

Latin America's Left-Turn and the Political Empowerment of Indigenous Women

Stéphanie Rousseau*¹ and Christina Ewig²

Given indigenous women's position at the intersection of gender and racial oppressions, assessing their political empowerment (or lack thereof) over the course of Latin America's "left-turn" offers a barometer of just how well pink tide governments succeeded in their promises of inclusion. We assess whether the left turn led to the political empowerment of indigenous women by comparing the center-right government of Peru with the left-wing governments of Bolivia and Ecuador. We find that left governments perform better, but among the left, type of left party matters. Moreover, equally important is the strength of indigenous movements and indigenous women's organizing.

Introduction

The election of Hugo Chávez in 1998 in Venezuela marked the start of what is now considered Latin America's "left-turn" or "pink tide", in which eleven of the eighteen democratic countries elected left governments over the course of the next fifteen years. Chávez's win, and the leftist governments that followed, were propelled by a series of factors, one of which scholars have termed an "incorporation crisis"—the failure of previous right-leaning democratic governments and their conservative, market-oriented economic policies to represent the needs and desires of especially those most economically and socially marginalized. The triumph of the left, however, was not just the result of pressures from publics that proclaimed "*Que se vayan todos!*" (All of them must go!), but also was the result of the heterogeneous electoral coalitions that left parties across the region crafted (Luna and Filgueira 2009).¹ Significantly, for the first time in modern history, in several Latin American

¹Department of Social Sciences, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, Lima, Peru

²Humphrey School of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN, USA

*srousseau@puccp.pe

cewig@umn.edu

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countries, indigenous peoples, previously largely excluded from formal politics, were important parts of these new coalitions (Madrid 2012; Raymond and Arce 2013). But did this incorporation into electoral coalitions parlay into political power for indigenous women?²

Peruvian indigenous leader Tarcila Rivera recently stated: "... we indigenous women want to be recognized, respected and included in actions affecting our lives. We want to participate fully. We don't want decisions about the future of our lands, territories, natural resources, the right to food, health and education, to be taken without reference to us."³ This call for recognition and political inclusion reflects the multi-dimensional exclusion that has affected indigenous women, and rural indigenous women in particular, for much too long (Bourque and Warren 1981; Radcliffe 2002, 2015).⁴ Due to their extreme marginalization, indigenous women potentially stood to gain the most from the promises of inclusion made by Latin American leftist parties at the start of the new millennium. Moreover, given that indigenous women are positioned at the intersection of gender and racial oppressions, assessing their political empowerment (or lack thereof) over the course of the left-turn offers an important barometer of just how well pink tide governments succeeded in their promises of inclusion.

We assess whether the Latin American left-turn led to the political empowerment of indigenous women on three measures: constitutional citizenship rights, political inclusion in national parliaments, and state commitment via indigenous women's policy machineries. Our assessment compares and contrasts the center-right governments of Peru with the left-wing governments of Ecuador and Bolivia during the pink tide. These three neighboring Andean nations have significant indigenous populations and experienced electoral mobilization of indigenous peoples into electoral coalitions during the pink tide period. The comparison allows us to assess the roles of party ideology and party type, as well as identify other factors that contributed to, or detracted from, indigenous women's political empowerment.

We find that the left governments of Ecuador and Bolivia have better records of promoting indigenous women's political empowerment than the right governments of Peru. But among the left, type of left party matters. The "movement left party" of Bolivia was significantly more engaged in promoting indigenous women's political empowerment than the populist left of Ecuador. In addition to left ideology and left party type, equally important for indigenous women's empowerment was the strength of indigenous movements and indigenous women's mobilization.

Possibilities and Challenges for Indigenous Women's Political Empowerment

Should we expect the political left in Latin America to support the political empowerment of indigenous women? Previous history and scholarship

suggest a mixed outlook. Historically, the relationship between indigenous movements and the left in the region has been tense and varied, yet the new political coalitions that formed in the pink tide period gave reason to anticipate greater inclusion of indigenous peoples and their concerns. Yet, whether these coalitions would include the voices of indigenous women was far from clear. On the one hand, indigenous women were on the front lines of indigenous social protests in many countries, an integral and vocal part of indigenous movements. At the same time, they comprise the most historically and politically marginalized group in the region, marginalized not just in general politics, but also often by the male leadership of indigenous movements (Deere and León 2001; Rousseau and Hudon 2017). Latin American feminists, meanwhile, historically have viewed indigenous women more as clients of their service projects than as political partners.

Building on previous scholarship, we argue that four factors are most likely to impact indigenous women's political empowerment: the strength of national indigenous movements; a strong position of indigenous women within indigenous movements; the presence of a left governing party that has mobilized indigenous voters as part of its electoral base; and the type of left party in power.

It is infrequent for any historically marginalized group to obtain political empowerment without social movement mobilization. In Latin America, advances ranging from worker's rights to same-sex marriage were the result of massive organizing by unions in the first example, and LGBTQ movements in the latter (Cotler 1978; Parker 1998; De la Dehesa 2010; Díez 2015). Given indigenous women's position at the intersection of two marginalized groups—indigenous peoples and women—indigenous movements or feminist movements could serve as potential movement bases. More often than not, however, the geographic, class, and race differentiation between predominantly rural indigenous women and the typically urban, middle class, and white or *mestizo* (mixed race) feminist movement leadership, has made the integration of indigenous women and their claims into feminist movements rare (Ewig 2006; Hernández Castillo 2001; Monasterios 2007). By contrast, indigenous women are often already integrated—to varying degrees—into indigenous movements in Latin America, today and historically (Rousseau and Hudon 2017). Thus, the strength of indigenous movements in national politics, and the degree to which indigenous women are able to forge leadership within these movements, are key predictors of indigenous women's eventual political empowerment.

