were carried out in Spanish which is not the mother tongue of the researcher. But as all interviews were recorded and carefully processed afterwards precautions were taken to avoid misinterpretations.
1.5 Structure of the thesis

The study is divided into six different chapters:

The first chapter presents the research problem, the objective and the questions of study. It also explains three core concepts, the relevance, the theoretical framework, limitations and delimitations of the research.

The second chapter explains methodological framework of the study.

The third chapter provides information about the conceptual framework and the theoretical debate that has been used as a tool throughout the entire research process.

The fourth chapter starts with describing the Ecuadorian context. In the second part, the research questions are answered one by one as the empirical findings are presented. The chapter ends with a summary of the findings.

The fifth chapter provides an analysis of the research material in relation to the theoretical debate on globalization and its impact on indigenous cultures.

The sixth chapter concludes the results.
2. Methodological framework

This chapter presents how the study was conducted, aiming to make the research process transparent.

2.1 Methodological approach

The study has a typical qualitative approach. A qualitative strategy was deemed preferable since it comprehends reliance upon the views of the individuals studied, and allows making interpretations out of the meanings that these people themselves give to their realities (Creswell, 2009:4). No quantitative research procedures were used since that was not considered necessary for the fulfillment of the research objective which is of an interpretative character.

The work takes the form of an ethnographic study. Ethnography as strategy of inquiry let the researcher explore characteristics of cultural groups that share a common history, attitudes, beliefs and behaviors with help of direct contact (Creswell, 2007:70). The strategy of inquiry was a natural choice since the study aims to bring to light an indigenous perspective and ethnographies typically makes it possible to capture the view directly from whom it concerns.

The method of inference used in this study is abduction. Danermark et. al. (2002:91) describes abduction as when the research has a clear starting point in a framework which then is used throughout the whole study as to describe, interpret and explain the observations. By making clear the point of departure, an abductive research allows the researcher to make analytical interpretations of the phenomena studied. The objective is not to claim the truth, but to show that with the use of a certain framework certain conclusions can be drawn. The point of departure used in this study is the debate on globalization’s impact on indigenous culture. That debate worked as a, in Creswell’s (2009:62) words “theoretical lens” throughout the entire study. That means that it guided the questions asked, the collection of material and how the empirical findings were processed.

In sum, the methodological approach and strategy of inquiry chosen are linked to a basic assumption of the world view as social-constructivist, which means that
individuals tend to develop subjective understandings of their experiences and therefore give own meanings to these.

2.2 Methodological procedure

2.2.1 Field study
The research was carried out as a field study in Ecuador during an eight weeks long period of time (November-December 2012). The major part of the material was collected at CONAIE’s office in Quito, the capital of Ecuador, as well as in a small indigenous community named San Pedro de Escaleras, located in the canton of Cuenca.

The choice to conduct the research as a field study was made because it gives the opportunity to observe the people studied in their natural settings (Mikkelsen, 2005:124). This can both increase the understanding and help creating a more holistic description of the culture-sharing group. The direct contact helps to discern patterns and factors that might be impossible to identify through a desk study.

The research procedure took off in Quito were meetings were held with two university academics that are acquainted with CONAIE. Through interaction with these I came in contact with CONAIE’s leaders and got invited to their office where interviews could be held. With help of CONAIE leaders, the community of San Pedro was identified as a suitable place to carry out the interviews with the youth for the third research question. San Pedro seemed suitable since it was explained as a place where, on the one hand a lot of external elements are entering due to its location in close proximity to the large city of Cuenca. And on the other hand, the community is a member of CONAIE and has a strong local community organization that is actively struggling contra mining projects in the area. There was thus reason to expect that youth in the community are influenced both by elements of globalization and CONAIE’s work to strengthen indigenous culture and traditions. At last, San Pedro was also described as being very much like any other indigenous community in Ecuador as regards maintenance of culture and traditions. This increases the prospect for generalizations to some extent.
2.2.2 Semi-structured interviews and respondents

The semi-structured interviews carried out in Ecuador serve as the primary source of information. The primary stakeholders for the interviews are: First, three of CONAIE’s top leaders who work at the office in Quito. As the research aims to capture an indigenous social movement’s perception on how globalization affects contemporary indigenous youth, turning to the movement’s top leaders was a natural choice. Second, main stakeholders are also the six community- and/or indigenous leaders of local-, provincial- and regional organizations affiliated with CONAIE. CONAIE has a very complex member structure that will be explained more in detail later on. But important to know as of know is that CONAIE is a network of indigenous organizations on different levels. This might create confusion as of who is a leader within the organization of CONAIE and who is not. Therefore, all leaders on sub-level organizations are referred to as “CONAIE activists” in order to distinguish these from the head leaders. Third, primary stakeholders are also the 20 indigenous youth between the ages 15-30 years living in the indigenous community San Pedro de Escaleras. The choice to turn to a sample of indigenous youth in an indigenous community was made because that provides some real examples of how the situation looks as regards their maintenance of indigenous culture and identities and eventual impact of globalization. Despite the fact that findings from this community cannot count for all Ecuadorian indigenous youth, they are expected to reveal general patterns.

Interviews were also carried out with secondary stakeholders. These were such as authority persons working with indigenous youth, Ecuadorian academics as well as community members of San Pedro de Escaleras and served as informants on the topic.

All interviews carried out were semi-structured, face-to-face interviews with open-ended questions. Typical for these are that no premade questionnaires are used but rather a flexible guide with certain issues that are discussed (Mikkelsen, 2009:181). An exception to this were the interviews carried out with indigenous youth in San Pedro, which contained one part of standardized pre-determined yes or no-questions that aimed to categorize the respondents. Moreover, the interviews were made with an almost equal representation of women and men, with representatives from both rural and urban areas and of different occupational, educational and economic backgrounds.
2.2.3 Participatory observation
Participatory observation during meetings and reunions with indigenous organizations on a local, provincial and national level was another method used which provided information that helped to guide and structure the research. Apart from participation in local reunions in and around San Pedro, observations were made during an assembly in Saraguro for the indigenous organizations in the region on the 8th of December 2012, as well as during a national assembly in Quito organized by CONAIE on the 19th of December 2012. Observations were also made during the two weeks that I stayed in the community of San Pedro, in public spaces, during traditional community activities and in the elementary school. Observations were also made at universities in Quito and Cuenca.

2.2.4 Secondary sources
The secondary source of information is earlier research published in books, articles, documents. All sources were critically scrutinized and only peer-reviewed material was used as to guarantee the academic standard. Some statistical numbers are used throughout the text; these are all deemed sufficiently confidential since they are taken from large and recognized sources. All material used can be found in the list of sources.

2.2.5 Triangulation
Triangulation is defined by Mikkelsen (2005: 349) as when a phenomenon is looked upon from different points of views and when more than one strategy, method and source of information is used. This can increase the validity and reliability of the information. Qualitative interviews, observations as well as secondary sources of data have been used for this thesis, which made possible a triangulation of the information.

2.3 Ethical considerations
This study aimed to take into account ethical issues during all stages of the research. Apart from the more abstract relevance of the study, the research problem is considered meaningful for the individuals being studied - the indigenous- since it sheds light over a very actual problem. It also brings to light the perceptions of those who rarely are asked to give their opinions, indigenous youth.

During the data collection, the interviewees got to decide about time and place for the interview as well as eventual anonymity. Some of the CONAIE activists gave
their permission to be mentioned by name in the study. Others wished to be treated anonymously and will therefore be referred to either by an invented name or by age and gender. All the youth interviewees fall under this latter category. A more detailed explanation of the interviewees and location of the interviews is provided in appendix I. The interview questions were carefully selected and sensibly formulated in order to avoid inconveniences. As regards the writing, the language has been thoughtfully considered so that words used are as unbiased as possible to avoid unintended discrimination. The study procedure has been made as transparent as possible in order to increase the credibility and trustworthiness of the research.

2.4 Critique of the sources

Finally some words should be dedicated the liability of the sources. It cannot be excluded that the youth interviewees might not always have given open-hearted and honest answers to a, for them, foreign and unknown researcher. Fear or uncertainty might have caused them to answer in a certain way. However, by providing as much information as possible about the purpose of the research and making clear the role of the researcher attempts were made to avoid this. Furthermore, it cannot be overseen that representatives from the indigenous organization do have certain interests and might have answered the questions in accordance with these. But as interviews were held with leaders on many different levels and not just the top leaders, this served as a way of verifying that the situation was described somewhat similar even among those who do not work actively with the framing of the organization’s agenda.
3. Conceptual frame and theoretical debate

This research is embedded in the theoretical debate with literature on globalization’s impact on cultures and indigenous peoples. This chapter discusses theories about globalization and what implications it might have on world cultures and indigenous people. A review of existing literature on the topic is also provided which aims to inform about the theoretical context of the study.

3.1 Conceptual frame

3.1.1 Youth

In this study, the concept of youth refers to young adults between the ages of 15–30 years old.

3.1.2 Indigenous

The concept ‘indigenous’ is in this research used as a generic term for all the native nations, nationalities and peoples of Ecuador. The Convention 169 by the International Labour Organization (ILO) which was ratified by Ecuador in 1998 grants the right for indigenous self-identification. With help of that instrument, CONAIE has through political lobbying succeeded with passing a law that permits the auto-determination of the peoples and nationalities of Ecuador. This means that it is the own subjective understanding which determines whether a person is indigenous or not.

