

but cooperate on the national level. However, the Kurds of Iran, Syria, and Turkey do not enjoy this same level of political participation in their respective nation-states.

The Aboriginal people of Australia do not control regional entities within a federal system such as those in Canada, Iraq, or Spain. Nevertheless, they have requested seats in the national parliament. While this request has been rejected, state governments are considering similar requests.

Financial Resources

According to the United Nations, in 2010, indigenous people numbered 370 million, representing about 5 percent of the world's population. Yet they make up fully one-third of the world's extremely poor rural population of 900 million. Therefore, most indigenous people, like impoverished communities everywhere, have few financial resources available to influence the political

discourse of the dominant societies in which they live.

In the United States, until indigenous peoples' rights movements gained momentum in the 1970s and 1980s, their political participation was marginal at best. However, once they claimed a voice in the voting franchise, organized themselves, reclaimed some of their lost lands and natural resources, and achieved some significant victories in judicial cases, the political impact of indigenous people began to be felt—despite structural and constitutional impediments.

In addition to public pressure and litigation, a key method for overcoming obstacles to greater political participation is the acquisition and targeted use of financial resources. This is especially true for the Native American tribes of the United States. With their sovereignty protected by federal law, American Indian reservations are largely exempt from state laws that may prohibit gambling activity. Therefore, many tribes have opened casino operations on their lands.

PACHAKUTIK

In 1995, indigenous activists in Ecuador launched the Pachakutik Movement for Plurinational Unity (referred to as Pachakutik) to encourage the candidacies of indigenous people for political office. In the pan-Andean Quechua language, *pacha* means "time" or "land" and *kutik* means "a return." Hence, the word signifies change, rebirth, and transformation, in the sense of both a return in time and the coming of a new era.

Pachakutik emerged out of years of debate on the roles of indigenous peoples in electoral politics, including whether indigenous organizations should put forward their own candidates and issues or whether they should support sympathetic leftist parties. Pachakutik represented the emergence of a third option, a new political movement in which indigenous peoples and other sectors of Ecuador's popular movements organized together as equals in a joint project to achieve the common goals of a new and better world.

The movement opposed neoliberal economic policies that privatized public resources and functions and favored a more inclusive and participatory political system. Pachakutik's leaders spoke of four revolutions: ethical, socioeconomic, educational, and ecological.

Pachakutik was an explicit reversal of a policy adopted by the Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador (CONAIE, Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador), the country's primary indigenous organization, not to participate in elections, because neither the political system nor political parties functioned in a way that represented the people's interests. CONAIE emerged in the highlands in 1986 as an

anti-electoral political force in opposition to existing political parties, whereas Pachakutik emerged out of the Amazon among activists who were much more willing to engage in party politics.

In August 1995, Amazonian activists, such as CONAIE President Luis Macas, unilaterally announced the formation of an indigenous political movement called Pachakutik. Members of Pachakutik quickly merged their efforts with highland activists, who had created a parallel political movement called Plurinational Unity.

Pachakutik realized mixed results in electoral contests. In 1996, it allied with journalist Freddy Ehlers, who came in third in the presidential race. Macas, however, won a post as a national deputy, becoming the first indigenous person elected to a countrywide office in Ecuador. In 2002, Pachakutik supported Lucio Gutiérrez, who won the presidency. In exchange, Macas was named minister of agriculture, and another longtime leader, Nina Pacari, assumed the head of foreign affairs until half a year later, when Pachakutik broke with Gutiérrez over his neoliberal economic policies.

This experience made indigenous activists more cautious about allying with people outside their movement. As a result, four years later, Pachakutik remained in opposition to the more sympathetic government of Rafael Correa. Although largely excluded from national power and averaging about 10 percent of the vote in Congress, Pachakutik realized substantially more success in local contests within indigenous communities.

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