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Surviving against all odds: Pachakutik's electoral support, mobilization strategies, and goal achievement between 1996 and 2019

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Citation

Dávila Gordillo, D. L. (2021, July 1). *Surviving against all odds: Pachakutik's electoral support, mobilization strategies, and goal achievement between 1996 and 2019*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3185908>

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Issue date: 2021-07-01

3 Pachakutik’s electoral performance and organizational resources (1996-2019)

Pachakutik is the only political party founded in Ecuador in the 1990s that has continuously presented candidates for national and subnational elections up to the present day. Since its formation, the party’s elected representatives and the party’s leaders have become a fixture of the political debate. Pachakutik can be described as a long-lasting party (a 24-year-old party) with a well-known presence in Ecuadorian politics both inside and outside the electoral cycle. This party has also been defined as an “unsuccessful (flop) [party]” (Levitsky et al., 2016, p. 36). The argument behind this description is that Pachakutik has not achieved significant levels of electoral support (at least 10% of the national vote share) in five or more consecutive elections (Levitsky et al., 2016, p. 4).

These different yet equally accurate descriptions of Pachakutik suggest the party is an example of the type of parties introduced in chapter 2. These are parties that persist with low or fluctuating levels of electoral support and with scarce resources. The extant knowledge about Pachakutik makes it easy to affirm that the party is persisting despite low levels of electoral support. It is well known that it has received declining shares of the national vote at the presidential and legislative elections since 2006 (see, for example, Madrid, 2012; Mijeski & Beck, 2008, 2011). It is, however, unclear whether the party is one with few resources. There is a common idea that Pachakutik is a party with ample human resources (a dense network of affiliates) given its connection to the indigenous social movements (Van Cott, 2005, p. 99). This may have been true when the party was first created in 1996. However, since then, the Ecuadorian state has become more invested in regulating political parties and their resources, which has meant informal resources had to become formalized. This could have affected the party’s resources. There is, however, no current comprehensive overview of the party’s resources.

In this chapter, I show Pachakutik is an example of parties persisting with low or fluctuating levels of electoral support and scarce resources. The first section of the chapter provides a short overview of the Ecuadorian state, and then discusses the ecuadorian party regulation and electoral laws, and the Ecuadorian party system between 1996 and 2020. This overview is helpful to understand Pachakutik’s context. The second section discusses the party’s electoral performance at the national and sub-national levels. This is a comprehensive overview of the party’s electoral performances spanning through almost all elections in which

the party has participated. The third section discusses the party's formation, registration and re-registration, and the organization's resources, i.e., the party's staff, the party's members, the party's leaders, and the party's financial resources. The last section brings all of the others together to present Pachakutik as a persisting party with scarce resources and fluctuating levels of electoral support.

3.1 Ecuador

Ecuador is an understudied case in political science. Although it has received some attention mostly due to the saliency of the indigenous movement in the early 1990s, in general it is not at the center of political science research. Therefore, it is pertinent to take some space to introduce the country. Ecuador is located in northwestern South America. It shares its northern border with Colombia, its eastern and southern borders with Peru, and the Pacific Ocean to the west. Geographically the country is divided into four regions. The first, the lowland (*Costa*) extends from the Pacific Ocean to the edge of the Andes mountains that traverse the country north to south. The highlands (*Sierra*) comprise the Andes mountains. The third region *Amazonia* extends from the outskirts of the Andes to the Amazon basin. The last and fourth region comprises the Galapagos Archipelago located 900km west from mainland. The maps used throughout the dissertation only show continental Ecuador.

Ecuador is currently divided administratively into 24 provinces, 221 cantons, and 1040 urban and rural parishes. It is a country with a rich pre-Columbian history. After being part of the Spanish colony in 1830 the Ecuadorian state was funded. It became unicameral presidential system, eventually turning into a bicameral presidential system, and lastly returning to a unicameral presidential system. The country has been plagued with political instability and was under a military rule between 1963 and 1966 and between 1972 and 1978. Since the return to democracy, while there has been no further military rule many presidents were ousted. The country has nonetheless achieved a certain level of political stability since 2006. In total between 1830 and 2020 Ecuador has had 20 Constitutions.

3.2 Party regulation

In Ecuador, political parties have been considered a fundamental part of democracy since 1883. Legislation addressing parties' formation and regulating party organizations has increased throughout the years (Vela Puga, 2006). Since 1945, the Ecuadorian Constitution has included

articles relating directly to political parties. The states' management of parties has increased since then. This section focuses only on the period between 1979 and 2019.

3.2.1 Parties in the Constitution (1979-2019)

Since the return to democracy in 1979, parties in Ecuador have been "constitutionalized," meaning that the parties and the state have come closer (van Biezen & Kopecký, 2007). Ecuador has had three different Constitutions between 1979 and 2019: the 1979 Constitution, the 1998 Constitution, and the 2008 Constitution. These three Constitutions all regulate party organizations and keep them at the center of all democratic processes. The constitutionalization of parties in Ecuador follows a model of parties as public utilities. Parties are "crucial mechanisms for the realization of democratic values and principles, such as participation, representation, and the expression of the popular will" (van Biezen & Borz, 2011, p. 350).

The regulation of parties in Ecuador at the Constitutions and secondary legislation has been relatively stable (with no radical changes). Party regulation has consistently moved towards increasing the state's management of parties. The three Constitutions establish that democracy in Ecuador is linked to political parties as they are expected to articulate representation. Parties hold a central position in the Ecuadorian democracy.

The three Constitutions establish that parties are organizations protected by the state. Any citizen can start a new party (provided the new organization fulfills some requisites, including presenting a government program and developing a national organization). The Constitutions moreover establish that political parties can receive state subsidies. This right was extended to national independent political movements in the 2008 Constitution. In addition, the 2008 Constitution dictates that parties should have equal gender representation within their leadership, and parties should set-up internal democracy processes to appoint their leaders and select their candidates.

