Master’s thesis
Changing Identities in Ecuador: the influence of Intercultural policies on ethnic identification

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# Table of Contents

1 Chapter I. Introduction .............................................................. 1  
2.1 Research Aims and Objectives .............................................. 1  
2.2 Ecuadorian Background ......................................................... 1  
2.2.1 Ecuador’s historical background ....................................... 1  
2.2.2 Ecuador’s demographic background .................................. 3  
2.3 Research Question .............................................................. 3

2 Chapter II. Methodology .......................................................... 6  
3.1 Introduction ................................................................. 6  
3.2 Research methodology ....................................................... 6  
3.2.1 Qualitative Methods ...................................................... 7  
3.2.2 Semi-structured Interviews ............................................ 8  
3.3 Data Analysis ................................................................. 9

3 Chapter III. Interculturality and Intercultural Policies .................. 11  
4.1 Introduction ................................................................. 11  
4.2 Culture and Interculturality .................................................. 11  
4.2.1 Interculturality Models .................................................. 12  
4.3 Interculturality in the Ecuadorian Context ............................... 14  
4.3.1 Interculturality in the actual times / Expert’s perspectives ...... 16  
4.4 Intercultural Policies .......................................................... 19  
4.4.1 Intercultural Policies in Ecuadorian Context ....................... 20

4 Chapter IV. The issue of Ethnic Identification .......................... 23  
5.1 Introduction ................................................................. 23  
5.2 Collective ethnic Identity ..................................................... 23  
5.3 Individual ethnic identity and Self-ethnic identification .......... 24  
5.3.1 Self-ethnic identification / How Ecuadorians identify themselves 26

5 Chapter V. Ethnic Identity Change ............................................ 30  
6.1 Introduction ................................................................. 30  
6.2 Processes or tools that cause ethnic change (politics vision) ....... 30  
6.2.1 Personal perspectives about the change of ethnic identity in Ecuador ................................................................. 31  
6.3 Census as tool for ethnic identities re-configuration ............... 36  
6.3.1 The National Census and Ethnic identification in Ecuador ..... 37

6 Chapter VI. Intercultural Policies and the issue of ethnic identification 39  
7.1 Introduction ................................................................. 39  
7.2 Ethnic identity and Intercultural Policies in Ecuador ............... 39  
7.2.1 The Influence of Intercultural Policies on Ethnic identification / Personal opinions from experts ................................................. 41  
7.3 In closing ................................................................. 45
8  Literature........................................................................................................................................ 49
9  Appendix......................................................................................................................................... 54
  9.1  Expert statements translation........................................................................................................ 54
   Interculturality in the Ecuadorian Context......................................................................................... 54
   Personal perspectives about the change of ethnic identity in Ecuador57
   The Influence of Intercultural Policies on Ethnic identification/58
   Personal opinions from experts ........................................................................................................ 58
9.2  Appendix 2..................................................................................................................................... 61
2 Chapter I. Introduction

2.1 Research Aims and Objectives

The aim of this study is to investigate how Intercultural Policies and other socio-political means can influence ethnic identification of Ecuadorians. This study aims to gain an insight in the perspectives of different Ecuadorian experts that work in areas influenced by these policies. This will be done through qualitative analysis of semi-structured interviews with five academics, three teachers and two community leaders. Additionally, this paper will deal with the idea of Interculturality and ethnic identification, first by examining theoretical and historical frameworks and second by relating specific experts statements rooted in Ecuadorian context.

2.2 Ecuadorian Background

2.2.1 Ecuador’s historical background

Ecuador is a country that constructed for a long time the idea of a “Mestizo Nation,” wherein the political discourse promoted the status of a cultural and racial mixture, where the State and the majority of the population established two common ancestors: Spanish and indigenous. However, this socio-cultural agreement of being “mestizos” was commonly plagued by

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1 Anibal Quijano emphasizes the relationship between the origins of racism with the discovering of America. He expresses that the idea of race in its modern sense, has no known history before the constitution of America, it was originated when appeared the conquerors and the conquered, he insists that racism emerges from colonial / modern capitalism. (quoted by Jo 2013)
discrimination and racism against ethnic minority groups. People of indigenous and Afro descent were the targets of such social stigma.

This exclusionary reality was a legacy of colonial times and survived over centuries even after the independence in 1822. During the first centuries of the Republic the general situation in the country was mostly characterized by political and territorial instability. The Ecuadorian political scene was an experimental one, experiencing clerical dictatorships, radical-liberal governments, conservative populist governments and a military dictatorship in 1972. Some social democratic and conservative presidents who finished their terms followed this period. From 1997 to 2007 there were seven different presidents in power (Küper, Valiente, 2014). This political instability and the pre-existing racist social structures helped to conserve the idea that to be Ecuadorian, one should be white or mestizo, the indigenous and Afro descendants were constantly under cultural assimilation processes.

In 2007 Rafael Correa Delgado was elected president, the political situation calmed down and a new National Constitution was approved thanks to a National Referendum. This new Constitution represented a new conjecture for ethnic vindication and cultural reinforcement. This new political response includes the declaration of Ecuador as a Plurinational and Intercultural country (Ecuadorian Constitution 2008). This declaration reproduces the aspiration that ethnic groups fostered with the movements and struggles in the eighties and nineties. Thus, in the last decade Ecuador was transformed from the “Mestizo country” into a “Plurinational country”, a political idea that assumes, recognizes and promotes cultural and ethnic diversity based on an Intercultural dialogue (National Development Plan 2013-2017).
2.2.2 Ecuador’s demographic background

The multilingual and multinational country of Ecuador has 16,335,280 inhabitants distributed throughout four geographic regions: Coast, Andes, Amazon and Galapagos Island. Ecuador's citizens are made up of 14 Nationalities: Awa, Epera, Chachi, Tsa’chi (Tsachila), Kichwa, A’i (Cofán), Pai (Secoya), Bai (Siona), Wao, Achuar, Shiwiar, Shuar, Sapara and Andwa. These nationalities embrace 20 towns that include cultures such as: Kichwa (13 towns), Valdivia, Huancavelica, Manta, Yumbo, Afro-Ecuadorian, Montubio and Mestizo. In an extent of 256,370 km², 14 indigenous languages of 8 different linguistic families are spoken: Barbecue, Chocó, Jivarı, Quechua, Tukano, Zaparo, and two separate families Cofan (A’i) and Wao Terero.

2.3 Research Question

Étnicamente yo soy indígena, de padres pujilies, indios kichwa hablantes. Aunque mi papá a la edad de 18 años ya estaba mestizo, el había salido

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2 Indigenous nationality: It is a group of millenary and constitutive towns of Ecuadorian State, which define themselves as such, with a historical identity, language, and common culture, living in a territory. They have institutions and traditional forms of economic, legal, social and political organization.

3 Indigenous Towns: They are defined as the original collectivities, formed by communities or centers with cultural identities that distinguish them from other sectors of Ecuadorian society; they are governed by its own systems of social, economic, political and legal organization.

Retrieved from: http://www.inec.gob.ec/estadisticas/index
a los 10 años de su comunidad, ya estaba sin kichwa sin nada, él ya era mestizo. Nosotros nos criamos en Quito en la ciudad mestizos prácticamente y hasta cuando yo tuve mis veinte y tantos años yo era mestiza. Hasta cuando empecé a investigar mis ancestros; entonces senti que eso no era malo, senti que era algo importante para mí y que podía definirme dentro de algo(P.Ch. indigenous-teacher).

The initial quotation gives us an insight into the intricate process that “ethnic identification” implies for many Ecuadorians, this short personal explanation could exemplify an analogous story for people belonging to ethnic minorities. In fact, ethnic identification represents an interesting and complex issue of analysis, in this country where the majority of the inhabitants define themselves as “Mestizo” and the rest of the population belonging to ethnic minorities experiencing fluctuations between different cultural identities. “Ethnic identity” as a group practice of indigenous vindication was a challenge to the premise that indigenous and Afro descendant people should be converted/or converted themselves in “mestizos citizens”. However, due to structural discrimination and exclusion many people of these groups preferred to assimilate the white-mestizo culture. As also seen in the quotation the practice of cultural assimilation was considered normal in a society marked by the phenomena of “mestizaje”, which signified not only a biological mixture but also a cultural domination and synthesis of ethnocentric strategies (Etxeberria, 2001).

This social reality was a framework for ethnic conflict, on one side there were the majority groups, white- mestizo peoples supported by institutional, political and academic structures that excluded or limited the participation of minorities. On the other side where the ethnic minorities in constant social struggle and seeking ethnic vindication. Therefore, ethnic conflict lasted centuries however in the last years different courses have been set; a
number of political processes occurring in the Andean Region in Latin America influenced the growth of a new social paradigm in Ecuador. This new socio-political paradigm goes on the contrary way to the idea of a “Mestizo” or “homogenous” country, this new paradigm finds in cultural and ethnic diversity a basis for social harmony. In fact, Ecuador presents itself as a Pluricultural and Intercultural land, such political discourse/strategy is supported by a number of advances that permit its change, here the “Intercultural policies” play a central role. These are State’s responses designed to change inequality and exclusive social structures. Besides these policies a number of public institutions/means have been developed with the idea to promote “Interculturality” in sectors like education, health, and justice.