3.1.3 Identity

Identity is in this study understood in accordance with how Van Elteren (1996:56) describes it; as being located in symbolic space and time. Symbolic space means that it has imaginary geographies, characteristic landscapes and sense of home and roots. As regards time, Elteren provides that: “Identities also have their placement in time- in invented traditions which bind past and present, in myths of origin which project the present back into the past, and in the narratives of the nation or region which connect the individual to larger, more significant historical events” (ibid.).
3.1.4 Culture
Rowntree et.al (2003:24) define culture as learned and shared behavior held in common by a group of people and empowering them with a ‘way of life’. It has both abstract dimensions such as ideology, values and ideas, and material dimensions such as music, clothing and food. The definition also recognizes that culture is a process and not a condition, meaning that it is continuously changing and adapting to new circumstances.

3.1.5 Globalization
This research recognizes the multidimensional character of the concept of globalization, and for the purpose of the study it is defined as a wide range of processes and outcomes of political, social, cultural and economic dimensions that can be linked to the increased global transcontinental interconnectivity. This definition recognizes Scholte’s (2005:59-75) notion to contemporary globalization; as the spread of trans-planetary and supra-territorial connections between people, manifested in for instance communication, organizations, travel, production, markets, money, finance, military, ecology, health, law and consciousness. To give some examples of these; globalization as manifested in communication is meant the increasing use of technologies such as TV, cellphones and internet, as manifested in organizations is meant the increasing regime of international organizations. Moreover, globalization as manifested in money and finance refers to e.g. the use of international credit cards, a floating exchange rate, overseas banking and security markets and as manifested in production; e.g. the location of labor-intensive phases of production at low-wage sites.

Moreover Scholte (2005:124ff) underlines that liberalists tend to see globalization as development, economic growth, liberal democracy and neoliberalism, while alternatives ways of comprehending globalization largely have developed out of critique of this liberalist viewpoint. The alternative viewpoints come from e.g. political realists who emphasize the role of power-seeking behavior in contemporary globalization, and Marxists who see the phenomenon as an outcome of capitalism.

3.1.6 Cultural globalization
The concept ‘cultural globalization’ recognizes that globalization both shapes cultures and is shaped by them. Hopper (2003:3) explains that the cultural dynamics of globalization stems from the interaction of different processes and forces which are contributed to by different actors in shifting environments. Signs of cultural globalization are for example the global import and export of cultural elements like food
habits, entertainment, tourism, ideologies and values. The cultural consequences of globalization are not generalizable to humanity as a whole; they appear differently everywhere. In order to understand the effects it is necessary to examine the juncture between the global and the local within different contexts (ibid.). Researchers provide that the scale, intensity and volume of contemporary worldwide cultural connections are unique and have no precedents, and that literally everywhere on earth people are exposed to foreign value systems (Held et al., 2003:46). Typical for contemporary cultural globalization is that it is extra evident in youth- and popular culture, and that it is driven by companies and not by states (Hopper, 2007:93).

How and to what extent globalization affects identities is a subject of great controversy. Does globalization make world citizens more similar or more different? These points of views can be sorted into three different strands, globalization as homogenization, globalization as hybridization and globalization as differentiation.

3.2 The debate on globalization’s impact on culture

3.2.1 Globalization as homogenization

The homogenization thesis is the most common held belief about globalization, and it provides that we are in a period of cultural convergence (Holton, 2000:142). This means that a global society where people eat the same food, share the same values and pray to the same gods gradually is taking form. Thus places, people and environments are thought to be losing their specific characteristics and become constituents of one homogeneous whole. This viewpoint can be found among those who Giddens (2010:24) calls ‘the radicals’, and Held & McGrew (2003:16) ‘the globalists’, meaning the globalization sympathizers that believe its consequences can be seen everywhere.

Globalists picture a future of a united global homogenous community, where there are no wars or ethnic strife (Rowntree, 2003:10). On the other hand, there are critics who fear that globalization will lead to forced cultural adaptation, and that many nations will become culturally endangered in the process (Gardell, 2002:147).

How this alleged ‘global culture’ will take shape is well debated (Holton, 2000:88). The ‘Americanization’ perspective acknowledges the United States’ powerful political role in the world, and holds that their considerable international influence through media will force global popular culture to adapt to American standards. The ‘Westernization’ perspective points at former colonialism and explains the western
cultural imperialism as the driving force behind the cultural convergence in the world (ibid:91). The ‘McDonaldization’ perspective highlights the dominant role of transnational and multinational companies (TNC’s and MNC’s), and their influence on global culture.

3.2.2 Globalization as hybridization

Contemporary globalization and the intense cultural blending through increased transplanetary contact can also be seen as leading us towards hybridization of identities. A hybrid identity consists of various constituents, where none is necessarily given more importance than the others but rather contributes to a common whole (2008:252). Scholte provides that hybrid identities are nothing new, but that today’s globality has intensified the feeling of having many “selves”. What it has given rise to, is that people increasingly starts to identify in sub-state, trans-state, supra-state and non-territorial ways, and that these constituents become mixed (Scholte, 2008:231). This means that a person can identify as indigenous, an EU-citizen, a migrant and a feminist at the same time. This can be compared to back in history when the state-nation tended to have a dominant role in peoples’ way of identifying.

3.2.3 Globalization as differentiation

Globalization as differentiation refers to that globalization often encourages strong responses among local people to embrace what is theirs. Gardell (2002:141) states that traditional values and truths become relativized in relation to each other as world cultures become more overlapping. A natural response to the confusion that emerges in this process is that people start to turn back towards their own cultures and try to differentiate themselves from the rest. The view that globalization leads to differentiation can be found among ‘the skeptics’, meaning those who argue that everything about globalization is exaggerated (Held et. al., 2003:13, Giddens, 2003:24). Moreover, Rowntree provides that not least can differentiation be seen through the increased nationalistic activities the world over, as well by already existing nation-states as by smaller alternative self-defined nations such as indigenous peoples. Advocators of this perspective also emphasize the frequency of the phenomenon of ‘glocalization’ which is a composite of globalization and localization. The concept refers to the way the global and the local always interact, for example when products are adapted to fit local conditions. (ibid.:44).
3.3 The debate on globalization’s impact on indigenous people
When it comes to indigenous peoples, there exists a certain disagreement among scholars concerning how these are affected by globalization.

3.3.1 Globalization as harmful for indigenous people
The critics believe that globalization just benefits those who are already prosperous and that it will erase cultural diversity on earth. O’Sullivan (2012:637) provides that the most common scholarly view is that globalization with its complex meaning contends various elements that oppress and marginalize indigenous people. There has for a long time been assumed that global processes causes more change among non-dominant peoples such as minority groups than the dominant ones, and that the outcome is that distinct cultural groups lose their special characteristics (Berry, 2008:328). Globalization is in this context associated with imperial expansion, capital accumulation, colonization of territories, neo-colonialism, urbanization and the undermining of indigenous cultural priorities. Lauderdale (2008:1836) criticizes the so called ‘global diversity’ for being highly limited and restricted to the constraints of modern nation-states. Accordingly, indigenous peoples are often seen as deviants and fall subjects for development projects aiming for their normalization (Lauderdale, 2009:374). Furthermore, he states that neoliberalism contains many elements which can be closely linked to the resources of indigenous peoples; sacred places and human dignity get to pay the price when international corporations ravage for economic profit in the name of ‘progress and development.

Synott (2000:29) argue that global development forces indigenous peoples to assimilate into the societies in which they live, since states and international corporations keep repressing their resistance. He claims that the survival of indigenous cultures is at risk if failure to recognize these peoples continues.

3.3.2 Globalization as positive for indigenous people
On the contrary, another more recent academic standpoint is that globalization in many ways favors cultural differentiation and therefore should be seen as something positive for indigenous peoples. The debate circulates around to what extent globalization favors the emergence of social movements which can revitalize traditional cultures on their way to extinction, how it equips these movements with tools and yield unique opportunities for these to claim their rights. Globalization optimists tend to rely heavily on the neoliberal economy and how it will benefit all the worlds’ peoples.
Through empirical studies of indigenous peoples that due to globalization-related processes have been exposed to intercultural contact, Berry (2008) concludes that both of the two most likely outcomes have positive consequences for the preservation of indigenous culture. Moreover, Berry claims that revitalization acts, meaning actions by cultural groups trying to re-establish their cultural independence, nowadays can be found all around the world. Since the 1980’s, Latin America has indeed seen an explosion of indigenous movements which revitalize indigenous culture (Escobar et. al., 1992; Werlhof, 2008). Hall and Fenelon (2008a:1894) provide that this kind of resistance, ranging from everything between cultural maintenance to violent revolution and struggles over sovereignty, are very significant for many peoples cultural survival. Synott (2000:29) provides that we can also see that indigenous peoples increasingly are forming worldwide coalitions and assert their claimed rights to the international community. The result of this is a growing global regime of rights for indigenous peoples. Hall and Fenelon (2008a:1893) state that “Indigenous peoples are linking up throughout the world, comparing their situations and sociopolitical relations with dominant elites in the states encapsulating them (…)”. Many authors stress the changed political opportunities in response to globalization as what has facilitated the landscape for such movements to emerge (Puig, 2010; Sullivan, 2012). One of these changes is the decentralization of power, which means that power is no longer so concentrated in the hands of the nation state governments, but distributed among a wide range of actors on different levels. There are also discussions about in what ways globalization gives tools to ethnic movements, e.g. in the form of communication technologies, to accomplish their own ends (Fenelon et. al, 2008b:2, Synott, 2000:29).

3.4 The linkage of this study to the existing debate

To summarize the debate, some authors are pessimistic about globalization and its impact on indigenous people while others are more optimistic. As regards the theoretical framework of this thesis, earlier research show support for as well the homogenization-, hybridization- and the differentiation theories as possible outcomes in the meeting between indigenous culture and globalization.