Latin American indigenous movements grew in strength beginning in the 1980s, pre-dating, and eventually contributing to, the region's left turn. Early examples include the consolidation of Ecuador's multiple indigenous organizations into a confederation in 1986 followed by a 1990 uprising, and the self-proclaimed indigenous Zapatistas of Mexico launching their revolt in 1994 (Becker 2008; Eisenstadt 2011). Deborah Yashar attributes the reemergence of

indigenous movements across Latin America to a fundamental shift in the 1980s in which corporatist arrangements—where the state had guaranteed a limited set of social rights to class-based groups (with many indigenous groups categorized as “peasants”)—broke down, in favor of the market oriented and pluralist arrangements of neoliberalism. This shift, coupled with democratization and a growing global discourse of “multiculturalism,” opened the possibility for indigenous groups to organize under an ethnic frame and to participate in national politics. They only successfully did so, however, in those places where they had substantial networks that connected diverse indigenous communities, and where they had the associational space in which to organize (Yashar 1996, 2005). The most powerful movements emerged in Mexico, Ecuador, and Bolivia, but movements also emerged in Guatemala, with its large indigenous population, and even in Colombia, where indigenous peoples make up just 2 percent of that country’s population (Sieder 2002; Van Cott 1994; Warren and Jackson 2002).

The growing muscle of indigenous movements in the 1980s and 1990s was no small part of the electoral success of the political left in those countries with strong movements. Broadly, indigenous movements’ claims are founded on several pillars: self-determination of indigenous peoples on their ancestral territories, recognition of indigenous forms of governance, participation in state policy-making that affects indigenous livelihoods, and respect for cultural difference in matters of health, education, and language. However, in the 1990s and 2000s, as Roberta Rice shows, indigenous movements “artfully linked indigenous peoples’ demands to issues of political and economic inclusion for the masses” (Rice 2012, 5), effectively backing the broader movements that led to the rise of the region’s new left (see also Collins 2014). In some countries, indigenous movements were able to convert their movements into indigenous parties and participate directly in electoral politics, while in others indigenous peoples became key constituents in broad electoral coalitions behind the formation of new left parties (Lucero 2008; Madrid 2012; Raymond and Arce 2013; Van Cott 2005). All of these coalitions were leftist in the campaign period; though some moved right upon election.

Historically, the Latin American left, while it varied in political strategy—some lefts focused on revolution, others on electoral politics with social democratic objectives, while still others were populist in nature—was unified in its focus on the class inequalities wrought by capitalism and the state as the principle solution to these. But it paid little attention to inequalities based on identity, dismissing identity concerns as “anachronistic” (Yashar 2011, 184). The pink tide that began at the turn of the millennium is called “pink” because following democratization in the 1980s, the modern Latin American left shed its revolutionary objectives and embraced electoral politics. But in countries with large indigenous movements or even simply electorates, some lefts also began to embrace multicultural discourses (Madrid 2012; Raymond and Arce 2013; Yashar 2011). Thus, we might expect an uneven pattern of

incorporation of indigenous concerns (including indigenous women's concerns) among left parties, with those left parties that craft coalitions including indigenous electorates more likely to be responsive.

This responsiveness, in turn, will also depend largely on the *type* of left. [Levitsky and Roberts \(2011\)](#) divide Latin American lefts into four types: an institutionalized partisan left, a movement left, a populist machine left, and a traditional populist left. These four lefts are distinguished by two characteristics: their level of institutionalization and whether their locus of political authority is concentrated or dispersed. Institutionalized partisan lefts and populist machine lefts have longstanding organizational structures, while movement and populist lefts are newer and have more shallow structures. But of greater concern for our analysis is the locus of authority. The institutionalized partisan and movement left parties have dispersed authority, the former among party organizations, and the latter among movements. Both types of populist lefts, by contrast, concentrate power in the hands of one leader. Populist lefts rarely allow channels for social movements to express their demands, preferring to build power based on antagonistic "us versus them" discourses that preclude recognition of specific identity categories ([de la Torre 2010, 2015](#)). This makes populist left governments poor conduits for the political empowerment of indigenous peoples, and indigenous women in particular. By contrast, we should expect greater incorporation of indigenous concerns if they are incorporated into the electoral coalitions of either institutionalized partisan, or movement left parties.

In summary, indigenous peoples will be more likely to gain greater political empowerment first, if they have a strong movement, and second if they form an integral part of a left governing party's electoral coalition. (Given the redistributive thrust of indigenous peoples' demands, we do not expect right parties and indigenous demands to align.) But such integration does not guarantee the political empowerment of indigenous women. We are only likely to see indigenous women's empowerment in those contexts in which indigenous women activists have successfully mobilized to develop their own space and leadership within indigenous movements.

Indigenous women have been active participants in Latin American indigenous movements since at least the 1990s ([Hernández Castillo and Canessa 2012](#)). They have managed to increase their public visibility through time, creating both spaces within mixed sex indigenous organizations, and their own indigenous women's organizations ([García 2003](#); [Pequeño 2009](#); [Picq 2012](#); [Rousseau and Hudon 2016](#)). While indigenous women's views and experiences vary enormously across and within countries, they share a common desire to maintain unity with indigenous movements while generating new organizations or new possibilities for women to assume leadership and share power with men ([Rousseau and Hudon 2016, 2017](#)). Their organizing has resulted in greater media visibility as politically active subjects, and a political discourse on indigenous women produced by them rather than by

development experts or anthropologists, which tended to be the case in the past. Indigenous women have voiced specific concerns about domestic and state violence, multiple threats to their livelihoods deriving from extractive activities, and the need for institutional guarantees for gender equality in decision-making. Indigenous women face discrimination in access to political power from the community to the highest state institutions. We anticipate that indigenous women's political empowerment at the national level will be more likely when indigenous women are highly organized.

Comparing Peru, Ecuador, and Bolivia

We selected three countries for our analysis of indigenous women's political empowerment that display significant variation on our independent variables: strength of national indigenous movements, organization of indigenous women within indigenous movements, the presence of a governing left party that has mobilized indigenous voters as part of its electoral base, and type of left party in power. We focus our analysis on the center-right governments of Peru under Alan García (2006–2011) and Ollanta Humala (2011–2016) in comparison to the left governments of Rafael Correa (2007–2017) of Ecuador, and Evo Morales (2006–present) of Bolivia. Our period of observation thus begins in 2006 and ends in 2016, which corresponds to the latter half of the region's pink tide, given that the first leftist government in our three-country comparison was elected in 2006.