At this stage of the social circumstances where the re-foundation on the State aims for the realization of a Plurinational country it can be suitable to question: whether “Interculturality” is already an assumed and understood idea for Ecuadorians? How are these “Intercultural policies” approaches the idea of ethnic identity? How could these Intercultural policies influence ethnic identification of Ecuadorians?

Thus, this study stems from this line of questioning; the following work will analyze different Ecuadorians’ visions/thoughts about the influence of Intercultural policies on ethnic identification. In addition to this analysis an insight in themes such as Interculturality and ethnic identity will be provided. The importance of such study is based on the desire to foster qualitative research that goes beyond the presentation of governmental or statistical documents, in this way personal opinion are the central part of the investigation, furthermore they will be use as reference on relational deductions with theoretical data.
3 Chapter II. Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The following chapter will describe the research methodology of this study; it will explain the reasons that led to consider the use of qualitative research. As complementary information the research methods used in this investigation will be detailed as well as the data analysis procedure.

3.2 Research methodology

In order to answer the research question and engage in the descriptive nature of the topic, qualitative research was considered as an appropriated choice. Qualitative research obtains relevance in the study of social relations, due to the fact that this kind of research takes the researcher forward to inductive strategies; that means that instead of starting from theories and testing them, sensitizing concepts are required for approaching the social contexts to be studied (Flick, 2009). This thesis uses open questions to explore experts’ perspectives, which allows for an important reference of visions, opinions and personal thoughts. In fact, the main focus of this research is inductive, trying to develop an interpretation of how Intercultural Policies and other political means influenced ethnic identification of Ecuadorians. The descriptive and analytical part of this study will be complemented with the preliminary literature research, which permits to have a theoretical and historical background on topics such as: Interculturality, public policies and ethnic identification.
The methodological design was develop on the basis of the Grounded Theory. As is explained by Flick, the Grounded Theory is a circular process in which the researches gives priority to the data and the field under study over theoretical assumptions; this feature makes a contrast with theory-driven or linear models that normally follow a strict process of research\textsuperscript{4}. In this case theories should not be applied to the subject of study, they are going to be discovered and formulated during the work with the field and the empirical data (Flick, 2009). In the case of this research thesis, the empirical data will be used only to describe some fundaments that answer the research question; moreover it will be establish a number of relations between the theoretical backgrounds to the expert's visions to deepen into Ecuadorian reality. In anyway will be generalized to the point of producing a rule or model.

3.2.1 Qualitative Methods

A quantitative research methodology permits the integration of empirical data with theoretical, previously gathered, analyzed information. In this study, the empirical data collection was accomplished through semi-structured interviews; these kinds of interviews are often an appropriated data source for such qualitative research because they allow the researcher to delve deeply into social and personal matters. The researcher set up a group of predetermined open-ended questions, with other questions emerging from the dialogue (DiCicco-Bloom, Crabtree, 2006). The interviewees were chosen thanks to theoretical sampling, which is an important strategy in qualitative oriented research; it conducts the researcher to choose the

\textsuperscript{4} Linear investigations are based on the phases of: theory, hypothesis, operationalization, sampling, collecting data, interpretation and validation (Flick, 2009).
participants according to investigation needs and on the base of their knowledge and proximity to the research issue (Mayring, 2007).

### 3.2.2 Semi-structured Interviews

In this study ten semi-structured interviews were conducted with ten Ecuadorians. They were considered as experts, given that they work in cultural, academic, educational and political areas. In fact, the development of their professional activities requests certain level of knowledge associated to the research topics. Obviously, should be take into consideration that ethnic identification is also a personal process influence by the cultural belonging of each expert, due to this feature it was considered suitable to integrate their self-ethnic identification in each one of their statements. Looking for a clearer interview structure, the main group was divided into three subgroups. The subgroup’s division was relayed on the need to obtain similar information even when the interviewer’s questions were different; three questions guides were developed based on the distinct work context of the subgroups. The three subgroups:

- The first subgroup was formed by five people, including: an anthropologist, a sociologist, a historian, a public servant and a master student who lives in Germany; these experts work as much on public institutions as on the private sector.
- Three teachers formed a second subgroup; two of them work on public schools, one in a big city and the other one in a rural area. The third teacher works for the private sector.
The last subgroup was formed with two community leaders who identified themselves as indigenous and have experience in community work and public policies.

Due to the fact that the researcher resides in Germany and the interviewees live in Ecuador, nine from the ten interviews were done throughout video calls. The researcher conducted nine interviews including one that was made in Berlin. An Ecuadorian collaborator personally conducted an interview with a community leader in the Amazon Region in Ecuador since the Internet in this area was deficit. The ten interviews were conducted once per individual and each one took between thirty minutes and one hour. The interviewees were promised anonymity and gave the permission to record the interview. The group of interviewees was diverse, an issue that represented an advantage as well as a challenge for the investigation. It was an advantage since the research questions addresses the approaching to personal opinions of Ecuadorians; Ecuador is a diverse country, which means that the diverse of thoughts and visions attend to this issue. However, it was a challenge then associated opinions to certain research categories were far away from each other and this aspect could imply a very widespread understanding.

3.3 Data Analysis

On the contrary to the inductive research design of this study, the empirical data was analyzed by means of a deductive category application, this procedure of qualitative content analysis works with theoretically derived aspects of analysis, bringing them in connection with the text (Mayring, 2000). Mayring (2000) explicates that the main idea of this deductive
process is to define the categories by means of explicit definitions, examples and coding rules, this action helps to determine exactly under what circumstances a text passage can be coded with a category. In this study the research categories were briefly conceptualized, that allowed to determine variables/subcategories, which were structured under the coding rules. The empirical data was carefully read and highlighted after that synthetized and ordered.

The expert’s examples/statements are the central part of this thesis; they will be quote and included along the thesis text, most of them has been paraphrased or summarized. Some of these statements will be included into the theoretical and historical insight with the aim to link this process to personal experiences; furthermore empirical data examples will answer in a descriptive way the research question. Additionally it should be said that the researcher has developed this deductive data analysis on the base of a constructivist point of view, which clarifies that all phenomena are time and context specific. Hence, the insight given can only regard a reconstruction of subjective perspectives of people in specific situations (Mayring, 2007).

Finally, it must be understood that the objective of the empirical data analyses and its inclusion on the thesis aim to describe important visions/process instead of generalizing them. It could be suitable to cite Mayring (2007), who says:

Descriptive studies want to prepare the ground for generalizations in the sense of collecting specific observations as basis for discovering similarities or rules. Good descriptive studies try to present the phenomena in a broad range, to explore different contexts and so they have to reflect on later generalizations (Mayring, 2007, pag.14).
4 Chapter III. Interculturality and Intercultural Policies

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will firstly give an insight into the general concept of Interculturality as well as a brief explanation of three different models of Interculturality: the European, North American and Latin American. This academic and political approach will permit a better understanding on the development of this concept in the Ecuadorian context and will also be a framework to the comprehension of experts’ statements analysis. Secondly, it will be examine the meaning of Intercultural Policies and the advance of such policies in Ecuador.

4.2 Culture and Interculturality

In order to fully understand Interculturality, it is important to first clearly define “culture”, which is theorized as follows:

Culture consists in patterned ways of thinking, feeling and reacting, acquired and transmitted mainly by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values (Kluckhohn, 1951)\(^5\).

\(^5\) Retrieved from: https://us.sagepub.com/sites/default/files/upm-binaries/48150_ch_1.pdf (10.07.15)
Interculturality is a term that has been deeply discussed in the last years, the importance of this discussion lies on the reality of modern societies that each time is more diverse and multicultural. This societies’ reality is associated with their own historical pluriculturality and also the actual phenomenon of migration, in these modern societies there is an intention on finding a way that permits a respectful relation between different cultures, avoiding ethnocentrism and assimilationist forms. Thus, Interculturality reflects the condition, dialogue or social conduct towards this respectful relation (Etxeberria, 2001).

The development of this term is closely related to Educational and Academic fields, a number of theoretical approaches have been made to understand what Interculturality represents, however it’s more basic understanding could come from the different social contexts/models where this dialogue is foster.

### 4.2.1 Interculturality Models

According to a North American context the idea of Interculturality is enclosed within another term, “Multiculturalism”, this idea entered into the North American context especially between the years of 1960-1970. The construction of this concept appeared associated with the development of ethnic studies and also to the origin of cultural revitalization movements in a time where social collectives mainly formed by Afro Americans demanded vindication of rights. To put it one way, the demand in this region was not based on the exigency of a harmonic and respectful coexistence between the different cultural groups, but rather the established requirement was to analyze the institutional structure that permitted the exclusion of certain groups and moreover the marginality of these groups in an alleged
democratic reality (Dominguez, 2011). This social context built up its own idea of Multicultural education:

Multicultural education is also a reform movement that is trying to change the schools and other educational institutions so that students from all social-class, gender, racial, language and cultural groups will have an equal opportunity to learn. Multicultural education involves changes in the total school or educational environment; it is not limited to curricular changes (Banks.J, Banks.Ch, 2009, pag.4).