Parties are expected to maintain an active life outside government with lively organizations that ensure member participation, accountability, and internal democracy. Parties are moreover allowed to organize as the opposition to the sitting government. For parties within government, particularly those that hold seats at the legislature, the Constitutions establish that if these seats represent 10% of the legislature's seats, the party (or parties working together) may form a legislative block. The Constitutions also specify one of the functions of political parties as part of the democratic process: recruiting candidates. Since 1998, these candidates may be party members or non-members, i.e., independent candidates.

The three Constitutions establish boundaries between parties and state institutions. In particular, no party leaders can be appointed to the Judicial Branch. Furthermore, the 2008 Constitution specifies that the *Consejo Nacional Electoral* (CNE), the electoral management body, will be formed by appointees with no links to political parties. This went against the 1978 and 1998 Constitutions, which, instead, established these appointees should be representatives of (the most voted) political parties.

The Constitutions also have prescriptions relating to the judicial oversight of political parties and secondary legislation norming parties. All Constitutions establish judicial oversight for parties. The 2008 Constitution, in particular, reinforced the judicial oversight creating an Electoral Tribunal (*Tribunal Contencioso Electoral*). Until 2009, the secondary legislation that regulated parties in Ecuador was divided into three different laws: the electoral law (*Ley de Elecciones*), the party law (*Ley de Partidos*), and the electoral expenses law (*Ley de Control del Gasto Electoral y de Propaganda Electoral*). Since 2009, these three laws have been brought together into a single extended law known as *Código de la Democracia*.

3.2.2 Parties in secondary legislation

Party law

The *Ley de Partidos Políticos*, first published in 1978 and included since 2009 in the *Código de la Democracia*, is the main secondary law regulating political parties. This law and its multiple iterations (multiple articles have been amended and added throughout the years) have reflected the Constitutions' objectives of regulating political parties. The law has mostly established the requisites for the formal registration of political parties. The most important requisite for registration is the supporting signatures of 1.5% of the district's registered voters.²⁸ This law also establishes how parties can be de-registered. Parties may request their de-registration, or they may be de-registered by CNE for not fulfilling the law's requirements. Party registration and de-registration regulations are scaled up or down depending on the district in which parties are registered. Moreover, the law establishes the procedures for party mergers and discusses how party organizations should be organized.

The law also establishes that parties can receive state subsidies in addition to receiving funds from their members. Until 2009 the law established that only political parties that received 4% of the national vote in two consecutive elections were entitled to receive a state

²⁸ Party registration in Ecuador can happen at the parish, canton, provincial, and national level. For each case new parties must present the supporting signatures of 1.5% of the registered voters in whichever district the party wishes to be registered.

subsidy. This meant that neither a national nor a local independent movement was entitled to this type of subsidy. This changed in 2009. The law now establishes that all national political movements and political parties can receive the subsidy (provided that they fulfill the requirements).

Electoral law and Campaign Expense law

The *Ley de Elecciones* and the *Ley del Gasto Electoral* are also part of the *Código de la Democracia*. Although these laws deal mostly with the practical aspects of elections, they also include important party regulation articles. In particular, the *Ley de Elecciones* establishes (since 1996) that political parties may join electoral alliances and thus present their candidates under shared tickets. The law establishes that these alliances can be organized locally, i.e., on a district per district basis, or nationally. Since 2009, the law adds further regulations for these alliances. Parties joining alliances are required to establish a management body, appoint leaders, and establish candidates' selection mechanisms. Since these changes were added to the law in 2009, a registered electoral alliance became subject to all parties' regulations.

The electoral and campaign expenses laws come together on the issue of who can be a candidate. As already mentioned, parties remain at the center of democracy and are thus defined as the conduits for representation. Until 2009 candidates could either be: 1) affiliated to a party, 2) sponsored by a party, or 3) be *independent candidates*. Since 2009 the law has eliminated the special provisions for registering independent candidates. All candidates have to be registered under a party name, even those not officially affiliated with a party. Moreover, all candidates have to be selected via internal democracy procedures. This means that, since 2009, parties returned to being the only means by which individuals may aspire to hold public office in Ecuador.

The laws not only establish who can be a candidate in terms of party affiliation but also in terms of gender. Since 1998, the laws (and the Constitution) established that gender parity was necessary. Between the years 2000 and 2009, the law required 30% of all candidates to be women. The required percentage of each party's women candidates had to increase by 5% in every election until reaching 50%. Since 2009 a zipper quota was established.

To sum this up, since 1979, political parties have become increasingly managed by the state. Political parties' state's management has evolved, from establishing registration requirements and specifying the parties' functions (such as candidate selection) to a detailed account of how party organizations should be set up and run. However, these regulations have

mostly focused on national-level organizations. In Ecuador, registering and maintaining a national level party organization is considerably more challenging than registering and maintaining local level organizations. As argued by van Biezen and Rashkova (2014) party regulation may deter new party formation (p. 901). Arguably, in the Ecuadorian case, party regulation deters new national party formation.

3.3 The Ecuadorian party system

3.3.1 Methodological considerations

One of the main difficulties of studying the Ecuadorian party system is the large number of parties participating in elections. In addition to the many new parties (national and mostly local) created for every election, the number of competitors is compounded by electoral alliances.²⁹

An alternative to deal with the ever-growing number of parties, particularly for longitudinal analyses, is to organize the parties and the alliances into categories. Using categories helps follow the trends of support for different party groups and simplifies narratives (moving away from long and often confusing lists of parties). Parties in Ecuador can be divided into three categories.³⁰ The first category is the *traditional parties category*. The traditional parties are national parties that participated in the first or the subsequent national elections since Ecuador's return to democracy in 1979.³¹ The second category is the *non-traditional parties category*. The non-traditional parties are national parties that were not present at the first or the subsequent national elections since Ecuador's return to democracy. The last category is the *Movimientos Independientes* (independent movements) *category*. This category includes all political movements created after 1996 that have not received political parties' status (rights and duties). Pachakutik is a non-traditional party.

