



**RADICAL DEMOCRACY IN THE ANDES:
INDIGENOUS PARTIES AND THE
QUALITY OF DEMOCRACY IN LATIN AMERICA ***

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ABSTRACT

I explore whether recently formed indigenous political parties in Ecuador and Bolivia are fulfilling their promise to improve the quality of local government by establishing institutions that promote intercultural cooperation and the participation of individuals and civil society groups. To the extent that such improvements have occurred, I seek to identify the conditions under which they succeed. I argue that under certain conditions even "least-likely cases" for the establishment of radical democratic models can produce positive changes in relations among hostile ethnic groups, shift resources toward underserved populations, and create spaces for citizens and civil society groups to deliberate public spending priorities. Such models are most likely to work when indigenous parties and their social movement sponsors are able to (1) maintain internal unity and solidarity; (2) develop distinct, complementary roles; (3) attract charismatic, talented mayors who are willing and able to work across ethnic lines; (4) reelect successful mayors; and (5) attract resources and technical support from external donors.

RESUMEN

Exploro si los partidos políticos indígenas recientemente formados en Ecuador y Bolivia están cumpliendo su promesa de mejorar la calidad del gobierno local a través del establecimiento de instituciones que promuevan la cooperación intercultural y la participación de los individuos y los grupos de la sociedad civil. En la medida en que estas mejoras hayan ocurrido, busco identificar las condiciones bajo las cuales ellas han tenido éxito. Sostengo que bajo ciertas condiciones aún los "casos más improbables" para el establecimiento de modelos democráticos radicales pueden producir cambios positivos en las relaciones entre grupos étnicos hostiles, orientar recursos hacia poblaciones desatendidas y crear espacios para que los ciudadanos y los grupos de la sociedad civil deliberen acerca de las prioridades de gasto público. Es más probable que estos modelos funcionen cuando los partidos políticos indígenas y los movimientos sociales que los respaldan están en condiciones de: (1) mantener la unidad interna y la solidaridad; (2) desarrollar roles sociales distintos y complementarios; (3) atraer alcaldes carismáticos y talentosos que están dispuestos y capacitados para trabajar cruzando las divisiones étnicas; (4) reelegir a los alcaldes exitosos; y (5) atraer recursos y apoyo técnico de parte de donantes externos.

In the 1990s, as South America's party systems began to undergo serious crises, indigenous peoples' social movement organizations formed electorally viable political parties for the first time. In Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, and Venezuela, candidates emphasizing an ethnically indigenous identity, representing parties affiliated with indigenous social movement organizations, gained a foothold in national legislatures and control of local and subnational governments. They have been most successful in Bolivia and Ecuador, where they not only dominate dozens of local governments but control significant blocs in Congress, and in 2005 and 2002, respectively, elected the country's top executive.

Much has been written about the implications for democratic quality of the recent decline of Latin America's traditional parties (Coppedge 1998; Mainwaring 1999; Mainwaring and Scully 1995; K. Roberts 2002). The failure of parties to reduce poverty and inequality, to protect citizens from crime and violence, to raise levels of economic development, and to protect human rights in the two decades since the shift from military regimes to elected civilian democracy has generated declines in public support for parties and for democracy itself (O'Donnell 2004: 46–51; UNDP 2004: 62). But we have yet to learn much about the impact of the new indigenous parties on the quality of democracy. They certainly have fulfilled their promise to indigenous constituents to improve their “descriptive representation”—that is, electing representatives that share the same ethnic and cultural characteristics (Mansbridge 2000: 100–101). Some indigenous party candidates and platforms also promised voters that they would provide a more participatory, intercultural model of democracy, particularly at the local level where they have captured municipal government. And they proposed that their alternative models should serve as a model for the world. For example, the Ecuadorian indigenous-movement-based party Pachakutik (Pachakutik Movement of Plurinational Unity) boasts that its goal is “the metamorphosis from utopia to reality” through the creation of “Alternative Local Governments” (Coordinadora de Gobiernos Locales Alternativos 2004: 3). As one of its coordinators explained to me:

We believe that we were the first, the pioneers. Now there are other experiences in Ecuador, but we were the pioneers with respect to what is a participatory, democratic government, and we defined various areas. This is not done as an experiment but rather as a real exercise of power in order to demonstrate to the

country and to the world what is possible, that it is possible to have other types of democracy, where the society is taken into consideration. (Interview, Benito Suarez, Quito, Ecuador, 21 June 2005)

Similarly, at its Fifth Congress, the Bolivian indigenous-movement-based party Movimiento al Socialismo (Movement toward Socialism, or MAS) approved the following principles, among others:

To postulate a true participatory democracy of consensus, respect and recognition of the diverse social organizations, where the Communities and the people find their liberation from all forms of poverty, misery and discrimination without being subordinated or exploited...

To consider Bolivia to be a multinational and pluricultural State integrated by living and existing together in mutual respect....

The Movement toward Socialism, expresses its profound commitment to the development of a Communitarian Democracy, of consensus and Participation, of social and economic content. This democracy must contain political mechanisms that constitute channels for links between government and all popular sectors.¹

I seek to discover whether the new indigenous parties are fulfilling their promise to improve the quality of local government by establishing institutions that promote intercultural cooperation and the participation of individuals and civil society groups. To the extent that such improvements have occurred, I seek to understand the conditions in which indigenous party innovations succeed or fail.

RESEARCH DESIGN

My framework for evaluating the success of experiments in participatory, intercultural democracy is derived from the rich debate in democratic theory concerning alternative norms and processes that could significantly improve the quality of democratic life. These alternatives usually are grouped under the heading “radical democracy.” Although there is considerable variety among the proposals, most emphasize greater opportunities for participation in public life of individuals, voluntary associations, and social movements; institutions that promote public debate on public policy issues; opportunities for civil society organizations and individual citizens to participate in the monitoring of government activities; the creation of state or quasi-state institutions representing identity groups as a complement to territorially based

representative institutions; measures to ensure that disadvantaged individuals and groups have the resources necessary to participate on a basis of greater equality with more advantaged groups; and the promotion of a more lively and free civil society. For radical democrats, improvements in democratic quality are those that increase the availability of these properties; the more properties available, the greater the democratic quality.

I apply the insights of this normative debate to comparative social science research of real-life cases in which Bolivian and Ecuadorian indigenous political parties attempted to realize some or all of the goals that radical democrats articulate. I combine the two approaches because traditional political science efforts to evaluate democratic quality (e.g., Dahl 1971; Coppedge, Alvarez, and Maldonado 2005; Altman and Pérez-Liñán 2002; Munck and Verkuilen 2002; A. Roberts 2005), based on measurement of (mostly quantifiable) indicators of contestation and participation, are useful but insufficient. They typically fail to capture crucial information about diverse modes of participation beyond voting, to incorporate an assessment of the participation of civil society organizations/voluntary associations in public life, or to reveal and assess patterns of domination based on group membership. Despite the extensive amount of work produced on democratic quality, the literature lacks a consensus on an appropriate definition of democracy or the appropriate criteria for its assessment and measurement (Armony and Schamis 2005; Vargas Cullel 2004: 107). The insights of this literature tend to point to incremental institutional reforms, such as adjusting the formula for turning votes into seats or the relative power of executives and legislatures. However, given the profound problems with democracy in the ethnically divided, politically unstable, impoverished central Andean countries, improvements in democratic quality cannot rely on existing institutional designs and processes, which mainly have been copied from distinct contexts. We must look instead to radical, innovative alternatives that challenge the prevailing values and institutions that have consistently failed to provide conditions for meaningful citizenship. And we must expand our vision of democratization in developing regions like Latin America to encompass new possibilities. As Hagopian observes (2005: 321), existing paradigms of regime transition and democratization have failed to explain why democracies are doing so poorly—in Latin America, as well as in regions with longer democratic traditions. I concur with Leonardo Avritzer that our best

hope is to identify practices and institutions in society that have the potential for improving the quality of democracy, and

