

**Cooperación Sur-Norte:
¿qué puede aprender la sociedad civil de Estados Unidos de la experiencia de la
sociedad civil de Ecuador en tiempos de creciente populismo?**

**South-North Cooperation?
What Civil Society in U.S. Can Learn from Ecuador's Civil Society
in Times of Rising Populism**

**DRAFT 9/30/2017 – Please do not cite
Email author for updated version**

Susan Appe, Binghamton University (sappe@binghamton.edu)
Daniel Barragán, Universidad de Los Hemisferios, Quito, Ecuador
Fabian Telch, Binghamton University

Introduction

Global trends of populism have dominated international politics and news media. Populists leaders are charismatic and aim to be recognized as legitimate representatives of ‘the people’ through the use of emotion. Ideologically, populism can address the so-called left or right (Canovan, 1999; Laclau, 2005). It has extended widely worldwide, from the populist governments of Rafael Correa (Ecuador), Evo Morales (Bolivia) or Nicolas Maduro (Venezuela) in Latin America to the Trump (U.S.) and Silvio Berlusconi (Italy) administrations in the North. In addition, extreme right movements such as Marine Le Pen in France or anti-Muslim movements in the Netherlands and extreme left parties as Beppe Grillo’s five-star movement in Italy have surfaced. Indeed, the implications of populism’s rise on civil society cannot be ignored. Given the global rise populism, we find that it provides opportunity for both the North and the South to learn from each other. In particular, learning experiences from South-North cooperation (that is, cooperation from developing to developed countries) have not been extensively documented in popular media nor academic literature (for an exception, see Johnson and Wilson, 2006). Thus, we use a South-North cooperation framework and while focused on Ecuador to U.S. cooperation, the article presents findings of interest to many contexts—in the

Global South and Global North—in which civil society has been targeted and is facing the consequences of rising populism.

North-South cooperation remains the dominant exchange of assistance, however, there are examples of cooperation that include transfers of strategies and knowledge from the South to the North, particularly originating from Latin America. These transfers have informed community development theory and practice such as micro-credit, micro-finance, and lending circles (Brancaccio, 2016). In addition, scholars have looked to the South's corporate social engagement framework to inform the Northern model of corporate social responsibility (Salamon, 2010). Participatory tools in community development in the South have also been transferred to Northern contexts. Participatory budgeting model originated in the city of Porto Alegre, Brazil, involves citizens in the allocation of resources in the budgets of local governments. It has been adapted by over 1500 cities in both the Global South and Global North with the aim to render more democratic decision making processes in budgeting (Pinnington, Lerner, & Schugurensky, 2009; Ganuza, & Baiocchi, 2012; see also Lewis, 2014). Likewise, Participatory Action Research (PAR) is a research methodology that originated in Colombia and combines research and theory with political participation in order to solve economic, political and social problems. It has experienced widespread use in both the Global South and Global North (Fals Borda, 1987; Gott, 2008). And it has not only been community development strategies that have been transferred from the South to the North in the name of cooperation. In 2005, Venezuela started a program to subsidize oil for poor communities in the United States. The program started as a result of Hurricane Katrina when Venezuela donated \$1 million to disaster relief (Kleven, 2012). Driven by political motivations of then Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, the program at its height expanded to provide heating oil for more than 400,000 Americans annually free of charge (NBC, 2005).

Thus, the paper positions experiences in the South, in this case Ecuador, with populism as an opportunity to transfer information and provide assistance to the North. The paper briefly

addresses the global trend of populism and how it has emerged in Latin America. It addresses the parallels across the rhetoric and leadership styles of Trump and Correa. The paper then outlines major discourse and regulatory policy targeted toward civil society during the Correa Administration. We present four major lessons learned by CSOs in Ecuador. The paper focuses on lessons learned by Ecuadorian CSOs, in particular, their adaptation strategies under rising populism and heightened, tense political discourse for civil society.

Global Trends of Populism

Defining what is populism in contemporary modern societies is a challenging task. In general, populism has been interpreted as a specific communication style of political actors that calls against traditional power holders and elite values. It has been termed as revolutionary populism, intellectual populism, peasant populism, farmers' radicalism, populist dictatorship, populist democracy, reactionary populism, politician's populism, techno populism, petro populism, among others (Canovan, 1981; Deiwiiks, 2009; Mouzelis, 1985). Common features of populism are: a) a continuous exaltation to the people as a justification for behaviors and actions; b) an anti-elitism feeling against the those in power and c) considering the people who do not share their ideology as rivals or the "others" (Jagers & Walgrave, 2007).

Populist movements put at risk the pluralism of liberal societies (Weyland, 2013) by communicating through stories, myths, and using a direct language to project a collective dream (Budney, 2011). Populism cannot exist without the appeal to the people, establishing a considerable distance between the people and those elites that govern in their own interests (Deiwiiks, 2009). Even though all these elements are common to populism, there are relevant differences in how economic, historical, ethnic, religious, demographic and political conditions play in the establishment of populist governments. Recently, populism has been used to react to globalization processes that include the extension of global trade, foreign labor competition and cultural resentments among others, in the aim to return to a closed approach to the world (Gusterson, 2017; McGrath, 2013).

Populism is not new. From the nineteenth century egalitarian movements of Russian peasants or authoritarian regimes as those of Peron (Argentina) and Vargas (Brazil) in Latin America, populism was used to define the policies and politics all over the world (Jagers & Walgrave, 2007). Today, however, even as these political movements are proliferating, none of them wish to call themselves populist as the term is used mostly as an insult from political enemies.

In Latin America, there have been three waves of populism in the region: a) the first wave from 1940 to 1960, b) the second wave from 1990 to late 1990s, and c) from late 1990s to nowadays. The first wave, that took place in Argentina and Brazil with leaders as Juan Domingo Peron (Argentina) and Getulio Vargas (Brazil), which promoted a sense of belonging among classes and a greater redistribution of resources to the poor. The second wave involved the governments of Fernando Collor de Mello (Brazil) and Alberto Fujimori (Peru) that challenged the macroeconomic corrupt behavior of state-led elite groups and ended with the implementation of neoliberal reforms to foster economic growth.

