

The Human Rights Sector in Ecuador

Evidence from the Public



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The Human Rights Sector in Ecuador: Evidence from the Public

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Rachel Schmidt¹

Research Consultant

rachel@rachelschmidt.ca

Shannon Golden

Humphrey School of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota

golde118@umn.edu

James Ron

Humphrey School of Public Affairs & Department of Political Science, University of Minnesota
Department of International Studies, Center for Economic Research and Teaching (CIDE)

Jamesr@umn.edu

David Crow

División de Estudios Internacionales, Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas (CIDE)

david.crow@cide.edu

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Executive Summary

Ecuador's human rights activism is focused on indigenous rights, press freedoms, governmental reforms, and public accountability.

To learn about the Ecuadorian public's perceptions of human rights and human rights organizations, we surveyed the general public in 2012 as part of our broader study of [local human rights communities](#) and [public opinion](#) worldwide, details of which are available at www.jamesron.com/Current-Projects.php.

We conducted a survey of 1,503 adults across Ecuador. Like the Ecuadorian public, most respondents had moderate levels of education, were Catholic, and struggled to meet household expenses. Survey respondents reported they:

1. Do not hear the term “human rights” very often.

Most heard the words “human rights” either “sometimes” or “rarely.”

2. Have positive associations with the term “human rights.”

Much of the public associates the term “human rights” with positive concepts, including protecting people from torture or murder, promoting socio-economic justice, and promoting free and fair elections.

3. Believe local Ecuadorian rights groups are internationally funded.

Most respondents thought local human rights organizations received the bulk of their funding from foreign organizations, governments, and citizens.

4. Have modest levels of trust in human rights groups.

Respondents trusted local human rights organizations (LHROs) and their international counterparts similarly, reporting “some” or “little” trust in both. Their trust in local rights groups was in the middle of the domestic trust spectrum. Their trust in international rights groups, by contrast, was towards the upper end of the spectrum.

5. Have low contact with Ecuadorian human rights groups.

Very few respondents participated in LHRO activities or knew anyone involved in a human rights group.

Part I: The Context

Reforms, Oil, and Political Unrest

After a long history of military coups, dictatorial rule, and territorial disputes, the 1979 constitution brought renewed hope for Ecuadorian democracy.² The 1979 reforms introduced universal suffrage and banned discrimination based on race, religion, sex, language, or social status.

In the 1980s, however, falling oil prices triggered economic decline, labor unrest, demonstrations, and a state of emergency. Political instability continued to plague the country, and in 1990, an indigenous uprising sparked the growing involvement of Ecuador's indigenous people in government and in human rights efforts.³ Public activism became more frequent during the 1990s, as Ecuadorians, especially indigenous groups, demanded that a greater share of the country's oil revenues be invested in local development. Unrest peaked in 1997, when mass protests against then President Bucaram's government led to his ouster.⁴



Photo by Julien Gomba via [flickr.com](https://www.flickr.com/photos/julien_gomba/).

Civil unrest continued, however, and by 1998, a string of congressional impeachments indicated that government corruption was rampant.⁵ In 2005, anti-government protests exploded after the Supreme Court dropped corruption charges against two former presidents and Congress forced out the sitting president.⁶ Public demonstrations continued that year, with citizens demanding that oil revenues be spent on public infrastructure. The protests were so severe that the government had to temporarily halt all crude oil exports.⁷ Shortly thereafter, nationwide protests peaked over a proposed free trade agreement with the United States, which ignited human rights concerns about access to medicine and the right to health.⁸

² See the BBC Ecuador Timeline, available at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/1212826.stm>, accessed April 22, 2014.

³ Lauderbaugh, George M. 2012. *The History of Ecuador*. Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood.

⁴ The Economist. 1998. "Ecuador: Now for the hard part." July 16. Available at: <http://www.economist.com/node/144094>, accessed June 26, 2014.

⁵ The Economist, *op. cit.*

⁶ Dudley, Steven. 2005. "Protests Escalate in Ecuador's Capital." *The Washington Post*, April 18. Available at: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A61869-2005Apr18.html>, accessed June 26, 2014.

⁷ BBC News. 2005. "Protests halt Ecuador oil exports." August 19. Available at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/4164840.stm>, accessed June 26, 2014.

⁸ BBC News. 2006. "'No end' to Ecuador trade protest." March 15. Available at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/4807900.stm>, accessed July 1, 2014. Also see: <http://www.cptech.org/ip/health/trade/andean> for a collection of resources about the controversy surrounding the

In late 2006, Rafael Correa won the presidency, and with voter support, he rewrote the constitution once more. But with protests erupting by 2007, he found political stability still



Photo by colonos via [flickr.com](https://www.flickr.com/photos/colonos/).

beyond the country's grasp. As demonstrators began taking over wells in the Amazon, the president declared a state of emergency.⁹ In 2010, the government increased state control over the oil industry and in 2011 President Correa continued to expand his authority by winning a public referendum on a package of constitutional reforms, which some argued was a power grab.¹⁰ Even with this tightening of governmental control, indigenous protests over land and water polices have continued and charges of political and police corruption persist.

Ecuador's tumultuous political history, coupled with ongoing allegations of corruption and media suppression, has contributed to the rise of a distrustful and somewhat fragmented civil society. As public trust in the state has eroded, Ecuadorians have been left with a general feeling of threat, exclusion, and pessimism, hindering the involvement of civil society in formulating and implementing public policy.¹¹

Ecuador is party to multiple international human rights treaties, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women.¹² In 2007, Ecuador also voted in favor of the UN adoption of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. In addition, Ecuador's 2008 Constitution guarantees civil, political, economic, and social rights to all citizens. In practice, however, the state lacks clear public policies to protect human rights and does not have the capacity to implement its formal human rights commitments.¹³

Free Trade agreement with the Andean Countries; accessed June 16, 2014. For the letter written by Medecins Sans Frontiers on the FTA insisting on intellectual property rights that would restrict access to medicines, see: <http://www.cptech.org/ip/health/trade/andean/msf03242004.doc>. Accessed June 16, 2014.

⁹ BBC News. 2007. "Ecuador bids to quell oil protest." November 30. Available at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/7120624.stm>, accessed June 18, 2014.

¹⁰ BBC News. 2011. "Ecuador President Correa 'wins referendum'." May 8. Available at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-13325112>, accessed June 30, 2014.

¹¹ Burbano de Lara, Felipe. 2008. "Deinstitutionalized Democracy." Pp. 271-276 in *The Ecuador Reader: History, Culture & Politics*, edited by C. de la Torre and S. Striffler. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

¹² See the University of Minnesota's Human Rights Library for an exhaustive list. Available at: <http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/research/ratification-ecuador.html>, accessed April 22, 2014.

¹³ de la Torre, Carlos and Steve Striffler, eds. 2008. *The Ecuador Reader: History, Culture & Politics*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Contemporary Human Rights Concerns

Mass demonstrations and blockades by indigenous groups continue to be a primary concern in Ecuador, as indigenous groups demand the right to consultation on government plans for natural resources. Government forces and agencies frequently subject indigenous and *campesino* (farmer) leaders to false charges of terrorism, as well as arbitrary arrests and criminal prosecution.¹⁴ The government repeatedly fails to consult indigenous groups about oil extraction projects on their territories.¹⁵ Rights activists say there is no systematic process for government consultation with indigenous groups.¹⁶

Media suppression and freedom of expression are also primary human rights concerns.¹⁷ Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International report that government authorities use litigation against journalists and other critics to keep them from speaking out.¹⁸ For example, in 2013 President Correa introduced a Communications Law regulating broadcast and print media, restricting press freedom, and arguably leaving the door open to arbitrary prosecutions and censorship.¹⁹ Immediately after, three owners of *El Universo*, a leading newspaper, and a journalist were convicted of slander for an editorial critical of the President. The President later pardoned them,²⁰ but multiple other slander convictions have followed.²¹

Ecuador also has the largest number of refugees in Latin America, chiefly Colombians fleeing armed conflict in their country. The Correa administration changed asylum procedures in 2012 to narrow the definition of refugee, and instituted new claims procedures that human rights defenders decry as contradicting international standards.²²

Other ongoing human rights concerns include excessive force and isolated unlawful killings by security forces, trafficking in persons, exploitation



Photo by UNHCR/ACNUR Américas via [flickr.com](https://www.flickr.com/photos/unhcr/1211111111/).