On the other hand in Europe, Interculturality is related to the migration phenomena, this term was assumed more as a way of communication, and has been integrated as well in pedagogical studies. Europe proposes the Interculturality as a democratic way of learning between diverse cultural groups (Godenzzi, 2005). In the European context the intercultural education appears as a political discourse in the eighties, it was defined as a way of education according to cultural diversity and in the search for democratic coexistence. Europe articulates Intercultural education to the notion of “competences”, in this sense both majority and minority groups should develop or learn intercultural abilities, which permits them to have the same opportunities in educational context as well as in the job market (Dominguez, 2011).

In the case of Latin America, Interculturality or “Interculturalidad”⁶, responds more to the idea of rights vindication and social struggle. The genesis of Interculturality in Latin America was influenced on one side by European thought and other by the “Indigenous Movement” and its struggle for rights; between others for an appropriated Intercultural Bilingual Education (Valiente, 2004). In this region “Interculturalidad” go forward than the basic understanding and recognizing of cultural diversity, the main issue that the intercultural dialogue tries to solve here is to avoid the unequal conditions

⁶ To emphasize the Spanish translation.
where cultural, ethnic or social interchanges occur (Godenzzi, 2005). Described by Walsh:

The Interculturality in this region of the world, means power, indicates building processes and influence of thoughts, voices, knowledge, practices, and social powers "others"; another way of thinking and acting in relation to and against modernity / coloniality7 (Walsh, 2006). 8

Since the nineties the “Interculturalidad” in Latin America was presented almost exclusively in the indigenous organizations’ agenda. However, important political events occurring in the last decade made this term turn into a significant part of states discourses in the Andean Region countries. The election of Evo Morales as the first indigenous president of Bolivia in 2005 marked the emergence of indigenous people on the political scene and thereby the emergence of the idea of “Interculturalidad”(Aman, 2014). Bolivia and Ecuador are the countries were the objective of an intercultural dialogue has been included in different spheres of the social and political life; these states have integrated the intercultural transversal idea into their Educational Systems.

### 4.3 Interculturality in the Ecuadorian Context

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7**Coloniality refers to a pattern of power that emerged as a result of modern colonialism, but instead of being limited to a formal relationship of power between two individuals or nations, rather refers to the way that work, knowledge, authority and inter-relationships are interconnected through the global capitalist market and the idea of race**(Maldonado,2007 p:131).

8**My Traslation from: “La interculturalidad en esta región del mundo, significa potencia e indica procesos de construir y hacer incidir pensamientos, voces, saberes, prácticas, y poderes sociales “otros”; una forma “otra” de pensar y actuar con relación a y en contra de la modernidad/colonialidad”(Walsh, 2006).**
Interculturality in Ecuador cannot be understood without having first a historical approach to the indigenous struggles and the development of Intercultural Bilingual Education (IBE). Both events were connected to a cultural and ethnic vindication process that indigenous organizations promoted during 1950-1990. The starting point of this process was the requirement for a suitable bilingual education for indigenous communities; important indigenous leaders such as Dolores Cacuango promoted the idea of community organization and initiated the creation of bilingual primary schools for indigenous children. This initiative was followed by some educational proposals that came especially from the Ecuadorian Catholic Church and international NGOs⁹, a number of agreements and community projects were settled during this period. The main aim of this process was the formalization of Intercultural Bilingual Education, an objective that was achieved later on in 1982 (Moya, Ramírez 2007); this kind of education was designed on a base of cultural, linguistic and community pertinences (Küper, Valiente, 2014). The IBE permitted not only the schooling of indigenous children but also strengthened the community organization. During the eighties the country testified the rising of a strong indigenous movement in Latin America, different Ecuadorian Indigenous Organizations¹⁰ started to protest against an assimilationist and exclusionary society. In the nineties, the same organizations promoted a number of “Levantamientos

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⁹ It is important to remember that community management is not the only history of the IBE. It also responds to a strong influence of NGO “s (especially the German GTZ), churches (particularly the Summer Institute of Linguistics) and other national and international organizations (World Bank, USAID, UNICEF, etc.), many had public or privite allied interest to the state, with a different vision from the sociopolitical and cultural purposes of the communities and organizations. (Walsh, 2009) My traslation.

¹⁰ In the early seventies was born the indigenous organization "Ecuador Runacunapac Riccharimui" ECUARUNARI ("The awakening of the Ecuadorian Indian"), during the same period, the indigenous people of the Ecuadorian Amazon also constituted a new type of organization, the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of the Ecuadorian Amazon, CONFENIAE. They conformed the organizational structures that later on would be the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador, CONAIE by (Dávalos ,2002). My translation.
Indígenas”¹¹, to request social changes (Guerrero, 1996). Until this point the idea of Interculturality was used exclusively to describe a form of schooling and in some cases a form of relation from the ethics groups toward the white-mestizo society. During the nineties the IBE was administrated with autonomy by the indigenous organizations, but with the coming to power of Rafael Correa Government and the redaction of a new Constitution in 2008, the idea of Interculturality aimed a National sphere, it was included in nearly all public dependences as a transversal idea, in fact the IBE was integrated to the Education Ministry and in 2011 a new law declared/ promulgated the National Educational System as Intercultural (Küper, Valiente 2014)

4.3.1 Interculturality in the actual times / Expert’s perspectives

As has been explained, the political changes in Ecuador permitted the ascension of the idea of Interculturality to the National sphere, however this idea could still be a distant concept for most of the Ecuadorian citizens, due to this issue in this study will be analyzed experts perspectives about Interculturality in Ecuador, to give the reader an approach towards a more objective meaning and actual state of this idea/dialogue in Ecuadorian society. To analyze the opinions of different social actors, it will be use a theoretical approach to Interculturality described by Catherine Walsh¹² (2009) who defines Interculturality from three different theoretical

¹¹ Today, the word "Levantamiento" integrates the national political lexicon. It was conceptualized in 1990 by the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE), originally defined a rebellion on a farm; however, now raises at least three connotations among Ecuadorians: evokes a public manifestation of a population, "levantamiento" implies a widespread mobilization caused by a political problem of general nature, it must raise the national level and to be considered as a “levantamiento”, the indigenous protest has to be a concrete and symbolic practice by means of public space occupation(Guerrero,1996). My translation.

¹² Catherine Walsh is senior professor and director in the "Latin American Cultural Studies " doctorate at the Universidad Andina Simon Bolívar in Ecuador. She has a long trajectory accompanying the processes of indigenous and Afro movements in Latin America.
perspectives: a relational, functional and critic. The first perspective of Interculturality, the “relational”, embraces more a basic form of general contact and exchange between cultures, i.e., between people, practices, knowledge, values and different cultural traditions. This contact could be developed in an equal or unequal situation. In the second perspective the intercultural dialogue is rooted into the recognition of diversity and cultural difference, it aims to include and promote tolerance, coexistence and dialogue, however, it is “functional” because it does not question the causes of social and cultural asymmetry, it is compatible with the logic of the existing neo-liberal model. The third one is called “critical Interculturality”, it does not start from the problem of diversity/difference but from the racial-colonial-structural problem. From this position, the intercultural dialogue is seen as a project that is built from the people’s demand and from the subalternity, in contrast to the functional perspective. It requires the transformation of the structures, institutions and social relations and according to Walsh is something to be built.

Experts were asked to give a personal opinion about the meaning of “Interculturality”, to deepen the theme and establish theoretical relations, the statements were associated to the corresponding relational, functional or critical perspective of Walsh (2009):

1. *Es la interrelación entre personas con identidades culturales específicas, diferentes uno de otro y a la vez respetuosos entre sí* (P.Ch mestiza)

2. *Aquí dentro de la comunidad entendemos la interculturalidad como una relación de todas las etnias que conforman el Ecuador, cada una con su propia identidad* (L.Y indigenous-Kichwa)
3. *El criterio de las nacionalidades muy propio es que nuestras actividades pueden ser compartidas, nuestras fiestas, nuestras celebraciones, pero siempre solicitamos el respeto por parte del resto de pueblos y nuestro respeto hacia el resto de pueblos, solamente de esa manera podemos hacer interculturalidad*(P.C indigenous)

4. *El tema de la interculturalidad, no ha evolucionado, seguimos con las mismas formas de exclusión, que vienen del discurso de Interculturalidad antiguo, no se ha usado procesos exactos con los que se pueda emprender diálogos interculturales* (C.C mestizo)

5. *Hablas muchas veces de interculturalidad, nuestra constitución habla de interculturalidad pero en la vida diaria a veces no sabemos que es, manejamos ese concepto muy a la ligera, no lo vamos incorporando de a poco, no lo vamos incorporando primero desde los mestizos, primero desde lo más básico desde la urbanidad* (A.M mestiza)

**4.3.1.1 Discussion**

In statements 1, 2 and 3 we find words such as coexistence, interchange, relation and respect, the same that could be linked to a *relational* or *functional* perspective of Interculturality, interviewees are aware of the social context were an intercultural dialogue could take place, however they did not express if they believe whether inequality or exclusion situation are limiting this dialogue. On the other hand a *critical* perspective could be found in the statements 4 and 5, from these pronouncements could be
inferred that the interviewees have a critical position about how Intercultural dialogue has been developed, and they explain that the dialogue still maintains exclusive forms and could belong to an old political discourse. According to their point of view Interculturality has not been enough understood to be socialize in the urban sphere.