Finally, the third wave of populism in the region started with the rising of Hugo Chavez in Venezuela, Rafael Correa in Ecuador and Evo Morales in Bolivia. These leaders have been opposed to free-market Western-oriented policies, the exploitation of their countries commodities and thus, advocating for a more inclusive development model. Even though these movements have been rooted in democratic principles since their beginnings, the fact is that these governments have been heavily criticized for authoritarianism perspectives, corruption and violations to human rights, democracy and individual freedoms (Fisher, 2017).

Both Trump and Correa are authoritarian and populist leaders, who sought to offer the electorate the solution to transforming society. They differ as the former is a right-wing populist and the latter a left-wing populist (Ramos, 2017). Hidalgo (citation) describes Trump and Correa, and includes Venezuela's Maduro:

Trump, Maduro and Correa start their narrative strategy from the hatred of their political opponents. Trump hates Mexicans, Hispanics, and immigrants. He makes them his adversaries and offers to defeat them. Maduro and Correa hate the media, freedom of expression, critics of their governments and private enterprise.

Donald Trump and Rafael Correa use Twitter and Facebook as powerful tools to publicize these messages and to debate with their opponents. In fact, their accounts became regular channels to connect directly to followers, emphasizing their outsider status and viral rhetoric to followers and media (Hoffman, 2017; Post, 2017; Wofford, 2016) (See Table 1).

In the case of Donald Trump, he chose to blame elites of the conditions that have pushed back the United States and have made Americans unhappy of the status quo (Kazin, 2016). His demagoguery has exploited the fears of the U.S. about terrorism, unemployment, social justice and individual rights, among others, in order to position himself as a savior (Infobae, 2016a). His nationalist discourse advocates for a superior moral and his continuous appeals for democracy and anti-establishment behaviors are paradoxical as since inauguration, he has eroded democratic values and has reinforced the power of the establishment in the country (Filcheinstein, 2016).

In the case of Rafael Correa, former president of Ecuador from 2007 to 2017, his techno-populist message was addressed anti-party and anti-liberal feelings. Its political movement *Patria Altiva i Soberana* (PAIS) (Proud and Sovereign Fatherland) gathered scholars, left-oriented followers and political leaders without any particular ideology in the name of saving the country from corruption and neoliberal reforms

Table 1. Correa and Trump Quotes Compared

Topic	Correa	Trump
Othering	There are clearly NGOs that come to create disturbances, that they finance...terrible interference of 'gringuitos' that want to impose in our country what they have never achieved in their countries (El Ciudadano, 2010, June 26).	We MUST have strong borders and stop illegal immigration. Without that we do not have a country. ¹
Media	The vanity and double standards of the corrupt press and its lackeys: freedom of expression is only for them	With all of its phony unnamed sources & highly slanted & even fraudulent reporting, #Fake News is DISTORTING DEMOCRACY in our country! ²
Media	"Lo siento Fundamedios, pero voy a tener que bloquearlos. Mi estómago no da para tanto. Hello to your friends". ³	@WSJ is bad at math. The good news is, nobody cares what they say in their editorials anymore, especially me! ⁴
The people	The Homeland Returns	Make America Great Again
The people	end the "speech", despite the complicity of the press, the Ecuadorian people will demand accountability...	@realdonaldtrump . The forgotten man and woman will never be forgotten again. We will all come together as never before.
Elite	They will continue with this avalanche of slander to camouflage their own incapacity and the delivery of the country the same as always	@realdonaldtrump Mitt Romney had his chance to beat a failed president but he choked like a dog. Now he calls me racist-but I am least racist person there is

(Torre, 2013). Correa saw himself as an outsider without any personal interests who had the moral duty to fight for a more equal society. Consequently, Correa saw himself as the savior of

¹ <http://www.cnn.com/2016/08/26/politics/donald-trump-immigration-tweets/index.html>

² <http://www.newsday.com/news/nation/trump-defends-son-accuses-media-of-distorting-democracy-1.13803495>

³ <http://www.fundamedios.org/alertas/presidente-bloquea-fundamedios-en-twitter-disgustado-por-datos-de-estudio/>

⁴ <http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2016/03/2016-donald-trump-latin-america-twitter-213759>

the nation, through his technocratic decisions that promoted truth and fairness. The democratic debate during the Correa's administration was legitimized by its fight against neoliberal and colonial institutions that have hampered the development of the country. However, freedom of expression and association were limited in the aim to facilitate the implementation of government's policies and strengthening of the executive branch (Conaghan, 2016). Indeed, these leaders share common ground. For example they both have admiration for Vladimir Putin, seeing Russia more as an allied than an enemy (Cuellar, 2016). Also, their lack of tolerance to criticisms have developed into threats and legal actions against media and political rivals. Furthermore, Trump's "Make America Great Again" or Correa's "La Patria Vuelve" resemble a common message to return to the good track and values of the legitimate people (Universo, 2007). Indeed, their fight against elitist groups have dominated these discourses.

Environment for Ecuador's Civil Society during Correa's Populist Administration

Like in many countries, CSOs have played an important role in public governance and policymaking in Ecuador (Brautigam & Segarra, 2007; Cabrera & Vallejo, 1997; Heinrich, 2007; World Bank, 2007). In the beginning of the 20th century, civil society had strongly ties to the Catholic Church and elite society. The labor union movement emerged in the 1930s and by the 1950s, development projects and programming began to integrate CSOs. Through relationships with the Catholic Church, nonprofits worked in rural technical assistance, disability services, family planning, and education (World Bank, 2007). The 1980s and 1990s experienced a CSO boom as organized civil society was fully integrated into the public policy process, often in service provision. Ecuador's most recent 2008 Constitution recognizes CSOs as a central means to strengthen citizenship (Articles 96 and 97). However, there is not a specific overarching law which addresses CSOs; instead, rules and regulations have been enacted through executive decrees (Estupiñán, 2008).