...to transfer democratic potentials that emerge at the societal level to the political arena through participatory designs. Without this second step through which informal publics become deliberative, problem-solving publics, democratization in Latin America will not be able to bridge the gap between democratic societal practices and a hybrid political society that resists its full democratization. Thus, deliberative publics become the central arena for completing democratization due to the way they manage to connect renovations within the public culture to institutional designs capable of transforming non-public and hybrid practices into democratic forms of decision making. (Avritzer 2002: 9–10)

The social science literature on municipal innovation tends to focus on causal variables related to economic and social structure, the role of the state, and transnational influences.² To date such studies have shed little light on the key role of political parties as catalysts and transmission belts for experiments in alternative local government. An important exception is the much-studied participatory budgeting in the Brazilian city of Porto Alegre, which the Workers Party (PT) instituted in 1989 (Avritzer 2002; Baiocchi 2003, 2005). This fascinating case shares some similarities with the cases studied here: the leftist, anti-neoliberal orientation of the governing party and the focus on local government, particularly its budgeting process. Indeed, NGOs helping indigenous parties in Bolivia and Ecuador to design and implement participatory governance models explicitly offered the Porto Alegre case as a model. But there are significant differences that limit the relevance of comparisons, including the absence of a focus on *intercultural* participation in Porto Alegre; the size of the municipalities studied (Porto Alegre has a metropolitan area of almost 3 million people, whereas the Andean municipalities studied contain less than 100,000 persons); starkly different political and institutional environment (highly decentralized, federal Brazil, and unitary Bolivia and Ecuador); and the far higher level of economic and social development and greater availability of economic resources in Porto Alegre (Baiocchi 2001: 47, 65). Nevertheless, my agenda is similar to that of Gianpaolo Baiocchi, who applies Fung and Wright's "empowered participatory government" model as a normative framework for evaluating the Workers' Party's radical democratic experiment in Porto Alegre (2003, 2005), and to that of Leonardo Avritzer, who constructs a theory of "participatory publics," which he uses to

reveal the democratizing features of the Porto Alegre participatory budgeting experiment, as well as of citizen participation in electoral monitoring in Mexico (2002). I likewise draw from the radical democracy literature to construct an ideal-typical model of indigenous party goals and practices in the Andes that I use to evaluate the results of indigenous party experiments in participatory, intercultural democracy in local government in Bolivia and Ecuador. Like Baiocchi and Avritzer, I also use my cases to test the validity of normative democratic theory.

The philosophical literature on radical democracy also has limitations. It tends to be abstract and usually fails to offer concrete models applicable to real-world cases (Johnson 1998: 175–6; Fung and Wright 2003a; James 2004: 15). The few real-world examples chosen usually are taken from advanced industrialized societies (e.g., Cohen and Rogers 1995, 2003; James 2004: 3; Warren 2001)³ and philosophers often ignore divided societies, writing them off as impossible cases (James 2004: 15). This is unfortunate because ethnically divided developing countries are more in need than stable, institutionalized democracies of innovative solutions to address democratic stagnation or reversal. Moreover, Western democracies (and other struggling democratizing societies) might learn from developing-country examples, just as developing countries have learned from advanced industrialized society models (Armony and Schamis 2005: 126).

Because the quality of democracy in the central Andes is poor by any social science measure, the experiments studied are at most 10 years old, and the social and economic conditions are extremely adverse, we must keep our expectations for the results of these efforts modest. I define a “successful” experiment as one in which new participatory, deliberative, intercultural institutions are established and survive the transition from the founding administration to another, and in which these institutions are formally open to the participation of all citizens—individually, or collectively through membership in voluntary associations. This is, admittedly, a low standard for success, but it denotes an impressive achievement given the constraints on such reforms in the environment studied: high inequality and poverty, extreme party system fragmentation and electoral volatility, and longstanding interethnic hostility and mistrust. I concur with Abers, who avers, “[a]ny positive transformation will have contradictions, imperfections, and failures. The temptation is often either to focus on the inadequacies or to ignore them

altogether” (2000: 18). Thus, she urges us to “appreciate modest gains, understanding them as windows of insight into better possibilities” (2000: 19). Judith Tandler sets a comparably low standard for success in her study of municipal reform in Ceará, Brazil, arguing that this provides “a more realistic portrayal of the typical development success story” (1997: 17). Similarly, in his study of the quality of public life in Spain, Robert Fishman examines whether a political society “affords citizens an engaging public arena within which they may contemplate, discuss if they wish, and ultimately choose among competing views, alternatives, and proposals,” rather than measuring substantive improvements in public policy or social justice (2004: 3). In this study of the Andes, “successful” experiments should be considered promising and suggestive, rather than replicable models. Thus, the outcome of interest is improvements in democratic quality in particular municipalities owing to the establishment of participatory, intercultural, deliberative institutions.

The factors determining the outcome are the conditions that enabled or impeded an indigenous party from serving as catalyst, designer, and executor of democratic innovation. Political parties merit particularly close scrutiny in any study of democratic quality: as key links between citizens and the state, and as potential transmission belts for the diffusion of local innovations to higher levels of government. In the Andes, some indigenous political parties are at the forefront of offering new visions of democracy. The conditions I identify vary both among these parties and within them. For example, whereas Ecuador’s Pachakutik has been responsible for the most successful experiments, several of its efforts have failed or been reversed; meanwhile, Bolivia’s Movimiento Indígena Pachakuti (Pachakutik Indigenous Movement, or MIP) has produced no improvement in democratic quality. I argue that a significant part of the variation in the relative success of indigenous parties’ efforts to improve democratic quality can be explained by: (1) the degree of organizational unity and solidarity in the local party apparatus, and in the national party structure more generally; (2) the successful development of distinct roles and the maintenance of harmonious relations between the indigenous party and its parent social movement organization; (3) the party’s ability to attract and cultivate charismatic mayoral candidates who can communicate effectively across ethnic boundaries; (4) the party’s ability to reelect such mayors and, thus, provide

the necessary political continuity for innovations to become institutionalized; and (5) the party's ability to attract financial resources from NGOs and international donors that augment tiny municipal budgets.

Bolivia and Ecuador were chosen for study because they are the Latin American countries with the most electorally successful indigenous political parties in terms of geographic scope and levels of government occupied. Thus, they were most likely to provide a range of examples of municipal government and to offer variation in terms of outcomes. Both have struggled with the challenge of national economic, political, and social integration, owing to the physical barriers to communication and transportation presented by high mountain ranges and dense Amazon jungle. These geographic enclaves facilitated the relative isolation, until the 20th century, of indigenous cultures. As a result, both countries have a significant population that retains and expresses a distinct, non-nation-state identity, alternately expressed as *originario*, *indígena*, or *campesino*. An estimated 62.5% of Bolivians are indigenous and the national indigenous affairs office recognizes 37 distinct ethnic groups.⁴ Estimates of Ecuador's indigenous population vary widely, ranging from 6.6 percent (from a 2001 census undertaken by the government's statistical agency, SIISE) to 45 percent (estimated by the country's main indigenous organizations and sympathetic anthropologists).⁵

