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Woman in Ecuador: Exercise of political power since the return to democracy.

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Resumen

El presente trabajo de graduación se desarrolla a partir de la recopilación y análisis de información relacionada al ejercicio del poder político de la mujer en el Ecuador, desde el retorno a la democracia enfocado hacia la realidad de la mujer su participación e inclusión en el ámbito político del país.

Son varios los estudios, las normas y las agendas, que han sido elaboradas por organismos internacionales y nacionales en pro del bienestar y cumplimiento de los derechos de la mujer, con el objetivo de que sea parte activa de la sociedad y de la vida política de cada Estado.

Actualmente Estados y gobiernos de turno, deben tener una visión amplia y de integración social, económica y cultural, en la que la mujer este presente por sus capacidades y no únicamente por el hecho de cumplir una ley o captar mayor número de votos o electores para su movimiento o partido político. Es por lo mencionado, que el presente trabajo se fundamenta en el análisis de la sociedad internacional para llegar al caso específico del Ecuador y la realidad que vive la mujer en cuanto a inclusión y participación política para llegar a ejercer el poder.

Abstract

This graduation paper develops through the compilation and analysis of information related to the exercise of women's political power in Ecuador since returning to democracy, and is focused on the reality of women's participation and inclusion in the political arena of the country.

Several studies, rules and agendas have been developed by international and national organizations for the welfare and fulfillment of women rights, with the main objective of helping women become active participants in society and in the political sphere of each state.

Nowadays, states and governments should have a broad social, economic and cultural vision, in which women stand out for their abilities and not only because political parties have to obey laws or as a way to get more votes for their political movements. For this reason, this graduation paper first analyzes the international political arena, and then the Ecuadorian political example in order to understand the reality that Ecuadorian women have to deal with in order to achieve political inclusion and participation.

INTRODUCTION

Women have a transcendental and important role in society. They perform tasks inside and outside the home. Sometimes, they represent the nation in the international community. Many times they are elected and other times it is determined by the head of the state. Nowadays, they are ambassadors, NGO representatives, heads of state, national secretaries, ministers, heads of small, medium and large companies, managers among others, around the world.

Formerly, the right to elect and to be elected was a man's opportunity only, since women were considered as unable and had no right to perform their citizenship capacities. They were limited to perform only activities determined by the family and society.

In 1893, New Zealand was the first country where women acquired their right to vote without limitations. In Ecuador, Matilde Hidalgo de Procel went to register in the Ecuadorian Electoral Council on order to participate in the elections that would take place in 1925. She got an affirmative response from the Electoral Council. This right was included in the Constitution of 1929; the right of men was mandatory and the right of women was optional. In 1967, this right was established to be mandatory for both women and men.

Women have been part of the political life in Ecuador for short periods of time, due to the fact that the patriarchal structure remains intact in the country. In the early XXI century, women started to have greater participation in Ecuador after their inclusion in the National Congress, today called the National Assembly.

This thesis is based on an informative research implemented with the objective of knowing and analyzing women's participation and political power practiced in Ecuador since the return of democracy in 1979. A brief worldwide analysis has been done, then a Latin-American study was implemented, and finally there was an Ecuadorian case review. The antecedents that permitted women to access the political pathway and their impact within the social, cultural and economic fields will be discussed as well as the challenges they have to face.

In the first chapter important terms will be defined for the development of the research such as patriarchy, machismo, feminism, and political participation. Also, the worldwide exercise of political power will be some cases that have crossed frontiers and become references to elaborate agendas and policies that are pro women. Then women's political participation in Latin America and their progress in the legal field will be demonstrated; finally, there will be a brief historical review about women's political participation in Ecuador.

In the second chapter there is a study and analysis of several social agencies that have promoted women's participation within the exercise of political power and the positions and opinions of women that have been part of the political process in the country and the input generated will be analyzed also.

Finally, chapter three is a window into women's current reality, their participation and opportunities in politics, in terms of equity, and the challenges that have to be overcome to practice political power in Ecuador.

Chapter 1: Historical Review of Women in Politics.

To have a better understanding and a better appreciation of women's current role it is necessary to explain the practices of political power in a worldwide and a Latin-American context and the link among women, politics, and society. Moreover, this chapter will provide relevant data about Ecuadorian women's participation in the evolution of the political field and the effects on society. Then some relevant terms for the topic will be defined in order to have a clear conceptual basis for the development of this thesis.

Patriarchy and Machismo.

Patriarchy is a societal organization and structure. As a social structure, and mostly a governmental one, it comes as a consequence of our ancestors and conquerors. It is important to highlight that not all men were responsible or agree with this kind of government; according to Herrera Gomez, it was a fight guided by violent men against peaceful men, women, children, and natural resources.

Because of the way that men and women have been differentiated in the ideological, cultural, political fields and human relationships, women and men were considered as beings of a different nature. This ideology conceives of women as quiet, obedient and dependent on male critical thinking while men are active and autonomous, especially in their thoughts. That is why men have the right to rule, guide or lead¹

Within Latin-American society men seem to have to play their "macho" role. For them, this means power, domination and the control over women. Machismo is present in the majority of cultures around the world; in contrast patriarchy is the set of attitudes and behavior that are lived and practiced within the society. Generally, machismo is linked with patriarchy which is usually demonstrated in the political culture² of different countries around the world.

¹ Woman in patriarchal culture (I), available in: <http://www.regeneracionlibertaria.org/la-mujer-en-la-cultura-patriarcal-i>

² **Political Culture:** Set of values, opinions, attitudes, behavior, orientation and cultural styles, informal and institutionalized, that are present in the power relations related to the general guideline of society.; known as politics. It has to be seen as a reference framework that permits understanding the relationship between facts and politic behavior, as well actors and the system.

Feminism

To counteract machismo and the effects that it has on women and men around the world, varied and diverse groups have come together to fight for equality and equity.

Regardless of the place where feminists are, they share common features and objectives. Consistent among them is what motivates them--“the personal is political.” This is a reference to the different situations in which women live, and which not only affects them but is a consequence of a structure, a system of power or laws; therefore, this is a socio-political reality that has to resolve itself.

When talking about feminism, Catells refers to and defines it as, “every single person, group, reflections, and acts oriented to abolish subordination, inequality, and the oppression of women and to then achieve their emancipation and the construction of a new society where sexual and gender discrimination are not allowed.”³

This assertion is supported by several authors, sociologists and other people around the world who are in favor of fighting to defeat the gaps between women and men. According to Maria Luisa Montero and Mariano Nieto Navarro, who stated in their article “Patriarchy: An invisible structure”, define feminism as,

“... an ethical commitment and a social movement of which the last objective would be the abolition of all inequalities and discrimination that occur in our society because of gender. Therefore, feminism is a fight for essential human rights implied for men and women.”

This means that feminism is not only a woman’s matter or fight, it is a societal issue. Also, it is important to emphasize that when we talk about feminism, it cannot be generalized since there is a whole feminist culture, indeed there are many and varied cultural expressions with which one or more of women can agree. That is why the fight is developed from the reality of each society’s circumstances.

³ Castells, Carmen. *Perspectivas feministas en teoría política*. Paidós, Estado y Sociedad, Barcelona, 1996, page. 10.

Women, independent of their role in society, started to organize themselves to reach safe and worthy labor conditions, achievements of their voting rights. However, the women's fight was reinforced to create new political parties, such as in the case of the Partido Feminista Nacional (Argentina), the Partido Cívico Femenino (Chile), and Evolución Femenia (Peru).

Civil wars and dictatorships motivated the different feminist parties to link their struggle with the recovery of democracy in their countries. The slogan used by the Chilean feminists was "Democracy in the country, in the house and in bed"⁴, and it was useful for other feminist groups in Latin-America⁵ to develop a feminist autonomous vision.

Subsequent years were important for the different feminist movements in Latin-America when many fought for power and others identified themselves with empowerment according to Rowlands (1997),

- **Power to** identify and transform relationships, structures, and institutions that constrain women and preserve subordination. This involves mobilization.
- **Power with** other women to make shared decisions. The shared power multiplies individual power and inasmuch as the whole is superior to the sum of the individual parts, it involves autonomous organization.
- **Power from** within to build upon itself; power surges from the being itself since it is not a present and it cannot be given. It implies being conscious about the subordination that affects all women, and the confidence incremental in their capacities.

It has been said that the empowerment in an individual dimension and collective dimension are necessarily linked because if there is not support from the collective, empowerment would not be sustainable in long-term periods in any society.

⁴ Julieta Kirkwood and Margarita Pisano

⁵ Igualdad, feminismos latinoamericanos.

http://www.americalatinalgenera.org/es/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1145&Itemid=321

The Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean was founded in 2009. Its objective was to disseminate and monitor the accomplishment of international purposes and goals which favor women's equality in society and the role they perform within it.

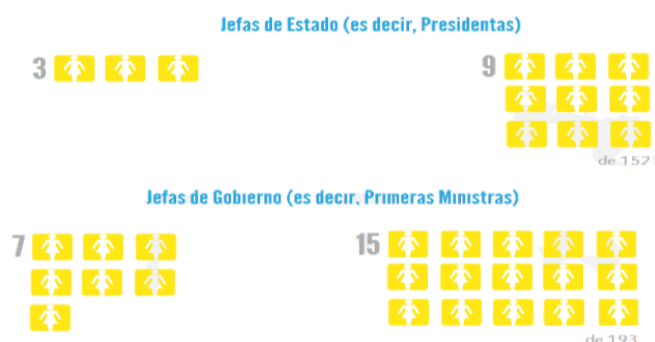
Political Participation

Men and women's political participation in society and power practice can occur in different manner and it is an ability that can be learned. Political participation means the inclusion of different agencies of society which seek to have influence on the decision making process that benefits the common objectives.

Political participation and women's power are limited. This can be observed in a UN Women's publication that indicates that only 5.9% of the heads of state worldwide are women; despite being 50% of the population. However, this small percentage has been the result of many years of efforts and hard work.

Comparing this information with that obtained in the Inter-Parliamentary Union and NU Women on 1995 before the Fourth World Conference on Women held on Beijing, from the current data we can conclude the following:

Graphic 1. Female and Male Heads of State in the world.



In this way, this first chapter provides an approach with regard to women's performance of political power within the country, and seeks to understand the importance of women's contribution for the development of this field in Latin America.

1.1 Women in society and global politics: Historical Data.

In the feudal system society was divided into three stages; first the warriors, who were in charge of defense, then speakers in charge of prayers, and third the peasants (the majority of the population) who were charged with working the land which was the nobility's property. The church was part of the nobility because the noble's sons were in senior positions, and lastly, women were in charge of monasteries and female convents.

In this society, women and men were treated differently in juridical and social aspects. Women were subject to their husbands, fathers or brothers, depending on each European country. However, it was considered that women had the greatest role in history at that time. After that, until the late XIX century, as a consequence of the economic crisis women were separated from work and secluded in the home.

Noble feudalist women played roles to enhance feudalism. Marriage was arranged by the parents when the girls were little and it took place generally before they turned fourteen. Second born or third born girls were made to enroll in a convent. In the XII century, when the feudal domains were confident, new ideas of women's roles in society developed, thanks to the so-called Love and Chivalry Code. At that moment women started to be recognized as an exquisite love and an object of worship.

In English law, which was based on land and property, landowning women were considered powerful and had some male rights such as, hiring workers, suing, or being sued and making last wills and testaments even if they were widows or single.

During the Hundred Years War (1337-1453) between France and England, the woman's role was highlighted in world history and the church. Joan of Arc (Jeanne d'Arc in French), who was born in Donremy, France in 1412, asserted that she saw the Archangel Michael and heard Saint Catherine of Alexandria' and Saint Margaret; they motivated Joan to join the French Army to clear the English from their territory.

Joan asked King Charles VII to lead the troops to prevent the English occupation of the territory of Orleans.

Once they had won the war, the monarchy abandoned Joan of Arc. The Duke of Burgundy, an English ally and foe of Charles VII, caught and detained Joan as a prisoner for months. Then he sold her to the allies as a spoil of war. The Church was considered complicit in Joan of Arc's condemnation to the stake. She was doomed and burned alive when she was only 19. After some years, pope Callixtus II convened a committee of jurists who concluded that the Joan's trial was unfair. Pope Benedict XV proclaimed her a saint on May 16, 1920.

During the Middle Ages, country women were the majority of the population. Independent of their status, women were expected to work for having enough resources to maintain themselves and their families. Generally, there were some activities that were only for men and others only for women. For instance, men were associated with agriculture, except ploughing; women were in charge of the care of animals such as cows, hens, sheep, among others. Young, single women were in charge of the domestic chores; these were related to kitchen, clothes making, child care and care of disabled people when there were some. Country women, single or married, had a great responsibility for their economic environment.

In the modern age, women were excluded from industrial and productive spaces in the State economy. They were limited only to perform household chores, and then women's works were limited to things such as sewing, where only women could perform that duty. The only job where women were not excluded from or limited to was that of midwifery. But even then, it was necessary to be approved and evaluated by the medical hierarchy.

During the XVII century, in middle class, families especially women became recognized as more powerful within their homes because they became the "queen of the house". They were responsible for the upbringing and children's' education, including household chores. Nevertheless, the education that mothers passed to children was not enough because women themselves did not have access to basic education.

In this context, the French Revolution (1789) was transcendental and essential for humanity inasmuch as human rights were proclaimed to be equal for everyone. Women had an important role at that moment, although their historical and social participation was not recognized. They were limited while fighting for their achievement, such as in equality between men and women and economic and political power in society. It is with that revolutionary event that women started to participate in public politics and also to reclaim their legal and political rights such as divorce, educational access, among others.

In 1791, Olympe de Gouges wrote the “Declaration of Women’s Rights as Female Citizens”, as a counterpart of the “Declaration of Men’s Rights”, which started with French Revolution. Gouges’ declaration called for equality with men. In 1792, Mary Wollstonecraft wrote “A Vindication of Women’s Rights”; in that publication she defended education, work, and public life as women’s rights. However, those were denied by the middle class society of that era.

During the Industrial Revolution, the woman’s contribution in societal development was limited to being part of the proletariat because of their labor inclusion, low salaries and precarious conditions. The first country to join the process was England, and then some other European countries followed such as France. Other non-European countries were The United States of America and Japan. The majorities of the women came from rural areas and were involved in domestic service, dress manufacturing and the textile industry. Even though it was prohibited in Scotland for women and children to work in mines, they carried out coal, because they substituted for machinery and horses. Over time, female prostitution was evident in the big cities where the industrial revolution was present.

Access to education for women was prohibited until the XVII century. It is for that reason that, in the XIX century, young women with higher education levels were hired as governesses or teachers of middle class children while others had the opportunity to work in offices.

From 1914 to 1918, during the First World War, women were asked to fill some positions left by men, especially in Europe. When the war had ended, there were campaigns that encouraged women to quit their jobs. Many of them were displaced

to other functions while others were convinced to return to their former activities. However, some of them fought to maintain the jobs they had gotten and which they had carried out responsibly. From 1915 to the 1930's, Denmark, Russia, Austria, Luxemburg, Ireland, Germany, Sweden, The United States, Great Britain, and Spain approved of and recognized the right to vote for women. In subsequent years, France, Italy and Switzerland were added.

During the Second World War (1939-1944), women were called on again to perform industrial labor, auxiliary services and for civil defense. The wage was lower than that of men but with the opportunity to keep their positions without the obligation of returning home after the war to do household chores.

An early feminist mindset woman who was the starting point and example for European society and the world as a whole was Aleksandra Kollontái (born in March 31, 1872 in St. Petersburg, Russia).

She married Vladimir Ludvigovich, but after her Socialist party affiliation she left him with her son to study in Zurich. Then, in 1899, she enrolled in the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party where she was an active member of the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917. She was director of the Soviet Women's Organization called Zhenodtel in 1920.

Aleksandra was far removed from patriarchal concepts, and with Lenin they developed *an institutional network which included, nursery and child care institutions, day care, restaurants, and public laundries that would set women free from child and home.*⁶

During the last years of the Contemporary age and within the international community they tried to promote women's participation and their vote in diverse State organisms, as well as in private sector. The objective was to achieve access to equity, political power and the decision making that would affect their families and the society they represented.

⁶ Women in history. Available on <http://www.mujaresenlahistoria.com/2011/12/el-feminismo-socialista-aleksandra.html>

Women's roles were frequently silent. The places where women tried to gain access and act were the ones which generated solidarity links overlapping the competitive ones, however women did not receive any great recognition within the collective nor in the politic field. Moreover, in the few environments where women participated, there were conflicts of power. As previously mentioned it was believed that before pursuing an active position in politics, women had to be active social figures.

Malala Yousafzai is a recognized worldwide figure because of her active fight for fundamental and women's civil rights for her country in the Swat Valley in Pakistan. In that place, women were banned from access education by a Taliban regime.

In her speech, held in United Nation Organization (2013), she claimed,

Today I am focusing on women rights and girl's education, because they are the most keenly affected. There was a time, when activists asked men to fight instead of them. But now, we are going to do it by ourselves. I am not saying that men have to have a part and stop discussing women's rights, I am focused on women, to start being independent and fight for themselves. So, my dear brothers and sisters now is the time to talk.

For her, education, poverty, injustice, racism and deprivation of rights, are common limitations that men and women face every day in Pakistan. However, they affect almost all women in Swat and around the world because equality between men and women has not been reached yet.

Jeannine Anderson (1994) claims that, "Any project that changes women's conditions and postures has to consider the strong tendency [we have] to stick to a gender system in which we identify the quantity of beauty in life which can channel oppression and discrimination". Projects and proposals to improve equity and the woman's role in society are limited and questionable since we as society are obliged to carry out rigid rules based on beauty and fashion stereotypes. A considerable percentage of female candidates or politic representatives have been elected because of their appearance, sensitive procedures, and their way of expressing their lifestyles. In many cases female beauty is considered a requirement to be part of politics, putting aside their intellectual and leadership capabilities.

