

Local Democracy in Rural Latin America: Lessons from Ecuador

**John Cameron, PhD candidate
Department of Political Science
York University
Toronto, Ontario, Canada**

cameronj@yorku.ca

This paper is a work in progress. The author invites any comments and feedback.

Prepared for delivery at the 2001 meeting of the Latin American Studies Association,
Washington, D.C., September 6-8, 2001

Local Democracy in Rural Latin America: Lessons from Ecuador¹

Advocates of municipal decentralization argue that transferring decision-making power to levels of government that are 'closer to the people' can strengthen administrative efficiency, democracy and opportunities for local development. However, in countries such as Ecuador, there is considerable tension between the proposed benefits of decentralization and a socio-political context characterized by highly unequal socio-economic power relations,² clientelism, corruption,³ populism, instability⁴, processes of neoliberal economic restructuring, and economic crisis.⁵

¹ The field research for this paper was conducted between March and December 1999 with a Social Sciences and Humanities Council of Canada Doctoral Fellowship. The author also wishes to thank: Jean Daudelin, Jonas Frank, David Myhre, Liisa North, and Kathleen O'Neill for providing comments on earlier versions of this paper, FLACSO - Ecuador, Terranueva (Quito) and CEBEM (La Paz, Bolivia) for providing public fora to present and discuss earlier drafts, and FLACSO - Ecuador for providing an institutional base for the field research. All translations from Spanish are by the author. A previous version of this paper was presented at the Canadian Association of Political Science (CPSA) meetings at the Congress of Social Sciences and Humanities, Québec City, May 27-29, 2001.

² Osvaldo Hurtado, *Political Power in Ecuador*. trans., Nick Mills (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1980); David Schodt, *Ecuador: An Andean Enigma* (Boulder: Westview, 1987).

³ Transparency International ranked Ecuador as the most corrupt country in Latin America and the 15th most corrupt country in the world in 2000.

⁴ For example, Ecuador has had 5 presidents since 1996: Sixto Durán Ballén (1992-96), Abdalá Bucaram (1996-97), Fabián Alarcón (1997-98), Jamil Mahaud (1998-2000) and Alvaro Noboa (2000 -).

⁵ 'Ecuador on the Brink?' *The Economist* (January 15, 2000), 33-34; Liisa North, 'Austerity and Disorder in the Andes?' *NACLA Report on the Americas* 33, 1 (1999), 6-9.

However, in spite of this apparently unpropitious political context, local level peasant and indigenous organizations in Ecuador are displaying a growing interest in municipal politics as a means of asserting greater control over rural infrastructure and processes of local development.⁶ Moreover, in an important shift away from prevailing municipal practices, a small but increasing number of rural municipalities have recently attempted, with greater or lesser degrees of success, to introduce processes of participatory decision-making into their administrations and to promote processes of inclusive local economic development. Indeed, the vast majority of those municipal governments in Ecuador that have promoted citizen participation and administrative innovation are located in rural areas.

The key question addressed in this paper concerns the structural and conjunctural conditions which have opened political opportunities for indigenous and peasant organizations to transform rural municipal governments and make them more democratic as well more effective agents of local development. Examining three cases of rural local government in the highland Ecuadorian municipalities of Guamate, Cotacachi, and Bolivar, this paper finds that participatory municipal governments with strong regulatory capacities have emerged only where four highly exceptional factors have been present: 1) an equitable distribution of agricultural land, 2) strong local peasant and / or indigenous federations, 3) high levels of technical and financial support from non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and 4) talented political leadership with strong ties to local popular organizations. In addition to these four exceptional factors, a fifth ingredient, all too common in Ecuador, appears necessary for the development of participatory municipal governance: 5) economic marginality.

The paper begins in Section One by proposing a working methodology for studying municipal governments in rural Latin America. Section Two then examines the presence of these five conditions in the three specific municipalities while Section Three analyses the five conditions from a broader comparative perspective. The paper concludes by proposing policy alternatives that might improve opportunities for local-level democratization and development in other rural municipalities in Latin America.

⁶ Tanya Korovkin, "Indigenous Peasant Struggles and the Capitalist Modernization of Agriculture: Chimborazo, 1964-1991" *Latin American Perspectives* 24, 3 (1997), 25-49. In 1996 municipal elections, indigenous and peasant leaders were elected as mayors in 10 municipalities. In May 2000, indigenous and peasant representatives were elected as mayors in 26 out of 215 municipalities and as Provincial Prefects in 5 of 21 Provinces.

I TOWARDS A METHODOLOGY FOR UNDERSTANDING CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN RURAL MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS

As the decentralization of service delivery and fiscal power becomes increasingly common throughout Latin America, local governments are beginning to emerge from years of neglect in studies of both democratization and of economic development.⁷ Thus far, the analysis of municipal politics in Latin America has overwhelmingly focused on large urban centres to the almost complete exclusion of rural municipalities, despite the concentration of poverty in rural areas,⁸ and the potentially important role of rural municipal governments in providing rural infrastructure and promoting rural democracy.⁹ Studies examining efforts by local governments in Latin America to promote processes of participation and local development have also tended to emphasize the institutional design of participatory mechanisms and the particular political and administrative strategies pursued by municipal authorities as the key variables explaining success in promoting citizen involvement in local government.¹⁰ The World Bank in its 1999 / 2000 *World Development Report* similarly argues that the success of decentralization and of efforts to make local governments accountable to their constituents depend on matters of *institutional design*.¹¹

While the particular form of municipal institutions is clearly an important causal force shaping participatory processes (and the lack thereof), the development of those institutions can only be fully understood in the context of the economic, political, and social structures within which they develop and operate. An understanding of the political opportunities for making rural municipal governments more democratic therefore also demands an analysis of broader structural

⁷ See for example: Wayne Cornelius, Todd Eisenstadt and Jane Hindley, eds., *Subnational Politics and Democratization in Mexico* (San Diego: Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, University of California, San Diego, 1999); Henry Dietz and Gil Shidlo, *Urban Elections in Democratic Latin America* (Wilmington, Delaware: Scholarly Resources, 1998); Jonathan Fox, "Latin America's Emerging Local Politics?" *Journal of Democracy* 5, 2 (1994), 105-116; R. Nickson, *Local Government in Latin America* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1995); Charles Reilly, ed., *New Paths to Democratic Development in Latin America: The Rise of NGO-Municipal Collaboration* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1995); Judith Tendler, *Good Government in the Tropics* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997).

⁸ In Ecuador, according to the World Bank, the share of the rural poor in national poverty is 59 percent, although the rural population is only 39 percent of the national total. The incidence of rural poverty in Ecuador is estimated at 67 percent; World Bank, *Ecuador Poverty Report* (Washington: World Bank, 1995), 164; World Bank, *World Development Report 1999 / 2000* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 232.

⁹ The rural sector has also been widely overlooked in recent studies of democratization in Latin America, see: Jonathan Fox, "Editor's Introduction?" *Journal of Development Studies* (Special Issue on the Challenge of Rural Democratization: Perspectives from Latin America and the Philippines) 26, 4 (1990), 1-18; Evelyne Huber, "Introduction?" in Evelyne Huber and Frank Safford, eds., *Agrarian Structure and Political Power: Landlord and Peasant in the Making of Latin America* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1995)

¹⁰ See for example: Rebecca Abers, *Inventing Local Democracy: Grassroots Politics in Brazil* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2000); Judith Tendler, *Good Government in the Tropics*; Peter Winn and Lilia Ferro-Clerico, "Can a Leftist Government Make a Difference? The Frente Amplio Administration of Montevideo, 1990-1994" in Douglas Chalmers, et al., eds., *The Politics of Inequality in Latin America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

¹¹ World Bank, *World Development Report 1999 / 2000*, 107, 121.

conditions, such as patterns of asset and power distribution, that might condition efforts by local-level peasant and indigenous federations to expand their influence in municipal politics.

This paper proposes an approach to the study of rural municipal politics based on an analysis of local level socio-economic power relations. The core of this approach is a modified application to the local or micro-regional sphere of Barrington Moore's comparative historical method for explaining the emergence of democratic and authoritarian regime types through an analysis of agrarian landholding patterns and class relations.¹² A thorough explanation of Moore's approach is not possible within the constraints of this paper. However, it is worth quoting Huber to highlight the central analytic connection which Moore establishes between the presence of large landowners dependent on a large supply of cheap labour for authoritarian outcomes, as opposed to *the democratizing impact of the presence of smallholding patterns*.¹³

Moore's model has been criticized for inadequately conceptualizing the potential autonomy of the state and the impact of international politics and economics on the emergence of different regime types,¹⁴ for paying insufficient attention to the roles of subordinate classes and the working class in particular in shaping political institutions,¹⁵ and for failing to recognize that there may be other paths to democracy than "bourgeois revolution".¹⁶ Building critically on Moore's model, Rueschemeyer, Stephens and Stephens as well as other authors have proposed what might be best described as a "relative class power" approach to democratization.¹⁷

This approach seeks to explain the political trajectories of states by placing emphasis on: the distribution of productive assets and the corresponding balance of economic and political power between different classes and class coalitions; the impact of international and transnational power relations on the local balance of class power; the institutional structure and relative autonomy of the state; the centrality of political organization to the power of subordinate classes; the importance of divisions within elite groups for the creation of effective democratic institutions;

¹² Barrington Moore Jr., *The Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Modern World* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966).

¹³ Evelyn Huber, "Introduction", 17.

¹⁴ Theda Skocpol, "A Critical Review of Barrington Moore's Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy", *Politics and Society* 4, 1 (1973), 1-34.