¹⁴ Amnesty International 2013. "Annual Report: Ecuador 2013." Available at:

<http://www.amnestyusa.org/research/reports/annual-report-ecuador-2013>, accessed April 22, 2014.

¹⁵ For example, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights recently confirmed that the government had not consulted the Sarayaku indigenous community about an oil exploration project on their land. Amnesty International 27 July 2012. "Ecuador: Inter-American Court ruling marks key victory for Indigenous Peoples." Available at: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/ecuador-inter-american-court-ruling-marks-key-victory-indigenous-peoples-2012-07-26>, accessed April 23, 2014.

¹⁶ Amnesty International 2013, *op. cit.*

¹⁷ U.S. Department of State. 2013. "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2013: Ecuador." Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor. Available at: <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?year=2013&dliid=220441>, accessed June 16, 2014.

¹⁸ Amnesty International 2013, *op. cit.*; Human Rights Watch 2014a. "World Report 2014: Ecuador." Available at: <http://www.hrw.org/world-report-%5Bscheduler-publish-yyyy%5D/world-report-2014-ecuador>, accessed April 22, 2014.

¹⁹ Human Rights Watch, *op. cit.*

²⁰ Amnesty International 2013, *op. cit.*

²¹ Human Rights Watch, *op. cit.*

²² Human Rights Watch, *op. cit.*

of minors, and child labor.²³ Prison overcrowding and delays and denial in due process are also serious concerns.²⁴ In addition, the ongoing judicial reform process threatens the independence and impartiality of Ecuador's judiciary.²⁵ Overall, the range of human rights challenges in Ecuador is significant, and the human rights sector continues to struggle against government restrictions that make it even more difficult to create meaningful change.

Ecuador's Non-Governmental Rights Sector

Ecuador's economic development is heavily influenced by oil exploitation, creating a "petroleum government" with an authoritarian and clientelistic style.²⁶ The 20th century saw the growth of powerful patrimonial networks, which either stood in for or hampered the growth of civil society organizations; pressure from large family networks continues to inhibit public activism based on common needs and non-familial relationships.²⁷ An entrenched mindset that both government and social movements should be profitable, like corporations, affects the growth of civil society in Ecuador.²⁸



Photo by Kaytee Riek via [flickr.com](https://www.flickr.com/photos/kayteeriek/).

The first Ecuadorian civil society groups were charitable and volunteer organizations that provided services to the poor and vulnerable. In the 1960s and 1970s, agrarian reform liberated a large section of the indigenous population, who then played an important role in the expansion of Ecuador's rights movement.²⁹ The development of local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) throughout this period, coupled with technical assistance from and cooperation with international organizations, formed the early roots of rights-based social activism in the country.

In 1979, with the end of military rule and a new constitution that guaranteed basic liberties, the NGO sector grew enormously. Between 1980 and 1989, activists registered 199 new NGOs, more than double the number created in the previous 80 years. Many of these were dedicated specifically to human rights.³⁰ The indigenous rights movement also continued to grow during the early 1980s.³¹

²³ U.S. Department of State, *op. cit.*

²⁴ U.S. Department of State, *op. cit.*

²⁵ Human Rights Watch. 2014b. "Ecuador: Ensure Judicial Independence." January 29. Available at: <http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/01/29/ecuador-ensure-judicial-independence>, accessed June 25, 2014.

²⁶ Bustamante, Fernando, Lucía Duran and Ana Cristina Andreotti. 2006. "Ecuador's Civil Society: 'An Efficient Civil Society Going Beyond its Weaknesses'." Fundación Esquel and CIVICUS—World Alliance for Citizen Participation. Available at: http://www.civicus.org/media/CSI_Ecuador_Country_Report.pdf, accessed April 21, 2014.

²⁷ Bustamante, Duran, and Andreotti, *op. cit.*

²⁸ Bustamante, Duran, and Andreotti, *op. cit.*

²⁹ Bustamante, Duran, and Andreotti, *op. cit.*

³⁰ World Bank. 2007. "Civil Society's Role in the Governance Agenda in Ecuador: Assessing Opportunities and Constraints." *Social Development Papers: Participation & Civic Engagement*, Paper No. 105, June. Washington, DC. Available at: http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTSOCIALDEVELOPMENT/Resources/244362-1164107274725/3182370-1164201144397/Civil_Society_Governance_Ecuador-web.pdf, accessed April 21, 2014.

³¹ Bustamante, Duran, and Andreotti, *op. cit.*

It wasn't until the mid-1990s, however, that civil society became truly proactive in the governance arena.³² When legislators impeached the president in 1997, and began drafting a new constitution, civil society actors, including human rights groups, played a pivotal role, helping to insert mention of indigenous, women's, and youth rights into the new document.³³ Rights-based NGOs were also instrumental in passing the 2005 Transparency Law, making government accounts and financial transactions public, and in helping to create the Ombudsman's Office and Civic Committee Against Corruption.³⁴

Ecuadorian human rights defenders face an uphill battle in their current relations with the government, as the Correa administration often issues statements openly critical of local and international NGOs.³⁵ This conflict has intensified as social movements based on ethnic and regional identities have increased efforts to decentralize the government.³⁶ The President recently issued decrees to give the government more control over NGOs, including authority to dissolve Ecuadorian groups that are deemed to be "compromising public peace."³⁷ One such group, an environmental NGO called *Fundación Pachamama*, was shut down after protesting oil drilling in the Amazon.³⁸ President Correa has also stated that some NGOs threaten national security, and recently accused local NGOs of being international informants attempting to undermine the government.³⁹



Photo by Micaela Ayala V./Andes via flickr.com.

Despite these challenges, activists have achieved notable successes. In a recent example of powerful rights activism, indigenous plaintiffs against Chevron/Texaco won a 2011 landmark ruling that found Chevron responsible for vast environmental contamination. Indigenous rights groups and environmental groups, such as *Oilwatch Sudamérica*, were instrumental in providing evidence and keeping the lawsuit alive over

two decades.⁴⁰ The lawsuit alleged that pollution was linked to the near-extinction of several tribes, cancer deaths, miscarriages, dead livestock, and sick fish, and the judge ordered Chevron to pay eighteen billion dollars in damages, which the company has refused to do.⁴¹ NGOs,

³² World Bank, *op. cit.*

³³ World Bank, *op. cit.*

³⁴ World Bank, *op. cit.*

³⁵ U.S. Department of State, *op. cit.*.

³⁶ World Bank, *op. cit.*

³⁷ Human Rights Watch 2014a, *op. cit.*

³⁸ U.S. Department of State, *op. cit.*.

³⁹ U.S. Department of State, *op. cit.*.

⁴⁰ Radden Keefe, Patrick. 2012. "Reversal of Fortune." *The New Yorker*, January 9, 2012. Available at: http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2012/01/09/120109fa_fact_keefe?currentPage=all, accessed April 23, 2014.

⁴¹ Radden Keefe, *op. cit.* In 2013, Ecuador's high court changed the ruling to \$9.5 billion, and a U.S. judge later ruled that this Ecuadorian ruling had been corrupt. See: Ax, Joseph. 2014. "Ecuador \$9.5 billion ruling against Chevron was corrupt: U.S. judge." *Reuters*, March 4. Available at: <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/03/04/us-chevron-ecuador-idUSBREA231CZ20140304>, accessed June 26, 2014.

especially indigenous rights organizations, continue to fight for the payment of damages from Chevron while seeking to bring additional oil companies to account for similar environmental harms. Chevron is in ongoing arbitration with the government over oil site clean up.⁴²

Local human rights organizations (LHROs) in Ecuador have faced considerable challenges, but have also enjoyed some successes and moments of policy influence. By some measures, Ecuador has a thriving rights-based sector, including the highest per capita levels of NGO affiliation in Latin America,⁴³ and a prominent indigenous rights movement. It is unclear, however, to what extent the general population participates in or supports rights-based and organizations. Our survey data address this knowledge gap.