During the Correa presidency, his rhetoric often targeted organized civil society. Correa

tied the large number of CSOs to neoliberalism and asserted that these organizations had learned to avoid paying taxes and have meddled in political activities. To complement the rhetoric, the Ecuadorian government began to release major regulatory reforms in several sectors including communication and media industries and higher education. In 2008, as part of a bundle of regulatory reforms under the Presidential Executive Decree No. 982, the Ecuadorian government revised the process for obtaining legalization. This included several new requirements such as registration in a newly created the Registry of Civil Society Organizations in order to collect and publish information on legally recognized CSOs (Presidencia de la República del Ecuador, 2008). An organization was required to present its documents to the line ministry that corresponds to its policy area in order that the line ministry could verify that the organization is both active and is paying taxes to Ecuador's Internal Revenue Service. Thereafter the organization was to enter into the registry which was a centralized database that keeps record of these legally recognized CSOs and makes this information publicly available (Presidencia de la Republica del Ecuador, 2008).

This regulatory action was again followed by intense rhetoric. Correa promised to refuse conditional international aid and other mechanisms to what he has called "imperialistic humanitarian" projects that often included CSOs (Agencia EFE, 2010, March 20). Correa spoke directly to the Ecuadorian people, cautioning them to be "careful" of NGOs, and highlighted process of "NGOization" (Agencia EFE, 2010, March 20).

Threatening more regulatory action, Correa explained in 2010 that "the party is over, the fair of joy is over" (Flores, 2010, May 29). He denounced the fact that there are more than 50,000 organizations with legal status in Ecuador. He stated: "This is part of the corruption that has occurred in the country, no one knows where they are, who the representatives, nor do they inform the government" (La Prensa Latina, 2010, May 30). He continued, that "the new form to disable progressive governments are these Think Tanks, these NGOs financed for the transnational extreme right, including intelligence agencies" (El Ciudadano, 2010, June 26) and

that “there are clearly NGOs that come to create disturbances, that they finance...terrible interference of ‘gringuitos’ that want to impose in our country what they have never achieved in their countries” (El Ciudadano, 2010, June 26).

In 2013, Decree No. 16 replaced the Decree of No. 982, adding several new requirements for nonprofit legal status (Presidencia de la Republica del Ecuador, 2013). Decree No. 16 created a newer registry called Unified Information System of Social Organizations which seeks to make the activities of CSOs more transparency. In 2015, a third decree, Decree No. 739 was released which in addition to Decree No. 16 regulates organized civil society (Presidencia de la Republica del Ecuador, 2015). There might be confusion in the application of the law as Decree No. 16 has not been repealed therefore both Decrees are simultaneously in effect and the registry continues.

Ecuador’s Civil Society Responses to Correa’s Populism

We propose that Ecuador’s experiences during the administration of President Correa provide a window into understand civil society under rising populism. Given the trends of populism elsewhere, of particular interest in the U.S., we present several lessons learned by Ecuador’s civil society from which other contexts can learn. The following outlines lessons learned by CSOs during the years of President Correa’s presidency (2007 – 2017). The paper situates the lessons learned in Ecuador as means in which to establish South-North cooperation. That is, there are several parallels between the context created for CSOs by President Correa’s presidency and the emergent context for CSOs in the U.S. under President Trump’s presidency.

These lessons learned are based on fieldwork conducted since 2008 which has included participation in dozens of meetings, informal conversations with civil society leaders in Ecuador as well as 85 in-depth, formal interviews with civil society leaders during 2009–2016. The formal interviews sought to understand the unfolding narrative of a civil society in Ecuador during the Correa presidency and in particular how CSOs responded.

Lesson #1: Specific Policy Areas Targeted

Perhaps not surprisingly, under the Correa Administration, organizations representing specific policy areas were publically targeted. Organizations defending the rights of nature, indigenous rights and freedoms of expression were especially targeted. Many of these types of organizations work in contentious policy and programmatic areas in Ecuador, including women's, indigenous, cultural, rural, environmental, and media rights.

One of the first organizations to be targeted under Correa was *Acción Ecológica*. In 2009, *Acción Ecológica* was told by the Ministry of Health that it was no longer permitted to legally operate in Ecuador. An organizational leader from *Acción Ecológica* explains:

Well, we found out about the Decree when the government shut us down. Just like that. A letter [from government] notified us of the shut down, it referenced Decree No. 982 and the registry. (November 2010)

Since 1989, *Acción Ecológica* had been granted legal status through the Ministry of Health. According to several blogs and news reports, the Minister of Health, Caroline Chang, stated that during the process of the data cleaning that was mandated by Decree No. 982, it came to light that *Acción Ecológica* was not fulfilling its written objectives (Denvir, 2009). The organization was shut down for about two weeks, and under domestic and international pressure, then was able to re-register with the Ministry of Environment which did not exist when the organization was founded in the late 1980s. The ordeal drew in big names within the international activists community. Well-known journalist Naomi Klein wrote a letter to Ecuadorian President expressing her “genuine shock and confusion” at the action taken by the Ministry of Health in the case of *Acción Ecológica* (Klein, 2009). She noted the uniqueness of *Acción Ecológica*, citing that it was unlike many of the “professional class of NGOs” that are more concerned about nature than people (Klein, 2009).

Organizational leaders believed the shut down to be a result of the debate on the Mining Law in Ecuador. At the time, *Acción Ecológica* supported peasant and indigenous protest against large-scale mining in Ecuador. *Acción Ecológica* argued that the new mining law

avored the transnational mining companies and deeply harmed communities that were mined (La Prensa Latina, 2009). This escalated politically, and while in the past *Acción Ecológica* had supported many of the Correa government's policies and initiatives this made the organization one of the Administration's most charged critics.

Several years later another environmental group was target by the government.

