

Challenging the Standard Narrative: Myth-making and Accountability in Ecuadorian Environmental and Indigenous Politics

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Abstract

Over the past 20 years, a standard narrative has emerged to describe the impacts of oil development in Ecuador's northern Amazon region. According to this narrative, international oil companies took advantage of low environmental standards and weak government oversight to destroy the forest and victimize native communities. Then, Amazonian Indians and environmentalists joined together to fight “big oil” in courts of law and public opinion. The narrative has been repeated in countless internet campaigns, news and magazine articles, and even a recent movie. Yet many of its aspects and implications remain unexamined. Are myths legitimate organizing tools for political purposes? What is the “indigenous position” on oil development? Does focus on the private sector ignore government responsibility for bad policies? This paper attempts to address such issues.

Historical Background

In order to fully understand the issues surrounding anti-oil campaigns in Ecuador, it is necessary to first consider the political and economic backdrop. Exploitation of “vacant” lands in Ecuador’s northern Amazon basin, known as the *Oriente*, remained a constant policy objective under both civilian and military governments in the 19th and 20th centuries.¹ The discovery of oil in 1967, and the resulting boom between 1972 and 1976, was considered a windfall opportunity by the ruling elites.²

This new income allowed the government to invest in education, health and infrastructure projects. But there was a heavy price to pay: it also led to massive borrowing against future production³. As the price of oil fluctuated on the international market, Ecuador’s government soon found itself deep in debt. Its currency was devalued and political unrest ensued.⁴ One World Bank report summed it up this way:

This newly found wealth could have been used as the basis for an expansion of its capital base and a sustainable improvement in its standard of living. However, the oil revenues, largely appropriated by the public sector, were used to finance an increase in the size of the state and to subsidize private consumption (through low prices of domestic petroleum products). This strategy was successful at first, but proved unsustainable when external circumstances changed.⁵

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¹ Robert Wasserstrom, “Roads, Oil and Native People: A Controlled Comparison on the Ecuadorian Frontier,” presented at LASA Conference, Toronto, October 6-9, 2010.

² David W. Schodt, *Ecuador: An Andean Enigma*, Boulder: Westview Press, 1987, p. 107.

³ George Philip, *Oil and Politics in Latin America*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982, p. 115.

⁴ Osvaldo Hurtado, *El poder político en el Ecuador*, Quito: Editorial Planta, Tenth Edition, 1997, pp. v-xxviii.

⁵ World Bank, *Ecuador. Public Sector Reforms for Growth in the Era of Declining Oil Output*, Washington: International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, 1991, p. 1. A continuing discussion of oil revenues and their impact on Ecuador’s

In the *Oriente*, oil production brought roads and improved livelihoods. Beginning in 1972, concurrent with the oil boom, many lowland areas were occupied by *colonos* (homesteaders) under Ecuadorian agrarian reform laws.⁶ These settlers were required to “improve” their homesteads by clearing forest and planting crops, usually pasture. The government also offered low-interest loans, subsidies and other incentives to raise cattle. By 1994, when official colonization ended, most of the northern *Oriente* had been given away to private farmers and plantation operators.⁷ And by 1995, nearly one-fifth of the country’s Amazonian forests had been cleared, while indigenous communities retained only a small fraction of their original lands.⁸

Table 1: Population of the Northern *Oriente*, 1962-1992⁹
(currently, Napo, Orellana and Sucumbíos Provinces)

Year	Population
1962	25,582
1974	55,142
1982	115,110
1992	371,110

Government subsidies directly accelerated the geographic expansion of agriculture into lowland forests. During the 1970s, gasoline in Ecuador rarely cost more than \$0.10/gallon, far lower than international prices. Even during the 1980s, domestic prices rose to only \$0.30/gallon.¹⁰ Although low energy prices may have benefited everyone, they were especially advantageous for farmers in remote settings. And

economy can be found in other World Bank publications, starting with *Ecuador. Development Problems and Prospects*, Washington: World Bank, 1979; *Ecuador Poverty Report*; Washington: World Bank, 1996; and most recently, Vicente Fretes-Cibils et al., *Ecuador*, Washington: World Bank 2003; and Vicente Fretes-Cibils et al., *Revisiting Ecuador’s Economic and Social Agenda in an Evolving Landscape*, Washington: World Bank, 2008.

⁶ A more detailed description of these laws can be found in Douglas Southgate, Robert Wasserstrom and Susan Reider, “Oil Development, Indigenous Populations and Deforestation in Ecuador’s Amazon,” presented at the Latin American Studies Association, Rio de Janeiro, June, 2009, <http://terra-group.net/pdfs/lasa.pdf>. For a useful summary of migration patterns in the *Oriente*, see L.A. Brown et al., “Complimentary perspectives as a means of understanding regional change: frontier settlement in the Ecuador Amazon,” *Environment and Planning A*, Vol. 24, 1992, pp. 939-961. Throughout this discussion, we will follow common usage among Latin American specialists and use the Spanglish term “colonization” interchangeably with “homesteading,” “migration” and “settlement.”

⁷ Wasserstrom, “Roads, Oil, and Native People,” presented at LASA Conference, Toronto, October 6-9, 2010.

⁸ With one exception: large parts of Huaorani (also spelled Waorani) territory – particularly remote areas within the Yasuni National Park and a so-called “untouchable zone” – remain largely intact. However, researchers are finding that illegal logging and trafficking in wild meat are serious issues throughout the area. See E. Suarez, et. al., “Oil industry, wild meat trade and roads: indirect effects of oil extraction activities in a protected area in north-eastern Ecuador,” *Animal Conservation*, Zoological Society of London, 2009, pp. 364-373.

⁹For primary sources, see Wasserstrom, “Roads, Oil,” p. 7.

¹⁰ Douglas Southgate, “Policies Contributing to Agricultural Colonization,” in Narendra Sharma, ed., *Managing the World’s Tropical Forests: Looking for Balance between Conservation and Development*, Dubuque: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, 1992, p. 227.

finally, during the 1970s and 1980s, the government offered subsidies and tax holidays to large palm oil produced and cattle ranchers who invested in the Amazon basin.¹¹

Settlement in the *Oriente* brought significant conflict and dislocation to native communities: occupation of land, alterations to traditional economies and social organization, loss of language and cultural identity.¹² Objections to native dispossession arose early but were brushed aside. Consider this account of a speech made by President Guillermo Rodríguez Lara in 1972, provided by Norman Whitten Jr.:

On September 25 of that year, the president flew to Puyo in the central Oriente and made a lengthy speech stressing such development objectives as the construction of roads, the provision of public services, and the acceleration of colonization and cash crop production. When a bishop raised the issue that 50,000 Indians lived in the affected areas, Rodríguez Lara... maintained that all Ecuadorans were part Indian. "There is no more Indian problem," he insisted. "We all become white men when we accept the goals of the national culture."¹³

Forced to compete with settlers for the legal title to their own lands, indigenous communities began to organize themselves. The Federation of Indigenous Organizations in Napo (FOIN) was formed in 1975, for the first time bringing indigenous people of various ethnic groups together.¹⁴ The Organization of Indigenous Peoples of Pastaza (OPIP), primarily representing lowland Quichua communities, formed in 1979.¹⁵

Throughout the 1980s, Ecuador was beset by economic and political crises. Overcome by debt and involved in another border war with Peru, the government regularly reduced gasoline subsidies and raised public transportation prices.¹⁶ In response, the country experience street riots every year from 1981 to 1984. Such unrest continued throughout the decade as the nation fell deeper and deeper into debt and poverty increased.¹⁷ The government saw increased oil production as the only answer.