Apart from their relationship to the independent variables, we selected these three countries due to their relatively large indigenous populations. According to official statistics, in Bolivia, indigenous peoples represent 62 percent of the population, in Peru 24 percent, and in Ecuador 7 percent (CEPAL 2014). While census data usually underreport the indigenous population, these figures allow us to place the three cases in a continuum from a small minority (Ecuador), important minority (Peru) to a majority (Bolivia).⁵ Each country's indigenous population is also characterized by significant internal ethnic diversity. The three countries are also similar in their extractive-based economies and convergences among some of the specific indigenous ethnic groups present in each country. Observing four independent variables in three cases is complex and may not readily allow for generalization. We do think the variation we observe, however, allows us to highlight some of the major patterns that likely apply elsewhere.

Indigenous Movements

With regard to the independent variables, the three countries vary in the strength of their indigenous movements. Peru has a weak indigenous movement that has not forged national organizing structures that bridge Peru's two major indigenous populations, which are culturally and geographically split

between the jungle lowlands of the Amazon region and the highlands. Even within these regions, organizations tend to compete rather than collaborate, and the highland region's organizations have been substantially weaker (Chartock 2011; Paredes 2010; Thorp and Paredes 2010; Yashar 2005). By contrast, in Ecuador, the indigenous movement overcame its geographical and cultural divisions and has been a key actor in civil society since the 1990s. In 1986, activists founded the main indigenous national organization, the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE), unifying a number of regional federations (Becker 2008; Chartock 2011; Lucero 2008, 2006; Selverston 1994; Van Cott 2005). The Ecuadorian movement's incursion into institutional politics, however, generated divisions, leading to a decline in strength in the early 2000s. In Bolivia, a strong indigenous movement emerged in the 1990s. The political power of the Coca Leaf Producers and other indigenous organizations was strengthened when they strategically used the participatory democratic reforms introduced by President Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada to gain a political foothold (Albó 2002; 2008, Van Cott 2005).

Indigenous Women's Movements

Our cases also vary in the strength of indigenous women's organization within indigenous movements and their mode of organizing. In Peru, they have organized principally outside of mixed-sex indigenous organizations and have obtained some influence, but in the absence of a strong indigenous movement their power is limited. In Ecuador, they have organized predominantly inside the indigenous movement, but have been relatively weak at the national level especially in comparison to Bolivia. In Bolivia, they have pursued a *sui generis* path of gender parallelism, an organizational strategy that has resulted in significant influence.

In Peru in the mid-2000s, indigenous women founded the independent indigenous women's organizations, the National Organization of Andean and Amazonian Indigenous Women of Peru (ONAMIAP) and the National Federation of Peasant, Artisan, Indigenous, Native, and Salaried Women of Peru (FEMUCARINAP). Both unite grassroots and regional organizations from the Amazon and the highlands, an unprecedented success given Peru's regional divisions. While these organizations have small memberships and are resource poor, they have increased public recognition of indigenous women as legitimate political actors. For example, they were among a small number of indigenous organizations invited to take part in working groups on indigenous peoples created by the Ministry of Culture and were also key in coordinating joint actions of the main indigenous organizations at several junctures (Rousseau and Hudon 2016, 2017).

In Ecuador, indigenous women have been movement leaders from early on, leadership that resulted in high-profile political positions for some. Nina

Pacari, for example, was elected representative of the Chimborazo Province in the 1997 Constituent Assembly, Congresswoman and Vice-President of Congress in 1998–2000, and became the first indigenous woman appointed to cabinet as Minister of Foreign Affairs in 2002. Several other indigenous women also became prominent public figures. However, in general, indigenous women have faced great obstacles in their quest to develop autonomous voices within the indigenous movement which, according to Manuela Picq, “reproduces violence and inequality especially when it comes to gender” (García 2003; León and Alejandra 2016; Picq 2012, 11; Radcliffe 2015). One exception is the Chimborazo Kichwa Women’s Network, which, as we will explain below, was successful in promoting indigenous women’s rights in the 2008 constitution (Picq 2012).

Of our three cases, Bolivian indigenous women developed the strongest position within the indigenous movement. Principally organized via “gender parallelism,” where women-only organizations form alongside mixed-sex indigenous organizations to channel and enhance indigenous women’s participation, these new organizations remain partners with male-led indigenous organizations (Rousseau and Hudon 2016, 2017). The best known example is the Bartolina Sisa National Confederation of Peasant, Indigenous, and Native Women of Bolivia, created in the early 1980s. Another important organization created in 2007 as a partner of the Confederation of Indigenous Peoples of Bolivia (CIDOB) is the National Confederation of Indigenous Women of Bolivia (CNAMIB) in the lowlands. The exception in this pattern is the National Council of Ayllus and Markas of Qullasuyu (CONAMAQ), a mixed-sex organization within which indigenous women are active leaders. In the context of a very successful indigenous social movement, gender parallelism maximized women’s capacity to benefit from political opportunities within the state by allowing indigenous women to advance joint proposals with their partner organizations.

Ideology and Indigenous Electoral Incorporation

We compare two countries governed by the left and one country governed by the right in order to distinguish the role of political ideology in our outcome area of interest. In each of our cases left parties or coalitions have targeted indigenous voters as an electoral constituency, though in 2003 in Ecuador and in 2011 in Peru, these coalitions moved to the right once in power and lost support from indigenous peoples’ organizations. In Peru, political parties courted indigenous voters based on their indigenous identity beginning with Alejandro Toledo’s 2001 electoral campaign, and then Ollanta Humala and his leftist Peruvian Nationalist Party in his failed 2006 presidential bid and successful bid in 2011 (Madrid 2012; Raymond and Arce 2013). In the case of Humala, after taking power, his left-leaning coalition quickly moved to the right and was considered a center-right government

(Barrenechea and Sosa Villagarca 2014). The right-leaning APRA party won the 2006 elections without any overtures to indigenous voters.

In Ecuador, the indigenous movement was itself a protagonist in electoral politics. In 1995, the main indigenous confederation, CONAIE, formed its own political party, Movement for Plurinational Unity Pachakutik, which did well in high density indigenous regions, but did not become a major national party (Lucero 2008; Van Cott 2005). Its participation in the 1996 and 1998 national elections did, however, yield the first indigenous-identified national legislators (Sánchez López and Freidenberg 1998). CONAIE's alliance with the government of Lucio Gutiérrez (2003–2005), who ended up turning right and was deposed, resulted in electoral incorporation but the decision to join a governing coalition that spectacularly failed debilitated the movement and party for years after (Becker 2010; Madrid 2012). When left-wing Rafael Correa ran for President in 2006, he negotiated with Pachakutik's then-leader Luis Macas, offering him to join the ticket as Vice President. However, Macas decided to run for the presidency himself. As a result, in the second round from which Macas had been eliminated, the indigenous movement was more likely to support Correa over his right-wing opponent, though there was no formal electoral coalition.