Fundación Pachamama worked in the Ecuadorian Amazon to promote a model of development based on human rights and rights for nature. It explains that: "Since 1997, *Fundación Pachamama* worked in solidarity with indigenous organizations of Ecuador's Amazon to defend their rights and their homelands. It played a fundamental role in establishing Rights of Nature in Ecuador's constitution" (<http://www.pachamama.org/advocacy/fundacion-pachamama>).⁵ In 2012 a new plan to exploit in some areas in Ecuador was released. In response, the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE) organized protests to not sign agreements. A *Pachamama* leader explains:

Pachamama became an 'uncomfortable actor' [for government]. We worked with the CONAIE and others who were clearly against oil extraction. *Pachamama* was not an organizer but there was some protest disruption, verbal insults to the Chilean Ambassador, Juan Pablo Lira, and physical aggression to the business person of the Belorusneft company, Andrei Nikonkov. (July 2016)

At that time in 2013, the government accused *Fundación Pachamama* of physically harassing the ambassador of Chile and others at an event related to Amazonian oil concessions. Government officials alleged that *Fundación Pachamama* was "straying from its statutory objectives" and endangering "internal security and public peace" (Solano, 2013). The *Pachamama* leader explains:

Government blamed *Pachamama* and listed indigenous leaders as *Pachamama* affiliates. We were black listed (July 2016)

⁵ Ecuador was the first country to grant rights to nature within its 2008 Constitution passed on Sept. 28, 2008. The Constitutional Article states: "Natural communities and ecosystems possess the unalienable right to exist, flourish and evolve within Ecuador. Those rights shall be self-executing, and it shall be the duty and right of all Ecuadorian governments, communities, and individuals to enforce those rights" (for more information see: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2008/sep/24/ecuador.conservation>)

On the grounds of Decree No. 16, Ecuador's government revoked the legal status of *Fundación Pachamama*. *Pachamama* was shutdown on December 4, 2013 because of its involvement, as mentioned, in protests against mining development in Ecuador (Open Letter, 2013). A

Fundación Pachamama leader explained:

On December 14, 2013, ten to fifteen people came, dressed as civilians. There was no process rather they decided on Saturday to shut us down. We were removed from the office, and closure tape was put on our office (July 2016)

Organizations working in rights related to free press were also targeted. For example, the Andean Foundation for Media Observation and Study (*La Fundación Andina para la Observación y Estudio de Medios*; hereafter referred to as its Spanish acronym: *Fundamedios*), was created in 2007 in order to support the media and journalism in Ecuador. Through its mission, to "promote and protect the rights and liberties of expression, press, access to information, and association" (<http://www.fundamedios.org/quienes-somos/>), it monitors threats to the freedoms of expression and association and alerts the public through the diffusion of information. Accusatory discourse by government started as early as 2011 for *Fundamedios*, an organizational leader explained some of the concerns:

...the government wants to know what are the activities of [our foundation] ... and what we plan to achieve this year. However, in the [policy reforms], it would be at whatever moment during the year, in whatever situation, one could ask for whatever document, so, you can have people who say 'give me the minutes from that board of directors meeting from two years ago.' You would have to have a single person in charge of providing these documents. For a foundation like [us], it is impossible...we are a small team and people here complete various functions at the same time. We could not be dedicating a person to handle these requests. (January 2011)

Lesson #2: Human Rights Framing

In the realities of the threats and closures, organizations targeted and their allies use a rights-based framework to defend themselves. An example of this is the Provincial Network of Rural and Quichua Women's Organizations of Chimborazo. Just over a year after the release of the Decree No. 982 in 2009, the group of women's submitted an open letter directed at government that asked the government to revise the new procedures, particularly related to the

registry. The women's groups argued that, the limited, and sometimes no, access to technology threatens to further exclude their members and challenge their right to organize causing several organizations to abandon organizing all together. It stated to government: "With these requirements, you are taking away our voice and our word, the possibility to fight for a better life, and above all you are taking from us our space to meet, between women, as we, indigenous women, have rights [outlined in] the Ecuadorian Constitution" (Women's Organizations of Chimborazo, 2009, p. 2). The women's group took their case to the Ecuadorian Constitutional Court arguing that several articles in the initial 2008 Decree No. 982 violated their rights to organize.

Acción Ecológica, which was closed for several weeks by government and discussed above, argued that it is not only the right to associate that is threatened by the regulatory action, but also the roles that these organizations play are threatened. *Acción Ecológica* framed its lawsuit as from a group of Ecuadorian citizens whose obligations are outlined in the 2008 Constitution's Article 83 (*Acción Ecológica*, 2010b). Article 83 obligates Ecuadorians to uphold the Constitution, particularly to respect and protect rights laid out in the Constitution. *Acción Ecológica's* asserts that the Decree prohibited the work of citizen groups and organizations that defend the rights laid out in the Constitution (*Acción Ecológica*, 2010b).

Going to the Constitutional Court with a framing of rights was clear from the beginning for *Acción Ecológica*:

The objective of putting forth the lawsuit was to respond from the law, from the Constitution, the existence of an executive decree that appears to us to be violating rights. There would be a permanent possibility of censorship... Therefore we have responded. We imagine that there will be other steps that will come in the future...we have taken these actions to uncover a debate about the Decree 982 in order to see what it is we can continue to do in the future. (November 2010)

Fundación Pachamama is another organization that used the Constitutional Court in reaction to being shut down. Fundación Pachamama claimed that the policy reforms "[sought] to suppress [its] legitimate right to dissent from the decision of the National Government to

concede areas of Amazonian indigenous nations to oil companies, without respecting their constitutional rights to free, prior and informed consultation, according to the standards of the International Law of Human Rights” (as cited in World Movement for Democracy, 2013). *Pachamama* exhausted all legal options in Ecuador related to the policy reforms and went to the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights in Washington D.C. in March 2014 for a hearing. The next step is to explore bringing a case to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, a process that could take several years.