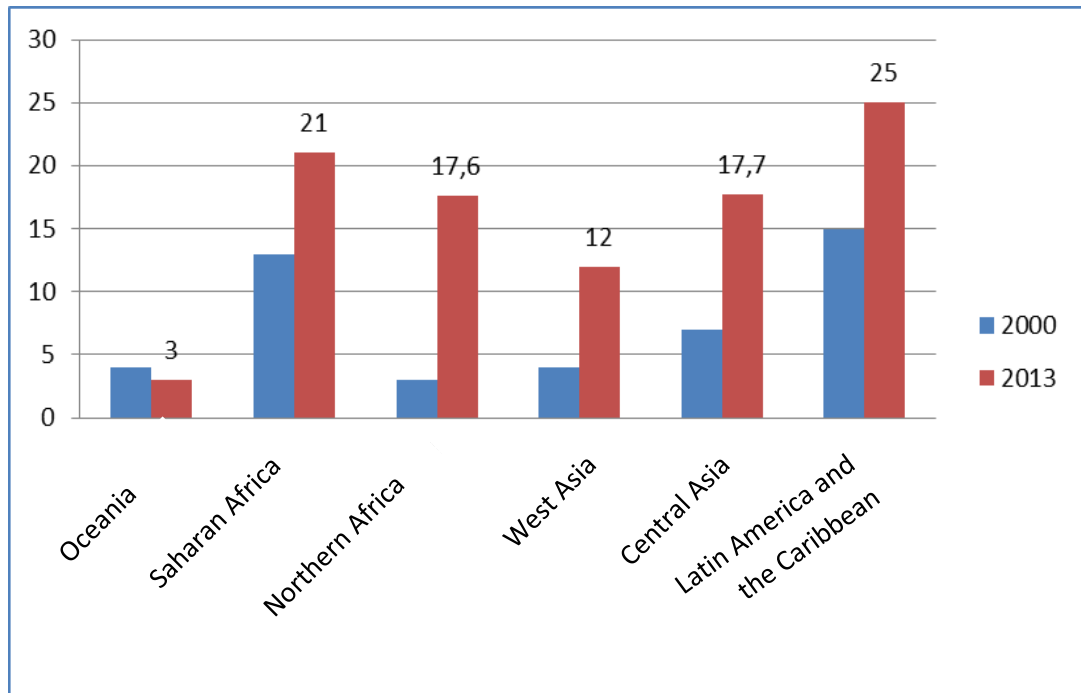
Women around the world are limited in comparison with male opportunities. However, the input and effort they put in their homes and also the performance as workers does not have recognition or equal salary. That is why women have fewer opportunities in society and most of the times are considered inferior to men.

According to Clara Fassler (2007) in her research about Women Development and Participation, “women’s politic participation has been considered a strategy in the building of gender equity and the deepening of democracy”. Nevertheless and even with the recognition of women’s right to vote as well as the required participation in political parties, the aforementioned participation is still limited. Women have been included in political parties to help them in their enrollment process, but they have not been included in the political exercise itself.

The United Nations Development Programme (hereafter referred to as the UNDP) in fulfilling its promise of gender equality, promotes and encourage States to watch over the rights of women. The main objective of the UNDP is democratic and inclusive development to promote a violence-free society, to ensure female political participation. Within the main topics of the UNDP approach, the empowerment of women will generate a boost in a growing economy with their productivity.

According to a report by the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, there is a chart where the percentage of seats of women in National Parliaments in 2000 and 2013 is shown. In this data, parity between genders and the exercise of political power is close to being achieved in a global scale.

Graphic 2 Seats for women in 2000 y 2013



Resource: ODM 2013 Report.

During the seventies, women were considered an economic agent in the family. In this decade, women and feminist movements emerged to fight against the great gap between women and men, especially in the educational field. This fact strengthened discrimination because it continued the designation of traditional tasks and unpaid works to women. Faced with this reality Women in Development (WID) appeared and later become Gender and Development (GAD).

The different feminist movements around the world have sought and fought to get rights and equality. However, not all the battles of these movements were positive.

The years from 1975 to 1985 were declared by the United Nation, the Decade for Women. This initiative sought that state governments create places for women, especially in the public field. Nevertheless, the situation did not change considerably because of the male superiority in the organizational chart. During this decade, in 1979, the member countries of the UN approved the “Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women”, whose main goal was non-violence against women.

In Nairobi, in 1985, the “Third World Conference on Women”, named “Development Alternatives for Women in a New Era”. In this meeting it was announced that equality between women and men in the economic, political and social contexts was not possible. That is why there was a need for woman’s integration with State development through the implementation of an inclusion model of women in political power.

The Conference of Human Rights – Vienna (1993), was the scene of the Women’s and Girl’s Rights Proclamation as their own, indivisible set of universal human rights.

Over the years, women have improved their participation within society where they could fight for their well-being and for the accomplishment of their rights. Labor opportunities that women can access have resulted in their confidence in their own communities, and have contributed to the State economies. However, according to data from the UNDP, in the world there are currently about 1,300 million poor people, and 70% of them are women, thus, limitations have appeared when trying to access new opportunities.

In this regard, the non-discriminatory educational goal is an offer of an equitable present and future with equal relationships, to make women become an agent of social change. It attempts to improve health, food, and children’s education through women where they are considered as a key factor, except in some countries such as sub-Saharan Africa and Central Asia.

The current estimate of the world population is about 7,000,000,000 of which 49.6% are women (Worldometers); they have been discriminated against and have not had any rights during the last century. Then, they became beings with rights and got opportunities within society. They were incorporated into productive and better compensated jobs in the public and private sectors and are highly participative in the local and community fields; nevertheless, there are many things to be changed and improved in the political field.

Within the international community, there are several women who have had the chance to represent and exercise power. Among them, we have presidents or prime ministers of their countries according to their respective types of government. Some

of them are Sirimavo Bandaranaike (Sri Lanka), Indira Gandhi (India), Golda Meir (Israel), Isabel Perón (Argentina), Elisabeth Dominitien (Central Africa Republic), María de Lourdes Pintasilgo (Portugal), Margaret Thatcher (Great Britain), Mary Charles (Dominican Republic), Corazón Aquino (Philippine Islands), Benizir Bhutto (Pakistan), Ertha Pascual Trouillot (Haiti), Mary Robinson (Ireland), Violeta Barrios de Chamorro (Nicaragua), Edith Cresson (France), Anna Suchocka (Poland), among others. It can be seen that the majority of these people are European or Asian, leaving behind American women's participation. I believe that, in these continents patriarchal systems, it is more evident.

In Europe we can cite Angela Merkel, German minister since 2005. She has been leading her country and taken it to political and economic development. German people trusted in her again in 2009 and September 22, 2013.

Merkel proposed that the German people maintain themselves and give their families a decent standard of living. To achieve this goal, the minister was conscious about the necessity of youthful curiosity and the experience of the elderly.

Lucia Ronzulli is another example of women who lead the European Parliament's Committee. She is part of the People of Freedom Party. (Il Popolo della Libertà, PdL in Italian); she took her newborn child to the meeting to vote. She declared, "I want to be a symbol with Victoria, my daughter, and I think about women that cannot bring together their professional and family life". The main objective of this action was to demonstrate all the difficulties that women have to face every day while coordinating their labor and family issues; thus, she tried to draw to the attention of the public the fulfillment of women's rights.

From the two examples, the second caused more impact and acceptance from women because they identified with this case whereas with Merkel, there were some complaints that she focused all her efforts on the economic field, instead of the opportunity of equality and the fulfillment between women and men rights.

1.2 Women in the Latin American Politics.

In the last two decades of the XX century, in Latin America and the Caribbean some democratic processes has been implemented or restructured after a series of

dictatorships that have marked the region. One of the main elements of democracy is the elective processes that take place regularly according to the laws in each country. This mechanism permits the increase of the peoples' participation to decide their governors; and that, in turn allows women and men's participation to be equitable.

However, that participation does not involve only the organization as a civil society but to be part of the critical thinking and to get involved with public programs. It also means the effective inclusion of social actors within the political system, the representation and decision making; inclusion ⁷ in this context became an essential element to include women in public scenarios. The purpose of this process is the achievement of equality regarding to men to improve democracy and then the region's governability.

In this regard, Latin America has become an example of "Feminized Politics". According to the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (UN-INSTRAW) (2007), women's participation increased, on average, from 9% to 14% in the executive power (ministerial positions), from 5% to 13% in the Senate, and from 8% to 15% in the lower house of Congress or unicameral parliament. This democratic transformation has permitted women to express and perform according to their own political ideologies.

This feminizing tendency in Latin America has been influenced by four different factors that promote continuous female political leadership growth. Among them, there is a modern tendency according to the preference of voting within the members of the region favoring women. The international community commitment, visible in the Declaration of the Millennium Development Goals which was signed by the global leaders in 2000, and the political crisis has permitted the creation of spaces in which women can participate.

During the last three decades, women have attained many significant achievements regarding politics, right legislation, discrimination, family violence, reproductive rights and family matters. If women keep working in this participative process within

⁷ Inclusion refers to the act of including and hold something or someone. Usually, this concept has been used in relation to social situations or circumstances, where some groups are included, while others are excluded of some specific social benefits.

the executive and legislative power in all Latin America countries, they will have more influence in debates and on their political agendas within their own countries. The success to promote an agenda related to gender equity would depend on many factors such as, women's abilities to form similar ideological groups, social classes and racial and ethnic groups because through the political movements many improvements would be generated.

In the 90's, Latin America established female participation while the declaration of Argentina as the pioneer country, since in 1991, was the first country to create the well-known Quotas Law. Since that date, 11 countries in Latin America have promoted female participation mechanisms with Quotas of Gender in the elective process. Mexico, Costa Rica, Paraguay, Brazil, Bolivia, Ecuador, Panama, the Dominican Republic, Peru, Honduras, Costa Rica, and Uruguay (would be proclaimed in 2014) from 1996 to 2009 have strengthened women's participation in their elective processes with between 20% and 50% increases in quotas.

The popular election Quotas refer to the percentage of positions of the executive power designated for women. This law is mandatory in Colombia and Panama. However, in these two countries there are still failures when warranty the fulfillment and implementation of some regulations with regard to female participation. Some country and regional data about political power will be presented below. The detailed information is from 2010, and it was obtained from varied sources.

- **Argentina**

Women's Quota Laws were established in 1991 through the 24.012 Law. It determines 30%, as minimum of woman participants being capable to be elected. Nevertheless, this law has been interpreted in different ways; that is why with the 1246/00 Decree it is decided that for every three candidates, one has to be a woman. When there are only two positions, one has to be for a woman. When this regulation is not observed, there is a sanction; the list cannot be enrolled. As a result of this Law, female presence in congress has increased from 6% to 38.3%.⁸

⁸ UN-INSTRAW. "Sistemas electorales y leyes de cuotas". En *Serie Mujeres, poder local y democracia: Conceptos clave*, page. 6

- **Bolivia**

In March 1997, a regulation, known as a Quota System through Law 1779, it established 30% of female participation' minimum. The lists that do not fulfill this requirement would not be admitted for the elections. In this country, before the Law application, congress women were the 11%. Nowadays, and after this change it is 12.74%.

- **Brazil**

In 1995, a new norm is established. It determines that women's participation in municipal elections has to be at least 20%. This law was incorporated in 1997 in the country. If there is any violation to this law the list would not be inscribed in the election process. In the congress before the law, female representation was 7%, now the representation stands at the 9.43%.⁹

- **Colombia**

In 1999, a Quota Law for the Legislative Power was approved. In 2001 it was declared unconstitutional. In 2000, the 581 Law was focused on the development of the 13th, 40th and 43rd articles of the Political Constitution that warranties Fundamental Women Rights. Therefore, this law gives women an adequate and effective participation in all the State branches and organisms. For the political positions in the lists system, the law declares that participation has to be balanced between women and men.¹⁰

- **Costa Rica**

As a recommendation by the diverse political parties in this country, women were included in political life; then Costa Rica became the first country in Latin America that promoted it. In 1996, through Law N^a 7653 of the Reform of the Electoral Code

⁹ Ríos Tobar, Marcela, page. 44.

¹⁰ Information taken From:

<http://www.presidencia.gov.co/equidad/documentos/VF%20PLegable%20Ley%20de%20cuotas.doc>

and the Organic Law of the Supreme Court of Elections, it established that women's participation must be 40% of the list. If the lists did not follow this regulation, they would not be able to subscribe. "Since the application of this norm, the seats occupied by women have increased 22.82%, from 14% to 36.84%.

- **Uruguay**

Since 2009, a great advance related to women and political participation occurred when the Chamber of Deputies approved a law where women were included on the lists. It means that, for every two men one woman was included. This was expected to happen in June, but it was postponed until the 2014 elections.

- **Ecuador**

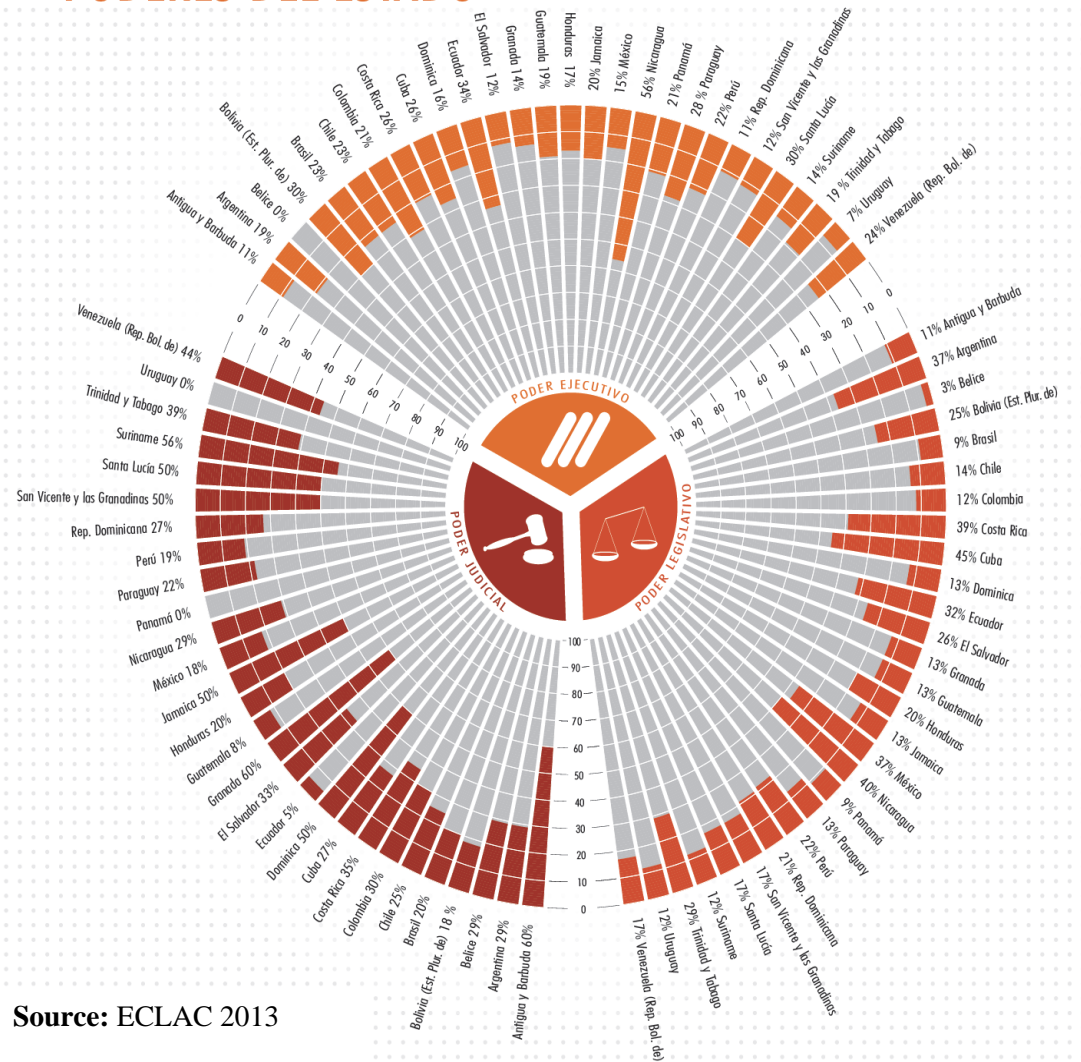
According to the article 46 of the Elections Law Code, the lists of the legislative power are sequenced and balanced. It means one woman – one man or one man - one woman until the candidate list is complete. Before the approval of this law, in the Legislative Power only the 4% of the members were women, nowadays it is 32.26%.

In Latin America there are countries which do not have any Quota Law. However, there are women in political positions even with minimal participation. According to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), 25% of women participate in public office¹¹.

¹¹ Available in:

<http://www.cepal.org/oig/WS/getCountryProfile.asp?language=spanish&country=ECU>

Graphic 3. Percentage of women in the executive, legislative and judicial power.



Source: ECLAC 2013

Chart 1: Percentage of Women Political Participation in Latin America and the Caribbean

Country	Type of Parliament	Total of Parliamentarian	Women parliamentarian	Percentage
Antigua y Barbuda	Bicameral	17	2	11,76%
Aruba	Bicameral	21	5	23,81%
Bahamas	Bicameral	41	5	12,30%
Barabados	Bicameral	30	3	10,00%
Belice	Bicameral	31	0	0,00%
Canada	Bicameral	308	68	22,08%
Chile	Bicameral	158	20	12,66%
Colombia	Bicameral	268	28	10,45%
Cuba	Unicameral	614	265	43,16%
Dominica	Unicameral	32	0	0,00%
El Salvador	Unicameral	84	17	20,24%
Grenada	Bicameral	15	2	13,30%
Guatemala	Unicameral	158	23	14,56%
Guyana	Unicameral	70	30	21,00%
Haiti	Bicameral	120	6	5,00%
Cayman Islands	Unicameral	15	1	6,67%
Nicaragua	Unicameral	92	17	18,48%
Puerto Rico	Bicameral	82	24	29,27%
Saint Lucia	Bicameral	17	2	11,76%
Surinam	Unicameral	51	13	25,49%
Trinidad y Tobago	Bicameral	41	11	26,83%
Uruguay	Bicameral	121	18	14,88%
Venezuela	Unicameral	167	31	18,56%

Source: Official Websites of the cited countries.

1.3 Historical reference of women in Ecuadorian politics.

Research conducted by Natalia León (1997) in Cuenca about gender relationships within the colonial society at the end of the XVIII century claims that the social organization was based on hierarchy according to blood purity, color and ideals. Even in the place that woman occupied in the hierarchy, it was difficult to find

women in positions not exclusively determined by men. It was thought that women's fields for their own development were only the family, religious, marriage life, survival, charity, and, less commonly, education and art. This gives us a draft of how elite women were subordinated within family relationships.