As many parties participate in electoral alliances, these also need to be allocated within the three categories.³² To do this, I take into consideration the different partners within the

²⁹ This is mostly due to the fact that parties may join different alliances in different districts: in 2017 there were in total 28 electoral districts (for the legislative elections) a party could – in theory – present candidates in all 28 districts under different electoral alliances and use a different one for the presidential candidate. In total one single party may effectively turn itself into 29 different parties.

³⁰ I build on Flavia Freidenberg's (2015) categorization of Ecuadorian political parties.³⁰ She divides the Ecuadorian political parties into two categories: *traditional parties* and *non-traditional parties*.

³¹ The traditional parties are: *Izquierda Democrática* (ID), *Partido Social Cristiano* (PSC), *Democracia Popular* (DP-UDC), *Partido Roldosista Ecuatoriano* (PRE), *Partido Socialista Ecuatoriano* (PSE), *Movimiento Popular Democrático* (MPD) and *Concentración de Fuerzas Populares* (CFP).

³² How to deal with alliances depends on the type of analysis. For analyses centred on the number of votes parties receive, votes may be divided following what is established in the Ecuadorian electoral laws i.e., splitting votes

alliance. Suppose the alliance is between parties that belong to the same party category. In that case, the alliance is allocated to the same party category. Suppose the alliance partners are from different party categories. In that case, I assign the alliance to the party category of the partner with the larger number of seats at the legislature in that electoral year.³³ Using this rule ensures that the allocation of alliances considers the changes in political parties' relevance throughout the years.³⁴ Additionally, as my focus is on Pachakutik's performance, I assign all of the party's electoral alliances as part of the category Pachakutik.

I use these four categories (Traditional Parties, Non-Traditional Parties, Independent Movements, and Pachakutik) throughout the dissertation. Only in some cases, I refer to specific party names. When I do, I clarify to which party category these parties belong.

3.3.2 The Ecuadorian party system (1996-2019)

Before 1996 the Ecuadorian party system was controlled by traditional parties. Although voters were dissatisfied with the overall political class, often “punishing parties” by voting for the opposition, these “floating voters” consistently voted for traditional parties (Conaghan, 2003, p. 222).³⁵ This particular phenomenon meant that the party system could be described as volatile and inchoate while also controlled by the same set of parties (Sanchez, 2008, p. 326).³⁶ These parties established hidden cooperation patterns, which gave the system a form of institutionalization (Pachano, 2004). Traditional parties kept control over the party system and the government until 2002. These parties had almost absolute control over the country's government both at the subnational and the national arenas.

In 2002, the traditional parties' primacy declined. The first presidential candidate from a non-traditional party, Lucio Gutierrez, was elected. He embodied all that had characterized

following past electoral performances of the partners. An alternative is also to split the votes equally between alliances' partners (e.g. Mustillo, 2009; Mustillo & Polga-Hecimovich, 2018).

³³ For example, in the case of the electoral alliance between PSC and an independent political movement MIFPPE from the election of 2002 I assign this alliance to the Traditional Party category. I do this because in 2002 PSC was the largest party in the legislature thus also the partner with the largest legislative block. If by contrast MIFPPE had a larger number of seats at the legislature on that year, I would have allocated the alliance to the Independent Movements category.

³⁴ Many parties that were once relevant, such as traditional parties, have become less relevant within the system receiving declining shares of the national votes. For instance, for the elections of 1996, 1998, and 2002, most electoral alliances that included at least one traditional party were re-categorized to the traditional parties' category. By contrast, from 2006 onward, it is more often that I allocate these alliances (with a traditional party partner) to other party categories.

³⁵ Conaghan makes a detailed analysis of the Ecuadorian party system between 1979 and 1992. By the early 1990s voters were unhappy with parties often recurring to voting for the opposition to “punish” other parties, (Conaghan, 2003, p. 222).

³⁶ These parties were: *Partido Social Cristiano* (PSC), *Partidos Roldosista Ecuatoriano* (PRE), *Izquierda Democrática* (ID), and the party *Democracia Popular* (DP-UDC)

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anti-establishment politics in Ecuador. He was elected under the ticket of his new political party, *Partido Sociedad Patriótica* (PSP), and with the support of Pachakutik. At the legislative level, traditional parties continued to hold the majority of the seats, however. Gutierrez had to resort to building agreements with the traditional parties. Nonetheless, despite the traditional parties' continued presence, in 2002, the party system started to change.

The 2006 election of Rafael Correa, the ultimate outsider – despite his short stint as finance minister for Gutierrez's predecessor –, confirmed the end of the traditional parties' era. Correa ran with a robust anti-establishment platform. The electorate rewarded him. At the legislature, the traditional parties – together – held only 38% of the seats. For the first time, non-traditional parties held the majority of seats in Congress (52%).

As Correa's regime advanced, the Ecuadorian party system transformed. As Mainwaring (2018) describes it, the party system collapsed (p. 9). The traditional parties lost their preeminence. A mix of new non-traditional parties and new independent movements replaced them. Correa's party *Movimiento Alianza PAIS - Patria Altiva i Soberana* MPAIS (a non-traditional party) held most of the legislative seats in 2009 and 2013 and gained control of a large portion of the subnational arena's offices.

This trend started to change in 2017, however. Correa's successor, Lenin Moreno, swiftly distanced himself from the former president (and his supporters) and joined conservative groups in Ecuador linked to traditional parties. In that year, traditional parties also regained some space at the legislature. This trend continued into the 2019 subnational elections. Many of the traditional parties that were considered almost defunct won seats. Alongside traditional parties, new non-traditional parties and independent movements have also entered the political arena.

3.4 National and subnational elections (1996-2019)

This section reviews Pachakutik's electoral results between 1996 and 2019 at the national and subnational elections.

3.4.1 National elections

Presidential elections

Ecuadorians have elected their presidents in 1996, 1998, 2002, 2006, 2009, 2013, and 2017. Presidents are elected using a qualified plurality method in two-round elections. A candidate

may be elected during the first round provided she receives more than 50% of the valid votes or receives more than 40% of the valid votes with a 10% margin of victory. Except for Rafael Correa in 2009, no other Ecuadorian president has been elected in a single round since 1979. Presidential elections have been held simultaneously with legislative elections since 1996.