Fundamedios was forthright about its concerns about Decree No. 16 and filed a “protection recourse” against the Correa Administration in July 2013. *Fundamedios* highlighted that the Decree No. 16 violated rights such as freedom of association and freedom of expression guaranteed by Constitution and several international Human Rights treaties. Again, in 2015, the Correa government demanded that *Fundamedios* stop issuing alerts about abuses of freedom of expression and association in Ecuador. *Fundamedios* rejected the accusations and has publicly committed to continue its work (<http://www.fundamediosbajoataque.org/>).

Lesson #3: New Organizational Configurations Emerge

While civil society, particularly some specific segments of civil society as discussed above, were targeted by the Correa Administration, there are several examples of civil society under Correa taking on new forms and reconfiguring. For example, a subset of organizations immediately began to meet about the policy reforms in Ecuador once regulatory action began with the first Decree No. 982 in 2008. Together these organizations questioned the intentions of the then new Correa Administration. At the time, they asked, why information was being compiled and collected by government through a new registry and what was to be done with this information. The small group of organizations released a public document to highlight main concerns with the Decree No. 982 (Aportes, 2009). In the document, the organizations highlight the norms set out in the 2008 Ecuadorian Constitution; in particular, the Constitution’s acknowledgement of citizen participation in the construction of a more democratic society

(Aportes, 2009).

Many organizational leaders from this beginning stage, believed that the informal group of organizations should tackle larger and broader issues across civil society and looked at the policy reforms as a tipping point:

To start, I believe that because of ...the fragmented characteristic of the sector, it has been very difficult in Ecuador to find an element that unified us, an element around which to form a [group of organizations] (February 2011)

In 2013 after approximately four years of meeting, the organizations in Ecuador created the Ecuadorian Confederation of Civil Society Organizations (CEOSC). The Confederation seeks to improve the civil society legal framework and promote dialogue among CSOs and various actors, including government. Soon after, Decree No. 16 in 2013 was released and then No. 739 in 2015, concerns about discretion continued, particularly discretion that can be used to dissolve organizations. There was uncertainty about government's requests of information from nonprofits and the criteria government is using to assess organizations that might result in closures or dissolutions. Therefore, organizations in the Collectivity Frame recognize a value for collective action:

What are the benefits of being part of the Confederation? It helps us to defend ourselves, have a strong voice. (August 2015)

The closing of *Pachamama* provides another example of organized civil society taking on new forms. A letter of solidarity was signed by over 131 organizations worldwide and requested that the government not to renounce the rights of *Fundación Pachamama* in 2013. *Pachamama* exhausted all legal options in Ecuador and is currently exploring international channels. However, *Pachamama*, forced to dissolve under the 2013 policy reforms, remains active in another form. As explained by a *Pachamama* leader:

We are now Terra Mater, it is not a nonprofit organization, it is more of an association, but dealing with the same themes. It has notarized statutes and reports to Internal Revenue Services but it does not have legal status nor is it registered as a nonprofit organizations in a line ministry (July 2016)

Indeed, this has become an option for organizations working in indigenous rights, those that seem to bare many of the burdens Correa's populism. This brings about new challenges that the Pachamama leader explained. Even if more organizations opt to abandon the typical legalized nonprofit form, these organizations often still seek international funding and donors tend to want to fund organizations with legal status (July 2016). This might be changing as donor countries are rumored to increasingly loosen up funding rules when *needed* in some restrictive contexts for CSOs (see Carothers & Brechenmacher, 2014).

Another example also linked to indigenous rights is the Yasunidos Collective. Yasunidos is a collective group was created in August of 2013 in response to President Correa's announcement to end the Yasuí-ITT Initiative. The Yasuí-ITT Initiative was an innovative mechanism of compensation for the income not received when not exploiting oil resources. The Ecuadorean government committed indefinitely to leave about 846 million barrels of oil underground in the Yasuní ecological reserve to avoid environmental destruction, specifically the emission into the atmosphere of 407 million metric tons of carbon dioxide which would be produced by the burning of these fossil fuels. The government did this in return for economic compensation from the international community for the estimated value of 50% of the profits that would be levied if this resource was to be exploited (about 350 million dollars annual).

In the 2016 Latinobarómetro Report, Ecuador is ranked the country with the most self-censorship as only 34% reported that there is freedom to criticize the government "always" or "most always". Indeed, the political and social authoritarianism in Ecuador does not provide enabling spaces for civil society, as evidenced by the threats and closures for CSOs for their work (Latinobarómetro, 2016). In this context, the promotion of actions that could be considered as a threat to the security of the state from a single organization, or a group of them, could mean being subject to liquidation and closure processes.

The restrictive conditions that existed in the face of protest and opposition to extractive policies and abuses to human rights or indigenous peoples, caused CSOs to seek new spaces

and forms of association and expression that do not allow the state with control and opportunity for repression (Chiriboga, 2014). Faced with this, forming as a collective, without legal status, presents an alternative association to manifest "in which the anonymity of the mass ... allows to overcome fear and express criticism, among other things. In criticism there is individual punishment, in protest no" (Latinobarómetro, 2016).

Chiriboga (2014) states that: "some glimpses of renewed action can be found in the Yasunidos movement that has confronted the government's decision to exploit Yasuní, despite the fact that the National Electoral Council ignored the value of signatures [to go to a consultation process] in a harshly challenged procedure" (p. 30).

Lesson #4: Build and Leverage Local Capacity

The Correa Administration policy reforms all sought to recover the state's role in the management of the public programs and to distance itself from CSOs which in the previous decades has assumed much of the provision of public goods and services. The changes in relations between the state and organized civil society not only limited CSOs' participation in the formulation and implementation of public policies, but also influenced their operational models. The reforms implemented by Correa, had an opposite effect. Civil society saw it necessary to rethink its mode of intervention with a different logic so that it can continue to fulfill its role to serve the public good. Chiriboga (2014) reflects the main contributions made in this context:

It seems to me that perhaps the greatest efforts were two: one, that communities and organized groups begin to take an interest in the public theme and to participate; it was possible to build citizenship, to build participation, to engage in public policy, to make it not the state's heritage, traditional power groups or political parties, but rather to involve the population. The second has to do with this effort to underpin the expansion of rights and capacities of communities and social groups. These are not, as it were, easy concessions from the state, but are processes that imply the appropriation by the communities of those rights and struggles for their achievement, for their consecration in legal and normative frameworks, but which in themselves are not sufficient if there are no social groups that accompany them. (p. 127).