¹⁵ Dietrich Rueschemeyer, Evelyn Huber Stephens and John D. Stephens, *Capitalist Development and Democracy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); Goran Therborn, "The Rule of Capital and the Rise of Democracy", *New Left Review* 103 (1977), 3-41.

¹⁶ Huber, "Introduction", 17. Timothy Tilton, "The Social Origins of Liberal Democracy: The Swedish Case", *American Political Science Review* LXVII, 2 (1974), 569. Tilton argues that in the case of Sweden, the presence of a powerful popular movement and radical reform substituted for the "bourgeois revolution" which Moore saw as necessary for the creation of parliamentary democracy.

¹⁷ Rueschemeyer, Stephens and Stephens, *Capitalist Development and Democracy*, 47. Other works which develop a "relative class power" approach to democratization include: Huber and Safford, *Agrarian Structure and Political Power*; Therborn, "The Rule of Capital and the Rise of Democracy"; and Goran Therborn, "The Travail of Latin American Democracy", *New Left Review* 113-114 (1979).

and the ways in which the political actions of elite groups are shaped by their perception of the threats posed to their interests by subordinate classes.

While this approach has been used primarily to explain the political trajectories of national states,¹⁸ the cases presented in this paper suggest that an analysis of these factors is equally important for understanding the municipal ? regime types? of ? local states? . To explain different patterns of municipal governance in rural settings, the paper focuses attention on: the local distribution of agricultural land and corresponding class power relations; the relative strength of local peasant and indigenous organizations; the availability of technical and financial support from external agents that helps to improve the institutional structure and expand the relative autonomy of the municipal government; local historical and social factors that promote the formation of a strong local leadership base; divisions within local elite groups; and, elite perceptions of threats to their interests from changes in municipal institutions. Analysis of the three cases presented in this paper suggests that local configurations of land ownership and class power relations have a key impact on the democratic development and regulatory capacity of rural municipal governments in Latin America.¹⁹

Despite relatively weak conditions for democratic governance and social relations at the national level in Ecuador,²⁰ a considerable diversity in the distribution of assets and socio-economic power exists at the micro-regional level. A clear example, and indeed partial cause of this diversity is the varied impact of the 1964 and 1973 Agrarian Reforms in Ecuador. While the reforms had little or no impact on land tenure patterns and power relations in many cantons,²¹ in certain locales the reforms and subsequent political struggles to see them implemented had a

¹⁸ In additions to Tilton's analysis of Swedish democracy, other works using a relative class power approach include: Ronald P. Dore and Tsutomu Ouchi, ?Rural Origins of Japanese Fascism? in J. Morley, ed., *Dilemmas of Growth in Prewar Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972); Haim Gerber, *The Social Origins of the Modern Middle East* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1987); Stanley Trapido, ?South Africa in a Comparative Study of Industrialization? *Journal of Development Studies* 7, 3 (1971), 309-41; Jonathan Wiener, *The Social Origins of the New South: Alabama, 1860-1885* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1978).

¹⁹ The importance of relatively equitable configurations of socio-economic power for the development of participatory municipal institutions is also indicated by Abers, who observes that the on-going success of the ?participatory budget? in Porto Alegre, Brazil has partly depended on a split amongst the local economic elite engineered by municipal politicians to prevent that group from wielding enough power to obstruct the participatory budget process; Abers, *Inventing Local Democracy*, 226.

²⁰ See: Augustin Cueva, *The Process of Political Domination in Ecuador*. trans., Danielle Salti. (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1982); Hurtado, *Political Power in Ecuador*; Carlos Larrea and Liisa North, ?Ecuador: adjustment policy impacts on truncated development and democratisation? *Third World Quarterly* 18, 5 (1997), 913-934.

²¹ The *canton* is the geographic area in Ecuador governed by the *municipality*. The *municipality* is the local government; the *municipal council* is composed of a mayor and elected councilors (7 to 8 in most rural municipalities) Each *canton* is divided into various *parishes*, each of which is directed by a Parish Junta (*Junta Parroquial*) - which have traditionally been appointed by the local mayor but were elected for the first time in May 2000. Most cantons in Ecuador contain large rural areas.

significant effect on the distribution of economic assets and political power.²² An understanding of the diversity of patterns of local level asset distribution and power relations is thus critical to an analysis of the political opportunities for local level democratization and development, and hence the success of decentralization.

Before turning to the specific cases themselves, it is important to clarify use of the term “participation”. In discussions of decentralization and local government, the term “participation” is generally defined vaguely to include any municipal processes that involve formal mechanisms for local residents to voice their concerns, regardless of whether those mechanisms have any binding authority or even influence over municipal councils. However, if “participation” is to escape populist and instrumental manipulation and become a vehicle for genuine popular empowerment, its meaning must move beyond the concept of “voice” to a process of increasing citizens’ control over government decision-making. In this paper, use of the term “participatory” is restricted to only those cases where mechanisms for citizen involvement in municipal administration have at least a binding *moral* if not yet *legal* authority over municipal councils. Administrative mechanisms for consultation with local citizens will be referred to simply as “consultative”.

II CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN RURAL MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS IN ECUADOR

²² On the impact of Agrarian Reform in Ecuador see: Emil Haney and Wava Haney, “The Agrarian Transition in Highland Ecuador: From Precapitalism to Agrarian Capitalism in Chimborazo?” in William C. Thiesenhusen, ed., *Searching for Agrarian Reform in Latin America* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 70-91; José Vicente Zavallos L., “Agrarian Reform and Structural Change: Ecuador Since 1964” in Thiesenhusen, ed., *Searching for Agrarian Reform in Latin America*, 42-69; Korovkin, “Indigenous Peasant Struggles in the Capitalist Modernization of Agriculture?”; M.R. Redclift, *Agrarian Reform and Peasant Organization on the Ecuadorian Coast* (London: Athlone Press, 1978).

The developmental role of most rural municipal governments in Ecuador has been traditionally limited to small, unplanned public works in the village centre of each canton. Rural populations, even in predominantly rural cantons, have been widely excluded from the sphere of attention of most municipal governments. Democratic governance in Ecuadorian municipalities has also been very weak, with caudillismo, clientelism, corruption, mismanagement, paternalism, centralism and racism representing the predominant norms.²³ Eighty of Ecuador's 215 municipalities (37%) have been created since 1985, many of them for clientelist electoral reasons. The majority of these recently created municipalities have very small populations, municipal budgets and staffs.²⁴ Moreover, the weak administrative capacity and poorly trained and underpaid staff found in most rural municipal governments are a serious challenge to introducing participatory processes and improving efficiency.²⁵ In the particular case of Cotacachi, one of the municipalities examined in this paper, observers of the canton in 1990 described the municipal government as having a typically "limited margin of action and very little administrative capacity."²⁶ It is in this context that the Ecuadorian state has introduced a limited number of programs to promote municipal modernization and administrative decentralization. And it is in contrast to this widespread municipal *malaise* in rural Ecuador that the cases of Guamote, Cotacachi, and to a certain extent Bolivar stand out.

The three cases of rural local government examined in this paper were initially chosen because they had been broadly recognized in Ecuador as being among those which have most encouraged ? citizen? participation in municipal decision-making and have been frequently identified as possible models for other small, rural municipalities to emulate. All three municipal governments have attracted much attention from the Ecuadorian press and from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) interested in working with municipal governments.²⁷ The

²³ A review of recent press coverage of municipal politics in Ecuador helps to paint a picture of this situation. See for example the following headlines: ?The New *Caciques* of Los Rios [Province]? *Vistazo* 02/12/99; ?The Municipality of Esmeraldas: Immersed in Total Chaos? *Vistazo* (18/11/99); ?The Municipality of El Carmen in Dispute: More Conflicts? *El Comercio* (09/09/99); ?The Municipality of El Empalme in Dispute? *El Comercio* (07/05/99); ?The Municipality of Portoviejo: Living Chaos? *El Comercio* (25/04/99); ?Five Mayors Questioned for Management of Funds and Inefficient Administration? *El Comercio* (25/02/99); ?One Dead in Simón Bolívar: Enraged Population Destroys the Mayor's House?, ?Chaos in Other Cantons? *El Telegrafo* (25/08/98). ?El caos golpea las puertas del Municipio esmeraldeño? (Hoy, 5 May 1999, 2A)

²⁴ Of a total of 214 municipalities in 1999, 15 municipalities (7%) had populations under 5,000; 35 municipalities (16.3%) had populations between 5,000 and 10,000; 47 municipalities (21.9%) had populations between 10,000 and 20,000; 68 municipalities (31.7%) had populations between 20,000 and 50,000; Asociación de Municipalidades Ecuatorianas, *Cantones segun regiones* (Quito: AME, 1999).

²⁵ Lautaro Ojeda Segovia, *Encrucijadas y perspectivas de la descentralización en el Ecuador* (Quito: Abya Yala, 1998); Mario Rosales, ?El Municipio Ecuatoriano: sintomas y razones de su fragilidad? in Jordi Borja et al., eds., *Descentralización y democracia: gobiernos locales en America Latina* (Santiago: CLACSO, 1989).

²⁶ Centro Andino de Acción Popular (CAAP), *Pre-diagnostico y estrategia de desarrollo de Cotacachi* (Quito: CAAP, 1991), iv.