Besides, these perspectives of Interculturality there were found two different positions about the foster of this idea in Ecuadorian society, the first two interviewees see Interculturality as something that has been already assumed by Ecuadorians, a reality that is present in our society, perhaps due to diversity of cultures that have been coexisting in this territory from aboriginal times. However, there was also a position that expresses a kind of inconformity towards the situation in which this relation takes place, to this could be added that Intercultural dialogue is something that is still being built in Ecuador, is a political as well as cultural process that till today have approach an important space in academic and political fields, although most of the good intentions of creating a new intercultural society stay in a discourse, and are maybe inadequate or not radical enough to enable a structural transformation of society(Aman, 2014)

4.4 Intercultural Policies

According to Mata-Benito (2003): 

*The development of an intercultural epistemology inquires circumstances to allow dialogue between the types of knowledge on equal and reciprocal conditions. These cannot be built only through learning intercultural attitudes and abilities, it is also necessary to question in a critical manner the economic, social and political issues, in the framework of the tensions*
between the affirmation and denial of differences, and power relationships

(Mata-Benito. 2013 p.48).

Starting from this premise, the intercultural dialogue must first of all question current social inequalities, moreover it should look for uniform conditions that permit a fair cultural interchange, it is there where Intercultural policies come into play. Intercultural policies, as well as any other kind of public policies, are responses or means to solve certain social problems. From a legal framework these policies constitute activities made from Public Institutions, acting directly or with some type of influence in the citizens; they are purposeful, intentional, planned and not just reactive or casual (Porta, 1988).

In fact, since the nineties in the Latin American political context, Intercultural policies aimed towards a legal recognizing of ethnic and cultural diversity promoted the existence of ethno-cultural identities and its protection and right of equality before the law (Walsh, 2009).

4.4.1 Intercultural Policies in Ecuadorian Context

In Ecuador, during the eighties and the nineties, the Intercultural policies were basically understood as responses to indigenous/ethnic issues and were almost only visualized thought out Intercultural Bilingual Education. These policies were concomitant to International instruments such as the Agreement N.169 of International Labour Organization\(^\text{13}\), and also to a number of advances in legal matters such as agrarian reforms between the years 1964-1973(Rodríguez, 2012), this conjuncture will influence the declaration of Ecuador as a pluricultural State in 1998\(^\text{14}\). Later on in 2008,

\(^{13}\) C169 - Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169), see also www.ilo.org

\(^{14}\) The 1998 Constitution defines Ecuador as a multicultural and multi-ethnic country, this formulation could be seen as culturalist and static versus and to the political emphasis and cultural interaction of the 2008 Constitution, which declares the Ecuadorian State as plurinational and intercultural. The truth is that the 1998 Constitution also established an extensive catalog of collective rights and various references to indigenous cultures in areas
with the assumption of Rafael Correa Delgado Government and the creation of a new Constitution, Ecuador was defined as a plurinational and Intercultural country. In this way the idea of Interculturality arrive to a national sphere and is incorporated as a transversal idea in a new political model. This brought about the appearance of the idea or social objective of "Sumak Kawsay" or “Good living”\(^{15}\), which as described by Acosta (2010) is an opportunity to build a different society supported by a peaceful coexistence in diversity and harmony with nature, starting from the recognition of different cultural values that exist in the country and the world. The fundaments of el “Sumak Kawsay” are presented in 99 articles of the National Constitution (Acosta, 2010), in addition they delineated the political, social and economic objectives established in a “National Plan of Good Living”\(^{16}\). The plan is developed in a way that in order to achieve the national objectives, a number of public policies and goals were developed, there are twelve national objectives for Good Living, that are organized into three areas: 1) change in power relationships in order to construct the people’s power, 2) rights, liberties and capacities for Good Living; and 3) economic and productive transformation based on changing the productive structure. In the same Plan it is explained that it “represents a clearly-defined political position and sets the governance principles to which the country aspires and will implement during the coming four years”(Plan of Good Living 2013-2017). This affirmation implicates that this Plan can be contemplated as an own political strategy from the actual government and its political party; this Plan could be maintained or changed by future governments.

\(^{15}\) The Good Living is not a novelty or an originality of the Montecristi Constitution. Good living is part of a long search for an alternative life forged in the heat of social struggle particularly from indigenous peoples. It was thought long before that President Rafael Correa took the political power (Acosta, 2010).

4.4.1.1 Intercultural policies in Educational Fields

The Educational system has been an important scene for the construction of Interculturality and ethnic identity in Ecuador, in the eighties when the Intercultural Bilingual Education (IBE) formed part on the public politics, the indigenous organizations found in this opportunity the best way for community organization and political mobilization. The IBE was for a long time a response to needs of indigenous communities, it was designed especially by the same indigenous organizations, with the help of interinstitutional agreements and international NGOs, the requirements were the cultural and linguistic pertinence and the integration to Indigenous cosmovision. Important institutions were created in order to administrate strategic lineaments of the indigenous aspiration. So that, in the eighties the National Direction of Intercultural Bilingual Education (DINEIB)\textsuperscript{17} was funded and placed in charge of the planning, organization, direction, control, coordination and evaluation of the indigenous education. (Moya, Ramírez, 2007).

Since the eighties there has been a discussion on the inclusion of Interculturality into the National Educational System. This debate was concluded in 2011 with the promulgation of the Intercultural Education Law, this legal recognition included the idea of Interculturality into the primary and secondary levels of Hispanic schooling and at the same time the DINEIB was integrated to the Ministry of Education as a dependent Secretariat.

\textsuperscript{17} Spanish: Dirección Nacional de Educación Intercultural Bilingue
5 Chapter IV. The issue of Ethnic Identification

5.1 Introduction

The following chapter will outline the conception of ethnic identity, which will be examined firstly as collective identity and secondly as self-ethnic identity. Furthermore, this chapter presents an analysis about self-ethnic identification of experts, besides of making an approach to the Ecuadorian ethnic processes.

5.2 Collective ethnic Identity

To clarify the theme of collective ethnic identity it is appropriated, to consider the meaning of “ethnic group”, explained by Barth “an ethnic group is a population that is largely biologically self perpetuating, shares fundamental cultural values, makes up a field of communication and interaction, has a membership which identifies itself, and it is identified by others”(Barth, 1998 pag.11). In Ecuadorian context ethnic groups were considered as minorities in front of the “white-mestizo” majority. IN the past, belonging to a minority group meant to stay in a constant situation of inequality and exclusion, the historically excluded ethnic groups were indigenous and Afro descendant people, which in spite of the suffered violence, repression and exploitation, were able to build a collective identity and an own sense of recognition. As, it is expounded by DelPopolo (2008), the dimension of “identity recognition” takes precedence since it preserves the sovereign right and power to decide who belongs to an indigenous group and at the same time it
represents the exercise of the right of being recognized as part of it, without any kind of external interference.

The emergence of indigenous identities in Ecuador was possible thanks to an “ethnic vindication process”, as a result of the indigenous organization's struggle, social mobility, access to education and migration. (Rodriguéz, 2012). These identities are based/constructed principally on shared collective cultural features maintained for long time, these cultural particularities besides to the establishment of group relations allowed them to survive, in this sense Barth clarifies (1998, pag.16): “the persistence of ethnic groups in contact implies not only a criteria and signals for identification, but also a structuring interaction, which allows the persistence of cultural differences”.

A special feature of Ecuadorian ethnic groups is the consideration or the necessity to deselect themselves as ethnics groups\(^\text{18}\). A growing presence of indigenous intellectuals helped to forge their identity as “Indigenous towns and Nationalities”, this concept tries to emphasize tangible features or requirements of a nation; between others history, language, territory and shared culture. However, it does not aim to achieve self-determination to form their own state or match the borders of their nation (Gellner, 1988;Hobsbawm, 2000)\(^\text{19}\). In fact, the indigenous integration project aims to build “The Plurinational State” a State formed by several heterogeneous Nations (Ortiz, 2011).

### 5.3 Individual ethnic identity and Self-ethnic identification

\(^{18}\) For Sato (2012), the word “ethnic” had/have connotations of economic and cultural marginalization, numeric difference, differentiation from the majority of the society and subjection to prejudice and discrimination.

\(^{19}\) Cited by Sato, (2012)
In words of Kogan and Tubino(2004) identity is understood as something original that every human being creates from oneself according to his/her capacities; this primary human potential is incorporated into secondary identities like ethnic, gender and race(among others), both primary and secondary identities set a necessary nexus to such an extend that the one can not be conceived without the other. Given that ethnic identity is considered a secondary identity its background should based on an original culture; in this case the culture symbolizes the vital world from which an essential belonging link is constructed. Added to this sense of belonging, social recognizing plays also a relevant role, the recognizing of ethnic identities represents in fact a form of respect to the primary human nature, on the contrary its minimizing or disrespect embodies a threat to individual dignity and respect (Kogan, Tubino, 2004).

In Ecuador ethnic recognition has been accomplished thanks to group organization connected directly to the awareness of collective ethnic identity. Throughout empowerment of identity, indigenous and afro descendant minorities restructured cultural identification patterns. The identification process suffered transformations, till the nineties it was assumed that these groups could be indirectly identified taking into account their external traits and cultural behaviors, moreover they were commonly recognized due to the cultural/linguistic dimension criteria. Recently a political consensus was achieved, which establishes that this recognizing should be based on the self-ethnic identification (DelPopolo, 2008).