However, the globalization debates identified tend to emphasize consequences for entire groups of indigenous peoples. When it comes to particularities and sub-group
differences, such as variances as concerns youth, there is a greater uncertainty. There is also a general tendency that globalization analysts have been focusing more on economics and politics rather than culture, and that the cultural consequences have been seen more as side-effects (Lieber et. al., 2002:273f). This research aims to contribute to the debate on cultural consequences of globalization for indigenous people by filling in these two gaps; it deals with sub-group differences as it focuses on youth and likewise it is centered on the cultural consequences.

Moreover, as regards CONAIE, much of the existing research is focused on the rise of the indigenous movement in the 1990’s, why and how it emerged, its entry into national politics, its state-relation and political achievements, and contains the view of external researchers and scholars (Ospina, 2003, Becker 2010, Vanden 2003, Jameson, 2010). This means that CONAIE is very much evaluated by outsiders as regards its relative strength or weakness as a social movement - based on its political achievements. In order to evaluate the movement’s level of success as regards their objective to strengthen the indigenous nationalities and peoples, it is required that the organization be evaluated also from other perspectives. This research does indeed contribute with another perspective; it explores how the youth situation can explain its level of attainment.

The debate on the cultural impact of globalization has been used as a stepping stone in all parts of the process; it influenced the research objective, how the research questions were formulated and how the empirical material finally was analyzed. In the analysis, the material is discussed in relation to the three different theoretical perspectives as to see which one of these that best explains the situation regarding indigenous youth. At last, an evaluation of CONAIE’s struggle is made based on that argumentation.
4. Presentation of research results

The first part of this chapter provides background information about CONAIE and the political and social context in Ecuador. The second part presents the empirical findings and the research questions are answered one by one.

4.1 The Ecuadorian context

4.1.1 Ecuador’s indigenous population and their social situation

At the 2010 consensus, the Institución Nacional de Estadística y Censo (National Institute of Statistics and Censos, INEC, 2010) registered that 7.5% of the population auto-identify as indigenous. CONAIE on the other hand, holds that Ecuador’s indigenous population constitutes 40% of the total population. No official statistical agreement exists on the matter. Apart from the indigenous, there are four other by INEC officially recognized ethnic identities in Ecuador. These are: “mestizos”; a mix of indigenous and Spanish, which constitute about 71% of the population,” whites” which constitute 8.5%, “afro-ecuadorians” making up 6% and at last the “montubios” which are people of indigenous descent from the coastal regions which counts for 1.6% of the total population (INEC, 2010). Ecuador’s indigenous people are comprised into 14 indigenous nationalities and 18 peoples. The difference between these two stems from that the former is a group of people that politically define itself in terms of a nation, while the make-up of the latter group is not defined or restricted.

The various indigenous economic, social, and human development indicators for the indigenous part of the population still remain below the national average (UNHRC, 2006, Bowen, 2011). Recent surveys shows that 61% of Ecuador’s indigenous live below the poverty line, compared to only 29% of non-indigenous people (HDR, 2010). Bowen (2011:451) claims that despite that the indigenous movement is described as powerful in bringing changes for the indigenous population, the country’s indigenous population is the most marginalized societal group, both in a political and economic sense. IFAD (2012:13) provides that indigenous people have fewer years of education and indigenous women and children in particular continue to have less access to basic health services. The United Nation’s Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people provides that there are persistent
gaps in the implementation of the human rights of indigenous peoples in Ecuador (United Nations, 2010:1).

4.1.2 CONAIE
CONAIE is the national umbrella organization that coordinates the permanent struggle for Ecuador’s indigenous nationalities, peoples, communities, centers and associations. The movement was created in 1986 when the three regional indigenous organizations from the Ecuadorian coast, highland and the Amazon first grouped together into one common national being (De la Torre, 2006:247).

The movement and its work is driven by the conviction that the indigenous nationalities and peoples of Ecuador ever since the colonial conquest have been subjects to discrimination and exploitation (Conaie, 2010). Some of the principal objectives of CONAIE are; to consolidate the indigenous nationalities and peoples, defend indigenous lands, territories and natural resources, strengthen the intercultural education, struggle against colonialism and the presence of transnational companies in indigenous communities, strengthen the collective rights of indigenous peoples and maintain good relations with all the indigenous nationalities on the continent (CONAIE, 2010).

The organization’s head office is located in the capital, Quito, where about 10 leaders operate on a daily basis. CONAIE’s highest element is the Government Council which is elected in the General Congress held every three years. The Government Council is divided into seven different departments; International Relations, Communication, Education and Culture, Youth Issues, Organizational strengthening, Women and Family, Territories and Health and Nutrition, each of which is under leadership by a specific leader (Conaie, 2010). The current president is called Humberto Cholango and the term of office for the presidency is three years. The Government Councilors, CONAIE’s leaders, can be seen as the top layer of a chain of indigenous organizations affiliated to CONAIE. The leaders manage all contacts with state institutions, the president, and politicians and formulate laws and demands on behalf of all the organization’s affiliates.

The organization is made up of three regional affiliates; CONFENIAE from the Amazon, ECUARUNARI from the highland and CONAICE from the coast. Each of these three regionals consists of various second grade provincial organizations, so called “unions and associations”. The provincial organizations are made up of third grade
organizations, also called CONAIE’s ‘bases’. The bases are local communities, communes and associations. CONAIE has a form of collective membership structure which implies that all habitants born in member-communities automatically become affiliated (A2). Communities apply for CONAIE membership to the regional organizations which are responsible to approve or deny incorporation into the organization. The Council of Development of the Nationalities and Peoples of Ecuador (CODENPE) is the national official organ responsible for registering Ecuador’s indigenous communities. A person born in a member community maintains his/her membership the entire life, which means that independently if he/she moves the person will be considered a member of CONAIE.

Furthermore, CONAIE receives no economic support from any institution, including the state (A2). The current government has cut international funds and external economic cooperation that has been of much importance for the organization. CONAIE is thus completely financed by donations and contributions from its members, private actors and member organizations.

Since CONAIE’s formation it has mobilized several protests, marches across the country and demonstrations where roads have been blocked, cities invaded and state institutions occupied (ibid, De la Torre, 2006:248). Their demonstrations have mainly concerned issues such as collective rights or constitutional recognition. During the past two decades, CONAIE has accomplished various achievements for the indigenous population (Bowen, 2011:9). Amongst others, in 1996 was founded a political party, Pachacutik. This aimed to serve as an option to the traditional parties, as well as facilitate alliances with other sectors of the population (Chiriboga, 2004:54). Moreover, the indigenous movement has had a central position in all anti-neoliberal protests since 1990 and it has played important roles in two resignations of Ecuadorian presidents (Jameson, 2010:63). CONAIE also played an important role in the incorporation of collective rights in the 1998 constitution (De la Torre, 2006:248).

However, one of CONAIE’s greatest achievements is that the 2008 constitution declares Ecuador an Intercultural and Plurinational state (CONAIE, 2011). Plurinationalism is a political project that was created in 1994, which by the movement itself is described as the result of a long process of resistance and struggle against discrimination and exploitation; first the colonial-, then the capitalist- and extractive-, and lately the neocolonial- and imperialist system (ibid.:7-9). CONAIE explains plurinationalism as a political, economic and sociocultural organizational model based
on justice and freedom. It aims to equalize the Ecuadorian society as regards the different cultures and regions and cease the discrimination against all Ecuador’s original civilizations. The concept recognizes that all peoples are different and respects these differences, whether it is about way of understanding the world, spirituality, food, dressing or language. The indigenous demand for a plurinational state as an alternative to the capitalist order has been constantly reproduced and permeated all CONAIE’s work since 1990 (Jamesson, 2011:64). As it is now part of the constitution, the current work of the organization concerns the realization of Ecuador as a plurinational state in practice.

4.1.3 The political and societal context in Ecuador

Globalization processes have accelerated steadily in Ecuador since the end of the last century (Middleton, 2007:1909). There is no doubt that the global spread and intermixing of cultural elements known as ‘cultural globalization’ has intertwined the Ecuadorian society with the rest of the world. For example, transnational and multinational companies such as McDonalds and Coca Cola are advertising their products, people watch American TV-shows in their cellphones, tourists are travelling in and out and foreigners are establishing businesses in the country. There is thus a persistent interchange of cultural influences within the country and between Ecuador and the rest of the world.

During the last several decades, Ecuador has had a chain of governments whose policies have been very much characterized by neo-liberal reforms and the presence of international corporations in the country (MRGI: 2008). Since oil exports were initiated in 1972, the economic growth has shown unprecedented numbers and a consequence of that has been a steadily increasing urbanization (Álvarez-Berríos et.al., 2013:38). Governments have to a large extent spent earnings on improving the infrastructure such as communication networks and tele-communications for the growing urban population.

The current president Rafael Correa and his political left-wing party Nueva Alianza (New Alliance) have held power since 2006. Becker (2013:49) provides that special tension has arisen between Correa and CONAIE concerning his extractive policies regarding mining, petroleum and the agrarian policies that are accused of undermining rural communities and favor large-scale economic development restricted to urban areas. For this reason, CONAIE’s relationship with the government remains antagonistic. The movement suffers government persecution and severe accusations
(TIW, 2012:148). During the Correa-government, about 200 indigenous leaders have been accused of terrorism, physical damage and security-related crimes.

### 4.2 Empirical findings

In the following chapter, the empirical findings have been systematized and sorted into themes and categories that represent the main patterns detected in the field study. The research questions will be answered one by one.