²⁷ The three municipalities have all been studied by academic and / or non-governmental researchers. However, these studies have not systematically compared structural factors outside the municipal administrations themselves to help explain the relative success of these local governments in promoting participation in municipal decision-making.

three cantons are all relatively small in population, overwhelmingly rural - both in terms of population and economic activity, and suffer from relatively similar problems of poverty, although of varying degrees. The populations of two of the cantons, Guamote and Cotacachi, are predominantly indigenous, while that of the third, Bolivar, is primarily mestizo. The importance of this ethnic distinction is discussed in section II. (See Appendix for a comparison of the three cantons). Surprisingly, field research quickly revealed that participatory processes in Bolivar were much less successful than positive press and NGO coverage had first suggested. The Municipality of Bolivar thus became an important case for examining the failure of attempts to introduce participatory processes into local administration.

It bears emphasizing that the cases analyzed in this paper have little to do with the still incipient process of decentralization in Ecuador. The experiments with ? participatory democracy? in the three cantons were not responses to state policies but rather to local level conditions and actors. It is also important to recognize the danger of romanticizing these apparently successful cases of participatory democracy. The descriptions of Guamote and Cotacachi in this section may at first reading appear to be ? propogandistic? . However, I believe that the descriptions of these ? successful? cases in this section of the paper are well tempered by the analysis of their tensions and contradictions in Section III.

Guamote:

Guamote, located in the central highland province of Chimborazo, has a population of 28,000 (1990) which is over 95% indigenous, predominantly rural, and suffers from extreme poverty (see Appendix 1). Guamote has also undergone a process of land and power redistribution more far-reaching than in any other canton in Ecuador. It is one of the few cantons where the 1973 Agrarian Reform had a profound impact. In 1974, six *haciendas* controlled 72% of all land in the canton; indeed the distribution of land in Guamote before the 1973 Agrarian Reform was the most unequal in Ecuador.²⁸ Peasant mobilization for land in Guamote became increasingly radical in the early 1970s, under the influence of the progressive Catholic Church and the *Federación Ecuatoriana de Indios (FEI)* - affiliated with the Communist Party. In response to this pressure, the Ecuadorian state made Guamote a particular focus of the 1973 Agrarian Reform laws. By 1980, all of the large *haciendas* in Guamote had been broken up and more than 50% of the canton's land had passed into the hands of peasants.²⁹ (INEC 1973; Gangotena et al

On Guamote see: Victor Hugo Torres, ?Guamote: el proceso indígena de gobierno municipal participativo? in Mauro Hidalgo et al., eds. *Ciudadanías Emergentes: Experiencias democráticas de desarrollo local* (Quito: Abya-Yala, 1999); David Stanton, ?On the Road to Development: Participatory Government in Guamote, Ecuador? *Grassroots Development* 21, 1 (1997), 24-30. On Cotacachi see: Sara Baéz et al., *Cotacachi: Capitales comunitarios y propuestas de desarrollo local* (Quito: Abya-Yala, 1999). On Bolivar see: Patricio Donoso and Rafael Granja, *Descentralización y desarrollo local* (Quito: CORDES, 1999).

²⁸ Comité Interamericano de Desarrollo Agrícola (CIDA), *Tenencia de la tierra y desarrollo socio-economico del sector agrícola: Ecuador* (Washington: Unión Panamericana, 1965).

²⁹ Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos (INEC), *II Censo agropecuario 1974. Resultados definidos. Resumen nacional* (Quito: INEC, 1974); Francisco Gangotena et al., ?Apreciaciones preliminares sobre la incidencia de la disolución de la hacienda tradicional en la estructura agraria: el caso Guamote? *Revista de la Universidad Católica* (Quito) 8, 26 (1980), 15.

1980, 15). Since 1980, almost all of the canton's remaining land has passed into peasant hands through land sales, which in Ecuador have been responsible for transferring more land to peasants than the land reform laws.³⁰

Changes in local power relations occurred only slowly following the land reform process. Until the mid-1970s, power relations in Guamote were completely dominated by local *hacendados*, who operated with the support of municipal officials and local priests in a triangle of power known as *gamonalismo*.³¹ After Guamote's *haciendas* were broken up and the *hacendados* left the canton, political power was assumed by local mestizos - merchants, money lenders, and teachers. However, two parallel processes, both operating from the mid-1970s on, helped to shift power towards the local indigenous majority and ultimately resulted in the election of an indigenous mayor and municipal council. The first process was demographic: after the land reforms, large numbers of mestizo landowners and merchants began to move out of Guamote, leading to a significant relative increase in the indigenous and rural population of the canton.³² While persistent poverty has forced most local indigenous and peasant families into patterns of labour migration, much of this has temporary or circular. The second process was organizational. Following the land reform, and because of high levels of peasant mobilization, Guamote became an important focus of development initiatives in Ecuador, led first by the state and subsequently by NGOs. Although the nature and impact of those interventions has been highly contested, they did contribute to the growth of a network of local indigenous federations as well as a large group of local indigenous leaders with significant experience in the world of official development programs and NGOs.³³

³⁰ It is important to recognize that land sales to peasants have often occurred only under significant organized peasant pressure on large landowners and with financial assistance from NGOs (see: Hernán Carrasco, 'Población indígena, población mestiza y la democratización de los poderes locales en Chimborazo, Ecuador' in Sebastian Cox, ed., *Pueblos indígenas y poderes locales* (Santiago: CEDAL-RIAD, 1997), 17; Korovkin, 'Indigenous Peasant Struggles and the Capitalist Modernization of Agriculture', 36.

³¹ Paula Sylva, *Gamonalismo y lucha campesina* (Quito: Abya-Yala, 1985).

³² Carrasco, 'Población indígena, población mestiza?', 21-24.

³³ Bebbington also points out that an important number of local indigenous leaders in Guamote come from

families with comparatively large parcels of land (e.g. twenty to thirty hectares). Ownership of larger plots of land often meant both that families could afford to send their children to secondary school and that they did not need to migrate as frequently in search of employment and could thus remain in their communities where children were more likely to become involved in local development projects and develop leadership capacities; Anthony Bebbington, ?Reencountering Development: Livelihood Transitions and Place Transformation in the Andes? *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 90, 3 (2000), 517.

As the organizational capacity of the indigenous federations in Guamote developed with support from NGOs and the Catholic Church, they became increasingly engaged in local politics and began to launch candidates in local elections: 1980 marked the first entry of an indigenous candidate into the local electoral contest; in 1984, one indigenous councilor was elected; in 1988, two were elected; in 1992, two indigenous councilors were elected alongside a new mayor - Mariano Curicama, a highly approachable and extremely capable local indigenous leader. In 1996, Curicama was re-elected as a candidate of the newly formed indigenous political party, Pachakutik, along with seven indigenous municipal councilors (out of a total of eight). Curicama chose not to run in the May 2000 municipal elections. However, he was followed by another indigenous mayor, José Esteban Delgado, a former leader of one of Guamote's largest indigenous federations who also has strong links with NGOs and development agencies and who also ran as a Pachakutik candidate. Despite changes in land ownership and demographics, the gradual transition from mestizo to indigenous control of political power in Guamote was still troubled with ethnic tension and conflict. Following his election as mayor in 1992, Curicama had to overcome fierce resistance from local mestizos and had to threaten them with an indigenous boycott of mestizo businesses before he could assume his role as mayor.³⁴

During his tenure as mayor between 1992 and 2000, Curicama went to great lengths to make himself accessible and accountable to the canton's entire population. He made a point of being in his office every Thursday, market day, so that rural residents could see him when they came to Guamote's weekly market in the village centre of the canton. He also spent at least three days a week visiting the 114 communities in the canton. The municipality of Guamote has significantly increased its attention to rural parts of the canton, many of which were largely unknown to municipal governments before 1992. Not only do municipal officials now continuously visit rural communities, but the municipality has also substantially increased the proportion of its investment budget dedicated to rural public works. Curicama also insisted that the municipality's books be open to the public and that financial statements be published in local newspapers. Both the indigenous and mestizo leaders interviewed in Guamote universally agreed in 1999 that municipal politics were free of corruption and clientelism, although they conceded that clientelist pressures continued from the bottom-up.

³⁴ Stanton, ?On the Road to Development.?

One of the most important initiatives of the municipal government thus far has been the creation of the *Parlamento Indígena y Popular* (Indigenous and Popular Parliament) in 1997.³⁵ The *Parlamento* is, according to Mayor Curicama and other local indigenous leaders, the highest instance of representation in the canton, and Curicama asserted that the municipal government has the *moral* although not yet the *legal* obligation to implement the resolutions of the *Parlamento*, including budget decisions. The *Parlamento* itself is composed of the elected presidents of the *cabildos* (local councils) of each of the 114 legally recognized communities in Guamote together with representatives of the seven neighborhoods located in the village centre of the canton. The *Parlamento* representatives have met on average once every two months for one to two day sessions to propose and evaluate municipal policies, including budgets, and to hold councilors and the mayor accountable for their work.³⁶

Emblematic of the shift in authority over local development in the canton, a key role of the *Parlamento* is to coordinate and regulate the work of NGOs in Guamote.³⁷ Despite a decades long history of external development interventions, the work of outside actors was never coordinated in Guamote.³⁸ Indeed, the two principal criticisms leveled against NGOs in

³⁵ As a symbol of increasing indigenous authority over local development processes in Guamote, the *Parlamento* occupies the building that once housed the offices of the Ecuadorian state's Integrated Rural Development program (*DRI - Desarrollo Rural Integral*), located directly adjacent to the municipal offices.

³⁶ The extent to which the 114 members of the *Parlamento* actually *represent* their respective communities has yet to be investigated. Guamote's *Development Plan* identifies authoritarian leadership styles as a problem confronting many of the canton's communities; Ilustre Municipalidad de Guamote, *Plan Participativo del Canton Guamote* (Guamote, Ecuador: Municipalidad de Guamote, 1999), 28.