Self-ethnic identification encompasses an individual's self-concept derived from the knowledge of membership in a social group (or social groups) together with a value and emotional significance (Tajfel, 1981)\(^\text{20}\). This personal self-concept has been converted in an important psychological and

\[^{20}\text{Cited by Smith (2002).}\]
social indicator. This is commonly asked or measured in both National Census and statistics. Therefore, the pre-existence of a collective ethnic filiation is known in the Census by a direct question of self-recognition. It must be taken into consideration that self-ethnic identification denotes a personal process joined to several external factors such as the social context. Thereon, DelPopolo (2008) expresses that Self-identification is influenced by the socio-political context of the country. In summary, in an environment of structural discrimination, indigenous people and afro-descendants cannot identify themselves as such, especially in urban areas. In situations of ethnic revival, people who do not belong to a certain ethnic group can ascribe an affinity in order to access to specific policies, although this situation seems to have a lower incidence than the first.

5.3.1 Self-ethnic identification/ How Ecuadorians identify themselves

The following statements express how a group of Ecuadorian experts identify themselves and the reasons they use to explain such identification. This analysis shows the importance that ethnic identification has in relation with individual or personal processes; furthermore it involves the desire to illustrate Ecuadorian ethnic diversity.

1. *Mis antecesores viven desde hace mucho aquí y son originarios indígenas ¡sí!, entonces eso hace que yo me defina como indígena kichwa (M.Ch indigenous).*

2. *Negro afro ecuatoriano descendiente de africanos, mi padre y madre somos de raza negra, yo reconozco y es un profundo orgullo de ser*
un sujeto no tradicional no muy generalizado acá en Ecuador (O.CH afroecuatorian).

3. Si justamente nos autodefinimos, porque mal hecho de que cuando hicieron el descubrimiento a América pensaban que Cristóbal Colón había llegado a las indias por eso nos dicen que somos indios, no somos indios, somos de la Nacionalidad Kichwa(L.Y indigenous).

4. Siempre me he definido como mestiza, como mestiza “urbana”. También me acerco a lo indígena, me siento cómoda con eso no lo niego(A.M mestiza).

5. La opción más lógica dentro del bagaje cultural que tengo de experiencias es mestizo, que es una mezcla no solo étnica ósea no solo fenotípica, sino tiene que ver mucho con la cultura porque obviamente yo vivo en Ecuador, desarrollo mi trabajo en Ecuador, crecí en Ecuador entonces estoy más ligado, con la ideología dominate del país (C.C mestiza).

6. Yo me defino como una persona mestiza, me defino como tal porque aprendí o conocí esa historia, que somos producto del mestizaje que es la mezcla de razas que dan origen a lo que ahora somos(P.Ch mestiza).

7. Mi apellido es Chicaiza yo vengo de una familia indígena-negra, de parte de mi mamá mi abuelo me dice que es descendiente de negros y de parte de mi papá el sí indio, pero el perdió su identidad o su grupo étnico cuando vino hacerse mestizo acá la ciudad. Ahora con el pasar del tiempo yo puedo compartir esto con más claridad porque
he tomado la decisión de identificarme con mis ancestros negros e indios, entonces la situación ha cambiado completamente, por mi entendimiento y mi aceptación (P.Chi indigenous).

5.3.1.1 Discussion

In actual Ecuadorian context collectives ethnic identities represent an umbrella that covers a number of single ethnic filiations. The “Nationalities and towns” are nowadays the starting point of ethnic recognizing and moreover the central reference for self-ethnic identification. Thus, when an Ecuadorian accepts or acknowledges her/his ethnic identity, it is assumed that he/she knows exactly to which Nationality, town or culture she/he belongs. This fact can imply a level of difficulty for people with a low level of education or for them who aren’t involved in community or political work. In the case of the interviewed experts all of them explained, in a clear way, their ethnic identity and expressed without any problem their self-ethnic identification. It denotes their personal ethnic involvement and awareness. Meanwhile experts talked about their ethnic identification, they also clarified a number of personal motivations that led them to this identification. These motivations are concomitant or can be related to the conception of DelPopolo (2008) who said that indigenous/ethnic identification must be established by a criteria that involves four dimensions:

(1) "recognition of identity", which refers to people’s sense of belonging,
(2) "common origin", which refers to descendants of common ancestors and refers among other factors, to the people social and collective memory, (3) "territoriality", which would be linked to the ancestral heritage and people collective memory based on the occupation of ancestral lands and material and symbolic links that are part of it, and (4) the “cultural-
linguistic” dimension that it is related to the attachment to the culture of origin, social and political organization, language, worldview, knowledge and lifestyles (DelPopolo, 2008 pag.15)21

In fact, in all of the expert statements it was found the dimension of recognition of identity, all of them admitted to be sure about their ethnic identity, even one of them talked about being proud of his ethnic identity. Additionally, the dimension of common origin could be found in statement number: 1, 2, 6, 7, since the experts talked about their ancestors or parents. From statements 3, and 5 it could be identified the cultural-linguistic dimension, moreover in these points the conceptions of cultural heritage and history are referred. Experts’ statements display that people who are informed about their cultural belonging do not fell ashamed about their ethnic identity. On the contrary, for them, ethnic identity has become a singular characteristic that makes them fell original and pleased.

21 My translation from: “Ellas son: (a) la dimensión “de reconocimiento de la identidad”, que alude al sentido de pertenencia al pueblo; (b) el “origen común”, que se refiere a la descendencia de ancestros comunes y alude, entre otros factores, a la memoria social y colectiva de los pueblos; (c) la “territorialidad”, que estaría ligada a la herencia ancestral y memoria colectiva de los pueblos, así como a la ocupación de tierras ancestrales y vínculos materiales y simbólicos que se inscriben en ella, y (d) la dimensión “lingüístico-cultural” que se relaciona con el apego a la cultura de origen, la organización social y política, el idioma, la cosmovisión, conocimientos y modos de vida. (DelPopolo, 2008 pag.15)"
6 Chapter V. Ethnic Identity Change

6.1 Introduction

The following chapter gives a vision of some socio-political means that cause/caused ethnic change in Ecuador. Furthermore it was considered of big importance to talk about other structures that work together to design and application of Intercultural Policies. For this aim a perspective from the ethnic politics is going to be used. In the first part, it will be described the constructivist vision of Kanchan Chandra (2012) who proposes a number of means that produce ethnic change, these variables will be related to experts personal opinions that embrace important understanding of ethnic processes in Ecuador; additionally it will be examined the role that the National Census plays in ethnic issues.

6.2 Processes or tools that cause ethnic change (politics vision)

Chandra’s study, offers a Constructivist position about the change of ethnic identities, this position contrasts the Primordialism vision which arguments that ethnic identities do not change at all because they are fixed, singular, and exogenous to social processes. The constructivist’s idea demonstrates that ethnic identities are often endogenous to such processes and even more to political and economic competition. A premise of this vision is that ethnic identities are multiple, fluid and endogenous, so they are constantly

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22 Ethnic politics studies are centered on the political consequences of ethnic diversity. This perspective was considered as a suitable theoretical instrument due to the nature of this study.
influenced for multitude of variables including violence, modernization, creation of institutions and hybridity (Chandra 2012). Therefore, on the base that social processes can change ethnic identities, in the following analysis will explore five experts’ statements to find different assumptions linked to the change of ethnic identities in Ecuador. The interviewees were requested to describe fundamental changes that ethnic identification suffered in the last years in the country.

6.2.1 Personal perspectives about the change of ethnic identity in Ecuador

The following experts statements represent clear positions about the variables that cause or caused ethnic identity change in Ecuador. Experts were asked to describe they consideration about ethnic identity process in the country, evidently this assumptions are directly connected with their personal experiences and with their self-ethnic identification. An extra consideration may be associated to the work they do.

1. Ósea identificarse así, por ejemplo como yo lo digo: yo pertenezco a una etnia, soy indígena; era muy receloso porque en la antigüedad nosotros éramos maltratados. En la actualidad porque no sentimos orgulloso de nuestras raíces de lo que nosotros somos y hemos logrado porque para eso a nosotros nos ha costado muchísimo, nosotros a raíz de los levantamientos indígenas hemos hecho respetar, hemos hecho escuchar nuestra voz de protesta (M.Ch indigenous)
2. *Primero es la reivindicación que existe en el sentido del orgullo de ser afro ecuatoriano, indígena o montubio, se rompe con ese patrón con ese modelo de que al no ser blanco-mestizo era algo estigmatizado, era lo peor no ser blanco-mestizo. Ahora existe un profundo sentimiento de reconocimiento de lo que eres, hay una auto aceptación de lo que somos y eso también es producto de una transformación de la sociedad ecuatoriana. Se ha ido modificando ciertos patrones clasificatorios incluso tienes espacios de poder que se han ido asumiendo por los pueblos y las nacionalidades (O.Ch afroecuatorian)*

3. *Tú tienes ahí la página Socio Empleo, tú vas a la página y cuando participas por un cargo público por ejemplo te dan dos o un punto más “no me acuerdo exactamente” porque eres: montubio, afro o indígena. Entonces a la vez que tratas de ser incluyente con una parte que tal vez históricamente había sido relegada, haces que otra parte que tiene las misma capacidades, se queden sin ese “punto” eso todavía sigue siendo una pugna (A.M mestiza)*

4. *Nosotros dentro de las mismas agrupaciones étnicas o nacionalidades también vamos cambiando, también somos interculturales, también nos vamos globalizando, también nos vamos metiendo en un motón de intercambios y más aun ahora que todo es tan rápido (A.M mestiza)*

5. *Vale aclarar que anteriormente era prohibido mantener una relación amorosa dentro de la cosmovisión de las nacionalidades; de una persona de una nacionalidad con otra nacionalidad o de un pueblo con otro pueblo. Ahora nosotros dentro de las nacionalidades hemos*
tenido el tema del vínculo con otras nacionalidades, con otros pueblos incluso, así se va generando nuevas familias y por ende también igual se va conociendo nuevas particularidades. También hablamos acerca de la tecnología, por ejemplo para nosotros la tecnología es intercultural porque nosotros damos a conocer a través de las redes sociales del internet nuestras vivencias, nuestra cultura y compartimos la cultura de otros pueblos (P.C indigenous)

6.2.1.1 Discussion

Ethnic identities as social constructions are creating and recreating themselves in different ways. As it was explained, there are a number of variables that could influence this change, from researcher’s point of view the variables that are presented on experts enouncements are: violence, institutions that structure cognition or incentives and hybridity. These variables could be re-configuring or producing transformations in Ecuadorian ethnic groups, moreover they work as structures that make possible the application of Intercultural Policies.

