

NARRATIVES OF RESISTANCE: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC VIEW OF THE
EMERGENCE OF THE HUAORANI WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION IN THE
ECUADORIAN AMAZON

By

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Abstract of Thesis Presented to the Graduate School
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Indigenous groups of Amazonian Ecuador started organizing in the 1970s as a reaction to oil exploitation in the region, becoming a central issue in the political agenda of the Ecuadorian Amazonian indigenous movement. The Huaorani followed this trend with the creation of ONHAE, the Organization of the Huaorani Nationality of the Ecuadorian Amazon, which is also linked to the umbrella organization of the national indigenous movement.

The Huaorani are hunter-gatherer horticulturalists that have been described by ethnographers as an egalitarian society with a flexible sexual division of labor and lacking in hierarchical structures. However, through contact and cross-cultural interactions with the national society and more specifically, with missionaries and the impact of oil exploitation, this society has undergone changes in social structure. These changes are interrelated and have resulted in the deterioration of the living conditions of the Huaorani in general and of Huaorani women in particular. Huaorani women started organizing within the Huaorani organization, ONHAE, during 2002 and by 2005 they had

their own legalized association, AMWAE, the Association of Waorani Women of the Ecuadorian Amazon.

This study seeks to understand the emergence of this association and to analyze its functions and objectives. The emergence of AMWAE is analyzed through the narratives of its leaders from which I draw out the main driving factors behind its creation. I argue that the emergence of AMWAE can be understood by a combination of factors, some conjunctural and some related to the discontent of women with their subordination in formal leadership and their lack of access to income generating opportunities.

Moreover, I discuss AMWAE's structure, funding, networking and interactions with other social actors, highlighting its relations with ONHAE. I also analyze AMWAE's functions and objectives, and the principal concerns of its leadership as well as of members in the base communities, paying special attention to those that have the potential of transforming the existing gender relations, such as formal education. To complement the study of Huaorani women leaders, I explore the expectations and perceptions of AMWAE at the community level. The expressed concerns of the base are analyzed as demands, and they generally coincide with the objectives of the organization. Finally, while AMWAE's agenda cannot be considered feminist and AMWAE leaders do not engage in such a discourse, there were expressed concerns by AMWAE leaders that are related to gender issues as seen in terms of some of the driving factors behind the emergence of the association. These demands challenge current gender relations and are also related to the impact of cross-cultural interactions on traditional Huaorani customs and practices.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AMWAE	Asociación de Mujeres Waorani de la Amazonía Ecuatoriana
CAIMAN	Conservación de Áreas Indígenas Manejadas
CODENPE	Consejo de Desarrollo de las Nacionalidades y Pueblos del Ecuador
CONACNIE	Consejo Nacional de Coordinación de las Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador
CONAICE	Confederación de las Nacionalidades Indígenas de la Costa Ecuatoriana
CONAIE	Confederación de las Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador
CONAMU	Consejo Nacional de Mujeres
CONFENIAE	Confederación de las Nacionalidades Indígenas de la Amazonía Ecuatoriana
CONMIE	Consejo Nacional de Mujeres Indígenas del Ecuador
ECUARUNARI	Ecuador Runacunapac Riccharimui - Movimientos de Campesinos de Ecuador
FED	Fundación Ecuatoriana de Desarrollo
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
MUPP-NP	Movimiento de Unidad Plurinacional Pachakutik - Nuevo País
ONHAE	Organización Huaorani de la Amazonía Ecuatoriana
OPIP	Organización de Pueblos Indígenas de Pastaza
PRODEPINE	Proyectos de Desarrollo para Pueblos Indígenas y Negros del Ecuador
SIL	Summer Institute of Linguistics
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

When I designed my research proposal, the objectives were quite different from the research project that I ended up carrying out. I had been interested in the indigenous movement in the Ecuadorian Amazonian from the time of my undergraduate studies. I had also developed a particular interest in the Huaorani case, first, through the constant media references to their struggle regarding territorial rights and natural resources; and second, by the problematic and complex ways they are represented in the media. These representations are linked to the place the Huaorani have occupied in the national, Ecuadorian imagery. As noted by Whitten (1978) the Huaorani “(han sido) conocidos, principalmente, por mitos falsos y distorsionados que presentan su cultura a través de los ojos de quienes tratan de convertirla y subvertirla” [(have been) known mainly by false myths and distortions that present their culture through the eyes of those who want to convert and subvert it]. Moreover, these representations “tienen su origen en la voluntad misma de construir una identidad nacional frente al Otro distante” [have their origin in the very will of constructing a national identity in front of the distant Other (Rival 1994: 253).

In my original proposal I wanted to focus on the strategies through which the Huaorani configure their political action. I was seeking a better understanding of how they define and distinguish themselves with respect to other social actors, such as the environmentalist movement and the regional and national indigenous organizations. I was interested in how relations with these allies shape their discourse and priorities. The purpose of the study was thus to analyze the claims and demands of the Huaorani, examine their prime motivations for political activism and explain the reconfiguration of

a Huaorani identity and emergence of political consciousness. Two factors, however, led me in a different direction. The first was finding a book by Lawrence Ziegler-Otero (2004), the product of doctoral dissertation research, which dealt exactly with my issues. The second was that I had been in contact with a Huaorani leader via e-mail who had mentioned that there was an upcoming assembly of the Huaorani women's association. I was not aware of its existence since it had just been created in 2005. This changed my focus and my research objective became understanding what had led to the emergence of the Huaorani women's association, AMWAE (Asociación de Mujeres Huaorani de la Amazonia Ecuatoriana), and analyzing its functions. To put my research in context, in the following I briefly outline the organizing efforts of indigenous women in Latin America and particularly, in Ecuador.

Olivera (2005) describes the organizing of indigenous women in Latin America as a reaction to external influences, which she associates with the dynamic of capital and national institutions that tend to subordinate women in the context of their insertion in this process. However, it is difficult to make generalizing statements regarding indigenous peoples, whose insertion in this new political and social order is never complete as it encounters various forms of resistance. Olivera (2005) also identifies a contradiction between their traditional cosmovision and the dynamic of capital that is imposed hidden in the “valores, políticas, y discursos del progreso, del desarrollo y de la modernidad, primero del liberalismo nacionalista y ahora del neoliberalismo imperial, que inconscientemente han ido introyectando en sus subjetividades los indígenas que forman parte de población dominada por el sistema nacional” [values, politics and discourses on progress, development and modernity, first from nationalist liberalism and

now from imperialist neo-liberalism that unconsciously interject in the subjectivities of indigenous peoples that are part of the population dominated by the national system] (Olivera 2005: 315).

The growth and consolidation of both the indigenous and women's movement in Latin America coincide with the rise to dominance of neo-liberal governments in the region, that is, it is a product of the 1990s (Deere and León 2001). In the case of Ecuador, the Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador (CONAIE) was created in the late 1980s and became a strong social actor nationally in the early 1990s. In the country, a large proportion of the women face a double discrimination for being women and because of their ethnicity. Community women's organizations first emerge during the 1980s throughout Ecuador, along with middle class feminist groups and NGOs focused on women's issues. By the end of the 1980s out of the five hundred to eight hundred such groups existing in the country there were approximately fifty to sixty women's organizations that had obtained legal status to acquire funding and support from the government and international development organizations (Lind 2002). Lind argues that while these formal and informal organizations have played important national and local roles they have little formal economic support from the state (2002).

As for the institutional achievements of the women's movement, after many years of struggle some of their demands become rights guaranteed in the constitution that was a product of the 1998 constituent assembly. The 1998 constitution also granted a set of collective rights to indigenous and afro descendant peoples. However, the struggle against inequalities affecting women and especially indigenous and afro descendant women is ongoing.

In 1980 the National Office of Women was created within the Ministry of Social Welfare so as to provide an institutional platform to develop proposals that would have a positive impact on women. While the Ecuadorian state has signed international agreements for the improvement of women's condition, the incorporation of women to positions of power has been slow compared to other Latin American countries. This situation undergoes a significant change with the emergence of the women's movement in the late 1980s. In 1997 the Office became the CONAMU, the National Council of Ecuadorian Women, responding to an obligation undertaken by the Ecuadorian state after the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing 1995. Institutional autonomy and participation in decision making at the highest levels is considered necessary by the women's movement as well as by the leaders of CONAMU in order to contribute to the promotion of equal opportunities and the human rights of women. CONAMU works in the elaboration of public policies for the benefit of women and it legally recognizes all women's organizations.

However, the case of Ecuador seems to portray a disconnect between women's and indigenous movements (Prieto 1998). The indigenous movement, represented by CONAIE, which considers itself a mixed-sex organization, emphasizes unity in its struggle for the recognition of their rights as indigenous peoples and nationalities while considering women's issues within this framework. However, this does not mean developing a specific agenda toward directly modifying gender relations. Moreover, the leaders reject a feminist agenda, which they regard as an external and imperialist imposition (Prieto 1998).

The Consejo Nacional de Mujeres Indigenas del Ecuador (CONMIE), created in 1998, is an example of the growing consideration of women's issues within the discourse of indigenous women leaders. CONMIE was the first women's indigenous organization at the national level and was the initiative of a group of women activists who wanted to unify the "secretarias de la mujer" (women's secretariats) of five mixed-sex organizations. This group of women sought autonomy and equality because they felt dissatisfied within mixed-sex organizations where mostly men tend to hold positions of power. These women were leaders of CONAIE and other indigenous organizations who wanted to focus on women's issues. Since they believed they were not given the same importance and opportunities for participating in the political process as were the male leaders, they decided to create CONMIE. The goal of this organization is to struggle for gender equity while keeping its nexus within the structure of the broader indigenous movement (Prieto 2005).

In my research I intended to find out if in the case of AMWAE these same forces were also at play. However, an aspect that stands out regarding Huaorani traditional society was its comparatively egalitarian social organization, in which, as it has been stated by ethnographers (Rival 1996, 2002, Lu 1999, Robarchecks 1998) they did not engage in hierarchical relations. Interactions with the national society have had impacts on Huaorani society that include changes in social structures and gender relations. Thus, I wanted to know what meaning could the creation of AMWAE hold and what implications it carried. Was the creation of AMWAE related to changes in gender roles? Would the creation of AMWAE implicate a reivindication of Huaorani traditional values on social organization?

In an attempt to understand why indigenous women do not see themselves represented by the discourse nor structures of the so called women's movement, Emma Cervone et al. (1998) conducted a research project that focused on feminine leadership among Quichua populations of the Andean and Amazonian regions. Their study sees feminine leadership as a bridge between gender and ethnicity (Cervone et al. 1998).

Before delving further into feminine leadership, it is important to review briefly what constitutes a women's movement, since there are opposing views on what constitutes such a movement (Molyneux 2003). On the one hand, there are women's movements that are clearly identifiable, have a political program and a large number of followers. On the other hand, there are more diffuse ways of women's political activism that includes clubs, groups or networks. It is hard to set boundaries between these two types of movements because many times the latter evolve into the former. However, Molyneux (2003) prefers to refer to movements as those which have a broader scale and impact. Moreover, the literature suggests that independent grassroots mobilizations even if small-scale and directed towards basic needs, can be considered as a movement because of their global concurrence (Molyneux 2003).

Yet another concept is that of "women *in* movement" elaborated by Rowbotham (1992) that refers to the phenomenon of women who act collectively to reach common objectives, be these "feminist" or not. This concept is defined outside of the model of women's movements that are autonomous and that express gender interests. However, "women *in* movement" constitutes perhaps the most important part of feminine solidarity in most parts of the world (Molyneux 2003).

The concept of “women *in* movement” fits well with the study of feminine leadership carried out by Cervone et al. (1998) that proposes this as the bridge between gender and ethnic activism in Ecuador. Likewise, I propose that the activism of Huaorani women fits more into this framework. The study on indigenous feminine leadership by Cervone et al consists of four case studies, three from the Highlands and one from the Amazonian region. The objective of the Amazonian case study by Garcés (1998), similar to the objective of my study on Huaorani women, is to define the factors that contribute to indigenous feminine leadership and the challenges and problems faced in the practice of this role. The authors identify common factors leading to feminine leadership in the highlands and the Amazon. These include the combination of formal education and a process of ethnogenesis, being bilingual, and being exposed to the sphere of ethnic organizations that grant the opportunity for women to develop as leaders (Prieto 1998). I hypothesize that these factors can coincide in a general way with those that contribute to the development of leaders among the Huaorani women.

A key analytical tool for the study of women’s movements includes the distinction between practical and strategic gender interests. Practical gender interests are based in the fulfillment of the basic needs of women within a given gender division of labor. Strategic gender interests include demands “para transformar las relaciones sociales con el fin de potenciar la posición de las mujeres y conseguir un reposicionamiento mas duradero dentro del ordenamiento de género y la sociedad en general” [to transform social relations aiming to strengthen of women’s position and achieve a long lasting repositioning within the current gender relations and the society in general, my translation] (Molyneux 2003: 237). The purpose of this distinction is to highlight the

differences between diverse ways of confronting gender relations. Practical gender interests assume the existing gender relations as a given while trying to improve women's conditions within such. Strategic gender interests, however, explicitly question such relations (Molyneux 2003: 242).

The creation of AMWAE is a new phenomenon and this thesis is the first study of Huaorani women's activism and of the type of interests expressed by their leadership. It provides an opportunity to inform the discussion of women's issues inside indigenous organizations. Prieto (1998) states that the debate over these issues are centered on two basic positions. Some indigenous women argue that a gendered agenda within the organizations is not necessary because the indigenous world is egalitarian and the ethnic discourse equally represents both men and women. The second position, advanced by some indigenous women with formal education, is that women need to establish their own agenda inside the indigenous movement. This position recognizes the unequal and hierarchical relations between men and women that must be addressed by the indigenous movement and prioritizes equality in opportunities to positions of power in leadership (Prieto 1998). A third position of indigenous women that must be taken in consideration is highlighted by Deere and León (2001), which says that women need their own autonomous organizations as the only way for them to act on their own demands and to develop the leadership capabilities that will lead to women's empowerment. Through this study, I hope to contribute to this debate by analyzing the case of Huaorani women's activism.

Methodology: In order to carry out my field research, I spent two months living in Puyo, capital of the province of Pastaza, where the AMWAE and ONHAE office

headquarters are located. I conducted interviews among AMWAE leaders and carried out participant observation at the AMWAE office. I also attended an assembly in a community (Gareno) and some meetings in the ONHAE office and CONAIE office in Quito. I also conducted interviews at the community level to identify the concerns and demands at the base and examine the relations between community members and the association. In my interviews with AMWAE leaders, I not only sought to learn the factors that led to the constitution of AMWAE but also how its agenda is related to practical and strategic gender interests.

I used ethnographic, qualitative methods to obtain as much in depth information as possible, and to give the informant's point of view sufficient and deserved importance. These qualitative methods included structured and semi-structured interviews and participant observation. The key informants chosen were eight current AMWAE leaders and one former ONHAE leader. The age range of AMWAE leaders is early twenties to early thirties. They all had basic formal education and speak Spanish.¹

In the communities, the key informants were two male and eight female Huaorani contacted through a Huaorani female leader in the communities of Tiwino, Bataboro, Dayuno and Teparare. Puyo is the capital of Pastaza and to a certain extent the commercial, cultural and political capital of the Amazonian region. With a population of 45,825, this frontier city is connected by road with Baños and from there to Ambato, the central urban area of the country and Quito. The community of Tiwino was chosen for

¹ However, language should nonetheless be considered a barrier because none of the leaders responded that they felt completely comfortable with Spanish, a problem that particularly becomes an issue when they have to cope with legal terminology or participate in negotiation tables.

interviews because it represents a community outside of the old ‘protectorate’² but that had contact historically with missionaries. A road passes through the community, and an oil company has operations in the area and hires some Huaorani men as wage laborers. The Tiwino River serves as the boundary between the oil company’s area and that of the community. Bataboro is located about a thirty minute drive from Tiwino on the same road. This community is located further away from the oil company and depends on another river, the Bataboro for its livelihood. Tepapare and Dayuno were chosen for interviews because they had neither a road nor an oil company working nearby.³ I also conducted various unstructured interviews and carried out e-mail correspondence with the accountant of AMWAE. These interviews were key to my understanding of the operational aspects of the association.

² This was the first type of legal recognition of part of the Huaorani territory. A more detailed explanation of this follows in chapter one and two.

³ In fact, my passage through Dayuno was circumstantial. Dayuno was once a relatively large Huaorani community that due to tensions among the *nanicaboiri* or house groups comprising it was fractured and many members ended up moving and creating the community of Quehueire Ono (Rival 1996). Other members of Dayuno moved to other communities and it was not until the time of my field research that one family was building a settlement under the name of Dayuno again. The new Dayuno was on the way to Tepapare and I conducted an interview there as I stopped in my route to Tepapare.

CHAPTER 2 HUAORANI TRADITIONAL SOCIETY AND THE EXPANSION OF THE NATION- STATE IN THE ECUADORIAN AMAZON

History of Contact

During the colonial period, contact between the Huaorani and the colonial state was initiated by Catholic missions. Colonial Jesuit chronicles do not refer to the Huaorani per se, but it has been argued that they could have been identified with groups within the “Zaparoan block” that are referred to variously as Omaguas, Abijaras, Aushiris or Aubishiris, perhaps representing the northernmost extension of the Tupi-Guarani migrations (Ziegler-Otero 2004, Rival 2002).

It is during the rubber boom period (1880-1920) that references to the Huaorani start appearing in written documents. Historiographies report raids in Huao land and Huaorani raids in response that took place during the chaotic and violent times of the rubber boom in the region. There are not extensive written records of the atrocities perpetuated during this period, but Huaorani oral tradition report these type of encounters with *cohuori*, which is the Huao word for other/cannibal. This was a time of major population movements into the *Oriente* (how the Amazonian region is referred to in Ecuador) with the intensification of economic exploitation of the region.