³⁷ Since the early 1980s, Guamote has had one of the highest concentrations of NGOs in Ecuador. In 1999, there were 43 NGOs working in Guamote; Victor Bretón, *Informe sobre las posibilidades analíticas que brindan los datos contenidos en el directorio 'Sistema de información de organizaciones sociales'*, unpublished document (Quito: May 1999), 7.

³⁸ Indeed, Griffin pointed to a profound lack of coordination among agencies providing rural services

Guamote's *Development Plan* are the lack of coordination among them and the paternalistic culture they promoted by executing projects with little involvement expected from intended beneficiaries.³⁹ The *Parlamento* confronted these two problems by insisting that it coordinate the efforts of all NGOs interested in working in the canton and by requiring that communities provide at least fifty percent of the resources - in materials and/or labour - for all development projects.⁴⁰ Although this assertion of local control over external development initiatives has resulted in the departure of some NGOs, it has in fact attracted others, which see local control as a factor likely to increase the chances of project success.

throughout Ecuador, with health care services in particular suffering from a lack of institutional coordination; Kieth Griffin, *Land Concentration and Rural Poverty* (London: MacMillan, 1981), 204.

³⁹ Ilustre Municipalidad de Guamote, *Plan Participativo del Canton Guamote*, 28, 41.

⁴⁰ Interview with Mariano Curicama, 17/06/1999.

The other key initiative of the municipal government thus far is the 'Local Development Committee', created in 1997 with a U.S.\$280,000 grant from the Interamerican Foundation. The Committee's purpose is to start local community managed businesses to create employment and revenue for reinvestment in rural communities as well as to respond to some of the serious ecological threats facing the canton, such as deforestation and soil erosion. Thus far, the Committee has taken on six projects: a reforestation initiative, a trout hatchery, a composting facility, a grain processing centre, a training / meeting centre, and a traditional music group. In 1999, none of these projects was yet self-financing or independently managed, although the composting facility and trout hatchery were nearing that status. Despite some success with these 'micro-projects', the Development Committee continues to suffer from a lack of technical expertise, financial resources and difficulties in reaching consensus among the twelve different local indigenous federations involved.⁴¹

The Municipality, *Parlamento*, and Development Committee recently completed a year long process of elaborating a 'Local Development Plan'.⁴² The Plan was based on twenty-nine two and three day workshops in rural communities throughout the canton.⁴³ The Plan not only carefully analyses local development problems, such as exploitation of local indigenous residents in the weekly market, but goes much further than most other municipal plans in proposing viable solutions to those problems. Where other plans are generally silent on the history (or lack thereof) of municipal led development, Guamate's Plan presents much constructive criticism of the municipality and local indigenous organizations. Moreover, the 'Plan' has been published in both Spanish and Quichua and has been distributed to all of the communities in the canton, an important contrast to the excessively technical and unilingual nature of many of the local development plans that have been produced in Ecuador.

Beyond the specific accomplishments of Guamate's municipal government, a much more general change stands out. While the municipal government once represented the local interests of the canton's elite groups and was openly hostile to the local indigenous population, it is now open, accessible and welcoming to indigenous peasants, who are seen by the municipality and are encouraged to see themselves as local 'citizens'. The municipal buildings bustle with indigenous people and the leaders of local indigenous organizations continuously flow in and out of municipal offices on their way to and from meetings with municipal officials.

Cotacachi:

⁴¹ Interviews with Local Development Committee members, 06/1999 - 12/1999.

⁴² Local development plans are being produced by an ever growing number of Ecuadorian municipalities under the encouragement of the Association of Ecuadorian Municipalities (AME) and various NGOs. A large number of these have been produced primarily to create an appearance of municipal modernization. Many of these plans have been produced with little meaningful public consultation and are neither accessible to local populations nor particularly useful as diagnostic or planning tools.

⁴³ Guamate's development plan was funded by a U.S.\$49,000 grant from the NGO Comunidec (in turn funded by the Interamerican Foundation) and the state-funded PRODEPINE.

The canton of Cotacachi is located in the northern highland province of Imbaburra. Its population of 33,000 (1990) is approximately 50% indigenous and over 80% rural. Poverty and indigence are both very high, especially in the rural and predominantly indigenous areas of the canton (See Appendix 1). Cotacachi is divided into two geographic zones: a highland region where over 60% of the total population and almost all of the indigenous population live and where the municipal offices are also located, and the lowland region of Intag, which is geographically, politically and economically isolated, having been colonized by mestizo and Afro-Ecuadorian settlers only since the early 1970s.

In contrast to Guamate, agrarian reform laws have had almost no impact on land distribution in Cotacachi (see Appendix 1). Farms over fifty hectares (ha) and *haciendas* (which together represent only 18.6% of agricultural units) occupy 90% of all land in the canton.⁴⁴ Seven local *haciendas* have become highly modernized and now produce flowers and vegetables for export. However, as a 1991 study by a well-established Ecuadorian NGO observed, these agricultural enterprises contribute only minimally to local development processes.⁴⁵ At the same time, the global focus of the most important large-scale landowners has meant that they have had not interfered with processes of municipal governance (see below).

The average size of peasant landholdings in the highland area of the Canton is 0.42 ha, which is not enough to support a family⁴⁶ and has thus forced 90% of indigenous and peasant families into patterns of temporary labour migration.⁴⁷ Land tenure in the isolated subtropical region of Intag is more equitably distributed, with peasant land holdings (which represent 58% of agricultural units) occupying 77% of all agricultural land and properties over 50 ha occupying only 6.4% of land.⁴⁸ Perhaps surprisingly given the overall context of generally unequal property control, the municipality of Cotacachi, with a budget of about U.S.\$1.5 million in 1998 and 70 employees, has emerged as another leader of participatory administration in Ecuador.

Cotacachi's experience with participatory local government began in August 1996 with the election of an exceptionally talented indigenous leader, Auki Tituaña, as mayor.⁴⁹ His election victory followed the election of indigenous leaders chosen and supported by the local indigenous federation, UNORCAC (Union of Peasant Organizations of Cotacachi), in every municipal

⁴⁴ CAAP, *Pre-diagnostico y estrategia de desarrollo de Cotacachi*, 49.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 85.

⁴⁶ Luciano Martínez and Alonzo Azocar, *Comunidades de maíz y comunidades de la papa*. (Quito: CIRE, 1987), 4).

⁴⁷ Gabriela Flora, *Circular Migration and Community Attachment in the Highland Indigenous Communities of Cotacachi, Ecuador*. M.A. Thesis (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia, 1998).

⁴⁸ CAAP, *Pre-diagnostico y estrategia de desarrollo de Cotacachi*, 81.

⁴⁹ Tituaña has recently been identified as a *presidenciable*, that is, as a strong potential candidate for Ecuador's 2002 presidential elections; Marlon Puertas, 'El presidenciable indio' *Vistazo*, electronic edition (Quito: April 20, 2001: www.vistazo.com).

election since 1980.⁵⁰ Support from UNORCAC, which mobilized indigenous voters from the canton's 43 highland communities, was essential for Tituaña's election in 1996 and re-election in 2000. Tituaña was accompanied on the municipal council of eight by one indigenous councilor in 1996, two in 1998, and three since 2000.

Tituaña, an economist by training with a degree from the University of Havana, had worked professionally with the Department of Programs and Projects of CONAIE, Ecuador's largest indigenous organization, before seeking the post of mayor in Cotacachi. He came to the position of mayor with well-established contacts with international NGOs and a solid understanding of participatory planning processes. He began his tenure as mayor by calling for a Municipal Assembly in September 1996 which brought together all the organized social sectors of the canton to identify priority sectors and problems for municipal action.

⁵⁰ Interview with former president of UNORCAC, 30/08/1999.

The Municipal Assembly has since become Cotacachi's principal mechanism for participatory decision-making. Held every September since 1996, the Assemblies have grown in terms of the total number of participants - from under 200 in 1996 to almost 500 in 1999, in the number of social sectors represented, and in the 'quality' of the participation itself. At the first Assembly in 1996 there were almost no representatives from Cotacachi's mostly mestizo village centre sector and the municipal government was almost completely dependent on NGO assistance for the organization of the event. By the fourth Assembly in 1999, the urban sector was well-represented through a Neighbourhood Federation and neighbourhood level organizations - created through municipal leadership, while municipal employees had taken over almost all of the organizational logistics of the Assembly. In terms of the *quality* of participation, the mayor and other local observers assert that in 1996 local residents came to the Assembly primarily to ask for public works for their communities, but that by the fourth Assembly in 1999 they were coming prepared to debate issues related to the canton's development and were beginning to see themselves as 'citizens' of the canton and as agents rather than objects of local development efforts.⁵¹ Observers from local development-oriented NGOs in Ecuador are increasingly pointing to Cotacachi's experience as evidence that local 'citizens' can be created in a relatively short period of time.

⁵¹ Interviews, 08/1999 - 12/1999.

In addition to introducing participatory mechanisms into the municipal administration, Tituaña has also actively promoted the formation of participatory 'citizen' organizations in the canton, such as the Neighbourhood Federation the urban sector and a peasant federation - the 'Intag Zone Development Committee'⁵² in the isolated western lowland region of the canton. Efforts to promote local organization and leadership capacities are also evident in the municipality's incorporation of youth into its administration - from the formation of a local youth Journalism Club that works with the Municipal Radio Station, to encouraging youth to organize canton-level sports tournaments,⁵³ and the creation of workshops in the annual Assemblies for youth and children to discuss possible solutions to the problems they see facing the canton. Following resolutions of the annual Assemblies in 1996, 1997, 1998, and 1999, the municipality also created a series of permanent Intersectoral Committees that draw together representatives from a wide cross-section of Cotacachi's social sectors to pursue solutions to the particular problems facing the canton in the areas of health, education, tourism, and the environment. Tituaña's hope is that the municipality will decentralize increasing amounts of responsibility to these committees,⁵⁴ a sharp contrast to the majority of municipal governments in Ecuador which remain highly centralized in their administrative practices.