Although in practice the conditions with the state were restrictive, organizations sought to strengthen their interventions at the local level. In 2014, for example, the Ecuadorian Network

of Fair, Democratic and Sustainable Territories developed a process to strengthen the planning teams of the municipalities of Quito, Cuenca, Guayaquil and Santa Cruz (Galápagos) so that local governments were able to respond to the increasing complexity of urban contexts and to do so balancing the economic, social, environmental and cultural aspects within a participatory framework (Barragán, Muñoz and Sanhueza, forthcoming). This Network included local governments and the capacity to mobilize local knowledge and relevant proposals from civil society about building public policies with an integrated approach to sustainable development. The Confederation is also trying to leverage civil society action at the local level through networks and new funding mechanisms. First, the Confederation is forming federations at the sub-national level. The coordinator of this project, explains it as the following:

Building federations at the ground level will allow for civil society visibility and create solidarity among civil society. It will illuminate local civil society action to enable further decentralization of donor funding, and it will allow civil society to better defend itself under some of the restrictive policy. (July 2016)

However, the coordinator recognizes that the Confederation cannot employing a top down approach (one which government and donors have become accustomed to). Networks through the Confederations and the federations hope to become important vehicles in which organized civil society can jointly define mobilization strategies.

Second, through the support of the European Union's project "Strengthening civil society organizations and their capacities of association for the promotion, exercise and defense of rights", Confederation supports local CSOs and provincial bodies working in the promotion, exercise and defense of human rights. The project includes funds for the implementation of short-term projects with a focus on actions that promote civil society and human rights. These are funding mechanisms which seek to generate links and leverage local capacity.

Additionally, the CSOs have looked to other public policies that allow them to generate new relationships. Appe and Barragán's (2015, 2017) research addresses the case of the Organic Law of Higher Education and the collaborative relationships between universities and CSOs.

Although the generation of new spaces of collaboration between these actors has not implied new sources of financial resources for CSOs, it has been possible to generate a new model of intervention through the joint implementation of linkage projects that allow CSOs to advance their social development objectives. These new spaces of collaboration with the higher education institutions have also allowed to foment spaces of leadership to solve public problems and to produce local context-specific knowledge.

Discussion and Conclusion

This paper sought to broaden our understanding of the potential for South-North cooperation. That is, given the 10 years of government rhetoric and regulatory action targeted toward organized civil society in Ecuador under the populist Correa Administration, what can be learned for other context facing rising populism? South–South Cooperation has recently been identified as an emerging alternative development model as the architecture for assistance is changing beyond the traditional North to South model. South–South Cooperation has existed for decades but has accelerated and reemerged in the last 15 years. It is considered “the mutual sharing and exchange of development solutions—knowledge, experiences and good practices, policies, technology and resources—between and among countries in the global South” (citation). We propose that South-North cooperation can include the exchange of experiences and good practices in the cases of Ecuador and the U.S.

Populists leaders across the Global North and Global South share many similarities, including in the U.S. and Ecuador. The style of populist leadership includes charismatic, direct discourse and an authoritarian approach to power. Left and right-oriented politicians like Donald Trump and Rafael Correa as well as Nicolas Maduro (Venezuela), Vladimir Putin (Russia), Juan Domingo Perón (Argentina), Augusto Pinochet (Chile), Silvio Berlusconi (Italy), Recep Tayyip

Erdoğan (Turkey) and even Bernie Sanders (U.S.), among others, share a particular way to appealing to the masses, by attack the establishment and ruling elites.⁶ Left-wing governments like that of Correa have opened the space for popular mobilization to legitimize their policies. By contrast, their promises about participatory democracy have transformed into a more controlled institutional framework for CSOs, being more conditioned to government's opinions and threatened by the direct manipulation of citizenry by the government without the mediation of any association (Ortiz Lemos, 2014).

We have identified four lessons from the case of Ecuador. First, CSOs in Ecuador learned quickly that the Correa Administration targeted specific policy areas that threatened its political agenda. These included organizations often work in any combination of women's, indigenous, cultural, rural, and environment, and media rights. The Correa Administration targeted not only this type of organization, but specific organization themselves—with threats and in Pachamama's case resulting in a required closure. Second, organizations also used the Constitution and their responsibilities to uphold it as arguments for their defense in the wake of regulatory action, threats and closures. While many of these examples of rights-based legal action have not resulted in clear changes, it has allowed CSOs to frame their work and their rights to work guaranteed under the Ecuadorian Constitution. Third, CSOs also manipulated the organizational configurations which were targeted by rhetoric and regulatory action by the Correa Administration. This included being open to new organizational configurations outside of the legalized CSOs. Using both formal (in the case of the Confederation) and informal (in the case of the Yasunidos Collective) networks were effective during the Correa Administration for some organizations and policy areas. And fourth, when national leadership was questioning organized civil society's legitimacy, civil society looked to build and leverage local capacity. The

⁶ In this order, the figure of *el caudillo* or Latin American populist strongman, with their familiar and revanchist style, is thought to seduce working class coalitions and politicians of the North as inequalities raise in their countries. In addition, northern *caudillos* share some features of their Latin American counterparts such as their chauvinism and explosive character (Brassill, 2016; La Hora, 2017)

pressures felt under the Correa Administration allowed organized civil society to focus attention on building, leveraging and reconnecting to community-based efforts at the local level.