In both countries declining public support for democracy coincided with the emergence of viable ethnic parties, according to Latinobarometro surveys.⁶ Both countries provide a 10-year history of ethnic party activity and governance, beginning in 1995 in Bolivia and 1996 in Ecuador. Both have an indigenous-peoples'-movement-based political party with a consistent presence at the national level since 1997 and 1996, respectively. In Ecuador, this is the Movimiento Unido Plurinacional Pachakutik (United Plurinational Pachakutik Movement, or Pachakutik), which the Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador (Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador, or CONAIE) formed in 1996 in association with a variety of weaker popular movements. In Bolivia, a branch of an indigenous-peasant movement, the coca growers of Cochabamba, formed the Asamblea para la Soberanía de los Pueblos (Assembly for the Sovereignty of the Peoples, or ASP) in 1995. The portion of the ASP that best survived a 1999 split currently competes as the MAS. Both countries have an additional,

smaller indigenous political party that formed to compete with the first, and which has a more circumscribed regional base. In Ecuador, evangelical indigenous organizations associated with the Federación Ecuatoriana de Indígenas Evangélicos (Ecuadorian Federation of Indigenous Evangelicals, or FEINE) formed the Movimiento Indígena Amauta Jatari (Amauta Jatari Indigenous Movement, or Amauta Jatari) in 1998 to compete with Pachakutik. In Bolivia, indigenous peasant leader Felipe Quispe, then secretary-general of a portion of the Confederación Sindical Única de Trabajadores Campesinos de Bolivia (Unitary Syndical Confederation of Peasant Workers of Bolivia, or CSUTCB), formed the Movimiento Indígena Pachakuti in 2002 to support his presidential aspirations. Both secondary indigenous parties have elected mayors and municipal council members; the MIP elected a handful of national legislators in 2002.

Notwithstanding many demographic, economic, geographic, and political similarities, the institutional context for municipal innovation varies between the two countries. In Bolivia, the Law of Popular Participation (LPP) created 311 municipal governments in 1995 (today 327), the majority in places that previously had not held local elections or received public spending. It created vigilance committees to allow representatives of some 13,000 “Territorial Base Organizations” (now called Community Organizations) to monitor local spending and public works management, and required local mayors and municipal councils to develop annual operating plans using a participatory planning methodology. Although, compared to Ecuador, Bolivian law provides a more rigid, mandatory municipal structure, there is room for the incorporation of traditional authorities and customs in decision-making processes (interviews, Filemon Choque, Antonio Iskandar, July 29, 2005). As José Blanes observes, some mayors have “appropriated the legal framework” of the LPP and initiated creative innovations that allow communities to stretch the scarce resources provided by “co-participation” revenues, and many of these are rooted in the strong socio-territorial identification that communities share (2003: 200). Traditional communities are redefining the LPP’s goals and using it “to strengthen the traditional roles of the communities and their leaders” (202). After protests from indigenous and other civil society groups, a 2004 Bolivian law allowed citizens’ groups (*agrupaciones ciudadanas*, or ACs) and indigenous peoples (*pueblos indígenas*, or PIs) to participate in local elections without registering as political parties, breaking the partisan monopoly on

local political power. In the department of La Paz alone, 60 ACs and PIs participated in the 2004 municipal elections. Parties and groups representing indigenous constituencies are likely to incorporate local ethnic traditions into governance—for example, creating a role for traditional spiritual authorities in local decision making, or having traditional authorities (*mallkus*) serve a dual role as official representatives on vigilance committees (interview, Filemon Choque, July 26, 2005; Blanes 2000).

Municipal decentralization began in Ecuador after the transition to civilian elected rule in 1979 and accelerated in the 1980s and 1990s. Under the 1997 Special Law of Distribution, 15 percent of Ecuadorian state revenues are directed to Ecuador's 219 cantons, compared to 20 percent under Bolivia's 1994 LPP (Sánchez 2004: 83). Ecuador's municipal regime is vague and flexible with respect to the budgetary process. The 2001 Law of Decentralization does not specify mechanisms for promoting citizen participation in decision making or oversight, allowing for greater innovation by local governments, as well as greater variation in experiences. Thus, participatory budgeting and citizen oversight institutions only exist in Ecuador where local authorities have taken the initiative to establish them, whereas (in theory) they exist in all Bolivian municipalities (Radcliffe 2001; Sánchez 2004: 84; Van Cott 2000). Only 35 percent of Ecuadorian municipalities have developed local development plans (Ojeda Segovia 2004: 109).

Focusing on the local level illuminates variations in the quality of democracy within countries, notwithstanding the existence of identical legal and institutional structures. It is here that indigenous parties have the longest history of government experience and there are fewer impediments to institutional innovation. In order to make the project more manageable, I chose to examine the operation of indigenous parties within selected subnational regions in each country: in Bolivia, the departments of La Paz and Cochabamba; in Ecuador, the provinces of Bolívar, Chimborazo, and Imbabura. La Paz and Chimborazo are the only subnational regions in each country where two distinct indigenous-movement-based parties elected mayors in local elections between 1995 and 2005.⁷ These are the regional strongholds of the weaker, more geographically circumscribed indigenous party. Choosing these two regions illuminates variations within and across indigenous parties within a relatively homogenous political space. Both subnational regions also possess high proportions of indigenous population: in Ecuador

Chimborazo has the highest in the country (49.3%) and La Paz has the second highest in Bolivia (77.5%). I included Cochabamba, another majority-indigenous department (74.31%), because it is the bastion of Bolivia's most successful indigenous party, MAS, and the region where it has the longest experience controlling local government. Bolivia is a much larger country than Ecuador and its subnational regions contain many more municipalities (La Paz has 75, Cochabamba has 44). Therefore, I chose *two* additional Ecuadorian provinces in order to increase the number of municipalities in the data set. Bolívar and Imbabura both have relatively large indigenous populations (28.4% and 39.6%, respectively) and Pachakutik has had considerable electoral success in both provinces, electing mayors and congressional representatives. This increases the total number of Ecuadorian municipalities in the data set to 23 (see figure 1).

I begin by demonstrating how indigenous political parties rooted in Andean indigenous cultural traditions are offering a vision of radical democracy that closely mirrors the central principles and institutional innovations of the radical democracy literature, while offering their own distinct interpretations. The remainder of the paper is organized around the conditions specified above that impede or promote indigenous party efforts to improve democratic quality.

Figure 1

Geographic Scope of Research		
COUNTRY	BOLIVIA	ECUADOR
TOTAL POPULATION	8,274,325	12,090,804
TOTAL DEPARTMENTS/PROVINCES (2004)	9	22
TOTAL MUNICIPALITIES (2004)	327	219
SUBNATIONAL REGIONS COMPARED	<p>Department of La Paz total population: 2,350,466 percent indigenous: 77.5 municipalities: 75 Indigenous parties in local government: MAS, MIP</p> <p>Department of Cochabamba total population: 1,455,711 percent indigenous: 74.4 municipalities: 44 Indigenous parties in local government: MAS</p>	<p>Province of Chimborazo total population: 403,185 percent indigenous: 49.3 municipalities: 10, parishes: 61 urban/rural parishes: 16/45 Indigenous parties in local government: MUPP, MIAJ</p> <p>Province of Bolivar total population: 168,874 percent indigenous: 28.4 municipalities: 7, parishes: 29 urban/rural parishes: 10/19 Indigenous parties in local government: MUPP</p> <p>Province of Imbabura total population: 345,781 percent indigenous: 39.6 municipalities: 10, parishes: 49 urban/rural parishes: 13/36 Indigenous parties in local government: MUPP</p>