¹¹ Thomas Rudel, *Tropical Deforestation: Small Farmers and Land Clearing in the Ecuadorian Amazon*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1993, p. 34.

¹² The anthropologist William T. Vickers and sociologist Jorge Uquillas, among others, have provided extensive accounts of land conflicts between settlers and native groups during these years. For two examples, see William T. Vickers, "Informe preliminar acerca de las culturas siona, secoya y cofan para la Comisión Interinstitucional de INCRAE, IERAC, y Dirección de Desarrollo Forestal. Proyecto de Relimitación de Territorios Nativos," Miami, 1980 (unpublished manuscript); Jorge E. Uquillas, "Informe para la delimitación de territorios nativos siona secoya, cofán y huaorani," Quito: Ministerio de Agricultura y Ganadería, Comisión Asesora Interinstitucional, unpublished manuscript, 1982, pp. 5-18. Another excellent description can be found in Jorge Uquillas, "La tenencia de la tierra en la Amazonia ecuatoriana," in Teodoro Bustamante et al., *Retos de la Amazonia*, Quito: ILDIS and Abya-Yala, 1993, pp. 61-94.

¹³ See Norman Whitten, Jr., "Etnocidio ecuatoriano y etnogénesis indígena: la resurgencia amazónica ante el colonialismo andino," *América Indígena*, Volume 39, Number 3, 1979, p. 538; originally published as IWGIA Document 23, 1976. For further discussion of official attitudes towards Indians during these years, consult William T. Vickers, "Indian Policy in Amazonian Ecuador," in Schmink and Wood, *Frontier Expansion*, pp. 14-15. More recent analysis can be found in Lucy Ruiz's book, *Amazonia ecuatoriana. Escenario y actores del 2000*, Quito: EcoCiencia-Comité Ecuatoriano de la UICN, 2000, p. 52.

¹⁴ For an excellent description of FOIN and its local activities, see Thomas Perreault, *Movilización política e identidad indígena en el alto Napo*, Quito: Ed. Abya-Yala, 1992.

¹⁵ Theodore Macdonald, Jr., discusses the history of Ecuador's indigenous organizations in "Ecuador's Indian Movement: Pawn in a Short Game or Agent in State Reconfiguration?," *The Politics of Ethnicity, Indigenous Peoples in Latin American States*, David Mayberry-Lewis, ed., Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002.

¹⁶ John D. Martz, *Politics and Petroleum in Ecuador*, New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1987, p. 400-401.

¹⁷ Between 1970 and 1990, Ecuador's debt rose from \$209 million to \$12 billion. Poverty rates rose from 47% in 1975 to 67% in 1995. See Allen Gerlach, *Indians, Oil and Politics*, Wilmington: SR Books, 2003, p. 46.

In 1983, the state oil company CEPE (later renamed Petroecuador) undertook an extensive drilling program in its northern *Oriente* fields, previously explored by Texaco. Because it lacked money to expand oil development, the government also decided to seek more foreign investment. (See map) In 1984, it awarded a new exploration contract to Occidental Petroleum Corporation (Oxy) that included part of the Cuyabeno Wildlife Reserve.¹⁸ This emphasis on development over conservation continued throughout the 1980s, as the government leased oil blocks in the Yasuní National Park (a World Biosphere Reserve).¹⁹ Government policy continued to emphasize long-standing objectives of national integration and development. The environmental and social impacts of oil operations were ignored or discounted.

Within a few years, this situation caught the attention of multilateral lenders. After an earthquake damaged Ecuador's major pipeline in 1987, the World Bank provided \$80 million for repairs and improvements, along with funds for an environmental management plan to guide "responsible development of the petroleum sector." The management plan was completed but never acted upon, because further World Bank assistance was contingent upon separating Petroecuador's operating and regulatory functions. The Ecuadorian government refused to do this, and no further World Bank loans for the hydrocarbon sector were made.²⁰ In fact, comprehensive environmental regulations for the oil industry were adopted only in 1998. (Environmental permits are still issued by the Energy Ministry, not the Ministry of the Environment.)

International campaigns against oil development in Ecuador

By the late 1980s, government policies led Ecuadorian environmental groups to form a coalition to put the brakes on oil development. This coalition, which included Acción Ecológica, Fundación Natura, and CORDAVI, quickly recruited important U.S. allies: the Sierra Club and Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund, Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) and Rainforest Action Network (RAN). At the same time, leaders of Ecuador's nascent indigenous political movement began to fear that native land south of the Napo River would also be opened to oil development, without their consultation or participation. Two major organizations, CONAIE (Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador) and CONFENIAE (Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas de la Amazonia Ecuatoriana), joined forces with the environmental groups in 1992, albeit uneasily.²¹ As the anti-oil campaign progressed, Acción Ecológica also reached out to mestizo settlers.²²

But rather than attack the Ecuadorian government, which controlled oil development and sponsored agricultural migration, the coalition instead concentrated on foreign oil companies.²³ A standard narrative began to emerge: deforestation in the *Oriente* was the fault of foreign oil companies; and they had

¹⁸ Martz, *Politics and Petroleum*, pp. 354-355.

¹⁹ Matt Finan et. al., "Ecuador's Yasuni Biosphere Reserve: a brief modern history and conservation challenge," *Environmental Research Letters*, No. 4, July-September 2009.

²⁰ Kay Treakle, "Ecuador: Structural Adjustment and Indigenous and Environmentalist Resistance," in Jonathan A Fox and David L Brown, eds., *The Struggle for Accountability*, Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000, p. 226.

²¹ See Susan E. A. Hall, "Block 16: Conoco's 'Green' Oil Strategy," Cambridge: Harvard Business School Case N9-394-001, July 1, 1993. Also, Judith Kimerling discusses the relations between "white" Ecuadorian activists, colonists and indigenous groups in "Indigenous Peoples and the Oil Frontier in Amazonia: The Case of Ecuador, ChevronTexaco, and Aguinda v. Texaco," *International Law and Politics*, Vol. 13-25, 3 November 2006, p. 430.

²² Suzana Sawyer, "Fictions of Sovereignty: Of Prosthetic Petro-Capitalism, Neoliberal States, and Phantom-Like Citizens in Ecuador," *The Journal of Latin American Anthropology*, 6(1):156-197, 2001, p. 166.