Kelly Romoleroux (1993) conducted a study called, "Strong women fight for equality". Women's roles, their complementary participation, and support for men while performing political positions, were highlighted in this research. During the XIX and at the beginning of the XX century through Liberalism,¹² women could participate in political positions such as, educative, labor, marriage, divorce, and some other reforms within the legal system.

In Donoso and Valdéz's (2007) publication "Women's Political Participation in Latin America", there is a description of two different moments when women started their incursion into the cultural world, the defense of social labor rights, the participation in philanthropic charity organizations, the organization and mobilization of the first feminist strikes and protests, and especially in the fight for civil and citizen rights obtained by the voting process. The results of this struggle materialized after getting the female right to vote, Ecuador being the first (1929) and Paraguay the last (1961) country to obtain this right.

In 1924, Matilde Hidalgo de Procel went to enroll in the Electoral Register in Ecuador to participate in the elections that would take place in 1925. There she got a favorable response by the Electoral Council. However, the aforementioned right was included in the Constitution in 1929, making this mandatory for men and optional for women. In 1967 it is set as mandatory for both genders.

Liberal project for Alfaro and Women. It influenced the incorporation of the educative and labor fields. One of the first measures was the access to regular and secular education for girls. Then, girls only had the option to study in religious institutions. Thus, this was the first basis for their inclusion with female schools, as well as Art and Trade School for girls. With the objective of motivating the best students from Alfaro's government some scholarships were distributed in poor sectors. Also this project helped several students to travel abroad to professionalize as teachers. In the labor field a great progress for women was registered, as the insurance the right to work. This kind of principles that took place in Alfaro's administrations were visible during the next governments. One of the most important principles came out in 1929, when the women political right was expanded.

Women have been part of the political bench in Ecuador for short periods of time because of the patriarchal status that the government has had. At the beginning of the XXI century women started performing a greater power within the country through their participation in the National Congress, nowadays known as the National Assembly.

This pursuit attempts not only to be part of history, but to recognize women as the leaders of social struggles of independence, riots and indigenous rebellions. That is why Ecuadorian women throughout the history of the country continue fighting for their total recognition and a place in social, political, cultural and economic contexts.

According to the radio program, “Ecuador, Politics and Women” of the Latin American Social Sciences Institute (FLACSO in Spanish), women’s political life in Ecuador has been marked by many aspects, such as:

- **Stages of the feminine political process.**

With the citizenship concept in Ecuador, a pathway is open for women to participate directly in law making and actions within varied political scenes. After getting gender equality for Ecuadorian women, a development based on social inclusion was permitted.

Thus, women’s decisions were taken into account within public politics, and the interests of their participation increased. Then, the possibility of building a country based on women’s perspectives emerged.

In this process, there was a key element, the creation of regulations which enabled the articles written in the constitution be fulfilled. This process ended with the execution of The Organic Law of Participation, the Organic Law of Elections, and the Democratic Code. For the political parties and movements a norm was applied. It was the integration of women for elections with parity and alternate. This created a clear and open policy of participation for women within the national environs.

- **Quota Law.**

This topic refers to women’s and men’s equal participation. This appears in the 1998 Constitution when female participation in public positions was included; initially it

was only 30%. However, participation practices did not end with the political quota right, but trying to give recognition and respect to women. Because of their actions they should be considered as social transformation subjects; they reinforce the objectives and the democratic processes.

Even in the Constitution there are good conditions to help women improve their political processes freely; in society these thoughts have not been developed, and there are aspects and practices that have not incorporated women's equity as yet. This situation demands a greater interest and effort from all sectors and society institutions.

That is why the women's movements have put a lot of effort in to positioning themselves with their speeches and actions, to stop being simply represented, and to start participating, manifesting and denouncing rights violation and exclusion.

- **Challenges for politic Ecuadorian women.**

Ecuadorian women have worked progressively to overcome diverse obstacles within the political context. However, it has to be taken into account that there are many aspects that still need improvement such as, to have broad academic training, to show a positive attitude based on gender issues, and to develop a sexual division of labor when women and men are in equal conditions.

It is necessary to change cultural views and practices that affect women, especially the ones that are based on a patriarchal system. It was observed that women were discriminated against by men and other social institutions as well.

According to the Gender Action Plan of the Spanish Cooperation in Ecuador, it set the Convention of the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (hereinafter CEDAW) that recommended that the Ecuadorian State develop and implement policies that would insure the elimination of stereotypes given to women regarding their social roles.

Even though some of the actions to make changes in cultural patterns are poor, the impact of the "Reacciona Ecuador, el machismo es violencia" campaign has been important, as well as the constitutional precepts.

With regard to public institutions, it has been established that the different national or local entities still keep the patriarchal structure and thought--keeping women subordinated in gender relationships. This situation is still visible since the design and management of public policies show deficiencies related to gender relationships and the opportunity of access between women and men. Moreover, the state lacks effective mechanisms for women's participation within their own organizations as well as the definition and implementation of policies that promote equality. These have to be improved.

It is also important to highlight that the educational gap between women and men has been reduced from 1990 until now. According to the National Statistics and Census Institute (INEC), while in 1990 women had an illiteracy rate of 13.8%, men had 9.5%. In 2010 women had 7.7% while men had 5.8%.

The average ratings about educational system access is based on enrollment registers and, it presents some gender differences; the third level of education is the highest stage achieved where women's presence is greater, and in Basic General Education levels, parity is almost achieved according to enrollment registers. In the Ecuadorian Constitution (2008), educational access is insured for all the population. This must be secular, free, and mandatory until high school. However, third level education is free, too. Also, in the Constitution, gender perspective is incorporated within the diverse plans and programs sponsored by the Education Ministry. That is why the Decennial Plan for Educational aims to guarantee the universalization of basic education and eradicate illiteracy.

In the Ecuadorian Constitution of 2008 collective rights and indigenous movement identities have been insured through the constitutional declaration of the country as a Plurinational State. Indigenous women's participation is more evident within the National Assembly. Nevertheless, there are some inconsistencies in their participation. Also, the aforementioned constitution determines equal participation, as part of the collective rights.

“Indigenous community authorities, people and nationalities will exercise their jurisdictional functions based on their ancestral traditions and their own rights within their territory. Women's participation and decisions will be guaranteed.

Authorities will apply regulations and their own procedures to solve internal conflicts that would not be opposed to the Constitution nor to the international instruments of human rights. The State guarantees those decisions of the indigenous jurisdiction from public authorities and institution's intromission. (Art. 171 Ecuadorian Republic Constitution, 2008).

In recent years in the National Assembly indigenous women's participation has increased independently from their beliefs, or political ideology. This happened because of the application of the Constitution of 2008 which promotes equal participation of indigenous women as part of their collective rights.

CHAPTER 2: WOMEN IN ECUADORIAN POLITICS

The second chapter of the present work analyzes the events in Ecuador that have marked the development of women's involvement in politics. Moreover, a diachronic reading reference is done to observe the incidence of the different social movements to promote the participation of women in the country. In this context, in order to understand the role of women in Ecuadorian politics, the contributions that this gender has achieved throughout the history of the country and the results that have been achieved since their involvement in public power are analyzed.

Likewise, this chapter considers that it is important to highlight women who have come to power and analyze like the exercise of their political power in Ecuador. Each of these aspects will allow understanding the importance and influence that women have had in the development of national policy.

2.1 Historical reference of the moments that have promoted women's participation in the exercise of political power.

The participation and the exercise of women's political power depends on the environment in which they develop. This means that they are influenced by the history, culture, and socio-economic reality that a country possesses at the moment of exercising their political rights.

The participation of women in public affairs and equality in accessing public office have been recognized as fundamental rights both in the Inter-American Human Rights System and in the Universal Human Rights protection system. The importance of balancing the choices of men and women in the exercise of political rights has been established by the international community. This is evidenced as follows:

1. The Inter-American Democratic Charter,
2. Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women,

3. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW),
4. Convention on the Political Rights of Women, and
5. Other documents of the International Consensus such as the Millennium Development Goals, and the International Conference of Women ("Beijing Conference"), seeking the welfare and proper development of women.

In the document of 2011, "The way towards a substantive democracy: political participation of women in the Americas," set by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), establishes that the historical development of political participation of women should be observed. This observation should be done from a human rights perspective identifying things such as priority action, obstacles and barrier elimination that impede the exercise of this right¹³.

In spite of the fact that women constitute about half of the population, they still do not feel identified or fully represented in all fields of government and decision-making. The limited access of women to the public office and/ or positions of power in all spheres of public life are the result of discrimination and the inferior treatment given to women throughout history.

Thus, for example, the IACHR undertook a regional initiative to analyze the main advances or challenges in the states fulfillment of their obligations such as respecting and ensuring the equal participation of women in politics from the perspective of human rights.

In this historical context about women's participation, it can be seen that even international law has affirmed the duty of the States to guarantee the exercise of women's human rights with equality and without discrimination. The binding

¹³ American Commission on Human Rights, THE WAY TO A SUSTANTIVE DEMOCRACY: THE WOMEN POLITIC PARTICIPATION IN THE AMERICAS, 2011.

principles of equality and non-discrimination are the central focus of international system of human rights protection.

Internationally, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (“CEDAW”) establishes that the State and its various spheres have the obligation to eliminate discrimination against women in all its forms. In Article 1, the CEDAW defines discrimination against women as the following:

*“Any distinction, exclusion or restriction based on gender which has the purpose or effect of impairing or nullifying the recognition of women’s enjoyment or exercise regardless of their marital status, on basis of equality of men and women, human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field”.*¹⁴

This definition includes any difference in treatment based on gender that intentionally or in practice puts women at a disadvantage, and prevents the full recognition of their human rights in public and private areas.

The participation of women in public affairs and equality in accessing different political positions has been recognized as fundamental rights. This means that every woman has the right to recognition, enjoyment, exercise, and protection of all human rights and liberties as embodied in regional and international instruments on human rights and freedoms. Those rights incorporate the right of equal access to public service and the right to participate in public affairs (including decision-making).

As a constant feature, the governments in power have tried to gain supporters with the inclusion of women in their parties or movements. However, for many years the fight for stereotypes has been in the form of gender violence and the extension of the patriarchal system in our society. This fact is reflected in the opportunities and workplaces as well as in social and public representation.

In the national context, women have achieved significant progress through social struggle. This has provoked the development of laws and regulations to protect

¹⁴ Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos. “El camino hacia una democracia sustantiva: la participación política de las mujeres en las Américas”, p. 20

women and promote the exercise of their power as Ecuadorian citizens as well as representatives in Ecuadorian political power.

The positions between Liberals and Conservatives at the time of including women in the world of politics are reflected in the formation of their parties and statutes. On the one hand, it was not easy for Liberals to find women to participate in their political party although many of them were considered allies to this political ideology such as Matilde Hidalgo and Zoila Ugarte. On the other hand, the Conservatives had greater interest in including women in political participation as supporters and as an axis to maintain the traditional order. Examples include Dolores Cacuango and Luisa Gomez de la Torre who struggled for equality in the field of education among men, women and indigenous people.¹⁵

The Constitution of Ecuador in 1929, drafted under the leadership of the Interim President Isidro Ayora in article 13, recognizes women as citizens for the first time. However, they needed to have the men's same level. This means that they had to be over 21 years old and be able to read and write. In Article 151, the State through the Constitution guarantees the people of Ecuador several rights. Article 18 establishes that "The Law shall regulate everything especially related to the work of women and children". Finally, Article 168 establishes that the State has the obligation of giving privileged treatment to women, ensuring their education and training to make them an active part of the nation public administration. These articles ensure basic rights to women who previously were not considered by any government since women were not part of the political process and power. Therefore, their welfare, personal development and participation were not guaranteed as part of the country's affairs.

After the 1929 Constitution, later political cards took women into account, their rights, obligations, and opportunities for participating in the public life of the country.

However the 1978 Constitution, convened by the Military Government ensures the Government's obligation to guarantee to all individuals "the free and effective

¹⁵ Ximena Sosa-Buchholz, "MUJERES, ESFERA PÚBLICA Y POPULISMO EN BRASIL, ARGENTINA Y ECUADOR 1870-1960", *Procesos Revista Ecuatoriana de Historia*, Quito, 2008, p 92.

exercise and enjoyment of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights set forth in this Constitution and in the declarations, covenants, agreements and other international instruments in force”. Until then, this Constitution was the most detailed one about benefits and social rights. Moreover, with this Constitution, Ecuador returned to democracy.

On May 28, 1944, the great majority of the population held an uprising against the government of Carlos Arroyo del Rio who had governed since 1940. This act was perpetrated by the opposition in response to the electoral fraud perpetrated by Velasco Ibarra. In this uprising against the dictatorship, the names of some women were highlighted. They were Nela Martínez, Isabel Herrería, Ana Moreno, Corina Hidalgo, Alba Calderón, Luisa Gómez de la Torre, Nelly Cereced., among others. With the triumph of the revolution, the Coordination Committee of the Workers called for women to give a candidate congressional recognition of the work done. Martinez was nominated and won in spite of machismo and that a woman was the representative within the Committee. Although Nela Martínez participated in the congress as a substitute, sometime later she became a permanent representative.¹⁶

The parties and/or political movements have been promoters of women and their inclusion in participation and political exercise of power¹⁷. As is the case of the Ecuadorian Roldosista Party in whose by-laws (Art. 49) included a Women's Commission to support functions in specific areas. This meant that this political party partially recognized the role of women since they were only considered as the basis for getting members and female support.

After living a military dictatorship headed by Alfredo Poveda Burbano, General Luis Leoro and General Guillermo Durán, Ecuador returned to democracy on August 10, 1979 with the help of Jaime Roldós Aguilera and Osvaldo Hurtado.¹⁸

¹⁶ Romo, Leroux de Morales Ketty. *Situación Jurídica y social de la mujer en el Ecuador*. 1975. Departamento de publicaciones de la Universidad de Guayaquil. Guayaquil, 1975. p 94 - 95

¹⁷ Promoters that sometimes have a clear partisan intent rather than a real desire for change in structures and gender perspective.

¹⁸ Political Database of the Americas, República del Ecuador. “Cronología de Presidentes” <http://pdba.georgetown.edu/Executive/Ecuador/pres.html>, 2009.

Women have not had a major role in Ecuadorian politics since the governments of Roldós Aguilera, Osvaldo Hurtado, León Febres Cordero, Rodrigo Borja Cevallos and Sixto Duran Ballen. Women's participation in the exercise of power has been almost null and there are no bibliographical sources about it.

At the end of the eighties and early nineties (1988-1992), women had involvement in politics within public office. However, this exercise of power was limited since only eight women were part of the National Parliament: Cecilia Calderón, Cumandá Vinuesa, Yolanda Andrade, Marlene Nieto, Jenny Terán, and three substitute representatives. They were Diana Barzallo, Rita Caravaca and Matilde Guatemal (first indigenous woman who participated in the National Congress).¹⁹

On August 10, 1996, Abdalá Bucaram became president of Ecuador and Rosalía Arteaga was the vice-president. She was the first woman to reach that position. On February 1997, she assumed the presidency of the state for a short time (from February 6th to February 11th)²⁰.

Rosalía Arteaga, had had different public offices such as Councilwoman in Cuenca (1986-1988), President of the Cultural Committee in the Municipality of Cuenca, Secretary of Culture (1992), Minister of Education and Sports (Government of Sixto Durán Ballen, 1994)²¹. She was constantly linked to politics and decision-making in Ecuador.

After the ouster of Bucaram a vacancy in the office of President was generated and, by constitutional law, Rosalía Arteaga assumed this position. However, she did not have support and, due to the lack of a law that supported her, the Congress created the position of "Interim President ". After that, by vote, the power was given to Dr. Fabian Alarcón Rivera. To this situation the former president of Ecuador (Rosalía Arteaga) stated the following in the Las Palmas newspaper:

¹⁹ Haro Nancy, MEMORIA DEL CURSO "MUJER, CAMBIO SOCIAL Y DESARROLLO", "La Participación de las Mujeres en Los Partidos Políticos", Quito, 1991-1992, p 40.

²⁰ Aviles P., Efrén. <http://www.encyclopediadelecuador.com/temasOpt.php?Ind=292&Let=>

²¹ F.R.G., "Las Palmas de Gran Canaria", <http://www.laprovincia.es/sociedad/2012/12/12/rosalia-arteaga-perdi-presidencia-ecuador-mujer/502834.html>, 2012.

"I lost the presidency of my country for being a woman" ... "I was in charge for a very little time for being a woman, because the members of the Assembly of my country and especially the military could not accept a woman as the head of the country and army".

This situation proved that by the end of the twentieth century machismo still existed within government and the exercise of power. Arteaga's situation was a clear example of the limitations that women had in politics due to the lack of clear laws that support women's welfare in the performance of their duties.

During Fabián Alarcón's government, Interim President of Ecuador (1997-1998), two women were part of the government: Juana Vallejo as Minister of Tourism and Flor María Valverde as Environment Minister.

The National Council of Women (1997) has been a key support for the implementation of government policy through the "Plan for Equal Opportunities" and important alliances reached with the Association of Municipalities of Ecuador (AME) in order to strengthen and support gender equality and protect the rights of women.

Jamil Mahuad named Rocío Vásquez as Minister of Tourism, Yolanda Kakabadse as Environment Minister, and Ana Lucia Armijos as Government Minister²². Women's inclusion in Mahuad's government promoted gradual inclusion of women in political office.

The Constitution of 1998 is considered a first step in enacting several women's rights such as the right to personal integrity, freedom from violence, equality, non-discrimination, equal participation of women and men in popular election as well as decisions in the public sphere. More rights were the formal recognition of domestic work as productive labor and non-discriminatory education that promoted gender equality. The government was forced to adopt public policies to promote equality of women.

²² Gabinete de Jamil Mahuad y Ministros Jefes por áreas. <http://www.explored.com.ec/noticias-ecuador/gabinete-de-jamil-mahuad-y-ministros-jefes-por-areas-449.html>, 1998.