RADICAL DEMOCRACY

Radical democrats reject the minimalist, procedural definitions of democracy offered by most political scientists. They seek not only to dramatically improve the quality of contestation and participation and the protection of civil liberties, but also to improve the nature of civic life and the lives of citizens in substantive ways. This implies both the greater equalization of power and resources within a society and the uplifting of human beings as autonomous moral actors. Finally, radical democrats are committed to expanding the sphere of democracy beyond the state and to root it more in social life (see, e.g., Cohen and Rogers 1995: 239, 262; Hirst 1994: 12; Warren 2001). Indigenous

political parties claim to share these goals. They are allied with leftist ideologies and movements that promote redistributive economic policies. They reject the sharp distinction between the public sphere of government decision making and administration, and the private sphere of family and voluntary organizations delineated by the Western, liberal model of representative democracy. These spheres traditionally have been fused in indigenous communities, where the same leaders often perform administrative, economic, law enforcement, and spiritual roles, and families are the basic unit of politics. Some indigenous parties even have adopted the jargon of radical democratic political theory. In the capital of Ecuador's Bolívar province, Guaranda, the local Pachakutik affiliate included the following definition of "radical democracy" in its 2000 political platform:

Where the people effectively exercise social control and taking of decisions concerning their history, present and future, guaranteeing thus the real participation of civil society in the decisions, management, and execution of the most important aspects of their own lives. (cited in Arevalo and Chela Amangandi 2001: 21; my translation)

Indigenous movements in South America over the past 25 years have developed a common ideology of intercultural, participatory, transparent government that infuses indigenous parties' experiments in radical democracy. Most communities have legitimate structures of self-government and their own customary methods of justice, dispute resolution, leadership rotation, and collective decision making. According to the indigenous ex-mayor of Guamote, "these forms of participation, apparently new, are nothing more than the recuperation of ancestral forms of democratic practice among indigenous peoples" (*Pachakutik* 1999: 66). Although such statements must be examined critically, owing to the tendency of some indigenous leaders and their advocates to essentialize, romanticize, and reinvent cultural histories for external consumption, indigenous organizations and communities practice traditions rooted in indigenous culture that may facilitate radical democratic experiments.

Scholarship on radical democracy can be divided loosely into work on participatory democracy, associative democracy, and deliberative democracy, although overlap exists among those categories. Participatory democrats seek to expand opportunities for common citizens to take part in a variety of government decision-making processes, particularly at the local level where it is more feasible for individuals

to play an active role.⁸ Thus, they share with Andean indigenous political parties the goal of making existing representative institutions, in which citizens participate mainly by voting, more open to opportunities for collective decision making involving individuals and civil society organizations, particularly those representing disadvantaged and excluded groups. Although political theorists working in the Liberal tradition usually define participation in terms of individuals, it is important to expand the definition because in the Andes indigenous peoples seek collective citizenship rights—alongside liberal individual rights, such as voting and free speech—and consider the autonomous participation of their community organizations to constitute effective participation. Such organizations have a high level of legitimacy and accountability to members and are crucial to the maintenance of ethnic identity.

The insights of associative democrats are important to an analysis of indigenous parties in Latin America because most are the electoral vehicles of social movement organizations or community associations. The indigenous vision of citizenship encompasses the participation of representatives of the indigenous community and higher-tier ethnic and political organizations in all aspects of government decision making, alongside individual participation as voters and through membership in these organizations. Associative democrats emphasize the failure of the state in advanced democracies to satisfy human needs, resolve political conflicts and social problems, and participate in global cooperative activities (Hirst 1994: 9; Warren 2001: 6). To fill this vacuum, civil society is increasingly called upon—or takes upon itself the responsibility—to perform some of these roles. Indeed, in many rural areas of the Andes, and in the teeming migrant-receiving shantytowns that encircle major cities, indigenous community organizations provide law and order and regulate economic and social life. In fact, the public jurisdiction of indigenous customary law has been recognized in all five Andean constitutions. In this context “customary law” (*usos y costumbres* or *derecho consuetudinario*) refers to the common practices used by a particular indigenous community or ethnic group to regulate its internal affairs, sanction proscribed behavior, afford mutual protection and assistance, and maintain a cohesive collective identity. What Latin American constitutions increasingly are recognizing is not a static body of specified indigenous norms but, rather, the public authority of indigenous self-governing

institutions to make and apply such norms. These rights are typically constrained by higher-order constitutional rights and international human rights norms (Van Cott 2006).

Associative democrats argue that civil society associations contribute “social capital,” which fosters trust and solidarity that may extend beyond the associations to society as a whole. High levels of trust and solidarity improve the quality and efficiency of democratic governance (Putnam 1993; Warren 2001: 74). Indigenous communities and organizations have ample stores of social capital because they are organized around strong collective identities forged through mutual suffering and self-defense. Social scientists note that Andean indigenous communities share a strong sense of community identity that is attached to a particular territory, and which is reinforced by local self-governing systems and a tradition of community cooperation to achieve collective goals (Baéz et al. 1999: 50–52). This has generated a stock of “Andean social capital,” they argue, based on norms of “reciprocity, complementarity, and redistribution” (51, my translation).

Associative democrats Joshua Cohen and Joel Rogers argue that, under the conditions that they specify, associations improve democratic quality by making the system of interest representation more diverse and differentiated, allowing the maximum expression of interests that are poorly represented by parties and formal institutions (1995: 29). In addition, in some cases, they serve as instances of “alternative governance,”

that permit society to realize the important benefits of cooperation among member citizens. In providing a form of governance, associations figure more as problem-solvers than simply as representatives of their members to authoritative political decision-makers, pressuring those decision-makers on behalf of member interests. They help to formulate and execute public policies and take on quasi-public functions, which supplement or supplant the state’s more directly regulatory actions. (Cohen and Rogers 1995: 44)

Many indigenous organizations perform this “alternative governance” role. For example, Ecuador’s 25-year old Unión de Organizaciones Campesinos e Indígenas de Cotacachi (Union of Peasant and Indigenous Organizations of Cotacachi, or UNORCAC) functions like a “little municipality” by providing services to its members, maintaining its own technical management team of approximately 20 people, and serving as an operating arm for NGOs and international donors (Ortiz Crespo 2004: 104–6).⁹ The Bolivian and

Ecuadorian governments have formally recognized local indigenous spaces of self-government. In Ecuador, indigenous communities have been organized into *comunas* since the 1937 Ley de Comunas conferred special self-governing rights on these entities. Each *comuna* has a governing *cabildo*, which is elected annually in a public assembly (Baéz et al. 1999: 57). In Bolivia, the 1994 LPP gave legal standing and oversight authority to thousands of indigenous and campesino communities that had previously functioned informally (Van Cott 2000).

Mark Warren cautions, however, that associations are just as likely to promote illiberal values and practices that impair the quality of democracy (2001: 18). Many associations are advocacy groups, which form to promote narrow interests and not to create “alternative venues of governance” where opposing ideas gain equal attention (2001: 27). As “identity-based groups,” indigenous peoples’ movements are likely to “increase in-group solidarity ... by demonizing out-groups” (Warren 2001: 35). Similarly, Szasz notes that social movements often employ methods that weaken democratic institutions by normalizing or legitimizing extra-institutional and sometimes extra-legal, even violent, direct actions (1995: 150). Therefore, we must not idealize indigenous cultures. The democratic potential of indigenous community social capital varies according to local historical conditions, leaving some areas with more horizontal, democratic, equitable relations while others are more marked by the opposite (Baéz et al. 1999: 50–52).