In Bolivia, the indigenous movement also formed its own party. In 1995, a number of indigenous and peasant organizations joined to create the Political Instrument for Peoples' Sovereignty (MAS-IPSP), which became the Movement Toward Socialism (MAS) political party. From 1995 until 2005, when its presidential candidate, Evo Morales, won the election by a landslide, the party and its bases led a dual struggle of protesting in the streets and running candidates at all levels (Lucero 2008). Importantly, the MAS was so strong, it did not have to coalesce with other parties to obtain political power.

Party Type

While our three focus countries represent both left and right governments, within our left cases, there is important differentiation by party type. According to Levitsky and Roberts' (2011) typology of left parties, the Alianza País left government in Ecuador was a traditional populist left party. President Rafael Correa effectively utilized an antiestablishment discourse and "outsider" strategy in his campaign and centralized power upon taking office, developing a highly personalistic governing style (Conaghan 2011; de la Torre 2013). By contrast, Evo Morales' MAS government in Bolivia was a "movement left party," anchored in social movements to which its political leaders, including Morales, were accountable, though in recent years the MAS has become increasingly populist (Collins 2014; Levitsky and Roberts 2011). The latter type of party, as we will show in the case studies, was much more favorable to responding to indigenous women's demands than the traditional

populist leadership of Correa that by contrast increasingly antagonized indigenous movements during his rule.

Indigenous Women's Political Empowerment

We assess indigenous women's political empowerment under these left and right governments with three measures. Our first measure is *citizenship rights*: the explicit constitutional recognition of indigenous peoples' rights simultaneous with women's rights such that women's rights will be upheld at the same time as indigenous collective rights. While blueprint documents such as constitutions are not a guarantee of implementation of rights (especially in contexts of low state capacity) they can serve as an important basis for both individual legal and collective social movement claims not just at the national level, but also at the community, municipal, or territorial levels (Cassola et al. 2014; Scribner and Lambert 2010). For our second measure, *political inclusion*, we compare indigenous women's presence in national congresses before and during the pink tide. Following Anne Philips, we argue that descriptive political representation is a matter of justice, and thus a crucial measure of political empowerment (1995).⁶ Third, we measure *state commitment* to indigenous women's concerns by identifying if there are state policy agencies directed specifically towards indigenous women. Women's policy agencies have a long history in the region, and some countries have developed specific agencies or subdivisions directed at indigenous women (Franceschet 2003; McBride and Mazur 2010; Rai 2017; Rodríguez Gusta, Madera, and Caminotti, this issue). While indigenous women's political empowerment is also impacted by other factors—including policies aimed exclusively at women or exclusively at indigenous peoples—these three measures allow us to directly measure their political empowerment (or lack thereof) during the pink tide period.

Citizenship Rights

To assess the development of constitutional guarantees for indigenous peoples' rights together with gender equality, we examined the constitutions that prevailed during 2006–2016 in our three countries. We count only those clauses that address indigenous and women's rights simultaneously as measures of progress in indigenous women's empowerment. The comparison shows significant improvements in indigenous women's citizenship rights in our two left cases, Bolivia and Ecuador, and no change in Peru, in which the constitution lacks intersecting gender and indigenous clauses.

We attribute the variation to a combination of the independent variables described above. One is left ideology. Like the Chávez government in Venezuela, the leftist Alianza País and MAS governments saw new constitutions as a path to radically restructure their countries in a leftist direction, while there was little interest in such transformations by right-governed Peru.⁷

Both Ecuador and Bolivia also had strong indigenous movements at that point in time, which were crucial for the insertion of key indigenous rights clauses, though in Bolivia that organization was stronger. Indigenous women's organizing, however, was strongest in Bolivia. In Bolivia, indigenous women not only organized with indigenous movements, but also at specific junctures formed coalitions with feminists. This collaboration was feasible because of the high degree of empowerment of indigenous women's organizations, which allowed them to negotiate from a position of strength with feminists (Rousseau 2011).

In Peru, the 1993 constitution was written under the right-leaning government of Alberto Fujimori, and has remained unchanged with regard to indigenous and women's rights since that time. It does contain articles that separately recognize women and indigenous peoples. Article 2 guarantees equality before the law on the basis of "origin, race, sex, language, religion, opinion, economic condition, and any other distinguishing feature."⁸ With regard to "peasant" and "native" communities (which in Peru distinguishes between Quechua and Aymara highland indigenous peoples and Amazonian groups), Article 89 recognizes the legal status of these communities, and asserts: "The State respects the cultural identity of the Peasant and Native Communities." In addition, Article 149 allows these groups some local judicial powers. There are no clauses, other than Article 2, however, that specifically combine sex and race/ethnicity.

In Ecuador, we focus on the 2008 constitution, the product of a Constituent Assembly called by the populist leftist government of Rafael Correa. The previous 1998 constitution had several clauses that recognized indigenous peoples' autonomy and provided legal equality on the basis of sex and ethnicity, but it did not have any clauses that explicitly combined indigenous and gender rights.⁹ Despite the fact that Rafael Correa's Alianza País wielded significant influence, the 2007 Ecuadorian Constituent Assembly still provided significant space for indigenous movements, women's movements, and LGBTQ movements, among others, to influence the final document (Becker 2011; Lind 2012). Organized indigenous women also played a key role in promoting intersectional components of the constitution.