#### 4.2.1 CONAIE’s strategies and work with youth

There is an agreement among CONAIE leaders (A1, A2 & A3) that today’s youth is a problematic issue. They claim that young indigenous people are becoming distanced from their roots, lose their culture, way of thinking and other important constituents of the indigenous identity and that many start to identify with the dominant mestizo culture. Mauricio Paqui, CONAIE leader (A2), says that today’s generation of youth is very diverse, and that globalization causes a lot of changes that eventually lead to that these acculturate. He admits that CONAIE lacks strategies on how to reach out to this youth in order to come to grips with the problem. Paqui explains that in the indigenous world, a person’s age is of minor importance, and atypical for the indigenous movement is that everyone is participating, old as young. Focus is moved from a person’s age to capacity of taking leadership and being organized. He believes this is the reason why no prior concern has been given to the, as he explains it: “loss of the indigenous identities” among youth in particular.

However, these three CONAIE leaders and representatives from indigenous organizations affiliated with CONAIE identify several instruments directed towards children and youth, that aim to pass on indigenous culture, language and traditions as well as incorporate these into the indigenous organized world. These different instruments are presented hereunder one by one

**Intercultural bilingual education**

The intercultural bilingual education system became official in 1993. Increased influence by the indigenous organizations over the institutions that earlier had been responsible for indigenous education are said to have played a big part in the
formalization of bilingual education (Ospina, 2003:126). Since 2008, it has been
guaranteed in the constitution as a collective right for the indigenous nationalities and
peoples. Bilingual education is divided into juvenile-, familiar-, communitarian-,
general basic-, youth education and secondary upper school, and in 2012 the system
covered 173 900 students (Pichincha Universal, 2012). CONAIE activists (A1, A2, A3,
A6 & A7) provide that much hope is put to the Bilingual Education system, both as
regards the maintenance of physical as psychological characteristics of the indigenous
nationalities. They believe that with a well-functioning bilingual education system,
important elements can be secured from the childhood; everything from languages to
traditional clothing. The need for bilingual education recognizes the importance that the
nationalities are conscious about traditional thinking and comprehension of life even
from child-age, and then bring this thinking through their entire lives.

The Intercultural University of Indigenous Nationalities and Peoples, Amawtay
Wasi, aims to add to the intercultural bilingual system. It was legalized in 2004 and is
the only intercultural university in Ecuador. It has institutions in Quito and the parish of
San Pablo de Tenta, outside Saraguro in the southern highlands. The university
coordinator, Miguel Ángel (A7) claims that the university recognizes the importance of
incorporating both formal scientific- as well as informal peasant knowledge into the
education system, and therefore, ancestral understandings are mixed with occidental
modern science in the curriculum.

**Indigenous justice as a way of influencing the youth**

Indigenous justice has been part of the collective rights for the indigenous nationalities
since the constitutional reform in 1998. Article 171 of the Ecuadorian constitution
establishes that the indigenous communities, peoples and nationalities have the right to
apply their jurisdictional functions based on ancestral traditions. The system grants the
right to community leaders to impose rules and regulations both on community- and
family levels. The indigenous justice system can thus be used as a tool to control the
youth and how they disperse their time. Baltazar (A9) who is a young community leader
dealing with the application of indigenous justice in his community notes the use of
technologies such as TV must be restricted to not be harmful. The community leaders
can for this reason prohibit the youth to watch certain series on TV or listen to foreign
music. Baltazar states these restrictions serve as an initiative to incentivize the youth to hold on to local traditions; with the aim of keeping communal practices alive.

Mauricio Paqui (A2) says it is really hard to estimate to what extent indigenous justice is practiced throughout Ecuador. There are communities that are very formal, but also many that are very de-controlled. But he provides that in the whole country, there are few communities that are conscious about what is happening with today’s generation of youth. He therefore believes that very few communities use indigenous justice as an instrument to impose restrictions directed towards the youth in particular.

**CONAIE works with four pillars of youth issues**

Severino Sharupi, leader of the Department of Youth Issues (A3) informs that CONAIE’s leadership has implemented four main pillars of issues that concerns youth.

*The first pillar* is that the movement shall install leaders of youth issues also in the regional and provincial affiliate organizations. At the moment, some of these organizations have leaders while others do not, and among those existing - good coordination has been hard to achieve.

*The second pillar* is alike the first one, but concerns the equipping of these leaders with respective youth councils, all way down to a provincial level. The youth council is the main tool of CONAIE for the incorporation of indigenous youth into the movement and is not an objective in itself, but a strategy. The main purpose with the council is to redirect the new generations towards organizational efforts and pull these closer to the core of the movement. At present, there are six established youth councils in different parts of Ecuador, but the goal is to achieve one council in each of the nine zones. At the moment all are located in rural areas. The youth councils are created in open assemblies which normally attract about 80-200 persons and participation or registering in the council is voluntary. Those who chose to participate are usually those who are the most diligent and supportive towards CONAIE in general. About eight to twenty persons use to get listed in a council and people tend to stay in the council to support the leader once having entered. Some of them have parents that have worked with the indigenous organizations and are therefore already familiar with the organization, but there are also youth that come from families with no former engagement.

*The third pillar* is about the strengthening of the indigenous identity among youth, in a political, ideological as well as a in cultural way. Severino explains that the
general approach, from as well the government as from CONAIE itself, has been to approach the struggle to maintain the indigenous nationalities from a culturalist point of view. Efforts have been made to maintain the indigenous cultures, e.g. for reasons of tourism, and importance has been given to that people wear their ponchos instead of focusing on the deep underlying problems of why people cannot wear traditional clothes. Thus, if identity as a concept means nothing more than just culture, the struggle for the maintenance of the indigenous identity will not solve the core problems (A3). What will be conserved as concerns the indigenous nationalities then, are the cultural indicators of an identity, not the head constituents such as the Andean and indigenous world-view, spirituality, political theses, science, local knowledge and religions.

_The fourth pillar _concerns the starting up of processes of political, ideological and organizational formation. These are such as reunions in local communities organized by youth councils, where the youth is trained in everything from debate techniques to traditional wisdom.

In order to fulfill the objectives of these four pillars, there are two main sources from which the work is emanated. The first is the General Congress that is held every three years where youth issues are discussed and strategies laid out. The second source is the “Table of Youth Issues” that is organized during these congresses, which always raises specific topics that needs to be debated as concerns youth. Moreover, it is the leader of the Department of Youth Issues who has the outer responsibility for the establishment of the organization’s work with youth and the fulfillment of these four pillars. Severino who at the moment is in hold of that position states that incorporation of more youth into the organization always is desirable since it strengthens the organization from below, but he admits that it is not an easy task and that attempts often are met with obstacles.

**4.2.2 Obstructive elements identified by CONAIE leaders and activists**

CONAIE leaders and activists identified several types of elements that tend to oppose youth formation and maintenance of indigenous identity and culture. These elements are discussed one by one hereunder. The second part of the research question concerning which of these elements can be linked to the impact of globalization is further discussed in the analysis.
“Back in history, the parents have been teaching their kids what it means to be of a certain nationality, nowadays they can’t because they are busy trying to survive”

- Severino Sharupi, CONAIE.

**The educational system**

Many of the interviewees recognize the vast importance of the education system for the maintenance of the indigenous nationalities and peoples, and provide that there is a big clash between indigenous values and the present academic system (A1, A2, A3, A5, A7 & A8). State universities compromises educational systems that are seen as manipulative and totally alien to the indigenous nationalities (A7). “The education system does not strengthen neither the national economy nor the peoples and nationalities of the country. To the contrary, it supports and maintains the neoliberal consumer-society” (A2). Bartolo Ushiga, CONAIE leader (A1) states that from the moment the youth enter the universities, they start up a process of drastic change; they have to struggle to become somebody and get an occupation. The result is that the youth get a completely different way of thinking. This is also seen to affect their attitudes towards CONAIE and its agenda (A2). Changing back these mentalities is described as very difficult. Franklin, leader of a youth council (A4) states that education, how it is valued and what is being taught depend very much on culture. “If schools and colleges in which indigenous kids are supposed to realize themselves are represented by a totally different cultural system, it is not surprising that they lose very much of their own heritage culture”. He says that the consequences are acculturation, that youth leaves their communitarian lives and become egoists. By acculturation he means that the youth lose their indigenous features and become assimilated with mainstream culture. “The only thing they are thinking about is how to make money, as if life does not matter anymore”. By that statement he refers to the common indigenous viewpoint that material things such as money do not enrich or give value to life, and that it rather distorts peoples’ minds. Moreover, the fact that kids are obliged to wear school uniform makes these unfamiliar with traditional clothing (A8). Another problem is that very little space is given to the indigenous languages, even in bilingual schools. Indigenous languages usually are taught from between half an hour up to two hours per week, which the interviewee means yields far too little practice. As he sees it, the bilingual
schools are not capable of coming to terms with the fact that indigenous languages are in a process dying out. Franklin (A4) says that institutional education is just one part. The other part is ancient knowledge and wisdom which cannot be taught in formal state institutions. These skills, such as languages, holy ceremonies, medicine, and values are instead acquired in homes, the nature and from elderly people. That the youth is given the possibility to acquire these skills is crucial for the survival of the indigenous cultures. However, according to Franklin, the government fails to grant the youth the right to do so.

**External intervention**

The interviewees frequently refer to globalization in a negative connotation. It is said to change the minds of today’s youth and make these become acculturated, meaning that they lose their indigenous characteristics. Bartolo Ushiga (A1) says that the consequences from globalization that we see among indigenous youth are frightening.