Populism in the U.S. is still emergent. Under Trump populism has begun to produce a strong top-down relationship between government and CSOs (Selçuk, 2016; Turner-Lee, 2017). And while beyond rhetoric, Trump has not put into action any regulatory reforms that target CSOs, his decisionmaking thus an indication that CSOs will indeed be affected by Trump's policies. For example, Trump's decisions on climate change and withdrawal from the Paris Agreement have fostered the reaction of CSOs, that see in Trump's decisions a threat to the health, jobs and nature in the country, among others (Secretariat, 2017). Casey (2016) asserts that Trump's potential actions against civil society will affect a large number of organizations (hospitals, metropolitan museums, universities, small development organizations). The potential implications of Trump's approach to CSOs will include: a) lack of articulation by the Trump Administration about its relationship with CSOs; b) increasing workloads for CSOs due to his decisions on immigration, environment, education, vulnerable populations, issues around human rights such as civil rights and LGBTQ rights, among others; c) the reduction of taxes might change the incentive structure for people to give philanthropic dollars to CSOs; and finally, d) we might see more use of market-based solutions instead of CSOs for solving public problems (Casey, 2016).

On the good side in the U.S., the identified "liberal bounce" potentially increases donations to CSOs that oppose Trump's policies (Casey, 2016). Still, a lot is unknown for U.S. CSOs. Therefore, CSOs across the Global North and the Global South need to create spaces to better understand the implications of populism on civil society. Ecuador's CSOs have the capacity, knowledge and experiences to be a global resource for such South-North exchanges.

References

- Altenburg T, Weikert J. 2007. Trilateral development cooperation with “new donors” German development institute briefing paper
- Appe, S. (2017). Civil society organizations in a post-aid world: New trends and observations from the Andean region. *Public Administration and Development*.
- Appe, S. (forthcoming). Directions in a post-aid world? South-South development cooperation and CSOs in Latin America. *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*. OnlineFirst.
- Appe, S. & Barragán, D. (2015). Policy Windows for CSOs in Latin America: Looking Outside Legal and Regulatory Frameworks. *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*.
- Appe, S. & Barragán, D. (2017). Universities, NGOs, and civil society sustainability: preliminary lessons from Ecuador. *Development in Practice*.
- Appe, S. & Pallas, C. (Forthcoming). Aid reduction and local civil society: Causes, comparisons, and consequences. *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*.
- Arato, A., & Cohen, J. (1988). Civil society and social theory. *Thesis Eleven*, 21(1), 40-64.
- Barragán, D., Muñoz, L. & Sanhueza, A. (Forthcoming). La importancia del Principio 10 para la implementación de los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible en América Latina y el Caribe. *Revista de Derecho, Universidad de Chile*.
- Beasley-Murray, J. (1999). Learning from Sendero: Civil society theory and fundamentalism. *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies*, 8(1), 75-88.
- Betz, H.-G. (2002). Conditions favouring the success and failure of radical right-wing populist parties in contemporary democracies *Democracies and the populist challenge* (pp. 197-213): Springer.
- Brancaccio, D. (2016, September 26). This financial innovation could help low-income people

- gain access to credit. Marketplace. Retrieved from:
<http://www.marketplace.org/2016/09/26/wealth-poverty/jose-quinonez-macarthur-unbanked-credit-lending-circle>
- Brassill, G. (2016). Donald Trump Tweets Like a Latin American Strongman. Politico.
- Budney, J. (2011). What we can learn from populism. (Nordic Institute for Contemporary Art). Fuse Magazine, 34(2), 10.
- Canovan, M. (1981). Populism. London: London: Junction Books.
- Canovan, M. (1999). Trust the people! Populism and the two faces of democracy. Political Studies, 47(1), 2-16. doi:10.1111/1467-9248.00184
- Casey, J. (2016). Trump´s first days: what will he actually do? Baruch College. Retrieved from https://baruch.mediaspace.kaltura.com/media/Campaign+%2716+%40Baruch+A+What+Will+He+Actually+DoF/1_pj8gn00y
- Carothers, T. & Brechenmacher, S. (2014). Closing Space: Democracy and human rights support under fire. Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.
- Chiriboga, M. (2014). Las ONG ecuatorianas en los procesos de cambio. Quito: Ediciones Abya Yala y Comité Ecuménico de Proyectos
- CIVICUS. (2016). State of Civil Society Report 2016. Retrieved on 4 July 2016, from <http://www.civicus.org/images/documents/SOCS2016/summaries/SoCS-full-review.pdf>.
- Conaghan, C. (2016). Ecuador under Correa. Journal of Democracy, 27(3), 109-118. doi:10.1353/jod.2016.0040
- Cuellar, A. (2016). Trump, el nuevo bolivariano. Semana.
- Deiwiks, C. (2009). Populism. Living reviews in democracy, 1.
- Echeverría, J. (2015). La Democracia Sometida. El Ecuador de la Revolución Ciudadana. Quito: Diagonal.
- CIVICUS. (2016). State of Civil Society Report 2016. Retrieved on 4 July 2016, from

- <http://www.civicus.org/images/documents/SOCS2016/summaries/SoCS-full-review.pdf>.
- Espejo, P. O. (2017). Populism and the People. *Theory & Event*, 20(1), 92-99.
- Fals-Borda, O. (1987). The application of participatory action-research in Latin America. *International sociology*, 2(4), 329-347.
- Filcheinstein. (2016). Democracy dies in darkness. *The Washington Post*.
- Fisher, M. (2017). How does populism turn authoritarian? Venezuela is a case in point. *The New York Times*.
- Fowler, A. (2016). "Non-governmental Development Organisations' Sustainability, Partnership, and Resourcing: Futuristic Reflections on a Problematic Dialogue." *Development in Practice* 26 (5): 569–579.
- Ganuza, E., & Baiocchi, G. (2012). The power of ambiguity: How participatory budgeting travels the globe. *Journal of Public Deliberation*, 8(2).
- Gott, R. (2008). Orlando Fals Borda. *The Guardian*
- Gusterson, H. (2017). From Brexit to Trump: Anthropology and the rise of nationalist populism. *American Ethnologist*, 44(2), 209-214. doi:10.1111/amet.12469
- Hoffman, A. (2017). President Trump's top tweets of all time show a stark divide. *Time*.
- Hudock, A. (1995). Sustaining Southern NGOs in Resource-Dependent Environments, *Journal of International Development*, 7(4), 653-668.
- Infobae. (2016a). Donald Trump tuitea como Rafael Correa, Nicolás Maduro y Cristina Kirchner. *Infobae*.
- Infobae. (2016b). En qué se parecen Donald Trump y Rafael Correa. *Infobae*
- Isaac, J. (2017). *Whats in a name? What is Populism?* (Vol. 28, pp. 170-174). Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Johnson, H., & Wilson, G. (2006). North-South/South-North partnerships: closing the mutuality gap'. *Public Administration and Development*, 26(1), 71-80.