²³ Kay Treakle provides this account: "Accion Ecologica targeted Northern companies, lending agencies, and donor governments. In the process, they engaged with Northern environmental organizations to strengthen their ability to generate enough pressure for the media and policy makers in the North to pay attention to the problems caused by international companies and policies." Treakle, pp. 225-226.

committed genocide – or at least ethnocide -- against indigenous communities as well.²⁴ This narrative formed the basis of a lawsuit filed against Texaco (now part of Chevron) in 1993, and has been used in a variety of advocacy campaigns.²⁵

In general, these campaigns have followed an “expanded narrative” that shares similar key messages:

- Oil operations pollute the environment, especially streams and rivers.
- These operations disrupt traditional native subsistence economies and cultures.
- At the same time, they usurp indigenous lands.
- Petroleum operations are imposed by foreign companies without adequate consultation, participation and local involvement.

A chronology of the events that have shaped indigenous and environmentalist activism in and about Ecuador is included in Appendix 1.

I will now present three case studies that illustrate how this campaign unfolded since the mid-1980s.²⁶

1. Conoco, a doubtful victory

In 1986, Conoco, at the time owned by the large American chemical company DuPont, signed an exploration agreement with the Ecuadorian government for Block 16, which included intact rainforest, parts of the Yasuní National Park, and ancestral homelands of the Huaorani.²⁷ After sending a critical letter to Conoco in 1986, RAN issued its first “action alert” against Conoco in 1988. The following year, it launched a high-visibility campaign in the U.S., with support from key Ecuadorian activists. Initially, RAN and its allies focused on protecting the region’s flora and fauna from oil development. But they quickly discovered that this approach had little resonance outside of limited preservationist circles. Within a few months, they had expanded their campaign to cover another major component of the rainforest ecosystem: native people.

The advantages of this new approach soon became obvious. Indigenous people provided a bridge to the broader community of human rights activists, which attracted new supporters. An expanded narrative was offered by Randy Hayes, RAN’s executive director:

²⁴ “Five indigenous groups in the region have lost 95% of their ancestral land and seen dramatic declines in their populations. These groups – the Cofan, Secoya, Siona, Kichwa, and Huaorani – had prospered in the rainforest for centuries before Texaco’s arrival.” Amazon Defense Coalition/Winter 2009, “Understanding the Lawsuit Behind ‘Crude:’ Background Information on *Aguinda v. ChevronTexaco*,” www.chevrontoxico.com; pp. 2-3.

²⁵ According to the Harvard Business School case study, charges of genocide in Ecuador were first raised by the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund in a complaint filed in 1989 with the U.N. Commission on Human Rights “accusing oil companies, Conoco included, of ‘genocide’ in relation to the Huaorani.” The case study says that this charge was later reduced to “ethnocide” and the U.N. refrained from conducting an investigation. Nevertheless, it concludes, such charges “still hung heavily in the air...” See Susan E. A. Hall, “Block 16: Conoco’s ‘Green’ Oil Strategy,” Cambridge: Harvard Business School Case N9-394-001, July 1, 1993. Suzana Sawyer has also criticized the misrepresentation of plaintiffs as indigenous peoples: “Undoubtedly, the idea that Amazonian Indians are suing the world’s fifth-largest oil conglomerate makes for good news, garnering much-desired international attention and support for the case. But it also presents a skewed picture. The majority that makes up the ‘class’ are non-indigenous colonos...the majority of people who live near Texaco’s highly contaminating oil wells are Spanish-speaking colonos.” See Suzana Sawyer, “Fictions,” p. 63.

²⁶ Some of the information contained in these case studies is based on the author’s direct experience in advising oil companies in Ecuador on stakeholder relations from 1995 to 2005. For additional details, see www.terra-group.com.

²⁷ The Huaorani (also spelled Waorani) are perhaps the best known of Ecuador’s lowland peoples, in large part due to their reputation for savagery. Until they were convinced to move into villages by the Summer Institute of Linguistics in the early 1960s, more than 60% of Huaorani deaths were homicides. While nearly 20% of these were the result of warfare with outsiders, more than 40% were due to internal vendettas. See Clayton and Carole Robarchek, *Waorani: the Contexts of Violence and War*, Mason, OH: Cengage Learning, 2008, p. 19.

Unlike most of our U.S. forestlands, the tropical rainforest is inhabited. Their destruction not only raises questions of land rights and biodiversity – of monkeys, of trees. It also raises questions of people. The fate of the indigenous communities [is] deeply connected to the fate of the forest, raising profound human rights issues if their homelands are to be destroyed. If you destroy the forest, you destroy these people. In the rainforests, ecological and human rights issues are therefore deeply interlinked.²⁸

But problems arose immediately. Many indigenous groups – including CONFENIAE, the regional confederation of Amazon native communities – didn't want to be “preserved.” Instead, they wanted to share equitably in the benefits of development. And the human rights activists who supported them were concerned about protecting indigenous land claims, not about using Indian communities as a prop in first-world environmental campaigns.²⁹

Meanwhile, in 1989, NRDC sent its own representative, Judith Kimerling, to Ecuador. Kimerling was a former New York State assistant attorney general who had prosecuted Occidental Petroleum for its operation of the Love Canal hazardous waste sites. Kimerling led a team of Ecuadorian and American lawyers and environmental specialists on tours of the former Texaco fields, by then operated by Petroecuador. Her book, *Amazon Crude*, published by NRDC in 1991, summarized the argument against oil development in Ecuador's rainforest and provided an updated environmental narrative for public pressure against Texaco and Conoco.³⁰

Kimerling introduced a new element – pollution – into the campaign against oil development in Ecuador:

Hundreds of oil wells generate more than 4.3 million gallons of toxic wastes every day, virtually all of which are spilled or discharged into the environment without treatment, contaminating countless streams and rivers – often the only sources of water for surrounding communities. Burning oil and gas contaminate the air, along with volatile organics that enter the air from oil-covered waste pits and roads, and unremediated spills.³¹

Faced with unrelenting international pressure, Conoco decided to leave Ecuador in 1991.³² Reflecting on the Conoco campaign, Robert Kennedy, Jr. (then head of NRDC's international program) later wrote in a column published in the *Washington Post*:

American corporations with rain forest operations present an inviting target for U.S. environmental groups. Attacking them relieves our sense of powerlessness to deal with a tragedy that is largely outside our borders and beyond our control. Such attacks may also help to build solidarity with certain Third World environmental groups, for whom any success against a U.S. corporation is an important source of prestige among their

²⁸ Quoted in Susan E. A. Hall, “Block 16: Environmental Groups' Perspectives – Part 1,” Harvard Business School Case N9-394-004, July 5, 1993, p. 6.

²⁹ A similar process took place five years later in neighboring Pastaza Province, where ARCO was developing Block 10. For a description, see Sixto Mendez, Jennifer Parnell and Robert Wasserstrom, “Seeking Common Ground. Petroleum and Indigenous Peoples in Ecuador's Amazon,” *Environment*, Volume 40, No. 5, June, 1998, pp. 12-45.

³⁰ NRDC became the first major environmental group to understand the balance between preserving trees and protecting people. In his introduction to Kimerling's book, for example, Robert Kennedy, Jr. writes, “By far the most disturbing impacts are to the quarter million forest people, including the members of eight indigenous tribes who rely on the natural resources of the *Oriente* for their survival.” See Judith Kimerling, *Amazon Crude*. New York: Natural Resources Defense Council, 1991, p. xi.

³¹ Kimerling, *Amazon Crude*. p. 31.