Expert’s statement number (1) expressed that vindication process of indigenous groups has been a key event that influenced the change of ethnic identities in Ecuador. He explains that in past times was difficult to accept freely being indigenous because of the maltreatment they suffered. This thought could be associated to the theoretical assumption that suggests how “violence” produces change on identities. Violence is not only understood as a physical abuse but also as disrespect, minimization and exclusion. As described by Chandra, individuals who belong to ethnic minorities and experienced these hostilities trend to feel more engaged to react and defend themselves against future incidents. They create a sense of ethnic solidarity
that could be a step to organize themselves for upcoming social mobilizations. To a certain extent, this variable could be considered the starting point of the ethnic identity change in Ecuadorian society. A violent process could influence the ethnic change in two directions, change towards cultural assimilation or change towards ethnic vindication and strengthen.

Other socio-political variable, that influences ethnic identity change, is the creation of **Cognition Institutions**, its creation is associated to idea that modern states could influence the cognitive frameworks that individuals accept as commonsense (Chandra, 2012). On relation to this variable the expert’s statement number (2) expresses that change of ethnic identities in the country is due to the recognizing, social transformation and power’s spaces occupied by the minorities. Hence, it could be said that social and political transformation are interdependent processes in Ecuador. This change of paradigm acknowledges the ethnic groups participation and the progress of the idea of plurinacionality. The expert did not say that there are institutions developing this conception, but it is understandable that only throughout “institutional” recognition it is possible to get over discriminatory models in a society. For instance, in the last years it was created the Minister of Culture, institution in charge of cultural promotion and patrimony conservation. This entity articulates projects that promote cultural diversity as part of the national patrimony. In fact, cultural or ethnic singularities are being reinforced to integrate them in productive areas such as touristic promotion or community development. The improvement of socio-economical status of cultural identities denoted a better understanding and implied a better self-valuation inside of the ethnic groups and inside of the mestizo society (Plan of Good living 2013-2017).

The third expert’s statement (3) displays clearly how institutions can influence the change of ethnic identity. This expert mentioned an **institution**
that provides incentives or sponsorship. The expert gave an example of how this institution establishes a kind of positive labor discrimination. She explained how a public institution offers an incentive based on ethnic identification in order to improve a qualification for a work place in the public sector. This assertion clarifies that this kind of incentives try on one side to promote inclusion but on the other side it can be unfair because they create struggle between groups. From Chandra’s point of view, institutions, that configure incentives, produce change of ethnic by attributing costs and benefits to particular aspects of ethnic identities, They could include policies to manage the distribution of state-controlled jobs, services and privileges. These policies are intentionally designed to produce change in aspects of ethnic identity, however they can also be designed for other unintended purposes.

Likewise, another important fact that influences the change of ethnic identity is hybridity, this argument implies that ethnic identities change fast and frequently and are constantly disturbed. In this context it could be cited Bhabha who proposes that:

> A nation or other identity category is never fully defined, and never defined once and for all; It is constantly in the process of being defined through an attempt at the articulation of the idea to audiences being incorporated. This is the “intrinsic hybridity” of identity.”

Hybridity as variable for the change of ethnic identity can be deduced from the last two experts statements 4 and 5. They clarified that ethnic identities in Ecuador are constantly changing due to (among other factors) the interrelation with other ethnic groups. This process provokes; for instance the formation of new ethnic-mixed families. The use of technology is also described as a change’s influence since it provides new information and

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23 Cited by Chandra pag. 15-39
enables cultural interactions in a relatively quickly way.

### 6.3 Census as tool for ethnic identities re-configuration

The census is an instrument that enables not only the visualization of ethnic groups but also the establishment of parameters for construction and reconstruction of ethnic identities. This mechanism is continually influencing the ethnic identities, by means of structuring and validating components. These components participate in the building of a society’s ethnic framework; for instance, the census mirrors the commonsensically real image of a diverse country. It reduces the big amount of population diversity/heterogeneity into a small number of standardized cultural/linguistic dimensions (Chandra, 2012). Furthermore, modern censuses are a suitable and reliable monitoring mechanism of social inequalities. They may incorporate gender or ethnicity dimensions into disaggregated data and rearrange the data in order to present results in appropriate indicators. However, in some respects the information could be insufficient and should be complemented. (DelPopolo, 2008).

The population’s image that a national Census presents has a fundamental social meaning that can be used as an important ethnic-political strategy. As said by Chandra, the interpretive scheme imposed by the census, is based on objective factors that represents the basic repertoire of cultural attributes in a population. This can reinforce or erase objective differences when they exist, but it cannot create them where they do not (Chandra, 2012). In other words the census can enable the strengthening of ethnic identities by showing in numbers their real population. Additionally, it could be a conjecture that allows the construction and visibility of new ethnic groups. However, it cannot create by itself cultural singularities.
6.3.1 The National Census and Ethnic identification in Ecuador

Ecuador's National Census included by the first time ethnic categories in 2001, this statistic permitted to have a new ethnic picture from the country. It also revealed unequal distribution and equity gaps associated to ethnic issues.

In year 2011, census’ results showed in terms of self-ethnic identification, according to culture and customs of the population that: 71.9% Ecuadorians identified themselves as mestizos, lower than the 2001 proportion of 77.4%. In this occasion appeared a new ethnic category montubios that reached 7.4%, while African-descendants reached 7.2% and indigenous people 7.0% of the population (INEC 2011).

Thus, the indigenous population’s percentage showed in the previous (2001) census did not vary significantly only from 6.8% to 7.0%. On the contrary, the Afro-Ecuadorian population climbed from 4.9% to 7.2%, furthermore a special feature on this census was the appearance of the montubio population, which is a new cultural identity of Ecuadorian coast; they were previously recognized only as farmers.24

The variations on the census showed a decreasing of the mestizo population, which can implies that as a survival strategy against racism indigenous people identified themselves as mestizos in the preliminary census. On the other had, it was revealed an increasing in the afroecuadorian population. This change occurred because Afro-Ecuadorian’s took the initiative to diversify their forms of identity as blacks and mulattos, after that the INEC regrouped them.

Based on the fact that, statistics have a great political involvement in terms of resources distribution and design of public policy, the census results’ presentation opened an intense debate about the size of indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian population (Villacís, Carrillo/INEC 2011). Private studies, indigenous organizations and social movements considered that ethnic groups population is underestimated. The main problem can be the existence of structural social problems such as discrimination and the lack of ethnic awareness based on collective rights. To this issue may be added a number of technic limitations in the census, such as the questions’ design and the difficulty of communication in multilingual areas.  

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Chapter VI. Intercultural Policies and the issue of ethnic identification

7.1 Introduction

This chapter explores how Intercultural policies embrace the issue of ethnic identity in Ecuador, there will be describe a number of policies that from researcher’s point of view frame or make an approach to ethnic identity issues. After that, it will be presented the analysis of experts’ statements, which will give a vision on how these policies are assumed by Ecuadorian society. Therefore, it will be inferred the kind of influence that Intercultural Policies can have in Ecuadorians' ethnic identification. The last outline will be also included in this chapter.

7.2 Ethnic identity and Intercultural Policies in Ecuador

The presence of ethnic identity’s conception in Intercultural Policies embraces a particular level of complexity. This ethnic premise as needed piece on “Interculturality” building can not be reviewed as an independent question, on the contrary, it must be seen as a cross, integral and multidimensional idea. Hence, the importance of ethnic reinforcement in public policies is based (from researcher’s point of view) on the transformation of ethnic dominance. As it is explained by Ortiz:

*The transformation of ethnic dominance conditions occurs not by a grant from the dominant groups, but as a result of the struggle of subordinate actors and the development of a cultural*
discourse supporting their demands, their self-identity and their rights (Ortiz, 2012. Pag 45).  

Consequently, intercultural policies are part of the support’s discourse towards social transformation, in which, the active actors are without doubt the ethnic groups.