By the term globalization the respondents normally meant all kinds of elements of external intervention reaching an indigenous community. Among these were mentioned: occidental influences such as TV, music, fashion, food, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, International Services, immigration, tourism etc. A community leader explains that all outside influences affect the youth; everything that they come in contact with during their lifetime affect them a little and control their minds, both unconsciously and consciously. Luis Contento, CONAIE activist (A6) states that the geographic location of a community is of much importance as concerns to what extent youth will maintain their native culture. An isolated village is not as exposed to external intervention as a community located in close proximity to urban life. The communities with the most intervention of mestizo culture are those that are the most acculturated, and those communities in which youth maintain their culture the most is where external interventions for a long time has not been permitted. The latter types are communities where they have not until recently got access to technologies such as cellphones, Internet and TV.

**Urbanization and migration**

Mauricio (A2) explains that the political and economic system of Ecuador forces people to leave their territories in order to open up for natural resource extraction. The state aims to reinforce the idea of urbanization. Youth living in their communities are those
who are the most incentivized to participate in indigenous organizations (A3). Baltazar (A9) explains that saying that those are the ones who are living the indigenous reality; they participate in communal work, maintain local traditions, assist in local assemblies, and are subjects to the indigenous justice system. Franklin (A4) says that at some point the youth must know what it is like to be part of an indigenous community in order to understand why it is worth to struggle for its maintenance. For that reason, the rapid urbanization is a great concern. Participation and organizational efforts are very low among the city-dwellers, and many choose to distance themselves from the indigenous movement as soon as they move to the cities. When the youth move, whether it is to New York or Quito they are likely to accustom to urban lifestyles. Internal and external migrations thus play big roles in the process of acculturation (A7). Franklin (A4) says it is sufficient that a distant family member migrates for this to have consequences for the maintenance of the indigenous culture of a person. Remittances make possible that people abandon their agriculture and construct bigger houses. That often leads to that they forget about everything that was important to them before their relative moved abroad, including the community and traditions. Moreover, migration leads to that many children grow up with e.g. a grandfather as the only adult. In these households, traditional culture can get lost from one generation to the other. A grandfather might not have the time to teach the kids native languages, or the capacity to stop the kids when they want to leave community life behind. Luis Contento (A6) states that low outflow of people in the community prevents cultural loss among youth. This is because migration whether in a small scale always bring consequences for the entire community. When people return home with a changed lifestyle and enough money to buy a pretty house, this creates a domino-effect and makes people want to create the same opportunities for themselves.

**Uneven development**

Mauricio Paqui (A2) emphasizes that development, infrastructure, universities and employment opportunities are concentrated in urban areas which is another factor that reinforces urbanization among the youth. Contento (A6) explains that what kind of work people do is of crucial importance when it comes to strengthening the bonds between people of the same nationality and preserving a rich culture. Where he is from, agriculture, cattle rising and handicraft are the principle work activities. Typical for these activities is that they maintain the villagers united, as they all the time work in
close proximity to each other. The concentration of territories, water and means of production in the hands of a few, create a lifestyle where people live on their own and work on their own. This way of living leaves no time to develop the cultures and lives.

**City-life**

Severino (A3) states that the youth who move to the city are those who most abandon their indigenous identities, and explains this by saying that: “living in the city is a different world; people compete to survive”. He means that in the cities, the need for survival surpasses the cultural necessity; “nobody would prefer to deny an employment and die of poverty just to be able to speak his language and practice traditions”. By this, Severino means that the lifestyle that people acquire in the city, e.g. that of being an employee, does not leave much time over for indigenous people to keep cultural practices alive. Mauricio (A2) states that many of the youngsters who move to the city keep seeing themselves as indigenous, but their way of thinking and their mentality changes. The major change is that their mind gets focused on how they can serve the capitalist system they live in, instead of wanting to serve the society as a whole and live in harmony with the rest. As concerns physical changes, a lot of people moving to the cities rapidly start to appear as mestizos; they cut their hair and change their traditional clothing for fashion clothes. Some of them start to deny their indigenous heritage, both for themselves and people in their surroundings. When that reaches it extreme, people change their indigenous-sounding surnames and start to neglect their own family. More drastic changes occur in smaller cities, while in the bigger ones there is more accepted to look different. Franklin (A4) says that once people move to the cities they tend to forget all the strengths that they have in their communities and territories. “For us indigenous peoples, life itself is in our territories, not in the cities”.

**Other factors**

Ángel (A8) states that the government is working hard on trying to make the country’s children and youth involved in ordinary politics. Government discourse and political propaganda directed particularly towards youth aim at attract these to government politics and; “win over indigenous youth to their side of the struggle”. With ‘their side of the struggle’ is meant supporting the government and their politics (recognizing that CONAIE has a hostile position towards these).
Media is taken up by CONAIE leaders as a factor that contributes to changing today’s youth. Ushiga (A1) says that: “Media is completely monopolized by a small group of people, which restricts the possibility for real communication to occur. Far from all Ecuadorians can reach out with their message, and the indigenous nationalities are those who get to suffer”.

The objective that the entire country be covered by youth councils has been very hard to achieve, which is a great obstacle for youth engagement. Severino Sharupi (A3) says that in many areas the organizational incentives by the councils are very weak, and there are in practice only two of the six councils that show advancement. This is mainly due to the bad economic situation; in order for the councilors to attend meetings they have to travel between communities, and with lack of resources that becomes impossible.

Ethnic discrimination is a recurrent element mentioned by the interviewees. There seems to be a consensus on that the situation is steadily improving, and that indigenous youth nowadays are more rebellious against bullying. But however, many examples of how discrimination can be found on different social levels are taken up in the interviews.

Ushiga (A1) claims that youth living in the urban areas are suffering a lot of social problems, and discrimination on all levels. Pérez (A5) says that in schools and universities there are separations between mestizos and indigenous peoples, and it is very uncommon to see indigenous people occupying high positions. Paqui (A2) states that one important factor for why youth stop identifying as indigenous is the widespread racism towards the nationalities and peoples and Ángel (A8) claims that the youth generally is “ashamed” of being indigenous. Pérez (A5) says that in schools, many times ‘indigenous’ is the worst you can be, it means being rough, ignorant, violent, savage and un-civilized.

4.2.3 Indigenous youth in San Pedro: identities, culture and impact of globalization
This part presents the findings from the research on youth in the community of San Pedro. Ways of looking upon the indigenous identity and level of maintenance of indigenous culture is presented in a summarized way. The second part of the research question regarding the impact of globalization is further discussed in the analysis.
The village
San Pedro de Escaleras is an indigenous community that belongs to the parish of Victoria de Portete, located outside the city of Cuenca in the province of Azuay in the Ecuadorian highlands. The community has a little more than 1000 habitants. San Pedro de Escaleras is a member of CONAIE and recognized by CODENPE as an indigenous community. The main economic activities in the village are agriculture and livestock. The habitants originate from the nationality Kañaris and the native language is Kichwa. The traditional clothing in the community has been a dark skirt made of wool (pollera), boots, hat and scarf for women, and poncho, dark trousers and boots for men. Both women and men have had long braided hair. Old traditions and festivities are such as carnival, dances, the “pampamesa” which is a form of pick-nick where people share the food from a table to which everybody has contributed and “mingas” which is a form of organized communal work.

Traditional culture fades away along with the generational shifts
Among 30 interviews, and about the double amount of informal talks made during the two weeks long stay in the village, there is one thing agreed upon by everyone; that traditional culture is disappearing and that the youth are no longer bearers of the cultural characteristics traditional to the community and its habitants. Signs of that are such as that the youth wear other clothes, do not speak Kichwa, do not listen to traditional music, are disorganized and dis-united, do consciously separate themselves from each other and adopt habits from the cities. An older woman says that today’s youth are losing respect towards each other, life and nature, something that lies at the heart of community tradition. A community leader states that the majority of people between 15 and 30 are travelling between the city of Cuenca and the community for work and education, and they earn new habits as soon as they come in contact with city-life.

As of today, traditional dressing can be observed among the eldest, and among many above their 40s. As concerns people between the ages 30-40 it is not at all common, and among people from 0-30 years old it is exceptionally rare. In general, youth dress in mainstream clothes. The traditional dressing is just for very rare occasions such as local festivities. All respondents agree on that you can wear traditional clothes while possessing almost all kinds of occupations and in all social situations, but at the same time, everybody state that youth tend to change clothes once
they arrive to the city. Only those who do not leave the community are said to maintain the traditional pollera.

Both youth and the elderly say that when for example “mingas” are organized, everyone participate, young as old. But, people also state that local traditions are not all held as frequent as before. B9 says that what is changing the most are ways of looking upon life: “Nowadays people want to become a little bit better than his neighbor, both economically and in other senses. Before, people were more humane, and when they organized communal parties everybody was united. Today, partying is more about who organizes the biggest party and invites the most people”. B20 says that: “my generation do not know where we are from and where local traditions stems from, we do no longer know about sharing and working together, but egoism we know very well”.

Twenty interviews were made with youth between 15-30 years old whose parents and grandparents were all born and raised in the village. Ten of these identified as indigenous and ten as mestizos. Among the respondents, nobody speak Kichwa and ten have parents and grandparents who speak/spoke the language. Two persons from the indigenous group wear traditional clothes, while in the mestizo group nobody does.

The youth explain why they auto-identify as indigenous

Those who identify as indigenous gave a variety of reasons for that way of identifying; for their roots, blood, occupation, culture, for being born in the community, having parents from the community and that they had learned habits and customs from parents and grandparents. The most frequent factor mentioned was ‘for being a peasant’. But however, none of them denies that an indigenous person can have any kind of occupation.