Table 3.1 shows an overview of the most important data for the presidential elections between 1996 and 2017. The table includes the number of presidential candidates that competed in every election (on average nine candidates);³⁷ the voter turnout for every election (the average voter turnout for the presidential elections is 74.35%); the names of the parties that qualified for the second round; and, the name of the elected president and his party.

The presidents elected in 1996 and 1998 were members of traditional parties. Since 2002 no member of a traditional party has been elected. Only non-traditional parties' candidates have been elected between 2002 and 2017. No president elected between 1996 and 2002 finished their period in office. All three were removed from office following public demonstrations. Rafael Correa, elected for the first time in 2006, was the first president to serve a full term since 1996. Moreover, he was the first president to serve in three consecutive terms since the country's return to democracy.

Pachakutik presented its first presidential candidate in 1996 and has presented candidates in elections since then, except for the 2009 elections. The 1996 elections were notoriously positive for Pachakutik, with the party receiving 20.61% of the national votes and coming in third overall. While the party did not qualify for the second round, the strong showing was considered a testament to the indigenous movement's strength (Van Cott, 2005). In 1998, Pachakutik's candidate received only 14.5% of the national vote and came in fourth. In 2002 Pachakutik's candidate was the most voted candidate during the first round. He was elected president after the second round in 2002 with 54.8% of the national vote. However, the electoral alliance only lasted six months after the new president took office, which meant Pachakutik was never effectively in power. Table 3.2 and figure 3.1 summarize Pachakutik's candidates' electoral support.

³⁷ The 1996 elections were the first ones in which independent candidates could participate. It was expected that many independent candidates would run for the presidency (and all other offices) after the law changed; however, the number of presidential candidates in 1996 and afterwards did not increase compared to the previous period (1979-1992). Between 1979 and 1992 the average number of presidential candidates was 9.

Table 3.1 Presidential Elections in Ecuador 1996 - 2017

	Year of presidential Elections						
	1996	1998	2002	2006	2009	2013	2017
Number of Candidates	9	6	11	13	8	8	8
Voter turnout (%)	71.71%	70.13%	64.24%	72.38%	75.90%	82.02%	83.10%
Second-Round							
Party 1	PSC	DP-UDC	PSP/MUPP	PRIAN MPAIS/PS-FA	-	MPAIS	MPAIS
Party 2	PRE	PRE	PRIAN	MPAIS/PS-FA	-	CREO	CREO
Elected party	PRE	DP-UDC	PSP/MUPP	FA	MPAIS*	MPAIS	MPAIS
President's name	Abdala Bucaram**	Jamil Mahuad***	Lucio Gutierrez****	Rafael Correa	Rafael Correa	Rafael Correa	Lenin Moreno

Source: Electoral data from Tribunal Supremo Electoral (TSE) and Consejo Nacional Electoral (CNE). Turnout data for the 1996 and the 1998 elections from International IDEA, Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance.

*Rafael Correa was elected in the first round of elections in 2009.

**Abdala Bucaram was removed from office after being declared mentally unfit to rule by the legislature on February 12, 1997. He was succeeded by the president of the National legislature Fabian Alarcon.

*** Jamil Mahuad resigned as president on January 21, 2000, after week-long public demonstrations spearheaded by the indigenous population and the military. He was succeeded by his vice-president Gustavo Noboa.

**** On April 20, 2005, the Ecuadorian legislature voted to remove Lucio Gutierrez from office on the grounds of abandoning office. This was preceded by more than seven days of public unrest and demonstrations in Quito. His vice-president Alfredo became the next president

In 2006 Pachakutik presented its first “party member candidate,” Luis Macas. Macas, who was also Pachakutik’s first indigenous presidential candidate, received only 2.2% of the national vote. Since then, the party’s candidates have received marginally more electoral support. In 2013 Pachakutik joined the electoral alliance *Unidad Plurinacional de las Izquierdas* to un-seat Correa. Despite bringing together most left-leaning opposition parties, Pachakutik’s candidate came in 6th, receiving only 3.3% of the national vote. In 2017 Pachakutik joined another electoral alliance with roughly the same characteristics as the 2013 alliance. The party’s candidate came in as a distant 4th with 6.71% of the national vote.

Table 3.2 Presidential electoral results: Percentage of the national vote share received by Pachakutik and the parties that moved to the second round.

Presidential Elections: percentage of the national vote share						
	1996 (%)	1998 (%)	2002 (%)	2006 (%)	2009 (%)	2013 (%)
Run-off 1st	27.2	34.9		26.8	52.0	57.2
Run-off 2nd	26.3	26.6	17.39	22.8	28.2	22.7
MUPP	20.6	14.7	20.64*	2.2		3.3
						6.7