The Council of State 11 was formed after Jamil Mahuad's overthrow in January 2000, and after the implementation of dollarization in the country. The Council was supported by the CONAIE (Antonio Vargas Huatatoa, leader of the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities), army officers, General Carlos Mendoza, Colonel Lucio Gutierrez and Carlos Solórzano Constantine (former president of the Superior Court of Justice). These characters self-declared part of the Board of National Salvation on January 21st and provoked the overthrow of President Mahuad. On January 22nd, this Board gave the governmental power to Gustavo Noboa Bejarano who at that time was the vice president.

In 2003 Lucio Gutierrez, designated Ivonne Baki as Minister of Foreign Trade, Nina Pacari as Chancellor, Rosa Torres as Minister of Education and Doris Soliz as Minister of Tourism²³. Three of them still continue in the midst of national policy as representatives in the nation's power.²⁴

In Rafael Correa's government, through the Constitution drafted by the Constitutional Assembly in 2008 which was approved in a referendum by the Ecuadorian people, the historical roots in men and women are recognized by establishing and guaranteeing more women's rights. Similarly, equality and non-discrimination are promoted; the women's role is reclaimed in society as well as their political participation and the exercise of political power. For instance, president Correa formed his Ministerial Cabinet with the participation of Dr. Guadalupe Larriva as Defense Minister. This modified the idea that only men could successfully perform this function namely, the exercise of authority and defense of the nation.

As regards the "Participation rights", women and men will participate on an equal basis in positions of nomination or appointment to the civil service. In instances of direction and decision in political parties and candidates for multi-person elections, the government will generate equality policies between men and women. Concerning the issue of "work and payment", it was established that women and men had equal

²³ Council of State: in some countries, it is the highest advisory body which manages the most important affairs of State: the Council of State has existed in various times and with various responsibilities. Source: <http://www.wordreference.com/definicion/consejo%20de%20estado>

²⁴ Lucio Gutiérrez tiene ministros predilectos, <http://www.hoy.com.ec/noticias-ecuador/lucio-gutierrez-tiene-ministros-predilectos-146500.html> 2003.

opportunities to get a job or professional training in the work area. Moreover, women had the right of fair payment without being victims of any violence that could impede them from working normally. However, the previous rights have been only mentioned in written papers with good intentions since the country has still a majority percentage of men in public service and citizen representation.

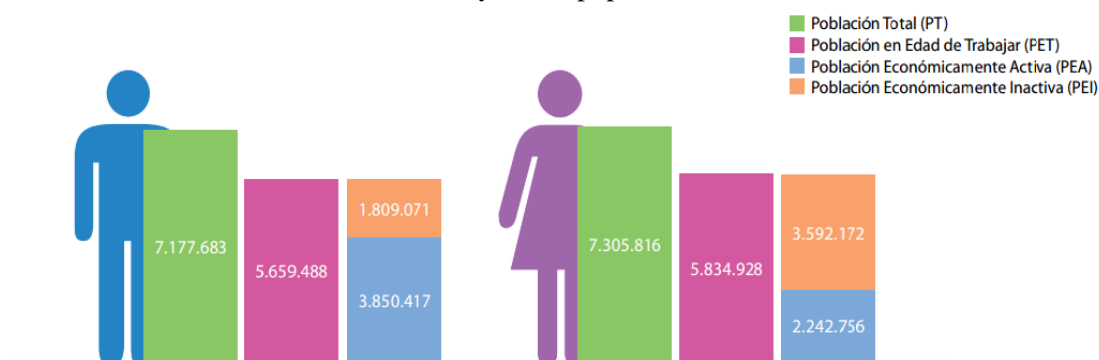
The Montecristi Constitution and the objective of ensuring women’s rights have been the basis for the development of Organic Laws such as the following:

1. The Democracy Code is a reformatory law including the Organic Law on Elections and the Political Organizations of Ecuador in which the principle of parity and alternation in multi-candidate lists are prioritized.
2. The Organic Law of the Council of Citizen Participation and Social Control proclaim equal rights, conditions and opportunities and proportional representation of men and women.

In this context, the Census of Population and Housing of 2010 demonstrated that there is a higher percentage of women than men. Approximately 2,242,756 women are in the productive age of 15-49 years however, this amount represents less in relation to the same category of men.

Graph 4

What is the structure of the economically active population?



Source: INEC. Census of Population and Housing 2010

In spite of there being a greater female majority in the country, the political exercise of power is still in men’s hands. The allocation of State portfolios to women is minor and this will be described later.

However, the inclusion of women in the private sector has been increasing (in management, leadership and entrepreneurship) as stated by Susana Santisteban in the interview in April 2014.

On June 10, 2012, the digital newspaper “Immediate Ecuador” highlights the effort of the current government with the following excerpt from the article:

“The project of the Citizen’s Revolution from 2007 to the present takes into account women to move forward in building a fairer and more equitable society. They assume their natural positions although there are still obstacles”

The educational, cultural and traditionalists of Ecuador are dormant obstacles for many women who desire to participate in the exercise of political power in the country. These social barriers must be defeated from their roots to achieve equity and equal opportunities for men and women.

According to a 2012 report by the international network Social Watch (quoted by the digital newspaper “Immediate Ecuador”), the nineties had the barriers that prevented women from entering into the political life, which were machismo, culture, education, lack of money, family obligations, and requirements of political struggle. At present, these barriers are weaker because the 2008 Constitution looks after and guarantees the rights of women and their participation in the exercise of political power. These obstacles as in past decades so today are common before entering the political party or when exercising political office. The previous statement was presented by Monica Chuji former minister of the current government.

Betty Tola former Minister of Policy Coordination and Decentralized Autonomous Governments affirms that in recent years there have been advances in six cornerstones which are, social economy and development, social security, sexual and reproductive health, access to land , political participation, and the eradication of violence. Finally, in her article “Women of Daily Revolutions” she says, "There is a lot of work to do; however, our struggle has found victories” (Pensamiento Femenino 2010).²⁵

²⁵ Tola, B., *Las mujeres de las revoluciones cotidianas*. Pensamiento femenino, 2010.

In the Plan del Buen Vivir the objectives, policies and goals are related to gender equity and they are the following:

OBJECTIVE	POLICY	GOAL
Guarantee people's access to public participation and politics.	10.1 To promote collective and autonomous organization in civil society. 10.3 To promote political and electoral participation with equity in popular elective office, designation and in public institutions.	To reach 30% of women's participation in elections.

In the 2013 Presidential elections, the National Electoral Council (CNE) registered 11,675,441 voters. This showed that 5,848,128 were women and 5,827,313 were men. On February 23, 2014, the CNE recorded a total of 11,613,270 voters divided into 5,821,182 women and 5,792,088 men.

In the February elections, mayors, governors and councilors were elected. The data above showed that the number of women who went to the polls was higher than men. However, the number of women elected was lower in relation to the number of male candidates for the same political positions. Although openness to women's participation in elections has been given, there is still work to do to strengthen and encourage women to participate as candidates in upcoming national and local elections.

To strengthen the work of women's inclusion in the exercise of political power and call for social change in our country, President Rafael Correa in his speech on March 8, 2010 said:

"The Citizen's Revolution has a female face due to gender policy and the proposal that we together, women and men, move towards the construction of Sumak Kawsay. This ensures everybody's opportunity to develop their full potential and women's advancement is recognized as the progress of human beings"

Thus, gender equity in access to opportunities for men and women in different positions is sought. This seeks to develop their potential in order to obtain self and collective benefits. This is reflected in access to free and obligatory education for children regardless of their ethnicity or social status. This is stipulated in the Ecuadorian Constitution.

In the current government women have been included in the cabinet until March 2014. Three out of ten government secretaries are headed by women: National Migration is represented by Lorena Escudero, National Risk Management Secretary (SNGR) by Maria del Pilar Cornejo, Peoples Secretary, Social Movements and Citizen Participation by Mireya Cardenas. The ministries headed by women are: Ministry of Social Development (Cecilia Vaca), Ministry for Natural and Cultural Heritage (Belén Moncayo), Ministry of Public Works and Transport (Maria de los Angeles Duarte), Ministry of Policy, Autonomous and Decentralized Government (Betty Tola), Ministry of Environment (Lorena Tapia), Ministry of National Defense (Maria Fernanda Espinosa), Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion (Doris Soliz) and the Ministry of Public Health (Mgs. Carina Vance). They are only eight out of the 23 ministries that are headed by women; however, this represents women's progress in representing Ecuadorian society.

In the first quarter of 2014, President Correa called for the resignation of all his ministers. The purpose of his request was to reform and refresh the government to continue the revolution. That is why the Secretaries and Ministries are formed as follows: Viviana Bonilla heads the National Political Secretary, Vinicio Alvarado heads the National Public Administration Secretary, Omar Simon will head the General Secretary of the Presidency, and Rommy Vallejo heads the new National Secretary of Intelligence.

In the cabinet many other have kept their places, however, there have also been assigned responsibilities to people of the Political Party or people related to it. These are: Ministry of Social Development (Cecilia Vaca), Ministry for Natural Heritage and Cultural (Belén Moncayo), Ministry of Environment (Lorena Tapia), Ministry of National Defense (Maria Fernanda Espinosa), Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion (Betty Tola) and the Ministry of Public Health (Carina Vance) Security Minister (Fernando Cordero), Ministry of Labor Relations (Carlos Marx Carrasco),

Ministry of Public Works and Transport (Paola Carvajal), Ministry of Justice, Human Rights and Religious (Leidy Andrea Rocha Zúñiga). The number of women has increased from 8 to 10.

The contrast of the data above allows us to know the percentage of women in the exercise of political power. They do not only represent other women they are a benchmark since our population in its diversity can have affinity and trust representatives regardless of gender.

2.2 Women and their contributions to Ecuadorian policy since the return to democracy until the late twentieth century.

There are several ways in which women have sought to influence and contribute to the society especially from the exercise of political power. Each of them has had to significantly contribute according to the current government requirements as well as the environment they have developed.

According to Gisela Bock (2006) "The history of women is not an independent history apart from men, but it is its own history"²⁶and therefore it was and still is important to save it. Several studies on the issue of gender have contributed to the understanding of processes and dynamic social, economic, political and power relations that have been established.

The demonstrations, ideas and proposals headed by women have been debated in many cases in society; in contrast, in other cases this has generated discomfort. That is why women have sought individual or collective peaceful alternatives to express and demand their rights.

The main women's contributions and achievements in relation to the legal framework are the following:

- Approval of the right to vote in 1929.
- Amendments to the Civil Code in 1988.
- The law against violence to women and family in 1995.
- The compliance of the law of quotas.

²⁶ Bock, G., (2006)

- Employment Protection Act.
- The Constitution of 2008.
- The participation of a large percentage of women in the Assembly of 2008.

In the early 40s women began their struggle to have access to government positions in the country. This process has occurred simultaneously with the evolution of Ecuadorian politics. Thus, women have not only achieved respect for their political and social rights they also have occupied positions that have been created because of their efforts and perseverance.

At this point, it is important to refer to rural women's roles in the political participation of our country. The inequity in the socio-political sphere between women and men during 40's and even today remains very noticeable. In spite of the long history of women's effort and struggle to break the tendencies and barriers, the poor participation of rural women remains a reality that must be faced.

Since the return to democracy (1979) in Ecuador, women have fought to have their rights expressed in the Constitution. For instance, some policies expressed in Leon Febres Cordero government have been rejected in order to promote women's rights.

These policies are the result of the need to have women in their houses (as housewife and mother) and also in the labor field (as cheap, exploitable and manipulated workers). Social and economic policies that kept latent relations of domination and subordination of gender were developed.

At the beginning, the social policies were aimed at the "integration of women in development", however these policies were not accomplished. For instance, the expression used by President Febres Cordero in which he emphasized his manhood saying "well secured with pants", he used this expression to make pejorative comparisons between his opponents and women. Policies of production and employment were linked to the idea of "export or die". It was a means to save the economy of the county. For this reason, women had access to employment, but with conditions for participation in the production process.

In 1994, the Commissioners for Women were created. They were supported by Law 103, which punishes any type of violence as a crime against women. The same year the Law of Free Maternity and Attention to the Children was created which increased the coverage in sexual and reproductive health.

In 1997, the Employment Protection Act for Women supported the minimum participation of 20% women in Notaries, Courts and Superior Courts of Justice.

The Constitution of 1998 promoted the rights of women to achieve gender equality in various aspects of society.

That is why, since 2007, the electoral processes have given parity and alternation between men and women when participating in a political office.

Moreover, it can be said that women's advancements in participating and being in charge of political power is reflected in their attendance and voice in public hearings, oversight committees, advisory councils, observatories and opportunities for citizen participation.

Ecuador stands out for having a noticeable participation of women in politics throughout Latin America. The historical records show that it is one of the pioneer countries in recognizing and exercising the right to vote for women.

Several areas of power allocated to the public sphere are related to economic-productivity and therefore are considered of higher value and importance. In contrast, the social field has been located in relation to the private areas where women play roles based on domestic relationship, privacy and family welfare.

In this context, the political participation of rural women emerged as a historical fact from the Constitution of 1998²⁷ where a scenario for participation was created in the electoral lists to integrate a Rural Parish Committee. Art. 228 of the Constitution raised the Rural Parish Committee to the level of Autonomous Sectional Government thereby giving way to a new democratic process for women's participation in rural areas.

²⁷ Haro, L., Participación política de mujeres rurales en Ecuador. Disponible en [http://www.amjupre.org.ec/sites/default/files/luzharo.%20MUJER%20RURAL%20\(1\).pdf](http://www.amjupre.org.ec/sites/default/files/luzharo.%20MUJER%20RURAL%20(1).pdf)

It is true that the integration of the Rural Parish Committee is the starting point for rural women's political participation and the Law of quotas is mostly fulfilled however, barriers for political participation in municipal and provincial assemblies remain.

The political incursion into the Rural Parish Committee has changed the lives of hundreds and thousands of women who could leave the domestic and the traditional role to face a new challenge in their lives. Elected rural women often face the exercise of power alone since the political parties and movements do not provide the necessary support to carry out their role as authorities.

Several indigenous women have faced serious family problems due to machismo that affected their rights. Testimonies on this subject are striking since women's partners often treat them as personal belongings and do not realize that women not only are responsible of their families but to the people who elected them. Women have acquired a new socio-political responsibility.

Rural areas seek to create new political positions with gender identity. Moreover, the recognition of human rights (civil, political, social, economic and cultural groups) of rural women is increasing with a gender perspective that integrates women into new participation.

In January 2008, the "School for Strengthening Local Management of Rural Ecuadorian Woman Leaders" was created and supported by different institutions. Thus, it has sought to provide new technical tools for rural women through access to information and communication technologies (ICTs) in order to enable them to acquire new knowledge for governance.

It can be said that the country has gained significant progress on the issue of gender equity. This is because the gaps in the access to education have decreased. However, some disproportions prevail in relation to dropout. The goal of equality in education between women and men has already been achieved in most cases and the country is on track to reach it in 2015.

Another important achievement in the context of gender equality is eradicating illiteracy among women. In August 2009, the Ministry of Education and Culture,

MEC declared Ecuador "free of illiteracy, according to UNESCO standards. The improvement has contributed to the promotion of literacy programs of the Ministry of Education, Manuela Sáenz (for mestizos) and Dolores Cacuango (for indigenous people).

Women's political participation has improved significantly. The Constitution of 2008 recognized the parity and alternation between women and men and the Election Law institutionalized parity in the electoral lists. So the country has seen an improvement in the institutional framework to end gender violence, increase women's political participation and therefore improve the social, economic and political context.

Political representation is aimed to create strategies and conditions for the equal participation of women in all social, private and public spaces. Indeed, equality requires social arrangements that enable all society members to interact as equals, this is essential for fair material resources distribution and recognition of the independence and diverse social voices.

It can be said that women's movements have played a fundamental role in the restoration of democracy. The relations established among different expressions of the movement (human rights groups, survival organizations in conflict zones and feminist organizations) allow recognition of women as part of the anti-dictatorial democratic and progressive forces committed to democracy and peace.

In recent years, women's political participation has become part of the political agenda. It is evidenced by the inclusion of plans demanding equality which have been implemented by most countries through equal opportunities programs.

Similarly, quota law is one of the main goals in countries that do not have legislation in this regard. In addition, some plans of different governments in relation to equity have begun to consider this, not only in the electoral field, but also in the government structure. In Uruguay and Costa Rica the plans for equal opportunities appear as a goal with defined time frames for their achievement.

Among the factors that have enabled progress on gender equality in various fields are: political will of governments, existence of inter-party consensus concerning women, political representation and the different groups that represent and fight for

women's rights. All these elements have generated positive results in terms of political participation of women, not only nationally, but also regionally.

This means that building a free and democratic society involves the inclusion of social elements in social and economic justice as a basis of freedom exercised for everybody in order to achieve justice and participatory democracy. The combination of these factors seeks to articulate democratic freedoms with the possibility of building a fair society, working to improve economic, socio-cultural and political inequalities.

As mentioned before, we must work to achieve social and intergenerational solidarity focused on women's rights and their universal application within social policies including the right to health care which is a cornerstone in building "El Buen Vivir". This has implications for women and their families at work and productivity and, therefore, in all aspects of life in the society.

Finally, in order to achieve gender equality, particularly in the political field, every government should apply a set of measures to promote and protect the rights of women as citizens thereby overcoming the women's utilitarian notion.

2.3 Women who have come to power and their participation in Ecuadorian politics since the late twentieth century and early twenty-first century.

Women's political participation in Ecuador has been marked by several periods in the last twenty years. In 1998, the women's movement managed to incorporate into the Constitution the right to fair and equal participation of women in public office. However, this right only achieved 30% of women's participation from the lists of the candidates. Besides, women's participation in other State functions was relegated to be a matter for men who were in power. It is easy to see the lack of culture in relation to women's equal participation which the country possesses despite this group's representing half of the population.

From achievements obtained in Montecrisiti and current government implementations, it can be determined that it is essential to overcome the struggle to achieve a simple quota in political participation. It is of utmost importance to develop and implement a new model of citizenship which includes equal

participation of women of different ethnic minorities as well as those with disabilities.

This constant struggle of women to achieve a significant representation in the political and social environment has made visible the need for further development of democracy in the country. That is why, the issue of fairness becomes an essential condition for strengthening democracy and therefore for significant improvement for both the social and political representation of women.

That is why the concept of parity for women has become one of the objectives to be achieved within the democratic process and thus the key to forming a citizenship based on egalitarian participation. In this way women become active in the social and political activities of the country.