³² More recently, ConocoPhillips purchased Burlington Resources, operator of Block 24. So far, Conoco has not announced whether it plans pursue work in this area, where the Shuar Federation and its allies have successfully opposed oil activity since 1998.

constituents. (Conoco's most vociferous opponents, two Ecuadoran environmental groups, virtually ignored drilling by the Ecuadoran national oil company in nearby Yasuni National Park).

There are many times, of course, when companies deserve bashing. But platitudes will not save the world's remaining rain forests. We need a more sophisticated approach, one that will allow us to negotiate with those corporations willing to commit themselves to the highest environmental standards. The problem, after all, is not caused by U.S. corporations, but by government decisions driven by a complex cycle of debt, poverty and growing populations.³³

Regret that Conoco had been forced to leave – and concern that less responsible operators might represent a bad alternative – was also voiced by Ecuadorian environmental leaders and senior officials in the Environment Ministry after Kennedy wrote his column. In this case, the standard narrative drove campaign strategy, while completely ignoring the government's weak environmental policies.

Ultimately, the anti-Conoco coalition fractured over indigenous rights and other differences. One group opposed all development in the rainforest; another indicated that it might reluctantly support development outside of the Yasuni Park and Huaorani Reserve, etc.³⁴ Initially, Ecuadorian groups – reflecting a deeper schism in their own society – tended to elevate forest protection over concerns for indigenous land rights. In later years, this view changed, as native rights were elevated to parity with forest preservation.³⁵

2. Myth-Making in the Texaco campaign: the mysterious Tetete³⁶

After Conoco departed, several members of the original coalition turned their attention back to Texaco.³⁷ All three major campaign themes – rainforest destruction, violation of indigenous rights and pollution – played a prominent role in the lawsuit against Texaco, filed in New York in 1993. A new allegation was added: destruction of the Tetete.

The Tetete were a small group of Western Tucanoan speakers living in the Amazonian borderlands between Ecuador and Colombia. Today, their former territory lies within the Cuyabeno Wildlife Reserve, a popular site for ecotourism. From 1877 through the 1920s, however, Ecuadorian rubber collectors worked the area and shot or kidnapped Tetete people whenever they showed themselves. Unlike neighboring groups, the Tetete ultimately chose resistance rather than accommodation or slavery.

Tetete resistance quickly brought greater violence. In 1923, for example, Pedro Palomares, a rubber collector searching for *balata* (the local latex) with his workers, met several Tetete along a stream near the Cuyabeno River. He shot one and the others fled. In 1924, another *cauchero* in the same area was attacked but managed to kill four Teteté. In 1926, three others – including a woman and an old man – were shot near Lake Cuyabeno. Reporting on these events to his superior, Capuchin Fr. Bartolomé de

³³ Robert F. Kennedy Jr., "Driving out Conoco disservice to rain forests," *Washington Post*, August 24, 1992.

³⁴ For an account of these events, see Hall, "Block 16: Conoco's 'Green' Oil Strategy;" also Christopher A. Cummings, "Oil in the Ecuadorian Rainforest: A Primer," New York: Management Institute for Environment and Business, 1993. Joe Kane also reports on NRDC's failed effort to negotiate an agreement with Conoco, in *Savages*, New York: Knopf, 1995, pp. 69-78 and in "With Spears from All Sides," *The New Yorker*, Sept. 27, 1993, p. 54.

³⁵ See Guillaume Fontaine and Iván Narváez, coords., *Yasuni en el Siglo XXI*, Quito: FLACSO, 2007, pp. 101-109; and Fontaine, *El precio del petróleo: Conflictos socio-ambientales y gobernabilidad en la región amazónica*. Quito: FLACSO, 2007, pp. 283-297. According to Fontaine, this transition resulted in formation of a "united front" involving key environmental and indigenous groups. The Frente de Defensa de la Amazonía (FDA) [Amazon Defense Front] continues to coordinate many campaign activities in Ecuador.

³⁶ This section is based upon Robert Wasserstrom, Susan Reider and Rommel Lara, "Nobody Knew Their Name," unpublished manuscript, 2010.

³⁷ Texaco left Ecuador permanently in 1992 after turning its operations over to Petroecuador in 1990.

Igualada wrote that one *cauchero* had recently found a settlement with five houses and estimated that it contained no more than 50 people. “This tribe was more numerous before,” he concluded, “but it has been reduced by disease and attacks by the whites....Every day, [the Teteté] are becoming fiercer.”³⁸

As Tetete numbers and territory shrank, other groups – primarily their neighbors, the Siona – began to spread out. According to William Vickers, Siona settlements typically included 100-300 people who hunted and gardened within a broader range of 1,100 to 1,150 sq. km. “The motive for migration need not be depletion of a local area,” he wrote, “rather, a move after several years at one site tends to enhance the cost-benefit ratio of various subsistence activities because an area with relatively depleted resources is traded for one with relatively abundant resources.”³⁹ By 1940, it seems, they were pushing up against the Tetete.

Then in 1941, this problem suddenly became more acute. A closely related group, the Secoya, migrated from Peru and settled with their Siona relatives on the Cuyabeno and Aguarico Rivers. They, too, needed land and space for hunting. Siona oral tradition recorded a final confrontation between Siona-Secoya and Tetete along the Aguarico: “On a sandbar, the two groups faced each other in long lines and began to fight. Very soon, the Siona won; a few Tetete escaped, others died, and several were wounded...Later, a Siona man found them fishing on Lake Cuyabeno, and they wounded him slightly in the shoulder...After that, we never saw them again.”⁴⁰

Based on interviews in the mid-1970s, Vickers provided a more detailed description: “The actual raid consisted of a typically Amazonian early morning sneak attack in which a number of Tetetes were reported to have been killed. The motive for the attack is said to have been a sorcery accusation that occurred...during a visit that the Tetetes made to the Aguarico people.”⁴¹ Afterward the Tetete withdrew to the isolated headwaters of the Cuyabeno and Pacayacu. In 1945, according to an Eno man who traded with them, they had been reduced to “10 or 12 families, maybe 50 people.”⁴² No one knows what happened over the next 20 years. Occasionally, Cofán and Siona families caught shadowy glimpses of them while collecting turtle eggs or fishing in the Cuyabeno lakes. But no major raids or other contact occurred.

In 1965 or 1966, a Quichua work crew cutting trails for oil exploration in the area stumbled across several Tetete houses but saw no one. In March, 1966, two Capuchin missionaries persuaded the exploration company to take them by helicopter to a temporary landing site nearby.⁴³ They found their way into a Tetete settlement and spent five days with its three inhabitants: two men – one aged around 50, the other

³⁸ Bartolomé de Igualada quoted in Miguel Angel Cabodevilla, *La selva de los fantasmas errantes*, Pompeya, Ecuador: CICAME, 1997, pp. 158-160.

³⁹ William T. Vickers, “The Territorial Dimensions of Siona-Secoya and Encabellado Adaptation,” in Raymond B. Hames and William T. Vickers eds., *Adaptive Responses of Native Amazonians*, New York: Academic Press, 1983, p. 470.

⁴⁰ Fernando Payaguaje, *El bebedor de yajé*, Shushufindi, Ecuador: Ediciones CICAME, 1994, pp. 27-29.