While large-scale landowners in the canton have been mostly indifferent to the local participatory process, Tituaña has actively cultivated support from the local urban mestizo middle class. Perhaps ironically, much of the legitimacy and respect that Tituaña has won from the urban mestizos has not resulted from the opening of participatory spaces or the promotion of local organization and leadership development. Rather, it has been the mayor's record in completing public works projects - electrification, street lighting, sewage, potable water, road improvements, sports fields - that has earned him much of his local support.⁵⁵ When asked for their opinion of the mayor in interviews, local residents very frequently responded 'he is very good', and then in the same breath 'he has completed many public works.' And so, while Tituaña's vision of the role of the municipality is new, public expectations of the local government have not yet changed. At

⁵² El Comité de Desarrollo Zonal de Intag, was reorganized and renamed as the Council of Parish Juntas of Intag (Consejo de Juntas Parroquiales de Intag) in 1999.

⁵³ See: Ilustre Municipalidad de Cotacachi, *Memorias de la Segunda Asamblea de Unidad Cantonal de Cotacachi*, 1997; 'By Mandate of the Municipal Assembly: create incentives for sports?' *La Hora* (Ibarra, Ecuador), 19 October 1997.

⁵⁴ Interview with Auki Tituaña, 02/09/1999.

⁵⁵ See for example the newspaper article: 'Economist Auki Tituaña Qualifies as the Mayor of Public Works?' *La Verdad* (Ibarra, Ecuador: 13 September 1998).

the same time, it is clear that efforts to promote participatory planning are only likely to be supported if they are accompanied by improved public works and services.

Public works have been crucial to the legitimation of both the participatory process and Tituaña's own presence as an indigenous mayor. Indeed, despite Tituaña's determination to be a mayor of human development, not of cement, he identified local residents' perceptions of the municipality as little more than an agent of basic public works as one of the main obstacles to the growth of the participatory process in Cotacachi.⁵⁶ Other indigenous mayors have also found it necessary to devote large amounts of time and resources to public works in the village centres of their cantons in order to gain acceptance from village-based, middle class mestizo residents, and in some cases have done more for the development of village centres than previous village-based mestizo mayors.⁵⁷ The ability to complete such public works projects within the constraints of Cotacachi's small budget is in part due to efficient administrative practices and the use of community labour (*mingas*) in public works projects. However, it is primarily a result of the very significant financial and technical support that the Municipality has received from NGOs and donor agencies⁵⁸ - funding that is neither sustainable in the long-run nor broadly replicable at the national scale.⁵⁹

The interventions of Cotacachi's municipal government before 1996 were generally characterized by small, unplanned public works in the urban centre of the canton, completed without public consultation and often by contractors whose family and political ties to municipal politicians were much stronger than their technical competence.⁶⁰ In contrast, Tituaña has placed

⁵⁶ Interview with Auki Tituaña, 02/09/1999.

⁵⁷ See for example: Ana Maria Larrea and Fernando Larrea, 'Participación ciudadana, relaciones interétnicas y construcción del poder local en Saquisilí' in Mauro Hidalgo et al., eds., *Ciudadanías emergentes*.

⁵⁸ For example, in November 1999, a group of four NGOs pledged \$780,000 for a water and sewage project in cooperation with the municipality for rural communities in the canton (IV Asamblea de Unidad Cantonal, 15/09/99). In December 1999, there were seventeen NGOs working with the municipality.

⁵⁹ In Cotacachi, most NGO funding is limited to four to five year terms. Moreover, as the director of one of the leading NGOs working in Cotacachi revealed, aid has also in many cases been tied directly to Tituaña's tenure as mayor; had he not been re-elected in May 2000, important NGO contracts would have ended. (Interview 20/07/99).

⁶⁰ Interviews in Cotacachi, 08/1999 - 12/1999.

heavy emphasis on the importance of planning that is both participatory and technically sound, first through the Municipal Assemblies and then by contracting technical feasibility studies for public works projects prioritized by local communities. Tituaña has also expanded the role of the municipality beyond the canton's village centre to include previously neglected rural areas. In marked contrast to the established pattern in most Ecuadorian municipalities, Cotacachi dramatically increased the proportion of municipal spending dedicated to rural areas to 47% of the annual budget in 1999.⁶¹

⁶¹ Auki Tituaña, IV Asamblea Cantonal (Cotacachi15/09/1999).

Tituaña's political strategy for Cotacachi has extended beyond working through institutional structures to social mobilization and protest. Although Tituaña has not been a leader or organizer of the significant indigenous protest movement in Ecuador, he has lent his support as well as logistical backing to local indigenous protest action against the Ecuadorian state. In the nationwide *levantamientos* (uprisings) that have brought transportation and commerce in highland Ecuador to a standstill for days and even weeks at a time since 1990, Tituaña provided municipal vehicles to transport protesters from the village centre of Cotacachi to blockades on the Panamerican highway.⁶² Mariano Curicama, the Mayor of Guamote from 1992 to 2000, similarly participated in and organized municipal transportation to road blockades on the Panamerican highway during nationwide *levantamientos* organized during his tenure as mayor. Neither mayor, in opting for a strategy focused primarily on formal politics and institutionalized participation, has ignored or abandoned political strategies of protest, which Szasz, in a discussion of participatory institutions, insists is 'the motive force for all real forward movement in social history.'⁶³

It is also important to emphasize that both experiences of municipal participation have developed within, and cannot be understood outside of the context of the much broader indigenous political movement in Ecuador that has used formal electoral politics, bureaucratic channels and political protest, in particular the shutting down of transportation through highway blockades, as central components of its strategy since the first uprising in 1990.⁶⁴ Although there has been a lack of coordination between the local experiences of participatory democracy in Cotacachi and Guamote and the national level organizations of Ecuador's indigenous movement, institutionalized participation at the local level and protest action at the regional and national levels have gone hand in hand. The development of institutions for local democracy in these two municipalities has not been divorced from a much broader political struggle for social and economic change at the national level.

Bolivar:

The canton of Bolivar, in Ecuador's northernmost province of Carchi, has a population of just over 15,000. Although poverty in Bolivar is high, land is more equitably distributed than in many other parts of the country and there are few large extensions of land (see Appendix 1).⁶⁵

⁶² Tituaña also attracted widespread media attention following the January - February 2001 *levantamiento* by calling for sanctions against other indigenous mayors and provincial prefects who did not actively support the indigenous protest action; see the newspaper story: 'El alcalde Auki Tituaña deploró la falta de apoyo en Imbabura' *El Comercio*, electronic edition (Quito: February 15, 2001).

⁶³ Andrew Szasz, 'Progress through Mischief: The Social Movement Alternative to Secondary Associations?' in Erik Olin Wright, ed., *Associations and Democracy* (London and New York: Verso, 1995), 155.

⁶⁴ José Almeida et al., *Sismo étnico en el Ecuador: varias perspectivas* (Quito: CEDIME and Abya-Yala, 1993).

⁶⁵ Even in 1973, land holdings of under 20 ha (which represented 97% of agricultural units controlled 44.1% of the canton's land. There was only one hacienda over 500 ha - which controlled 1500 ha; INEC, *II censo agropecuario*. There are now only a few large extensions of land in the canton of 200 to 500 ha; Interviews in Bolivar, 11/1999 - 12/1999).

The population is small and relatively homogeneous - primarily small-scale mestizo farmers with seven small Afro-Ecuadorian farming communities in the lowland area of the Chota valley. Local residents, as well as NGO circles in Quito were excited and optimistic when the canton elected the young and enthusiastic ex-guerrilla leader, Fabián Ramírez, as mayor in 1992 after a campaign platform that emphasized citizen participation, capacity building, rural development, health, education, gender equity and administrative accountability. Hope for the future of local politics surged again in 1995 when the municipal government organized the first Municipal Assembly to be held in Ecuador and brought together over 300 residents from the canton's 56 communities for three days of workshops to elaborate a development plan for the canton. The municipality has also actively promoted *mingas* - community volunteer labour for local public works projects - as a means of extending its capacity to complete public works such as road improvements and irrigation canals, especially in rural areas.

Images of Bolívar's municipal administration in the national press and NGO circles have been largely positive and Mayor Ramírez received much praise for his apparent efforts at promoting participatory mechanisms in the municipality and for promoting local capacity building.⁶⁶ For example, in 1999 the director of a Quito-based NGO working on local government issues, although not in Bolívar, described that municipality as the 'foremost' in the country among mestizo-populated cantons for its promotion of citizen participation⁶⁷ Another NGO, CARE International, identified the positive attitude of Mayor Ramírez as one of the key factors which led CARE to select Bolívar as the location for pilot projects on health and economic development.⁶⁸

The perceptions of the residents of Bolívar of Ramírez and the municipal government, however, are very different from those that predominate outside the canton. Ramírez's supporters praise his work to promote a curriculum reform in the canton's schools, to improve access to primary health care, and to promote small-scale agricultural production during a two-year partnership program with CARE International. However, they also acknowledge that few public works projects were completed during Mayor Ramírez's tenure, especially in the village centre of the canton, and that the municipality's *Development Plan*, the 1995 Canton-wide Assembly, and the training courses organized by the municipality have had no visible impact on local development processes.⁶⁹

Moreover, between 1992 and 2000, those who supported Ramírez's administration became a minority. Many of those who endorsed his fresh ideas about participation in 1992 became frustrated and angry with the lack of municipal public works, especially in the village centre. Ramírez's emphasis on citizen participation, rural development, health and education was

⁶⁶ See for example the very positive impression of Bolívar's municipal government presented in: 'The Example of a Municipality' *Hoy* (Quito: September 18, 1995).