Among indigenous movement gains, the 2008 constitution follows the indigenous principle of *sumac kawsay*, or *buen vivir*, which loosely translates as well-being in harmony with community and the environment (Villalba 2013). In addition, Article 1 describes the state as "plurinational" and Articles 56 and 57 recognize indigenous collective rights. While these changes did not encompass all indigenous movement demands, the constitution was ultimately supported by the movement (Becker 2011). For women, the legal rules of gender parity and sequential alternation in electoral lists were put in practice for the first time for the 2007 Constituent Assembly election, based on a quota law that had progressively raised the quota each year, but which had not always been implemented correctly (Piscopo 2016, 219). Gender parity was

constitutionalized in Title IV, Chapter 1, Article 16. Parity represented a major gain for the women's movement, which had struggled for years for the full-fledged implementation of previous electoral gender quota laws. As such, Ecuador was the first adopter of gender parity in the region, setting a trend that has been taken up by six more countries to date (Piscopo 2016). Unlike in Bolivia, however, gender parity was achieved by feminist and women's organizations without significant cooperation with indigenous women (Llanos 2013, 65–67). Indeed, women's movement activists in the Assembly paid scant attention to indigenous women's specific demands, some of which were successfully included in the Constitution as we highlight below, but without feminists' direct support (Picq 2012, 15).

Due to the efforts of organized indigenous women, the 2008 constitution does make significant advances in bringing gender and indigenous rights together. After receiving little attention from the women's movement, and due to a history of failures by the CONAIE to seriously address shortcomings of the justice system for indigenous women, the Chimborazo Kichwa Women's Network, a regional indigenous women's organization, mobilized independently to bring women's equal participation in the justice system into the 2008 constitution (Picq 2012). This parity is recognized in the general justice system (Section 3, Article 176), and Article 171 on autonomous indigenous justice systems, provides "a guarantee of women's participation and decision-making."

The new Bolivian constitution is even more advanced than Ecuador's in reforming the state through recognizing indigenous peoples' rights, gender equality, and most importantly the intersection between these. When the left-wing government of Evo Morales was elected in Bolivia in 2006, the 1967 constitution, with 2002, 2004, and 2005 reforms, was in effect. This constitution, like the early constitutions mentioned above, had separate clauses protecting women's and indigenous rights, but did not have any specifically intersectional clauses.¹⁰ Shortly after assuming power in 2006, President Morales called for a Constituent Assembly that resulted in a new constitution adopted in 2009.

Similar to Ecuador, the constitution writing process was tense, but did allow significant space for movement influence, especially those aligned with the MAS (Postero 2010). These included indigenous and women's movements (Jeria 2010; Rousseau 2011). Unlike Ecuador, in Bolivia, the feminist movement made a concerted effort to develop a set of principles that integrated the differing perspectives of a wide variety of Bolivian women—including indigenous women—into collectively generated proposals presented to the Constituent Assembly (*Mujeres Presentes en la Historia* 2006; Novillo González 2011). Moreover, indigenous women were highly organized, and able to maintain autonomy and voice in this process. As a result, in the new constitution, several articles recognize women's rights and indigenous rights

separately, but several also place these rights in dialogue in the same article—moving citizenship rights for indigenous women forward significantly.

Bolivia's major indigenous organizations—including Bartolina Sisa—formed the “Unity Pact of Indigenous First Peoples and Peasant Organizations” in order to influence the Constituent Assembly, with great success. The 2009 constitution renamed the Bolivian Republic the Plurinational State of Bolivia. Significant articles for indigenous peoples include Article 2, that recognizes the self-determination of indigenous nations and peoples and their right to autonomy, Articles 30–32 that elaborate on those specific rights, and Chapter 7 (Articles 289–296) that provide the basis for indigenous autonomy. Articles 190–192 allow for a separate indigenous justice system. In each of these examples, the constitution states that these separate rights shall respect all rights guaranteed by the constitution (which would include prohibition of sex discrimination). It also recognizes thirty-six indigenous languages. Women also created a lobbying organization, *Mujeres Presentes en la Historia*, that, as mentioned above, did significant pre-Constituent Assembly organizing work to bring together the diversity of perspectives of Bolivian women (though not without tension and conflict). Women constituents also coordinated together, formally and informally (Rousseau 2011, 11–12). As a result of their influence, the constitution was written in gender-inclusive language and includes numerous references to gender equality.

But key to our analysis is when gender rights and indigenous rights are placed together. This combination occurs several times. Article 26 places gender equality alongside indigenous rights: Article 26.I specifies that political participation must be equitable and exercised in equality of conditions between men and women; while 26.I.4 allows for direct nomination of representatives of indigenous communities, using local norms and practices. Similarly, Article 147 states that in legislative elections, the state guarantees the equal participation of men and women and the proportional participation of indigenous peoples and nations. This includes the principles behind reserved seats for indigenous peoples, a clause that through legislation became seven reserved seats in the National Assembly. Ministerial appointments, likewise, are to “respect plurinational character and gender equity” (Article 172.22). Indigenous women initiated many of these intersectional clauses. These women were in part influenced by their constitutional collaborations with feminists, but the proposals also stemmed from their own belief in the indigenous principle of gender complementarity between men and women. Their proposals were then adopted, sometimes in even stronger terms, by the Unity Pact of indigenous organizations that presented them to the Assembly (Rousseau 2011).

Political Inclusion

Indigenous women's political inclusion, measured as presence in national legislatures, increased in all three of our cases during the pink tide period,

including in right-leaning Peru. However, only in the left cases of Ecuador and Bolivia did indigenous women achieve representation that was high in proportion to their presence in the overall population, and only in Bolivia did their political presence reach impactful levels (figure 1). The key factors at play here are the electoral incorporation of indigenous candidates, the pressure of the women's movement and indigenous women's organizations on the constitutional reforms that led to the introduction of gender parity in Ecuador and Bolivia, as well as party ideology and left party type.

As table 1 illustrates, indigenous women's political inclusion increases as indigenous people's representation increases overall and as women's inclusion increases overall. We attribute this trend to three interacting dynamics. First, in all three cases, beginning in Ecuador in 1998, followed by Peru in 2001, and finally Bolivia in 2005, there is electoral incorporation of indigenous candidates into leading political parties or coalitions. The placement of indigenous candidates in winnable seats in elections is an important part of electoral incorporation as it signals the party's commitment to representing indigenous peoples. The presence of a strong indigenous movement within this coalition, moreover, makes it more likely for indigenous peoples to have higher levels of representation. This movement strength is behind the relatively high numbers of Ecuadorian indigenous representatives beginning in 1998, and again in 2002, when the movement joined a leftist coalition that subsequently turned right. While not high in raw numbers, Ecuadorian indigenous representation is proportionally high when one considers the relatively low percentage of indigenous peoples overall (7 percent) in Ecuador.¹¹ Indigenous representation also leaps in Bolivia with the simultaneous strengthening of that movement and its incorporation into the MAS, which wins national elections in 2005.