- Kazin, M. (2016). How can Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders both be 'populist'? The New York Times Magazine.
- Kleven, R. (2012). Hugo Chavez Gives Heating Aid to U.S. Poor Following Obama Budget Cut. <https://mic.com/articles/3357/hugo-chavez-gives-heating-aid-to-u-s-poor-following-obama-budget-cuts#.FRy8hm7Sc>
- La Hora.com. (2017). Académico neoyorquino compara tuits de Correa con los de Donald Trump. La Hora.
- Lewis, D. (2014). Heading South: Time to Abandon the 'Parallel Worlds' of International Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) and Domestic Third Sector Scholarship? *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, 25:1132–1150
- Jagers, J., & Walgrave, S. (2007). Populism as political communication style: An empirical study of political parties discourse in Belgium. *European Journal of Political Research*, 46(3), 319-345. doi:10.1111/j.1475-6765.2006.00690.x
- Kaltwasser, C. R. (2014). Latin American populism: Some conceptual and normative lessons. *Constellations*, 21(4), 494-504.
- Laclau, E. (2005). Populism: What's in a Name? *Populism and the Mirror of Democracy*, 48.
- McEwan C, Mawdsley E. 2012. Trilateral development cooperation: power and politics in emerging aid relationships. *Development & Change*, 43(6): 1185–1209.
- McGrath, M. (2013). The Histories of Populism. *National Civic Review*, 102(2), 50-56. doi:10.1002/ncr.21125
- Molina, C., Lopez, P., Celi, C., Pazmiño, Maria Sol (XXXX). A debate on the Ecuadorian civil society organizations' role to support development effectiveness and democracy in an emergency context. (pp. 67-74). In 2016 Global Synthesis Report State of Development Cooperation: Checking the Core of Effectiveness. <http://csopartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/2016-Global-Synthesis-Report-e-copy-1.pdf>

- Mouzelis, N. (1985). On the Concept of Populism: Populist and Clientelist Modes of Incorporation in Semi-peripheral Polities. *Politics and Society*, 14(3), 329.
doi:10.1177/003232928501400303
- Mudde, C. (2017). The problem with populism. *The Guardian*. NBC News. (2005).
Massachusetts in energy deal with Venezuela deal provides discounted oil to needy in state. Retrieved from http://www.nbcnews.com/id/10157028/ns/world_news-americas/t/massachusetts-energy-deal-venezuela/#.WNJ-roHyvcs
- Müller, J.-W. (2017). Donald Trump's use of the term 'the people' is a warning sign. *The Guardian*.
- Pinnington, E., Lerner, J., & Schugurensky, D. (2009). Participatory budgeting in North America: the case of Guelph, Canada. *Journal of public budgeting, accounting & financial management*, 21(3), 454.
- Post, W. (2017). There's a Trump tweet for everything, failed Obamacare repeal edition.
- Presidencia de la República del Ecuador. 2008. "Decree No. 982." Accessed July 24, 2016.
<http://decretos.presidencia.gob.ec/decretos>.
- Presidencia de la República del Ecuador. 2013. "Decree No. 16." Accessed July 24, 2016.
<http://decretos.presidencia.gob.ec/decretos>.
- Presidencia de la República del Ecuador. 2015. "Decree No. 739." Accessed July 24, 2016.
<http://decretos.presidencia.gob.ec/decretos>.
- Ramos, A. (2017). Trump y el populismo. Corporación Viva la Ciudadanía.
- Salamon, L.M. (2010). *Rethinking corporate social engagement: Lessons from Latin America*. Sterling, VA: Kumarian Press.
- Schulpen, L; Loman, B & Kinsbergen, S. (2011). Worse than expected? *Public Administration and Development*, 31(5): 321–339.
- Stavrakakis, Y. (2004). Theory of Populism and the Lessons from Religious Populism in Greece. *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 9(3), 253-267.

doi:10.1080/1356931042000263519

- Torre, C. D. L. (2015). De Velasco a Correa. Insurrecciones, populismos y elecciones en Ecuador, 1944-2013. Quito: Corporación Editora Nacional y Universidad Andina Simón Bolívar.
- Torre, C. D. L. (2013). El tecnopopulismo de Rafael Correa: ¿Es compatible el carisma con la tecnocracia? *Latin American Research Review*, 48(1), 24-43. doi:10.1353/lar.2013.0007
- Universo, E. (2007). Repitió el eslogan de su campaña: "La Patria vuelve". *El Universo*.
- Ulloa, C. (2017). El populismo en escena. ¿Por qué emerge en unos países y en otros no? Quito: Flacso.
- US News. (2017). Venezuela's Troubles Put US Heating Oil Charity in Limbo. Retrieved from <https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/massachusetts/articles/2017-03-21/venezuelas-troubles-put-us-heating-oil-charity-in-limbo>
- Van Kessel, S., & Castelein, R. (2016). Shifting the blame. Populist politicians' use of Twitter as a tool of opposition.
- Weyland, K. G. (2013). The Threat from the Populist Left. *Journal of Democracy*, 24(3), 18-32. doi:10.1353/jod.2013.0045
- Wofford, B. (2016). Pinochet. Chavez. Trump? Politico.
- Woody, C. (2016). There's another world leader who's optimistic about a Trump presidency. *Business Insider*.