Some community members are less able to participate than others. In particular, women, less-educated members, members of less-dominant or less-numerous indigenous subgroups, and those considered “outsiders” have difficulty speaking in community fora, because they are silenced or lack the self-confidence to speak publicly (Abers 2000: 9). In Ecuador, *cabildos* are completely or predominantly male owing to lower levels of literacy among women, the opposition of husbands, women’s lack of free time after housework and child care, and sexist cultural norms. In the canton of Cotacachi, for example, female adult illiteracy is 27 percent, 10 percent higher than for adult men (Ortiz Crespo 2004: 59). The situation is worse in Bolivia, where female illiteracy rates are higher, particularly in rural areas. For example, in rural provinces of La Paz an estimated 45 percent of women are illiterate. Indigenous women almost never serve in leadership

roles, apart from auxiliary functions associated with domestic life that complement the positions of their husbands. Language is another barrier to equitable participation. If deliberation occurs in Spanish, those less proficient—particularly older and female community members—may be disadvantaged. Moreover, as Simmel observes, groups based on a “feeling of belongingness” are particularly threatened by any manifestation of internal disunity, especially if they consider themselves to be in a state of war against non-group members. Such groups do not tolerate dissent because they cannot afford to weaken the group unity they believe underpins their survival (1955: 93). This explains the tendency of indigenous communities—particularly those in close contact with nonindigenous antagonists, such as the coca growers of Bolivia—to enforce what outsiders consider to be authoritarian policies within social movement organizations and their electoral partners. For example, Andean indigenous parties often expel dissenting members who propose more conciliatory strategies toward adversaries. Expulsion of dissenters maintains unity and avoids giving opponents the perception of weakness (Simmel 1955: 96).

Deliberative democracy shares important norms with associative democracy because group members mainly associate through communication and face-to-face social interaction. But deliberative democracy requires a particular type of communication: reasoned argument among equal individuals who are predisposed toward cooperation, respect for others, and the possibility of being persuaded (Dryzek 2005: 220; Elster 1998: 8; James 2004: 6). Deliberative democrats argue that democratic quality improves when public policy decisions are made collectively and publicly following reasoned arguments, which are made by and to those affected by the decisions. Deliberation increases the availability and facilitates the exchange of information; organizes the collective talents of a large group of people who are capable of correcting the mistakes of others; forces citizens to make reasoned arguments that appeal to others, rather than simply voting for their own interests; legitimizes collective decision making as people feel that their own views were heard and recognize that collective decisions reflect the will of a majority; facilitates implementation, compliance, and monitoring, as citizens feel greater ownership of decisions; and improves the quality of citizens (Elster 1998: 8–11; Fearon 1998: 50).

Virtually all indigenous communities in the Andes have a tradition of deliberative assemblies where leaders are chosen, important decisions are made, and cultural identities and community solidarity are built and maintained (Baéz et al. 1999; Ortiz Crespo 2004: 70; interview, Alberto Yumbay, July 7, 2005). As Segundo Andrango, a Quichua Indian and coordinator of a USAID-funded NGO in Ecuador, observes:

There is a long tradition that the people govern themselves in these territories, these families. There they resolve their conflicts, they make accords and decisions. That is to say, there is a strong political participation and also exercise of democracy and governability, which doesn't happen in an urban-mestizo neighborhood of western culture, where all are individuals. They [urban people] are neighbors [*vecinos*]¹⁰ but they are not citizens. This is the strength of [indigenous parties] Pachakutik and Amauta Jatari, this structure from below. (Interview, my translation, July 8, 2005)

Where a habit of public deliberation already is part of the local culture, deliberative democracy proposals are more likely to prosper (Fearon 1998: 58). Indigenous communities are particularly auspicious spaces because indigenous cultures promote consensus seeking as a means to strengthen community identity and solidarity against the threat of external oppression and forcible cultural change. Decisions typically are made in assemblies in which all actors (in many cases these are mainly male) have an opportunity to express their positions. Deliberations go on at length until the majority opinion becomes clear. In Cotacachi's annual budget-planning assemblies, for example, decisions are more often taken by consensus than by vote (Ortiz Crespo 2004: 158). According to assembly president Patricia Espinosa,

decisions are made in the Assembly through the realization of diagnostics among the actors, adopting proposals and negotiated decisions and not through decisions of the majority or minority. This form of deliberating and resolving has an advantage: in a society that has a history of interethnic conflicts one doesn't seek to deepen differences but rather to overcome them. Thus in the Assembly importance is given to listening to diverse opinions and tolerating discrepancies, and to a practice of dialogue and reconciliation. (Ortiz Crespo 2004: 160; my translation)

Although losers may grumble, there is strong pressure to go along with assembly decisions (interview, Gonzalo Guzman, June 22, 2005). In addition to social disapproval, dissenters may face material sanctions for failing to support community projects. This system of social control ensures that decisions are supported by the community and, thus,

enjoy greater legitimacy, which facilitates more effective implementation and monitoring of projects. The legitimacy of government decisions, moreover, is strengthened by their being embedded in cultural institutions. As the director of the Association of Municipalities of the Department of La Paz explains,

Some times there are problems of conflicts among authorities, but they have achieved the incorporation of ancestral cultures into public administration to some extent in the moments of municipal planning, their traditional authorities participate in the convocation of the people, they take part in deciding what projects to prioritize, the management of community resources. If someone commits an error they are punished using *usos y costumbres* [customary practices], so this permits that the culture is immersed in the government. This form of administration is empowering to both in a complementary way. (Interview, Filemon Choque, July 26, 2005).

Nevertheless, the literature on deliberative democracy does not offer much hope for the type of experiments in deliberative democracy that indigenous parties currently are undertaking because the necessary conditions for deliberative democracy usually are not available in ethnically divided, economically unequal societies, where rival groups may not be open to persuasion or willing to compromise identity- or resource-based demands (Dryzek 2005: 219–20). Members of disadvantaged groups seek “‘cathartic’ communication that unifies the group and demands respect from others” (220). Although these challenges exist, subordinate cultures that have developed a habit of deliberation and consensus seeking may draw on this cultural capital to offset them. They also have the potential to infuse the larger society with these values when their institutional innovations incorporate nonindigenous citizens and groups and gain national and international recognition for their greater efficiency and legitimacy, as has occurred in Ecuador.¹¹

In addition, indigenous cultures in the Andes can use social and cultural capital to compensate for the scarce economic resources available to their local governments. Indigenous communities throughout Latin America have a tradition of contributing unpaid labor for community projects and public works. In the Andes this practice is called the *minga* (Baéz et al. 1999: 52; Ortiz Crespo 2004: 62, 96; interview, Abraham Borda, July 26, 2005). Such labor is generally supplied without resistance provided that the leaders convoking the *minga* are considered legitimate and all members participate,

including community leaders. With respect to Ecuador, Baéz et al. observe that approximately 80–90 percent of community members participate in the execution of public works projects, although the percentage tends to fall significantly with regard to administration and maintenance (1999: 52). Municipal resources are scarce throughout the rural Andes and municipal governments have little money to invest in community projects. In indigenous communities, authorities can induce community members to provide free labor for these projects, which stretches the money further by reducing labor costs.¹²

In short, we can discern an ideal-typical model of indigenous-party-directed radical democracy that encompasses an emphasis on direct participation (as opposed to representation); the incorporation of voluntary associations into the spheres of government decision making, oversight, and implementation; the provision of spaces for public deliberation; and a call for economic redistribution. These are key themes in the contemporary theoretical literature on radical democracy. But the indigenous vision is distinct in that it puts greater emphasis on collective—as opposed to individual—participation that is rooted in shared cultural identity, and on promoting cross-cultural communication and cooperation in divided, highly unequal societies, where many radical democrats don't believe democratic innovation is feasible. In contrast to Avritzer's idea of "participatory publics," which emphasizes the face-to-face interactions among individuals and keeping the sphere of public discussion independent from the state (2002: 39), indigenous parties emphasize collective representation and participation, and prefer to insert civil society organizations and voluntary associations directly into public policy-making spheres. Nevertheless, they share his emphasis on constructing stronger public spaces for deliberation, giving social movements privileged access to this space, and fusing Western institutional traditions with nonwestern cultural specificities (40–44, 56).