Another period of contact occurs during the 1940s with the launching of oil exploration. The Dutch company Shell began oil prospecting activities in the *Oriente* and specifically in Huaorani territory at this time. Even though Shell’s enterprise was not very successful due to difficulties in securing a labor force, their passage through the area left a town named after the company -Shell- which was centered around a missionary station. There are also written records of attacks on and counter attacks by Huaorani during this

time. Full-scale oil exploitation, however, does not take place in the Oriente until the 1970s (Rival 2002).

Permanent peaceful contact (although an arbitrary term) with the national society was established in the 1950s through North American missionaries of the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL). Their first encounter, however, was rather violent ending with the killing of five missionaries. These missionaries, who had encroached on Huaorani territory seeking contact to convert the Huaorani, also killed a Huaorani, although this fact is rarely mentioned. This event received international attention and contributed to a construction of the Huaorani within the national imagery as the “Aucas,” a Quichua word that can be translated as “savages,” thus becoming the emblematic Other.

With the expansion of capitalism through oil exploitation in the *Oriente* in the 1970s the Ecuadorian state gained more economic and political control over the region. It divided the region into blocks for future potential concessions to the companies. In the case of Huaorani territory, the SIL played a significant role in facilitating the entrance of the oil companies. It was convenient for the missionaries to encourage the relocation of villages closer to the missionary station, which opened the way for the entrance of oil companies into Huaorani ancestral territory. The presence of the state in the region has always been very limited and characterized by its lack of provision of basic services like health programs. Precarious formal schooling programs that replaced the missionary schools after the SIL was expelled from the country in 1982 constitute the closest point of connection with the nation state.

In recent times another contact that is conflictive and represents a threat is the increase of illegal logging in the area. Many times violence has broken out between

loggers and Huanorani communities, including those in voluntary isolation like the Tagaeiri and Taromenani.

Aspects Traditional Huaorani Society

While it is difficult to sketch the main elements of traditional Huaorani society with confidence, there is consensus that they lived nomadically in egalitarian, autarkical groups and that they consistently rejected contact, trade, exchange or any kind of relationship with the neighboring indigenous groups and later with the Ecuadorian national society.

At the time when a more permanent contact and prolonged relations were established (1960s) there were three to four territorially localized groups. Within these groups there are also subgroups that carry the name of an important elder and the suffix iri meaning group (Robarchek and Robarchek 1998), for example, Guikitairi stands as a way of referring to Guikita's group.

Among the ethnographers who studied the Huaorani, there are remarkable differences of interpretation regarding important features of Huaorani society. While Robarchek and Robarchek (1998) focused on violence and provided a broader account of some general aspects of Huaorani society, Rival and Lu made deeper studies departing from distinct theoretical backgrounds. Their different perspectives can also be partially explained by the different time periods of their research, both Rival and Lu conducted fieldwork in Quehueire Ono but it could be assumed that their views of the community might differ due to their individual experiences. Rival experienced the creation of Quehueire Ono when between 1989 and 1990 the house group she was living with, along with some others house groups, decided to split from the community of Dayuno and go trekking to find a new place where to settle. Quehueire Ono then was new and very small.

There was more natural abundance and consequently, for hunter/gatherers/horticulturalist like the Huaorani, probably less horticultural activities. Some years later, in 1996, the Quehueire Ono that Lu found was one of the most populous Huaorani communities, had a school and had just signed a contract with an oil company allowing them to conduct seismic prospecting.

Traditionally, the Huaorani settlement pattern consisted of self-sufficient and relatively isolated residential units with an average of thirty members inhabiting a longhouse. Typically, a longhouse was inhabited by an older couple, their unmarried children and their married daughters with their husbands and children. Often, men were married to more than one woman, usually sisters (Lu 1999, Rival 2002, Robarchek and Robarchek 1998). Kinship and marriage were structured by bilateral descent and cross cousin marriage. Post marital residence is uxorilocal without bride service. Cross cousin marriage divides people into two types of *guirinani* (relatives), parallel cousins considered as siblings and cross cousins who could be potential spouses (Robarchek and Robarchek 1998). The fundamental unit in Huaorani society is the *nanicabo* (house group) within which demand sharing¹ is intense, shaping its economic subsistence pattern. Exchange with the outside, on the other hand, is much more limited. Living together, being part of a *nanicabo*, translates symbolically to sharing substance which is what makes you *huaomoni* (us). Once you leave the *nanicabo*, you become *huarani*

¹ Demand sharing”, as coined by Peterson (1993), is not morally constructed as a reciprocal obligation. Rival identifies this concept as applicable to the Huaorani case although she also describes giving and receiving food among the Huaorani as the moral base of common residency (Rival 1996). As Peterson explains “demand sharing reflects tensions between autonomy and relatedness” (Peterson 1993: 871). Huaorani sharing economy contrasts to that of other groups who engage in reciprocal exchange because the act of giving is dissociated from receiving (Rival 1996, 2002). Food sharing is thus described as a personal expression, consistent to hunter-gatherer food sharing that is by demand and not by unsolicited giving which emphasizes on donor obligation and recipient entitlement. This practice is very much in tune with egalitarian principles where receiving does not bind the recipient to reciprocate. Bird-David explains that in this type of giving, when an individual requests food, it is the giver’s generosity that is invoked instead of moral obligations due to past provisions (Bird-David 1990). It should be stressed that this characteristic present among the Huaorani, breaks from what is common among other Amazonian groups where reciprocity is the dominant type of exchange.

(other). Likewise, if you marry in, like men coming to live in the nanicabo of their wife's mother, you become guiri (relative) and eventually huamoni. According to Rival, residence principles seemed to be structurally more important for social organization than consanguinity (Rival 1996, 2002).

To better understand the system of relationships shaping Huaorani society, the differentiations of the key terms, cohuori, huaomoni and huarani are pivotal. Cohuori, as mentioned earlier, can be translated into a cannibal Other that make up an undifferentiated class. This may include other indigenous groups, slave hunters during the rubber boom era, missionaries, oil company workers, illegal loggers or anyone else invading their territory to 'prey' on them. That is, everybody else that is not Huaorani, standing in absolute opposition to them. The Huaorani, however, see themselves as differentiated into huaomoni 'us', and huarani 'others', the other Huaorani that do not make up part of their group (Rival 1996, 2002). Such a system of relationships characterizes settlement patterns, the endogamous nexuses and the limited exogamous relations.

Rival (1996) identified three models of residential patterns in her field work. The first is more similar to the pre-contact, traditional residence pattern of isolated house groups living off hunting, gathering and horticulture. Nowadays, however, even among groups following this residential model, longhouses are not as common and do not hold as many people. The second model consists of grouped longhouses, a sort of semi-village with clusters of houses dispersed throughout an extended area. The clusters consist of two or three houses and are separated by many kilometers and by cultivated land and a river. There is no plaza or center but the longhouse of the founding members is recognized as a

nucleus where people from different clusters meet informally and where visitors without kin should stay. Residential configurations are fluctuant; from year to year houses might be abandoned and new ones built. Belonging to a residential group, however, is fairly stable. While how space is occupied might be flexible, the social relations across residential lines are more structured defining the endogamous nexuses. That is, "...the extended family clusters remain the primary units of social, political and economic organization" (Robarchek and Robarchek 1998). The third type of settlement is the village with an elementary school and sometimes an airstrip. At the time Rival was conducting her field research, the second type of residence pattern was the most common. She predicted that most would eventually follow the third pattern. Today, thirty-two out of the thirty-four communities have a school and are thus settled as villages.

Another point that must be stressed is that spatial mobility among the Huaorani is related to a means for alleviating social tension. According to Lu (1999) apparently there is no other structured mechanism for non-violent conflict resolution. When conflict arises the responses are either to suppress the anger or to be consumed by *pīi* (anger) and engage in spear killing. Such attitudes have led many times to prolonged intra-ethnic and inter-ethnic violence. When the suppression of anger is approaching a limit, another response without engaging in spear killing is the fissioning of settlement (Lu 1999).

Robarchek and Robarchek summarize Huaorani political organization, authority and social control as follows:

Waorani society is egalitarian at the extreme and every residence group is completely autonomous. Within these groups, there are no headmen and no formal councils. Even within households and settlements there is no authority beyond individuals' power of persuasion or coercion. There are no communal religious rituals or obligations and no clubs or other associations that might confer on some individuals authority over the actions of others (1998: 102).

Apart from the consensus on the Huaorani egalitarianism, a point of dissension about the role of ritual like the ceremonial drinking feasts is understated by the Robarcheks (1998) but elaborately highlighted by Rival (1996, 2002). There are three drinking festivals: the peach palm (*Bactris gasipaes*), the plantain and the eëmë, the manioc drinking festival.² All these festivals play a key role in marriage alliances. An important characteristic of these feasts is that they do not seem to implicate trade or exchange of gifts. The peach palm drinking festival is much more informal, improvised and celebrated when there is a need to consume the abundant fruits made into a drink. The manioc and plantain drinking festivals are planned in advance when a nanicabo has specifically planted large quantities of the crop to invite other house groups. During the feast people divide by gender and it is the sexual difference that cuts across *huaomoni* (us) and *huarani* (others) differences opposite to daily life practice. Traditionally these feasts transformed *huarani* groups into *huaomoni* allies bonded through the collective marriage alliances as well as individual connections. This way, the *huarani*, potential enemies, are transformed into allies. However, nowadays, not many marriages are carried out this way. The drinking feasts, while fewer, still take place and serve to renew and strengthen alliances by bringing people from the different house groups together (Rival 2002).

There is also some dissension on the role of horticulture. On the one hand, the Robarcheks (1998) define the Huaorani as “classic tropical horticulturalists” and argue that their life and subsistence is rooted in the manioc gardens. Lu (1999) demonstrates how in Quehueire Ono the bulk of Huaorani diet comes from cultivated crops. Rival, on

² *Tepe* is the name of drink made of manioc that is a fundamental staple in Huaorani diet and is served in the eëmë festival. It should be stressed that contrary to the Quichua manioc drink (*chicha*) like that of the Shuar, and other Amazonian indigenous groups, the Huaorani *tepe* is not fermented, lacking alcohol content (Rival 1996, 2002, Robarcheck and Robarchek 1998).

the other hand, argues that the Huaorani should be seen as hunter-gatherers more than horticulturalists. She refers to the concept of “natural abundance”³ to maintain that the Huaorani prefer to rely on gathering and hunting, and that subsisting from perennial plants is seen as more reliable than from cultivated crops. The value of horticulture, Rival asserts, rests not on subsistence but on providing the essence of the manioc and plantain⁴ drinking festivals that serve to join different house groups for the occasion. This way, horticulture is seen as analogous with times of abundance, peace and stability (Rival 1996, 2002). Beyond the contention, what is critical is that horticulture is what enables these drinking festivals to occur and thus, it has a key structuring role in Huaorani society.

This traditionally egalitarian society of hunter-gatherer-horticulturalists is characterized by a gender division of labor noted for its flexibility (Rival 2002). According to Rival, “sexual differences are naturally embodied in a way that suggests both equivalence and complementarity” (Rival 2005: 288). Furthermore, this author observes that in Huaorani social life gender is given little importance since both in representation and practice, conception, birth, childcare and upbringing are alike for boys and girls. As they grow and mature the undifferentiated and overlapping tasks performed by each acquire more gender specificity. Men principally hunt and women take care of gardening or gathering and cooking, however, these parameters are not rigid. Men also

³ Rival coins this term to refer to the “indigenous representation of the relationships between living people, the forest, and past generations”. The author argues that this concept helps to highlight “the reasons behind the Huaorani dismissal of crop production as a mode of subsistence and uses manioc cultivation as the point of comparison. Rival states that “it is through hunting and gathering that daily subsistence is secured and that manioc cultivation is (1) neglected in practice, (2) largely confined to (...) the elaborations of ceremonial drinks used (...) in feasts; besides (3) manioc is associated with fast unreliable growth” (Rival 2002). Moreover, contrasting to the third aspect on manioc cultivation, “there is also the idea that useful perennial species encountered in forest groves are closely associated with one’s forbears”.

⁴ While plantains and manioc are cultivated, peach palms are not seen as such, rather they are just seen as a by product of their and their ancestors consumption (Rival 1996, 2002)

are involved in gathering and gardening while women can also hunt. Fishing is done by both men and women although women do more fishing than hunting, which is rather occasional. Collecting fuel wood and fetching water are duties that may vary in gender specialization from one household to the other. Men are also very much involved in childcare. The same flexibility can be seen in the manufacturing of art crafts (Robercheck and Robercheck 1998, Rival 2002, Ziegler-Otero 2004). While men and women know how to and can craft almost every object from their material culture there are some exceptions. For example, men do not make clay pots or fishing nets, while women do not make spears or blowguns. However, it is the crafting of these items, not their use that is gendered (Rival 2002).

Moreover, the relationship between spouses has been characterized as a reciprocal partnership. Couples with unmarried children must function as productive units, with each partner fulfilling their mutual obligations in order to provide for their children because, as Rival states "... conjugality is, first and foremost, joint parenting" (Rival 2002: 106). This emphasis on joint parenting is expressed from the moment of gestation with the practice of the *couvade* that "activates the mutual obligations of joint parenting and the gender symmetry it produces. Fathers and mothers equally share in the ritual protection of the fetus, who contains an equal quantity of female blood and male semen" (Rival 2005:292).

With parenting responsibilities certain activities of the conjugal pair become gendered as a form of complementarity. This complementarity results in a certain division of labor that not only varies from couple to couple but that also is not normative since there is an equal value given to the different productive tasks. More importantly, in

this egalitarian society these differences are not translated into hierarchy. Even in the context of the ceremonial drinking feasts where gender identities are emphasized (and individual identities like kin, affines, friends or enemies are downplayed) it is to tame hostility and create conditions for peace, alliance and marriage. Rival highlights that, as opposed to the classical description of the use of gender as a system of social inequality here it is used to erase social differences and principally those between *huaomoni* and *huarani*. Thus, gender symbolism instead of expressing hostility between the sexes is used in ritual contexts to overcome potential conflict as sexual and bodily images are not used to symbolize male supremacy but the importance of organic life and fertility (Rival 2005).

The Impact of the Oil industry and the SIL on Huaorani Society and Subsistence patterns

After permanent contact with the Huaorani was established in the late 1950s, different factors have contributed to changes in Huaorani social organization, settlement patterns and gender relations. The first factor is the influence of the SIL that established a missionary station in the Huaorani community of Tihueno in 1958 and managed to gain control over the ‘protectorade’ or reservation for the Huaorani granted by the government⁵. They managed to attract most of the Huaorani population to live within this zone that consisted of less than ten percent of their traditional territory. Although the SIL was later expelled from the country and the Huaorani now have title to their own territory covering an area much greater than that of the ‘protectorade’, SIL greatly influenced their settlement patterns. The Huaorani now have more sedentary settlements, which are closer to large rivers and many of them located around airstrips and schools. Residential units in

⁵ Territorial struggle will be discussed in greater detail in chapter II.

particular were altered. While the Huaorani were uxorilocal and extended families shared a same longhouse, the missionaries imposed monogamy and also encouraged them to split into nuclear families. However, even while residing in different houses, an extended family will build them close to each other.

Moreover, sedentarism caused changes in subsistence patterns that in turn affected gender relations. With sedentarism, game was depleted in the hunting grounds close to the villages. As hunting treks took longer periods of time, the women were left behind for days at a time to perform all the household duties (E-shen Lu 1999).

Similarly, wage labor also increased the burden of women's work. Oil companies in Huaorani territory hire Huaorani men under sporadic and short contracts that at times can leave an entire settlement without men for months, leaving women alone with all the responsibilities of providing food for the family (Ibid 1999). Some oil companies have programs of "community relations" that distribute food to Huaorani communities. While this way women do not have to increase their daily activities to get enough food for their families, it has the consequence of bringing about a negative dietary change. Their diet becomes poor in proteins as they rely on the carbohydrates and sugars provided by the oil companies. Furthermore, the distribution of food, part of the "community relations" programs, has also influenced how women relate to each other. Instead of gathering "to cooperatively fish or garden they become more isolated, each female head of household fixating on her own weekly ration" (Ibid 1999).

To conclude, in this chapter I provided an overview of Huaorani society discussing how these hunter-gatherer-horticulturalists belong to an egalitarian society lacking of hierarchical structures. The sexual division of labor is significantly flexible

and tasks performed by each gender are equally valued. However, contact with missionaries, the national society and the oil companies have produced changes in Huaorani society that have affected their social structure, settlement and subsistence patterns. These changes are interrelated and have resulted in the deterioration of the living conditions of the Huaorani in general, and of Huaorani women in particular.

CHAPTER 3

THE ECUADORIAN INDIGENOUS MOVEMENT AND THE HUAORANI IN THE CONTEXT OF POLITICAL MOBILIZATION

Amazonian indigenous grassroots organizations started forming in the late 1960s. The first organizations were those representing the Amazonian Quichua, Shuar and Achuar groups. Initially, these were did not coordinate their activities way which made the struggle for their rights even harder. But the fact that these Amazonian peoples found themselves experiencing common growing threats against their culture and survival brought them together to develop a resistance strategy. In the 1980s, consciousness of the importance of unity at the regional level fueled the organization of the first and second regional congresses of Indigenous peoples of the Ecuadorian Amazon. In these congresses they came to define their main objectives, which were the defense of the culture and territories of all the Amazonian indigenous nationalities, and addressing specific problems of particular communities. These efforts led to the creation of the CONFENIAE (Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas de la Amazonia Ecuatoriana) in 1980.