⁴² *Ax, op cit.*

⁴³ World Bank, *op. cit.*

Part II: Ecuadorian Public Opinion

Our research team was interested in the ways human rights language, issues, and organizations are perceived in Ecuador. This section begins with an overview of methods and respondents' key demographic characteristics. Next, we discuss to what extent the public is exposed to human rights language and what associations they have with the term. We present respondents' perceptions of LHRO funding and respondents' own donations. We compare respondents' trust and participation in LHROs to other domestic institutions. Finally, we compare perceptions of international HROs to a range of international institutions.

Methodological Overview

In 2012, we surveyed 1,503 adults living in Ecuador with the help of [CIMACYT](#), an Ecuadorian survey firm, in collaboration with the *Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales Sede (FLASCO)-Ecuador* and CIDE's *The Americas and the World* project.⁴⁴

Our sample is a stratified multi-stage cluster random sample, representative of Ecuador's ten most populated provinces (Figure 2.1).⁴⁵ According to the 2010 Ecuadorian Census, these provinces represent 81% of the total population. Selection was random for all stages. See Appendix A for details.

Figure 2.1
Sampling Area



Provinces included in the sample are labeled above.
Source: www.mapsopensource.com, accessed July 1, 2014.

⁴⁴ *The Americas, and the World* is a project of CIDE, conducting public opinion studies throughout Latin America. For more information and to access reports, please visit: <http://mexicoyelmundo.cide.edu/home2010english.swf>.

⁴⁵ The margin of error for calculations based on the entire sample is +/- 3%, with a confidence level of 95%.

Respondent Characteristics

Table 2.1 highlights respondents' key socio-demographic characteristics; see Appendix B for further details.⁴⁶ Our sample was gender-balanced, with an average age of 41, and an average monthly income of \$240-\$480 USD. About 41% felt they could cover their monthly expenses without major difficulties, and 40% had received their *bachillerato*, or secondary school diploma. Some 61% had worked outside the home in the week prior to the interview, and most self-identified as *mestizo*, or mixed race, and Catholic. Most said that religion was very important to them. More than half did not support any particular political party, and most placed themselves in the middle of the political Left and Right.

Table 2.1
Respondent Characteristics

Sex	50% female
Age	
Mean	41 years
Range	18-91 years
Monthly Household Income	
Less than \$240	35%
Between \$240-\$480	41%
Between \$481-\$960	16%
Above \$960	9%
Median income range	\$240-\$480
Feel their income can cover household expenses	41%
Education ⁴⁷	
Primary or no formal education	33%
Secondary	44%
Post-secondary	24%
Primary economic activity	
At home	26%
Working	61%
Ethnicity	
Mestizo (mixed race)	83%
Religion	
Catholic	76%
Christian/Protestant/Evangelical	12%
Mean importance of religion, 0-10 scale ⁴⁸	8
Politics	
Does not support a political party	48%
Supports PAIS Alliance	40%
Mean political orientation, 0-10 scale ⁴⁹	5

⁴⁶ All figures given are valid percentages that exclude non-responses and non-applicable responses, unless noted otherwise. The sample is weighted; all figures given represent weighted data.

⁴⁷ These figures indicate the percentage of respondents who completed at least one year of education at each level. For example, 44% of respondents had completed at least one year of secondary school.

⁴⁸ Where 0 means religion is “not at all important” in respondents’ lives and 10 means “very important.”

⁴⁹ Where 0 means political Left and 10 means political Right.

Human Rights' Resonance and Reach

Adults in Ecuador are moderately exposed to the term “human rights,” but have little personal contact with human rights workers. Most respondents have positive associations with the term, although some reported more negative perceptions.

To assess respondents’ exposure to human rights language, organizations, and activists, we began by asking, “*In your daily life, how often do you hear the term ‘human rights’?*” Figure 2.2 indicates that over a third heard the term “daily” or “frequently,” while 64% heard it “sometimes,” “rarely,” or “never.”

Figure 2.2
Respondents Sometimes Hear "Human Rights" in Their Daily Lives (N=1,450)

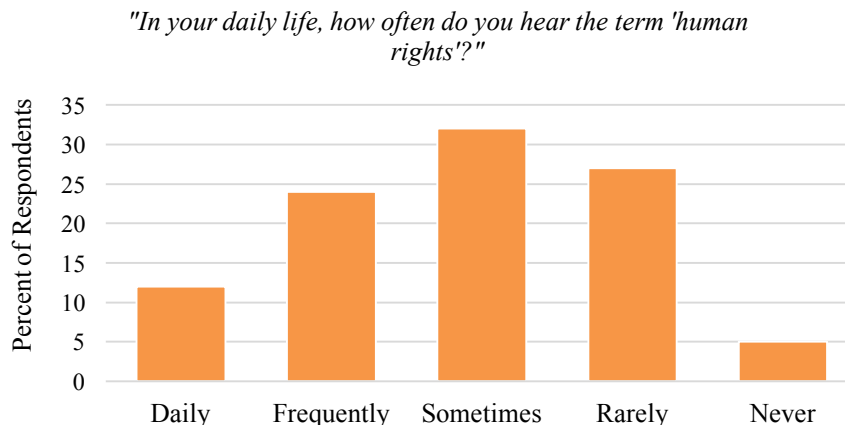
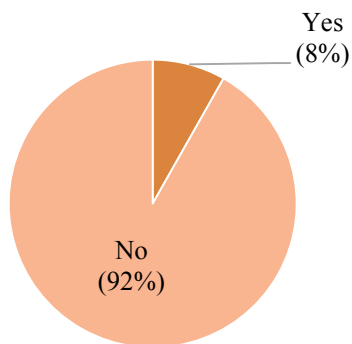


Figure 2.3
Few Respondents Had Met a Human Rights Worker (N=1,458)

"Have you ever met someone that works in a human rights organization?"



As Figure 2.3 suggests, few Ecuadorans have contact with HRO workers; only 8% answered “yes” to our question, “*Have you ever met someone that works in a human rights organization?*”

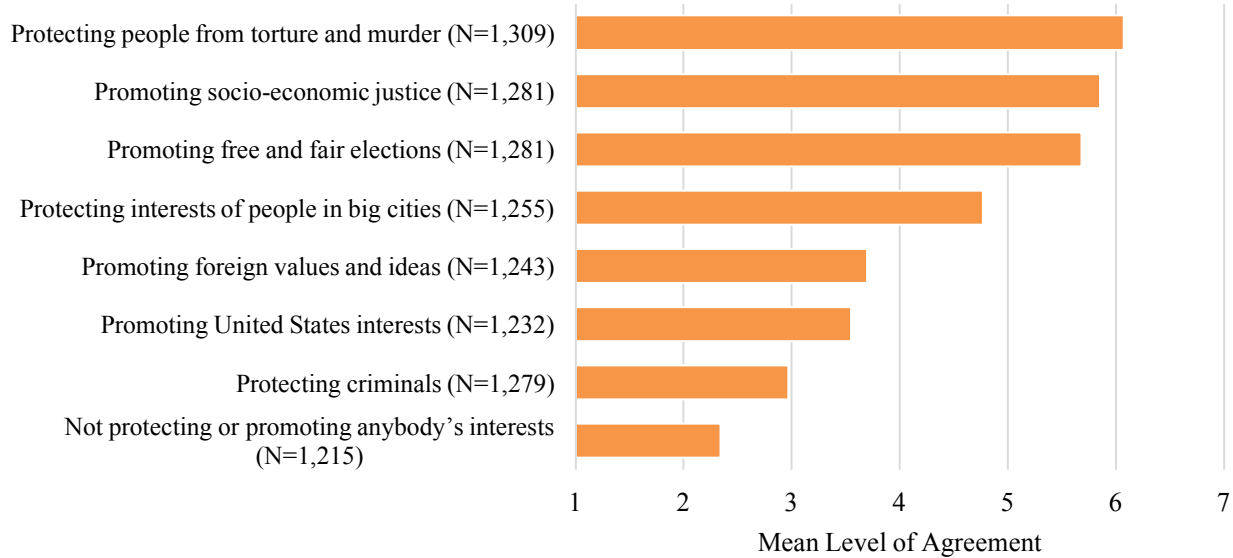
To see what respondents thought of the term “human rights,” we asked, “*In your opinion, how strongly do you associate _____ with the term ‘human rights’?*” We asked respondents to rank the extent to which they associated human rights with these other phrases on a seven-point scale, where 1 is “not at all” and 7 is “a lot.” As Figure 2.4 shows, respondents tended to strongly associate human rights

with positive phrases. There is also concern with human rights’ urban bias, however, as many associated the term with “protecting the interests of people living in big cities.”⁵⁰

⁵⁰ All differences between mean levels of agreement in Figure 2.3 are statistically significant at the .05-level.

