

The author's best work is in the middle chapters where case-by-case descriptions of alienation of land appear. The consistent level of detail is remarkable and makes the reader feel connected to these Indian families who were dispossessed. Due to redundant descriptions of land takings, however, the middle chapters of the book do not read as well. Less useful than the introduction and the final chapter, these chapters could benefit from more analytical writing. Ultimately, however, the final chapter brings the points together by successfully describing recent history and actions being taken to reaffirm Native voice in contemporary California land policy.

The book contains a brief statement attesting to the Native voice in regard to the Dakota Access Pipeline issue, court actions, and protests. It would be reasonable to pursue, in further research, both the historical and contemporary roles of the Indigenous voice in the development of the National Environmental Policy Act, the Clean Water Act, and similar natural resources and environmental statutes. A broader, scholarly analysis of the current "standing" or status of tribes in federal environmental/natural resources consultations would also be a good complement to this work. There is an evolving body of published research in this nexus.

In sum, this is a very useful book. The book provides substantial documentation of the litany of wrongs in California with regard to Indigenous land tenure. The eagerness of electrical power developers and timber interests are on display and the resulting unquenchable requirement for land and access combined to remove lands from Indians and Indians from land.

*Joseph G. Hiller*

University of Arizona (emeritus)

**Vernacular Sovereignties: Indigenous Women Challenging World Politics.** By Manuela Lavinás Picq. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2018. 240 pages. \$55.00 cloth; \$35.00 paper.

In *Vernacular Sovereignties: Indigenous Women Challenging World Politics*, Manuela Lavinás Picq uncovers the multifaceted role of Indigenous Kichwa women in Ecuador in mobilizing their communities to resist state definitions of who they are and the social, economic, and political forces that seek to oppress them. Picq shows the ways that local and national policies marginalize Kichwa women in various contexts. Picq places the struggles and successes of these courageous actors on center stage. As she highlights their intersectional identities as women, Indigenous people, and members of rural, poor communities, rather than present them as victims, the author brings out Kichwa women's strength, courage, and resilience.

The unwavering determination of Kichwa women focused especially on women's participation in the administration of Indigenous justice. The book's narrative of resistance and activism culminates in the fundamental and groundbreaking role that the women played in the rewriting of the Ecuadorian constitution in 2008, which was the first in Latin America to enshrine the rights of Indigenous women and to mandate

gender parity in the administration of justice. As Picq emphasizes, because this constitution protects not only individual rights, but also collective rights, it thereby recognizes alternative sovereignties. This was the culmination of a long and focused campaign that began decades earlier; as Picq documents so well, efforts to infringe on Indigenous land claims in addition to the sexual and domestic violence perpetrated against women sparked localized resistance and the movement to expose and redress that violence, throughout Ecuador as well in as their own Indigenous communities.

*Vernacular Sovereignties* opens with a contextualization of the current struggles of Kichwa women in the history of Ecuador and Latin America. Picq very clearly provides the reader with analyses of colonial and postcolonial Ecuador, conditions that severely limited the territorial and cultural rights of Indigenous peoples. However, she also compellingly examines the history of Indigenous resistance in all phases of these confrontations. Special attention is paid to the 1990s, when Indigenous people in Ecuador mobilized against the restrictive and repressive policies of the government, essentially paralyzing the nation for many weeks. Picq describes how this uprising began over issues of land claims and conflicts over inadequate land redistribution even after official land reform policies were instituted. Although the uprisings began in Indigenous communities, they quickly led to the mobilization of hundreds of thousands of people throughout Ecuador, challenging state policies and control. This section of the book is so useful and important that I would have liked to learn more about the details of how the Indigenous communities were able to mobilize such large numbers of people throughout the country: for example, what processes, what actions did they take in order to accomplish this? Picq provides references to consult, but as seminal as these events were, North American readers may not be as familiar with them as Latin Americans.

In the 1990s Indigenous peoples throughout the world were pressing for international recognition of their rights in their own territories to control the resources, their systems of local leadership and decision-making, and to protect and enhance cultural norms. These global struggles led to the ratification of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2007. The only countries that voted against this declaration were the descendants of the four major English-speaking settler colonies: Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States. Because of public pressure both internally and internationally, these four countries soon reversed their vote, with the United States joining last in 2009. Kichwa women and Indigenous communities throughout the world have since used articles in the UN declaration in their attempts to protect and advance their political, economic, and cultural interests.

Crucially, the UN declaration does not define “indigenous” but allows for indigeneity to be variously understood depending on the local contexts. Picq rightly stresses that “Indigeneity is a relational identity; it refers to a historical positioning rather than an essential nature. . . . constructed by and for states through colonial processes” (15). Where the state marginalizes Indigenous communities and constructs them as peripheral, community members must resist and counter this positionality as well. Several chapters in Picq’s book give us insight into the ever-changing sites of contestation which Kichwa women must struggle with and adapt to. They continue to strive for

representation both in their own communities and the larger state. Of the 138 elected members of the Ecuadorian Congress in 2014, only four were Indigenous women. This is clearly a small number, although it is instructive to note that until 2018, when two Native women were elected, the 435-member United States House of Representatives had only one Native American representative.

Throughout the volume, Picq discusses the critical issue of domestic and sexual violence perpetrated against Indigenous women in different contexts. Indigenous women living in rural communities in Ecuador are particularly vulnerable to sexual assault. This is yet another way in which Kichwa women are marginalized and silenced. She points out that sexual violence against women may be committed within the household by husbands or other relatives, but is also likely to be perpetrated by strangers outside the domestic sphere, especially non-Indigenous men. In another North American comparison, Picq cites the statistic that in the United States, 86 percent of the sexual assaults against Native women are perpetrated by non-Native men. And in the United States and Canada, we have become increasingly aware of the dangers faced by Native women who live in communities where extractive industries not only assault the land and resources of First Nations, but where the men who work for these companies assault Native women almost without consequences. This crisis has led both the United States and Canada to take some legislative action: in the United States, for example, the Violence Against Women Act, which includes protections for Native women and also returns some degree of sovereignty to tribal courts dealing with crimes committed by non-Natives on Indian reservations, was extended both in 2013 and 2018—after much debate and some resistance.

Picq explores changing gender relations in Kichwa society that, as elsewhere in the Andes, traditionally emphasized gender complementarity in which work and responsibilities were allocated to women and men in different roles, but they were similarly valued or at least women's household and community participation in decision-making and leadership was protected. These gendered systems were radically altered as a result of the Spanish invasions and conquests so that Indigenous communities were forced to more closely resemble the gender norms of European society. And as Picq persuasively argues, the transformed gender norms remain in Kichwa communities, especially in rural areas. As a result, women are doubly, or actually triply, marginalized because of their gender, their ethnicity, and their poverty. The volume therefore convincingly demonstrates that Kichwa women's activism in the state political realm is thus even more remarkable.

Finally, Picq's analysis emphasizes the ways that Kichwa women's political voices have helped raise important practical and theoretical questions about the functioning and organization of modern states that contest the notion of the monolithic "state" itself and also raise critical issues of sovereignty and the ways that multiple sovereignties can be exercised. By exploring the complexity of Kichwa women's activism, both historically and currently, Picq's work is a valuable contribution to studies of and theories about gender, indigeneity, and the modern or postmodern state.

*Nancy Bonvillain*  
Bard College at Simon's Rock