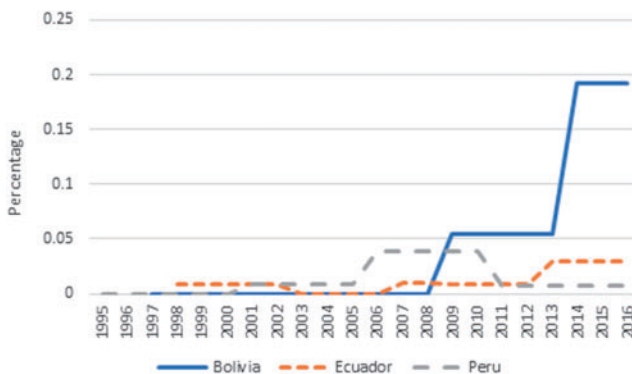


Figure 1. Indigenous women in congress 1995–2016. Source: table 1.

Table 1. Percent members of national congresses

Peru Election year	Ecuador			Bolivia		
	Indigenous women (%)	Election year	Indigenous women (%)	Indigenous women (%)	Election year	Indigenous women (%)
1995	0	1998	4	1	1997	0
2001	1	2003	5	0	2002	0
2006	5	2007	5	1	2005	NA
2011	2	2009	4	1	2009	5
		2013	6	3	2014	19

Sources: Peru: Sex and indigenous identity coded by Christina Ewig. Indigenous self-identity coded based on biographical materials and verified with country experts. Indigenous includes members that identify as “peasant” (*campesino*) as well as indigenous. Ecuador: Congressional members sex from the Consejo Nacional Electoral de Ecuador. Identification of indigenous self-identity coded by Christina Ewig based on biographical information and consultation with Ecuadorian indigenous activist, Armando Muyolema. Bolivia: Congressional members 1997 and 2002 from the Bolivian Corte Nacional Electoral and coded by Christina Ewig based on biographies in the Diccionario Biográfico Parlamentario; 2005 data from Loayza Bueno (2012); 2009 data from Cabrero (2013); 2014 data from the Bolivian Vicepresidencia del Estado, available at: https://www.vicepresidencia.gob.bo/sesiones?page=parlamentarios&id_gestion=1&id_pestana=8.

While indigenous men gain seats as a result of electoral incorporation, it takes longer for this to effect indigenous women's political inclusion. The exception is Peru, where indigenous women enter earlier but their numbers also decline over time rather than rise. In Ecuador and Bolivia, indigenous women's numbers, as a proportion of all indigenous leaders elected, hover near or below that of all women as a proportion of the congress both before the pink tide and in the early pink tide years. It is only later in the pink tide that their numbers begin to pick up, once gender parity is institutionalized. While indigenous women's early presence in national congresses can be attributed in part to their leadership in indigenous social movements, their increased presence to half of all indigenous peoples elected in 2013 in Ecuador and 2014 in Bolivia can be directly attributed to gender parity laws passed in each of these countries during the pink tide, and rooted in the previously discussed constitutional reforms. As we discussed above, in Ecuador, constitutional reforms that institutionalized gender parity were the result principally of feminist mobilization, but in Bolivia, indigenous women also have been clear advocates for gender parity.

The fact that we see increases in indigenous women's political inclusion over time in both left cases is significant for demonstrating the importance of left ideology. However, we attribute variation between Bolivia and Ecuador to left party type. Even before the parity law, the MAS adopted internal rules on gender parity and alternation in national elections, a point that underlines that party's ideological commitment and openness to the pressures of its movement base (Machicao and Copabianco 2013, 47). Moreover, President Morales stood out for being the first Bolivian President to appoint indigenous women to high positions of political authority (Rousseau 2010). For example, the presidency of the 2006 Constituent Assembly was given to Silvia Lazarte, an experienced leader from the Bartolina Sisa Indigenous and Peasant Women's Federation. Morales' cabinet in 2010 and 2011 included 50 percent women ministers, with at least three indigenous women in the 2010, and two in the 2011 cabinet, of twenty members total. However, in 2012, women's presence decreased to 35 percent and continued to decline, reaching 29 percent in 2015 (Sánchez 2015, 135).

State Commitment

Ecuador and Bolivia again perform better than Peru on our measure of state commitment: state policy machineries that specifically address the needs of indigenous women. However, advances in Ecuador pre-date the pink tide and actually experience backsliding under the populist left government of Rafael Correa. The clearest advances for indigenous women on this score take place in the movement left party case of Bolivia. The key factors at play here are party ideology, left party type, and the relative strength of indigenous women in the indigenous movement.

Peru has no specific policy or state machinery to address indigenous women's needs and demands. While its Ministry of Women's Affairs was established in 1995, it has no specific office to work with indigenous women. The Interculturality Vice-Ministry of the Ministry of Culture, created in 2010, has an Office on Indigenous Peoples' Rights, but so far an indigenous person has neither led this office nor the Vice-Ministry itself. The Vice Ministry created a Working Group on Indigenous Peoples' Policy to hear indigenous organizations' demands and proposals, but according to Ketty Marcelo, President of the indigenous women's organization ONAMIAP, it does not have decision-making power and has served as a "small pill" to swallow the political silence of the Vice-Ministry on key issues of importance to indigenous peoples, not to mention indigenous women (Hurtado 2017). We attribute the lack of advancement in Peru to right governing ideology as well as its weak indigenous movement.

In populist left Ecuador, President Correa's government showed very little interest in developing the state's capacity to generate public policy directed at indigenous women. Demonstrating his populist tendencies toward centralization and attacking what he may have perceived as a potential base for opposition, in 2009 President Correa shut down the National Council on Women (CONAMU), the official state women's machinery since 1997. CONAMU was created as a result of the Beijing UN Conference on Women and was an important ally of the women's movement. CONAMU had an office for indigenous affairs and therefore addressed indigenous women's status, even though according to Sarah Radcliffe (2015, 149) it did not establish a truly collaborative relationship with indigenous women leaders. The government justified dismantling CONAMU by pointing to the 2008 constitution, which called for the creation of a National Council for Gender Equality, simultaneous with similar agencies for indigenous peoples, handicapped persons and intergenerational equality.