In the magazine *Agora Política* (2012), Bethy Amores said the following as regards the fair participation of women:

"In this context, the movement for parity should question the existence of a single logical and standardized position raised from state power. It is also important to place in the democratic agenda the need to build an institution that represents social diversity and recognizes new forms of relationship between the State and society in the disadvantaged or vulnerable "(p. 19).

Ecuador has made great advances in women's rights due to the activity of women's organizations and political groups. It is important to highlight that the inequality issue is not limited to constitutional and legal norms. It also involves economic and social equality in order to guarantee full participation.

Although the participation of women in several fields of power has significantly improved, this does not mean that those in power are faithful representatives of gender rights or popular sectors. It is not sufficient that gender rights and gender equity are written into the Constitution, it is essential that these rights gain a place in daily practice.

The gender issue is a constant struggle and ideological debate whose task is to make politics accessible to all women. Incorporating more women to political life and then

raising awareness of that struggle for women's rights is a political struggle that is looking for a new society in which inequalities can be overcome.

An example of political participation at the executive level is that of Rosalia Arteaga. This occurred on August 10, 1996, when Abdala Bucaram Ortiz assumed the presidency of Ecuador and Rosalia Arteaga became the first woman to hold the office of Vice President of Ecuador.

According to Karla Calapaqui, women's participation has become increasingly visible in the government of Rafael Correa. Women are at the head of workers unions, farmers, small businesses, etc. The most notable evidence is that Ecuador's largest union, the National Union of Educators (UNE), was headed by Mery Zamora and subsequently by Mariana Pallasco. Other areas in which the leadership role of women is highlighted is on the Board of Governors of the CONAIE, the United Confederation of Neighborhoods of Ecuador (CUBE) headed by Natasha Rojas, the Federation of high school students of Ecuador (FESE) headed by Lady Morales, among other public offices which are managed by women.²⁸

However, several women have felt more discrimination against their leadership in this government. An example is the Mery Zamora case. She is the former leader of the Popular Democratic Movement (MPD) in Manabí because the current President has repeatedly made strong comments against her and her political position. Other examples are Monica Chuji, Guadalupe Llori, Nivea Velez, Lourdes Tibán, among others who have also been attacked with negative comments.

Dénnecey Trujillo, who has exercised political power at different levels in recent years, says:

"Women continue without sufficient representation in the fields of decision making; although there is parity in representation, we are relegated, compared to men, in empowerment. This lack of understanding and definition of the problem implies that public policies do not clearly highlight the specific needs of women and the role we play in society".²⁹

²⁸ Ágora Democrática (IDEA Internacional-NIMD), Año 03. n.º 6, marzo 2012, Quito, Ecuador, p 28.

²⁹ Ágora Democrática (IDEA Internacional-NIMD), Año 03. n.º 6, marzo 2012, Quito, Ecuador, p 30.

Although the objective is to generate equity in public participation and the exercise of public power for women, the results are not as had been hoped. There are several movements and/or political parties that have women as participants, however, this is only to fulfill the legal requirements and the quota which is required by the State. That is why, women's participation is considered minimal and subjected to the will of the leaders' of the party/movement.

The rights regarding political participation remain limited and much discrimination continues against gender, race, culture, class, sexual orientation, and age. If we examine women's participation in the practical exercise of power within the political parties or movements, one can say that mainly men occupy the highest political positions and only in some cases do women occupy these charges.

Trujillo affirms that data collection should be central to the formulation of public policies that can ensure fair participation. Similarly, the concepts of gender equality must be included in planning, programs, projects, gender agendas, and international agreements. In this vein, information must be collected and presented to show detailed data by age, sex, socioeconomic indicators, among others.

After the level of participation of women in national political power has been established, one can present women other cases which have become part of political organizations and their experiences in this field.

According to the magazine *Ágora Política* (2012), Alicia Acosta, who became Provincial Director of the Patriotic Society Party in Cotopaxi, said the following about her experience in the political party.

"We must understand that the relationships we build in and out of our political parties involve the formation of individual and collective identity. In this line, it is possible to confront personal and social heterogeneities, appeal to the active participation of partners and supporters as well as to build consensus. It is also important to recognize and respect differences; the same should not be recognized as inequality since it is a full exercise of freedom".
(p.46) ³⁰

³⁰ Magazine *Ágora*, pág. 46. Ecuador

Another woman who has become leader in the indigenous political field is Manuela Cobacango who was Counsellor of the National Electoral Council during the period 2008-2011, Coordinator of Women in the Community or Chumillos (now subsidiary UCICAQ). She was also member of the Operating Committee of the National Confederation of Farmers, Indigenous and Black people in Ecuador (FENOCIN) (2007-2008).

According to Manuela Cobacango, the National Confederation of Farmers, Indigenous and Black people in Ecuador (FENOCIN) is an organization with 43 years of experience in social struggle. It is part of the National Leadership of Women and Family, which is responsible for training leaders and encourages women's participation in all of the areas of the organization.

Likewise, in the Agora Magazine, Cobacango states the following regarding her vision of women's political participation in the country.

"Our country needs women and men, this will be achieved when the two genders become participants to create new horizons that could design and build alternatives to solve once and for all the problems of society"

Another character within the context of gender struggle is Lucia Salamea. She is a native of Cuenca and works as Representative of UN Women in Ecuador and Colombia, and Director for the Andean Region. She is sociologist specialized in gender and development. She has extensive experience in initiatives in favor of women's rights in rural and urban areas. Her academic and research work has been included in publications, seminars and conferences in America and the UK.

According to Salamea, a critical point within political parties is the disadvantage that women have. For women it is difficult to coordinate their political, work and family life. The coordination issue between work and family is affected by sociocultural patterns. It is known that their colleagues or partners do not support women who participate politically since it is believed that women should be at home and responsible for housework.

It is essential that political parties provide women opportunities that guarantee their training in leadership, in political performance and relationships. A political party that practices gender equality provides opportunities to its members.

The lack of media openness to women who practice or are part of different political parties or movements is remarkable the press must take into account women of African descent, indigenous as well as lesbian politicians. In our country, the opportunities for women who have different sexual preferences, African descent, or who are part of an ethnic minority should have the opportunity to assert themselves publicly.

There is another reality even more striking and this is violence and political harassment. Women have declared clearly that they feel harassed, that they do not have free exercise of intervention and participation, because their participation is being observed all the time. According to Salamea, on the event of 25 November (International Day of No Violence against Women), one of the indigenous councilors told her of an experience when she was elected. The men of the City Council approached her and told her: "Are you sure that you can work on this? Have you thought about this work? Do you know what it requires? Would it not be better for you if you were to resign?"

These examples demonstrate low confidence in and discrimination towards women's capabilities in leadership and governance. These types of questions or statements are repetitive against women and their abilities to exercise power on behalf of the people.

The fact that women became economic actors through education changed the way women identified themselves and gave them the possibility to influence the public sphere. So, an enabling environment was created to develop interest in women's political participation. When women transformed their individual interests in a collective, they were demanding the right to vote and this involved a constant struggle to become key actors in society. Thus, women could claim their civil, political and social rights.

This is how the little known and undervalued work of women has had a difficult road to face and challenge the traditional roles of women and men. Women have managed

to organize their own associations and participate in several fields of political debate which has given women the necessary guidelines to formalize their demands.

CHAPTER 3: WOMEN EXERCISE POLITICAL POWER AND IT'S CURRENT REALITY

The third chapter of this work presents an analysis of the current situation of women in relation to their political participation in the country. The contributions that women have made in both the socio-economic and cultural environment and women's influence within the exercise of political power in Ecuadorian society are highlighted. This chapter also analyses the activities and the level of performance achieved by women, specifically in the current government. This will point out the contribution of this administration in promoting women's participation in several aspects of national life.

Finally, this chapter addresses the challenges women face today when they engage in the practice of politics and become representatives and leaders of various aspects of public life. We can better understand how women have achieved positive results in national political life and the challenges that must be overcome as a society to achieve gender equity.

3.1 Women in social, cultural, and economic environments and their influence in the exercise of political power in Ecuador.

The process of inclusion of women in the exercise of political power allows them to advance in their purpose of intervention and influence as important social actors. Women not only look to possess a public or political office, but to create possibilities and opportunities that enable empowerment. This also secures the struggle to overcome social, legal and institutional challenges which would allow more training, advocacy and participation of women.

"Women who have prepared for the fight, have overcome stereotypes, have worked towards gender equity policies, have legislated in favor of women's rights and many of them never stopped being mothers" (Sonia Vera) ³¹.

³¹ Revista Ágora Política. (2012). pg. 22

In the social, cultural and economic environments, women nationally have been generating great contributions, mainly from the private sector. Many of these contributions have not been noticed or recognized. In March 2012, a group of women were recognized due to their contribution in Ecuadorian culture in the last century with the "Bicentennial Medal of Cultural Merit". However, the recognition of women in this field has been held only in social events, and daily life still competes for a place to break the mold on expression of art and those who should perform it. This is a permanent women's struggle for the right of free expression.

For women, the 2008 Constitution³² is a sign of their influence (it can be considered comprehensive or limited) since this incorporated and ensured women's rights. These are:

- The inclusion of gender in the Constitution. This implies the rights and freedoms of progression, sexual rights, reproductive rights, the right to life, the right to a decent life and a life free of violence.
- Parity as a mean for a political party or movements' formation, as well as designation and representation.
- With regard to collective rights and indigenous justice, the indigenous women's rights are ensured and equal participation of women is established.
- In addition, the Constitution guarantees equality policies between men and women through a specialized mechanism. The inclusion of gender in policies and public programs is a mandate that is linked to the creation of Equality Councils.

³² The Constitution of 2008, incorporates several articles in favor of women which were already considered in the 1998 Constitution.

- The right to political participation in public life. The State promotes equal representation of women and men in positions of nomination into public office as well as the right to decide in political parties and movements. In the nominations for multi-person elections, alternate and sequential participation of men and women in the lists will be respected.

From the year 2011, the number of associations and women's organizations has grown both in the number of members and their participation in society³³. Women have shown their interest to participate and be part of different movements and political parties. These organizations and women's movements are the AC Democracy, the Assembly of Popular and Diverse Women of Ecuador (AMPDE), the Association of Women in Rural Parish Boards of Ecuador-AMJUPRE, Cabildo of Women in Quito, the Ecuadorian Development Centre of Alternative Studies (CEDEAL), the Confederation of Women for Change (CONFEMEC), the Women's Political Coordinator of Ecuador, el Colectivo Nosotras, Flor of Guanto, the National Forum of Women, the Lawyers Forum for Legal Security (Guayas), the Defense Front for Sexual Rights and Reproductive Rights, the Women's Movement of Popular Sectors, the Political Collective Luna Creciente, the Women's Movement of El Oro, the National Platform for the Rights of Women, the Ecuadorian Organization of Lesbian Women, Red Santa Elena, the Political Network of Women in Ecuador (REMPE).

However, this growth is not the result or part of the openness of the current government towards women's participation and their proposed initiatives. It is the result of previous governments and women's participation in matters of public and political interest. Moreover, the long historical and social struggle of women's movements has favored the changes that we are seeing now.

Among some of the contributions resulting from women's movements and their struggle for greater gender equality, we can mention the following:

- Appreciation of cultural identity and gender.
- Strengthening of indigenous organizations with greater participation of women.

³³ La Tendencia, revista de análisis político. 2012

- Introduction of the topic of women in communities and organizations.
- Creating an economic contribution to the family and the community by women.
- Initiation of processes of awareness in men in relation to male-female equality and opportunities that both deserve.
- Recognition of the artistic contributions of women and productive projects in the country.
- Redefining actors of human rights since feminist theory demands equality with men. However, at the same time equality should consider the differences and appreciation of women's humanity. Along with the contextualization of the woman as an actor it has also recognized their right to have rights. For instance, to extend the scope of women's autonomy.
- In legal issues, something which should be noticed is the recognition of full legal capacity, equal rights and obligations between spouses, the abolition of discriminatory attitudes in labor issues and laws to punish domestic violence. Sexual and reproductive rights to rescue women's bodies and their right to decide as well as to trade the traditional exclusive role of women to the work of raising children with one that can be shared with men and with society.
- There has been a change of perspective about human rights raised by the women's movement when the legal concept of rights changed into a "culture of human rights". From advances achieved at conventions, agreements and United Nations action programs have generated the practices of movement processes or reconceptualization of human rights that go beyond a formal concept of equality. It seeks a universal understanding of rights that reaches the lives of women; hence women support the change of the patriarchal paradigm.
- The change of approach in the development and incorporation of women in the Development Agenda from the Decennial of Women, as the United Nations declared them. Likewise, it is considered essential to promote women's empowerment processes to become subjects of change; and achieve their full participation in the development and creation of social and economic benefits.

- Increased presence of women in politics. However, the Election Law quotas were established but only in candidatures resulting in a large gap between candidates and elected women. It is important to notice the fact that a woman as a political candidate does not imply that an improvement in the situation to their fellow is given. Therefore, the issue of political participation, especially in the popular sectors, remains a major challenge.

It is important to focus on the fact that, although women are not in found public office or in the exercise of political power, young women are creating opportunities for leadership training in rural areas. This seeks to raise awareness and responsibility in women when giving proposals.

3.2 Women in the fulfillment of political power in the current government.

The government of Rafael Correa has shown contradictions when addressing several issues and demands of women through which the government has led to inclusion and partition. On the other hand, it has shown excessive patriarchal thinking.

In several instances, he has demonstrated his commitment to women, their participation in government and their exercise of political power. In one of his public speeches, he said:

"The International Women's Day is not flowers (...)it is the political struggle of women to get their citizenship rights to vote in free elections so that candidates can be women, to study, to work, to decide without a man deciding for them."

This was a speech in which he mentions women and includes them in a formal environment of citizen participation, the struggle for their rights and non-subordination to male guardianship. However, for Margarita Aguinaga, the current government gives way to the diversification of women's organizations as well as feminist and gender struggles. However, it is still a patriarchal and authoritarian structure in which the president holds influence over decisions, opinions and drafts issued by women.

In relation to the participation of indigenous women, Claudia Ranaboldo and Yolanda Solana in their paper, "Gender Inequality in Political Participation of

Women in Latin America and the Caribbean" (2008), determine the following strengths and weaknesses that women are facing:

Strengths

- Setting of indigenous issues in international and national levels.
- Proposals for indigenous policies in order to overcome historical inequities and discrimination.
- Increased ability to exercise citizenship and to respect the rights of indigenous peoples.
- Existence of women's demands in different fields (political, economic, social, and cultural) that can be closely linked to the access of information and the exercise of one's rights. It represents continuity between public and private spheres and proposes an interpellation policy.
- Action mechanisms such as affirmative action quota laws and systems that represent an opportunity.
- Local spheres of government offer greater opportunities for the participation of indigenous peoples.

Weaknesses

- Limited knowledge of indigenous women's reality.
- Conservative Positions of traditional organizations that critically influence the possibilities of empowering women.

Assumption that the participation sphere and exercise of political power is only a name and it does not result in the active participation of women.

- It can be considered as a general standard that political organizations assign women to lower positions or substitution changes.

- The positions of indigenous women tend to adapt to the trends that are expressed by the main indigenous organizations, mostly lead by men.

Examples of women exercising political power

- **Proposal to legalize abortion in Ecuador and the response of President Rafael Correa.**

In mid-2013, a proposal for legalizing abortion in any rape situation was presented in the Assembly. This proposal received positions both for and against abortion. There was a division in the majority party in the Assembly. However, several women in this government movement (Gina Godoy, Paola Pabon, and Soledad Buendia) supported the legalization of abortion with information that supported their position.

The President of Ecuador, in response to the proposal of the legalization of abortion and the positions of the assembly members of his movement, called them traitors and threatened to resign from his position if the Assembly (controlled by the government) approved that proposal³⁴.

The issue had been discussed earlier by members of the movement and they had agreed not to change it since they way it was drafted in the Penal Code established the necessary measures to protect pregnant women who were under the terms set by the code previously mentioned and that required abortion practices.³⁵

³⁴ During his weekly report, the president emphasized that, while he is in the position, "I would not legalize abortion beyond what it is already included in the current penal code. If you manage an unfair group of people of Alianza País party support abortion, I will immediately present my resignation because one of my principles is to defend life. I am willing to resign and history will judge" and he reiterated that he will veto "any attempt to legalize abortion "in the Legislative Assembly.

³⁵ Penal Code of Ecuador Art 447.- The abortion performed by a doctor, with the woman's consent or her husband or close relatives when she is not in a possibility to do it, it is not punishable:

1. If it done to prevent danger to life or health of the mother, and if this danger could not be avoided by other means; and,
2. If the pregnancy is the result of rape or statutory rape committed in an idiotic or insane woman. In this case, the consent of the legal representative of women will be required.

President Correa's position, provoked Paola Pabon, withdrew the motion that was proposed in favor of abortion in cases of pregnancy resulting from rape: "opposition boos do not hurt opposition, what hurts me is to have disappointed comrades who have a legitimate right to claim in this Assembly a different position." No one would dare to put the issue on the table along the debate.

The Ethics Committee of Alianza País punished³⁶ Gina Godoy, Paola Pabon, and Soledad Buendía, based on the position taken by President Correa. Although there were more Assembly members who supported the decriminalization of abortion, the criminalization of abortion was approved on October 13, 2013 according to the terms determined by Correa.

In the previous situation, the conservative position in our country is notable. Although today 44% of Assembly members are women and three of them lead the National Assembly, it has not achieved the freedom to express, write and propose legislation or projects freely without feeling subjected to the will of "the boss - President".

The case of the decriminalization of abortion seen from the vision of the Ecuadorian President may be considered improper. However, as a proposal for health and life of women, (girls and adolescents in many cases) it is a law that should be widely debated. It can be seen that women, despite representing the citizenry, do not always have the ability and the right to express their ideas, proposals and criteria. Unfortunately, women still must be submissive to the "will" of the president / leader, who assumes his authoritarian role and exercises power to limit the ability of women and their role in political function.

There is still much to do, to exercise political power that we, as women are currently offered, is a social formality and it can also be considered as mandatory. Despite the many conquests, what is still pending is to be considered knowledgeable people with ideas and realities. Soledad Buendía, in order to make known her position on this

³⁶ The punishment was one month of silence outside the Assembly, and the prohibition of addressing the issue of abortion in public again

fact, stated: "Ecuadorian women still have a battle to fight ". This battle also should be waged from homes and schools.