⁶⁷ Interview, 09/06/1999.

⁶⁸ Interview, 13/07/1999.

⁶⁹ Interviews in Bolívar, 09/1999-12/1999.

aimed primarily at addressing the significant disparities between the canton's rural areas and its village centre. However, the Mayor failed to secure widespread support from the residents of the village centre for his shift from traditional municipal practices. Village dwellers were generally not interested in changing either municipal administrative practices or the local development agenda, as the village centre had traditionally been the privileged focus of municipal public works projects. In shifting the emphasis of the municipal government towards the rural sector, Ramírez alienated large numbers of village dwellers, including the local clientelist elite, which felt even further threatened by movement toward participatory municipal planning. In the absence of strong popular organizations to defend the nascent participatory process, local clientelist elites, with support from village residents, were able to overthrow both the Mayor and the participatory process (see below).

Ramírez's failure to complete any major public works during his tenure as mayor may have been a strategic error or an administrative weakness. However, another factor is clearly the limited resources available to the municipality in comparison with Guamote and Cotacachi. Although in 1998 Bolívar had a larger municipal budget per capita than the other two cantons, Guamote and Cotacachi have benefitted from much higher levels of NGO support. Direct NGO assistance to the municipalities of Guamote and Cotacachi in 1998 was almost equal to the municipal budgets of the two cantons, while in Bolívar, NGO support was worth approximately four percent of the municipal budget. This significant difference in levels of external financial support is perhaps partly related to NGO concerns with a corruption scandal in Bolívar (see below), but it is also very likely connected to the differences in ethnic composition of the three cantons. As will be discussed in Section III, NGOs in Ecuador have concentrated their activities in areas with high indigenous populations.

Seeing few tangible results from local participatory efforts, opponents of Mayor Ramírez asserted that the process of organizing the Municipal Assembly in 1995 and producing the *Local Development Plan* in 1997 were a waste of precious local resources which they would not repeat.⁷⁰ Municipal councilors in fact refused to support efforts by Ramírez to organize a second Assembly. Criticisms of Ramírez also went beyond poor administration to nepotism and corruption⁷¹. Leaders in the canton's Afro-Ecuadorian communities also alleged that the mayor and municipal employees were racist and treated them poorly whenever they entered municipal offices. Afro-Ecuadorian leaders eventually came to discourage the residents of their communities from participating in community work projects organized by the municipality because of their lack of faith in the Mayor and municipal government.

⁷⁰ Ilustre Municipalidad de Bolívar, *Plan de desarrollo integral del canton Bolívar* (Quito: AME, 1997).

⁷¹ Opponents asserted that the small margin by which Ramírez was re-elected as mayor in 1996 was achieved only through the purchase of votes with pigs in one of the canton's parishes. They insisted that he hired and promoted family and friends to work in the municipality; Interviews in Bolívar (09/1999-12/1999).

Opposition to Ramírez's leadership reached a peak shortly after his re-election in September 1996, when he was arrested on corruption charges. The Mayor was held in prison for 44 days, although the Superior Court of the Province of Carchi found insufficient evidence to try him.⁷² The personal political ambitions of certain municipal councilors who enjoyed support from other members of the village elite as well as from important political allies at the provincial level played key roles in this scandal. Whether or not the accusations of corruption leveled against the Mayor were true,⁷³ the scandal seriously discredited both his image and that of the municipality as an institution, as well as seriously dividing the local population. After 1996, the Mayor found himself largely unable to initiate new administrative practices or any significant public works projects. The municipality's efforts to promote gender equity also largely collapsed after the mayor and his wife (who had directed those efforts) divorced and she left the canton in 1996. By 1999, most residents had few expectations of either Ramírez or the municipal government and widely characterized the efforts to promote participatory planning in their canton as a failure. Ramírez chose not to run in the May 2000 municipal elections, which saw the former vice-mayor, now representing a centre-right coalition of six parties, assume the office of mayor. In this new political context it appears that attempts to promote local participatory politics have ended.

II MAKING SENSE OF PARTICIPATORY MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATIONS

The success or failure of a particular rural municipal government in developing participatory institutions and administrative practices affects a relatively small number of people. The more important question for development and democratization is whether the conditions exist that would allow successful experiences to emerge on a broad scale. The experiences of Guamote, Cotacachi and Bolivar highlight the importance of key five variables in the relative successes and failures of efforts to develop participatory institutions with strong regulatory capacities in those municipalities: 1) an equitable distribution of agricultural land, 2) strong local peasant and / or indigenous federations, 3) high levels of technical and financial support from non-governmental organizations (NGOs), 4) talented political leadership with strong links to local communities, and 5) economic marginality. This section examines the relative presence and absence of these five factors in the three cantons studied from a broader comparative perspective and highlights the widespread absence of the first four factors in most other rural cantons in Ecuador.

The Distribution of Agricultural Land and Socio-Economic Power Relations:

Evidence from the three case studies examined in this paper suggests an important connection between land distribution, corresponding socio-economic power relations, and

⁷² Charges against Ramírez asserted that he used municipal tractors to plow his own fields and then paid a mechanic to turn back the time-meter on the tractors to avoid paying for their use. For a more detailed description of the scandal see articles in *El Comercio* (September 25, 1996) and *La Hora* (October 2, 23, 31, 1996).

⁷³ Although the Provincial Superior Court found insufficient evidence to try Ramírez, it is important to note that the investigative capacity of Ecuador's judicial institutions is notoriously weak; see United States Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, *1999 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices*, 2000: www.state.gov/www/global/human_rights/1999_hrp_report/ecuador.html

municipal democracy and regulatory capacity. In the case of Guamote, agrarian reform was a crucial pre-cursor to the emergence of local participatory institutions. First, because the reform process broke the power of the landowning elite that had previously controlled local politics in the canton and opened the political space for participatory initiatives to develop. Second, because the intense struggles to see the 1973 reform laws implemented helped to develop local indigenous federations, leaders, and identities. It is also important to recall the education and leadership opportunities that emerged for children of families in Guamote with medium sized parcels of land and led to the emergence of a notable strata of well-educated local leaders with significant experience working with NGOs and development agencies.

However, although land reform processes created opportunities for political development in the canton, they have not led to any significant economic improvements. Because land in the canton is of very poor quality⁷⁴ and agrarian reform legislation was not accompanied by effective state programs to help make peasant agriculture profitable - irrigation, roads, extension, credit and marketing services, etc. - the canton's population continues to live in extreme poverty. Local capital accumulation is minimal. There are very few economic resources in the canton that might be used to create either significant local employment or a demand for the growth of local service industries. Thus, while land redistribution was a necessary pre-condition for the emergence of a participatory municipal administration in Guamote, it has not addressed the resource void that continues to stand in the way of local economic development.

In Cotacachi, a participatory municipal administration took root without a previous process of agrarian reform. Large haciendas still control the canton's best land, with some of them producing in cooperation with transnational corporations. Significantly, the large landowners have not resisted or made any notable attempts to frustrate the changes in Cotacachi's municipal government. Nor, however, have they been willing to participate in the process or be taxed or regulated in any way by the municipality. They have tolerated the participatory process because they are powerful enough to operate beyond its reach. *Hacienda* owners do not produce for the local market, in many cases do not live in the canton, and are generally not interested in local politics. Rather, their outlook is oriented towards national and global markets and policies. Thus far, Cotacachi's municipal government has been unable to involve these powerful actors in the participatory process or even to reach basic agreements with them over issues such as water and pesticide use, which are becoming increasingly important for local residents. There are few signs that this stalemate will be overcome in the near future or that local elites will be drawn into participatory processes. Local landowning elites in Cotacachi have not stood in the way of participatory initiatives by the municipality; however, *they have placed*

⁷⁴ Most of the land redistributed through agrarian reform in Ecuador was poor and often inappropriate for agriculture. *Haciendas* on good quality, fertile land were generally not broken up, but rather were re-organized and modernized as capitalist agricultural enterprises; Korovkin, "Indigenous Peasant Struggles and the Capitalist Modernization of Agriculture".

clear limits on the jurisdiction of the municipal government and continue to operate freely beyond its control.

Strong Local Peasant and Indigenous Organizations:

In the absence of strong local peasant organizations, attempts to establish a participatory process in Bolivar failed despite a certain political will on the part of the mayor and a relatively even distribution of land and socio-economic power. Equitable control of land may be necessary for the development of participatory municipal governments with reasonable regulatory capacities, but it is clearly not in itself a sufficient condition. Field research in Bolivar found an organizational and leadership void in the canton. The director of the Municipality's Department of Social Participation lamented that there was very little citizen pressure for opportunities to participate in municipal decision-making and that there were no local social organizations with an interest in local development issues.⁷⁵ The local priest similarly bemoaned the difficulty of finding people to take on leadership roles within his church (Interview 03/12/99). In the absence of local popular organizations and political pressures, local *caciques* were easily able to establish political clienteles, which they then manipulated in opposition against the ? participatory? initiatives of the Mayor. Local residents continue to pursue clientelist links with municipal politicians in quests for small public works, such as street paving, even when they have become temporarily organized in resident associations, as was the case with the short-lived *Junta Civica* in Bolivar.⁷⁶

Strong local organizations have been central to the development of the participatory processes in Guamote and Cotacachi. In both cantons, the election of mayors representing indigenous and peasant residents was only possible through the support of local indigenous and peasant federations. First, because the federations were able to mobilize rural voter support for the indigenous candidates. Second, because the election of indigenous mayors in Guamote and Cotacachi followed eight and sixteen years, respectively, of work by indigenous councilors who had been nominated by and elected with the support of local indigenous federations. Their work created a precedent for and helped to legitimate the presence of the subsequently elected indigenous mayors.