CONDITIONS THAT PROMOTE THE SUCCESS OF INDIGENOUS PARTIES' RADICAL DEMOCRACY EXPERIMENTS

In this section I articulate my argument with respect to the role of five conditions that influence the relative success of indigenous parties in establishing radically democratic innovations. Because the space constraints of a working paper preclude a systematic analysis of the data, I provide anecdotal evidence to illustrate my argument.

The Degree of Organizational Unity in the Local Party Apparatus

Electoral politics typically becomes divisive when social movement organizations enter the electoral arena and struggles emerge over access to candidacies and salaried positions. Leaders of local indigenous organizations affiliated with indigenous parties often expect to select the party's candidates and place their leaders in appointed government positions. Sometimes they butt heads with national or subnational leaders who prefer other candidates. In addition, splits occur within the local party organization when competing factions and personalities struggle over candidacies, often requiring national leaders to mediate. These internal struggles generate disunity, consume resources, and turn off voters. In the best of cases, base-level members will rise up and obligate their leaders to make peace (interviews, Segundo Andrango, July 8, 2005; Rafael Archondo, August 1, 2005).

Competition between indigenous parties also can sabotage participatory processes by dividing the indigenous population and emphasizing competition over cooperation. For example, in the Chimborazo municipality of Guamote, which is 93 percent indigenous, Pachakutik mayor Mariano Curicama established an Indigenous and Popular Parliament in 1997. The parliament is composed of 114 annually elected *cabildo* presidents. It works with a local development committee, which provides technical assistance and includes the participation of the 12 presidents of Guamote's major social organizations. The parliament enjoyed considerable success until Curicama retired and Pachakutik mayor José Delgado took his place in 2000. Subsequently, the evangelical indigenous party Amauta Jatari elected its leader, Juan de Dios Roman, head of the parliament. Competition between Pachakutik and Amauta Jatari over control of the

municipality sunk the participatory project. The municipality refused to share information with the parliament, preventing it from carrying out its monitoring function. The situation continued after the 2004 elections, in which Dios Roman was elected mayor and Delgado head of the parliament (interview, Lucia Duran, June 24, 2005). Since that time the mayor and municipal council have monopolized decision making, with the exception of small amounts of money distributed to each parish (*parroquia*). The politicization of the indigenous movement and the disunity that party competition fostered in Guamote led indigenous social movement organizations that had once supported Pachakutik to distance themselves from the party (interviews, Emilio Guzniay, June 29, 2005; Jorge Leon, June 16, 2005; Yangol 2003).

The Ability of Indigenous Parties and Their Parent Social Movement Organizations to Develop Distinct Roles and Maintain Harmonious Relations

The four parties studied exhibit distinct relationships with their sponsoring indigenous social movement organizations, and these have changed as party organizations have matured. In Bolivia, relations between the coca growers' federations and the MAS originally were symbiotic. When MAS first formed, there was little difference between the movement and the party—the latter was merely the political instrument of the former. In the party's base in the coca-growing region of the Chapare of Cochabamba, and in rural areas of Oruro and Potosi where the campesino *sindicato* (union) is the main community organization, there is little differentiation between the social organization and the MAS—the union leaders simply perform additional political functions. Even at the national level, when MAS and coca federation leaders meet in assemblies it is difficult to distinguish party from movement representatives. The only clear distinction between the MAS and the campesino-indigenous movement occurs in urban areas and in the MAS congressional delegation. Both spaces include leaders of more diverse political and social sectors.

However, tensions have emerged between local social movement and national party leaders in Bolivia since the 2002 national elections when, in response to its unexpected second-place showing, the MAS began to construct a more formal party-style apparatus and increasingly to act according to the logic of a political party. Whereas in

1995 and 1999 it was the norm for *centrals*—the basic units of the coca growers’ movement—to choose their own local candidates, in 2004 higher-tier MAS leaders tried to impose them. Sometimes they succeeded, sometimes not. This was particularly the case where the MAS was expanding outside of its base to urban and more heterogeneous areas, where they face more competition and must form alliances with diverse popular and middle-class movements. In these cases it has been common since 2002 for national leaders to intervene to settle disputes, often at the expense of local peasant organizations. The shift to more partisan behavior has caused many militants to feel that the MAS has betrayed the original goals of the coca growers’ movement—to defend their territory and their right to grow coca leaf (interviews, Rafael Archondo, August 1, 2005; Abraham Borda, July 26, 2005; Fernando Mayorga, August 8, 2005; Pablo Regalsky, August 8, 2005).

A different set of problems occurs when indigenous parties gain office and fail to respond as expected to the demands of their social-movement partners and the latter’s base constituency. At the local level, some Pachakutik mayors have provoked the ire of local indigenous movement sponsors by spending money in urban, nonindigenous neighborhoods, rewarding nonindigenous groups in the Pachakutik electoral coalition with government jobs and development projects, and failing to obey the commands of local indigenous movement leaders (see the example of Guaranda, below). Conversely, if the party prioritizes indigenous interests, nonindigenous groups attack it for failing to represent the entire population. Baiocchi discovered the same tensions between the PT and its component social movements as the latter struggled for voice and influence within the party. Meanwhile, opponents of the PT in São Paulo criticized the party for privileging its constituent movements over the interests of the public at large. He articulates the problem this way:

Without a broad-based participatory system that drew participants from outside organized movement sectors, the municipal government was open to the charge of “left patronage.” And without a clear system of rules for negotiating competing interests, the administration in time also came under attack from segments of the Party that accused the administration of “class treason” for attending to the interests of business in certain decisions. (Baiocchi 2003: 66)

Movement-party conflicts have dampened enthusiasm for electoral politics in both Ecuador and Bolivia. As indigenous movement leaders often point out, the organizations formed Pachakutik and the MAS to further the agenda of the indigenous movement, not the other way around (interview, Gilberto Talahua, Quito, June 23, 2005; CSUTCB 1996: 68–69).

Even where open conflict does not emerge, in both countries confusion exists over the distinct roles that the parties and movements should play. In Ecuador in particular, leaders of CONAIE and Pachakutik bicker publicly over the appropriate role of the other and struggle to monopolize political representation of the indigenous. A large part of the problem is that the same individuals cycle through the movement, the political party apparatus, and into the government in elected or appointed positions. This has the effect of blurring the boundaries between state and society, and between party and movement. Rebecca Abers (2000: 17) observed the same problem in her study of the PT in Brazil.

The Party's Ability to Attract and Cultivate Charismatic Mayoral Candidates Who Can Communicate Effectively across Ethnic Boundaries

The quality of mayoral leadership is among the most important determinants of indigenous party success. Mayors of indigenous parties who are able to implement and gain public support for innovative models of government have two things in common: (1) substantial personal charisma; and (2) the capacity and willingness to communicate and negotiate effectively across ethnic divides. Those willing and able to reach out across ethnic and urban/rural divides have tended to be indigenous leaders with professional training who are comfortable in urban settings. That is, they are comfortable living in two worlds: that of the indigenous community, movement, and organization, as well as that of the urban, mestizo professional.