In the following paragraphs, it will be described a short review of Intercultural policies, which make an approach to the issue of ethnic identity/reinforcement. These policies are sustained by a national objective and are detailed on the National Plan of Good Living (2013-2017). They were also portrayed in a document of the “National Agenda for equality for Nationalities and Towns (2013)” (2015). It should be taken into consideration that the term “ethnic identity” is not used as frequently as their synonymous “cultural identity” or “diverse identity”.

As described in the National Plan, are duties of the Ecuadorian State:

Objective 1 “To consolidate democratic governance and construct the people’s power”, with the corresponded policy: 1.8 “To construct the plurinational, intercultural State for Good Living.”

Objective 2 “To foster social and territorial equality, cohesion, inclusion and equity in diversity”, one of the corresponded policy is: “To guarantee true equality in access to quality health-care and education services for people

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26 My translation from: “La transformación de las condiciones de dominio étnico se produce no por una concesión de los grupos dominantes, sino como resultado de la lucha de los actores subalternos y de la formulación de un discurso cultural que sustenta sus demandas, su auto identidad y sus derecho.” (Ortiz, 2012. Pag 45)

and groups requiring special consideration because of inequalities, exclusion and discrimination persist.”

Objective 3 “To improve people’s quality of life” and its policy: 3.4 To strengthen and consolidate intercultural health care, incorporating ancestral and alternative medicine into the National Health System.

Objective 4 “To strengthen citizen capacities and potential.” the corresponded policy is: 4.8 “To promote intercultural dialogue as the backbone of the pedagogical model and the use of educational spaces.”

Objective 5: “To build spaces for social interaction and strengthen national identity, diverse identities, plurinationality and Interculturality”. Three important policies are 5.2 “To preserve, value, foster and give new meaning to the diverse collective and individual memories and democratize their access and dissemination. 5.3 To promote cultural creation in all its forms, languages and expressions, for both individuals and diverse collectives. 5.7 To promote inter-cultural understanding and cultural policy, mainstreamed through all sectors”.

These polices are described in a summarized English version of the National Plan. In this plan can be read the realistic goals that the actual government intents to achieve with the application of these policies, the goals are presented as percentages and indicators of living standards.

7.2.1 The Influence of Intercultural Policies on Ethnic identification/ Personal opinions from experts

Experts were questioned whether they think that Intercultural policies influence ethnic identification of Ecuadorians and in which way they could
visualize this influence. The experts develop their work activities in different areas such as education, culture and community work, these areas have been directly or indirectly influenced by intercultural Policies.

1. Ahora la políticas nos benefician porque nos permiten desarrollar capacidades. Anteriormente si eras de una organización, eras indígena, ya tenías un derecho para ubicarte en un espacio. Ahora es muy productivo ya que nosotros tenemos que esforzarnos, por ejemplo cuando yo estuve en la universidad tuve la suerte de ser el mejor estudiante pero no competía solamente con indígenas, competía con compañeros mestizos, compañeros afros y también extranjeros, no por el hecho de ser indígena yo tenia un privilegio (P.C indigenous).

2. Yo creo que influencian correctamente, porque guían a los estudiantes a conocer, a darse cuenta de que todas las personas somos únicas, somos diferentes los estudiantes logran aceptar las diferencias, respetarlas y además apreciar y entenderlas como propias de nuestro Ecuador (P.Ch mestizo).

3. Entonces si dentro de las políticas de estado a nosotros nos respetan, por ende nosotros nos sentimos orgullosos y a la vez sumamente complacidos de ser indígenas, si influye bastantísimo estas actividades de parte del gobierno a la parte indígena (M.Ch indigenous).

4. Yo creo que si han influenciado por ejemplo en los jóvenes, por un lado pero no en todos los campos porque todavía seguimos siendo súper segregados. Lo que es importante es que los jóvenes se
sientan parte de esta construcción, que no sean las políticas solo dictadas, sino que sean parte de la cotidianidad (A.M mestiza)

5. Claro, si son aplicadas adecuadamente vamos a tener ciudadanos que primero se aceptan a sí mismo, aceptan de donde son, aceptan su color de piel, aceptan su grupo. Lo que yo aspiro es que no se creen personas nacionalistas, con un sentido más bien discriminatorio (O. Ch no ethnic identity)

6. Al momento en que se abre el dialogo en las esferas políticas, en las esferas académicas y se reconoce que la diversidad es parte del Ecuador, se da la posibilidad de que los jóvenes y los niños se identifiquen como afrodescendientes como indígenas abiertamente y que no traten en lo absoluto de “blanquearse”. Obviamente hay que reforzar porque acá en Ecuador no se habla de la diversidad étnica como se habla de otros temas y el discurso todavía sigue siendo muy frágil (O. Ch afroecuatorian)

7. Si existe, si hay un cambio las políticas intentan eso, ya un cambio es que se trate de mantener la lengua materna. En el caso de las políticas educativas lo que tratan es que esos grupos minoritarios estén dentro, de que no estén aislados, de cubrir un poco esa necesidad y que se apliquen sus derechos. Aunque en nuestro país por bien hacer, dicen que las escuelas tienen que ser todas por igual y todos los niños tienen que tener acceso, eso está correcto. Pero cuando no tomas en cuenta realmente los procesos interculturales, el bien hacer es un arma de doble filo, entrar a una comunidad kichwa hablante en donde jamás han tenido la luz, el agua y les
pones la “Escuela de milenio”28, con computadoras, con todo ¿Qué generás? Es rápido, es una novedad. Si lo que se quiere es hacer Interculturalidad lo que tienes que fomentar primero es lo conocido, una estructura adecuada al ambiente, términos adecuados al ambiente, integrar poco a poco, por bien hacer que nuestros estudiantes estén en igual condiciones de otros, nosotros podemos estar dañando unas bases culturales hermosas( P.Chi mestiza)

8. Las políticas, algunas de ellas están teniendo éxito en mantener ciertos rasgos grupales, las que yo he visto mas destacadas son generalmente en la Amazonía; pero justamente estamos en ese problema de los incentivos, que es un problema bastante fuerte aquí porque el Ecuador siempre ha tenido una visión paternalista de estos asuntos, en el que es tu padre el estado es el que te mantiene. Entonces realmente yo no creo estén ayudando a tener una verdadera reivindicación de identidades; de por si es una búsqueda de algún tipo de incentivo que les ayude a superarse dentro de su propio grupo(C.C mestizo)

7.2.1.1 Discussion

The preliminary experts’ statements allow having a general vision about the impact of intercultural policies in ethnic identification of Ecuadorians. For

28 The Millennium Educational Units provide educational offerings to complement the needs of the community where it is emplace; the offer may cover basic general education and secondary education. These units incorporate elements of modern information technology in the teaching-learning process. The places where new units will be located are selected based on some technical criteria such as: to attend historically relegated sectors and prioritize a poverty level of the population.
experts number: 2 and 6 these policies have influenced, above all in the collective sense of acceptance of being a diverse country. This “positive” acceptance led to the appreciation of cultural differences; moreover it permits the reinforcement of ethnic groups since they are more aware and proud of their cultures. They considered also that policies create a sense of cultural acknowledgement and respect (experts 3-5), this added to a certain extend of self-appreciation. Other experts saw intercultural policies as a noticeable practice that is actually happening (experts 1, 2, 3, 4, 6 and 7), a second mind expressed a skeptic opinion about the “future” application of the policies (expert 5), which denotes that intercultural policies are prevalent in the political discourse and in some strategic areas. However, they are still seen more as a long term Project. There is a position that expresses a kind of inconformity with the foster of these policies (experts 6,7). Expert number (6) expressed that some policies in educational sectors, promote the use of new technologies, this without having a reinforcement on the own culture. This issue could cause a big weakening in children’s cultural features. Expert number (7) considered that intercultural policies influence particular motivations based on economic or political power’s aspirations. This situation can be associated to the issue of State’s incentives.

7.3 In closing

The principal part of this study was the analysis of qualitative data, which was grounded on expert’s speeches. This data allowed the development of five discussions that explored the following issues: the meaning of Interculturality for Ecuadorians, self ethnic identification, processes/means that influence change of ethnic identity and the influence of intercultural
polices in ethnic identification. These discussions permitted to infer the following conclusions:

Firstly, “Interculurality” in Ecuador is an idea that has been broadly promoted by the actual political discourse, the promotion of this idea has progressed in the last years thanks to the advance of a legal framework based on policies and institutions which have passionately carry the idea of an intercultural dialogue in academic, political, social and educational spheres. The insertion of this dialogue can be better visualized in educational areas with the formalization of the Intercultural Education National System. Although it seems to be only the beginning of the process because the construction of this dialogue needs a deep change in social structures, something that is probably more a desire than a realistic short-term outcome in a country with high levels of poverty and inequality in South America29.

Secondly, the issue of “ethnic identity” in Ecuador has been subordinated/integrated to the transversal idea of Interculturality and Plurinationality, while the political discourse opened a broad opportunity to discuss the relations between different cultural groups, ethnic conflict has been reduced to the assumption and acceptance of cultural diversity. Therefore, Intercultural policies of course are influencing ethnic identities’ empowerment because they embody political support that promotes the idea of harmonious living in diversity besides the quest of social equality. However, the application of such policies could not represent a success in

29 Retrieved from:
every aspect of ethnic issues, they could be causing a reinforcement of collective cultural identities based on political or economical interest and moreover they could be creating a sense of paternalism where the State provides the shapes for such reinforcement and the groups try to fill in these requirements without having a real cultural vindication or revitalization process.