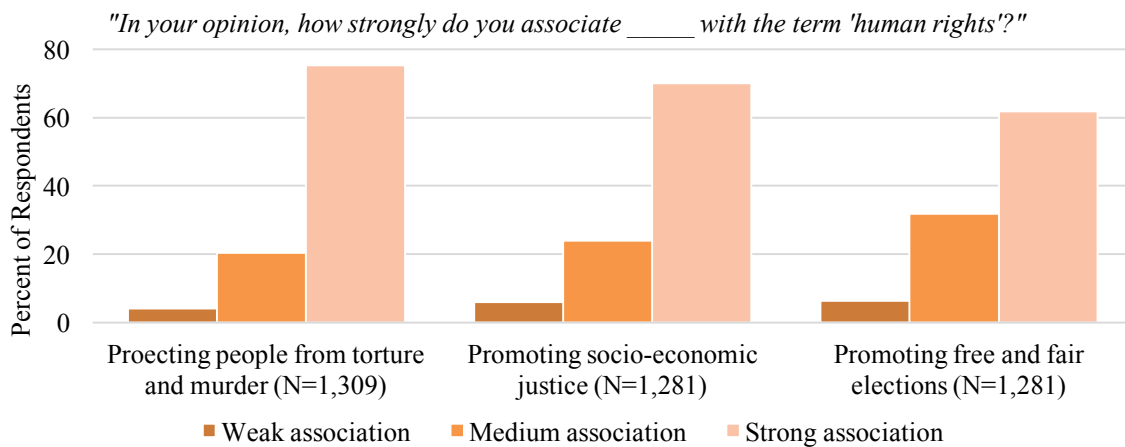
Figure 2.4
 Respondents Had Positive Associations with "Human Rights"

"In your opinion, how strongly do you associate _____ with the term 'human rights'?"



More specifically, as Figure 2.5 demonstrates, many respondents strongly associated human rights with positive phrases such as “protecting people from torture and murder” (75%), “promoting socio-economic justice” (70%), and “promoting free and fair elections” (62%).⁵¹

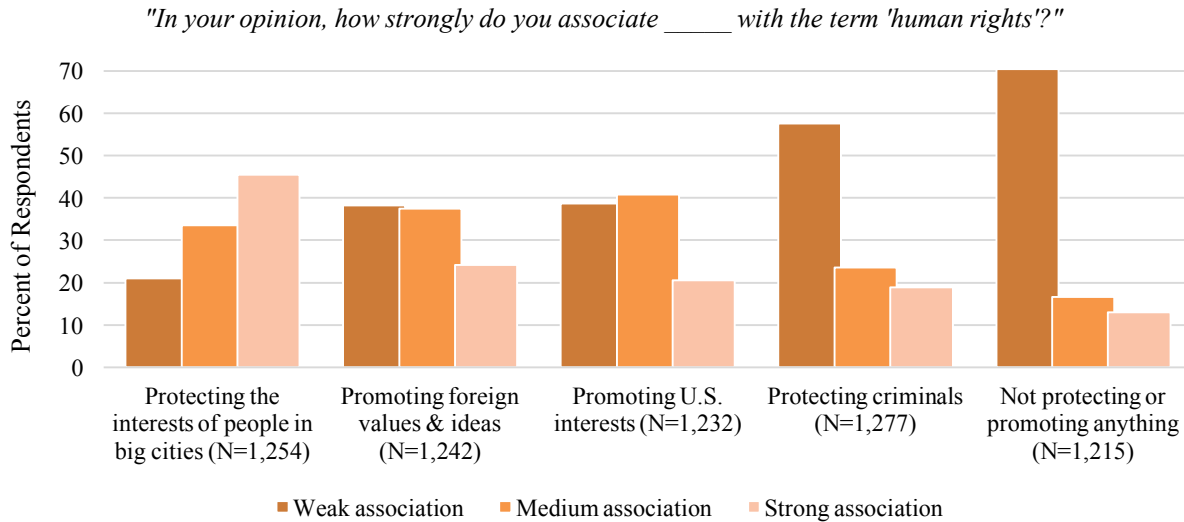
Figure 2.5
 Respondents Strongly Associated "Human Rights" with Positive Definitions



⁵¹A strong association here refers to respondents who selected a 6 or 7 on the scale; a medium association refers to respondents who selected 3, 4 or 5; and a weak association refers to respondents who selected 1 or 2.

However, Figure 2.6 shows that some respondents also *strongly* associated human rights with negative phrases. Notably, 45% of respondents strongly associated human rights with “promoting the interests of people in big cities,”⁵² 24% with “promoting foreign values and ideas,” and 21% with “promoting U.S. interests.”

Figure 2.6
Some Had Strong Negative Associations with "Human Rights"



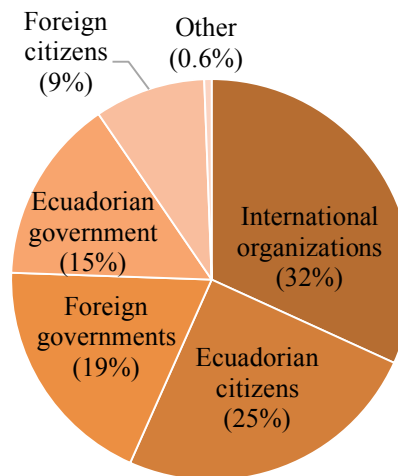
Resourcing LHROs

Over half of respondents thought that LHROs received most of their funding from foreign sources.

When asked, “*In your opinion, where do you think that non-governmental human rights organizations in Ecuador receive most of their funding from?*” most respondents thought that funding came primarily from outside of Ecuador, specifically from international organizations (32%) and foreign governments (19%).⁵³

Figure 2.7
Respondents Thought LHROs Are Internationally Funded (N=1,223)

"In your opinion, where do you think that non-governmental human rights organizations in Ecuador receive most of their funding from?"



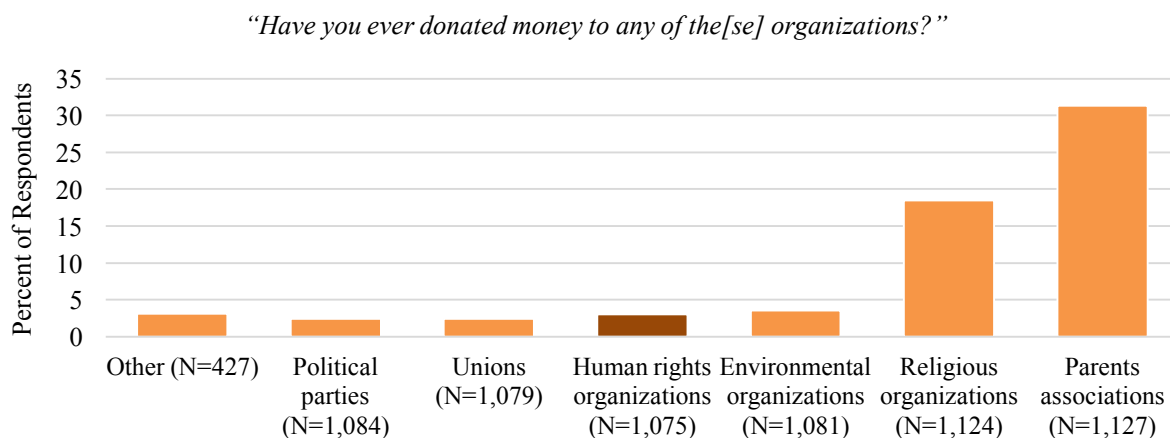
⁵² There was no difference between urban and rural respondents on this question; 45% of both urban and rural respondents strongly associated human rights with “promoting the interests of people in big cities.”