B1 says that: “whatever happens with us due to globalization, we will never cease to be indigenous, that is forever”. Another girl says that “We bring the indigenousness in our bodies, that does not change”. B13 says that “you have it in your blood. Your lifestyle can change but you maintain your indigenousity always”. B10 says that she feels indigenous because traditional values have been passed on to herself and her siblings thanks to their grandfather, who has always been telling stories with deep and worthy messages.

1 A more detailed description of the respondents is provided in Appendix II.
The youth explain why they auto-identify as mestizos
Among the mestizos respondents tended to explain their ethnicity in terms of why they are not indigenous. The answers were: indigenous people speak Kichwa, are natives, work with agriculture, have another way of thinking, religions and other way of working, have different food habits, ideologies and clothing, are poorer, do not leave their communities, are not as advanced, have no cultural variation, do not use technologies etc.

B14 says that: “Indigenous people do not have mixed blood as we do, they are native people from here, with no interference from the Spanish”. B16 says that: “there are not so many indigenous people in Ecuador any longer. It might be some indigenous people left in the Amazon, but this is changing very fast. Soon there will be no left, Ecuador is modernizing”. By modernizing was meant that people e.g. increasingly are living in the cities and do no longer work with agriculture.

B18 sees indigenous as those who live in the countryside, or far from the civilization. He says that he do not identify as indigenous because he do not feel that special, he feels “just like anybody else”.

The youth explain why traditions and culture are changing
Respondents explained that indigenous culture is changing or disappearing because Ecuador is modernizing, people are moving to the cities and abroad and either they bring their families with them or they leave the kids at home, people travel and work outside the communities, people get new ideas, there is not much time left over, culture and habits from other countries are influencing, internet is misused, the youth do not learn from the elderly no longer, there exist no respect between the generations and that new technologies change peoples’ lifestyles.

B19 says that: “where indigenous culture is maintained is where it has not changed at all, like for example in the Amazon. In this village, peoples’ way of living has changed. They are no longer fishing as they used to, and nowadays they cultivate other crops”. He says that people in his generation tend to spend most of the time in the cities, either for work or studies, and when they return to their village it is either for a weekend or to sleep, nothing else. Before, people also ate differently. Today people eat hamburgers and drink soft-drinks”. B11 says that: “in school we learn about the great empires, like the Mayas and the Incas, not about our own local culture and its history.
When talking about indigenous people, it is as if it is always in past tense, so people get a feeling that it is something of the past”. The girl suggests that instead that teachers do excursions with their students to museums, they could go visit communities in the countryside, to see how they live and what their culture is like.

Many of the respondents feel obliged to move to the city, since they feel there are no opportunities for them to realize themselves in the village. B4 says: “I would have loved to stay here where everything is safe and calm, and avoid the delinquency in the city, but I feel that is not even an option”. B6 says that since almost all children have family members who send them money and clothes from the United States, they do not have to learn agriculture or traditional work. To these children it is as if nothing is important, as long as they get money. B5 says that: “when the parents move to the United States the kids are left home with their uncle, and the result is that they do not learn to share. They become egoists because they receive no parental love and moral”.

B3 explains that the kids get a changed viewpoint from the first day in school. When they enter school, they unite with children from other social classes, and in that moment they learn that the classmate who has one dollar more than the others is a little bit more powerful, etc.

A young mother (B6) underlines that she do not think that the reason why teens do not wear traditional clothes is that they are unfamiliar with the old customs, it is rather because they feel they can take part of “the other world” if they dress modernly. They deny their own culture and believe they get more opportunities if they dress like mainstream. Many of the interviewees mention that they would like traditional clothing to be conserved or that the pollera is very cute, but that they do not want to dress like that themselves. Some say that it is not their “style” or that they prefer to dress in fashion clothes like famous people. Some said that their parents had stopped to wear traditional clothes due to health issues or after having travelled abroad and been stared out, and for that reason they themselves had never been introduced to that kind of clothing. Some youth admit that they have asked their mother to take off the traditional skirt because they felt ashamed when she for example came to pick them up after school. B8 informs that everyone seem to have their own reason for why they stop use traditional clothes.

B1 states that today’s generation of youth are “taken by globalization and the modern world”, and by that she refers to for example western clothing and new technologies. Before, people have been more respectful towards their traditional
ideologies, structures and traditions, but nowadays the situation looks completely different. B9 claim that: “I would have liked to maintain traditional culture more, but nowadays technology is such a big part of our lives, and in order for someone to advance one has to know computers. There is not time for everything so one has to choose”.

To the question of what the biggest difference is between the culture in the community, as of now and when his grandparents were young, B13 answers “responsibility”. “Nowadays the youth do not spend time with their families since they have no responsibilities and tasks in the home. They leave their homes for work, to do sports, drink alcohol, go out and fight and other things”.

Six out of ten among the mestizos, and seven out of ten of the indigenous answered that indigenous people are discriminated against. According to many of the interviewees, there is still discrimination at the universities and indigenous students tend to form their own groups. Many interviewees mentioned that they have friends who are ashamed of revealing that they are from an indigenous community. B17 points out that people with a little more money tend to say: “that person is indigenous”, referring to all those of less money. Many state that that there is pressure to abandon ones cultural symbols, such as dressing and language. B3 says he was ashamed of speaking in Kichwa in the city, it was better to greet people in Spanish to not reveal his heritage.

4.3 Summary of the findings

Before going over to the analysis, a short summary of the findings on the three research questions is provided.

1. CONAIE’s leaders state that they lack effective strategies as on how to reach out to today’s diverse generation of youth. Hope is mainly given to the bilingual education, the indigenous justice system, the youth council and the four pillars.

2. Several elements are identified by CONAIE activists that are obstructing the maintenance of indigenous identification and culture among youth. These are; the educational system, the low level of participation in the indigenous organizations, external intervention, urbanization and migration, uneven development, city-life and more.
3. Despite that San Pedro is officially declared an indigenous community, it is not obvious that the youth auto-identify as such. 50% of the respondents identified as mestizos and 50% as indigenous. Physical and psychological characteristics for the indigenous identity and culture seem to be disappearing among the young generation. The youth themselves believe that is due to their changed lifestyles, that Ecuador is modernizing, the cultural influences from other countries, the urbanization etc.
5. Analysis

This chapter analyses how the research questions can be responded through the field material with reference to the theoretical debate. The first part deals with the situation of today’s youth and the last part uses that information as a foundation for an analysis of the struggle of CONAIE.

5.1 Globalization and indigenous youth

Part of the objective of this study is to understand globalization’s impact on indigenous youth culture from how the situation is perceived by the indigenous movement. To begin with, almost all of by CONAIE activists identified obstructive elements to the preservation of indigenous cultures can in one way or the other be seen as caused by or linked to the concept of globalization. Thus, the structure of the educational system, forced migration, large-scale urbanization, external intervention and uneven economic distribution can all somehow be linked to different constituents of contemporary globalization. For example, globalization’s inherent organization of production attracts TNC’s to indigenous territories which can cause migration or impose external cultural traits on the community (CONAIE, 2009:65f). Moreover, the reorganization of the traditional workforce structure linked to globalization reduces the amount of indigenous people who can sustain in rural areas, which can lead to forced urbanization.

Moreover, CONAIE as a movement tend to have an explicit negative standpoint towards globalization, as seen in official speeches, pronouncements, demonstrations etc. On their official website, contemporary globalization is called “aggressive” and blamed for the causing of indigenous cultural adaptation to the dominant culture in Ecuador (CONAIE, 2010). Severino explains this negative standpoint stating that: “we cannot practice our cultures when our territories are taken by multinational companies, our water is contaminated due to foreign mining projects and our families are exploited”, referring to these processes as symptoms of contemporary globalization.

However, as globalization is such a comprehensive concept with a very diffuse explanation, it is not so surprising that all the elements can be linked to the concept. In practice, almost any process could fit in under its reach, in one way or the other. It is therefore not possible to blame the concept of globalization as such, since that would mean to reject almost everything that characterizes the contemporary world as we know
This study will instead try to sort out more in detail what it possibly is with globalization that CONAIE perceive is affecting the youth and their indigenous identification. Consequently, in order to better explain the situation, help was taken from the conceptual frame and the theoretical debate presented in this study. That made possible a clarification by dismantling the concept of globalization and its consequences into smaller pieces.

5.1.1 The impact of cultural globalization

Almost all of the elements that obstruct the maintenance of indigenous culture among youth, as explained by CONAIE activists in question number two, draw upon the fact that the youth are exposed to cultural globalization. Hopper (2003:3) explains cultural globalization as “the interaction of different cultural processes and forces, contributed to by different actors in shifting environments”. For instance, the first challenge presented: the educational system; in state universities the youth come in contact with worldviews and values that contradict indigenous traditional way of thinking and the result tend to be that they change their comprehension of the world and start to think differently. Moreover, another challenge identified was external intervention; when TNC’s are advertising their products in indigenous communities the youth are incentivized to change their customs. A third example is urbanization; as the youth move to the cities they get to know other ways of creating a livelihood which tend to make them want to change their own. Thus, all the identified obstructive elements do in one way or the other describe situations where the youth are exposed to cultural globalization. That fact, taken together with Hopper’s (2003:2) statement that cultures never are immune to cultural globalization processes but partly constituted by them, encircle a possible explanation of the matter.