However, the Correa government delayed the establishment of these Councils (which were to have a consultative role only) until July 2014, when the National Assembly finally passed authorizing legislation.¹² The law established the principle of parity for the selection of authorities of each Council, which concretely meant that indigenous women would at least attain parity representation on the Council for the Equality of Indigenous Peoples and Nationalities. But up until the end of Correa's presidency, the Council for Gender Equality as well as the Council for the Equality of Indigenous Peoples and Nationalities had barely started to organize themselves. Only in May 2017, after the end of Correa's rule, were the representatives from civil society elected to the different Councils, a condition necessary for the Councils to start functioning effectively.¹³ In interviews with former CONAMU and current Council for Gender Equality staff, these individuals pointed to both the president's excessive personalism and centralism as reasons for the delay. One informant described the president as "a picture of authoritarian power" that

“did not conceive of persons as subjects with rights,” and for that reason delayed and subsequently debilitated the Councils.¹⁴

There are some parallels to Ecuador in the experience of Bolivia with regard to the women’s policy machinery, but indigenous women in Bolivia actually gained space in new state apparatuses. The Morales government started its rule by dismantling the state machinery that had existed for over a decade, the Vice-Ministry on Gender and Generational Affairs within the Ministry of Sustainable Development. This office had been an ally of the women’s movement, and had contributed to advancing gender policy in the state, but without a specific mandate to attend indigenous women’s demands (Htun and Ossa 2013). In its place, the Morales government created an Office on Gender and Generational Violence in the new Vice-Ministry on Equal Opportunity within the Ministry of Justice, thus a hierarchical step backward. At the same time, Morales dismantled the Ministry on Indigenous Affairs and Native Peoples, arguing that indigenous peoples were now ruling the country and therefore they no longer should be treated as a political minority.

Yet for indigenous women, in 2010, the Morales government created an Office for Depatriarchalization under the new Vice-Ministry on Decolonization, itself within the Ministry of Cultures.¹⁵ This office was created due to the pressures of a small group of indigenous women who had been elected to the Constituent Assembly, and the office’s two first appointees were indigenous women (Diaz Carrasco 2013). The head of this office in 2012 described depatriarchalization as: “The rebellion and permanent struggle of our Mother Earth together with her daughters and sons against patriarchal racist domination.”¹⁶ Located within a Secretariat in charge of plurinational public administration, one might indeed expect it to play a role in transforming the state. One of its key policy proposals is the application of gender parity in public service. It launched a draft Bill on Decolonization and Depatriarchalization in 2014, which as of this writing had not yet been discussed by the legislature. However, despite its strategic positioning and lofty goals, most observers, including the CEDAW Expert Committee, found that this new entity had neither the resources nor the authority to proactively contribute to engendering public policy or ensure that gender and ethnicity were considered intersectionally.¹⁷

Taken together, the results of our three measures of empowerment show that the pink tide has led to significant transformations for indigenous women, except for the measure of state indigenous women’s machineries, where there has been movement backwards, stagnation, or minor gains. In table 2, we summarize the relative progress on indigenous women’s empowerment, comparing the pre-pink tide period of the 1990s with the end of the first decade of left governments 2016. NONE indicates no progress or a worsening situation; LOW indicates modest progress, and HIGH indicates significant progress.

Table 2. Indigenous women's political empowerment, 1990s and 2016

	Constitutional citizenship rights		Indigenous women's political representation		State machinery on indigenous women	
	1990s	2016	1990s	2016	1990s	2016
Ecuador	NONE	HIGH	LOW	HIGH	LOW	NONE
Bolivia	NONE	HIGH	NONE	HIGH	NONE	LOW
Peru	NONE	NONE	NONE	LOW	NONE	NONE

With regard to the roles of left party and left party type, the table demonstrates that the left governments of Ecuador and Bolivia have shown greater progress on these indicators than the center-right government of Peru. However, left party type also played a role—with movement left party Bolivia performing substantially better than populist left Ecuador. But party type was certainly not the only factor at play; an additional crucial variable was the greater strength of indigenous women within the indigenous movement in Bolivia compared to Ecuador.

It is also clear from [table 2](#) that the most progress has been made in constitutional rights and political representation. Constitution-writing processes can be democratic watersheds; and this was the case in Ecuador and to an even greater extent in Bolivia, resulting in Bolivia in the substantial inclusion of indigenous women. Gender parity, for its part, is a policy area that has achieved increasing consensus across the region, and while Ecuador and Bolivia were forerunners in adopting parity, we still might consider parity an easier “win” compared to other policy demands ([Piscopopo 2015](#)). By contrast, the sphere of executive power appears to be more resistant to opening up to indigenous women's interests. One explanation may lie in the relatively lower effort that indigenous women may have invested in the latter. Or it could be that governments are more conservative when it comes to reforming the bureaucracy.

Conclusion

Did the pink tide lead to the political empowerment of indigenous women? Our comparative analysis of the left governments of Ecuador and Bolivia with the right governments of Peru leads us to answer a qualified “yes.” Qualified, because the pink tide's impact was not uniform: in addition to left governance, type of left party government matters significantly. On our three measures of constitutional citizenship rights, political inclusion, and state commitment to indigenous women, left governments score better, but the movement left party of Bolivia performs significantly better than the populist

left of Ecuador. In addition to its type of left party, Bolivia also hosted the strongest indigenous and indigenous women's movements during this period. Thus the strength of indigenous movements, and in particular the kind of leadership of indigenous women within these movements (gender parallelism), are also important factors behind indigenous women's empowerment.

The demands of indigenous movements, especially insofar as they overlap with the distributive objectives of left parties, are more likely to find a sympathetic audience in left governments. But indigenous movements also pose significant challenges to left parties because they raise a set of collective rights demands, such as self-determination on their ancestral territories, that often conflict with government desires to raise revenues through extraction for redistribution. Yet, when indigenous movements are strong or their voters are necessary for an electoral victory, left parties may be willing to incorporate their demands. Movement left parties, by and large, sustain this incorporation. By contrast, responsiveness to indigenous movements is unlikely under populist left governments, that by definition are uninterested in the differentiated interests of specific groups, and which are loath to share power outside their personalistic leadership. This dynamic was clear in the populist left of Ecuador, and is increasingly evident as the movement left party of Bolivia becomes more populist.