Although Amazonian indigenous people were the first to organize in indigenous grassroot organizations, the Ecuadorian highland region had a longer tradition of political activism and mobilization. ECUARUNARI (Ecuador Runacunapac Riccharimui - Movimientos de Campesinos de Ecuador) emerged in 1972 with the purpose of uniting the representation of highland indigenous peoples. Before the 1970s and the formation of ECUARUNARI, organizing among Highlands indigenous people was led by non-indigenous left-wing organizations and mainly concentrated on peasant demands for better wages and agrarian reform. According to CONAIE, organizations like the FEI (Federación Ecuatoriana de Indígenas) and other peasant organizations were not really

representative of indigenous peoples (CONAIE 2006). When the agrarian reform was passed in 1964, conditions did not change much for the indigenous people. As a result, ECUARUNARI was formed with the purpose of having an exclusively indigenous representation, emphasizing ethnic consciousness and addressing identity issues. In the early 1980s the organization had begun to establish relations with other regional indigenous organizations as well as with international indigenous and non-indigenous peasant organizations. ECUARUNARI also served as the executive coordinator for the CONACNIE (Consejo Nacional de Coordinación de las Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador), created in 1980 to provide coordination among all the indigenous organizations in the country. While there are some other highland indigenous organizations that operate at a local level, ECUARUNARI is the most prominent one operating at the regional level and representing all highland Quichua indigenous people who, together, in numbers make up the majority of the indigenous nationalities in Ecuador. Thus, having the capacity to convene all these peoples, ECUARUNARI had a fundamental role in the rise and consolidation of the indigenous movement in general, and played a particularly role in the consolidation of CONAIE (Llacta 2006).

CONAIE (Confederación de las Nacionalidades Indígenas de Ecuador) was formed in 1986, and occupies the top of a chain of organizations that interact and coordinate from local, provincial, and regional levels to the national one. Besides ECUARUNARI, from the highlands, the other two main regional organizations are CONFENIAE (Confederación de las Nacionalidades Indígenas de la Amazonia Ecuatoriana), from the Amazon, and CONAICE (Confederación de las Nacionalidades Indígenas de la Costa Ecuatoriana), the most recent one representing the Coastal region, which has the smallest

share of the indigenous population in the country. With the formation of CONACNIE (Consejo Nacional de Coordinación de las Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador) they came together to understand what united and separated them. What separated them was a language barrier but what united them was much greater: the lack of land, the lack of bilingual education and most importantly, the need to make their voices heard. Thus later, with the consolidation of CONAIE, they achieve the objective of making their voices heard at the national level.

The main issues in CONAIE's agenda include:

- Dar dirección política al Movimiento Indígena a fin de lograr la igualdad económica, socio-cultural y política.
- Promover y consolidar el proceso organizativo de las Nacionalidades y Organizaciones Indígenas.
- Recuperar y defender los territorios de las Nacionalidades Indígenas y luchar por el derecho a la autodeterminación de los pueblos.
- Defender la integridad de las Nacionalidades Indígenas y velar por su unidad.
- Representar a las Nacionalidades Indígenas ante el Estado y sus gobiernos de turno y ante instituciones de desarrollo nacionales e internacionales.
- Crear mecanismos de interrelación entre las Nacionalidades y Organizaciones Indígenas del país, mediante la recuperación de la historia, la cultura y las tradiciones.
- Defender, rescatar y desarrollar las culturas de las Nacionalidades Indígenas.
- Fomentar las relaciones internacionales a través de una política de apoyo, cooperación, respeto y solidaridad entre todos los Pueblos. (Consejo Nacional De Cultura 2007)
- [To give political guidance to the indigenous movement with the purpose of achieving economic, socio-cultural and political equality.]
- To promote and consolidate the organizational process of the indigenous nationalities and organizations.

- To recuperate and defend the territories of the indigenous nationalities and to fight for the right to self-determination of the people.
- To defend the integrity of the indigenous nationalities and to safeguard their unity.
- To represent indigenous nationalities before the state, the current administration and before national and international development institutions.
- To create mechanisms of interrelation between the indigenous nationalities and organizations of the country through the recuperation of history, culture and traditions.
- To defend, recover and develop the culture of the indigenous nationalities.
- To promote international relations through policies based on support, cooperation, respect and solidarity among all the Peoples]

Additionally, there are other demands that are included in the agenda as critical events develop in the country.

The concerns that are articulated are cultural- and identity-related issues as well as issues regarding land rights and aid to small farmers and peasants. In their discourse, indigenous peoples express an intertwined point of view of these issues: “Un pueblo sin cultura no puede existir, un pueblo sin territorio no puede vivir, un pueblo sin idioma que es parte de la cultura, no seria pueblo.” [A people without culture cannot exist, a people without territory cannot live, a people without a language, which is part of culture, would not be a people] (CONAIE 2006). In short, the dual general objectives of the movement are to resolve the land issue and to attain the recognition of Ecuador as a plurinational and multicultural state.

Due to the increasing sense of indigenous identity enabled by the organizations from the three geographical areas in the 1980s, a significant indigenous uprising took place in 1990. Unlike other indigenous uprisings that had taken place throughout Ecuadorian history, this one was a peaceful protest, but it paralyzed the nation. Blocking roads and seizing food so it would not reach the market, the protesters made clear to

everyone their importance in the national social structure. In this uprising, which would not have been possible without the leadership of the CONAIE, indigenous people were demanding that their place as citizens be recognized. But recognition and acceptance of them as “different citizens” was also a part of these demands (Collins 2004:47). This last demand expresses their attempt to reshape the nation's exclusionary ethnic identity by proclaiming it a multicultural, pluri-national state. The pluri-national state is one of the main concepts used in CONAIE's political project in which it is defined as “la organización política y jurídica de los Pueblos y Nacionalidades del país. El Estado Plurinacional surge cuando varios pueblos y nacionalidades se unen bajo un mismo gobierno y Constitución. El Estado Plurinacional es distinto del Estado Uninacional que es la representación de los sectores dominantes” [the political and judicial organization of the nationalities and peoples of the country. The pluri-national state arises when various nationalities and peoples are united under the same government and constitution. The pluri-national state is different from the uni-national state that is the representation of the dominant sectors] (Llacta 2007)

CONAIE's participation in the 1998 National Constituent Assembly enabled the indigenous peoples to make important changes to the new Constitution. Even though they did not obtain the official recognition of the Ecuadorian state as pluri-national and multicultural, they did achieve the official recognition of Ecuador as a multiethnic and pluricultural state. Other imperative achievements include the legalization of land for a number of indigenous communities and the creation of DINEIB (Direction Nacional de Educación Intercultural Bilingüe del Ecuador), a nation wide bilingual education program

for indigenous students to study in their own language as well as in Spanish (Collins 2004).

During the 1980s CONAIE's position was characterized by its autonomy from the political parties and a stance of non-participation in formal politics. Their position was rooted in a radical critique of the Ecuadorian state which they regarded as exclusionary and anti-democratic.

However, they realized that the advantages of political participation at a national level could provide greater access to resources in order to address concrete material needs and demands of their communities. As a result, the political wing of the indigenous movement, MUPP-NP (Movimiento de Unidad Plurinacional Pachakutik - Nuevo Pais), emerged in 1995. Pachakutik describes itself as a political, pluri-national and democratic movement that has organizational autonomy and strong relations with the indigenous nationalities and peoples (Pachakutik 2007). The creation of Pachakutik, in the overall context of opposition to the neo-liberal model, represented "an alternative to forming an ethnic party or merging with existing Leftist groups" (Becker 2006). They proposed an alternative that would incorporate the creation of a new economic, political and cultural model within a more inclusive and participatory political system. Furthermore, Pachakutik was configured more as a political movement than a political party and its name itself vouches for an alternative, a 'new country'. The meaning of the Quichua word pachakutik also suggests "change, rebirth, transformation and the coming of a new era" (Becker 2006). With the consolidation of Pachakutik the indigenous movement acquires a greater presence by participating politically at the national level.

The Creation of ONHAE: Building a Pan-Huaorani Identity

It is in the context of the oil industry era, once contacted and evangelized, that the Huaorani find themselves struggling for their land and rights. ONHAE (Organización de la Nacionalidad Huaorani de la Amazonia Ecuatoriana) was founded in the period of 1989-90 as the Huaorani saw the need to organize themselves in order to contend with the different social actors that had become embroiled in their lives. The organization was officially constituted in a *Biye*¹ (assembly) in 1990.

The bulk of the literature on the Huaorani does not include a thorough analysis of ONHAE, but does refer to it in one way or another. In *Huaorani versus Maxus: poder étnico versus poder transnacional*, Narvaez (1996) is the first to focus his study more on ONHAE, but it is not until Lawrence Ziegler Otero's *Resistance in an Amazonian Community: Huaorani Organizing against the Global Economy* (2004) that there is a truly detailed study of the creation of the ONHAE, its functions, and the role it plays in the Huaorani and national society. The book examines the organization and its leaders in the context of their relations with the different social actors with which they are continuously interacting. The actors include oil companies, missionaries, other indigenous organizations, and environmentalists (Ziegler-Otero 2004).

As described by Ziegler-Otero there were four major factors leading to the creation of ONHAE. The first is the emergence of a group of young Huaorani activists who had been formally schooled and had a better understanding of the national society (that is, the criollo-mestizo world) than their elders. This new generation believed that there was a need for them to serve as a “go-between” for the Huaorani people. The second factor was

¹ The *Biye* is the annual assembly organized by the ONHAE.

the decrease of missionary influence due to the expulsion of the SIL combined with the increasing cultural literacy of the younger generation of Huaorani. The third incentive was the increasing influence of non-Huaorani, non-evangelical outsiders involved with the Huaorani and concerned for their future. Particularly significant within this group was Laura Rival (the first non-missionary anthropologist to conduct long-term research among the Huaorani) and the representatives from the CONFENIAE, CONAIE, and OPIP (Organización de Pueblos Indígenas de Pastaza) that encouraged them to organize and affiliate to them (Ziegler-Otero 2004). This latter factor is highly significant given that the indigenous movement in Ecuador is especially strong. Finally, the fourth factor delineated by Ziegler-Otero was the sense of crisis, consequence of an increasingly more intense and frequent encroachment of and threat to their territory (2004).

In 1994 ONHAE adopted its first set of by-laws, according to which the *Biye* was to be the highest authority of the organization and through which policy could be decided, leaders elected and removed, and agreements approved. The by-laws also set up a specialization among the leadership board, which was comprised of a president, a vice-president, a treasurer, and other *dirigentes* (officers), each of them in charge of either land, education, health or tourism. In the elaboration of the by-laws, OPIP and CONFENIANIE provided assistance and guidelines.

An interview I conducted with David Elliott (2007) from the Fundación Pachamama sheds light on the process of legalization of indigenous organizations. Although indigenous organizations are not legally required to be recognized by any state organism, they always want to call for such recognition, and following the guidelines for the by-laws is part of the process. Without legal recognition from the State, relations with

the different social actors are hindered, such as when it is required in order to obtain a land title, or when NGOs require it in order finance a project, or when banks require *personería jurídica* (legal personhood) to open an account.

There are different ways to proceed, but the main prerequisite is to obtain the *personería jurídica*. The legal recognition of an organization is a sort of ministerial agreement whereby that the state recognizes the organization. There are three means by which organizations can obtain legal recognition from the state, which also depends on how they decide to organize. Some organizations organize and legalize themselves as *comunas* (communes) and these are governed by the Ministry of Agriculture. The most common way for Amazonian indigenous populations to organize is as organizations, associations and federations that are ruled under a different law. They are organized as social organizations and they are legalized through the Ministry of Social Welfare. There are also some organizations that obtain their legal status through the Ministry of Government. These were the standard procedures until 2004 when a presidential decree was passed in which authority was given to CODENPE (Consejo de Desarrollo de las Nacionalidades y Pueblos del Ecuador) to issue and manage the legal recognition of the Indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian organizations. In 2005 another decree was passed that gave CONDENPE the exclusive authority to legalize any type of indigenous organization.

CODENPE was created under a presidential decree in 1998, in response to the institutional changes that came with the 1998 constitutional assembly. The latter obliged the state to enable the participation of the different peoples and nationalities of Ecuador in planning and decision making. As of August 2007 congress approved Indigenous

institutions including CODENPE. Thus, CODENPE is now supported by organic law and not only by a presidential decree

CODENPE's national council includes an executive secretary and a representative of each of the self-defined nationalities and peoples. This structure allows more grassroots links and communication and thus more representation. In contrast to the other state institutions, CODENPE registers the organizations without imposing specific norms in their by-laws and respecting whichever way they decide to organize themselves internally. As argued by proponents and supporters of this initiative, this results in the organizations having more autonomy and therefore more potential for empowerment. This way individuals may not need to be registered members of the institution or to have a formal voting registration to count as actual members, but the by-laws can enable all individuals from a specific ethnic group to be innate members of a specific organization. CODENPE is much more flexible in regards to such exigencies because they are aware of how unjust it results to ask for a voter registration card or *cédula* (national personal identification) of a person who lives deep in the forest. For CODENPE such requirements are discriminatory because they hinder the legalization of organizations of indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian peoples that live in remote areas without easy access to the state.

Following this new framework, significantly progressive statements have been included in the by-laws of some organizations such as affirming rights to all the resources in their land. Also, for those groups still lacking legal title to their land, they could self recognize their ancestral territory in the by-laws of their organization. While this is not the equivalent to a land title, it represents some kind of legal recognition or at least a legal claim. The implications of these changes are still not well known. Another positive aspect

of the new regulatory framework is that having a single entity such as CONDEPE under which to register, means that indigenous organizations have more control over potential splits within their organizations. For CODENPE to endorse the creation of a new organization when there is already an organization representing the nationality, requires first the permission from the nationality's general organization (David Elliot, 2007, personal communication).

The recent leaning toward organizing simply as nationalities under CODENPE rather than as organizations, federations, associations, communes and the like is also part of an initiative undertaken by CODENPE jointly with Fundación Pachamama and other NGOs. Recently many indigenous organizations have changed their names and registered simply as nationalities under the CODENPE. In the case of the Huaorani, for instance, only a couple of months after I left the field in 2006 the ONHAE became NAWE² (Nacionalidad Waorani de la Amazonia Ecuatoriana). ONHAE leaders explained this change as related to their interest to be recognized at the national level as a nationality rather than just an organization. Moreover, as part of their initiative, CODENPE and project partner NGOs have elaborated a simple manual on how to organize as a nationality without having to resort to lawyers, with the purpose of opening a route to empowerment.

The primary concerns of ethnic federations of the Amazon region as described by Theodore MacDonald include: “1) to defend their member communities’ rights to land and resources, 2) to expand and strengthen their organizations, and 3) to maintain their unique ethnic identity” (MacDonald 1998:90). Considered against Ziegler Otero’s

² Given that during my time in the field the transition from ONHAE to NAWE had not been made, I will still refer to the organization as ONHAE throughout the text.

ethnography and my own observations, these do coincide with the primary concerns of ONHAE. Furthermore, as recorded by Ziegler-Otero, the final agenda that emerged from the *Biye* which he attended were the following goals: “1) land and border marking projects, 2) education, 3) health issues and 4) tourism” (Ziegler-Otero 2004:114). These expressed goals are reflected in the assignments of leaders within the organization to specific specializations. They also correspond to the concerns expressed by AMWAE and the former ONHAE leader I interviewed.

In my interview with the former ONHAE leader, to the question about which were the main concerns that led the Huaorani to organize, territory was the first issue to be mentioned. “Mas importante para Huaorani mucho tiempo que viene hasta hoy y va futuro para mi es de territorio Huaorani, territorio es como madre grande que tiene, esa cultura va muy largo, idioma, cultura que para que tenga, ese es para Huaorani.” [The most important for the Huaorani from a long time ago and until now and for the future for the Huaorani is their territory, territory is like a big mother, this culture has been around for long, language and culture for the Huaorani to have, that is it]. Here the intimate link between land and culture is expressed. The other concerns that were mentioned were health issues and education as a means to deal with external pressure and relate to outsiders. Moreover, these concerns also coincide with the concerns that were prominently mentioned in the interviews I conducted at the community level.

ONHAE gained visibility in 1992 when they lead their first march to Quito denouncing the activities of Maxus (a Houston based oil company) and Petroecuador (the national oil company). This brought much attention to the Huaorani case and garnered them a meeting with President Sixto Duran Ballén. However, after all the efforts to

oppose the entrance of oil companies, the leaders of ONHAE ended up signing the first pact between the organization and the oil company, Maxus. This marks the fundamental problem in praxis that all generations of ONHAE have faced. “While they oppose the oil companies, they have so far been unable to maintain a strong stand against them when the resources offered by oil companies appear so great in the economic context of the Huaorani” (Ziegler-Otero 2004:85). Rival (1994) argues that the Huaorani acknowledge the fact that relations with the oil companies bring both good and bad consequences, and this is why their positions on the matter can be considered inconsistent. The ambiguity of the impact of the socio-economic changes brought about by oil activities make their decisions on what adjustments are necessary or wanted in their life style much harder (Rival 1994).

In the face of this, the Huaorani find themselves in an extremely complex and contradictory position confronting what has been defined as the *assistencialist* model or the oil companies-Huaorani relations model (Narvaez 1996, Rivas Toledo and Lara Ponce 2001). This model is produced because of the vacuum left by the oil exploitation process which was characterized by improvisation and scattered state presence for control of such activities and their impacts in the region.

In the 1980s, however, through the CEPE (Corporación Estatal Petrolera Ecuatoriana), a Fund for Communal Development was created, and the Huaorani benefited from small infrastructural works. In the early 1990s these actions were taken over by the transnational oil companies that started to implement Huaorani Communitarian Programs, assisting in the areas of health and education and replacing the State as provider of basic services. These communitarian programs respond to the needs

of the oil development process in the country. The state requires that the oil companies have environmental and communitarian programs. Moreover, the oil companies supply the infrastructural works that the State is unable to provide (Rivas Toledo and Lara Ponce 2001). The Huaorani are thus faced with the dilemma of a struggle for their land and rights against a social actor that is at the same time providing services. This creates a dependency on the oil companies and allows the oil companies to gain control over the indigenous organizations and justify their enterprise.