It seems possible that cultural globalization is hampering the maintenance of the indigenous identity and culture among youth, since situations in which youth are exposed to it often are accompanied with physical and psychical identity changes. It is noteworthy that this is not to say that cultural globalization threaten the direct survival of youth individuals that possess the indigenous identity. Rather, it changes their ways of being. What it possibly is about cultural globalization that causes these changes among indigenous youth will be further explored with the help of the three theoretical viewpoints; globalization as homogenization, globalization as differentiation and
globalization as hybridization. Additionally, the in-depth study on youth in San Pedro makes it possible to examine the phenomenon more in detail.

5.1.2 Confusion around the indigenous identity in San Pedro

From the empirical studies in San Pedro, it turned out that there is certain confusion concerning what it means to be indigenous. Despite the fact that the youth share very similar backgrounds and live in the same community, they have very different views of the indigenous identity and on the eventual existence of indigenous peoples in Ecuador. The youth interviewees who identify as indigenous will hereafter be referred to as the “indigenous” and those who identify as mestizos, the “mestizos”. Many of the “mestizos” initially stated that they identify as “normal”, and in defining normal they explained that they were not indigenous or some other ethnicity, but mestizos. That shows that “being normal” for them somehow means not being indigenous, which might be an additional indicator of the tension and discrimination that is said to exist between the different ethnic groups. Among the “indigenous”, the indigenous identity seems to be associated with being a peasant, as could be seen in their way of explaining why they identify as indigenous in chapter 4. Two examples of how explanations were given will be provided: B11 says that her grandparents are much more indigenous than her, because they “do not leave the fields and their animals”. She, in contrast, travels to the city and visit her friends living in other places. Another girl who is uncertain of how she identifies explains this uncertainty saying that she likes to plant the fields, but that she likes to do the city as well, which makes it a tough question. The fact that B11 stated that her grandparents were ‘much more indigenous’ also indicates that it is not necessarily a sharp division between the two identities, but that one can identify differently depending on the context.

5.1.3 San Pedro’s youth develop hybrid identities

In San Pedro, influences from many different corners seem to penetrate the lives of the youth. The everyday lives of the majority of the respondents are characterized by domestic work, farming, work outside the home, studies, going out with friends, the use of Facebook, participating in the community life, spending time with the family etc. The youth are through these activities exposed to cultural globalization of different kinds. One possible explanation of what impact this cultural globalization has on the youth is
that constituent features for the indigenous culture become blended with others. In other words, their identities become hybridized.

Among the youth, many examples of hybrid identities could indeed be found. In accordance with how Scholte (2008:232) explains globalization-related hybrid identities, it could be seen that the youth identify in as well sub-state, state-, trans-state, supra-state and non-territorial ways, all at the same time. For example, they identify with an ethnic group, either the indigenous- or the mestizo one, as Ecuadorians, as Latin Americans, e.g. as victims of the Spanish colonization and e.g. as football-players, all at once. Moreover, the development of hybrid identities due to cultural globalization can also be a possible explanation of why there is such confusion around what constitutes an indigenous identity in San Pedro. Scholte (2008:252) underlines that hybridization tends to make people feel fluid or fragmented, as they are able to choose between different senses of the self. It can also create lost souls. Thus, this intermixing of identities might create confusion among the youth when it comes to determining for instance what it means to be a peasant, an indigenous person or a city-dweller. Categories and socio-economic status become blurred.

5.1.4 Discussion of the three perspectives

Independently of way of identification, the respondents in San Pedro seem to have similar attitudes towards the seeming disappearance of indigenous culture. CONAIE has in fact been very present in the village, and the majority of the respondents answer that they are familiar with what CONAIE stands for and does. The major part also claims that it is sad that indigenous cultures are disappearing. But despite this, none of them is incentivized to actively engage in any indigenous organization for their maintenance. Thus, among the “indigenous” youth, there is not so much support for the viewpoint that the consequence of globalization is increased differentiation, and arguments such as that by Gardell (2002:141), holding that embracement of own cultural particularities is a natural response to globalization. In opposition to that perspective, the findings of this study point at that for Ecuadorian youth the situation is the other way around. CONAIE leaders provide that the youth that are the most engaged in organizations and activities regarding indigenous issues are those who live in communities isolated from external intervention. That is communities where e.g. the communal life is maintained and indigenous justice applied. In other words, where engagement for reasons such as group pressure or the need to ‘fit in’, becomes in the interest of the youth. Organizational
initiatives among the youth that move to the cities or live in communities such as San Pedro where they are very much exposed to elements of globalization in general, and cultural globalization in particular, does on the other hand almost equal zero. This shows that the existence of an influential indigenous movement does not in itself serve as support for the theory that globalization leads to increased differentiation and that the survival of indigenous cultures therefore is secured.

Moreover, despite the fact that the youth in San Pedro is said to lose their indigenous cultural traits, it is doubted that they would be on a path towards developing a ‘global lifestyle’. There were no signs of that globalization would be Americanizing, McDonaldizing or Westernizing the indigenous youth culture as such. To the contrary, it points at that reality is much more complex. Hopper (2007:102) disregards the tendency to look upon global flows and the cultural consequences in a unitary sense, and Giddens (2010:28) argues that globalization can be described as a multifaceted mix of different processes rather than one only, and therefore, its cultural consequences are also many-sided and shifting. Holton (2000: 88) emphasizes that there are also many different ways in which the phenomenon of cultural homogenization can occur. It is according to Hopper (2007:102) seldom ‘Americanization’ or ‘McDonaldization’ which threatens the autonomy and identity of specific cultural groups, but more often a local influence. Consequently, in line with that argument, the youth in San Pedro did show more tendency of being influenced by dominant youth popular culture in Ecuador, than by any single global dominant culture as such.

Subsequently, in the interviews with CONAIE leaders, the concept of “acculturation” was repeatedly mentioned as a consequence of the different elements and processes they identified towards the maintenance of indigenous culture. Thus, by acculturation was meant that indigenous youth lose their indigenous particularities and adapt to mainstream culture. Mainstream culture does here equal “mestizo culture”, as the great majority, 71 % of the Ecuadorian population auto-identify as mestizos (INEC, 2010).

Typical for hybrid identities is that they contain many constituents where none necessarily is dominating or given more importance than the others (Scholte, 2008:252). This means that assuming that cultural globalization cause indigenous youth to develop hybrid identities, where new identity constituents are acquired from mainly the dominant mestizo-culture in what CONAIE leaders describe as a process of
acculturation; it cannot be expected that the youth will give any special moral importance to their indigenous characteristics and the maintenance of these.

This means that if there for some reason would be necessary to prioritize among different identity constituents, the indigenous characteristics are not necessarily given precedence. What the findings from San Pedro point at, rather, is that the youth tend to drop indigenous identity constituents if these for some reasons are not compatible with new acquired identity features. Examples were given of that people had stopped to speak in Kichwa when moving to the cities, cut their hair before assisting university, lied about their indigenous roots to new friends, taken off the traditional “pollera” when leaving the community and distanced themselves from other indigenous people in public spaces. This shows that when they apart from identifying as indigenous also started to identify as a city-dweller, university student or some other identity, no special importance was given to the conservation of the indigenous cultural traits in particular.

This thus points at that indigenous characteristics are disregarded when the youth do not benefit from their maintenance. Moreover, to take that argument one step further, and analyze which mechanisms might be at stake in those situations where the youth do not benefit from maintaining their indigenous identity features, it seems as if discrimination and a desire to fit in pinpoint the situation. For example, many respondents claimed that there exists discrimination towards indigenous people in the university. This might then incentivize indigenous youth to try to hide the visible parts of their indigenous identity such as language and clothing, and instead dress in mainstream clothes and speak Spanish in order to “fit in” with the rest.

What this points at is that the process of hybridization of identities successively might be leading towards cultural homogenization. This argument is based on that ethnic diversity will become less rigid as cultural traits from all the ethnic groups in Ecuador are intermixed and certain cultural features are dropped in the process. Through this ethnic mixture, an ethnically homogenous youth culture can be expected to take shape in Ecuador. Berry (2008:328) emphasizes that the common view is that global processes causes more change among non-dominant peoples such as minority groups than the dominant ones, and that the outcome is that distinct cultural groups lose their special characteristics. Considering that there is no empirical evidence for that mestizo youth do adopt characteristics for the indigenous identities in the process of cultural intermixture (at least not to any visible extent), there is reason to believe that the more homogenous youth culture that is developing mostly contain cultural traits
from the mestizo part of the population. It is in this line of reasoning possible to expect that instead of ethnic group deviances, such as mestizo culture in contrast to indigenous cultures, cultural identity differences among youth might become expressed in other ways and constellations, such as through music preferences or leisure time activity habits.

Furthermore, part of the objective with this research was to increase the understanding about the struggle of CONAIE. This background information will therefore now be used to draw certain conclusions on the current situation for the indigenous movement.

5.2 A hint of the prospects that CONAIE will fulfill its objective to preserve the indigenous nationalities

With help of the background information from the first part of the analysis, it can be concluded that the impact of globalization (and particularly cultural globalization) on indigenous youth brings along indirect obstacles to CONAIE’s work and objective. Why so will be explained below.

Paqui (A2) explains that for CONAIE it is important that the preservation of all constituent features of the indigenous nationalities is guaranteed. All the indigenous groups of peoples have their own world-views, ways of thinking, customs, spiritualties, ideologies, religions, traditions, value systems, clothing, languages, social organizations, cultural symbols and physical characteristics (A1&A2). Paqui says that as long as the state does not guarantee that the nationalities can be preserved in their original forms in relation to these characteristics, Ecuador cannot be considered a plurinational state.