⁵³ Fourteen percent of respondents answered “I don’t know” to this question. Percentages listed here are valid percentages.

A sizeable minority (25%) also thought LHROs received most of their funds from donations by Ecuadorian citizens. Despite this, only 3% of respondents reported having donated money themselves to these groups.

After reading a list of civic and political groups, we posed the question, “*Have you ever donated money to any of the[se] organizations?*” Although the number who had donated to HROs is small, Figure 2.8 suggests Ecuadorian LHROs attract donations at a similar level as many other civic organizations, with the exception of parents associations and religious organizations.

Figure 2.8
Very Few Donate to HROs



Trust in Local Rights Groups

LHROs are situated in the middle of respondents’ spectrum of trust in domestic institutions.

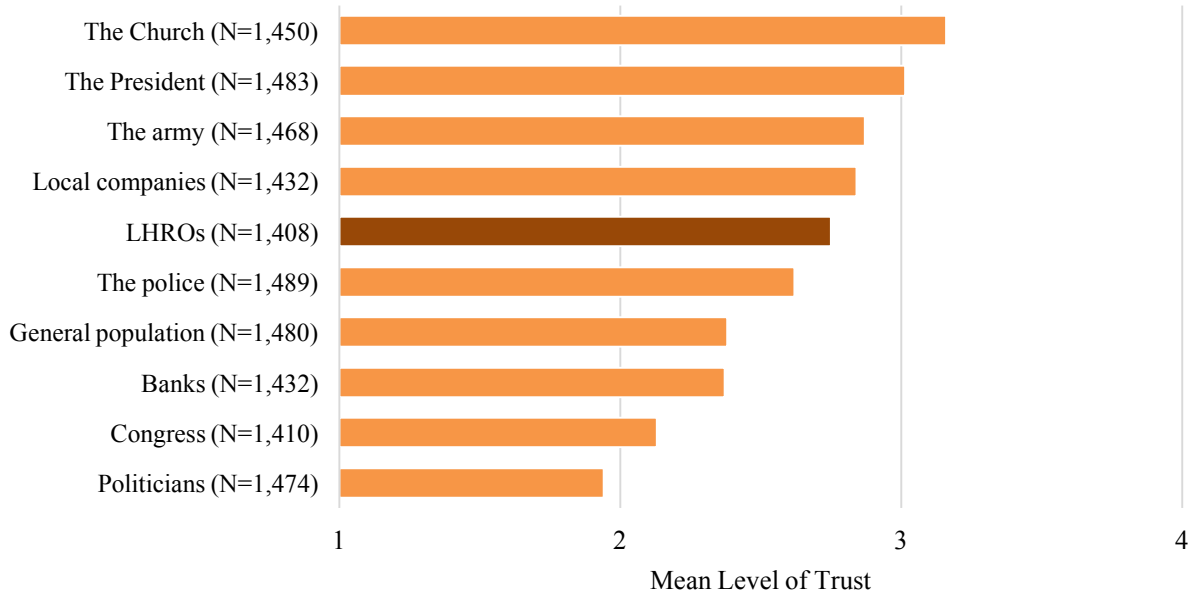
When asked, “*Please tell me how much trust you would place on the following institutions, groups or persons,*” respondents were, in general, not highly trusting of domestic actors. They most trusted the Church, reporting an average of 3.2 on a four-point trust scale, in which 1 was “none” and 4 was “a lot.”

As Figure 2.9 shows, local human rights organizations ranked in the middle of respondents’ trust spectrum.⁵⁴ Although they didn’t trust LHROs as highly as they trusted the Church, the president, army, or local companies, they did trust local rights groups more than politicians, congress, banks, the general population, or the police.

⁵⁴ The mean level of public trust in LHROs differs significantly from both trust in local companies (sig=.003) and from trust in the police (sig=.000).

Figure 2.9
 Respondents Moderately Trusted LHROs,
 Compared to Domestic Institutions

“Please tell me how much trust you would place on the following institutions, groups or persons...”



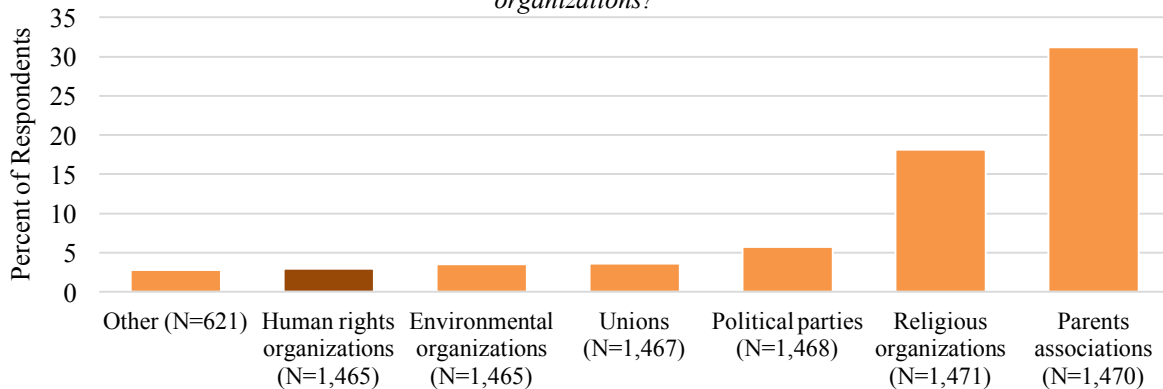
Civic Participation

Local human rights groups attract fewer participants than other civic groups.

To explore civic engagement in formal organizations, we asked, “*Could you tell me if you have participated in the activities of any of the following organizations?*” Figure 2.10 illustrates that public participation in LHROs closely mirrored their donations to LHROs, as discussed above.

Figure 2.10
 Very Few Participate in HROs

“Could you tell me if you have participated in the activities of any of the following organizations?”



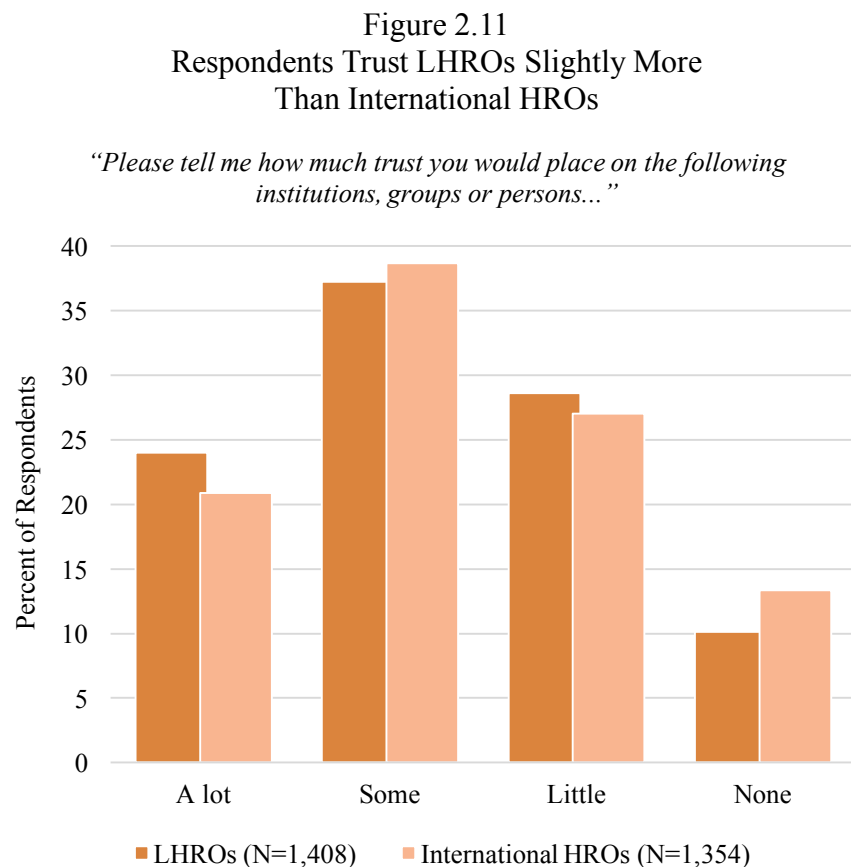
Participating in LHRO activities was one of the least common forms of reported civic engagement (3%). Respondents most commonly participated in parents associations (31%) and religious organizations (18%). Note, however, that membership in parent-teacher associations is mandatory in Ecuador.⁵⁵

Views on International Human Rights Organizations

Respondents trust domestic human rights organizations slightly more than international human rights organizations, but they trust international HROs slightly more than other international actors.