The Huaorani-oil companies relations model functions through the ties of power that bind these two social actors, the oil companies, on the one hand, as providers of goods and services, and the Huaorani, as “beneficiaries” that have the obligation of accepting these due to their needs and Ecuadorian law. Since the subsurface belongs to the state, this limits what the Huaorani can do to oppose oil exploitation in their territory (Rivas Toledo and Lara Ponce 2001). At the same time, according to Rivas Toledo as well as Lara Ponce and Narvaez, this model is one of the external factors that has helped create a Huaorani ethnic identity. Here it is important to remember that traditionally for the Huaorani, there was not a notion of a Pan-Huaorani identity. For example, other Huao terero speakers that were not part of their endogamous nexus were considered *huarani*, that is, others. According to these authors this emergent Huaorani ethnic identity corresponds to commercial, extractive and industrial interests, rather than to a need to construct the Huaorani as an independent political actor in national life. Huaorani identity is thus described as transitory and strategic, externally motivated and articulated mostly by ONHAE. Narv ez refers to this kind of identity construction as “situacionalismo” as it

is formed according to the circumstances wherein they find themselves in the face of external interests instead of an autonomous historical processes.

Hence, this theory sees Huaorani identity as temporary and thus merely reactive and conjunctural. It loses sight of the fact that such “situations” are embedded in a long and complex process of socio-economic transformation due to the expansion of capitalism in the region and integration to national society. These define their reality and are not merely a conjuncture. I do not disagree with the fact that the creation of ONHAE was conjunctural and that Huaorani ethnic identity is a construct that was built in relation to external factors, especially at the level of the formal leadership. However, this does not make it less real or valid. I would argue that after seventeen years of being organized as an ethnic organization, Huaorani identity might not be merely a response to a ‘situation’ but to a constant reality of operating between two worlds, the Huaorani and the national society. Reducing Huaorani ethnic and political identity to “*situacionalismo*” is reducing the political element by viewing it from a reactive logic of cause and effect when the political is much more complex.

Furthermore, within this line of thinking Rivas Toledo and Lara Ponce also describe the creation of ONHAE not as a need of the Huaorani seeing themselves as a minority, but more as corresponding to national and transnational interests. The oil companies needed a representative entity at the negotiation table to legitimize their expansion in exchange for health and educational programs. Likewise, the ONHAE is seen as a good base for the development and consolidation of the “*asistencialista*” model. This argument then not only reduces the political but also ignores any type of agency on the part of the Huaorani.

At the time of Ziegler-Otero's field work he found that Maxus had managed to establish some dependency of ONHAE upon the company since they paid for the office including most of the furniture and equipment as well as part of the staff honorariums. While these are not bribes they have had the effect of creating a sense of obligation to the company on the part of the Huaorani leaders. I would argue that while it is important to consider the implications of receiving money from the oil companies, it should also be kept in mind that the Huaorani should have the right to be compensated by the companies that are earning billions of dollars off their land.

Maxus was later bought by YPF (Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales), an Argentine state-owned oil company that was later bought by Repsol S.A., a Spanish multinational corporation. Today Repsol YPF, continuing the agreement that its predecessor signed with the Huaorani, pays the honorariums of all ONHAE and AMWAE leaders and staff.³ Repsol YPF hired ENTRIX, an environmental and natural resource management consulting firm specializing in environmental liability management, to develop its community relations plan. This plan, as stated by ENTRIX, is supposed to concentrate in the sustainable development of community infrastructure, education, healthcare, and preservation of Huaorani cultural identity (Entrix 2007).

While ONHAE's purpose has been to represent the Huaorani in face of the *cohuori* and the changes that they encounter as a result of the impact of national society, there have also been changes brought by the very process of organizing. These changes are seen in gender relations, internal politics, and decision making. In the case of gender

³ Repsol YPF (as agreed in the contract inherited from Maxus) also has to pay for *derecho de via*, that is, a payment the Huaorani nationality, through ONHAE, to have the right to pass through the Huaorani territory. This money is kept off the balance sheet and it could be used as the ONHAE finds it necessary. The exact amount Repsol YPF has to pay monthly is \$1596 which, considering what the company's profits, is almost insignificant. It happens that the honorariums for ONHAE leaders used to be extremely low and thus ONHAE decided to use *derecho de via* money to add up to the bonuses so that leaders could manage to live in the city.

relations, the process of organizing has also supported the ongoing process towards a more rigid gender division of labor, as the leadership of ONHAE is immersed in the more *machista* criollo-mestizo society of Ecuador. However, Ziegler-Otero argues that if gender relations within ONHAE are a reflection of those that exist among the Huaorani of today, which are more androcentric than traditionally, it cannot be said that this is solely a product of the organizing process or of the actions of the organization or its leadership. I would maintain that beyond the argument that changes in gender relations are influenced by the immersion in the national culture and not necessarily a result of organizing, the organizing process still created a new unequal dynamic in gender relations. This will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter through the testimonies of women leaders.

As for internal politics and decision making, there has obviously been a change to more centralized authority from traditional egalitarianism. In the interview with the former Huaorani leader, when reminiscing about the creation of ONHAE, she expressed the initial reaction of the people:

Llegaron como Huaorani y fueron a la comunidad y decian 'tenemos que tener como organización porque yo creo que después vendra la compañía, turismo, madereros, ONG de la gente cualquier cosa pero no sabemos porque van a venir' la gente pensaron tenemos que tener organización tener un jefe, dirigente, 'que es dirigente?' la gente decia (María).

[They arrived as Huaorani and went to the community and said 'We need to have something like an organization because I think that later the (oil) company will come and the people from NGO's and tourists, all kinds of people, but we do not know why they are coming' So the people thought we have to have an organization, have a leader, an officer 'what is officer?' people would say]

ONHAE, as an organization representing all Huaorani, has tended to encourage concentration of power in the hands of a few leaders, this way weakening the

traditionally diffuse and acephalous nature of Huaorani internal politics. While this is true and it is necessary to point this out as a problem, a greater disadvantage would be not to organize altogether. As eloquently expressed by Ehrenreich:

The internal political processes are the ones that help explain the satisfactory persistence, 'ethnic substance' even if many times they are hidden. Flexibility, dynamic adaptations and frequent innovations, and not cultural intransigency, are the key of the cultural survival of many indigenous peoples (Ehrenreich 1991 in Narvaez 1996:100)

The adoption of external patterns of organization is often traversed by a number of tensions that could seem contradictory. However, it is also important to acknowledge that this is a valid political stand that responds to new realities.

The central thesis in Ziegler-Otero's ethnography is that for an egalitarian society like the Huaorani forming an organization with a formally established hierarchy and the specialization of its leadership creates a center of power that becomes the target of the efforts of the different interest groups to influence, sway or even co-opt. Thus, the author argues that the diffuse decision making practices of Huaorani traditional society would have served better to maintain a stronger position vis-à-vis pressures from the different interest groups. Nevertheless, he also states that the final evaluation of ONHAE should not be made by social scientists but by the Huaorani. In this respect it can be said that ONHAE has established itself as the representative of the Huaorani people before the state, the press and by the Huaorani themselves (Ziegler-Otero 2004). From my observations, ONHAE is seen as the rightful representative of the Huaorani people and a front with which to negotiate with the *cohuori*, even if there are many criticisms of the organization and its leaders. There is a clear recognition on the part of the people that it is the representative of the Huaorani. Moreover, in the interviews I conducted at the

community level, when asked about ONHAE, some participants used the symbolism of a father to refer to the organization.

With this power of representation, ONHAE states its opposition to oil development in Huaorani land, but in practice this has not happened. Ziegler-Otero argues that this may mean the “opening wedge of a constellation of related forces that will ultimately doom the Huaorani culture and indeed the very survival of the Huaorani as a distinct ethnicity and society” (Ziegler-Otero 2004). While there is no denying the ill-fated impact that these agreements with oil companies may have, it cannot be assumed that this is only a consequence of the creation of the organization and the decisions taken by it. The external pressures still exist, and even without an organization such agreements could have taken place at the individual community level. Such would have left the communities even weaker, without any leader with relatively more preparation, experience, and understanding of the *cohuori* world.

While the organization is something external to traditional social organization, the pressures encountered with the integration to the national society are definitively foreign as well. The alternative of finding a means of organization that reconciles more with their cultural practices is something that, hopefully, can be built along the way through experience.

Legal Issues: Huaorani Territory, Environmental Legislation and Oil Politics

Huaorani ancestral territory covers an area of two million hectares' ha between the Napo and Curaray rivers. The first legal recognition of Huaorani territory is through the SIL with the creation of the “*Protectorado*.” Having already established a missionary station in the 1950s, the SIL obtained permission from the government to create a protected zone in 1969, the *Protectorado*. This area covered less than a tenth of Huaorani

traditional territory (Rival 1996). Most of the Huaorani population at the time was living within the *Proteccionado* or reserve. The control granted to the SIL lasted until 1982 when they were expelled from the country. Although some missionaries stayed under different denominations, they are far from possessing the same power as before, as resistance to their presence has grown. Furthermore, resistance to the influence of the missionaries, as mentioned above, became formalized with the creation and stance of the Huaorani organizations.

The next step was the creation of the Yasuni Nacional Park in 1979. The Yasuni was created with the technical assistance of UNESCO to the government without any previous social or ethnographic study and participation of the Huaorani even though it was evidently part of their traditional territory (Acción Ecológica). Ten years later, in 1989 Yasuni was declared as a Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO, we see the first manifestations of biological concerns for Huaorani territory and attachments of biodiversity significance to this space. This marks the beginning of the insertion of biodiversity discourses around Huaorani ancestral lands. But it also meant the dispossession of the Huaorani.

In 1990 the limits of the Park were reduced apparently to exclude an area rich in oil (the Block 16) so that its use would be free from the environmental regulations associated with the protected area. Once out of the limits of the Park, Block 16 became in that same year part of the legalized Huaorani territory. This was a maneuver by the state to facilitate oil exploitation in that block. After a long struggle, in 1990 CONAIE managed to have the government give legal title of Huaorani territory to its people through a presidential decree. However, only 612.650 hectares out of two million were officially recognized in

the presidential decree, representing less than a third of Huaorani ancestral territory. Additionally, the title granted to the Huaorani specifies that the awardees are not to impede mining and petroleum exploration or exploitation activities carried out by the national government or any other legally authorized entity. This was, thus, a maneuver of the state to have easier access to block 16 (Acción Ecológica, Narvaez 1996).

Even though the Huaorani have now had their land titled, the subsoil was kept under the state's administrative control. In Ecuador like in other ex-Iberian colonies, the subsoil belongs to the state. This causes a tension, since it limits the territorial rights of indigenous peoples, especially when having to deal with transnational oil companies which have the support of the state. This tension is a manifestation of the contradictions found between the environmental legislation (which prohibits oil extraction in national parks), indigenous legislation (to secure the constitutional rights to self determination with respect to their ancestral lands), and oil politics through energy-related legislation including the Hydrocarbon Law. This law has a "special" character which imposes its provisions on the other two pieces of legislation, because the state has the right over the subsoil. These tensions between legislation draw attention to what Fontaine lucidly coined as the "schizophrenic symptoms of the state," which, seeing itself pressured by the overwhelming obligations of the external debt, goes forth with the capitalization of the protected areas of the Amazonian region (Fontaine 2003).

ONHAE was created the same year that the land title was granted and territorial rights⁴ have remained one of their main struggles. In their perception of the environment sociability is an integral part of it and the intertwined association of these makes the

⁴ The struggle for territorial rights has focused on the expansion of the limits to include all of ancestral territory which includes the Yasuni National Park, control over it and managerial autonomy.

territorial demand crucial in their agenda. Like among other indigenous peoples, territory belongs to the social sphere. Thus, when referring to territorial rights, human rights are also at stake (Surrealles and Garcia Hierro 2005).

According to article 84 of the constitution, the pluricultural and multiethnic state guarantees indigenous peoples and afro-descendants the right to be consulted on any projects related to the exploitation of resources found in their lands. Displacement from their lands is a violation of their rights, just as excluding them as beneficiaries of such projects. Ecuador also ratified the ILO Convention 169 that ensures indigenous collective rights internationally. However, many times there is not compliance with these measures and indigenous rights are neglected. Transnational oil companies take almost 80 percent of the gains of oil exploitation and what stays goes mostly to pay off the external debt and never really benefits the Huaorani or the Oriente region. Thus in practice the neoliberal state is present to claim its rights to the subsoil but does not provide the Huaorani with basic services such as health care and adequate education programs but leaves that role to the oil companies. Oil companies with profits of hundreds of millions of dollars fail to comply with their obligations and they do not redistribute but the lowest percentage possible of those profits.

Historically, nation-states have appropriated pre-state indigenous territories and designed political frameworks that threaten the survival of these peoples. As the CONAIE continuously makes a point to articulate, for indigenous peoples and nationalities territoriality includes their worldview system along with their sense of belonging and identity. Thus, territory represents the physical space that contains life (CONAIE 2004).

To conclude, how adequate and acceptable are the legal titles of indigenous lands in Ecuador? While acquiring the legal title of their territory might have seemed at times as the final goal of the territorial struggle of indigenous peoples, they are constantly having to reassess this issue, that is part of an ongoing, longer process.

CHAPTER 4
HUAORANI WOMEN IN MOVEMENT: UNDERSTANDING THE EMERGENCE OF
AMWAE AND THE COMPLEXITIES OF HUAORANI FEMININE LEADERSHIP

In this chapter I will analyze the emergence of AMWAE, map out its structure and networks, discuss its objectives, and examine its relationship with ONHAE. To explore AMWAE's significance in Huaorani society I will also go beyond the institutional level, studying the perceptions of AMWAE in the communities and compare the demands of the community with AMWAE's objectives.

The Emergence of AMWAE

From the narratives gathered on the creation of AMWAE, I identify two sets of driving forces that need to be considered in order to understand the emergence of AMWAE. Both are somewhat interrelated without one necessarily predominating over the other. The first set is conjunctural and is related to two events: first, there were funds available for projects involving women, and second, there was opposition on the part of the women to an ONHAE leader and a contract he had signed. The second set of driving forces has to do with the discontent of women regarding their lack of representation in the leadership of ONHAE and their lack of income generating opportunities. I also identify some secondary factors. These are not as prevalent in the narratives of AMWAE leaders as the ones I identify as main factors, and are related to women's consciousness regarding gender and political roles. I will begin with the more conjunctural explanation for the creation of AMWAE.

Before AMWAE became an independent association legally recognized by the state, there was a group of Huaorani women organizing and working within ONHAE. These women lived in the city and thus had experience within the white-mestizo world. They were more informed about cross-cultural issues regarding territory, the role and

impact of the oil companies and ONHAE's ongoing projects than women in the communities. Also, their husbands had worked in ONHAE or at least participated in meetings, workshops and events of the organization. Rocío and Nancy were recognized as the main leaders in the creation of AMWAE. Rocío was the first and current AMWAE president during my field research. Nancy had previously been secretary of health of ONHAE and was officially the vice-president of AMWAE at the time of my research. It is also worth mentioning that Nancy is the daughter of Dayuma, the first Huaorani who had peaceful contact with the SIL missionaries. As the first convert, Dayuma became the bridge of communication between the missionaries and her Huaorani kin. She also became somewhat of a leader figure among the Huaorani who lived in the communities under or close to the missionary station and their influence. Nancy is therefore also recognized as a leader among people from those communities.

These women first organized themselves in 2002 under the name of Bore. They were given an office in the ONHAE headquarters where they worked as volunteers.

External funding had a pivotal role in this event:

...fondo vino a nombre de la mujer Huaorani para que trabaje una mujer pero no había una mujer avanzada, formada, entonces lamentablemente no había y entonces ahí era el periodo de Armando. Entonces Armando dijo que 'ustedes deberían formar una organización o una asociación de mujeres para que puedan trabajar y puedan administrar'. Entonces de ahí nosotras formamos también pero ahí teníamos que legalizar papeles, hacer estatuto (. . .) porque nosotros desde el principio también pensamos organizar, porque era antes nombre de asociación era Bore. Entonces con Bore nos dieron préstamo a las mujeres Huaorani ahí que maneje. Yo mismo fui y maneje un poco para piscicultura, para agricultura. Entonces así después dejamos porque no había para legalizar, legal como asociación. Teníamos que estar molestando el ministerio de medio ambiente pero ellos nos dijeron no podemos legalizar porque es de los varones, no querían. Entonces dijimos donde podemos coger la organización para poder trabajar las mujeres? Y ahí todas las mujeres estuvimos en una asamblea para que la ONHAE mismo apruebe, para que sea asociación de las mujeres Huaorani. Entonces ONHAE una vez tenía asamblea en Toñampare, periodo de Juan Enomenga, fuimos. Entonces dijo Juan Enomenga

si podemos dar para que ellas también trabajen las mujeres, porque vemos que hombres y mujeres tenemos fuerzas. Entonces ahí nos dieron, aprobaron el estatuto y de ahí salimos (Rocío).