Nevertheless, our analysis has shown that indigenous women have been relatively empowered in both Ecuador and Bolivia—though to a lesser extent in Ecuador. Left parties are more likely to incorporate the specific demands of indigenous women when these women have their own significant base within indigenous movements. In the case of Bolivia, indigenous women developed strong organizations that worked together with gender-mixed organizations. The largest such organization, Bartolina Sisa, exercised significant influence within the MAS government in Bolivia. In Ecuador, by contrast, while some indigenous women leaders have become highly respected public figures, indigenous women did not manage to create a significant favorable power balance within the indigenous movement.

Our measures of indigenous women's political empowerment convey only certain aspects of the politics experienced by indigenous women under the pink tide. Yet they speak to the core of what politics is made of: citizenship rights, electoral representation, and institutionalized influence on the public policy process. The Latin American pink tide has brought some progress for indigenous women. But they will need to seize the new channels that have opened up in that period, and keep pushing the state to transform their new rights into concrete policies.

Notes

Stéphanie Rousseau is Associate Professor of Political Science at the Department of Social Sciences, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú. She has a PhD in Political Science from McGill University. She also worked as Associate Professor of Sociology at Université Laval (Canada) until 2013. Her research interests are

social movements and citizenship, gender, and ethnicity in Peru and Bolivia. She is the author of *Women's Citizenship in Peru. The Paradoxes of Neopopulism in Latin America* (Palgrave Macmillan 2009) and co-author of *Indigenous Women's Movements in Latin America. Gender and Ethnicity in Peru, Mexico and Bolivia* (Palgrave Macmillan 2017). She has published articles in *Latin American Research Review*, *Journal of Latin American Studies*, and *Social Politics*, among others.

Christina Ewig is Professor of Public Affairs and Director of the Center on Women, Gender and Public Policy at the Humphrey School of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota. Professor Ewig's research centers on the politics of gender and race in Latin America. She has published widely on gender, race and social policy reforms in Latin America. Her current research investigates whether the rise of women and indigenous peoples into political office in Latin America has made a difference for the kinds of policy that is produced. Her book, *Second-Wave Neoliberalism: Gender, Race and Health Sector Reform in Peru* (Penn State University Press, 2010), won the Flora Tristán award for best book on Peru from the Peru Section of the Latin American Studies Association. Her articles have appeared in *Comparative Political Studies*, *Feminist Studies*, *Social Science & Medicine*, and *World Development*, among other journals.

1. This was the chant of Argentines during their 2001 political crisis in that country that led to a left government.
2. We define indigenous women as women who identify with a recognized ethnic group and/or who learned an indigenous language as a mother tongue. On race and ethnicity in Latin America see among others: [de la Cadena \(2000\)](#), [Telles \(2014\)](#), and [Wade \(2010\)](#).
3. "We want to be actors in our own futures with full rights," interview with Tarcila Rivera, May 14, 2014, available at: <http://beijing20.unwomen.org/en/news-and-events/stories/2014/5/we-want-to-be-actors>.
4. In 2010, 7.9 percent of indigenous women in Ecuador age 20–29 years had completed 13 years of study or more, in comparison with 30.9 percent of nonindigenous women. In Peru, it was 28.6 percent compared to 44.4 percent, respectively. Indigenous women also face higher maternal mortality rates: an estimated 47 percent higher in Peru, and 37 percent higher in Guatemala than nonindigenous women. Economically, they are among the poorest with low levels of formal labor market participation and concentration in the lowest paid positions, such as domestic workers (CELADE-CEPAL 2013, 67, 92.100-3).
5. In the 2012 Bolivian census, 41 percent of Bolivians identified as indigenous. This was significantly lower than the 62 percent reported in the 2001 census, and put in doubt some methodological aspects of the questionnaire (see [Tabra 2013](#)). Experts also dispute Ecuador's census figures, with some arguing that that country's indigenous population is 25 percent and others 43 percent (Van Cott 2005, 101). See [Martínez Novo 2014](#) for a discussion of census minimization in Ecuador.
6. We also recognize the importance of indigenous women's substantive representation, but leave that for future research.

7. Humala's government initially expressed interest in a return to Peru's 1979 constitution, but a total revision was not proposed.
8. All translations from Spanish are by the authors.
9. Chapter 2, Article 23 of the 1998 constitution guaranteed legal equality on the basis of sex, ethnicity, color and other characteristics. Chapter 4, Article 81 prohibited racism and sexism in the media. The constitution introduced a chapter on the collective rights of indigenous peoples and Afro-Ecuadorians that included long-standing demands such as possession of communal lands, prior consultation, and bilingual education (Chapter 5, Articles 83–84). It also allowed for indigenous justice practices at the community level (Section 8, Chapter 1, Article 191), and created indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian districts (*circunscripciones*) as part of the administrative structure of the State (Section 11, Chapter 1, Article 224).
10. The reformed 1967 constitution included a broad legal equality clause across a variety of categories and a 2002 reform in Title 1, Article 6 stated women and men were equal before the law. Title 3, Article 171 recognized indigenous communities' cultural, social, and economic rights as well as their communal lands. It also allowed for indigenous customs to resolve local conflicts. Title 9, Chapter 2, on the electoral regime allowed indigenous organizations to field political candidates.
11. This assessment, of course, takes the official census numbers at face value.
12. Ley Orgánica de los Consejos Nacionales para la Igualdad, July 7, 2014.
13. See <http://www.elcomercio.com/actualidad/cpcs-desginacion-representantes-consejosdeigualdad-sociedadcivil.html> (last accessed October 7, 2017).
14. Confidential interview by Christina Ewig, Quito, March 11, 2016.
15. The full name in Spanish is *Jefatura de Unidad de Despatriarcalización*, within the *Dirección de Administración Pública Plurinacional*.
16. Interview of Esperanza Huanca by Christina Ewig, La Paz, February 14, 2012.
17. CEDAW, *Como enfrentar la discriminación contra la mujer en Bolivia. Observaciones al Estado Plurinacional de Bolivia 07-2015*. Available at <http://www.nu.org.bo/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/01CEDAW-NOV-2015-Final-PARA-ENVIAR-nov-20151.pdf>.

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