Considering again public trust in institutions (Figure 2.9 above showed trust in domestic institutions), Figure 2.11 shows that Ecuadorian respondents trust LHROs slightly more than they do international ones.⁵⁶

On the other hand, Ecuadorians trust international HROs more than other international institutions, as noted in Figure 2.12. Respondents have similar trust in international HROs and the United Nations, but are less trusting of multinational companies, the U.S. government, and the European Union.⁵⁷



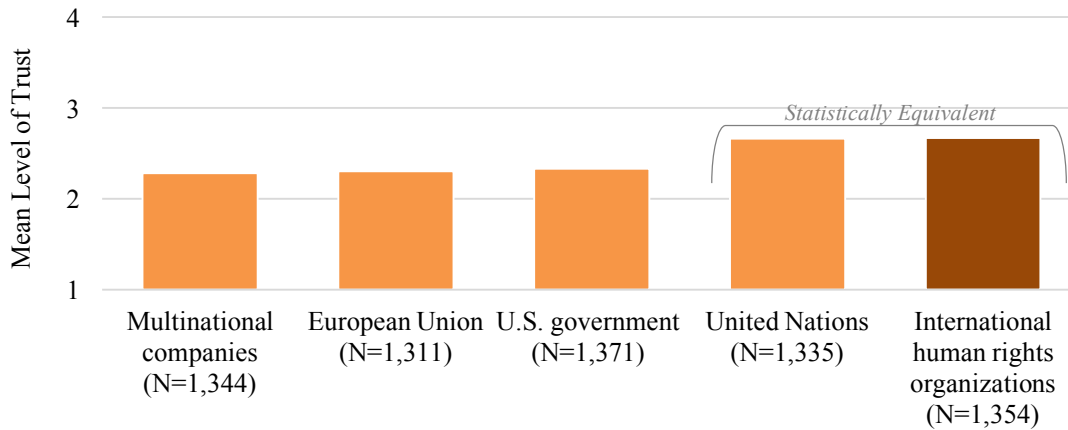
⁵⁵ Bustamante, Duran, and Andreotti, *op. cit.*

⁵⁶ Although the difference in means is very small (trust in LHROs is 2.75 and trust in international HROs is 2.67), it is statistically significant (sig.=.000).

⁵⁷ The difference in mean level of trust in international HROs and the United Nations is not statistically significant (sig.=.601). The difference between trust in international HROs and the U.S. government, however, is significant (sig.=.000).

Figure 2.12
 Respondents Trusted International HROs Slightly More than
 Other International Actors

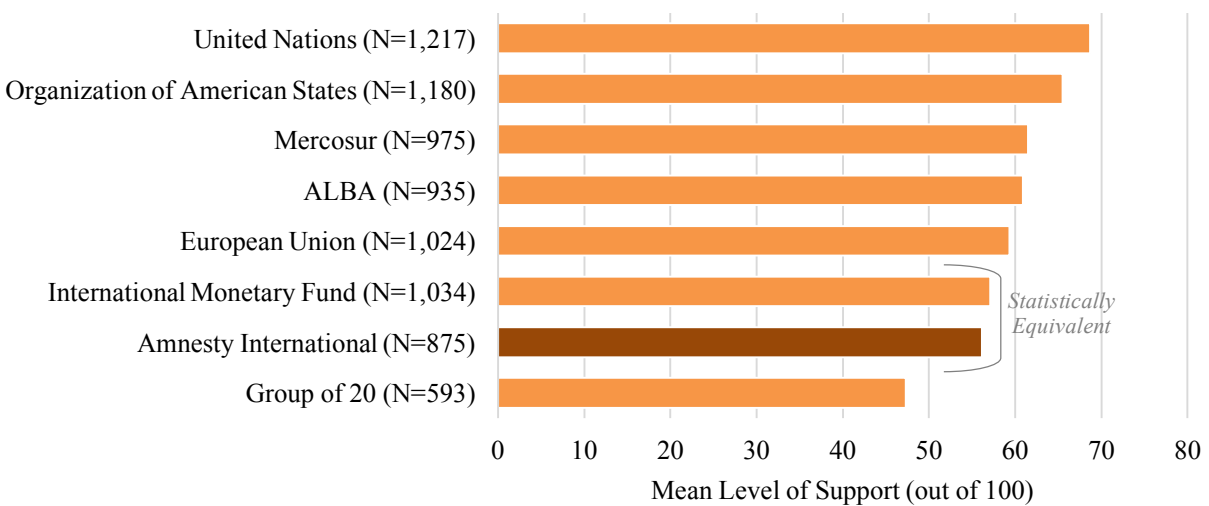
“Please tell me how much trust you would place on the following institutions, groups or persons...”



To probe further, we evaluated how favorable respondents’ feelings were towards the well-known international HRO Amnesty International, compared to other international organizations. Providing a list of international institutions, we asked, *“On a scale of 0-100, with 0 being very unfavorable feelings, 100 being very favorable and 50 being neither a favorable nor unfavorable feelings, what are your feelings towards the following international organizations?”*

Figure 2.13
 Respondents Had Less Favorable Feelings Towards Amnesty International

“On a scale of 0-100, with 0 being very unfavorable feelings...what are your feelings towards the following international organizations?”



As Figure 2.13 indicates,⁵⁸ Amnesty International did not score particularly high, receiving a mean ranking of 56 out of 100, placing it second to last on the list.⁵⁹ Even though respondents trusted international HROs in general more than some other international actors (as discussed in Figure 2.11), their feelings about Amnesty International were significantly less favorable than their feelings toward UN, OAS, and other international institutions.⁶⁰

Conclusions

Results from our public opinion poll in Ecuador indicate some cause for concern for the human rights sector in Ecuador. Although the general public has generally positive perceptions of human rights ideas, levels of exposure, trust, and participation are low. Much of the Ecuadorian public does not regularly hear human rights discourse, indicating that there is work to be done by those interested in spreading human rights ideas to the grassroots. Respondents also were not particularly trustful of LHROs, compared to other domestic institutions, and did not have especially favorable feelings towards Amnesty International at the global level. This is tempered, however, by relatively high levels of trust in international HROs, more generally. Finally—perhaps the strongest indicator of the “reach” of the human rights movement into Ecuador—very few respondents reported participating in or donating to HROs, which suggests a lack of broad public mobilization for formal human rights causes in the country.

⁵⁸ Mercosur is the Mercado Común del Sur (the Southern Common Market), a South American trade agreement; Ecuador is not a member state. ALBA is the Alianza Bolivariana para los Pueblos de Nuestra América (Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America), a Latin and South American IGO; Ecuador is a member state.

⁵⁹ It is important to note the lower response rate (see Figure 2.12) for both Amnesty International and the Group of 20, suggesting lower name recognition compared to some of the other international actors.

⁶⁰ The mean level of feeling about Amnesty International is not significantly different than the mean feeling about IMF (sig.=.163), as shown in Figure 2.12. There is a significant difference, however, in means between AI and both the European Union (sig.=.000) and the G-20 (sig.=.000).

Appendices

Appendix A: Methodology

Ecuador data collection was organized by the *Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales Sede (FLASCO)-Ecuador*, partner to *The Americas and The World Project* at CIDE in Mexico City.⁶¹ [CIMACYT](#), an Ecuadorian survey firm, carried out the sampling and conducted the interviews.