⁴¹ Vickers, “Territorial Dimensions,” p. 475. An alternative version was recorded by Cabodevilla, *Selva*, pp. 174-176. In a Cofán account, collected in Colombia, the Tetete are killed by Cofán villagers to punish them for kidnapping a village woman and her son. Franklin Barriga reported another variant in which soldiers kill the Tetete in reprisal for raiding a group of *caucheros*. See Franklin Barriga López, *Las culturas indígenas ecuatorianas y el Instituto Lingüístico de Verano*, Buenos Aires: Ediciones Amauta, 1992, p. 185.

⁴² Cabodevilla, *Selva*, p.191. This is the last credible estimate of Tetete population that has been found. Subsequent accounts seem to be extrapolated from unoccupied housing sites encountered in the forest. But among the Siona, as Vickers has explained, households often maintain several sites and moved among them periodically. See William T. Vickers, *Cultural Adaptation to Amazonia Habitats: the Siona-Secoya of Eastern Ecuador*, University of Florida, 1976, Ph.D. diss., pp. 170-171.

⁴³ In the 1950s, responsibility for Catholic missions in this area was transferred from Colombian Capuchins to a new Ecuadorian province. Photographs and a detailed account of the visit were published by the Vicariato Apostólico de Aguarico (1989) and summarized by Cabodevilla, pp. 201-203.

around 60 – and an old woman. Unfortunately, they had brought no translators, so they were unable to gather much information. Around 1970, an American Protestant missionary named Bruce Moore interviewed the same three Tetete and confirmed that their language was closely related to Siona.⁴⁴

In 1973, the three Tetete were visited by Moore's colleague Orville Johnson, who lived with the Siona-Secoya. This time Johnson brought three Siona-Secoya assistants; they learned that the survivors were siblings. Their houses were falling apart, the younger man explained, because he had hurt his arm with a machete and was unable to build new ones. Evidently, no other Tetete were available to help him – they seemed to represent a single, isolated household without spouses or children. In any case, they refused to say whether they were alone: talking with former enemies, they were reluctant to admit that they were undefended. By 1975, when Vickers took a census in the area, he counted only 266 Siona-Secoya and no Tetete.⁴⁵

One can only speculate about what occurred within Tetete society between 1941 and 1966, but the comparison with their Western Tucanoan neighbors provides useful clues.⁴⁶ The three old Tetete most likely represented a last extended patrilineal group (“sib”). They slept in two houses, suggesting that they belonged to two closely related nuclear families and called each other “brother” and “sister.” Maybe their own spouses and children had already died, but it is also possible that they had never married. Already by 1945, the Tetete population numbered around 50 people, perhaps involving only one or two extended patrilineal households. Depending on how strictly they applied marriage rules, they may have lacked any partners at all.

Similar stories can be found throughout the western Amazon wherever rubber was king in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries.⁴⁷ But unlike other groups, the Tetete left a unique legacy. In 1987, foreign oil companies were accused of exterminating 30,000 Tetete.⁴⁸ Since then, this accusation has been repeated by advocacy groups and a few academic researchers – sometimes implicating the oil companies directly, sometimes claiming more vaguely that genocide took place in areas that were explored for oil (see Appendix 2). It has become a sort of modern “black legend” that obscures the far more complex story of Tetete extermination and appropriates them into a narrative where foreign missionaries and oil companies became the main perpetrators of evil.

3. ARCO: Indigenous organizations take on their own campaign

In 1988, ARCO was granted oil exploration rights in Block 10, which included many lowland Quichua communities affiliated with OPIP. Soon, RAN began to circulate allegations of indigenous rights violations and environmental degradation.⁴⁹

⁴⁴ Barriga, *Las culturas indígenas ecuatorianas*, p. 185.

⁴⁵ Vickers, “Ideation as Adaptation: Traditional Belief and Modern Intervention in Siona-Secoya Religion,” in Norman E. Whitten, Jr., ed., *Cultural Transformations and Ethnicity in Modern Ecuador*, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981, p. 705.

⁴⁶ Even Siona who lived through the “war” recognized their similarity to the Teteté. “They were the same as us,” one old Siona woman told Cabodevilla. “If they hadn’t [attacked], they would have become civilized like us...They spoke the same language. I think they would have been living with us.” See Cabodevilla, *Selva*, p. 176.

⁴⁷ Over the past 20 years, a large body of research has examined the rubber boom and its impact on native peoples, most famously the Huitoto in Colombia. For a discussion of this research, consult Michael Edward Stanfield *Red Rubber, Bleeding Trees*. 1998, Albuquerque, New Mexico: University of New Mexico Press and Jonathan D. Hill, “Indigenous Peoples and the Rise of Independent Nation-States in Lowland South America,” in Frank Salomon and Stuart B. Schwartz, eds. *The Cambridge History of the Native Peoples of the Americas. Part III. South America. Part 2*, Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1999, pp.747-757.

⁴⁸ Cabodevilla, *Selva*, p. 16.

⁴⁹ The best case study of this controversy can be found in Guillaume Fontaine, *Análisis y evaluación de la gestión de los conflictos en el Bloque 10 (Ecuador)*, Quito: FLACSO, 2004.

In April, 1989, officials from Petroecuador, ARCO and CGC, the seismic contractor, were held involuntarily by OPIP-backed community members in the village of Sarayacu until they signed “accords” that committed the government to ending agricultural colonization in the area. The Sarayacu Accords also called for resolution of disputed land claims between native communities and settlers and demanded a 15-year moratorium on petroleum exploration.

Another controversial provision involved recognizing native territories with semi-autonomous political status and imposing a levy on oil production to support indigenous development. One indigenous leader described the Sarayacu Accords as a way of “telling the government that they needed to begin a dialogue with Indian organizations on the country’s oil policy and natural resources.”⁵⁰

This dialogue never took place. The government refused to repeal its settlement laws or grant political autonomy to Pastaza’s indigenous territories. And relations between ARCO and local communities remained rocky. In 1990, the company drilled an exploration well near Moretecocha and agreed to provide local people with a school and other infrastructure. But within a few months, villagers blocked construction of an airstrip and demanded additional benefits. Meanwhile, ARCO drilled another well near Villano and moved its operations there. Moretecocha was left with little to show for its efforts.

In Villano, oil development brought other conflicts to the surface. Local leaders decided that their first priority should be to maximize benefits from the company, rather than pursue OPIP’s broader agenda of territorial autonomy. In 1993, they withdrew from OPIP and formed an “Intercommunal Directorate” (later the Association for Indigenous Development, Amazon Region, ASODIRA) to negotiate with ARCO. OPIP’s leadership was largely Catholic, while ASODIRA was led by young Protestants. In fact, similar differences had also been exacerbated a territorial dispute between Moretecocha and Sarayacu, which only became worse when ARCO drilled its well on land assigned by the government to Moretecocha.⁵¹

During subsequent international campaigns against ARCO, OPIP and its allies claimed that the company used “divide and conquer tactics” to split the indigenous movement in Pastaza – specifically, to hivel ASODIRA off from OPIP.⁵² Such events really reflected deeper fault lines within the indigenous political movement. Like other Amazonian federations, OPIP had done a good job in winning land titles and other concessions for its members from a reluctant central government.