[Funds came addressed to Huaorani women for a woman to work but, unfortunately, there was not an advanced and schooled woman. This was during the period of Armando. So, Armando said ‘you should create an organization or association of women so that you can work and manage it’. So, we then created it but we then had to legalize documents and make by-laws (. . .) because from the beginning we also thought of organizing, because earlier the name of the association was Bore. So, with Bore Huaorani women received a loan and there I managed it. I went and managed it, a little for fish farming, for agriculture. And then we just left it because it was difficult to legalize, become legal like an association. We had to be bothering the Ministry of Environment but they said that we could not [be legalized] because it is from the men, they did not want. So, we said ‘where can we get the organization for women to be able to work?’ And then there we were all women present at an assembly for the ONHAE to approve [the legalization], to create the association of Huaorani women. So, ONHAE had once an assembly in Toñampare, during the period of Juan Enomenga, we went. So, Juan Enomenga said ‘yes we can give it to them for women to work too, because we see that men and women have strength’. So, there they gave it to us, our by-laws were approved and then we left].

In this quote we can explicitly see the conjuncture that leads to the emergence of Bore. Funds had become available to the organization for projects targeting women. These funds came from a PRODEPINE / IFAD¹ project and was designed to provide microcredit through a village bank or “cajas solidarias.” There was \$1000 available for the women who wanted to pursue an income generating project, which had to be paid back after one year including a low interest payment. This way, the organization would be able to keep the main capital and to make new loans to other women. However, it did not work because simply the money was never paid back.

Bore is the Huao name for a kind of ant, a hard working one. According to my informant, the name was supposed to symbolize the labor of Huaorani women who are

¹ PRODEPINE stands for Proyectos de Desarrollo para Pueblos Indígenas y Negros del Ecuador. This is a project of IFAD (International Fund for Agricultural Development), a specialized agency of the United Nations system devoted to support initiatives dealing with food security.

“siempre trabajando, siempre tejiendo” (“always working, always weaving,” my translation). Later they changed the name to AMWAE because AMWAE besides the meaning its acronym (Asociación de Mujeres Waorani de la Amazonia Ecuatoriana) also has a meaning in Huao-terero, the name of a fish.

There was another factor that led to the configuration of AMWAE as a separate entity. All the leaders mentioned the signing of a contract between Ecogenesis Development Company LLC ²and ONHAE under the leadership of Juan Enomenga as part of the story of how AMWAE was created. This contract entailed the waiving of usufruct rights to almost 700 hectares of Huaorani territory to the company.³ It was signed by ONHAE president Juan Enomenga without consulting any of the communities. This caused great turmoil that ended in the overthrow of this president and all the other officers. Since the women were among the strongest opponents of this contract, before he was overthrown, Juan Enomenga threw them out of the ONHAE office headquarters:

En ese tiempo cuando recién se formo, el Juan Enomenga ha dicho a las mujeres que empezaron a trabajar en la ONHAE acerca del FED. El Juan solamente queria firmar y coger dinero, pero las mujeres decían que no querían dinero y querian que el territorio Huao sea de los Huaorani, ninguna negociación y el Juan dijo que no, ustedes tienen que irse de aquí, ustedes están haciendo mal y por eso nos mando a sacar de la ONHAE(Rocío).

[In that time, when it was just created, Juan Enomenga told the women that had started working within ONHAE about FED. Juan only wanted to sign and take the money, but the women said they did not want money, and they wanted Huao

² In the interviews when the leaders talk about the contract with Eco Genesis Development Company LLC they refer to it as FED (Fundación Ecuatoriana de Desarrollo) which is the entity that directly deals with the Huaorani in representation of Eco Genesis. This will be discussed in greater detail in the section on critical issues of this chapter.

³ The interests that were implied in the contract with Ecogenesis fit within the broader context of environmental services, namely bio-prospecting, sustainable forestry, eco-tourism and others. However, in Ecuador, most of the time such initiatives have a great impact on indigenous peoples that do not have sufficient legal knowledge and skills to manage this kind of projects that involve their land and natural resources which are essential to their physical and cultural reproduction. In fact, the juridical department from CONAIE finds itself overloaded with similar cases from various indigenous organizations representing groups from throughout the country (personal communication, Manuel Morocho and Efrain Calapucha, 2006).

territory to belong to the Huaorani, no negotiations, and Juan said ‘no, you have to leave here, you are doing bad’ and that is why he threw us out of ONHAE]

This event led the women to settle in an office separate from ONHAE. They obtained the financial support of the project CAIMAN (Conservación en Areas Indígenas Manejadas) which had already been working with ONHAE and also opposed the Eco Genesis contract. CAIMAN was a consortium of national NGOs organized to develop projects financed by USAID (United States Agency for International Development). CAIMAN aided in the legal configuration of AMWAE. Furthermore, they provided capacity building workshops for the leaders on administrative management and communication. They also held workshops in the communities on topics such as agro-forestry management and handicraft production and marketing. While this was a very specific driving force supporting and guiding the creation of AMWAE, recurring in the narratives is another equally decisive factor.

There was discontent among the women with their lack of representation in the formal leadership of ONHAE. They also did not have access to paying jobs as the men did. Some of the narratives tell the story of the creation of AMWAE this way:

Primero empezaron Rocío y Nancy en oficinas de ONHAE, empezaron con el nombre de Bore, mujeres tenemos derecho de trabajar, no solo los hombres, dijeron, y así empezaron poquito a poquito sin sueldo ni siquiera. Así vinieron trabajando... (Marcela)

[First Rocío and Nancy started in the ONHAE office, they started with the name Bore, ‘we women have a right to work, not only men’ they said, and this way they started little by little, even without a salary. This way they started working...]

The narratives demonstrate a growing consciousness over genders roles in a formal leadership structure that left women behind. The interview with Rocío, the president and chief leader in the creation of AMWAE, perhaps offers the best example of this sense of dissatisfaction and revindication:

Yo vivía en la comunidad, después salí porque mi esposo trabajaba en la organización, en la ONHAE. Entonces ahí salí y conocí la organización, muchos años pase con ellos, pero ví que siempre los hombres trabajan, solo los hombres. Entonces siempre a nosotras nos dejaban a un lado. Entonces comenzamos así y después nosotros dijimos, organizamos, preguntando a todas las mujeres que viven adentro, dijimos: 'por que nosotras también no podemos formar una organización para poder trabajar igual que los hombres?' Entonces ahí dijeron, preguntamos en cada comunidad y dijeron que si estamos dispuestas para hacer, para formar una organización, para poder trabajar como iguales trabajan los hombres. Entonces de ahí fuimos a un taller en la comunidad Tiwino, que para formar una organización debemos concentrar todas las mujeres y queremos apoyar a la ONHAE, tenemos también que seguir apoyando, queremos formar una asociación pero con tal que trabajemos con la ONHAE. Entonces así fue en Toñampare otra reunión, después en Quihuaro otra reunión, fuimos Danementaro otra reunión y fuimos a Gareno, Gareno hemos ido como tres veces. Entones ahí poco a poco las mujeres primeramente no querían hablar, vivían en la comunidad entonces algunas conocían y algunas no entonces teníamos miedo de hablar español, miedo de hablar Huaorani.

En la época de Armando el no quería [aprobar para la configuración legal de AMWAE] porque decía que todas las mujeres tenían que estar en la casa no afuera. El decía que siempre estén en la casa decían pues pero nosotras nos levantamos. Después cuando ya dieron el nombramiento entonces tenía que buscar fondo para ir a Quito, entonces Armando en frente de las ONGs me puso, dijo en el publico cuando había bastante gente, me dijo: 'las mujeres Huaorani tienen que estar atrás de los hombres no adelante, no igual' pero le dije 'Armando, nosotros, en la historia Huaorani, hombres y mujeres defendieron cuando armaron la guerra, hombres y mujeres lucharon para tener la fuerza, eso esta mal' le dije. Porque en la organización también nosotros hombres y mujeres podemos estar juntos, no podemos estar haciendo destrucción a la organización cuando estamos, cuando están solos si pueden hacer, le dije. También cuando un líder puede hacer mal ahí si la organización esta de quiebra, le dije, la organización cuando son hombres cumplen hasta los niños si es bueno, le dije. Desde ahí las mujeres si estaban con ánimo de apoyar a la asociación, todas las mujeres viajaban Coca a la reunión, todos viajaban, niños y ancianos viajaban, ellos pensaron que tener una organización o asociación ellos estaban emocionados apoyar a la organización. Es bueno también cuando tenemos la organización, ya nosotras damos lo que estamos dando. Hay gente que dice que las mujeres Huaorani siempre están en la casa, no, porque nuestros abuelos siempre un hombre hacia lanza y la mujer también tenía que dar chicha u ortiga ahí y listo. Hombres y mujeres trabajaban pero ahora cambiaron y entonces no, tenemos que seguir y seguiremos nosotros [A diferencia de lo que sucede en la ciudad]...así hacen, adentro si trabajan juntos, la mujer siembra la yuca y el hombre corta el árbol (Rocío).

[I lived in the community, then I left because my husband worked in the organization, in ONHAE. So then I left and I came to know the organization, I many years spent with them but I saw that always men worked, only the men. So,

we were always left behind. So, we started this way, and then we said 'lets organize' asking all women who live deep in the forest we said 'why can't we also build an organization to be able to work as the men do?' So, there they spoke, we asked in each community and they said yes 'we are up for it, to build an organization, to be able to work just as the men do. So, we then went to a workshop in Tiwino, to create an organization we have to gather all women and we want to support ONHAE, we have to continue supporting it, we want to build an organization just as long as we work with ONHAE. And so there was another meeting in Toñampare, then in Quihuaro another one, we went to Damentaro to another meeting and we went to Gareno. We've been to Gareno like three times. So little by little, women at first did not want to talk, they lived in the community and so some knew but other did not and they were afraid to speak Spanish, to speak Huaorani. During Armando's period, he did not want [to approve the legal configuration of AMWAE] because he said that women should be at home and not outside. He said to stay at home but we rebelled. Later when we obtained the appointment I had to look for funds, go to Quito and so Armando in front of the NGO's when I was in the audience, when there was a lot of people, he said 'Huaorani women have to be behind the men, not before, not the same' but I told him 'Armando, we, in Huaorani history, men and women defended when war broke out, men and women fought together to have the strength, this is incorrect. Because in the organization also we, men and women, can be together, we can't be causing destruction to the organization if we are there, but if you are by yourselves you can, I said. Since then women became more enthusiastic to give support to the association, all women traveled to Coca to the meeting, everybody traveled, children and elders traveled, they were thinking about having an organization or association, they were excited about supporting the organization. It is good when we have the organization, we already give what we are giving. There are people who say that Huaorani women are always at home, no, because our grandparents always a man made a spear and the woman also had to give the *chicha* or nettle there and that is how it went on. Men and women worked but now things changed but no, we have to continue, and we will continue. That's how we do it, deep in the forest they do work together, the women plants manioc and the men cut the trees].

This narrative sheds light on the tensions around gender roles in an ethnic group that is immersed in the political and social ambiguities generated by the crosscultural relations between their traditional society and the national society. It is interesting to see through this narrative how the discourse on complementarity in gender roles among spouses appears. As discussed in chapter one, in Huaorani society the relationship between spouses has been described as a reciprocal partnership where certain activities become gendered as a form of complementarity. This complementarity results in a certain

division of labor that does not manifest any hierarchy (Rival 2002: 106). Thus, in this narrative it appears as if that conjugal complementarity is being transplanted into gender roles in activism. This is also noticeable in Rocío's statement on how the women's desire was to work with ONHAE, supporting it and coordinating with it. This can be understood as an appeal to *complement* instead of *substitute*.

There were also some secondary factors that appeared in the discourse of some of the leaders. They expressed their belief that women were firmer with respect to defending Huaorani interests and better managed money. An example of this view can be found in the following statement by the president of AMWAE:

: ... los hombres, solo los hombres hacían, pero nosotros estábamos atrás, pero les dijimos que nosotras entrando en la organización podemos trabajar igual que ellos. Porque si los petroleros entran talvez en el Puyo y ellos [gente en las comunidades] a lo mejor adentro dicen 'no, no queremos' y entonces mas bien nosotras podemos enfrentar con petroleros porque los hombres como son dan un poco de dinero y ya aceptan. En cambio nosotras no. Entonces hemos pensado así poco a poco (Rocío).

[Men, only men did, but we were behind, but we told them that joining in the work of the organization we could work the same as they do. Because if oil companies come perhaps in Puyo, they in the forest might say 'no, we don't want' and so we can face the oil companies because the way men are they give them a little money and they accept, we don't. And this is how we have been thinking little by little]

This discourse of the firmness of Huaorani women's activism to confront oil companies or any potential threats to their territory is not only common among AMWAE leaders, but I noticed this view was shared by some CONAIE officers and members of national NGOs that work with the Huaorani. However, this is something to be tested in practice⁴.

⁴ During my time in the field there were internal tensions that were linked to the contract with Ecogenesis/FED. Although AMWAE was one of the major opponents of the contract, at the time of my field research it was common knowledge that two officers were collaborating with FED. These two officers organized an assembly with the purpose of overthrowing the officers that opposed FED. These two officers allegedly collaborating with FED did not admit to their involvement with the institution and instead they argued how AMWAE leaders were not doing a good job and, in demonstration of their belief that the leadership of AMWAE should be replaced, renounced their positions. Because of this internal tensions and division within AMWAE, I could not interview these two

With respect to the way men and women manage money, women's better management of money is used as an argument for creating income generating activities for women:

Porque nosotros vemos, somos jóvenes como los hombres, porque tenemos que trabajar nosotras, derechos. Pero hombres solamente organizan y trabajan, pero mujeres tenemos dar a nuestros hijos buena educación, tener artesanías, todo, turismo, para educar bien y organizar bien para tener como mujeres queremos tener bien. Porque hombre trabajan y ganan plata y gastan ellos mismos y las mujeres nada tienen. Entonces ellas también quieren derecho para trabajar.

[Because we see, we are young like the men, because we have to work, we have the right. But only men organize and work, but we women have to give our children good education, have handicrafts, everything, tourism, to educate and organize well to have as women how we want to have well. Because men work and earn money and they spend it themselves and women have nothing. So they also want their right to work].

This quote not only makes clear that women believe they spend money more responsibly, but it reflects how they also want access to income generating opportunities. In their interactions with the national society men have been more exposed to income generating activities. Oil companies, for instance, have hired Huaorani men sporadically. Similarly, officer positions in ONHAE are also income generating opportunities that, until the creation of AMWAE, were occupied mostly by men.

Thus, building from the organization of Bore in 2004 within ONHAE, by 2005 women had created their own organization, AMWAE.

officers who I did not see again after they resigned in that assembly. Elections were carried out in that assembly but the new officers were not approved because there were not representatives from all communities present in the assembly. AMWAE leaders came to an agreement and decided that a couple of months later another assembly would take place to determine if the then current officers were to stay in their assignments. The assembly did take place and by the time I returned to visit five months after I left the field, the leadership had been replaced but through a more consensual assembly. Ironically, in the communities the fulfillment of terms of office was recurrently mentioned as a needed improvement for ONHAE and for AMWAE not to follow the same steps. But, at the time the assemblies are taking place this view is not manifested enough to be put in practice. In May 2007 I was informed of what Rocío expressed as very good news: there was no longer division among AMWAE members and Ecogenesis/FED had stopped being an issue.

Structure and Funding of AMWAE

AMWAE officially has ten officers: president, vice-president, treasurer, secretary, three board members and three substitute board members. These leaders are elected in an assembly, the results which are then ratified by CONAMU (Consejo Nacional de la Mujer). AMWAE also has an accountant and a secretary who is referred to as the *técnica*. Both the accountant and the technician are non Huaorani women from Puyo. They are in charge of tasks that the Huaorani officers do not yet have training in, but the goal is that someday Huaorani women will occupy these positions.

Following the structure of ONHAE, within the AMWAE leadership there are specific responsibilities assigned to each leader which include education, tourism, handicrafts, health and coordination. The structure of all indigenous organizations is similar because their by-laws follow a model that is required by the government in order to be legalized. As discussed in the previous chapter, this is now changing because indigenous organizations are now being legalized under CODENPE (Consejo de Desarrollo de las Nacionalidades y Pueblos del Ecuador) which does not require them to follow a specific by-laws model, but allows them to organize as they please. However, AMWAE was legalized as an association by CONAMU and according to its by-laws members have to be registered; this contrasts with ONHAE where all Huaorani are innate members. This organizing format is an imposition entailed by the by-laws of associations. However, the bases (and to a certain point, the leaders themselves) do not understand well this differentiation and consider themselves all members. AMWAE has its own *personería jurídica* and legal documents but ONHAE is still considered the main organization. They are, however, relatively independent and AMWAE has developed the capacity to manage its own affairs, settling in a separate office.

In the case of AMWAE, in practice, I observed little specialization. The president was involved in all affairs. Only once I saw her send other leaders as representatives for a meeting in CONAIE. However, she usually attended other meetings accompanied by other AMWAE leaders. There was one leader who seemed to have a more specialized role. This was the treasurer, Marcela. Marcela was always learning by the side of the *técnica* and the accountant, processing the payments of the other leaders and doing paper work.

The AMWAE office is located in downtown Puyo. It has three office rooms, one open meeting room, a bathroom and another room facing the street which houses the crafts store. One office room was occupied by the accountant, another one by the *técnica* and another room was assigned to the president. AMWAE leaders, including the president, gathered in all rooms indiscriminately. Additionally there was a studio in the back where the *conserje* (the guard and cleaning person) lived. The *conserje* was a Huaorani woman that lived there with her husband and children. The environment of the AMWAE office was calm and friendly. Children were always around. Toddlers were wrapped around their mothers, and older children would play around in the open meeting room or in the front yard. Huaorani children are very independent and from what I observed their presence in the office did not appear to be an impediment to their mother's work.

In the office there were some busy days and other days when not much seemed to be going on, but the women were there, weaving and discussing current issues and upcoming events. A busy day involved all-day workshops, mapping the upcoming month's agenda, and meetings with ONHAE and other organizations.