The sample includes 1,503 respondents and is a stratified multi-stage cluster random sample, representing the ten most populated provinces in Ecuador. According to the Ecuadorian Census of 2010, conducted by the National Institute of Statistics and Censuses (INEC), the ten most populated provinces cover 81% of the Ecuadorian population, including 86% of the urban population and 73% of the rural population.

Each of the ten provinces were divided into urban and rural strata, which were further subdivided into sectors. Ten households were randomly selected from each sector. Within a household, the potential survey respondent was randomly selected from among all individuals, aged 18 or above, living in the household. Table A.1 indicates that the number of respondents surveyed in each of the 10 provinces was proportional to each provinces' relative population size.

Interviews were carried out in person by teams of trained interviewers from the local area. Interviews were conducted in the respondents' homes.

Table A.1
Population and Sample Selection from the Ten Provinces

Province	Urban adult population	Rural adult population	Total adult population	Proportion of the population ⁶² and the sample	
Guayas	2,004,047	339,595	2,343,642	32%	Total number of respondents: 1,503
Pichincha	1,191,699	519,832	1,711,531	23%	
Manabí	485,476	356,908	842,384	11%	
Los Ríos	256,950	214,701	471,651	6%	
Azuay	254,377	197,133	451,510	6%	
El Oro	298,199	85,765	383,964	5%	
Tungurahua	140,634	190,736	331,370	5%	
Esmeraldas	156,843	144,898	301,741	4%	
Chimborazo	124,210	159,605	283,815	4%	
Loja	159,023	119,426	278,449	4%	
TOTAL	5,071,458	2,328,599	7,400,057	100%	

⁶¹ *The Americas and the World* is a project of CIDE, conducting public opinion studies throughout Latin America. For more information and to access reports, please visit: <http://mexicoyelmundo.cide.edu/home2010english.swf>.

⁶² This is the proportion of the total population of the 10 provinces, not the total population of Ecuador.

Appendix B: Characteristics of Human Rights Perceptions Poll Respondents

Socioeconomic Status

Socio-demographic characteristics of the 1,503 respondents are described below.⁶³ As Table B.1 illustrates, half of the sample was female. The mean age was approximately 41 years old.⁶⁴ The typical household made between \$240 USD and \$480 a month, as a combined income of all individuals who work.⁶⁵ Almost all respondents had several years of education, with 40% of respondents having completed secondary education or above.⁶⁶

Table B.1
Respondent Characteristics

Sex	50% female
Age	
Mean	41 years
Range	18-91 years
Monthly income range (median)	\$240-\$480
Completed secondary (<i>bachillerato</i>) or above	40%
International experience	
Lived outside Ecuador	9%
Travelled outside Ecuador	21%
Number of trips outside Ecuador (mean)	1 trip
Physical assets	
Has home telephone	49%
Has cellular/mobile phone	76%
Light bulbs in home (median)	5 light bulbs
Uses the internet	35%
At least once a day	20%

Only 9% of respondents reported having lived outside Ecuador, with work, studies, or family as the three reasons given.⁶⁷ Most respondents had not lived outside of Ecuador, though 21% had travelled internationally. Respondents more commonly cell phones, rather than home telephones,

⁶³ All percentages reported represent valid percent, meaning missing values or non-applicable responses are excluded in calculating the percentage. The data presented are weighted to adjust the sample to the Ecuadorian population on key characteristics.

⁶⁴ According to the CIA World Factbook, the median age in Ecuador is 27 years. For this research, we only surveyed adults, thus the average age is higher; the median age in our sample is 38 years old. See: CIA World Factbook. 2014. "Ecuador." Available at: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ec.html>, accessed April 28, 2014.

⁶⁵ Ecuador's GDP per capita (PPP) is \$10,800 (2013 estimate). CIA World Factbook, *op. cit.*

⁶⁶ From 2008-2012, the gross enrollment ratio for lower secondary school was 97% and for upper secondary school was 78%. UNICEF. "Ecuador Statistics." Available at: http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/ecuador_statistics.html, accessed June 18, 2014. The mean years of schooling for adults is 7.6 years. UNDP. "Human Development Reports: Ecuador." Available at: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/ECU>, accessed June 25, 2014.

⁶⁷ It is important to note that the response rate for this question was very low (21.8%), so the figure we report here is the absolute percentage, not the valid percentage.

and they typically had five light bulbs in their homes.⁶⁸ Over one-third of respondents reported using the Internet and about 20% of the sample said that they use it at least once a day.⁶⁹

Respondents were asked, “What was your main activity last week?” About 61% currently were working (this includes respondents who did not happen to be working the previous week, but usually do), while 26% stayed at home, 8% were students, and about 2% were seeking work but were currently unemployed.⁷⁰

Figure B.1
Most Respondents Were Currently Working
(N=1,492)

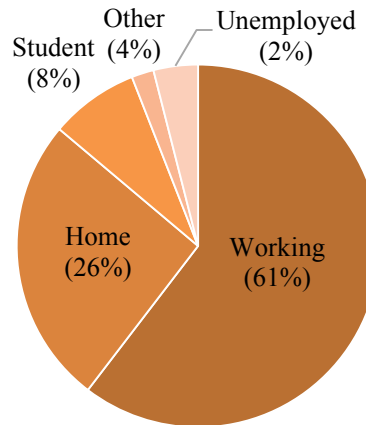
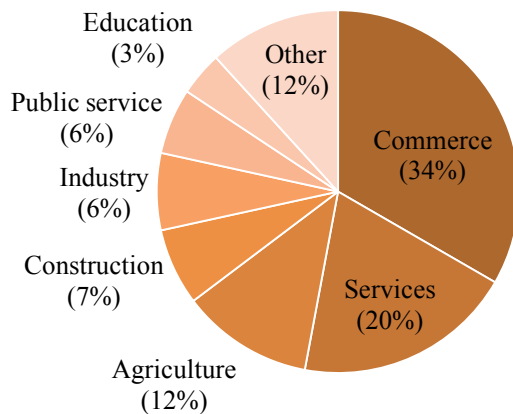


Figure B.2
Respondents Worked in Commerce, Services, and
Agriculture (N=933)



Respondents who worked outside the home were asked, “What activity is the institution or company you work for involved in?” As indicated in Figure B.2, of respondents who worked, about 34% worked in commerce and another 20% worked in services. A significant minority also worked in non-commerce service industries, in the public sector, and in farming.⁷¹

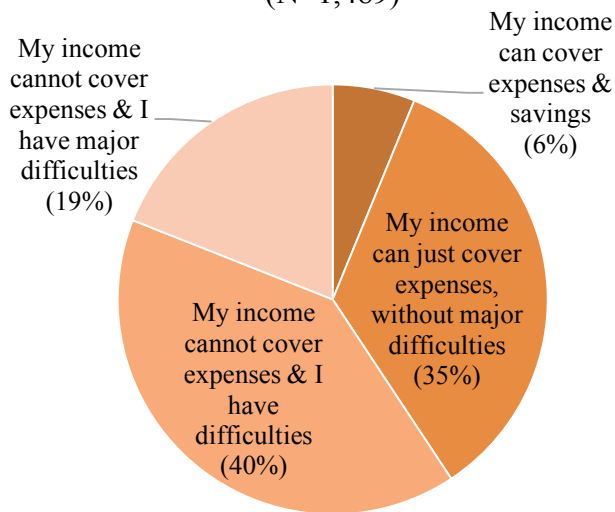
⁶⁸ In 2012 there were about 16.5 million cell phones in Ecuador; with a 2014 national population of 15.7 million people, this figure indicates that most of the population has at least one cell phone line. There were also about 2.3 million land telephone lines in Ecuador in 2012. CIA World Factbook, *op. cit.*

⁶⁹ This is not the valid percent, but rather indicates that 20% of the total sample reported using the internet at least once a day; of those who reported being internet users, 61% said that they are only at least once a day.