But once these objectives had been achieved, OPIP was perceived by many of its member communities as being out of touch with its base. In particular, Villano and other communities did not support OPIP’s demand for regional autonomy. They were more concerned with bread-and-butter issues: they wanted ARCO to bankroll community development and were not interested in sharing benefits with other OPIP members. In her study of the Block 10 case, Sharman Haley provides this description:

The lack of effective institutions and services in the Villano communities also affected their time horizon. Prior to the services provided by ARCO, the communities had very little in the way of basic health, education, transportation, and communication services. It would have been very difficult for them to hold out and bargain for future, long-term sustainable benefits.⁵³

⁵⁰ Mendez et. al., pp. 15-16.

⁵¹ Mendez et. al., p. 18.

⁵² Mendez et al., p. 18; Sawyer, *Crude Chronicles*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2004, p. 4.

⁵³ Sharman Haley, “Institutional Assets for Negotiating the Terms of Development: Indigenous Collective Action and Oil in Ecuador and Alaska,” *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, Chicago: University of Chicago, 2004, p. 202.

On one occasion, the differences between regional and local groups nearly ended in violence. ASODIRA and its members wanted ARCO to build road from their communities to national highway system at Puyo, 35 kilometers away. They also wanted the company to help them transport cattle because they intended to cut down the rainforest for pasture. OPIP opposed both of these measures, as did ARCO. Just before the Villano well was completed, a few ASODIRA members held three company employees hostage for ten days to demand a road. OPIP helped to arrange an escape, and the conflict passed.⁵⁴ The road was never built.

The campaign against ARCO continued until 1999, when the Villano well began production. Long before then, ARCO had agreed to convene a “Technical Environmental Committee” (TEC) that included representatives of ASODIRA, OPIP and its regional Protestant counterpart to oversee Villano operations. Nonetheless, environmental groups continued to charge ARCO with greenwashing and poor social performance: “[F]orming the Environmental Committee served as a foil for deflecting criticism and flaunting ARCO’s environmental and community consciousness to the rest of the world.”⁵⁵

This perspective was not shared by the indigenous leaders who participated in the TEC. “We have from the beginning helped the (ARCO) project,” one Villano community leader told Haley, while also acknowledging its difficulties. “Despite this, for us it has been a difficult process for the simple reason that there was no established procedure for working, negotiating and cooperating, neither for the company nor for the indigenous people.”⁵⁶ The complexity of relationships among and between various actors in the ARCO project and the larger political environment is captured in the drawing made by a facilitator (a professor at the Catholic University) in one of the Committee’s workshops (see Appendix 3).⁵⁷

Challenges for the Future: Ethnogenesis, Representativeness and Credibility

But let's get the story straight. God created Earth, and later created oil, but until the 1950s he left Lago Agrio to its natural ways. Actually, Lago Agrio did not even exist in the 1950s. It did not have a name. It was an uncharted wilderness along the Aguarico River—a forest Eden roamed by small groups of naked Indians, some of whom believed that the only real world is the world of dreams. They hunted with blowguns, drank hallucinogenic brews, made love in the jungle, and sometimes shrank enemy heads.⁵⁸

This fanciful account has enjoyed amazing longevity in popular narratives about the Amazon. But the reality, of course, was different.

Before 1540, a dozen distinct ethnic groups lived in Ecuador's northeastern lowlands, apparently enduring in one form or another for two thousand years before the Spanish arrived. Yet life was never easy. As the historian Michael Stanfield has written,

The 'White Rivers' of western Amazonia could, and did, support a relatively greater concentration of human inhabitants [than other parts]; however, competition for control and access to the best hunting, gathering and agricultural lands did set off violent clashes between clans and tribes. Those peoples who could not protect their lands along the rich

⁵⁴ Fontaine, *Análisis y evaluación*.

⁵⁵ Sawyer, *Crude Chronicles*, p. 144.

⁵⁶ Hector Mayancho, President of ASODIRA, quoted in Sharman Haley’s unpublished manuscript, “Communities and Corporations: Leveraging Oil and Gas for Sustainable Local Development,” July 9, 2002, p. 16.

⁵⁷ Pablo Ortíz, “Metodologías Participativas de Tratamiento de Conflictos Socioambientales,” presented at the Taller de Apoyo en Capacitación para los Miembros del Comité Técnico Ambiental (Bloque 10), March 11-13, 1997.

⁵⁸ William Langewiesche, “The Next Big Environmental David-and-Goliath Trial,” *Vanity Fair*, April 4, 2007.

rivers were pushed into forests with poorer soils and less game. But even the victors of such struggles in a delicate ecosystem could not settle permanently in one area; protein sources and crop yields declined after a few years requiring migrations to new lands.⁵⁹

In Ecuador, disease, slavery, competition for ever-shrinking resources and missionization resulted in a drop in native Amazonian populations from approximately 250,000 in 1540 to a few hundred in 1940.⁶⁰ Since 1955, however, as health care has become more generally available, the populations of the Cofan, Siona-Secoya and Huaorani communities have grown at the same rate as other Ecuadorians.⁶¹ Notwithstanding, the standard narrative prefers a fiction: “Five indigenous groups in the region have lost 95% of their ancestral land and seen dramatic declines in their populations. These groups – the Cofan, Secoya, Siona, Kichwa, and Huaorani – had prospered in the rainforest for centuries before Texaco’s arrival.”⁶²

The standard narrative is false in other ways. Deforestation in the northern *Oriente* has occurred because of government policies favoring colonization.⁶³ This trend occurred wherever access roads were built – within oil production zones or outside them.⁶⁴

Nonetheless, oil development poses important questions for native communities and their allies. Issues of accountability and representativeness remain to be resolved by indigenous and environmentalist organizations in Ecuador. For indigenous federations, this has been a continuous challenge, even as their political reach has expanded. According to Judith Kimerling,

...political participation through political parties has weakened – and dispersed – the organized indigenous movement by shifting the priorities of many leaders away from the needs of local communities (who feel abandoned) to the pursuit of public office, and by fomenting corruption and the emergence of an indigenous political elite that is isolated from indigenous communities. At the same time, considerable external pressures have been applied by private and public actors in an effort to use and divide indigenous organizations.⁶⁵

Tactically, it may be easier for advocacy groups to focus their campaigns on international companies rather than to press for fundamental changes in Ecuadorian policy or governance. But they run the risk of dividing the indigenous movement or exacerbating existing conflicts. On a case by case basis, individual communities or regional organizations may choose to engage with oil companies as development partners, rather than as adversaries.

Engagement presents challenges of its own. Consider this example, described by anthropologists Clay and Carole Robarchek. In 1993, they attended a *congreso* of the Huaorani federation, ONHAE.⁶⁶ They

⁵⁹ Stanfield, *Red Rubber, Bleeding Trees*, p. 4. Jorge Trujillo provides a dramatic account of Záparo expulsion from the Napo River Basin by invading Huaorani. See “Colonización en la región amazónica ecuatoriana,” unpublished report prepared for Entrix, Quito, 2007, pp. 14-15.