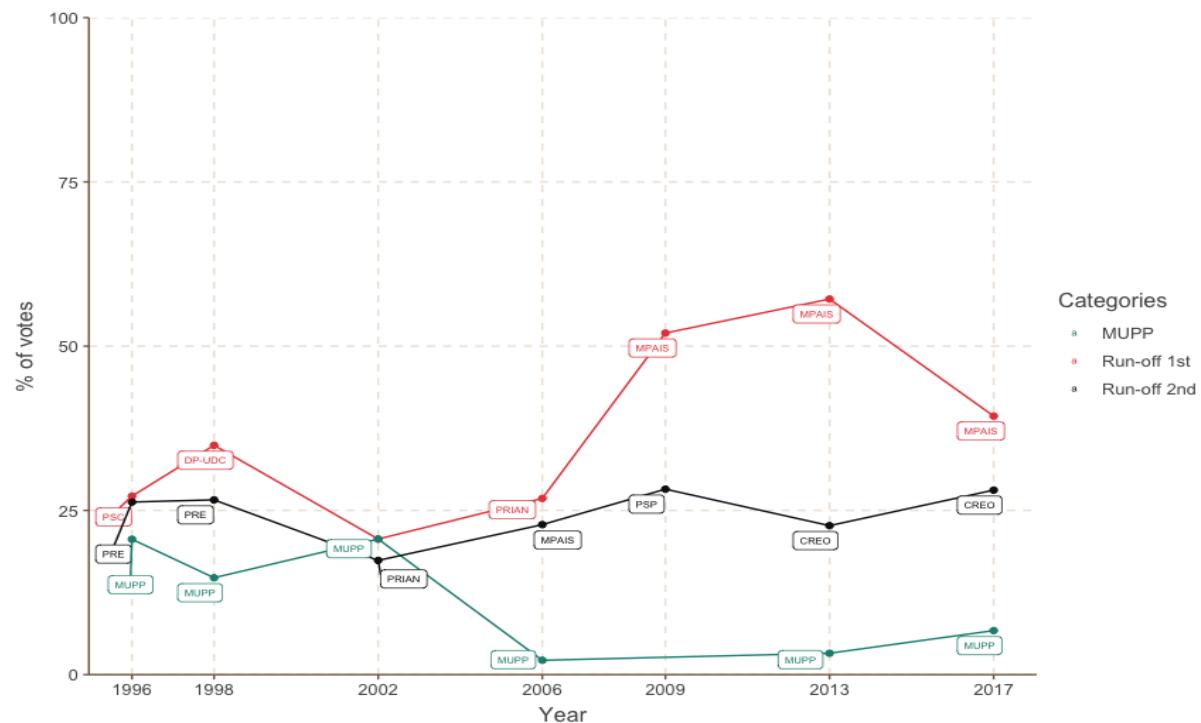
Source: Compiled with data from Consejo Nacional Electoral and Tribunal Supremo Electoral

* Pachakutik’s candidate, Lucio Gutierrez, was the candidate with the most votes in the first round of elections in 2002. He was elected president in the second round.

As it is clear, at the presidential elections, Pachakutik’s electoral support has declined since its breakthrough. Interestingly, at no point in time have the party’s candidates received upwards of “1 million votes” (Gonzalez, 1996) Pachakutik claimed to have by way of its links to Conaie. The only time the party was close to receiving 1 million votes was in 2002. However, these votes came from indigenous and mestizo voters and are not the one million votes promised by the indigenous leaders (Mijeski & Beck, 2011, p. 82). On the whole, between 1996 and 2017, Pachakutik moved from being a competitor to becoming almost irrelevant.

Figure 3.1 Presidential Elections results from 1996-2017 (percentage of votes received by parties going to the run-off and Pachakutik)

Pachakutik's electoral performance and organizational resources (1996-2019)



Source: Electoral data from Tribunal Supremo Electoral (TSE) and Consejo Nacional Electoral (CNE)

Legislative elections

Pachakutik has also consistently presented candidates to the legislature. Ecuador's legislature was known as the National Congress from 1984 to 2009, and since then, its name was changed to National Assembly. Table 3.3 provides a detailed overview of all relevant data about the Ecuadorian legislative elections. The table includes data on the size of the legislature, the type of seats, the seat allocation formula employed to transform seats to votes, the voter turnout, the number of parties that presented candidates, the number of parties with seats, and lastly, the effective number of parties by seats (ENPS)³⁸.

In 1996, the legislature was formed by 82 *diputados* (deputies). This number increased to 121 in 1998. The deputies were divided into national and provincial deputies. In 2002 and 2006, the legislature was reduced to 100 provincial deputies as national deputies' seats were eliminated. Since 2009 legislators are called assembly members, and these include national, provincial, and overseas representatives elected for a total of 124 seats. For the 2013 and 2017 elections, the total number of seats increased to 137.

³⁸ The ENPS was calculated using the Laakso-Taagepera Index (1979). All electoral alliances were counted as different parties.

Table 3.3 Legislative Elections in Ecuador 1996 - 2017

	Year of legislative elections						
	1996	1998	2002	2006	2009	2013	2017
Size of the Legislature (number of seats)	82	121	100	100	124	137	137
Type of Seats							
National	12	20	-	-	15	15	15
Provincial	70	101	100	100	103	116	116
Overseas	-	-	-	-	6	6	6
Seat allocation formula							
National							
Legislators	Hare, Largest reminders	D'Hondt				D'Hondt	D'Hondt
Provincial							
Legislators (including overseas legislators)	Hare, Largest reminders	Plurality	D'Hondt	Imperiali, largest remainders	Imperiali, largest remainders	D'Hondt	D'Hondt
Voter turnout (%)	71.71%	70.13%	64.24%	72.38%	75.90%	82.02%	83.10%
Number of parties with candidates	27	-	76	67	103	43	81
Number of parties with elected candidates	11	18	26	20	29	19	28
Effective Number of Parties by Seats	5.11	5.70	8.47	6.33	4.51	2.68	5.52

Source: Electoral data from Tribunal Supremo Electoral (TSE) and Consejo Nacional Electoral (CNE). No data is available for the number of parties with candidates in 1998. Turnout data for the 1996 and 1998 elections from International IDEA, Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance. Seat allocation formula data from (Mustillo & Polga-Hecimovich, 2018)

In 1996, national and provincial deputies were elected from either a single national district (magnitude 12) or 21 provincial districts (with district magnitudes ranging from 2 to 10 seats) using a closed-list proportional representation (PR) system. In 1998, national deputies were elected using a closed list PR (district magnitude 21). Provincial deputies were elected using multiple non-transferable votes (MNTV) from 21 districts (with district magnitudes ranging from 2 to 18 seats). Since 2002 legislators have been elected using the free list PR method (see table 3.3 for details on the formulas employed in each election). The number of districts has increased from 21 to 27, and the districts' magnitudes have also changed. The smaller districts continue to elect only two legislators, and larger districts elect up to 20 legislators.

The average voter turnout between 1996 and 2017 has been 74.21%. On average, 66 parties have presented candidates to the legislature. 2009 was the year with more parties competing. Interestingly, of these parties, only a few made it to the legislature. On average, only 21 parties got seats. Nonetheless, the seats were not evenly distributed. The ENPS shows that the fragmentation of the party system has fluctuated. On average, the ENPS was 5.47.