- **Ma. Paula Romo's representation and defense to Ruptura Movement in the National Electoral Council.**

The Ruptura Movement was born on September 12, 2004 and was officially registered in the National Electoral Council in 2012 with Dr. Maria Paula Romo as leader. She was a member of the Assembly from 2007 to 2008, an Assembly member for the province of Pichincha from 2009 to 2013 (Ruptura Movement, list 25) and president of the Commission for Justice and State structure. Currently she is Dean of the Faculty of Law at the International University of Ecuador.

Romo's presence in the exercise of political power, for many, can be considered as being short. However, she has shown great weight therein. She was a critical and determined woman in defending her movement from the resolution of the National Electoral Council to eliminate it.

As regards the possible dissolution of the movement, María Paula Romo said: "We will remain voices of democracy and continue playing politics". She also said that she would appeal the decision in the normal way. Her position against the CNE has been crucial in identifying herself in the profile of a prepared woman--one confident of her convictions. She is able to lead and defend her work as well as that of her team.

Romo has been involved in life and the exercise of political power. The Constitution of 2008 is clear in relation to the rights of women, which meets the goal of the movement of women in relation to politics in the country. It also declared that:

"We have solved our problem of "quantity "of representation, now we have to face the issue of "quality "of representation. Women do not always represent the agendas of women; sometimes women candidates can efficiently breed a patriarchal system and discrimination against women. Here we have a challenge: To achieve substantive representation ".

Romo is identified and recognized as a woman with merits and abilities. María Paula Romo became a poster child for the fight for rights for both men and women

because a woman is not always identified with another woman or a man with a man. In a country and a century with freedom, each person can choose the best option and support it.

3.3 Today's challenges faced by women when acting as representatives in Ecuadorian politics

The continuing women's struggle to exercise political power has reached a turning point in the 2008 Constitution. Women have not always had social and participation opportunities to represent the citizens. El Diario Hoy, in February 1997, states:

"Rosalia Arteaga and Sandra Correa have provided evidence for what was mentioned above. If women want to renew policies, they have to offer a "difference", that is, become a social actor capable of answering to the order and male power or patriarchal power in all its forms "³⁷.

One of the most important challenges is being recognized as critical and autonomous citizens by society and government. To Flavia Tello (2009), the main obstacles that still limit the participation of women, are

- 1. Going:** this refers to opportunities to enter the field of political participation on equal terms with men.
- 2. Input:** these are determined by terms of culture in relation to the role assigned to men and women.
- 3. Permanence:** once women have entered, many times they do not feel identified within the political work environment.

Susana Santisteban's (April, 2014) experience and opinion states that to overcome the above obstacles, "It is time to stop being silent. We have to be the way we are. We are different from men. However, we should not be afraid of showing strength when we must be strong although people are confused and tell us we are tomboys. But this is the way we have to start acting, just because we are strong doesn't mean that we are not women". María Paula Romo (May 2014) thinks that to exercise

³⁷ Diario Hoy edición del 23 de febrero de 1997.

political power women must have "decision, preparation, information, democratic character (it means: patience, tolerance, and respect for all) and especially do lot of work". These two views invite women to be authentic leaders, committed and firm in their work and especially in their objectives.

Dr. Lourdes Cuesta, coordinator of the CREO Movement in Azuay, in response to obstacles of parity, input, and permanence, recommends women to:

Lose the fear, open up space; find a space where they feel comfortable, where they feel respected and admired. This last one is very important. This allows each of them to be themselves and not let anyone tell them that they have to be a man or woman.

Each person is an independent and free being to exercise their thoughts, ideas, rights, and beliefs day by day. Women throughout the democratic process have broken the mold and created new horizons for future generations, for instance, the membership in the new National Assembly from 2013 to 2017 and the integration of 42% of women in the assembly (56 of 137). It means an increase in women assembly participation.

Assembly Members 2013-2017



Source: National Assembly of Ecuador

Gabriela Rivadeneira, Rosana Alvarado and Marcela Aguinaga were elected by the National Assembly of Ecuador as president and vice presidents, respectively.

Gabriela Rivadeneira, began her political life in the Pachakutik movement. Then she was deputy Mayor in Otavalo in the period of 2006-2008. Other public offices were Councilor of Canton (2004-2008), vice prefect of Imbabura (2009-2011); and Governor of Imbabura (2011-2012).

In 2007, Rosana Alvarado was representative of Azuay for the Alianza País movement in the Assembly. In this period she was part of the Legislation Board and Control Organ. In 2009, she was reelected and became part of the Justice and State Structure Legislative Committee. Finally, in 2013, once more again she was reelected as Assembly member representing Azuay and in the National Assembly she was elected as vice president.

Marcela Aguinaga was named the Environment Minister on November 17, 2007. She was nominated by the Alianza País Movement as a national candidate for the Assembly on November 10, 2012. She was elected assembly member and she became the second vice president of the National Assembly in May 2013.

Despite women gaining important political places in the government, we still must consider the daily problems to which women are exposed. Women still face discrimination due to their ethnicity, origin, social status--especially indigenous and women of African descent. Thus women have to overcome barriers such as:

- **Validity of a patriarchal gender order** in which the idea of categorizing men and women in certain areas especially in labor and social persists. This is reflected in the political roles in which women are being represented in a minority manner. Women who come to exercise political power are not often related to the female gender or maintain the patriarchal ideology.
- **Poverty:** the incorporation of women into the workplace has generated sources of income for their families. However, the wages they receive are low in relation to the responsibilities or positions they hold. A clear example is the non-financial recognition of domestic work that women perform without social security, underemployment, and unequal access to the labor field. It is very difficult to

achieve the desired gender equality without social equality. It is no coincidence that poverty maps show us how this problem is concentrated, especially in the female (the highest percentage being in the African-Ecuadorian and indigenous groups) and children population.

- **Resistance of political parties:** the quota law has favored women with the entry, participation, election and nomination of dignitaries of political or public positions. Political parties and movements are the main channel of access, especially in reference to elected office. However, there are several of these movements and political parties which maintain the idea of a patriarchal and traditionalist policy that influences the woman's entry since they are often delegated as subordinates.
- **Political harassment**³⁸ is present at different levels of participation and the exercise of political power is often directed to women. This fact has been visible from the growth of the exercise of political power. In our country since 2011, harassment has been punishable under the Organic Law and Election and Political Organizations of Ecuador (Democracy Code). The proposal to punish these came from Maria Soledad Vela, an Assembly member from Manabí, who said that in the same year 2011, 480 councilors reported having been victims of violence by municipal workers.

That is why, the recognition and incorporation of women in the positions of power and its exercise within the state is still a challenge. Although their participation in political areas is accepted, they cannot exercise their civil and political rights on equal terms with men.

For all of these reasons, it is still a challenge for women to enter and participate in the political life of the country. In social and economic spheres, the following aspects must be improved.

³⁸ **Political harassment:** unlawful act committed by a person or through third parties against a woman or her family for the purpose of preventing or restricting the exercise of public office. Moreover, to induce to action in compliance of their functions through acts of pressure or through persecution, harassment or threats by any means being evident or simulated.

- The laws that favor certain sectors and social classes that results in double discrimination against women. This implies certain affirmative action measures that better facilitates people with certain characteristics.
- Equity in access to education, health, labor, and other areas to gain women's participation in politics.
- Limit the action of women's role mainly in the private, family, and domestic environment.

Dennecey Trujillo (former Quito Councilor) thinks that government involvement is still poor. Therefore, there must involvement in protecting and guaranteeing the rights of women. The government should recognize diversity, equity and justice as principles that should be part of its agendas and public policy. (Agora Magazine, 2012).

Trujillo, indicates that it is essential the government promote a fairer society, with places and opportunities in equal conditions for both men and women, especially in the political arena and citizen representation.

In 2007, based on Trujillo's studies regarding the topic the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), states:

"Parity rather than a quantitative concept is the expression of the redistribution of power in three specific areas: the labor market, decision making and family life".

Therefore, the social responsibility of the government with the female gender goes beyond the quota law, affirmative action or written documents that talk about the rights of women. It must be ensured that in different areas equity, participation and opportunity are generated between men and women. However, to reduce and eliminate the high levels of discrimination, the government and its social, political and cultural actors must be committed.

In the social sphere, it is an even greater challenge since the objective is to reduce certain ideas and stereotypes established for years. In an interview to Susana Santisteban (CREO Movement), she said that we still must overcome inequality by

working with the media. There is a high percentage of advertising and communication through which the woman is presented as a subject or object without identity or personality thus inducing violence, discrimination, racism, sexism, intolerance and other forms that affect the integrity of the person.

Karla Calapaqui (Second National Coordinator of the Popular Democratic Movement) in the interview with the magazine Agora (2012) stated that the first thing that women should do when immersed in the exercise of political life of the state is

"... To understand that the struggle for women's rights must be linked with the aim of overthrowing the system of inequalities and the workers and peoples must build a new economic, political and social structure towards a life of justice and freedom".

When the social and political reality that a country faces has been determined, it is necessary to develop the following practices in order to achieve equity and improve political participation.

- Establish actions that allow the exercise of rights in situations of inequality.
- Form specialized committees in the analysis of the management and performance of women in office. These can be local, regional or national in order to develop and adopt policies that support its work.
- Ensure the fulfillment of equal treatment policies starting from the education and workplaces to promote the eradication of violence at its roots.
- Implement agendas to promote women's free and equal participation in the political and public life of the State. In an interview, Lourdes Cuesta affirms that this participation has not been achieved with all political parties or movements. This is in relation to the inclusion of women on merit, capacity or performance. From her point of view, women are taken into account only to fulfill a quota established by law for the acceptance and registration of candidates.

In an interview, Monica Chuji (Director of Social Equity and Gender of Azuay Prefecture) indicates that autonomy is essential for women, especially for those indigenous women wishing to participate in the exercise of political power. She would say more than autonomy or sovereignty but consciousness is needed. She thinks this is the first step to start influencing and assuming leadership "(May, 2014). Merely exercising sovereignty and autonomy over one's self one can demand equality, equity and participation between men and women without distinction or favoritism.

According to Karla Calapaqui, one must understand that the struggle for women's rights is linked with the aim to eliminate a system of inequalities. The objective is that women, workers, and peoples could build a new economic, political and social structure based on social justice and freedom.

The processes that woman's organizations are experiencing in their fight demands greater political participation. It has become a way to achieve the exercise of power and decision-making which helps to bring national and local actions in order to achieve a transformative proposal within Ecuadorian society.

In this sense, one can say that the milestones achieved by the claims and struggles of the feminist movement have highlighted the need to mainstream gender equality in the design, planning and implementation of public policies. The cultural view of women implying solely the responsibility of the home does not guarantee its presence in other areas of society. It is necessary to implement educational policies that guarantee equal relationships in the home and in the fair distribution of family responsibilities.

The cultural view of women's responsibility in their homes does not guarantee their presence in other areas of society. It is necessary to implement educational policies that guarantee equal relationships at home and in the fair distribution of family responsibilities.

In this context, it becomes essential that the Government promote a fairer society that generates spaces and opportunities in equal conditions. This will provide protection and developmental actions for vulnerable women. Thus, policies that will enable the correct implementation of commitments are assumed at an international level. This

improves and updates the national legal framework so that the full implementations of these commitments are guaranteed.

According to Ranaboldo and Solana's study on gender inequality in women's political participation in Latin America and the Caribbean, Ecuador shows an interesting context in this from the following criteria:

- Presence of a body of laws, rules, policies and institutional frameworks for political participation of women in the country; and
- Emerging results and persistence of problems in formal political participation and other related aspects.

In this research, some situations and priorities that should be improved and surpassed in terms of women's political participation are identified. These axes are:

1. Bridging the gap between formal legislation and planning and the actual practice of public management oriented to equal opportunities.

There is in the country a high concern for normative, formal and instrumental aspects of political participation. This concern has been reflected in the development of standards, ordinances, plans and participatory budgets from a gender perspective, and even in the creation of committees, councils, Cabildo, etc. However in many cases women's political participation has not had major effects in real life.

In an interview, María Paula Romo (May, 2014) affirms that women have achieved respect and recognition although there is still discrimination in our country:

"... We women are still" suspicious "in politics, from the language, until the times of the meetings or the apparent need to prove all the time the merits by which we occupy a position. I am a feminist and I have gender consciousness. That is the reason that I can identify situations of discrimination so I am aware that discrimination exists. However, I must say that I feel that I have achieved the respect and recognition for my work and merits in politics ".

In contrast, Monica Chuji affirms that in her experience in political exercise, she has experienced several situations such as indigenous woman. She indicates that she has

not felt discrimination in society for being a woman. However, she has had experiences of exclusion due to its cultural status in social and organizational aspects.

"Sometimes I have felt a kind of discrimination due to my cultural condition in the social level. However, at organizational, party, and political levels I can say that indeed I have felt it for my womanhood".

Therefore, it is established that this aspect should be strengthened in the future. This can be done through concrete initiatives based on good and operational practices adapted to each context in order to generate real and lasting changes.

In this sense, to overcome the challenges that women's political participation is facing, it becomes essential to underpin local processes rather than specific projects to strengthen women's political participation to achieve the following:

- A public/private inter-institutional coordination at regional levels committed to gender. This is to prevent that the topic be treated only by small groups.
- It would be ideal to connect national and local rules and laws (including the signing of treaties and international agreements) with viable local ones that make sense for the local population.
- To give continuity to policies and investments in medium and long term.
- Institutional reinforcement between local governments and local political community for the development of inclusive and sustainable processes.

2. Addressing women's political participation as one of the axes of a wider territorial approach.

With respect to communities, especially the most remote, it is clear that women and especially indigenous ones have demands and agendas closely linked to local economic development. Although formal representation and political participation of this group has been key to traditionally marginalized populations, the creation of development programs is important to enable the following:

- Overcome causes affecting equality in opportunities and, at the same time, women's political participation as mentioned above in the political exercise for equality with men.
- Coordinate specific and simultaneous action in three areas: political participation, social inclusion and economic development.
- Include the topic of cultural identities present in a territory as an axis for territorial valorization with women as main characters. This will help to reduce certain conservative cultural patterns that still stand in community organization.

The main challenge for the government and the people who represent citizens is to create opportunities for development and inclusion for all women regardless their status. These opportunities should be directed to fight, not only against discrimination but also for its prevention and eradication in order to have a country with social development and equity.

Participatory democracy is the invitation to become an active part of society starting from small areas where daily life takes on the project of the future of every person. It also creates opportunities for dialogue, training, education and entrepreneurship of new ideas and projects for social development in equity.

Men and women have gained positions through participatory democracy. However, it has been intended to convince women that they have accomplished a lot by just having the right to vote. It is important to notice that this is a means of attaining democracy and the citizens' ability does not end with this one. There are still open places to create and express their identity as well as approval and/or rejection of the social, legal, economical or governance realities of the country. These have become other forms of active, responsible and critical participation.

Monica Chuji is an example of improvement of identity and relationship within the community. She says that on several occasions she has felt discriminated against in some positions for her womanhood and in others for being an indigenous person.

“Well, I think we have always faced obstacles in the process of school, high school, and maybe less in college. One’s indigenous status (cultural condition) is the first reason for discrimination. In relation to my womanhood, I think I have felt discrimination at the organizational level. On the social level, the reason that sometimes I felt a kind of discrimination has been because of my cultural condition. But at the organizational level, at the party level, at the level of political movement, I can said that indeed I have felt it for my womanhood”³⁹

The woman who develops her life in rural areas or belongs to an ethnic minority has even greater challenges than a woman from the city. Rural women have less opportunity to access to the labor field in public areas. They are those with less remuneration for their work as well as the fact that they are exploited in their jobs. Women in rural areas are responsible for maintaining their homes, working for a corporate job, working at maintaining the home and in many cases with fieldwork.

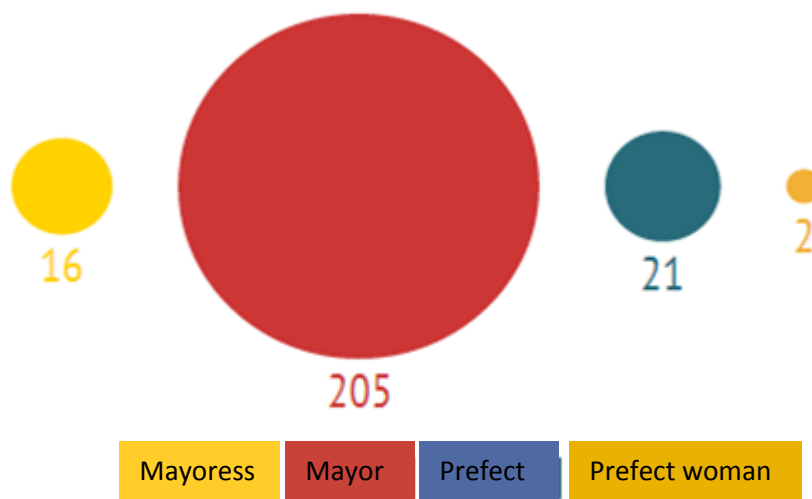
Ecuador is a multiethnic country enriched with various cultural demonstrations across the country: indigenous peoples, local peasants, mestizos, afros, etc. However, it does not strengthen the political participation of fair and equal opportunity, especially because of the differentiation done to indigenous people, mainly to women, as Chuji indicated above.

In places where there is a woman exercising public office it is more likely to break the inequality gap since many of them seek to create new positions and proposals that facilitate inclusion and enjoyment of rights for women.

In the last local elections held on February 23, 2014, the number of women who reached the post of prefect or mayor is much lower than the number of men occupying the same dignities. One can see it in the following graph:

³⁹ Interview in May 2014

Results of local election (February, 2014)



Source: National Electoral Council

Nationally, there were 14 female candidates for prefects. However, only in the provinces of Esmeraldas and Francisco de Orellana were there women elected as provincial representatives as well as several women who were vice-prefects. In relation to mayors, nine women were elected in the Coastal region, five in the Sierra region, and two in the Amazon region. On this Chuji says:

In some cases, it has been seen that women have not headed some important posts, and the trend continues. This problem is rooted in the power structure. It is not surprising that by the XXI this still occurs.