⁶⁰ Laura Rival, *Trekking Through History*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2002.

⁶¹ Robert Wasserstrom, “Indigenous Population Trends in the Northern Oriente of Ecuador,” unpublished manuscript, 2008.

⁶² Amazon Defense Coalition/Winter 2009, “Understanding the Lawsuit Behind ‘Crude.’ Background Information on Aguinda v. ChevronTexaco,” www.chevrontoxico.com, pp. 2-3.

⁶³ Rudel, pp. 69-70. See also Mario Hiraoko and Shozo Yamamoto, “Agricultural Development in the Upper Amazon of Ecuador,” *Geographical Review*, Vol. 70(4), p. 427.

⁶⁴ Wasserstrom, “Roads, Oil,” p. 14.

⁶⁵ Kimerling, *International Law and Politics*, p. 433.

⁶⁶ Organization of the Huaorani Nationality of the Ecuadorian Amazon, which was renamed Nationality Waorani of Ecuador in 2007.

note that both the government and “the Company” (in this case, Maxus) deliberately encouraged a process of “ethnogenesis” (in the form of a new tribal organization) because

it is very useful politically to have official Waorani ‘representatives’...whose signatures on official documents can be displayed as evidence of Waorani approval. This gives at least the appearance of an indigenous voice in the agreements that are being ‘negotiated.’ But saying that there has been support from the government and the Company in creating ONHAE is not to imply that there is sufficient support to make it *effective*. Moreover, these emerging ‘leaders’ are very young and unsophisticated. They are vulnerable to all sorts of threats and blandishments. And of course, this is still a society whose culture stresses that one’s own best interests and those of one’s kindred are primary. When funds are offered or at hand, it is very difficult for these officers to ignore demands from their own kindreds.⁶⁷

Representativeness has become an issue in almost all cases where oil companies have sought access to native land, and will no doubt remain a challenge for indigenous federations that demand recognition as legitimate representatives of native communities.⁶⁸ It has been sometimes difficult, and nearly impossible, to reconcile the broader political agenda often advocated by federation leaders with the views of local communities that may be more concerned with day-to-day subsistence.

Yet federation leaders make an important point:

Despite CONAIE and Pachakutik’s triumph in this endeavor (the 1998 constitution), government implementation of the policy has not exactly been consistent with the outline in that new constitution and the indigenous organizations have struggled since 1998. In cases such as ARCO’s deal to exploit oil resources in the Amazon, the government has totally ignored these new indigenous rights and sold communal land to be developed without another thought. Such violations have become commonplace and the reformation of the constitution seems in many ways to have just been a populist tactic used by the government to appease the indigenous groups while continuing to persistently pursue its neoliberal agenda. Because of this there has been an increasing amount of tension and differences of opinion within the indigenous movement, both between Pachakutik and CONAIE and within CONAIE itself. There even exists frustration among local tribes and the efforts of CONAIE because of the inability to stop the aggression of the government despite all that had been achieved.⁶⁹

Another example:

In August 2005 CONAIE called for action among indigenous peoples in the Sucumbios and Orellana provinces to protest political repression, Petrobras’ attempt to expand their petroleum extracting activities to the Yasuní National Park, and the general activities of Occidental Petroleum in the Amazon. Hundreds of protestors from the Amazon region took control of airports and oil installations in the two provinces for five days...Protestors have gone on record

⁶⁷ Robarchek, *Waorani*, p. 170.

⁶⁸ From 1996 to 1999, Occidental Petroleum negotiated with the entire Secoya community for access to a potential drilling site on communal land, because the community did not trust any of its members to represent it and make decisions on its behalf. For an account of this case, see Vickers, “Modern Political Transformation,” pp. 61-63.

⁶⁹ Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador, Wikipedia, July 23, 2010.

as saying that they want oil revenues to be redirected toward society, making way for more jobs and greater expenditures in infrastructure.⁷⁰

Clearly, many indigenous leaders are not opposed to oil development, but expect a seat at the table as partners in development strategies for their lands. Environmental activists opposed to oil activity in Ecuador will always find allies at many levels, but are likely to face opposition from indigenous organizations that take a more nuanced position on development. As Rebecca Reider (no relation to the author) notes, “Environmental groups working with the indigenous anti-oil movement should be mindful that supporting these movements is one part of a regional sustainable development strategy, not an automatic route to forest preservation.”⁷¹

Environmental and indigenous leaders have effectively focused the world’s attention on the impacts of Ecuadorian government policies, including oil development that occurred without effective environmental oversight or community consultation. But in order to assure their future success, they will need to maintain credibility as they – and their standard narrative -- will inevitably be scrutinized by the news media, academic specialists and others. The tactic of myth-making, which brought attention at the expense of greater conflict, seems overdue for retirement.

Date: August 9, 2010

⁷⁰ Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador, Wikipedia, July 23, 2010

⁷¹ Rebecca Reider, “Oil and Chicha: Indigenous Movements and Survival in the Ecuadorian Amazon,” *Tropical Resources Bulletin*, Vol, 24, Spring, 2005, p. 84.

Map: Ecuador
 (original Texpet oil production area shown in green)



Appendix 1: Milestones in Government Policy, Indigenous and Environmental Activism in Ecuador

Year	Event
1964	Government opens “untitled” areas in <i>Oriente</i> to settlers; also allows indigenous communities and others to receive “unclaimed” or underutilized land formerly owned by private <i>haciendas</i> . Federación Shuar is founded in southern <i>Oriente</i> to defend traditional territory from highland migrants.
1967	Texaco announces major petroleum discovery in Napo Province.
1972	Texaco begins production at Lago Agrio and Shushufindi fields. First indigenous organization (ECUARUNARI) founded in highlands to seek land titles and political rights.
1974	Agrarian Reform Law revised; effectively requires homesteaders to clear 50% of their land for titling.
1975	Federation of Indigenous Organizations in Napo (FOIN) founded.
1978	Government adopts “Amazon Region Settlement Act,” declaring most of <i>Oriente</i> to be public land and encouraging highland dwellers to resettle there.
1979	Organization of Indigenous Peoples of Pastaza (OPIP) formed.
1980	FOIN, OPIP and Federación Shuar form Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of the Ecuadorian Amazon (CONFENIAE).
1984	Government leases Block 15, including part of the Cuyabeno Wildlife Reserve, to Occidental Petroleum Company.
1986	CONFENIAE AND ECUARUNARI form Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE). Conoco signs exploration agreement for Block 16, including part of Yasuni National Park and Huaorani Reserve.
1988	International campaign against Conoco begins. ARCO awarded exploration rights in Block 10, which includes Villano. OPIP forms “base group” in Villano.
1989	First international campaign against Texaco begins. ARCO’s seismic contractor and Petroecuador employees “kidnapped” at Sarayacu.
1990	CONAIE organizes first “National Indian Uprising” protesting government failure to meet past commitments to indigenous citizens.