Pachakutik vice-mayor Washington Bazante describes the popular deceased indigenous mayor of Guaranda, Alberto Yumbay, emphasizing these qualities:

Mayor Yumbay was more active, more *aglutinador* (linking together) of the masses, more enterprising, he had another *mística* (mystical quality) in the work. ... And he worked with the indigenous and mestizo sectors through *mingas* [voluntary collective labor], and he was always present in these works, he was with the government apparatus, he was a very charismatic man. He was a man

who had innate qualities of knowing how to approach the community, the collective. (interview, Washington Bazante, July 4, 2005)

Another example is Cotacachi indigenous mayor Auki Tituaña, an economist, who lived in the urban part of the canton prior to entering politics. He had cultivated good relations with NGOs and government leaders prior to his election while working in various capacities with the national indigenous organization CONAIE. Thus, he has strong ties both to the indigenous movement and to key domestic and international actors, who have provided technical assistance and substantial economic aid (Guerrero 1999: 120). Ortiz Crespo argues that Tituaña's talents enabled him to fill the vacuum of political leadership in the canton:

Probably this tension between a social fabric that is strong but lacking agency and a clear political agenda left a vacuum that is filled by the presence of Mayor Auki Tituaña, which unites in a quite original manner various characteristics of his leadership: his professional formation and management capacity, his discourse of indigenous identity, and his great capacity to negotiate with mestizo sectors within and outside the canton. (Crespo 2004: 193; my translation)

In short, successful mayors tend to personify the new indigenous governance model and its values of transparency, interculturality, active participation, and society-state partnerships. A mayor who can charm mestizos and international donors, while infusing local government with the legitimacy of indigenous traditional authority is the ideal.

As Judith Tandler ably argues, leadership is a difficult variable to operationalize and, on its own, an unsatisfying explanation for effective municipal governments (2004: 17–18). If charismatic leadership is required for success, and its availability is largely owing to luck, then such experiences do not offer transferable models, or even hope, for developments elsewhere. For that reason, although students of municipal reform commonly emphasize the importance of good leadership and attribute failure to its absence, she chose to pay it little attention in her study of Ceará, Brazil. Emphasizing leadership, she argues, “does not add up to much of a guide for action.” Moreover, some capable, charismatic leaders fail to launch effective programs and some programs survive the loss of a charismatic leader (Tandler 1997: 18). Nevertheless, because charismatic, cross-cultural leadership is a common feature of successful participatory, intercultural innovation in the countries studied, I elected to keep it in the mix. Given the scarcity of

professionally educated indigenous leaders who are able to credibly present an indigenous identity, appropriate leadership is an important explanation for successful municipal reform in the Andes.

The Party's Capacity to Reelect Effective Mayors

In the absence of strong, established institutions, reelection enables mayors to nurture economic development and public works projects to fruition and, thus, instill public support for participatory processes. Reelection also provides more time to institutionalize innovations, giving citizens more time to get involved and to feel a sense of ownership, and making it more difficult for subsequent administrations to dismantle them (Ortiz Crespo 2004: 178). It also facilitates the institution-building efforts of NGOs. They don't have to wait for 10 months or more for a new government to take office and appoint personnel, and it reduces the need for training programs that consume time and money.

The most notable example of a long-serving, successful indigenous mayor in South America is Auki Tituaña, the Pachakutik mayor of Cotacachi, a small canton in the Ecuadorian province of Imbabura. Tituaña was elected with 24.11 percent of the vote in 1996, reelected with 60.70 percent in 2000, and reelected again in 2004 with 55.49% (Anrango 2004: 57; Pallares 2002: 104–6; www.tse.gov.ec). These results demonstrate significant mestizo support, since indigenous people make up only 37% of the population and mestizos 62% (Ortiz Crespo 2004: 59). In contrast to prior public officials in Cotacachi, Tituaña reached out to diverse social groups and got them to cooperate with each other (Baéz et al. 1999: 64; Ortiz Crespo 2004: 170). One month after taking office, with NGO and international support—more than 30 donor organizations worked in the canton between 1996 and 2002 (Ortiz Crespo 2004: 77)—Tituaña initiated a series of annual cantonal assemblies, which now are institutionalized in municipal law. He established a Committee of Cantonal Management to represent civil society organizations, with 10 *mesas* (sectoral committees) under its direction, addressing such issues as environment and health. The Cantonal Assembly operates year round through permanent links between citizens groups and municipal officials. Tituaña's longevity enabled him to establish close ties to donors, to demonstrate substantive results, to

institutionalize in municipal law new participatory mechanisms, and to instill in the population new habits of participation.

Leadership continuity is an acute problem in Bolivia. Under the indirect electoral system governing local elections, municipal councilors elect the mayor. Because Bolivia's party system is extremely fragmented, municipal councils usually lack a party with an absolute majority and ruling coalitions are highly volatile. However, MAS municipalities in the Chapare have enjoyed political stability because the party has had hegemonic control in the tropics since 1995 and several mayors have been re-elected. Chapare municipalities lack the political conflicts and frequent recalls and replacements of mayors that in other parts of Bolivia have delayed or prevented the execution of public works projects and the institutionalization of municipal structures established by the LPP (interviews, Rafael Archondo, August 1, 2005; Ivan Arias, August 1, 2005).

In contrast, even wildly successful experiments can collapse if they are not allowed to take root. In Guaranda, indigenous leader Arturo Yumbay was elected mayor in 2000 representing Pachakutik. Yumbay instituted a Plan of Participatory Development by organizing urban and rural neighborhood organizations, unions, clubs, youths, and indigenous community organizations. With modest financial support from NGOs and foreign governments, Yumbay fostered participation by personally visiting all of the neighborhoods and convincing them to provide volunteer labor to make scarce resources stretch further (interview, Gonzalo Chela Morocho, June 21, 2005; Arevalo and Chela Amangandi 2001). After Yumbay died in a 2002 car accident, the incoming government ended many of his initiatives. The change in government was accompanied by a fierce struggle between supporters of the deceased mayor's brother Alberto, who had the backing of the local Pachakutik organization and its indigenous movement sponsor, Federación Campesino de Bolívar-Runari (Bolívar-Runari Campesino Federation), and Pachakutik vice-mayor Alberto Coles, who legally assumed the mayor's office upon the death of Yumbay over the objection of Pachakutik leaders. The local Pachakutik affiliate expelled Coles from the party but he remained in office and won re-election in 2004 with support from the leftist Izquierda Democrática (Democratic Left). According to Guaranda's Pachakutik contingent, Coles reversed spending priorities to favor urban areas, in contrast to his predecessor's greater balance between rural and urban needs.

According to Coles, he is trying to continue the participatory and transparency initiatives of his predecessor, but has had difficulty working with urban mestizos, who he says lack interest in collective labor, although under Yumbay, even urban professionals and mestizos participated in *mingas* with the mayor—collecting garbage during the night with community brigades, for example (interviews, Alberto Coles, July 5, 2005; Wilfredo Macas, July 5, 2005; Alberto Yumbay, July 7, 2005; *El Comercio* 2003).