The presence of strong indigenous and peasant federations in Guamote and Cotacachi has also been very important for the production of new indigenous and peasant leaders who might become councilors, mayors or community leaders. In both cantons, leadership in indigenous and peasant federations has been the key path to municipal political power. With the exception of Auki Tituaña who developed much of his leadership experience in CONAIE, a national level organization, all of the indigenous and peasant politicians elected in the two cantons held leadership positions in local federations before entering municipal politics. Indeed, a quick examination of the work histories of indigenous and peasant mayors elected in May 2000 reveals consistent connections with local indigenous and peasant organizations.⁷⁷ Indigenous and peasant

⁷⁵ Interview, 06/09/1999.

⁷⁶ Interview with former President of the *Junta Civica*, 01/12/1999.

⁷⁷ The *curriculum vitae* of candidates in the May 21, 2000 elections in Ecuador are at least temporarily

federations in Guamote and Cotacachi have also helped to create a local culture of participation in meetings and collective decision-making at the community level that has been crucial for the development of participatory processes at the larger level of the canton, and have helped to hold municipal institutions accountable.

At this point it bears emphasizing that the institutional maturity, mobilization capacity and capability to promote economic survival (if not development) of indigenous and peasant federations in Ecuador varies widely. Martínez points out that many federations have been created from the top-down by external actors and have fostered clientelism more than economic development or political empowerment.⁷⁸ Martínez also argues that only a small minority of federations have developed the institutional and entrepreneurial capacity to actually implement local development projects.⁷⁹ Moreover, the technical coordinator of the state-funded Project for the Development of the Indigenous and Black Peoples of Ecuador (PRODEPINE), which works primarily with local and regional level indigenous federations, emphasized that only a very small group of these federations have developed political and economic strategies aimed at the municipal level; in the vast majority of cases, federation strategies are focused on the smaller political and economic space of the parish.⁸⁰

It is also important to at least raise the question of how strong local organizations are formed. In contrast to the path dependant process identified by Putnam to explain the emergence of high levels of 'civic engagement' in Northern Italy,⁸¹ the cases examined here suggest that external agents, such as NGOs, the Church and especially the state, as well as political struggle have important roles to play. The formation of self-organized indigenous communities (*comunas*) after 1937 and of indigenous and peasant federations in the late 1970s and early 1980s were in many ways responses to legal and monetary incentives to organization created by the Ecuadorian state.⁸² The experiences of Guamote and Cotacachi also suggest that *political struggle*, legitimated and supported by outside actors, is a central factor in the formation and consolidation of strong local organizations. Struggles against the abuses of *hacendados* and the Church, struggles to see agrarian reform legislation implemented, and struggles to take control over local development processes have strengthened indigenous federations in Guamote and Cotacachi. From a comparative perspective, the most representative and participatory rural municipal governments in Bolivia are concentrated in precisely the geographic area where peasants have been forced to struggle most actively to defend their livelihoods: the coca growing region of the Chaparé.⁸³ It is worth noting that political struggle is generally overlooked by NGOs and development agencies as an important historical factor that has promoted organizational strengthening and social capital formation, in preference for more politically neutral mechanisms.

⁷⁸ Luciano Martínez, 'Organizaciones de segundo grado, capital social y desarrollo sostenible?' *Íconos* 2 (Quito), 115-124.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 120.

⁸⁰ Interview, 15/10/1999.

⁸¹ Robert Putnam, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993.

⁸² Instituto de Estudios Ecuatorianos (IEE) and Fondo Ecuatoriano Populorum Progressio (FEPP), *Políticas estatales y organización popular* (Quito: IEE and FEPP, 1985), 233-5; Victor Bretón, *Capitalismo, reforma agraria y organización comunal en los Andes: una introducción al caso ecuatoriano* (Lleida, Spain: Universitat de Lleida, 1997), 93.

⁸³ Interview with staff of CERES, Cochabamba, Bolivia, 16/11/1999.

Technical and Financial Support from Non-governmental Organizations:

High levels of technical and financial support from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have been decisive for the development of participatory municipal governments in Ecuador. Both the logistical development and the local legitimation of participatory institutions have depended on such external support. NGO funding has also helped to increase the relative autonomy of rural municipal governments from local elites, allowing municipalities to invest in certain public works, especially in rural areas, that would have generated significant opposition were the funding to have come from municipal revenues.

In both Cotacachi and Guamote, NGO funding to the municipalities has grown to levels equal to municipal budgets in those cantons. Moreover, funding from NGOs has given the municipal governments in these two cantons a relative degree of autonomy from local elites, making possible significant municipal infrastructure and other investments without any economic reliance on local economic power holders. There is also an important connection between the high levels of NGO support to these two municipalities and the fact that they are led by indigenous mayors and have large indigenous populations in Ecuador, regardless of poverty levels. Bretón (1999) found a clear statistical relation between the geographic focus of NGO interventions and the presence of large indigenous populations.⁸⁴ Bretón's research reveals a bias on the part of NGOs in Ecuador towards working with indigenous rather than mestizo populations. Given the importance of NGO support to the development of participatory municipal institutions, the bias of NGOs towards municipalities with large indigenous populations favours the development of participatory processes in those cantons in relation to those with only very small or non-existent indigenous populations.⁸⁵

The high levels of technical and financial support from NGOs found in Guamote and Cotacachi are neither sustainable in the long run nor replicable on a broad scale. A survey conducted with the Association of Ecuadorian Municipalities (AME) found that the vast majority of municipal governments had no support from any NGOs and that the few NGO-municipal agreements which had been negotiated were for very small infrastructure works and other small projects like tractor repairs,⁸⁶ thus calling into question the viability, at least in the Ecuadorian

⁸⁴ More specifically, Bretón found that the relationship between NGO interventions and a large indigenous population between 1996 and 1999 was much stronger than the relationship between NGO interventions and poverty; Bretón, ?Informe?.

⁸⁵ 16 of 215 cantons in Ecuador have populations which are over 50% indigenous; 17 cantons have indigenous populations between 25% and 50%; Galo Ramón, *Diseñando la utopía: propuesta nacional de participación de los pueblos indios y negros* (Quito: PRODEPINE, 1998), 26). Most quantitative estimates put the total indigenous population of Ecuador at about thirty percent (FLACSO, *Los Andes en cifras* (Quito: FLACSO, 1994), 15).

⁸⁶ 51 of 214 municipalities responded to the 1999 survey on NGO-municipal cooperation. 35 of those municipalities had no support from any NGOs. Of the remaining 16 municipalities, NGO support was concentrated in 7 municipalities, including Guamote, Cotacachi and Bolívar.

context, of the development ? model? based on NGO-municipal cooperation suggested by Reilly.⁸⁷

NGO support for participatory municipal institutions in rural Ecuador has been focused primarily on Guamote and Cotacachi. With the election of mayors from indigenous and peasant sectors in twenty-six municipalities in May 2000, it is unlikely NGO resources will be sufficient to support even those municipalities where significant political will exists to develop more participatory forms of public administration. If development generating and sustainable participatory processes are to develop on a broad scale, much more funding from the state for these processes will have to be made available.

Talented Political Leadership:

⁸⁷ Charles Rielly, ed., *New Paths to Democratic Development in Latin America: The Rise of NGO-Municipal Collaboration* (London: Lynne Rienner, 1995).

Politically and technically talented mayors with political visions of participatory democracy and strong links with local communities as well as international development agencies have also been central actors - in some cases *the* central actors - behind efforts to create participatory municipal institutions in Ecuador. However, Tendler argues that 'outstanding leadership' is *not* a helpful explanation of good government, as it emphasizes 'the singularity of certain experiences' while 'planners need to search for ... repeatable lessons'.⁸⁸ Indeed, the exceptional political and administrative talent of Cotacachi's mayor, Auki Tituaña, suggests that at least part of the successes of Cotacachi's experiment with participatory democracy is due to the singular leadership qualities of the mayor, rather than factors which might be replicated in other cantons.

While Tendler's argument is well-taken, it is also important to examine the processes and contexts within which 'outstanding leaders' develop. Perhaps more important than the talent and vision of particular mayors, such as Mariano Curicama and Auki Tituaña, are the existence of local, regional and national indigenous and peasant organizations as well as the patterns of land ownership and asset control which have created opportunities for such leaders to develop.

As I argued above, leadership in indigenous and peasant organizations and NGO-affiliated development projects have thus far been the only path for indigenous and peasant candidates to positions of municipal authority in Ecuador. In both Guamote and Cotacachi, local indigenous and peasant federations, originally established in response to state incentives, have produced a variety of leaders who could be reasonably expected to win municipal elections and to further develop participatory institutions. Ownership of agricultural land and other productive assets has also been important to processes of leadership formation as it has enabled indigenous and peasant families to keep children in school for longer periods of time.⁸⁹

Economic Marginality:

The cases of participatory municipal institutions presented here represent experiences of local *political* development. However, neither Guamote, Cotacachi, nor any other municipalities in Ecuador which have promoted participatory processes have yet made any significant steps towards *economic* development. There is still a big gap between the creation of a few fledgling micro-development projects and increased attention to rural infrastructure and real processes of local economic development that might begin to curb out-migration by creating employment and generate broad improvements in people's capacities and standards of living.