	International campaign against ARCO begins.
1991	Conoco leaves Ecuador, Block 16 transferred to Maxus (subsequently bought by YPF, now part of Repsol).
1992	International campaign against Maxus begins. OPIP organizes march on Quito to demand “plurinational territory” in Pastaza and single land title for all indigenous communities there (not separate titles for each community). ARCO announces Villano discovery. Settlers in Pastaza strike against adjudication of single land title to OPIP. Government subsequently issues 19 communal land titles to indigenous communities in province.
1993	Communities near Villano form DICIP (later ASODIRA) to negotiate with ARCO for benefits. Lawsuit against Texaco filed by Napo residents.
1994	OPIP, CONFENIAE AND CONAIE occupy Ministry of Energy and Mines in Quito to protest exclusion of indigenous representatives from development planning, as well as from the 7 th Petroleum Bid Round. CONAIE organizes “Mobilization for Life” to protest new Agricultural Development Law that transfers communally held land to individual property owners. Also demands moratorium on future oil development.
1996	Eight indigenous representatives of a new political party Pachakutic, elected to Congress.
1997	International campaign against Occidental begins.
1998	Ecuador adopts a new constitution that requires indigenous landowners to be consulted and share in benefits of resource development.
2000	International campaign against Burlington begins. International campaign against EnCana begins. President Jamil Mahuad deposed by a triumvirate, including one CONAIE representative.
2001	International campaign OCP (Heavy Oil Pipeline) Consortium begins.
2003	Amazon Defense Front calls for moratorium on future oil development. Texaco lawsuit dismissed by U.S. federal court; a new suit is filed in Ecuador.

Appendix 2: Chronology of the Tetete Murder Myth

1987 “Oil companies murdered 30,000 Tetete.” Edison Viteri, CONFENIAE news conference, Quito. Repeated in newspaper accounts (Cabodevilla, *Selva*, p. 16).

1994 “The last indigenous Tetete were also driven away from the area. That displacement is widely believed to have hastened their extinction as a people.” See Judith Kimerling, “Dislocation,” p. 8.

1994 “Texaco’s first well was drilled in Lago Agrio, site of a village of the Tetete people, an indigenous group that is now extinct.” Glenn Switkes, “The People vs. Texaco,” *NACLA Report on the Americas* 28:2, September-October 1994, p. 9.

1995 “A 1987 study by the Ecuadoran government warned that oil development led by Texaco had placed the local indigenous groups ‘at the edge of extinction as a distinct people.’ Indeed, at least one group, the Tetetes, has completely disappeared in the wake of Texaco’s activities, and the Cofan population has been reduced from 15,000 to about 300 people.” See Chris Jochnik, “Texaco’s Devastating Search for Amazon Crude,” *Albion Monitor.com*. November 14, 1995.

1996 “Lack of resistance to disease is also a major problem for indigenous communities, the Tetete people disappearing completely after Texaco started operations in what is now Lago Agrio, Ecuador.” Gerald Coffey, Elizabeth Bravo and Esperanza Martinez, eds., *Oilwatch*, Quito: Oilwatch-Accion Ecologica, 1996, p. 78.

1997 Miguel Angel Cabodevilla publishes *La selva de los fantasmas errantes*, chronicling Tetete history since the 16th Century. His book, widely known in Ecuador, documents their slow disappearance throughout the early 20th Century and specifically disputes the standard narrative developed by activists.

1999 “One tragic result was the push into extinction of the Tetete people, a small indigenous group which in the mid-sixties was believed to have approximately 25 members and which, after a decade of oil development on their lands, was believed to have been wiped out by disease, contamination and/or hunger.” Paul Little, “Political Ecology as Ethnography: the Case of Ecuador’s Aguarico River Basin,” Brasilia: Universidad de Brasilia, Departamento de Antropología. Instituto de Ciencias Sociales, Serie Antropológica 258, 1999, p. 6.

2001 “Meanwhile, another western Tukanoan group, the Tetetes, who by the 1960s had been reduced to a few survivors, was pushed into extinction when the oil companies expanded onto their lands.” Little, *Amazonia Territorial Struggles on Perennial Frontiers*, 2001, p. 97.

2009 “A sixth indigenous group, the Tetete, disappeared altogether during Texaco’s reign of environmental destruction.” Amazon Defense Coalition/Winter 2009, Understanding the Lawsuit Behind ‘Crude.’ Background Information on Aguinda v. ChevronTexaco. www.chevrontoxico.com; pp. 2-3.

2010 “Oil extraction in the Amazon has already caused the extinction of the Tetete and Zaparo nationalities and continues to threaten indigenous peoples.” CONAIE website, July, 2010.

Appendix 3: Facilitator's Diagram of Villano Stakeholders
 (CTA indicates the Technical Environmental Committee)

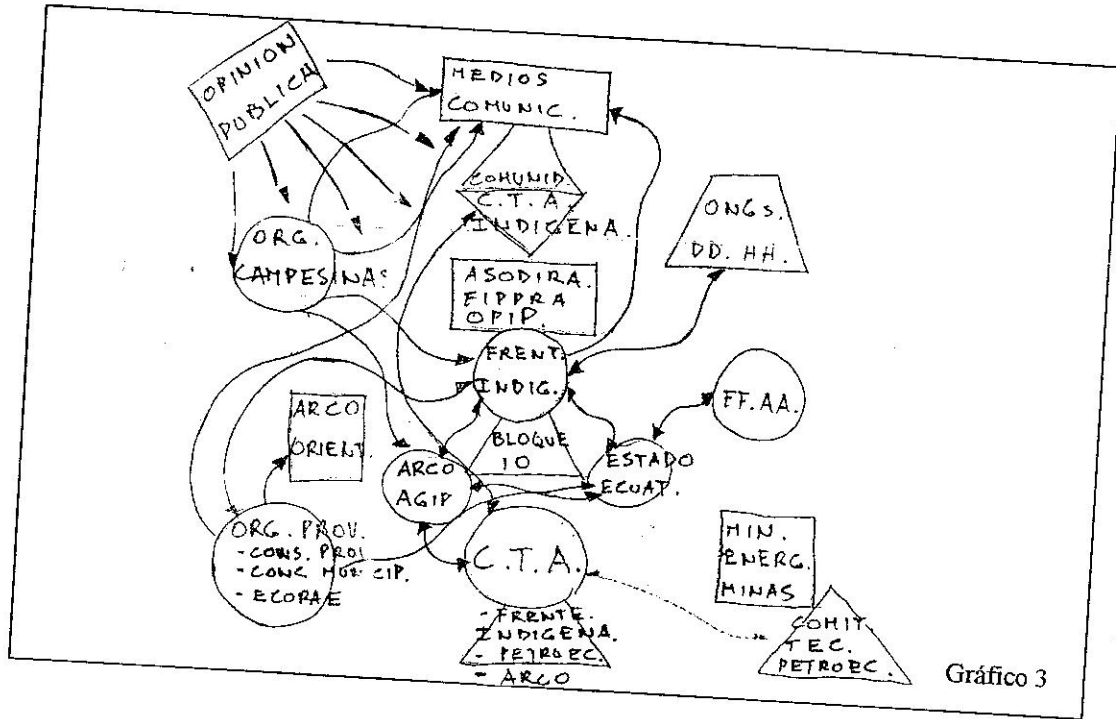


Gráfico 3

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