This problem must be overcome by applying the laws and not keeping them only as something formal in the country, but as a framework for the enforcement of rights and opportunities for all citizens, especially for women.

The contribution made by women in society originates from private, everyday life. However, these are part of a different society. It is clear and obvious that there is still much room for improvement, especially in a country of laws such as Ecuador.

It is important for women and men who are leaders to reach full exercise of political power in order to break the mold of a patriarchal and sexist society as well as ideas

and stereotypes planted in people's minds. Only then will the importance of men and women and their role in society be appreciated.

Gina Merino (June, 2014) indicates that the woman should be prepared to be an excellent leader and not let anyone or anything stop them from achieving their objective of participating in politics. Education and overcoming fears are the challenge of today. Women should continue forward with firm objectives day by day.

Conclusions and Recommendations

By the end of the present work and after analyzing the obtained data at international and national levels, one can see that there is a clear trend and struggle at worldwide levels based on inclusion and women's participation in politics and the exercise of power within the same field, the concern about the inclusion of women in the working life of a nation occurs mainly to meet global needs of eradicating human rights violations; and discrimination in the areas of: employment, education, participation, etc. This situation is framed in the context of pursuing equality and equity for men and women. The aim is to meet and ensure the achievement of the goals of each. That is why governments have seen the need to generate and interpret the laws to ensure the exercise of participatory and representative democracy in all the spheres of society.

Throughout world history, it has been shown that women's inclusion in the political life of a State has helped strengthen democracy since women not only represent their gender but also represents different social groups. Several women have been an example for other women when taking risks and being in charge of their own decisions. Women's political participation improves other women's lives. For instance, Malala Yousafzai is a young woman who, despite the political system in Pakistan, has raised her voice to generate social awareness of equality in rights, especially for girls and women of her country.

The Western and Eastern countries have few similarities, especially in ideological, social, economic and even religious aspects which have marked the history of nations and countries. These differences mark the role of women in society: providing or limiting; or generating or restricting their individuality as human being. This implies that women are citizens being capable of deciding, creating, expressing, educating, electing and being elected.

Ecuador is not the exception. Despite laws in favor of compliance with human rights and social inclusion, there are still differences that mark the role in which women and men must comply.

The exercise of the right of the vote lead first by Matilde Hidalgo was a historical and transcendent moment for the country. However, achievements are not limited to the

right to vote since democracy is not just that. Democracy means to participate and be included.

The different presidents with their cabinets have helped or limited women and their aims to achieve an exercise in political power. Since the return to democracy in 1979 several governments have worked in favor of a better society: a society without hunger, with jobs and fair wages, access to education and basic services. Women have achieved political office or public office in several governments. They have carried out relevant functions on equal terms with men. However, women's participatory democracy must go beyond this since it seeks to create openings and to generate an agenda in which women's interests are reflected.

It is important to highlight the fact that, not only women have to fight for the creation of rights, but also men since they struggle for social benefits for everyone. That is why Ecuador should ensure representation and training at all levels of citizen representation through the generation of strategies that promote the integration of women in places of political participation.

The present situation of the Ecuadorian State can be seen from different perspectives. On one hand, we have a number of women holding political or public office because of the efforts of several movements (especially feminist). They have achieved equal rights with men and it is a positive statistic for the inclusion of women in the political participation in the country. On the other hand, we have women who repeatedly have been limited by free speech. There is still the backwardness of the patriarchal idea that man can exercise his power, thoughts and ideas without considering women's perceptions regardless their relationship, but even more so if this man has a higher position.

An important recommendation is the creation and implementation of educational programs that support the important role of women in society. This will motivate, educate and include women in life and socio-political issues of the country leaving aside patriarchal and sexist ideas. This is the first step for women's training and inclusion.

It is also important to raise awareness and recognize that the struggle for equal rights and gender equality is not only by women's duty but should also be conducted and promoted by men.

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ATTACHED

Attached 1 interview to: Dra. Lourdes Cuesta



UNIVERSITY OF AZUAY

FACULTY OF LAW

SCHOOL OF INTERNACIONAL STUDIES

**Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of
Bachelor in International Studies and Foreign Trade**

INTERVIEW

**THEME: Women in Ecuador: exercise of political power since the return to
democracy.**

As part of this graduation paper in order to obtain the Degree of Bachelor in International Studies and Foreign Trade, I am gathering information about the women's exercise of political power in Ecuador.

The information provided in this interview will be used for the purpose of this thesis investigation.

I appreciate your collaboration.

Date: April 3rd, 2014.

Profession: Lawyer

Position: Provincial Coordinator of movement CREO

1. What motivated you to enter in the political world?

Well, I always like politics. Sometimes lawyers have that in the heart since we started.

Really that's what happens, I saw many things that were happening, specially loss of freedom in Ecuador, I got tired to complaining, I am tired to say, I am not agree whit this, I hate this. I started thinking that I can do, and were give the opportunity to contact, well they contacted me and with a friend, Mae Montaña and Cesar Monje, and CREO began to be form. Actually before it be approved by Electoral Council and when it was a political project they get contact with my friend Francisco Botifredy and me , and Cesar Monje y Mae Montaña what they want to do as movement that was forming.

Then I was part of the formation of CREO, and it was definitely where I said, I am comfortable here, I like be here, here I can act, and here I can carry out a project, not complain more and really start doing.

Then we started CREO formation, with all that was the process of signs recollection, obviously the fundamentals first, the values, signs recollections, decide for the movement name, how we will named, since CREO we approved, since this moment I am part of the provincial direction of Azuay.

2. Why the name CREO?

CREO has two meanings for us, believe. First, believe in ourselves, believe that we can, believe in a change. And, has the meanign to create, too. Create opportunities, this is that we want. Believe and créate.

3. Did you have any obstacle as woman at the time of the formation of the movement CREO in Azuay?

Inside CREO never, in CREO is one of the parts that I like and where more comfortable I felt. There is not sex distinction, race, economic position, that sometimes exist in other movements or political parties.

CREO people are respectful to freedom, and above all the respect that human beings deserve, for be different, to think differently.

People be interested in CREO because inside the movement no one is judged, no one is obliged to think like others, no one is told to say. Inside CREO are a lot of people who think differently but always with respect.

The fact that I am woman ever been an impediment, in CREO people be motivated, be respected and they feel proud that we be women that are sticking up for the country, an example can be Mae Montaña. Mae Montaña is a wonderful woman, she is our national political director, she is National Assemblyman, CREO assembly block leader. She is a woman who had be former by herself, she is a fighter woman. Then, with a leader like her in the movement all the other women felt motivated, supported and especially respected because within CREO women are respect, are consider us as women consider men.

4. Within CREO, do you have a political target?

I want a change, want a change in the country, I want to be an active part of that change. And I mean to active part of this change not as a candidate, as dignity elected, but, as an architect of that change, support those who be candidates, to whom be elected, always be supporting, always be building, always be giving ideas.

If you ask me, do you want to be president of the Republic now?, I say no. I do not think about it. I was alderman candidate, not only to get that dignity, was first for Cuenca because I love Cuenca, I love this city. And we want people know CREO project, too.

CREO is a project in which we want to generate opportunities, generate enterprises, generate empowerment because Ecuador need it, and specially freedom because it is that worries to us.

5. For you as woman, have we progress into public participation?

Yes, of course, it has be improving in Ecuador. Now we can see women in public offices that before were occupied only by men. However, I do not think that is an

issue, I am not a feminist, I always be clear on that because I think sometimes feminist or machismo stay and do not advanced.

It has never happened to me or I never feel that because I woman I do not reach anything. If in any moment I participated, for example, for a public office, for a job or for anything in life and I am not be chose, I do not feel that this happened because I am woman. But precisely because the other person man or woman has better opportunities, was better qualified. So I think women have achieved a space because ourselves have begun to prepare, because we stopped to se ourselves as beings designates only to house. It is a hard work. I always say If be anyone I admire in the world is these single mothers, these mothers fighters whom educated her children, make housework and every day get the bread.

I think that women have decided do not stay back, stop looking things at far away and begin to prepare, begin to be active part of changes and things.

So If now we see, of course many women are in high administrative offices, are managers, are ministers, are directors, because women are preparing. Women stop see things at far away.

6. What would you recommend as a leader of a politic movement to other women?

They lose their fear. Women are able of many things, If we are able to give life, which is that I always say, we are able of anything.

Women are strong, women are fighters and are sensitive, we see things in different ways that men.

Lose the fair, open up your space, look for a space where you feel comfortable, where you feel respected, where you feel admired that is important. Where allow you be yourself, where anybody say you what you have to do, man or woman neither.

They should lose the fear, be valuable women, brave women, that sometime have this fear ;uy what they will think!, I am saying this, no. Lose the fear, that is we are. Star for open our spaces, these are what we have to do.

Attached 2 Interview to: Susana Santisteban



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INTERVIEW

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I appreciate your collaboration.

Date: April 10th, 2014.

Profession: Student of Law School

1. Nowadays, do you exercise any political power?

I've been candidate twice. The first time, I was a candidate in the last elections for the National Assembly (Congress), and the second one was for sectional elections, specifically as a candidate for city councilor. Today, I am not exercising any political power because I am part of a new political party that was created two years ago, so nowadays we are working on making our political party known in the national political arena.

2. Are you part of the CREO Political party?

Yes.

3. What was your motivation to become part of this political party?

Well, I have seen that there is a lot of things going on in the country. We, as citizens are complaining all the time, but the bad thing is that we only complain and we do not act to change the situation. I think there is a moment when you decide that someone has to represent the citizens and help change the political situation, and if you have the time and feel that you can be part of the change then you do it. I knew I could represent citizens and contribute to the political development of women, so that's why I decided to be part of a political party and I am here doing my best.

I am part of CREO political party because I think it is a real political party, even though many people criticize Guillermo Lasso because of his religion (Opus Dei). However, inside the party no one tells us what to say, how to act or how to manage our propaganda. All the people that are part of this party act as an independent individual, this is something you cannot see in other political parties. CREO gives as the opportunity of being ourselves.

4. As a women, do you agree with all the ideas of CREO and do you think this political party is helping you to achieve your goals?

There is something I do not agree with, and it is kind of a sensitive subject for me, abortion. Most of the members of this political party are Catholics and I am a Catholic too. This is a really difficult subject and there is a huge discussion around it.

Because of my beliefs, I cannot approve abortion, however I cannot judge any women for deciding to have an abortion, there is a legal framework that has its rules.

This is the only topic in which we disagree, there is people in favor and others against it. There is also gay people in the party and they are personal advisers of Guillermo Lasso. I think CREO is a very liberal party and we let people participate as they are.

5. As part of CREO, do you think in the near future you could become a Minister or exercise any other political position?

Well, I was part of the Guayaquil Board of Directors but I had to resign before the national elections. I had the chance to help the party become closer to social areas that were not taken care before. I think we as a political party have to guide and take care of social vulnerable areas.

I've been always involved in social areas, one day I woke up and went alone with my driver to visit different parts of the city. Nowadays, I spend two days of the week at the Isla Trinitaria talking with the people that live there.

You can see me talking with my "comadres". This has helped me know and understand their way of thinking and living. It is really difficult to create economic policies for people that have less resources when you don't understand their real needs. When I talk to them I can understand that their needs are completely different to what we thought.

I think I would like to be part of a Ministry that has to do with social inclusion, mainly with social help. I would like to create new activities for social improvement, not only giving things, we as a political party believe that creating opportunities is essential such as supporting entrepreneurship and other business initiatives.

For example, I like to teach people from different social zones different kind of business initiatives, like how to produce cheese. If I don't know certain information, I acquire knowledge and skills and then I teach to people. For this reason, we are creating and building classrooms so we can improve these initiatives and create new business opportunities.

6. How do you see the role of women in the last decades, do you think women political participation in the national arena has improved?

I think women are not allowed to participate at all. Apparently, they have the chance to be part of the political decisions of the country, however, some members of the assembly (women) were penalized for giving their opinion.

Guillermo Lasso is aware of this situation, he knows every person in the political party, and he has never told us what to do. He knows that all the interviews we have are with no advisers and that each candidate says what he or she thinks, even though we do think differently.

Most of the time people confuse us as neo liberals. We as a party do think in liberalism. We apply it in the sense that we support people that want to start new initiatives and that feel free to go outside and find a job in order to maintain their families. We are aware of the employment situation in the country, there is not enough employment for all Ecuadorians and that has made citizens go to the streets and have informal jobs. We are committed to eliminate this, but we do not believe giving them a “bono” is the solution. It is necessary to create policies in order to reactivate the economy, this would create more employment and the informal jobs would be eliminated.

7. Which would be the correct proposals or plans in order for a woman to have a successful political career? Which is your recommendation

We have seen that women have been censored in their opinion. They are part of political parties, however when it comes to the decision making women are not taking into consideration. I do not believe in the quotas that determine certain number of women within a political group. I think most of the time women are part of political groups just as an obligation

Political Quotas

I think it is necessary to create equality among men and women. This is essential in order to lose the fear we have, then women can show as they really are and as a result people will know and understand our beliefs and political position. Most

of the time. Political parties don't allow women to express themselves, however CREO has always allowed to act as we are.

Also, there is another problem, people think women are not capable of being on a political position. For example, a lot of people have told me that I have not enough professional preparation. However, i've been the manager of many companies. I've have managed 24 companies just having my high school preparation.

We are seen as housewives and many people think that we are weak to support the pressure of being in a political position. Although, I think it is time for us to raise our voices and just express ourselves and show what we are made of. We are different from men, but we do not have to be afraid of showing our strength. Sometimes when we show our strength people say we look like men, but we have to act and show that our strength does not make us less women.

About women's roles

Our role in society is a little bit tenderer. This does not mean we are weak but this has to do with the fact that women also feel and think with their hearts. However, we do use our strenght when we demand the protection of our rights and we do fight to have what we deserve. It is time for women to let the shame and fear go and work harder to get the respect we deserve inside the political scenario.

I have seen different Ecuadorian women fighting for their rights. Have you seen Silvia Buendia on twitter?

Silvia Buendía defends a very good cause. She fights for the rights of the GLBT group.

About the GLBT

Well, I think it is a good cause. I think is really good to defend their rights and it is also fair enough. I do think Silvia kind of argues with everyone, she needs to be more clever and distinguish when to argue and when not.

With who...

I think we are more skilled when we think as a man and act as a woman because we are more clever and even more manipulative, you know what I mean. We are also more honest and fair. It is important to remember, that we as women have to use all our skills, not only act but also have the courage to face all the difficult situations that may appear. We have to dare to do all the things we said we couldn't do. Most of the time in politics you have to talk and deal with people you don't like or you don't agree with. However, we need to have the courage to deal with these difficulties in order to be accepted in politics.

By sensitivity

Exactly. That is when we behave so weak. No, I do not agree with that. I have learned on twitter, now that I am part of the cantonal, to talk with people I never thought I had talk. I always have a horrifying image of them and forever I will keep it. However, they belong to another movement, another party and in the moment to think about the welfare of all you have to draw certain barriers and learn to negotiate, that is the hard part of the policy to me.

Being as women to deal.

For me as women. Exactly because we are more legal, more honest and more proud. When women learned to be independent we are so proud of it.

8. What would you recommend to women who wish to enter politics?

Do in masse, and start to change this country because this country needs more sensitivity not to give away things, but to teach.

Leaving aside the paternalistic State YES to be a Development State.

Accurate and teach that we can be the best teachers because we are the ones who have directed many things, we give life, we head households. Like I said we have begun to gain spaces, now we are not only teachers now women are directing schools, it is like an example.

So I think we should let fear. What is the fear in us?

For example sometimes my husband says me: Why you like this be in this you may already be quieter. Then I say: because someone has to do it. Because we build our environment for our children or want to build for our children and, I think the big house as they say the great nations, to me is the big house, for me homeland is as home.

It must be so.

For me home includes everyone. For example, many friends, uncles, cousins, come to eat fanesca in this tiny apartment that you saw before. This is family, are friends, are all. Not only blood brothers, sisters or parents. Inclusive up for no friends they who sometimes because I twit the “CREO” they began to insult me.

Why?

Because our environment be this in politics. For example, If you talk about an economic issue, I try not to use offensive words never when I refer to others in politics because everyone has the right to think whatever. It is like we think CREO and respect the ideas, forgiveness respect people, maybe not ideas.

9. What is more important: respect the person or the idea?

Well I think defend your idea is important but respect people more. Because sometimes people close and no listen to other people then have very interesting discussions and sometimes one comes and says: My God, do not make so picky, and says why these people having greatest misfortunes they still insist in communism. However, this is a good person and believed faithfully in that. Then that person is more valuable that the idea.

I also share your thought. A person must respect the person because it is the ideas generator.

Yes, and you can change over time.

Ideas change, exactly, the person and the essence no.

Human beings do not, its heart knows it is and will stay. Sometimes have social resentments and it makes sense for their experiences, you understand me, but

people can live like others and perhaps their experiences change the idea, how to see life.

Susana, thank you.

Your welcome.

For help and availability.

Attached 3 interview to: Dra. María Paula Romo



UNIVERSITY OF AZUAY

FACULTY OF LAW

SCHOOL OF INTERNACIONAL STUDIES

**Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of
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INTERVIEW

**THEME: Women in Ecuador: exercise of political power since the return to
democracy.**

As part of this graduation paper in order to obtain the Degree of Bachelor in International Studies and Foreign Trade, I am gathering information about the women's exercise of political power in Ecuador.

The information provided in this interview will be used for the purpose of this thesis investigation.

I appreciate your collaboration.

Date: May, 2014.

Profession: Lawyer.

Occupation: Dean Faculty of Law in University International of Ecuador

Years of exercise the political power:

- 2007-2008 Constituent Assembly member.
- 2009-2013. Assemblywoman for the province of Pichincha. (Movement Rupture, lists 25)

1. What motivate you to go in politics?

I always feel interested by public affairs, those of all that is how I understand the policy. I believe in people rights and must be fought every day and in all areas. Those are my motivations.

2. Political charges exercised:

- Constituent Assembly Member.
- Legislator- Assemblywoman.

3. What role played you felt better? Why?

Both are very similar, have to do with opportunities for citizen representation and construction standards. I felt well on both because I feel that my formations give me additional policy tools to achieve my goals better.