⁷⁰ The 2013 unemployment rate in Ecuador was 5%. CIA World Factbook, *op. cit.*

⁷¹ In 2012, the labor force in Ecuador was 28% agriculture, 18% industry, and 54% services. CIA World Factbook, *op. cit.*

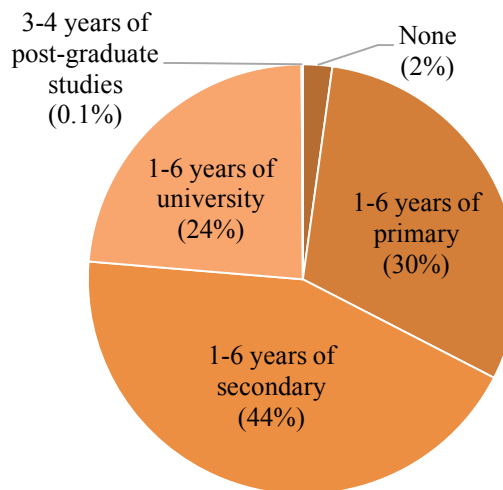
Figure B.3
Most Respondents Felt Their Income Was Inadequate
(N=1,489)



Next, respondents were asked, “*With the total family income, which statement best describes your income status...?*” As shown in Figure B.3 below, a considerable number of respondents (59%) felt that their household income could not adequately cover their living expenses. Just 35% felt that they could cover expenses without major difficulties, and only 6% reported that their income allowed them to have enough left over for savings.⁷²

As mentioned above, a large majority of respondents had more than a primary education, with 68% of respondents having at least one year of secondary level education or higher. In addition, 24% of respondents reported having one to six years of university education.

Figure B.4
Most Respondents Attended at Least Some
Secondary School (N=1,503)

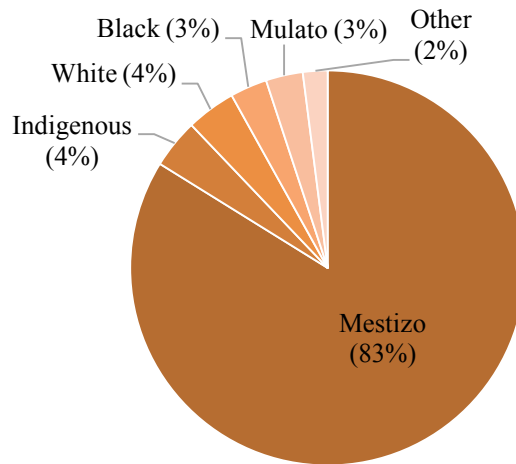


⁷² In 2012, 27% of the population in Ecuador was living below the poverty line. CIA World Factbook, *op. cit.*

Ethnic Identity

A large majority (83%) of the sample self-identified as mestizo (mixed race). The remaining respondents identified as indigenous, white, black, mulato, or claimed another ethnic identity, as shown in Figure B.5.⁷³

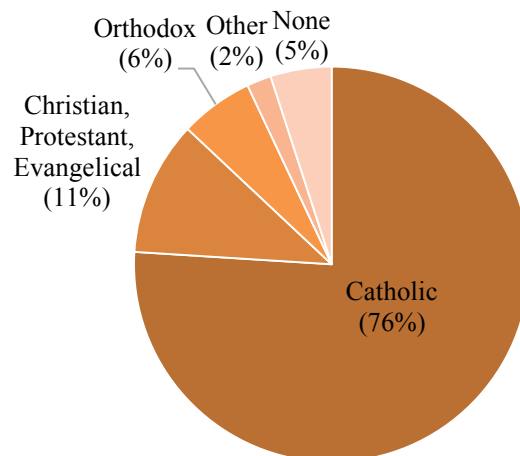
Figure B.5
Most Respondents Identified as Mestizo (N=1,494)



Religious Identity and Salience

When asked about their religious affiliation, most respondents (76%) identified as Catholic, as Figure B.6 illustrates, followed by Christian, Protestant, or Evangelical (11%).⁷⁴

Figure B.6
Most Respondents Identified as Catholic (N=1,496)

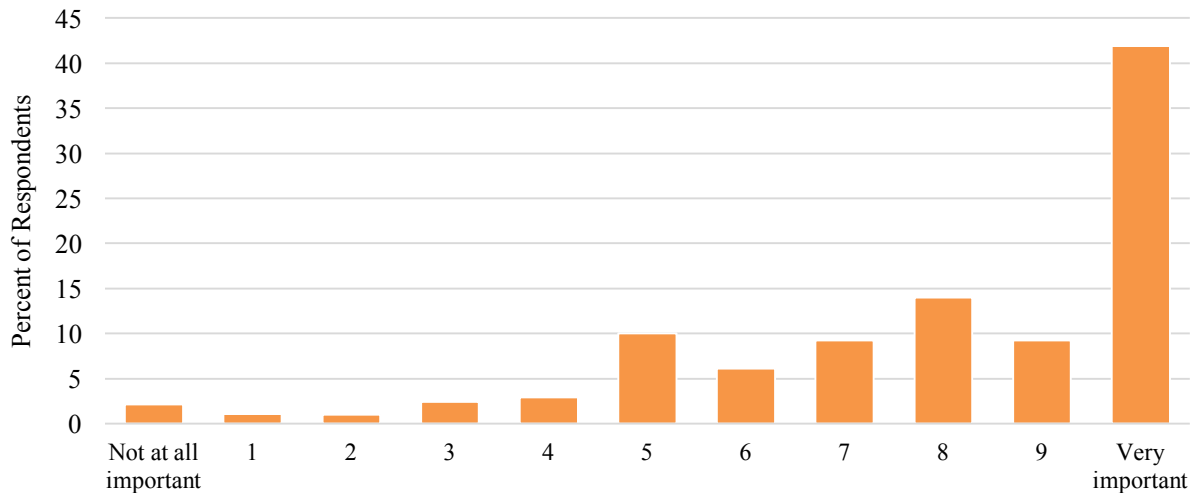


Respondents also claimed that religion was highly salient in their daily lives. When asked, *“On a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 means not at all important and 10 very important, could you tell me how important religion is in your life?”* approximately 42% selected 10, the highest level. The mean level of importance across all respondents was 8 (see Figure B.7).

⁷³ According to the 2010 census, the population of Ecuador is 72% mestizo (mixed Amerindian and white), 7% Montubio, 7% Afroecuadorian, 7% Amerindian, 6% white, and 0.4% “other.” CIA World Factbook, *op. cit.*

⁷⁴ The CIA World Factbook lists Ecuadorian religious affiliations as 95% Catholic and 5% “other.” CIA World Factbook, *op. cit.*

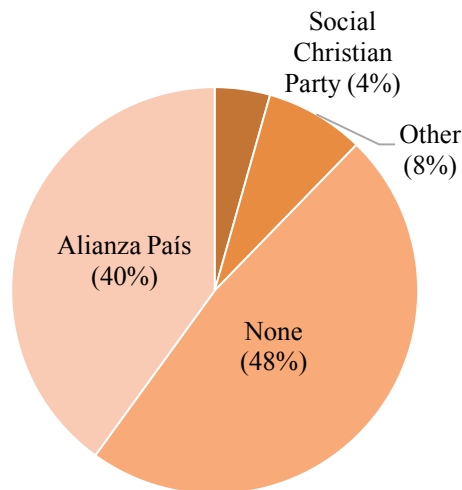
Figure B.7
 Respondents Reported That Religion is Very Important in Their Lives
 (N=1,473)



Political Orientation and Participation

To determine political affiliation, respondents were asked, “Regardless of the party you voted for, do you normally consider yourself a supporter of [which party]?” The majority of respondents (48%) did not identify with any political party; of those who did, most supported

Figure B.8
 Nearly Half of Respondents Did Not Belong to a Political Party (N=1,470)



Alianza País, the party of the current president (see Figure B.8).

Survey participants were then asked, “In terms of your political orientation, where would you place yourself on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means ‘politically left’ and 10 means ‘politically right’?” More respondents (10%) identified with the far political right than the far political left (6%) with the mean political orientation landing in the middle at 5, as Figure B.9 shows.

Figure B.9
Most Respondents Saw Their Political Orientation as Moderate
(N=1,282)