AMWAE works through the same networks as ONHAE: the oil companies, the NGOs of the project CAIMAN consortium, other NGOs, indigenous organizations and state institutions. Even if AMWAE is not directly involved in the implementation of projects that are carried out through ONHAE, AMWAE leaders are present and interact with the relevant institutions at planning meetings. Also, being a women's association means it has an even wider network. AMWAE is registered under CONAMU (Consejo Nacional de la Mujer) and occasionally participates in workshops related to issues on women's leadership.

My interviews with AMWAE leaders included a question about the association's networks (Table A-5). Specifically, I asked which were the most important relationships and with which social actors, and how these had facilitated or hindered their struggle. Ten institutions were mentioned positively as having helped AMWAE, while three were mentioned as not having helped AMWAE or causing problems for them. Out of the eight leaders interviewed, seven mentioned CAIMAN as having helped the association. Two NGOs that are part of the CAIMAN consortium were mentioned individually as organizations that help. Other institutions mentioned positively besides these were CONAIE, and then less frequently, ONHAE, IBIS, CONAMU, Acción Ecológica, Entrix and the Municipality of Puyo. IBIS is a Danish NGO that has worked with indigenous organizations in Ecuador for some years. It also works directly with CONAIE and with the Huaorani. Acción Ecológica is a national NGO that works on issues related to the impact of oil, mining, and plantation activities as well as biotechnology, bio-prospecting and bio-piracy. This is a politically committed organization that questions the model of

development implemented in the country which they consider to be unequal and anti-ecological.

The oil companies were mentioned by five leaders; two classified them as helping social actors, two as causing problems and one as not helpful. This underlines the contradictory relations that the Huaorani people have with the oil companies, as detailed in the previous chapter. The government was mentioned by two leaders and identified as unhelpful while Ecogenesis/FED was also mentioned twice as a social actor that causes problems.

In terms of funding, AMWAE initially (and at the time of my fieldwork) depended mostly on the CAIMAN project and the oil company Repsol YPF. In the annual budget agreement the Huaorani have with Repsol YPF, there is an item called *Bonificación dirigente* (honorarium for leaders) for ONHAE and for AMWAE it is called *Gestión AMWAE* (management of AMWAE). These are not salaries per se, but honorariums. According to the accountant of AMWAE: "...ni facturamos, tampoco tenemos ningún beneficio social pero, el personal Huaorani, si se enferma o pasa algo, la Compañía los cura o los lleva al hospital, pero si se enferma un *cohuori* que trabaja para el pueblo Huaorani se enferma o se muere gratis." [We do not invoice, and we do not receive any social benefits, but if any Huaorani personnel gets sick or something happens, the Company takes care of them and takes them to the hospital, but if a *cohuori* that works for the Huaorani people gets sick, they get sick or they die for free, my translation]. Additionally, Petrobrás and Perenco occasionally make contributions for specific items such as the cost of acquiring passports, mobilizations, etc.

During 2006 Repsol YPF gave AMWAE \$1200 monthly that went mostly for bonuses for the leaders. Each leader received \$100 a month and the remaining \$200 went for transportation to and from the communities and to Quito for meetings and workshops. Considering the profit that the company earns from Huaorani land, these bonuses are pittance. While some AMWAE leaders already lived in the city because of their husband's jobs, other elected officers had to move to the city. In both cases they have to support their families on only \$100 a month.

CAIMAN only gives a bonus to the president, and she must decide how to distribute it. It also pays the honorariums of the *técnica*, the accountant and the guard whose pay are not taken care of by Repsol YPF. CAIMAN was key in the configuration of AMWAE since it financed the rent for the AMWAE office, administrative costs (general office supplies, and telephone and internet bills), office equipment and capacity building workshops. All these expenses were registered, and AMWAE had to send monthly financial reports to be approved for reimbursement so that there was no diversion of funds.

While CAIMAN helped in the creation of AMWAE, its assistance only lasted one year. It helped train the leaders and carried out some community workshops. But one year of support was not enough. Even the capacity building workshops carried out during that year were not sufficient, as will be discussed in greater detail in the section below.

With the expiration of the agreement with CAIMAN and initiation of the 2007 budget agreement with Repsol YPF, AMWAE's funding situation changed. They had to move into a smaller office and all honorariums are now funded by Repsol YPF. The oil

company is interested in continuing oil exploitation for a prolonged time and so it must give more prolonged support to the Huaorani as suggested in the contract.

The budget agreement with Repsol YPF is negotiated annually giving the Huaorani organizations the opportunity to meet with Repsol YPF and present their demands. I was in the field when such a meeting took place to discuss funds for schools in the communities. The company sent invitations just a few days before the meeting which did not leave much time for the leaders to come up with a good proposal and discuss it with people in the communities. In the renegotiation of the 2007 budget agreement AMWAE managed to get a raise in the honorariums for its leaders. The difference in the level of honorariums paid to ONHAE and AMWAE leaders, however, is extremely high. For instance, the ONHAE president currently gets \$500 from Repsol YPF, \$360 from Petrobras and \$160 from ONHAE,⁵ or a total of \$1020 a month. The president of AMWAE, on the other hand, now gets only \$250 from Repsol. The other ONHAE leaders get \$400 from Repsol, \$160 from Petrobrás, and \$100 from ONHAE, for a total of about \$660 monthly. The other AMWAE leaders, however, only receive \$200 a month from Repsol YPF. This reflects how differences in the value of men and women's labor are being imposed from the outside. It is the oil companies that decide that the leaders of the women's association should earn less than men, although, the differences in payment are not explicitly between men and women but rather between their organizations.

⁵ These funds that are referred to as coming from ONHAE itself are actually *derecho de via*.

Relations between AMWAE and ONHAE

At this point, then, it is crucial to explore the relations between AMWAE and ONHAE. As noted earlier, the women first created Bore within ONHAE at the suggestion of the then ONHAE president, Armando Boya, because there were some funds available for women's projects. However, the idea of organizing among the women was not his alone; it had already been discussed among the women. The Huaorani women living in Puyo had been pondering about their marginality in the formal leadership of ONHAE. Even though Bore worked within ONHAE there were still tensions with the ONHAE leadership. First with Armando Boya himself who felt that the women should not be considered at the same level as men and should stay at home. Second, with Juan Enomenga who ended up expelling them from ONHAE, causing a clearer separation between the two organizations. Forming their own separate association was not the initial intention of the women leaders. They wanted to be included in ONHAE and work together, in partnership with the men. This was always stated in the interviews and in conversations.

With the leadership of Vicente Enomenga (who was president during my time in the field) there was a closer relationship between AMWAE and ONHAE. The two organizations were constantly coordinating. Nevertheless, I did hear occasional complaints. Rocío, for example, complained that the ONHAE men were not supporting them enough. However, there are always tensions among and between AMWAE and ONHAE leaders, and also between previous and current leaders of the organizations.

Both ONHAE and AMWAE have had elections since my period of field work (June through August 2006) and now have different officers. Under the new leadership, it appears as if the relation between ONHAE and AMWAE is not as close as it was under

the previous leadership. When CAIMAN's mission ended, and AMWAE did not have enough money to pay the rent for their office, they tried to go back to ONHAE headquarters where there was physical space for them. But ONHAE declined to help them, giving the explanation that the women "son muy chismosas y hacen mucho problema" [gossip too much and cause too much trouble] (Flora, personal communication). I was also informed that the women felt that in the 2007 budget agreement with Repsol YPF they were not given equal importance. As expressed by the accountant "como si las mujeres están ahí para que hagan artesanías y nada mas" [As if the women are there just to do handicrafts and that is all]. The implementation of projects and programs on key issues like territory, education, health, and even tourism is done through ONHAE, even if AMWAE participated in the planning and negotiating meetings. When AMWAE did not exist, women felt disadvantaged because they were not included in the formal leadership, but now that they have their association they are still excluded in the implementation of key programs and projects.

ONHAE is the organization representing the Huaorani nationality--both men and women--and thus it should have a more inclusive leadership. AMWAE was not created with the goal of substituting ONHAE, but rather complementing it by broadening Huaorani representation. In practice, the creation of AMWAE has had two contradictory outcomes. On the one hand, it has opened up a space for Huaorani women, giving them a channel for their voices to be heard and giving them more visibility in the sphere of indigenous organizations. On the other hand, the creation of AMWAE has also resulted in the paradox of ONHAE becoming for all practical purposes an all male organization.

While it is true that there was a lack of women's representation in the ONHAE leadership, which was the very fact that motivated the women to organize, it is also true that there had been some exceptions. Nancy, for example, was leader of health twice, María, leader of tourism, and Cantanpari, leader of territory. However, since the creation of AMWAE as a separate association there have not been any women elected to leadership positions in the last two ONHAE elections. The fact that ONHAE is the organization in charge of implementing projects on key issues like land, education, and health while AMWAE is mostly in charge of handicrafts or plant nursery projects is creating a clear division of labor among organizations, one that is now gendered and where women's activities are viewed as less important than the men's.

The motivations behind the emergence of AMWAE and the relations between it and ONHAE speak to key questions about social movements and women's movements. Should indigenous organizations be organized by gender? Should a women's organization exist as a separate entity or be an integral part of an ethnic organization? What are the implicit benefits and difficulties in these choices? In the case of AMWAE, is it only going to be relegated to manage handicrafts projects and result once again in the marginalization of women as ONHAE becomes an all male organization with more decision making power than AMWAE?

It is difficult to ascertain the proper answer to these questions and it is perhaps also too early to do so. It is, however, not only worth it but necessary to consider these questions. Drawing on the narratives it is important stress how these emphasized that ONHAE and AMWAE need to coordinate, and how AMWAE was created to provide

women with more opportunities, but also how AMWAE should support ONHAE and work together.

The AMWAE's Functions and Objectives

In the by-laws of AMWAE the main objectives of the association are stated as follows:

1. Fortalecer la participación solidaridad y responsabilidad comunitaria a través de la Asociación.
2. Desarrollar Programas encaminaos al mejoramiento del trabajo artesanal, turismo ecológico, cultural pecuario, forestal, y de conservación de la ecología en beneficios de las mujeres de la Nacionalidad Waorani.
3. Implementar cursos en todas las áreas para las Socias.
4. Gestionar ante los organismos públicos y privados, nacionales o internacionales, apoyo financiero para la consecución de los fines y objetivos de la Organización.
5. Dar a conocer las Leyes y Derechos que protegen a la mujer tanto entre las Socias y la comunidad.
6. Velar porque las autoridades cumplan debidamente con las disposiciones legales a favor de la mujer.
7. Fomentar relaciones de Cooperación con la ONHAE

1. [Strengthen communitarian participation, solidarity and responsibility through the Association
2. To develop programs that target the improvement of handicrafts, ecological tourism, and forestry and ecological conservation work for the benefit of Huaorani women.
3. To implement courses in all areas for the associates.
4. To negotiate before public and private institutions, national or international, financial support for the achievement of the objectives of the organization.
5. To make known, among associates and in the communities, the laws and rights that protect women.
6. To make sure that legal dispositions in favor of women are being properly fulfilled by the authorities.
7. To promote cooperational relations with ONHAE].

The by-laws, however, seem to represent more a formality than an actual guide for praxis, although, they are also always referred to with respect to legal procedures. My analysis is based on the objectives expressed by AMWAE leaders in their narratives. Most of the objectives stated in the by-laws coincide with the expressed objectives of

AMWAE leaders. Objectives five and six in the by-laws represent the exceptions; these were not mentioned by any AMWAE leaders. There are also expressed objectives of AMWAE leaders that are not mentioned in the by-laws. These will be discussed in greater detail below.

While it might be too early to analyze the achievements of a newly formed association like AMWAE, there are noticeable accomplishments. The first and most obvious is the opening of a political space for Huaorani women. The best example of this is how for the first time a Huaorani woman was appointed *dirigenta de la mujer* (leader of women) in the CONFENIAE (Confederación de las Nacionalidades Indígenas de la Amazonia Ecuatoriana), the regional indigenous confederation of the Ecuadorian Amazon. This recognition would not have been so easily accomplished if it were not for the creation of AMWAE. In this same line, the building of AMWAE has allowed women to widen their networks and their articulate demands more extensively. They have established relations with different social actors to put forward their projects.

Another achievement has been the capacity training of leaders and other Huaorani women that has been carried out through the different workshops by and for AMWAE. Capacity training was an issue frequently and emphatically mentioned by Huaorani women, both leaders and non-leaders, as a benefit. Lastly, AMWAE has developed their own income generating project, handicraft production, and sales are managed through AMWAE. This is an income generating opportunity of particular importance to women because it contrasts to wage labor since it involves their cultural traditions. AMWAE was able to carry out workshops in some communities and established a handicraft store in AMWAE headquarters in the city. This project was carried out by Sinchi Sacha, a

national NGO which is part of the CAIMAN consortium. These workshops were intended to rework traditional Huaorani handicrafts and introduce new techniques using traditional materials. This initiative was successful in that it took into consideration a demand of the Huaorani women and carried it through. However, just like every other project put forward by CAIMAN, it had no continuity. The agreement signed between AMWAE and CAIMAN was for only one year and was not renewed by the latter. As a result, AMWAE found itself with no funds to continue the projects. The dependence on externally funded projects has contradictory outcomes. On the one hand, it can provide funds for the association to develop new activities. But it does not necessarily result in self-sustaining activities. At the same time it can at least partially drive the agenda of the association away from its primary objectives.

The new leadership of AMWAE did not get the training to continue with the handicraft project, and they were also not trained for fundraising or connected to other organizations that might offer opportunities to continue training and such projects. After the 2005-2006 agreement ended, CAIMAN's mission was just dropped and while this mission might look good in USAID's reports, in practice, it has had many failures. USAID's website brags about how this mission succeeded in supporting the creation of AMWAE, and how many Huaorani they trained (USAID). However, paying some basic bills for a year, carrying out a few workshops, and counting the number of people who attend these workshops are questionable indicators of success if there was no provision for continuity.

Considering all the different social actors with which the Huaorani organizations interact, the experience with CAIMAN can actually be considered a positive one. Even if

some of the national NGOs which are part of the consortium that makes up CAIMAN have been declared *non grata*⁶ by CONAIE, this is something ONHAE and AMWAE have been able to counter-balance. Thus, overall their association with CAIMAN is considered as a positive one. In fact, in my interviews, AMWAE leaders considered it the organization that has helped them the most. However, the projects CAIMAN conducted with AMWAE not only lacked continuity, but the actual workshops carried out during that year were deficient. For instance, there was a computer skills workshop to train AMWAE leaders that only lasted one afternoon. Certainly one afternoon is not enough to train indigenous women who are not too familiar with such technology. The workshop was a waste of money and time since little actual progress in capacity building took place. As stated by Rocío: “Si van ayudar que ayuden bien” [If they are going to help then they should do it well].

Other workshops and activities that I observed or heard of included plant nurseries and workshops on hand crafts, communication, and internal management. The plant nurseries were established in the communities of Ñoneno, Meñepare, Tiwino and Bataboro. These had the purpose of training community members in agroforestry to produce materials used in the elaboration of hand crafts. The plant nurseries have since been abandoned by community members, another example of effort, money, and time spent in vain.

The communication workshops were important because poor communication between the communities and the Huaorani organizations is an issue that was constantly

⁶ In 2004 CONAIE declared many multilateral environmental organizations and their national partners *non grata*. CONAIE argues that these organizations receive significant funds but the expected results on sustainable environmental management are lacking. CONAIE further argues that the results have not been in conservation but in favorable economic conditions of these organizations meaning that these environmental institutions do not prioritize the interests of the populations directly dependant on the natural resources and natural environment in question (CONAIE 2004). Among the national environmental organizations there are two NGO's that are part of the CAIMAN consortium.

brought up at the community level. This CAIMAN initiative included providing the communities with radios and teaching AMWAE leaders and Huaorani women how to operate the radios.⁷ This initiative was only partially accomplished since only 12 radios were distributed. This experience also reveals the constant tension that indigenous organizations face in adapting to foreign ways of organizing. On the one hand, these means of organizing and communication seem necessary in order to i) increase communication, information and participation between base and leadership, and ii) communicate the indigenous people's struggles in relation to their interactions with the white-mestizo world. On the other hand, these new means are imposing a format that indigenous people may not be familiar with and find it difficult to make their own.

As mentioned earlier, the handicrafts project was perhaps the most successful project. Sinchi Sacha organized the handicraft store and positioned itself as the intermediary for sales at a larger scale. However, this organization promoted these workshops only in the city and in a few selected communities. Besides this problem, poor communication between the communities and AMWAE also caused the exclusion of many potential participants and beneficiaries.

After having discussed the accomplishments of AMWAE and evaluating the activities carried out by Project CAIMAN, it is necessary to look at the main concerns expressed by AMWAE's leaders so as to better understand the objectives and agenda of the association (Table A-1).

According to my interviews with AMWAE leaders, the main concerns of the association, in terms of the frequency in which they were mentioned, are territory,

⁷ Few non-leaders could attend these workshops that are mostly directed towards AMWAE officers because few women have enough money for transportation and lodging expenses that is reimbursed by CAIMAN only after and with receipts.

education, health care, and contamination. Another concern frequently mentioned was handicraft sales. Culture, tourism, looking after the forest and looking for projects were also mentioned by several participants. Finally, the least frequent concerns mentioned were capacity building, fulfillment of leadership, organizing, and water, all with the same frequency.

Defense of territory is a crucial issue for all indigenous organizations as detailed in the previous chapter. Moreover, even if the Huaorani have managed to have a large part of their ancestral territory legally recognized, there are constant threats to their rights. These threats include oil concessions, water contamination, illegal logging and usufruct rights among others. Education is valued greatly as a means of acquiring competence to interact with the national society or, as described by Rival (1996), to perform well in the public sphere. Lack of access to health care reflects another vacuum in the responsibilities of the state with respect to indigenous people in the Amazonian region. Interactions with the national society also brought many diseases for which indigenous people have no traditional medicine. Furthermore, oil activities have caused damage to the health of Huaorani people that live near the oil camps, water contamination being the most obvious. Handicraft sales, which came in the second set of frequently mentioned concerns, refers to creating opportunities for women to generate income and benefit the community as well as to help pay for the indirect costs of formal education of children. This concern is prominent because handicraft production is among the few income-generating opportunities for women that does not disrupt women's household responsibilities.