4. What is or are your goals to exercise political power?

Improving people life conditions within the meaning of exercise of rights and freedoms, best opportunities of all kinds – especially economic – without discrimination; and building of a democratic society.

5. In which aspect of society you considered to have contributed to a greater percentage for the country development? Why?

I consider pretentious to believe that one person can develop the country. I am sure that every act of mine, of my colleagues from political movement has been done to achieve our goals, and all are small steps / grit for these transformations.

6. What are the main challenges in fulfilling your activities today?

Nowadays I am Dean of the Faculty of Law in UIDE. My training allows me to tackle this responsibility. The main challenge: coping with the lack of certainty and arbitrary decisions by the authorities in higher education.

7. In the performance of your functions, have lived a situation in which meaning has discriminated for being a woman?

Many women continue to be "suspicious" in politics, from the language, until the times of the meetings or the apparent need to prove all the time the merits by which occupy some position. I am a feminist and gender have consciousness, can identify situations of discrimination and so I know the world. However, I must say that I feel have achieved the respect and recognition for my work and merits in politics issues.

8. What are the challenges that women face when deciding to participate in the exercise of political power?

I have no information to answer for all women.

9. What politic role would you like exercise?

Militant Political Movement to which I belong: Rupture, lists 25.

Any charges that movement, in line with my skills, required.

10. What would you recommend to women who want to exercise political power?

Decision, preparation, information, democratic character (it means: patience, tolerance, and respect for all) and especially a lot of work.

Attached 4 interview to: Mónica Chuji



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I appreciate your collaboration.

Occupation: Director of Social Equity and Gender of the Prefecture of Azuay.
Cuenca

1. Which has been your process to this point in your political career?

Well, first I would like to say that I come from a Quechua community in the province of Sucumbios, I'm from the Sarayacu community in the province of Sucumbios. And, we have grown and born within a community; of a community from the core of the organization, small or minimal, of indigenous people. That is to say, the organizational basis is the community, I've grown within the community, and for us a community has a cultural but also political sense.

A community's ways through the union of families, the union of people of all classes, and has certain community rules, you join with a purpose. You join a purpose to coordinate actions for community improvement on one side. You join a community and ways to defend your territory to defend education, demanding things the State, either by local governments or national government. Then I grew up in that environment, within a community, then say linkage to organizational political issue is from the community.

So the very fact that one grows in the community of one form or another has to be linked either through the catechism, either through health, either through being a promoter or social developer, the obligations you have in the community, then all that is forming you, especially when you have a father, a mother or close relatives who are leaders, who have been presidents, then that if you are going linking daily. But of course this is an indigenous organizational political activity facing the state.

2. Then, you could say that the main reason or one of the reasons why you be part of political power is due to the influence of your family and community life?

No, what I would say is that the antecedent to my public political participation (because I think you have to differentiate some things), first I must and where I am born is community organizing, understand?

Community organization aims to defend individual rights as peoples, as cultures, etc. Against the State, against the rest of society; in as much as it feels threatened by belonging to an indigenous culture, that is the prelude.

Then growing in an environment like this, training during that time, and, also my relationship with the Carmelita Church, the Catholic Church. The Carmelita mission gave us a lot of political education, legislative formation linked with the progressive church. So one hand we got a lot of political formation, that helped me and to other people of my generation who took the objective to study, but for the defense of Human Rights, that is the prelude.

Then I devote to life, to study, but always linked to the indigenous movement, always linked to the community nationwide. So I think most of my life has been organizational policy within the organization. In 2007 I open myself to public life, and begin my public politic life. But all my life linked to organizational rather political issue.

3. Have you ever felt or been the victim of an obstacle for their gender and indigenous women?

Well, I think we have always had in the process of school, college, maybe less in college, but have always been obstacles, one by Indigenous status, I think rather one feels, that is the first sign by which you discriminate, for your cultural condition. But from there on the topic of women, I think that I have felt at the organizational level, the domestic issue. The social level out why that sometimes I felt a kind of discrimination has been by my cultural condition. But at the organizational level, at the party level, at the level of political movement, organizationally I tell I felt for my womanhood.

4. Can you establish a relationship between women and politics in Ecuador?

Yes of course, I think that women's participation in partisan politics aside for public political life has (finally) and still has a number of obstacles, a number of difficulties. I think that not only in mixed society, I think that the same is reproduced in indigenous societies. Because until now, even when we have a constitution that guarantees 50% female 50% male, most people who lead by example lists in elections are almost men, then the alternate is a woman or going secondly women are.

In some cases it has been seen that women heads, but the trend continues. This is a problem that is rooted in the power structure, is not new in the XXI century is this happening.

5. The law of quotes. Is good for us as women?

Well I think in formal terms favored much, in fact it was a step taken at that time in the constitutional reform of 90's because it forced to political parties and institutions. Above all political parties to include women as quote you could not see from the perspective of rights to participate, but as quota to complete the formal requirement, a constitutional requirement.

Sure it helped, but let say the approach to the right on participation was never given.

6. Is not given more discrimination to woman with the quota law?

Well, there are different perspectives one of them could say yes. It is almost like when they tell the Indians in the current Constitution to do positive discrimination against the indigenous afros. There are many people who say that this may be or have a criterion of discrimination. The same applies to the issue of women with the quota law.

Personally I think it can be seen from perspectives, but rather would aim to whether or not helped. I think that helped, as I said so more formal, required them, but that was not the solution to eradicate the issue of discrimination against women.

So the issue of discrimination against women we know not removed with decrees or constitutional reforms. I think it is an issue that has to change by our cultural conception.

7. As a woman, what are the challenges we have to assume to be participants in the political life of a country?

Totally, first because the concept of politics lies in the possibility of taking a position of power affect changes required for a country and those changes have

impact on men, women and children in society. And esthetically politics is that, the act of governing. But in the process of governing certain sectors such as indigenous, afro or female have been excluded.

Then the importance of advocacy in politics seems essential, because we are part of that society, because women contribute to the economy because we contribute in the cultural issue, because our contribution is in every sense local, national, worldwide. Then I think we have an obligation not only the right, but I think moral obligation, ethics and politics to contribute and participate actively in politics. This kind of policy generally, partisan politics, organizational policy, or our status as citizens women and men.

8. What area has been highlighted more women in their impact and influenced?

For me in all areas, I sincerely believe that in all areas. Not is that it has not been externalized, has not been visible, but in politics I believe in the social sphere, to fight for the recognition of the rights of children, girls in recognizing the rights of women.

In terms of recognizing the economy, making budget for that if we start with an approach to gender say this (I do not remember the exactly word), but with the prospects of the conditions of women, the diversity of women.

So I think that really their contribution is that, I think that their contribution is in the economy because women are at it, they are in the formal economy, particularly in the informal economy that really is what moves the everyday.

9. Would you like exercise some specific position in politics, or do you feel have fulfilled all activities to do in politics?

No, I think that the contribution that one can do in politics was never finished, beyond partisanship, political life as such. When somebody acts as a citizen, as a generator of public opinion, when someone is in use in the administrative space. When you are in any of the spaces you can do politics pronouncements, through proposals, through spokespersons.

I believe that is more path to be walking, I have very little experience in politics eventually because I have more experience in organizational policy area in public policy. My time as a minister in government of Correa and my time as assemblywoman recognized as my two key areas that have defined quite my life and I think from the assembly was more space could have an impact on the reform of the Constitution, to write new articles, to fight for the rights. I think that was precisely the space through everyday life, am I missing a lot, and I really identify more from organizational policy space, rather than from partisan politics.

I believe and trust, and I hope that people participate in politics can act from its citizenship or nationality.

10. What is your greatest challenge to be part of a political organization and have social responsibility as women?

I think the biggest challenge is to open a path, open a gap where many women, regardless of their gender but as citizens with rights may represent, have access to power without any discrimination. We can participate on equal terms, do not know whether to compete on equal conditions and responsibilities as men, have an impact. Her position, her word be respected and that influence, and having the freedom to decide according to her conscience, according to her principles, her political formation. I think this one of the biggest challenges I propose as a citizen, as a political activist and as a person committed to the change. I think this the biggest challenge and it is a work in progress not easy, I think that in the XXI century still the gap is just beginning to open, but even that open road has many difficulties and must be beating.

11. What would you recommend to women and specifically indigenous women who wish to participate in a political movement, or, in a political society, active political life and not only as spectators, but as participants?

I think the first recommendation is that one has to learn to be independent. You must be consolidated with personal self-determination.

I think it's important to have sovereignty over consciousness, sovereignty over the decisions, and I think for that means being aware of the process where we come from and where we want to go.

Nowadays women, not just women but since we are talking about women believe that often they are influenced by certain political figures or male characters and become susceptible to influence. And I think that it is the reason that always says one thing and then you get to the criterion of the other person and not assume. I think that is the main challenge, the recommendations is that women have to learn to have our own autonomy. The moment we have autonomy of conscience, more than autonomy would say sovereignty in our consciousness, I think that it is the first step to begin to influence and assume leadership. Whether we do not self-definition us, self-determined, we can not take a leadership role in any space. I think that is precisely the barrier that we must break, the beginning to be consistent, autonomous, obviously reciprocal loyal to what we believe, with our organization but finally critics people with autonomous decision-making capacity.

Attached 5 interview to: Gina Elizabeth Merino Naranjo



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I appreciate your collaboration.

Occupation: COUNCILMEMBER GADM OF CANTON Riobamba

Years of service in the pursuit of political power: 7

1. What motivated you to pursue politics?

To strive for equal opportunities for political space for the women in my city and country.

2. Political charges implemented:

Councilor of GADM on Riobamba, coordinator of Women's Political Coordinator of Chimborazo.

3. From your point of view, what is the relationship between women and the exercise of political power in Ecuador?

Promotion of the Political Participation of Women.

4. What are the obstacles you have overcome to get to exercise political power?

Harassment and Violence Policy by reason of gender, affect political work and Public Management of Women.

5. In which role did you feel better? Why?

In Women's Political Coordinator, because through this organization I promote the exercise of citizenship for women.

6. What is or are your goals to exercise political power?

To build a society with social and gender equality.

7. What level of society you provided or could provide greater percentage for the country's development? Why?

Strengthening Women's Movement and Institutional Development at the National level.

8. What are the main challenges in fulfilling your duties today?

Gender equality and equal opportunity in the commissions City Council.

9. Do you live a situation where it was felt discriminated for being a woman?

No. I have always fought for my ideals.

10. Do you know what are the challenges that women face when they decide to participate in the exercise of political power?

Mainly their family and sexist society that unfortunately still exists in our country and worldwide.

11. What politic role would you like exercise?

Mayor of my city.

12. What would you recommend to women who wish to exercise political power?

Prepare themselves to be excellent leaders, and anyone or anything stop them to achieve their objectives of participation in politics.

Attached 6: Ministers name´s to May 28th, 2014.

INSTITUTION	CONTACT	OCUPATION
NATIONAL SECRETARIAT OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION	Dr. Vinicio Roldán Alvarado Espinel	National Secretary of Public Administration
	María Augusta Enríquez	Politic Advisor - Communication
NATIONAL SECRETARIAT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT	Soc. Pabel Muñoz López	National Secretary of Planning and Development
		Politic Advisor
	Lenin Muela	Communication Advisor
NATIONAL SECRETARIAT OF MANAGEMENT POLICY	Ab. Viviana Bonilla	National Secretary for Management politician
	Diego Montenegro	Communication Director
	Gustavo Bucaran	Politic Advisor
LEGAL SECRETARY GENERAL	Dr. Alexis Mera Giler	General Secretary
		Politic Advisor
		Communication Advisor
PRESIDENCY GENERAL SECRETARIAT	Sr. Omar Simon Campaña	General Secretariat
	Valeria Gonzales	Communication Director
	Soledad Donozo	Politic Advisor

NATIONAL SECRETARIAT OF COMUNICACION	Dr. Fernando Alvarado Espinel	National Secretary of Communication
	Andrea Rey	Politic Advisor
	Martha Armendari	Communication Advisor
MINISTRY OF COORDINATION OF STRATEGIC SECTORS	Dr. Rafael Alexis Poveda Bonilla	Minister of Coordination of Strategic Sectors
	Olger Calvopiña	Communication Director
	Carlos Puga	Politic Advisor
MINISTRY OF COORDINATION OF PRODUCTION, EMPLOYMENT AND COMPETITIVENESS	Ing. Richard Gonzalo Espinosa Guzmán	Minister of Coordination of Production, Employment And Competitiveness
	Carlos Hecheverria	Politic Advisor
	Alexandra paredes	Director de comunicación
MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC POLICY COORDINATION	Econ. Patricio René Rivera Yáñez	Coordination Minister for Economic Policy
	Grace Aguilar	Communication Director
	Fredy Perez	Politic Advisor
MINISTRY OF COORDINATION OF KNOWLEDGE AND HUMAN TALENT	Ph. D. Guillaume Long	Coordinating Minister for knowledge and Talent
	Agustín Armas	Politic Advisor
	Julia Chavez	Communication Director
MINISTRY OF	Msc. Cecilia Vaca Jones	Minister coordinating of

COORDINATION OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT		Social Development
	Valeria Arostegui	Communication Director
	Alexis Oviedo	Politic Advisor
MINISTRY OF COORDINATION OF SECURITY	Arq. Fernando Cordero Cueva	Coordinating Minister for Security
	Anabel Arguello	Politic Advisor
	Gabriela Fajardo	Communication Director
MINISTRY OF INTERIOR	Dr. José Ricardo Serrano Salgado	Minister of Interior
	Jamil Murillo	Communication Director
	Luis Bareces	Politic Advisor
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND HUMAN MOBILITY	Econ. Ricardo Armando Patiño Aroca	Minister of Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility
	Juan Meriguet Martínez	Politic Advisor
	Martha Roldan	Communication Advisor
MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEFENSE	Dra. María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés	Minister of National Defense
	Carmen Guerrero	Communication Director
	Ivette Macancela	Politic Advisor
MINISTRY OF FINANCE	Eco. Fausto Eduardo Herrera Nicolalde	Ministre of Finance
	Lic. Victor Carvajal	Communication Director

	Javier Lopez	Politic Advisor
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION	Econ. Augusto Xavier Espinosa Andrade	Ministre of Education
	Roberto Bustillos	Politic Advisor
	Lorena Portalansa	Director
MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT AND PUBLIC WORKS	Ing. Paola Carvajal Ayala	Minister of transport and Public works
	Lic Sebastian Valarezo	Communication Director
	Jose Zurita	Politic Advisor
MINISTRY OF LABOR RELATIONS	Eco. Carlos Marx Carrasco	Minister of Labor Relations
	Paola Pazmiño	Communication Director
	Wilson Mayorga	Politic Advisor
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURA, LIVESTOCK, AQUACULTURE AND FISHERIES	Lcdo. Antonio Javier Ponce Cevallos	Minister of Agriculture, livestock, aquaculture and fisheries.
	Lic. Diego Merizalde	Communication Director
	Ec. Diego Landazuri	Politic Advisor
MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY AND PRODUCTIVITY	Econ. Ramiro González Jaramillo	Minister of Industry and Productivity
	Ab. Jacob Cueva	Politic Advisor
	Maximiliano Donoso	Communication Director
MINISTRY OF PUBLIC	Mgs. Carina Vance	Minister of Health

HEALTH	Mafla	Pública
	Alfonso Andrade	Politic Advisor
	Natalia Deleg	Communication Director
MINISTRY OF ELECTRICITY AND RENEWABLE ENERGY	Dr. Esteban Albornoz Vintimilla	Minister of Electricity and Renewable Energy
	Juan Esteban Astudillo Álvarez	Politic Advisor
	Maria Josefa Corral	Communication Director
MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND NONRENEWABLE	Ing. Pedro Kléver Merizalde Pavón	Minister of Natural Resources and Nonrenewable
	Dr. Cristian Cevallos	Politic Advisor
	Lic. Freddy Aguirres	Communication Director
MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL INCLUSION	Soc. Doris Josefina Solíz Carrión	Minister for Economic and Social Inclusion
		Coordinadora de Despacho
		Coordinadora de Agenda
MINISTRY OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT	Econ. Diego Esteban Aulestia Valencia	Minister of Urban Development and Housing
		Politic Advisor
	Grace Benalcazar	Communication Director
MINISTRY OF TOURISM	Dr. Vinicio Roldán Alvarado Espinel	Minister of Tourism

		Politic Advisor
	Gabriel Espinosa	Communication Director
MINISTRY OF ENVIROMENT	Ab. Lorena Tapia Nuñez	Minister of enviroment
		Politic Advisor
	Alex Bastidas	Asesor Comunicación
	Estefania montalvo	Communication Director
MINISTRY OF SPORT	Sr. José Francisco Cevallos Villavicencio	Minister of Sport
		Politic Advisor
	Vanessa García	Communication Advisor
	Daniel Sanchez	Communication Director (E)
MINISTRY OF CULTURE AND HERITAGE	Sr. Francisco Velasco Andrade	Minister for Culture and Heritage
	Kintto Enrique Lucas	Politic Advisor
	Ma. Dolores Ordoñez	Communication Director (E)
MINISTRY OF JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS	Dra. Ledy Andrea Zúñiga Rocha	Minister for Justice, Human Rights and Religious Affairs.
	Lic. Fernanda Iglesias	Communication Director
	Ramiro Nuñez	Politic Advisor

MINISTRY OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION COMPANY	Ing. Jaime Hernán Guerrero Ruíz	Minister of Telecommunications and information Society
	Lucía Begnini	Politic Advisor
	Sebastián Chiribogar	Communication Director
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN TRADE	Mgs. Francisco Rivadeneira Sarzosa	Minister of Foreign Trade
		Politic Advisor
	Damian Velasco	Communication Director
MINISTRY OF WATER	Ing. Walter Hipólito Solís Valarezo	Secretary of Water
	Alexis Ponce	Politic Advisor
	Denisse Chavez	Communication Director
MINISTRY OF INTELLIGENCE	Tcrl. Rommy Vallejo	Secretary of Intelligence
	René Suarez	Politic - Communication Advisor
DEPARTMENT OF RISK MANAGEMENT	Dra. María del Pilar Cornejo de Grunauer	Secretary of Risk Management
	Daniel Lemus	Politic Advisor
	Maria fernanda Naranjo	Communication Director