⁸⁸ Judith Tendler, *Good Government in the Tropics*, 18.

⁸⁹ It is worth noting that a significant number of indigenous leaders at the national level in Ecuador are from relatively wealthy families engaged in export-oriented textile production centred around the north-central sierra town of Otavalo.

Indeed, whether significant local economic development is possible *at all* under current conditions in Guamote, Cotacachi and other small rural cantons is highly questionable. The problem, however, is not that peasant production is not economically viable and should not be encouraged, as advocates of a neoliberal approach to agriculture suggest. Small-scale peasant agriculture in Ecuador has proven to be remarkably efficient in the face of numerous constraints and continues to provide most of the food sold on the domestic market. Rather, at issue is the dominant macro-economic policy framework which has ended possibilities for land redistribution and has abandoned possibilities for local economic development to the market (and NGOs) with no significant intervention from the state.⁹⁰ Without state policies aimed at both the local and national levels to support small-scale rural agricultural as well as non-agricultural producers, it is unlikely that even those cantons with notable levels of NGO support will experience significant economic development. Even in the few cantons with substantial external assistance, NGOs recognize that they know little about how to make local development actually happen.⁹¹ Moreover, in Guamote, Cotacachi and other cantons with indigenous and peasant mayors, municipal governments have found that they have neither the power nor the technical knowledge to regulate even local agricultural markets so that they might become less exploitative to local producers and consumers.⁹²

The principal model for local development that Guamote, Cotacachi, Bolivar and other rural cantons have aimed at emulating is the experience of the parish of Salinas in the canton of Guaranda in the central highland province of Bolivar.⁹³ However, as Liisa North and I argued elsewhere, the experience of Salinas not only took over 25 years to evolve but also developed under particular local and macro-economic conditions that no longer exist in Ecuador, making the case practically unreplicable in contemporary contexts.⁹⁴

⁹⁰ Ecuador's 1994 Agrarian Development Law makes future land re-distribution almost impossible and encourages the break-up of communally held lands; Bretón, *Capitalismo, reforma agraria y organización comunal en los Andes*. The 1979 Law of Agricultural Promotion had already effectively ended the land reform era in Ecuador and shifted the emphasis of rural development to securing the property rights of large-scale modernized agricultural enterprises; Korovkin, 'Indigenous Peasant Struggles?', 35-37. Moreover, key components of structural adjustment, such as reduced import tariffs have made it increasingly difficult for many small rural non-agricultural producers to compete with cheap imports; see Liisa North and John Cameron, 'Grassroots-Based Rural Development Strategies: Ecuador in Comparative Perspective?' *World Development* 28, 10 (2000), 1751-1766. The disappearance of state rural development programs in the early 1990s together with the onset of Ecuador's economic recession and the application of adjustment policies further reduces the economic viability of rural livelihoods.

⁹¹ Interviews with the directors of three large Ecuadorian NGOs that work with municipal governments (20/07/1999; 02/09/1999; 05/10/1999).

⁹² See for example Guamote's local development plan which identifies exploitation of local residents by agricultural merchants as a key problem facing local producers; Ilustre Municipalidad de Guamote, *Plan Participativo de Desarrollo del Canton Guamote* (Guamote: I. Municipalidad de Guamote, 1999), 47-48.

⁹³ For descriptions of the Salinas experience, see: Anthony Bebbington, et al., *Actores de una decada ganada: tribus, comunidades y campesinos en la modernidad* (Quito: Comunidec, 1992); Liisa North, 'El programa de Salinas: Una experiencia de desarrollo microregional?' in Manuel Chiriboga, ed., *Cambiar se puede: Experiencias del FEPP en el desarrollo rural del Ecuador* (Quito: FEPP, Abya-Yala, 1999).

⁹⁴ Liisa North and John Cameron, 'Grassroots-Based Rural Development Strategies: Ecuador in Comparative

It is perhaps no coincidence that participatory processes have emerged and indigenous and peasant mayors have been elected in precisely some of the poorest cantons in highland Ecuador. To the extent that powerful economic actors are present in those cantons, such as the flower growers in Cotacachi and agricultural traders in market towns such as Guamote, municipal governments have thus far found themselves with insufficient power to tax or regulate them. Thus far in Ecuador, poverty and economic marginality have been unfortunate pre-conditions for indigenous and peasant organizations to take control of municipal power and local development processes.

Although the May 2000 elections produced some significant victories for indigenous and peasant politicians at both the municipal and provincial levels, these victories remain confined primarily to economically peripheral spaces. I do not wish to discount the election of indigenous and peasant provincial prefects or mayors in urban centres with more dynamic economies;⁹⁵ however, the crucial test for these newly elected politicians will be their capacity to reorganize political institutions and to regulate local economic development, that is to re-shape local power relations in ways that benefit rather than exclude and exploit the majority of their constituents.

Concluding Remarks:

Comparison of efforts to develop participatory municipal institutions in Guamote, Cotacachi and Bolivar suggests a number of key conditions necessary for the emergence of participatory local governments. Strong local indigenous or peasant organizations with a focus on municipal politics, extensive financial and technical support from NGOs, a social context supportive of local leadership formation, and economic marginality all emerged as key facilitating factors behind the relative success of participatory processes in Cotacachi and Guamote, and their failure in Bolivar. While the experience of Cotacachi has shown that an equitable distribution of agricultural land or other assets is not necessary for participatory municipal institutions to operate, municipal governments in such contexts may have little capacity to regulate or tax powerful local elites. The capacity of rural municipalities to promote and regulate processes of local development remains dependent on a favorable balance of local power relations, which in rural settings is based primarily on equitable patterns of land ownership.

These conditions, however, are not widely present in Ecuador. Not only is the number of strong indigenous and peasant federations with political strategies aimed at attaining municipal power quite limited, but NGO resources to support participatory efforts even in those cantons are insufficient. Moreover, patterns of land ownership in most rural highland cantons are dominated

Perspective? *World Development* 28, 10 (1998), 1751-1766.

⁹⁵ In May 2000 elections, indigenous leaders were as mayors in the provincial capitals of Guaranda and Ibarra and also as provincial prefects (similar to premiers or governors) in five of twenty-two provinces.

by large *haciendas* which will not be regulated or integrated into the local development efforts of participatory municipalities without significant conflict. Thus, the number of rural municipalities where participatory processes can be expected to develop and flourish remains seriously restricted by structural conditions and the prevailing macro-policy framework as well as by more conjunctural factors such as the organizational maturity of local-level indigenous and peasant federations.

Alternative policies that would help to create opportunities for the development of participatory municipal governments, and thus that would increase the chances of realizing the theoretical benefits of decentralization in rural Ecuador, include: agrarian reform, or at least credit enabling small agricultural producers to purchase land on a broad scale, state incentives for local-level organization, a nurturing macro-policy framework that would include support and protection for small scale agricultural as well as for rural non-agricultural production.

Appendix: Demographic and Municipal Indicators for Guamote, Cotacachi and Bolivar⁹⁶

Canton:	Guamote	Cotacachi	Bolivar	Ecuador
Demographic Indicators:				
1990 Population	28,058	33,240	15,157	12.2 million (1998) ⁹⁷
1990 Rural Population	89.19%	81.8%	68.3%	4.8 million (1998)
% of Rural Population in Predominantly Indigenous Areas (Zamosc 1995: 80)	100%	54.04%	0.0%	n/a
Surface area	1,223 km ²	1809 km ²	36,085 ha	284,000 km ²
Poverty	89.25%	84.15%	79.68%	35% (1994) ⁹⁸
Indigence	68.26%	56.21%	36.67%	15% (1994) ⁹⁹
Poverty Ranking (x / 214; 214 =poorest)	210	192	168	n/a
Infant Mortality (x / 1000 live births)	122.63	74.95	64.1	33 (1997) ¹⁰⁰
Illiteracy (Males over 15)	33.1%	2.1%	9.2%	7% (1997) ¹⁰¹
Illiteracy (Females over 15)	54.3%	37.3%	15%	11% (1997) ¹⁰²
Land Tenure:				
Agricultural units > 100 ha affected by Agrarian Reform: (Zamosc 1995: 82-83)	54.37%	3.49%	14.25%	??
Economy:				
Agricultural workers in Economically	83.7%	57.5%	78.2%	Value added as % of GDP 12% ¹⁰³

⁹⁶ Unless otherwise indicated, the source of the following data is: INFOPLAN, *Atlas para el desarrollo local* (Quito: INFOPLAN, 2000), www.infoplan.gov.ec/html/home/

⁹⁷ World Bank, *World Development Report 1999 / 2000*, 234.

⁹⁸ World Bank, *Ecuador Poverty Report*, 56.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 57.

¹⁰⁰ World Bank, *World Development Report 1999/ 2000*, 242.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 232.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 232.

Active Population (EAP)				GDP: 12% ¹⁰³
Industrial workers in EAP	1.7%	16.5%	3%	Value added as % of GDP: 34% ¹⁰⁴
Municipal Administration:				
# municipal employees (1999)	52	70	46	n / a
1998 Budget (in 1998 U.S. dollars) ¹⁰⁵	\$1,091,049	\$1,521,860	\$862,025	??

¹⁰³ Ibid., 252.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 252.

¹⁰⁵ Data on municipal budgets is from the financial records of each municipality.