Pachakutik in the legislature

Pachakutik has presented candidates to the legislature since 1996, both for national and provincial legislators. Figure 3.2 presents an overview of the provinces in which Pachakutik presented candidates and where they were elected between 2002 and 2017.³⁹ In 2002 the party presented candidates in all provinces. Since then, the party has presented candidates only in some provinces, albeit it has also presented candidates at the overseas districts.

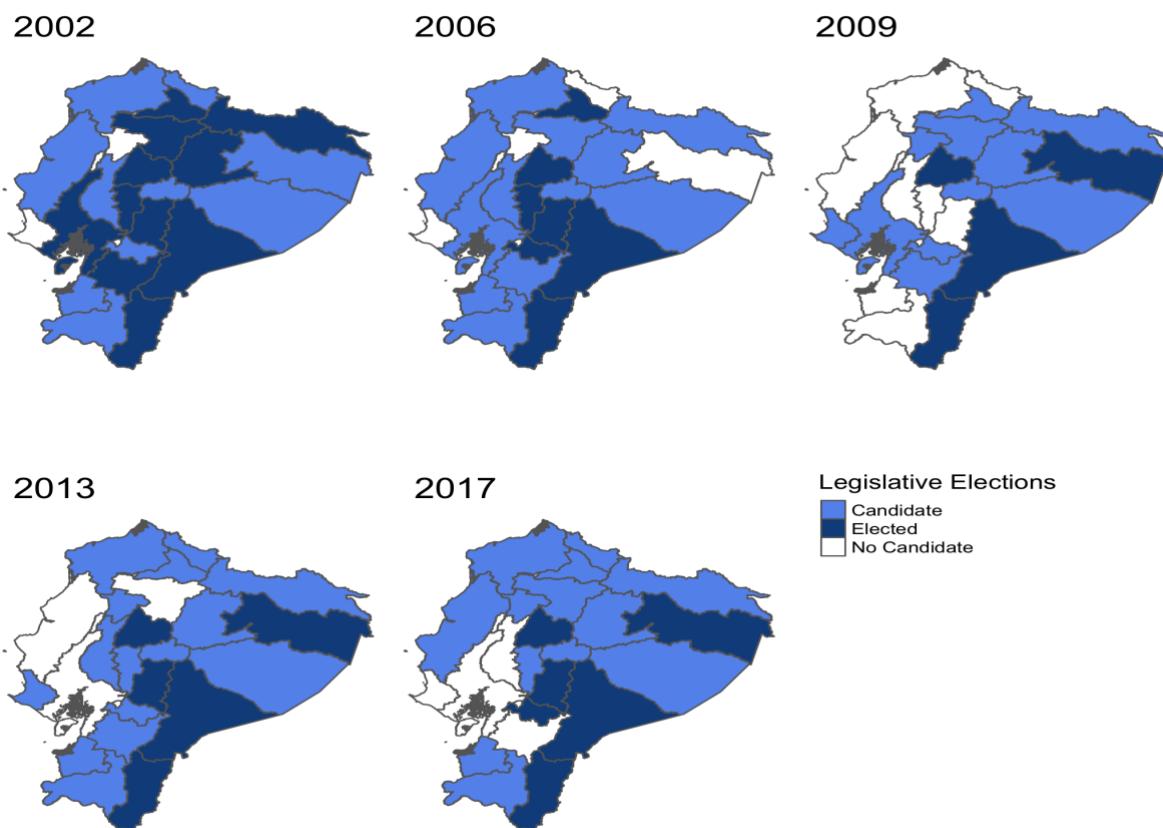
To explore in further detail Pachakutik's performance, I analyze the number of seats the party achieved in every election and the percentage of the national vote received by the party's candidates. I do the same for all other parties and present the data using the party categories discussed in the previous section. Table 3.4 summarizes, for each category, the number of seats (and percentage of seats) and the percentage of the national vote achieved by each party category. I used data from the *Tribunal Supremo Electoral* (TSE) and the *Consejo Nacional Electoral* (CNE) for the number of seats and data on votes from Polga-Hecimovich and Mustillo (2018).⁴⁰ It is essential to point out a slight mismatch between the electoral data

³⁹ The maps in figure 3.2 reflect Ecuador's 2019 administrative division. That is, a total 23 continental provinces plus Galapagos (not shown in the map). In 2002, the two white spots in the map were part of the neighboring provinces.

⁴⁰ Mustillo and Polga-Hecimovich (2018) discuss the difficulties of calculating party support in free-list PR systems. They propose four approaches for counting votes and apply them to the Ecuadorian legislative elections.

and the seat allocation data. Polga-Hecimovich and Mustillo split the votes from electoral alliances equally between partners. By contrast, the number of seats reflects the alliance allocation rules discussed in the previous section. This leads to a slight mismatch between seats and vote percentages, especially for Pachakutik's results in 2013 and 2017.

Figure 3.2 Provinces where Pachakutik presented candidates for legislators



Source: Built with data from Consejo Nacional Electoral. The maps reflect the 2019 administrative division of Ecuador.

The data in Table 3.4 shows that traditional parties have lost their preeminence, particularly since 2006. Non-traditional parties have, by contrast, gained space, holding in 2013 around 86.1% of the legislature's seats. Nevertheless, it is necessary to point out that direct comparisons between traditional and non-traditional parties are somewhat unfair. The latter party category is continuously growing. In contrast, the traditional party category is static.

I used their publicly available database with their preferred method for vote aggregation for each election and categorized parties to produce party category totals.