The concern denominated as culture refers to maintaining their cultural identity or as the participants express it “vivir como Huaorani, como *durani bai*” [living like Huaorani, like *durani bai*]. *Durani bai* is an expression in Huao-terero that means roughly; the the way of our ancestors. Paradoxically, formal education is linked to this because they see it as a way of preparing themselves to fight to maintain their territory and way of life in the face of the pressures that come from their interactions with the national society. Tourism, just as craft sales, is another income generating activity that is of interest to the Huaorani. This is another example of the contradictions that appear between a traditional way of thinking that is not open to the presence of *cohuori* in their land, with the desire for a means of generating income through this interaction. Looking after the forest is a concern related to the current destruction of natural resources, expressed as contamination by oil activities and illegal logging, among others. “Finding projects” represents the need of leaders to identify opportunities to offer the communities. These activities and the associated benefits justify their position as leaders, which is constantly being tested. Among the least mentioned concerns, capacity building relates to a particular interest of the association in training leaders and potential leaders. Fulfillment of leadership refers to the completion of the association’s officers’ appointed terms. This is due to the fact that many times because of internal tensions or dissatisfaction at the base, leaders have been dismissed from their positions and replaced during assemblies. The concerned expressed as “organizing” implies the coordination among and between leaders as well as between the organizations and the communities. Finally, water was a concern mentioned only by one leader, the AMWAE president, and it is related to the

problem of contamination. The quality of water in many communities has become an important issue.

It is interesting to point out that the most frequently mentioned concerns are those that are related to the traditional responsibilities and roles of the State. Those functions that are more in line with the role of the women's association, such as capacity building, fulfillment of leadership and organizing were less frequently mentioned. This is significant regarding the association's objectives and what leaders and the base expect. The concerns that were expressed more frequently coincide more with the agenda of the ONHAE. This reflects how AMWAE's agenda does not prioritize gender issues but fights for a political space, equality, and representation in leadership shared with men. In this process, the women encounter challenges to their pursuit and specific objectives that target the gender-based inequalities are incorporated into the association's agenda to open opportunities and a space for women. In reality, considering the concerns expressed by AMWAE leaders, it can be assumed that ONHAE and AMWAE have practically the same agenda. Nevertheless, when considering the narratives on the emergence of AMWAE and those other concerns not shared with ONHAE, it becomes obvious that what the women want is equal representation and participation in leadership as well as more income generating opportunities.

When analyzing AMWAE's agenda in terms of practical and strategic gender interests it becomes obvious that AMWAE's interests are more practical than strategic. For a more direct application in policy planning and formulation in the context of GAD (Gender and Development), Moser (1993) interprets the conceptual model of gender interests as gender needs. This author develops a gender needs assessment tool whose

purpose is to “recognize women as active participants in development” (Moser 1993:94). This tool, thus, is used to classify “planning interventions in terms of those that meet practical gender needs (that is, the needs identified to help women in their existing subordinate position in society) and strategic gender needs—namely, the needs identified to transform existing subordinate relationships between men and women” (Moser 1993:94). While AMWAE is not a development project but a women’s association, this tool can still be applied to analyze the needs it articulates.

This way, the most frequently mentioned concerns by AMWAE leaders can be interpreted as needs. Following this model, territory, education and health care would be AMWAE’s main needs. While for the Huaorani territory and health care are crucial to the condition of both men and women, these seem to be needs without the potential of transforming the existing gender relations. Education, however, does have the potential of transforming the existing gender relations in the sphere of the Huaorani organizations. As mentioned earlier, formal education is a factor that contributes greatly to leadership and being a successful leader. With the creation of AMWAE women have gained access to leadership but the control on critical issues is still held by ONHAE that has more decision making power than AMWAE. Thus, greater education for women may be strategic in that this may be a precondition for women to participate on more equal terms in ONHAE and exercise effective leadership.

Expectations and Perceptions at the Community level

Shifting the focus to the community level, in this section, I analyze the perceptions about AMWAE at the base and compare the community-level demands with the concerns expressed by the AMWAE leadership. To explore the demands at the base I asked the interviewees to express their concerns at:

- The community level (related to what they thought the community needs) (Table A-3)
- The individual level (related to their own priorities) (Table A-2).

Most of the time the concerns identified as individual or personal were related to concerns regarding close kin rather than to the individual per se. I must admit that I later pondered this conceptual division because, besides the language barrier, I questioned whether the conceptual differentiation between individual and community made sense for the interviewees. It did not seem as if the answers about the concerns of the community and those of the individual varied much, but the division of questions in this way gave interviewees a second chance to think and express their concerns. In the following, I summarize the results separately for the two levels of the question, but I analyze the concerns altogether.

Regarding the main concerns of the community, the most frequently mentioned one was education. In second place came the problem of excessive alcohol consumption and the road, which I will explain more about later. The following concerns were mentioned with the same frequency: health care, contamination, territory, tourism and the sales of hand crafts. Lastly, culture, looking after the forest, illegal logging, support from the organizations, and money management were also mentioned by at least one person.

The concerns identified as personal overlap greatly with those identified as communitarian. The most frequently mentioned one was also education followed by culture. Alcohol consumption then followed, and lastly, the road, tourism and the problem of domestic violence.

Education is the most frequently mentioned concern at both the community and individual levels and was among the most frequently mentioned concerns of AMWAE

leaders. While territory was among the most frequently mentioned concerns of AMWAE leaders, I was surprised that it was only mentioned by the interviewees twice as a concern pertaining to the community. Both of these respondents lived in communities close to oil camps. This discrepancy has to do with the fact that the leaders have a broader knowledge of the threats to their territorial rights and are aware of what is going on in Huaorani territory as a whole.

Health care was also an expressed concern at the community level, however, it is also interesting to consider the view of the eldest interviewee on this matter: “Para mi mejoraria tambien como dice salud, si, no hay medicina pero nosotros si tenemos medicina, tenemos todo, hay muchas plantas medicinales y eso nunca tiene que olvidar, seguimos teniendo.” [I also would like improved health care, yes, there is no medicine but we do have medicine, we have everything, there are many medicinal plants and that is something that never should be forgotten, we still have it]. Here health care is mentioned as a concern but this elderly woman approached it in a different manner emphasizing how Huaorani traditional medicine and related knowledge should be valued.

Alcohol and the road are two concerns that were not mentioned by AMWAE leaders, but were voiced by interviewees in the communities of Tiwino and Bataboro. Both these communities have a road passing through them, which according to the interviewees, brings problems, namely alcohol consumption. Alcohol consumption is said to cause family quarrels and violence, and great dismay was expressed about these interrelated problems. It should be stated that the Huaorani are not used to alcohol consumption traditionally. Their main drinking staple, *tepe*, in contrast to the

*chicha*⁸ consumed by other indigenous groups in the area, is not as fermented and has virtually no alcohol content.

Other concerns mentioned by non leaders in the communities were money management and support from the organizations. Money management refers to the difficulty they have in dealing with money, traditional practices are based on demand sharing among household members and reciprocity between spouses. As expressed by the interviewee, the lack of skills in money management manifests itself in disputes among family members and between families about debts and perceived retributions. Support from the organization refers to what they expect from the Huaorani organizations. These expectations will be discussed below.

Overall there was considerable overlap of the concerns expressed by AMWAE leaders and interviewees in the communities demonstrating that the leaders are aware of the demands of the communities (Table A-4). However, some concerns of the communities such as the road and alcohol consumption, which are very concrete issues pertaining to specific communities, were not mentioned by AMWAE leaders. This should serve as a warning to the association that the leadership must pay attention to activities with the potential to cause trouble and that they must address these issues.

In my community interviews, I also attempted to learn about the expectations that they have of both AMWAE and ONHAE. The expectations expressed by the interviewees in the communities were practically the same for both institutions. The most prominent expectation was better communication and coordination with the communities. As expressed by one participant:

⁸ A traditional fermented beverage made out of corn (in the Highlands) or manioc (in the Amazon).

ONHAE tiene que hacer contacto con nosotros, organizar, comunicar con nosotros y cuando hay problemas organizar las cosas bien . Por ejemplo, ONHAE tiene que invitar una fiesta grande, feliz, talleres, comunicar que es lo que estan haciendo. Tener contacto con nosotros porque a veces ONHAE no comunica, no sabemos nada. Ellos tienen problemas a veces, no organizan bien, no se comunican con nosotros y no sabemos nada... Nosotros tenemos que conversar con ellos, organizar bien para seguir adelante.

[ONHAE has to make contact with us, organize, communicate with us and when there are problems organize well. For example, ONHAE has to invite us to a feast, big, happy, workshops, tell us what they are doing. To make contact with us because sometimes ONHAE does not communicate, we do not know anything. They sometimes have problems, they don't organize well, don't communicate with us and we know nothing... We have to talk to them, organize well to go on].

It is worth noting how this participant also suggests how the organization should organize a big feast because such would resemble a traditional Huaorani custom of organizing manioc drinking feasts to establish, renew or maintain social nexuses. Rival (2002) explains how these types of feasts were traditionally organized by prominent elderly couples that typically led a compound of longhouses to move to a new area of the hunting territory.

ONHAE was described by a number of interviewees as a “big father.” As one participant put it: “ Para mi ONHAE es muy grande como tenemos nuestro padres, la organización, muy grande.” Taking the symbolism of ONHAE as a father, an interesting interpretation might be that the organization assumes the role of the prominent elderly couple in the Huaorani-*cohuori* context. Nevertheless, it is necessary to take into account that a pan-Huaorani identity is something that has only been recently created. In any case, taking up the organizing of these feasts could be a good practice to improve the relationships and communication between the organizations and the communities.

The same communication and coordination was expected from AMWAE:

[AMWAE] ... tiene que compartir con dirigentes mismos, organizar, comunicarse con nosotros. Si no comunican lo mismo van a quedar como ONHAE, entonces yo

pienso que tiene que hacer buen trabajo para mejorar, sin problemas, tiene que estar en contacto, con comunicación ...

[... they have to share among leaders themselves, organize, communicate with us. If they don't communicate they are going to end up like ONHAE, and so I think that they have to work well to improve, without problems, they have to be in contact, in communication ...]

However, instead of being considered as a “big father,” AMWAE was compared to a newborn baby: “ AMWAE es como un recién nacido. Thus, there is an implicit assumption that AMWAE needs to grow up to become a complete, “full service” organization. This does not imply that AMWAE is considered to be less important than ONHAE, but that it is new and still has to mature. In fact, the same participant expressed that both organizations should go hand in hand:

ONAHE es mas arriba, AMWAE es muy bajo, tenemos que ir subiendo bajando, subiendo hasta donde podemos llegar y después al final tenemos que llegar juntos como hombres y mujeres, sin problemas para vivir.

[ONHAE is more on top, AMWAE is very low, we have to go up and down and up until we can get there and later, at the end, we have to get there together, like men and women, to live without problems]

Other expectations that were consistently mentioned by community members were those related to responsibilities that traditionally are responsibilities of the state, namely, education and healthcare. As discussed above, this coincides with the concerns expressed by the leaders.

Another frequently mentioned expectation is that of fulfillment of the leaders' term of office. In respect to ONHAE, one participant said

Para trabajar ellos hasta cumplir [sus obligaciones] y no para dejar botando por atrás, dejar mitad –mitad, no es bueno, para mi es que trabaje bien y organice bien a nosotros. Si hay problemas que nos llamen ellos y podemos apoyar a ellos, si no comunica como podemos ayudar, apoyarlos ellos?

[They have to work until they fulfill [their obligations]and not leave it behind, leave it half way, that is not good, for me they should work well and organize us well. If there are problems, to call us and we can give them support, if they don't communicate how can we help, support them?]

Again, this was also something expected from AMWAE:

... como la otra organización [ONHAE] tiene que cumplir como dice dos años, tres años. Lo máximo tiene que cumplir porque a veces la gente esta por un año y se sale y otro entra y no sabe nada de como coordinar. Entonces quieren hacer como los hombres, pero para mi no era bueno esto.

[... like the other organization [ONHAE] has to fulfill like they say, two years, three years. The maximum it has to fulfill because sometimes people leave after one year and then another one comes and doesn't know anything about how to coordinate. So they want to do like the men, for me this is not good].

This statement particularly refers to a pattern that has been perpetuated by ONHAE officers who have not fulfilled their term of office due to tensions between them and former officers or by complaints from the base. This is why the interviewee says that it is not good that AMWAE follow this pattern, since ONHAE is predominantly comprised of male leaders. Also, male respondents showed a positive and enthusiastic reception to the idea of the women organizing and to the creation of a women's association. In contrast, the narratives of AMWAE leaders suggested that the creation of AMWAE was somewhat controversial in the beginning among the men of ONHAE living in the city. These men's response seems to recall traditional Huaorani egalitarian ways and suggests that gender inequality appears in the realm of the city and mostly in the context of the process of organization.

Some other expectations that were also expressed in the interviews with community members include fulfillment of the organizations' responsibilities, the capacity training of leaders, and the protection of Huaorani territory. Lastly, coordination with the "outside" (namely, the white-*mestizo* society) and between ONHAE and

AMWAE, and carrying out workshops were identified as expectations as well. All these expectations coincided for both ONHAE and AMWAE. The only exception was how some interviewees related one particular expectation to AMWAE, that they expect training workshops on handicraft production and sales.

While complaints regarding the lack of communication with the communities raise questions about the representativeness of the organizations and their legitimacy, it should also be emphasized that the perceptions of the organizations tell us that the base rightfully recognizes the organizations as their representatives with the outside world. Moreover, as seen in the above quotes, they also see supporting their organizations as their personal responsibility.

I also inquired about expectations for leaders of the two organizations, that is, what characteristics make up a good leader. One characteristic required for a good leader that was shared by all interviewees was experience. Experience is closely related to another characteristic that was also frequently identified, that a leader must be a mature person. Maturity was highlighted in the interviews because most of the time ONHAE and AMWAE officers are young, and perhaps any mishandlings can be interpreted as associated with their youth. The following quote speaks of the link between experience and maturity:

A veces nosotros metemos jóvenes [como dirigentes] pero no saben después que hacer, no pueden hablar, son muy débiles. Entonces la organización puede caer. Entonces yo pienso que para ser buen dirigente tiene que tener experiencia.

[Sometimes we get young people [as officers] but then they don't know what to do, they can't speak, they are very weak. So the organization can fail. So, I think that to be a good leader they have to have experience]

There is also the perception that younger Huaorani who are elected to officer are more oriented towards a future in the city where they lose sight of the ways of Huaorani people and their needs:

... jóvenes estudiantes van [a trabajar a la ONHAE] y para ellos es muy difícil. Son bachilleres pero es muy difícil, no entienden nada de como tener contacto con los ancianos y trabajar. Entonces solo piensan en vivir en la ciudad nomás.

[...young students go [to work to ONHAE] and for them is very difficult. They are schooled but it is difficult, they don't understand anything of how to have contact with the elders and work. They only think about living in the city]

Other good personal characteristics mentioned for leaders were the ability to coordinate with the base, and good family relations. It was not a surprise to hear that a good leader is one that coordinates and communicates with the base, and as mentioned by one interviewee, with the elders. Communication with the communities was brought up extensively in other parts of the interviews. However, I was not truly expecting to learn that among the characteristics of a good leader is for him or her to get along well with his or her family. I deduce that the rationale is that if a leader has good family relations this can be expected to extend to the community level, since this person will have good social skills. Other characteristics that were mentioned more than once were speech and organizing skills, as well as a leader who supports the communities and fulfills his responsibilities and term of office. Organizing skills refers to being skilled in the sphere of indigenous organizations, knowing the workings of this environment and how to operate in it. Moreover, it is directly linked to the idea of a leader that supports the communities, as seen in the following quote:

[Un líder que sea]... bueno organizando entonces él puede apoyarnos a nosotros, él puede buscar algunas cosas aunque sean pequeñas o grandes para las comunidades. A todos, no para apoyar a los que viven en Puyo nomás, a todos apoyar.

[(A leader that is) ... good organizing so that he could give us support, he can look for some good things, small or big for the communities. For everyone, not only to support those who live in Puyo, to support everyone]

From this quote we also learn of the perception that the Huaorani living in Puyo are the ones that get the most benefits from the Huaorani organizations. The Huaorani living in Puyo are more informed of the activities of the organizations and are more likely to participate in the workshops carried out in the city. Among the Huaorani living in Puyo are the ONHAE and AMWAE officers as well as Huaorani representatives in the DINEIB (Dirección Nacional de Educación Intercultural Bilingüe/ National Directorship of Intercultural Bilingual Education), all of whom receive honorariums. The fact that Huaorani living in Puyo get paid might lead to the perception that they benefit the most.

Speech skills refer to the ability of officers to speak in representation of and communicate with the Huaorani people. In this same line are the following characteristics: language, literacy and knowledge of the “city.” By language what is meant is the ability of leaders to be proficient in both *Huao-terero* and Spanish. In the by-laws of organizations it is a requirement for officers to be native *Huao-terero* speakers as representatives of the Huaorani people. While being proficient in Spanish is not stated in the by-laws, it is implicitly necessary in order to be a proper intermediary between the Huaorani nationality and the national society. In the same manner, literacy is also required to be able to carry out activities pertaining to the organizations’ relations with other social actors. Also linked to the two previously mentioned characteristics, “knowledge of the city” refers to, again, having the skills to interact in the sphere of the city and the broader context of the white-*mestizo* society. Finally, knowledge of Huaorani territory and no alcohol consumption were also identified as characteristics of a good leader. Alcohol consumption, as previously discussed, is associated with violence and

quarrels and, therefore, behavior even less acceptable in a leader. Knowledge of Huaorani territory, on the other hand, can have various meanings since the concept of territory is itself complex. Thus, it can mean knowing the location of all Huaorani settlements and hunting grounds, as well as knowing how to live in it and of it. Moreover, a leader with this knowledge is better equipped to defend their territory.