Indigenous Parties Must Attract External Resources

As Giancarlo Baiocchi discovered in Porto Alegre, people will not invest hours of their time making reasoned arguments about public policy without a substantive payoff in a relatively short time (2001: 65). Such debate is particularly unlikely among impoverished populations in developing countries, who work long hours at arduous tasks and may have to travel some distance to attend a community meeting. Notwithstanding a strong culture of participatory, collective decision making, indigenous community members won't participate in public policy making if they don't see concrete results in the short term; without them, participation ceases (interview, Paula de la Puente, June 24, 2005). Porto Alegre had ample tax receipts to motivate citizen participation when the PT initiated its experiment in 1989 and early substantive rewards rapidly increased interest in participation (Baiocchi 2001: 65). In Bolivia and Ecuador, however, governments don't have sufficient funds to design and support the creation of innovative municipal institutions and they lack the money to fund the development projects that attract sustained participation by community members. Thus, international donors working through NGOs are the main source of financing for indigenous parties' innovative models.¹³ For example, Cotacachi, Ecuador, receives 46 percent of its \$2.1 million average annual budget from external donors (Ortiz Crespo 2004: 183–4). International NGOs were working on participatory technologies long before indigenous parties gained office in Bolivia and Ecuador. In the mid-1990s, development NGOs were looking for spaces and actors to experiment with and took advantage of the opportunity to work with indigenous mayors, who shared their interest in promoting more participatory, transparent government with a strong economic development focus. European and North American NGOs also value the incorporation of intercultural practices into local democracy and

development as a means to confer greater legitimacy and sustainability (interviews, Fernando Garcia, June 17, 2005; Jorge Leon, June 16, 2005; Radcliffe 2001: 7–8). The availability of NGO technical support and funding influences the decisions of indigenous municipal leaders to adopt innovative institutional models. Several Ecuadorian mayors enlisted NGOs with whom they already had good working relationships to initiate their vision of participatory government (Larrea and Larrea 1999: 139).

The involvement of external donors carries risks. Their interests are not necessarily the same as the citizens they purport to serve. And they will eventually move on, leaving impoverished rural governments with the challenge of sustaining innovative institutions that are less able to provide the economic benefits that motivate citizen participation and deliberation. In fact, the European Union was preparing to pull out of Ecuador in 2005 because the country's average annual income had exceeded the required level for development assistance (confidential interview, July 8, 2005).

CONCLUSION

Preliminary findings from this project confirm that political philosophers are correct: improving democratic quality in ethnically divided, unequal, impoverished countries is difficult. However, in the Andes indigenous political parties are mobilizing cultural and social capital to overcome some of these difficulties. These parties benefit from organic relations with multitiered networks of mature, deeply rooted indigenous movements that are increasingly connected to broader networks of popular and middle-class social movements. They offer a coherent alternative to elite-dominated democratic institutions that have failed to improve citizens' lives in meaningful ways. They harness the capital of Andean indigenous cultures, which are more predisposed toward deliberation, consensus seeking, and the effective use of social control than are urban/mestizo cultures. The question remains whether they will be able to infuse these political values into the larger political culture. The diffusion of innovative democratic institutions will require a strategy that transcends the ambit of any one party or set of parties.

I have argued that under certain conditions even "least-likely cases" for the establishment of radical democratic models can produce positive changes in relations

among hostile ethnic groups, shift resources toward underserved populations, and create spaces for citizens and civil society groups to deliberate public spending priorities. Such models are most likely to work when indigenous parties and their social movement sponsors are able to maintain internal unity and solidarity and to develop distinct, complementary roles; when indigenous parties can attract charismatic, talented mayors who are willing and able to work across ethnic lines and to serve several consecutive terms in office; and when parties are able to attract resources and technical support from external donors. Owing to space constraints, I have not been able to examine here a number of other important factors. In future work I will pay more attention to variations between the two countries in the municipal legal frameworks that constrain indigenous parties' choices, such as requirements that a certain portion of municipal revenues be spent on particular sectors (i.e., health or education) and the relative difficulty of reducing the size of the municipal staff, whose salaries tend to consume municipal budgets. Attention also will be paid to the local and national political contexts, particularly relations among parties. How does the configuration of political parties on local municipal councils affect the success of participatory, intercultural institutional innovations? Can national politicians from opposing parties sabotage local experiments by cutting off access to resources?

Social scientists and radical democrats should pay greater attention to the role of political parties as the architects and engines of innovative democracy-improving institutions. They are in a unique position to serve as transmission belts of ideas and methods between and within geographic levels of government, once they have earned public support and have established effective means of communication and coordination. In order to harness this potential, proposals to improve the region's low democratic quality must not seek to circumvent the region's ailing parties but, rather, to make them a central focus of reform and innovation.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Movimiento al Socialismo (2004: 19–22), my translation.
- ² For example, geographer Sarah Radcliffe (2001: 6) argues that the emergence of innovative municipal institutions in Ecuador is a result of “the addition of development agendas to local governments’ remit; transnational connections; multiculturalism; and alliances between previously autonomous sectors.” Political scientist John Cameron focuses on: “[t]he balance of power among different classes;” “[t]he impact of international and global political and economic forces on the balance of class power and state-society relations;” “[t]he degree of state autonomy from class forces;” “[t]he institutional design of the state;” and “[t]he political strategies of state officials” (Cameron n.d.: 72–73).
- ³ Fung and Wright (2003b) are notable exceptions; two of their cases are developing countries.
- ⁴ Most Bolivian Indians are Aymara (25%) or Quechua (31%) and are settled in the western highlands. The remaining 286,726 Indians live mainly in the eastern lowland departments (INE, 2001).
- ⁵ The Quichua are by far the largest language group with an estimated 1.3 million in the highland region. Many Quichua have migrated to the lowlands, where they also are the most numerous group (approximately 90,000 members). There are 17 distinct sub-groupings or “pueblos” within the Quichua group, according to the government indigenous affairs office. In the Amazon region, apart from the Quichua, there are 12 indigenous “nationalities” (Pallares 2002: 6).
- ⁶ In Bolivia, 64 percent of respondents agreed with the statement, “Democracy is preferable to any other kind of government” in 1996, but only 50 percent agreed in 2003. In Ecuador, affirmative responses to the same question fell from 52 percent to 46 percent during the same time period (Mainwaring and Pérez-Liñán (2005: 50).
- ⁷ Two minor indigenous parties—Eje Pachakuti and the Tupaj Katari Revolutionary Movement of Liberation, formed in 1992 and 1985, respectively—were in decline during the period studied and did not participate in the 2004 municipal elections. See Van Cott (2005).
- ⁸ For example, Archon Fung and Erik Olin Wright advocate “empowered participatory governance” (EPG), which refers to a variety of experiments that “rely on the commitment and capacities of ordinary people to make sensible decisions through reasoned deliberations and [...] attempt to tie action to discussion” (2003b: 5).
- ⁹ In 2002 it managed a budget of approximately \$500,000 (Ortiz Crespo 2004: 102).
- ¹⁰ As an anonymous reader of this article correctly points out, the term *vecino* is commonly translated as “neighbor,” but has a distinctly urban-mestizo connotation in this context.
- ¹¹ Cotacachi mayor Auki Tituaña won the Dubai-Habitat prize from the United Nations, which recognizes mayors for transparency in government (Ortiz Crespo 2004: 124).
- ¹² Although voluntary collective labor in South America typically is associated with indigenous cultures and it can be difficult to induce mestizo citizens to participate in such efforts, in urban neighborhoods in Porto Alegre the Workers’ Party was able to organize *mutiroes*—voluntary labor performed on weekends—in the early years of the

participatory budgeting experience (Bruce 2004: 42).

¹³ In Ecuador, for example, the Spanish government funds the government's Alternative Municipal Government program. The Belgian, Cuban, Danish, Dutch, German, Japanese, Norwegian, Swiss, and US governments, as well as the European Union, the multilateral Indigenous Peoples Fund, the United Nations Development Program, the Corporación Andina de Fomento, the World Bank, and the Inter-American Development Bank, are major funders of municipal development projects in Bolivia and Ecuador, with foreign-based private foundations, such as CARE, Heifer Foundation, and the Esquel Foundation, providing smaller donations.

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