Table 3.4 Composition of the Ecuadorian Legislature between 1996 and 2017 by party category

Year	Independent Movements			Pachakutik			Non-traditional parties			Traditional parties		
	Seats (#)	Seats (%)	Votes (%)	Seats (#)	Seats (%)	Votes (%)	Seats (#)	Seats (%)	Votes (%)	Seats (#)	Seats (%)	Votes (%)
1996	4	4.9	-	8	9.8	-	-	-	-	70	81.7	-
1998	-	-	17.4	9	7.4	3.6	-	-	0.2	112	92.6	78.8
2002	3	3.0	12.6	14	14.0	5.4	14	14.0	20	69	69.0	62
2006	3	3.0	7.9	7	7.0	4	52	52.0	47	38	38.0	41.7
2009	12	9.7	15.2	4	3.2	2.7	85	68.5	58.6	23	18.5	23.6
2013	3	2.2	14.0	7	5.1	1.0	118	86.1	71.3	9	6.6	13.6
2017	4	2.9	21.3	7	5.1	2.7	108	78.8	55.4	18	13.1	20.6

Source: Electoral data (number of seats) from Tribunal Supremo Electoral (TSE) and Consejo Nacional Electoral (CNE). The seats of legislators elected under electoral alliances were added to the party category of the alliance's partner with the largest legislative block during the specific legislative period, except for Pachakutik. Pachakutik's seats reflect the number of legislators elected under the party's ticket (including alliances). Vote percentages from Polga-Hecimovich and Mustillo (2018)

Pachakutik's candidates, as was the case for the party's candidates at the presidential elections, have lost electoral support throughout the years. Nevertheless, this has not directly translated into lost seats. The party's electoral performance is dismal, to be sure. However, in the end, these votes have been enough to secure the party seats at the legislature consistently. The reduced national vote share can be explained as the byproduct of Pachakutik's choices, presenting candidates under electoral alliances.⁴¹ Alliances have effectively reduced the number of votes allocated to the party. Table 3.5 summarizes the number of Pachakutik's candidates elected under alliances and single-party tickets.

Table 3.5 Pachakutik's legislative seats between 1996 and 2017 (including legislators in electoral alliances).

Pachakutik's legislative seats (1996-2017)				
Year	Seats (#)	Percentage (%)	Seats with Electoral Alliances (#)	Percentage (%)
1996	8	9.8	-	-
1998	6	4.9	9	7.4
2002	5	5	14	14
2006	6	6	7	7
2009	3	2.4	4	3.2
2013	1	0.7	7	5.1
2017	3	2.2	7	5.1

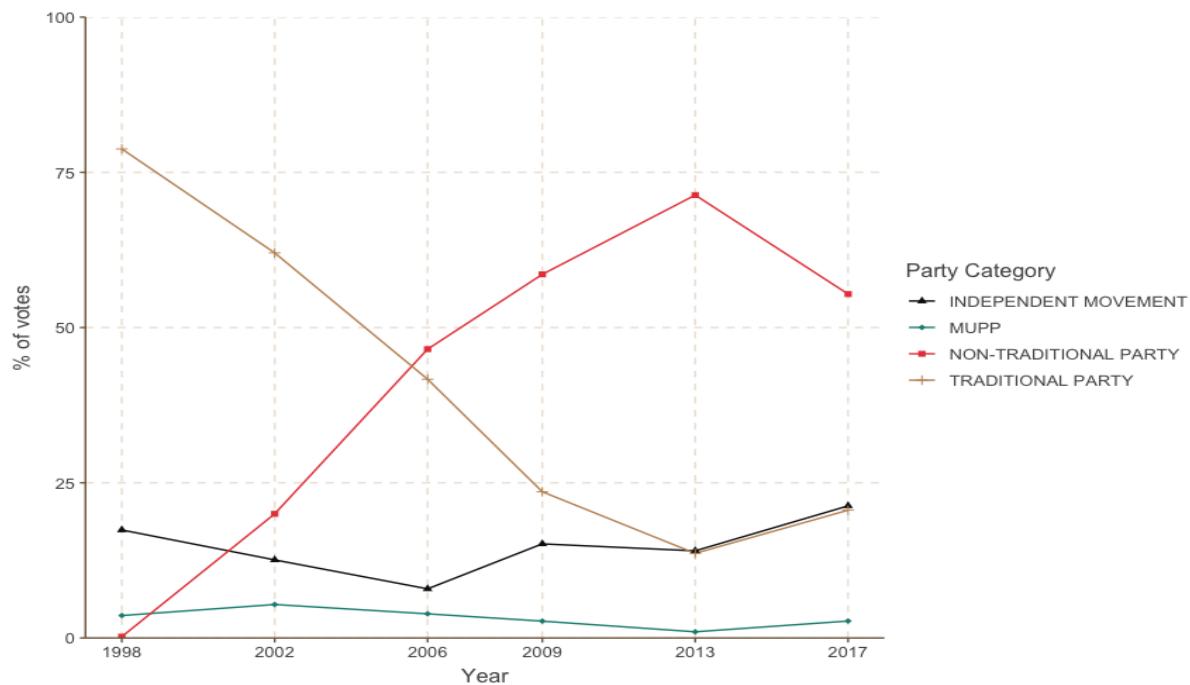
Source: Based on data from the Consejo Nacional Electoral and Tribunal Supremo Electoral

Figures 3.3 and 3.4 are helpful to visualize the support trends for each party category presented in table 3.4. Figure 3.3 plots the percentages of the national vote received by each party category, while figure 3.4 plots the percentage of seats achieved by each party category. Both figures show clear trends. Traditional parties lost votes and seats, while non-traditional parties won seats and votes. It is also clear how independent movements have been able to get electoral support across elections but seem not to overcome the effective electoral thresholds. By contrast, Pachakutik's candidates, despite receiving fewer votes, get more seats.

⁴¹ The eight seats registered as elected under a single ticket in 1996 effectively represented the party's alliance with independent movement *Nuevo País*.