In closing, in respect to the process of “self-ethnic identification”, intercultural policies have a positive influence specially in the construction of self acceptance and social recognizing, actual Ecuadorian society members recognize cultural diversity as a feature worthy of appreciation, such appreciation warrants a reinforcement of self esteem and confidence in the new generations of ethnic groups because they are facing a transformed Ecuadorian society. Clearly, it should be considered that ethnic identity is not a stable-psychological process; on the contrary it is more a relative and situational process (Sato, 2012). People/social actors used to escape a identity in some contexts and adopt other identities that allowed them to feel more satisfied in an interaction situation, this individual decision depends on the audience: an ethnic identity to a set of people and another to a different group, people usually has a repertoire of ethnic attributes which is selected for a given situation. In fact, people have the ability to act within the borders of various ethnic groups (Hicks, 1977)\textsuperscript{30}. This process of ethnic selection or in a way of “changing identities” is a real fact in Ecuadorian society, some people decide to return to their origins, other people choose to change their identification, and others are coming together to create new ethnic identities. The social context and the intercultural policies are supporting this process. Nevertheless, these responses are political strategies from the government

\textsuperscript{30} Cited by Sato 2012.
and in this way they are not long lasting or stable policies, they represent maybe only the actual political discourse that under other circumstances could change; added to this variable is the fact that most of the Ecuadorian population belonging to an ethnic group is not well informed enough about ethnic/cultural concerns, and this represents a huge impediment for the fostering of a truly Intercultural country.
8 Literature


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9 Appendix

9.1 Expert statements translation

Research Question

Ethnically, I am indigenous my parents were pujilíes, Kichwa-speaking Indians. Although my dad at the age of 18 was already mestizo, he had leaved his community when he was 10 years old, he did not speak Kichwa, he was already mestizo. We grew up in Quito in the city practically like mestizos, till I was on my twenties I was mestiza. When I started researching about my ancestors I felt that it was not bad being indigenous, I felt it was important for me and I could define myself as something (P.Ch. Indigenous-teacher)

Interculturality in the Ecuadorian Context

1. It is the interaction between people who have specific cultural identities, different from each other but respectful with one other (P.Ch mestiza).

2. Here, in the community we understand Interculturality as a relation between all ethnic groups that coexist in Ecuador, each one with their own identity (L.Y indigenous).

3. The nationalities criterion is that our activities, our festivals and
celebrations can be shared, but we always ask respect from the other towns and at the same time we respect other peoples; only in this way we can construct Interculturality (P.C indigenous).

4. The issue of Interculturality has not progressed, we continue with the same forms of exclusion, which come from the old Intercultural discourse. There have not been followed correct processes that enable an intercultural dialogue (C.C.mestizo).

5. You speak often about Interculturality, our constitution speaks about Interculturality but in daily life we do not know what does it means. We handle this concept very lightly, we do not incorporate it gradually, we do not incorporate it first with the mestizos, first from the bases, from the urbanity (A.M. mestiza).

**Self ethnic identification/ How Ecuadorians identify themselves**

1. My ancestors lived for a long time here and they are original indigenous, then that makes me to define myself as Kichwa-indigenous (M.Ch indigenous).

2. I am black Afro-Ecuadorian a descendent from African people, my father and mother are black, then I recognize and it is a deeply proud to be a non-traditional individual, someone that is not very common here in Ecuador (O.Ch. afroecuadorian).

3. Yes, we define ourselves, because we think it is negative that when Cristobal Columbus discovered America, people believed that they had
reached the Indies; so they called us Indians. We are not Indians; we belong to the Kichwa Nationality (L.Y indigenous).

4. I have always defined me as mestiza, an "urban mestiza". I also approach the indigenous culture, I feel comfortable with that I do not deny it (A.M. mestiza).

5. I am mestizo; it is the most logical option within the cultural baggage I manage. This is not only an ethnic or phenotypic mixture, it is related also to the culture because I live in Ecuador, develop my work in Ecuador, grew up in Ecuador then I'm more connected with the dominant ideology of the country (C.C.mestizo).

6. I define myself as a mestizo person because I learned it or knew the history, which explains that we are a product of the “mestizaje”, which is the mixture of races that have made us what we are today (P.CH.mestiza).

7. My last name is Chicaiza I come from an Indian-black family. My mother’s father tells me that he is an afro descendent and my dad he is indigenous, although he lost his identity or ethnic group when he came to the city and became himself in mestizo. Now, after time I can share clearly this identity because I took the decision to identify me with my black and Indian ancestors. So, the situation has completely changed due to my understanding and my acceptance (P.Chi. Indigenous).
Personal perspectives about the change of ethnic identity in Ecuador

1. In the past to identified oneself and say: I belong to an ethnic group, I'm Indian was very shaming because we were mistreated. Today, we fell proud of our roots and what we are; what we succeeded was a greater cost for us. With the indigenous struggles we have been encouraged, we made our voices heard (M.Ch indigenous).

2. First, there is a vindication process related to the proud of being afro-Ecuadorian, indigenous or montubio. Here, you break a pattern, which considered not being white or mestizo the worst; not being white or mestizo was something stigmatized. Now, there is a deep sense of appreciation of which you are. There is a self-acceptance about who we are and that is product of Ecuadorian’s society transformation. Certain classifying categories have been modified, furthermore you have power spaces that have been assumed by the towns and nationalities, it gives a clear sign of self-recognizing and transformation (O.Ch afroecuadorian).

3. There is a webpage called Socio-Empleo, if you go to this page and participate for a public job you get two or more points (I do not remember exactly) when you are: montubio, Afro or Indigenous. So, while you are trying to be inclusive with a group that historically was lowered, you take from the other group this "point" out and they probably have the same capacities. So, It still remains a struggle (A.M. mestiza)

4. We, within the ethnic groups or nationalities are constantly changing, we are also intercultural, we're also going global, we are also included in a
number of exchanges and even more now that everything happens so fast (A.M. mestiza)

5. It is important to mention that from the vision of the Nationalities, it was forbidden to maintain a relationship with someone from other nationality or town. Now, the Nationalities have links between them, in fact there were generated new families. Thus, we meet new singularities (cultures). It should be talked also about technology, which is also intercultural for us because through the social networks we express our experiences, our culture and we know other (P.C.indigenous)

The Influence of Intercultural Policies on Ethnic identification/

Personal opinions from experts

1. Nowadays the policies benefit us because they allow us to develop our capacities. In the past, if you were in an organization and you were indigenous, you could easily have a space (political work). Now the process is more productive then we have to make an effort. For example when I was in college I was the best student at my class, but I did not competed only with Indigenous, there were mestizos, afros and foreign students. The fact of being an indigenous was not a privilege (P.C indigenous).

2. I believe that the policies have a positive influence because they guide students to know and realize that all people are unique and different. Students manage to accept, respect and appreciate differences; furthermore they understand them as part of our Ecuador (P.Ch
3. If the State policies achieve that people respect us, we will feel proud and very pleased to be indigenous, these activities from the government influence a lot the indigenous towns (M.Ch. indigenous).

4. I believe that they have influenced on the youth people but not in all fields because we are still being segregated. It is important that young people fell themselves part of this construction because policies should not be just dictated they must be part of everyday life (A.M. mestiza)

5. Sure, if they are properly implemented we will have citizens who accept themself, their origins, their skin color and their group. Something I aspire is that people do not became nationalistic or discriminatory (O.Ch.no ethnic identity)

6. At the moment that you open a dialogue in the political or academic fields and diversity is recognized as part of Ecuador, you have the possibility that young people and children identified themself openly as indigenous or African descents, they are not going to "whiten themselves". Obviously, it must be strengthened because in Ecuador we do not talk about ethnic diversity as often as we talk about other issues and the discourse is still very fragile (O.CH. afroecuadorian)

7. Yes, there is a change; a change for example is the preservation of the mother tongue. The educational policies try that these minorities come inside and do not stay isolated. Policies cover a need and promote the application of rights. Although, in our country the State with good intentions aims to give all schools the same access, which is correct; but
if you take into account the truly intercultural processes, well doing is a double-edged sword. To enter in a Kichwa speaking community where they never had electricity or water and you place there a "Millennium School" with computers and everything, what do you generate? It is fast, it is a novelty. However if you want to build Interculturality, what you have to foster first is: the own knowledge, an appropriated structure, appropriated terms and to integrate little by little this idea. So, with good intentions that all students could study in the same conditions, we may be hurting some beautiful cultural bases "(P.CHI. Indigenous)

8. Some policies succeeded in maintaining certain group peculiarities, the most outstanding are working in the Amazon; but we have this problem of incentives, which is a very strong problem here because Ecuador has always had a paternalistic view of these matters in which the State is your father who maintains you. So, I do not believe they are helping to have a real claim of identity; they are associated to the search of a kind of incentive, which could help people to overcome within their own group (C.C. mestizo)
9.2 Appendix 2

**Eidesstattliche Erklärung**

Hiermit versichere ich, dass ich die vorliegende Arbeit in allen Teilen selbstständig verfasst und keine anderen als die angegebenen Hilfsmittel benutzt habe.

Ich bin damit einverstanden, dass meine Master Thesis öffentlich eingesehen werden kann.
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