There are some apparent contradictions between the identified characteristics that make up a good leader. Literacy and “knowledge of the city” are characteristics that are not commonly associated with maturity, given that most Huaorani elders are not proficient in Spanish, literate nor, have “knowledge of the city.” These characteristics are more likely to be present in the younger generation whom are not perceived as completely apt leaders. The convergence of all these characteristics is perhaps more likely among individuals such as the founders of ONHAE that while being young at the time of the creation of this organization, are now entering a more mature age, and, at the same time, also have more experience in the sphere of indigenous organizations and crosscultural relations with the national society. The two main leaders in the creation of AMWAE, Nancy and Rocío, are also more likely to fit within this category. These same contradictions emerge in the context of indigenous organizations vis-à-vis the national society and permeate the cross-cultural relations of indigenous peoples in daily life.

In sum, I have discussed how the emergence of AMWAE can be understood by a combination of factors, some conjunctural and some related to the discontent of women with their subordination in formal leadership and access to income generating opportunities. While AMWAE and ONHAE follow a similar structure and share their sources of funds, ONHAE is still considered to be the parent organization and its officers

earn higher honorariums than AMWAE's. AMWAE's agenda and objectives coincide greatly with ONHAE's but its functions are more limited since it is ONHAE that deals with the implementation of activities related to key issues such as education, health care and territory defense and management.

Regarding the cost and benefits of having an all women's association the first issue to consider is that with the creation of AMWAE, ONHAE, the parent organization with more decision making power, has apparently turned into an all men's organization. While this might translate to the marginalization of Huaorani women, some positive aspects that have resulted from the creation of AMWAE include: a national visibility and political space for Huaorani women; an increase in networking opportunities; the capacity training of women leaders; and promotion of handicrafts related to income generating opportunities.

At the community level, the expressed concerns were analyzed as demands, and I established how these generally coincided with the objectives of the organizations. However, these demands do not necessarily represent the actual functions of AMWAE according to its by-laws. Moreover, the main demands of the base and the main objectives of the organizations consist of activities that are traditionally the responsibility of the state.

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSIONS

The main objective of this thesis has been to understand and explain the emergence and functioning of the Huaorani women's association. Through the narratives of Huaorani women leaders we saw that there were different driving factors at play. For analytical purposes, I divided the main factors into conjunctural factors and factors related to the women's dissatisfaction with respect to their position in the formal leadership of ONHAE. As discussed in chapter three, the conjunctural factors are linked to two events. First, the availability of funds from PRODEPINE for a project involving women which led the women to initially organize within ONHAE under the name of Bore. Second, the opposition of the women to the Ecogenesis contract and the ONHAE leadership who signed it, led to the configuration of AMWAE as a more independent organization established in a separate office. The other driving forces included the discontent of women regarding their lack of representation in the leadership of ONHAE and the lack of income generating opportunities for them. There are other, secondary reasons related to women's growing consciousness of gender and political roles, such as the belief women's activism is firmer than men's and that women manage money better. In the context of cross-cultural interactions, income generating opportunities have been mostly available to men, who tend to spend money irresponsibly. According to the women, they want income opportunities too because they believe they should have the same right as men and because they would spend money more responsibly than men, directing it mainly to the needs of their children.

Here I juxtapose the narratives of AMWAE leaders with the driving factors behind feminine leadership identified by Cervone et al (1998). With respect to the Ecuadorian

highlands and Amazon, common factors contributing to indigenous feminine leadership include the combination of formal education and a process of ethnogenesis, being bilingual, and being exposed to the sphere of ethnic organizations that grants the opportunity for women to develop as leaders (Prieto 1998). Similarly, the main leaders in the creation of the AMWAE are bilingual, literate women that had being living in Puyo and whose husbands or relatives had experience in the ONHAE leadership. Indeed, one of the most prominent leaders in the creation of AMWAE had previously been an ONHAE officer. These factors continued to be an influence after the creation of the women's association; its current president was also an ONHAE officer. Moreover, being involved with the indigenous organizations not only gave them experience but also made them realize that the lack of participation by women was a problem. The narratives of the Huaorani women as well as the testimonies of the Amazonian Quichua women studied by Garces (1998), emphasize the interest in the attainment of gender equality in the positions of power. As discussed in chapter three regarding the complementarity between men's and women's work, particularly relevant in the case of the Huaorani is the fact that men and women have traditionally worked side by side. Rocio, a Huaorani leader, observed that when she arrived in Puyo only men worked in the ONHAE and she pondered how different this was from traditional custom.

Another point regarding gender relations relates to the discussion by Ziegler-Otero (2004) on the changes brought about the Huaorani organizing process. He argues that organizing has also validated the ongoing process towards a more rigid gender division of labor, but such changes in gender relations are not solely a product of the organizing process or the actions of the organization or its leadership. Within ONHAE, the author

sustains, these changes are a reflection of those that exist among the Huaorani society of today, which lean towards more androcentric ways than traditionally. I agree with his argument that changes in gender relations are influenced by the immersion in the national culture and are not necessarily a result of organizing. However, based on the narratives of AMWAE leaders, I would maintain that the Huaorani organizing process still created a new, unequal dynamic in gender relations.

As for the organizational structure of AMWAE, the association faces many of the same challenges as ONHAE. Huaorani organizations follow a format that is foreign to their traditional social structure. However, the need to be organized for cross-cultural relations and negotiations is recognized by both leaders and non leaders in the base. Perhaps, in the future, through experience they might find an organizing format that fits better within their traditional social structures and results in more effective interactions with other social actors.

Regarding funding, AMWAE also faces the same problem as ONHAE. That is, the association is trapped in the Huaorani-oil companies relations model described in chapter two. In this model there is an implied dependency and a complex relation with the oil companies that provide goods and services but simultaneously threaten the integrity of their territory. Thus, the Huaorani are “beneficiaries” and “contenders” at the same time.

Furthermore, adding to the impact that the oil companies have had on Huaorani social structure, settlement patterns, and the sexual division of labor is the undervaluing of women’s labor in the city. The honorariums that AMWAE leaders receive from Repsol YPF are one third of the amount that ONHAE leaders receive from the same company.

The oil companies, by placing a greater value on the labor of men, contribute to the establishment of artificial gender, social, and political hierarchies.

In the analysis of AMWAE's objectives in chapter three, I found that the official objectives in the by-laws are more focused and limited in scope than the objectives expressed by AMWAE leaders. AMWAE leaders see their responsibility and implied objectives as territory, education and health care, which is not that different from the objectives expressed by ONHAE. However, handicraft production and sales, and income generating opportunities for women, are objectives expressed by AMWAE that is not important in ONHAE's agenda. All the concerns of the leaders, with the exception of "territory," coincided with the views of the base. While the main concerns of AMWAE were implied objectives, the main concerns at the base were implied demands.

A perceived challenge for the Huaorani organizations is that the main concerns of the leaders as well as the main expectations of the base are education and healthcare, traditional responsibilities of the Ecuadorian state. Other writers have commented on how the state has delegated its constitutional responsibilities regarding Amazonian indigenous affairs. As discussed by Garces in the case of Quichuas of Napo, "el estado ha delegado gran parte de sus responsabilidades a las ONGs, las que se han convertido en intermediarias de recursos estatales y privados hacia la poblacion. La organización, en muchas ocasiones tambien ha asumido ese rol, lo cual ha debilitado su papel socio-político en las bases y en su relacion con el Estado y los agentes externos" [the estate has delegated a great part of its responsibilities to the NGOs, which have become intermediaries between state and private resources to the population. The organization, in many occasions has also assumed this role, which has debilitated its socio-political role in

the base communities and in its relation with the state and external agents] (1998: 96). In the case of the Huaorani, this role has been delegated by the state primarily to the oil companies that provide infrastructure and funding for educational and healthcare programs. ONHAE has to assume the responsibility of negotiating with the oil companies to attain the minimum standards for these services to be provided to the Huaorani people. This puts the organization into a vulnerable position because it does not have sufficient, trained personnel for these purposes. Furthermore, ONHAE does not receive sufficient funding to be able to discuss these issues in a timely manner with over thirty communities in order to better negotiate with the oil companies. In the case of AMWAE, the base expects these negotiational responsibilities to be filled by the association and the leaders conceive this as among their objectives, but this is not actually the function of the association according to its by-laws. Moreover, the women participate in the negotiation and planning meetings for these activities but it is through ONAHE that the funds are received, and the services implemented.

Huaorani perceptions of what constitutes a good leader reveal a blend of personal and political characteristics, as I have pointed out in chapter three. Valued personal characteristics include experience, maturity, public speaking skills, good family relations and to a lesser extent, characteristics like being literate, bilingual and abstaining from alcohol consumption. Political features identified include organizing skills, the capacity to coordinate with the base, being able to cope with responsibilities, the fulfillment of one's term of office and having "knowledge of the city." Whether personal or political characteristics, the tensions in attaining all of them are evident. While experience and maturity are greatly valued, being literate, bilingual and having "knowledge of the city"

is also perceived as necessary characteristics of a leader. The latter characteristics are mostly found among the younger generation while maturity and experience are attributes of elders. These intergenerational differences also reflect the constant tensions and contradictions that the Huaorani find themselves involved in while negotiating the traditional (*durani bai*) with what they refer to as *cohuoribai*, the ways of the *cohuori*. Most likely, these tensions and contradictions will remain important issues for the Huaorani and their organizations in the foreseeable future.

Tensions are also apparent in the relations between AMWAE and ONHAE. In their narratives, AMWAE leaders emphasized how they always seek to work together with ONHAE, complementing each other and coordinating. However, ONHAE has had shifting attitudes towards AMWAE depending on the officers in charge and on specific situations. It has encouraged and supported the women's organization but at times also opposed AMWAE when it showed political disagreement on some particular issue. Moreover, even if AMWAE participates in planning meetings and its leaders have a voice, ONHAE is the one that implements key projects and programs. This has to do with how the organizations are externally perceived by the different social actors with which they interact. In addition, this is also related to the objectives and functions stated in the by-laws of the organizations. ONHAE leaders have been passive regarding these political differentiations and the differences in the honorariums received by officers of each organization. They have not shown clear opposition to this kind of problem.

Here it is pertinent to discuss the costs and benefits of having a more independent all women's association. AMWAE's autonomy is relative since ONHAE is considered the parent organization and AMWAE is like a "daughter." In many studies of the

women's movement (Deere and León 2001) having an autonomous organization is seen as necessary for the empowerment of women. Molyneux (2003) also points to some shortcomings in this position. She notes how in some contexts autonomy can mean marginalization and a lesser political effectiveness (Molyneux 2003). That seems to be the case of AMWAE. So far, the creation of AMWAE has resulted in ONHAE becoming an all men's organization, and the primary one that implements and manages the key programs and projects that AMWAE leaders are most concerned with. On the other hand, among the benefits of having a Huaorani women's organization has been the leadership training, the opening of political space, and the widening of their networks that enable women to articulate their demands more extensively.

In the introduction I presented three positions on the role of women's issues within indigenous organizations. First, that a gendered agenda within indigenous organizations is not necessary because ethnic discourse equally represents both men and women. Second, recognizing unequal and hierarchical relations between genders, a gendered agenda within mixed-sex indigenous organizations is necessary. This position prioritizes equality in opportunities to positions of power in leadership. The third position poses that women need their own autonomous organization to successfully voice their own demands and develop leadership skills for women's empowerment.

Although AMWAE currently fits more or less within the third category since it is technically autonomous from ONHAE, initially, Huaorani women wanted to pursue the second option. Similarly to what Garces (1998) found for Amazonian Quichua women, Huaorani women stress the aim of equality in leadership. In addition, AMWAE's gender interests are not strategic but refer to basic needs which they do not articulate as gender

interests but as for Huaorani society as a whole. The exception to this is the production and sale of handicrafts, an income generating activity directed mostly towards women. The case of AMWAE problematizes this third position since it is configured as an independent all women's association, but this does not necessarily mean that its agenda includes strategic gender needs with the goal of empowering women. This was not necessarily the objective of Huaorani women, since they consider themselves as belonging to an egalitarian society. But when faced with the inequalities brought about by their interaction with and partial insertion in the national society, they question and resist such inequalities, including those regarding gender relations. Just as the women's movement and indigenous movement many times do not intertwine without tensions, so does the case of the Huaorani women's organization seems too complex to fit well in any of the positions mentioned above. Huaorani women organized in resistance to the changes brought about by the interactions of the Huaorani and national society. Just like ONHAE, they demand basic rights like recognition of and autonomy within their territory, and access to education and health care. At the institutional level, Huaorani women articulate their interest in the equality of leadership and income generating opportunities for women. Both these issues are manifested in the sphere of their cross-cultural relations.

It is worth reiterating that the communities have seen changes in gender relation as documented by Lu (1999), but these were not identified or expressed as concerns in my interviews at the community level. I believe this is due to methodological issues involved in my research. I had a small sample, my brief stay in the communities did not allow proper participant observation to identify these changes or concerns, and my questions

did not target this information. Thus, in my study, consciousness regarding changes in gender relations were present at the institutional level but absent at the base.

The very creation of AMWAE suggests that there is a certain consciousness over gender and political roles on the part of Huaorani women leaders. They have taken advantage of the conjuncture that influenced their organizing process to put forward two demands for the improvement of women's condition: equality in leadership and income generating opportunities for women. While these are gender interests, this does not necessarily mean that Huaorani women leaders fully identify with the discourse of the women's movement or that AMWAE has a truly feminist agenda since their expressed interests and the objectives of the association do not indicate it. Overall, it can be said that the organizing of Huaorani women can be interpreted as an important component of Huaorani resistance mechanisms.

Although this is a limited study due to time and logistics it can serve as a springboard for future inquiries. This study is mostly based on women leaders working in the city. The interviews conducted at the community level among non leaders targeted a small sample, and extended participant observation was not possible due to the aforementioned constraints. Future research needs to study in more detail the changes in gender relations at the community level. Such an endeavor would greatly enrich the study of Huaorani women leaders and the impact of their association.

APPENDIX A
QUANTIFIED ETHNOGRAPHIC DATA

Table A-1. Most frequently mentioned concerns by leaders

Concerns		%
contamination	4	50%
education (formal)	4	50%
healthcare	4	50%
Territory	4	50%
craft sales	3	38%
Culture	2	25%
looking after the forest	2	25%
Projects (income generating)	2	25%
Tourism	2	25%
Capacity training	1	13%
fulfillment of leadership	1	13%
organizing	1	13%
Water	1	13%
Alcohol	0	0%
Loggers	0	0%
money handling	0	0%
Road	0	0%
support from organizations	0	0%
Total interviews	8	100 %

Source: Interviews by the author, July 2006

Table A-2. Most frequently mentioned concerns by non-leaders (regarding individual issues)

Concerns		%
education	5	50%
culture/ duranibai	4	40%
Alcohol	2	20%
Road	1	10%
Turism	1	10%
craft sales	1	10%
Violence	1	10%
Total interviews	10	100 %

Source: Interviews by the author, July 2006

Table A-3. Most frequently mentioned concerns by non-leaders (community level issues)

Concerns		%
education	5	50%
Road	3	30%
Alcohol	3	30%
craft sales	2	20%
Tourism	2	20%
Territory	2	20%
health care	2	20%
contamination	2	20%
money management	1	10%
illegal logging	1	10%
Culture	1	10%
looking after forest	1	10%
Support from organizations	1	10%
Projects	0	0%
Organization	0	0%
fulfillment	0	0%
capacity training	0	0%
Water	0	0%
Total interviews	10	100 %

Source: Interviews by the author, July 2006

Table A-4. Total ranked of most frequently mentioned concerns

Concerns		%
education	9	50%
contamination	6	33%
Territory	6	33%
healthcare	6	33%
craft sales	5	28%
Tourism	4	22%
Alcohol	3	17%
Road	3	17%
looking after forest	3	17%
Culture	3	17%
Projects	2	11%
Water	1	6%
Support from organizations	1	6%
capacity training	1	6%
fulfillment of leadership	1	6%
Loggers	1	6%
money handling	1	6%
organizing	1	6%
Total interviews	18	100 %

Source: Interviews by the author, July 2006

Table A-5. AMWAE's networks and constraints

	social actor 1	social actor 2	social actor 3	social actor 4	social actor 5	social actor 6	social actor 7	social actor 8	social actor 9	social actor 10	social actor 11	social actor 12	social actor 13
leaders	CAIMAN	Entrix	FED/ Ecogenesis	Petroleras	ONHAE	Kantarida	Sinchi Sacha	CONAIE	CONAMU	Municipio	IBIS	Gobierno	Accion Eco
101 H D	helps	helps a bit	problems	helps/problems									
102 H D	helps												
114 H D					helps	helps							
115 H D	helps			no help		helps	helps						
116 H D	helps				helps	helps		helps	helps	helps			
117 H D	helps			helps					helps		helps	no help	
118 H D	helps		problems	no help/problems		helps		helps			helps		
119 H D	helps			helps				helps				no help	helps

Source: Interviews by the author, July 2006

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Mayra Daniela Avilés was born in Guayaquil, Ecuador where she lived until she moved to Florida. She graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in anthropology from the University of Florida where she later completed her Master of Arts in Latin American studies with a concentration in anthropology. Her research interests include social movements and indigenous activism in Latin America.