This thus shows that for the indigenous movement it is not desirable that a person e.g. maintains only the language-part of the indigenous identity, while he/she for instance acquire a new worldview, religion and customs. They wish the nationalities to be conserved in their totalities. In other words, in this way of thinking it can be argued that the development of hybrid identities among youth, whether or not it ultimately is leading to cultural homogenization, threatens the continuity of the indigenous nationalities in the form that CONAIE wants them to be preserved. This means that in that line of argument, the impact of cultural globalization on indigenous youth is not compatible with the goal of CONAIE’s struggle.
However, it can be seen that the movement lacks strategies as on how to reach out to today’s diverse generation of youth and embrace those who are in a process of identity change. And there seems to be more challenges to the maintenance of indigenous identities and culture among youth than what the indigenous movement has remedies for. Engagement in CONAIE’s activities gives good opportunities for the youth to strengthen their ethnic identity. But youth participation is for various reasons relatively low. One problematic issue is that engagement always is voluntary and no voluntary participation initiatives come from those who are in a process of identity change, meaning those who are acquiring hybrid identities and see no direct benefit of struggling for the maintenance of the indigenous cultures. This means that the youth that has no interest in the social differentiation of indigenous peoples or for other reasons cannot engage around these issues tend to position themselves outside the indigenous organized world. This in itself does not necessarily mean that they disregard their indigenous identity, just that they do not actively support forces that struggle for its maintenance and survival. CONAIE’s efforts seem to be directed towards those who are more deep-rooted in the indigenous world, and leave unaffected the youth that are already distanced from their roots and indigenous heritage, and possibly possess hybrid identities. Concerning the vast number of young people that fall in this second group (city-migrants, emigrants, youth growing up without parents, youth entering universities, youth living in communities with urban proximity, youth exposed to much external intervention etc.) it seems as if CONAIE is facing a great problem.

CONAIE leaders are very aware of the problems circulating today’s youth. Challenges identified by them and challenges detected through empirical studies in San Pedro are very alike. However, despite that awareness exists about the urgent situation, there seems as if there are not enough resources to do something about it. Here, CONAIE’s weak economic situation seems to play a central role. Participation and engagement is voluntary also by its leaders, meaning that all efforts are tied to economic opportunities. CONAIE leaders argue that their economic problems are embedded in the system and their solution is to keep struggling for its restructuring.
6. Concluding remarks

This chapter aims at concluding the results of this study as well as putting them in a wider context.

6.1 Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to increase the understanding of the struggle by CONAIE by investigating their strategic efforts towards youth and youth responses to these, in the context of globalization. The analysis made with help of the theoretical framework and the empirical findings fulfills this objective by pointing at that the movement stands before a very tough problem; that of passing over the indigenous identities to today’s youth. The movement has strategies to reach out with their message to children and youth to a certain extent, but despite that, culture and traditional way of thinking is clearly disappearing and becoming diffused in a fast speed among the young generations in Ecuador. To what extent globalization can be blamed for that will probably continue to be a matter of disagreement. However, this study encircles that one possible explanation is that cultural globalization has a significant influence over the identities of youth. It is suggested that as youth get influenced by external cultural elements, they tend to develop hybrid, multifaceted identities where the indigenous identity is not given more importance than any other identity constituent. This can lead to that cultural traits of the indigenous identity get lost if they for some reason are not compatible with new acquired identity features. The study emphasize that it seems as if the indigenous youth tend to adapt more to the dominant mestizo culture than the other way around, implying that what ultimately might be at stake is homogenization of culture in the country where the indigenous part of the population mainly will be those suffer loss of cultural traits. Discrimination is explained as a factor of much importance in this process. This means that ethnic diversity will become less rigid and cultural frontiers will become more fluent.

Moreover, no support was found for that increased cultural differentiation would be a natural outcome in the meeting between indigenous culture and globalization related processes. Hence, despite strong incentives for cultural revival and differentiation by CONAIE, this study argues that it seems difficult for them to realize their objective of preserving the indigenous nationalities and peoples in Ecuador as in their totalities. By totalities is meant that all constituent features of the nationalities are
preserved in their unique forms. The movement is considered to lack strategies as on how to reach out to those who would need it the most, the youth who is in a process of identity change. CONAIE state that the only way of guaranteeing the maintenance of the indigenous nationalities and peoples in Ecuador is to construct Ecuador as a plurinational state, which still has not been succeeded (A1, A2, A3). However, the leaders see no ways of constructing Ecuador in its current form as such. They argue that the entire political system has to be changed, since the state in its current form is constructed as a one-nation state that does not respond to all its nationalities. Their remedy is therefore to keep struggling for the construction of plurinationalism in Ecuador, in order to be able to counteract the underlying mechanisms for the identity change that can be seen among youth, which possibly might lead to that the indigenous nationalities lose their cultural distinctions.

At last, the study has contributed to the debate on globalization’s cultural impact on indigenous youth and the obstacles to CONAIE’s struggle has been highlighted in new dimensions, from the perspective of the indigenous movement itself. The study has also laid one piece in the puzzle concerning consequences of intercultural contact, which is an important issue to disentangle if we want to achieve greater interconnectedness between different ethnic and cultural groups on earth. It points at that contemporary globalization might have severe cultural consequences for minority groups such as indigenous people. Despite differentiation initiatives, there is reason to expect that it causes indigenous cultures to lose cultural features due to processes such as hybridization and homogenization of identities. These are processes that are very difficult to counteract, even for a social movements such as CONAIE which is described as Latin Americas most influential indigenous social movement.

“Remarkable as the resistance and survival of indigeneity have been around the world, future directions may well depend on how well we understand problems and promises that indigenous peoples experience in our increasingly globalized societies” (Hall et. al., 2008:1895).
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Appendix I

Interviews with CONAIE leaders and activists

(A1) Bartolo Ushiga, Quito 2012-11-21. Leader of the Department of Organizational Strengthening (CONAIE)

(A2) Mauricio Paqui, Quito 2012-11-22 & 2012-12-17. Leader of the Department of Territories (CONAIE)

(A3) Severino Sharupi, Quito 2012-12-17. Leader of the Department of Youth Issues (CONAIE)

(A4) Franklin, Quito 2012-12-17. Leader of the 2nd grade provincial organization: Association of Shuar in Pastaza and General Coordinator of a Youth Council (CONAIE member org.)

(A5) Carlos Perez, Cuenca 2012-11-29. Lawyer working for the rights of indigenous peoples and activist within CONAIE.

(A6) Luis Contento, Saraguro 2012-12-03. Vice president of the regional indigenous organization ECUARUNARI (CONAIE member org.)

(A7) Miguel Angel, Saraguro 2012-12-03. Coordinator of the Intercultural University of the Indigenous Nationalities and Peoples Amawtay Wasi and Community leader in a 3rd grade organization (CONAIE member org.).

(A8) Ángel, Saraguro 2012-12-03. Leader of a 3rd grade organization in Saraguro (CONAIE member org.)
(A9) Baltazar, Saraguro 2012-12-03. Leader of a 3rd grade organization in San Pablo de Tenta, Saraguro (CONAIE member org.)

**Interviews with youth in San Pedro**

(B1) 26 years old girl, 2012-11-25, San Pedro

(B2) 19 years old boy, 2012-11-26, San Pedro

(B3) 20 years old boy, 2012-11-26, San Pedro

(B4) 27 years old boy, 2012-11-27, San Pedro

(B5) 30 years old girl, 2012-11-27, San Pedro

(B6) 30 years old girl, 2012-11-28, San Pedro

(B7) 18 years old girl, 2012-11-28, San Pedro

(B8) 22 years old girl, 2012-11-28, San Pedro

(B9) 25 years old girl, 2012-11-30, San Pedro

(B10) 15 years old girl, 2012-11-30, San Pedro

(B11) 17 years old girl, 2012-11-30, San Pedro

(B12) 26 years old boy, 2012-12-02, San Pedro

(B13) 19 years old boy, 2012-12-02, San Pedro

(B14) 18 years old boy, 2012-12-02, San Pedro
(B15) 30 years old girl, 2012-12-02, San Pedro

(B16) 16 years old boy, 2012-12-02, San Pedro

(B17) 16 years old girl, 2012-12-03, San Pedro

(B18) 20 years old boy, 2012-12-03, San Pedro

(B19) 18 years old boy, 2012-12-03, Cuenca

(B20) 27 years old girl, 2012-12-04, Cuenca
Appendix II

Information about the youth respondents in San Pedro

The indigenous youth
None of the ten indigenous youth speak Kichwa, and six of them have parents and grandparents who speak the language. Two persons answered that they wear traditional clothes on a daily basis. Five of these know about CONAIE and their agenda, and four of them have been participating in some kind of activities such as assemblies or workshops. All those who have participated state that they would like to do it again, but that they do not have the time or money to travel. None consider him/herself active within any other indigenous organization. All 10 answer that they do participate in communal work and local traditions when these are organized, but some add that they normally do not have time or prefer spending time outside of the community. None of them answer that they only eat typical food cultivated in the community only, they eat a ‘mix’ of local and food from outside.

The mestizo youth
Among the 10 youth who identify as mestizos, none of them speak Kichwa and four have parents and grandparents that speak the language. None of them wear traditional clothes. Eight of them are familiar with CONAIE but none of them has participated in any related activities. Everyone answer that they eat all kinds of food, both traditional and non-traditional. Six of the interviewees use to participate in community traditions. Five of them state that they do not spend much time at home or in the community. All interviewees responded that their parents or grandparents have not talked to them about traditional culture and local habits in the community, and they themselves had not thought so much about it as to ask themselves.
Appendix III

Map of the indigenous territories in Ecuador

Source: Codenpe