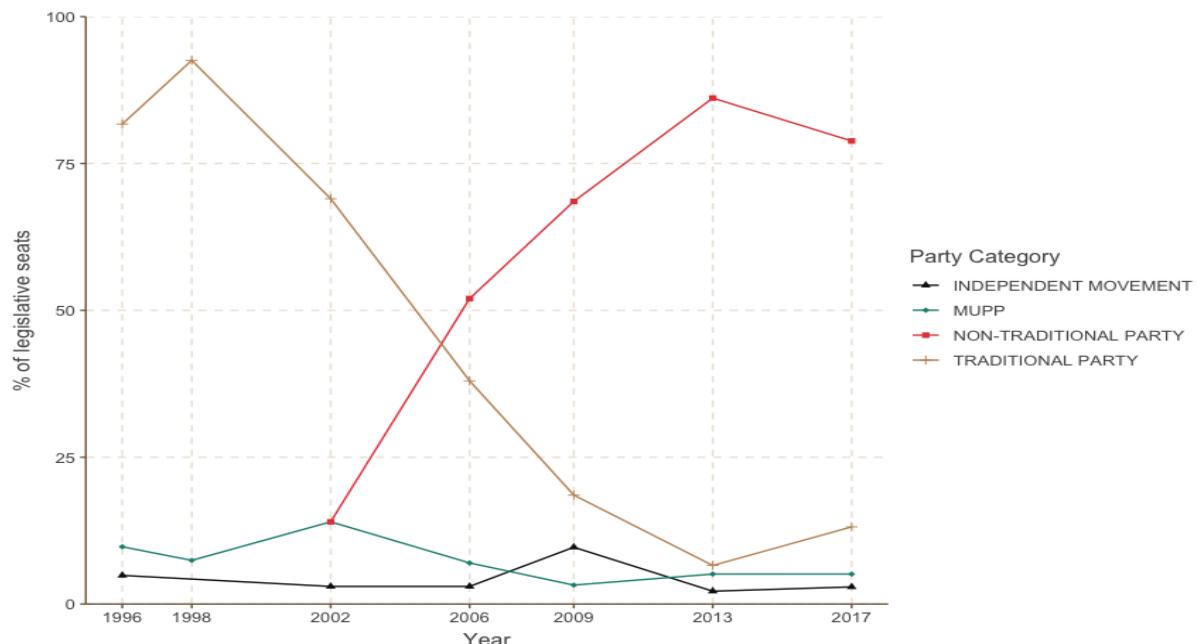
Pachakutik's electoral performance and organizational resources (1996-2019)

Figure 3.3 Proportions of the national vote share received by party category at the legislative elections (1998-2017)



Source: Built with data electoral data from Polga-Hecimovich and Mustillo (2018)

Figure 3.4 Composition of the legislature in Ecuador (1996-2017)



Source: Data from Tribunal Supremo Electoral (TSE) and Consejo Nacional Electoral (CNE)
 Pachakutik's electoral support has declined since 1996. Although the support change is not as steep as the decline at the presidential elections, it is clear that the party has become less

and less able to mobilize voters. Nonetheless, even with decreasing electoral support, the party has held on to multiple legislative seats (between 4 and 7). By and large, Pachakutik's accomplishments, especially regarding the number of seats, are impressive. Pachakutik is clearly a party with low levels of electoral support at the national elections. The party has received less than 5% of the national votes in the last four elections.

3.4.2 Subnational elections

In Ecuador, there are five different types of subnational officials elected in different electoral districts. These electoral districts follow the administrative division of the country. Twenty-three provinces elect prefects,⁴² 221 cantons elect mayors and municipal council members, and 816 rural parishes elect parish council members. Table 3.6 summarizes the number of elected officials for each office in each election (1996-2019) and includes data on each election's voter turnout.

Subnational elections in Ecuador are *high stakes* elections.⁴³ As discussed in chapter 2, electoral laws that fortify subnational elections can be conducive to party persistence. Processes of decentralization, federalization, and regionalization can disperse political authority across electoral arenas, making subnational levels more appealing (Golder, Lago, Blais, Gidengil, & Gschwend, 2017; Schakel & Dandoy, 2013). Parties that perform poorly at national elections may still find encouragement to compete at lower levels.

Ecuador is a decentralized country. In 1998 the Ecuadorian government started an *á la carte* system of decentralization. Local governments could petition almost all of the central state's competencies with only a few exceptions, such as defense and foreign policy (Faust & Harbers, 2012; Ortiz Crespo, Bastidas Redin, & Burbano de Lara Vásconez, 2017).⁴⁴ Subnational governments were "able to acquire control over a substantial amount of financial resources" (Faust & Harbers, 2012, p. 71). In 2008 the government established guidelines for mandatory decentralization that reverted the 1998 model (Ortiz Crespo et al., 2017, p. 24). The

⁴² Ecuador has 24 provinces however the Galápagos provinces is governed differently than all other 23 provinces.

⁴³ Subnational elections in Ecuador do not conform with the second order election model (SOE). In this model, subnational elections are considered second-order as there should be "less at stake" compared to national elections (Reif & Schmitt, 1980, p. 9). The second order elections model also expects that these elections should yield lower voter turnout, and that small parties will perform better than national parties as voters can "risk" to support smaller parties (Clark & Rohrschneider, 2009; Reif & Schmitt, 1980; Van Der Eijk, Franklin, & Marsh, 1996).

⁴⁴ A key step was taken in 1997, when the "Law for the Decentralization of the State and Social Participation" and the "Law of 15%" were approved. The first law established decentralization as a core interest of the state, and the second law determined that 15% of the state revenues should be allocated to local governments, increasing considerably the access of local government to public resources (Van Cott, 2008, p. 36). The next year, the 1998 Constitution established that provinces and municipalities could apply for responsibilities being executed by the central government.

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central government kept as exclusive competencies, amongst others, policies on education, health, social security, and housing.⁴⁵ Subnational governments could thus claim only a reduced set of competence. Nonetheless, the central government also formalized many local governments' competencies. This, in a way, compensated some of the losses of the local governments. On the whole, both models of decentralization have contributed to making local elections high stakes elections.

Table 3.6 Subnational elections in Ecuador 1996-2019 (number of officials to be elected)

	Year of subnational Elections					
	1996	2000	2004	2009	2014	2019
Number of officials elected						
Prefects	20	22	22	23	23	23
Provincial Council Members*	79	89	91	-	-	-
Mayors	200	215	219	221	221	221
Municipal Council Members*	830	887	893	1581	1305	1307
Parish Council Members**	-	3880	3960	3985	4079	4094
Voter Turnout %	71.71%	65.10%	70.33%	75.90%	82.67%	80.57%

Source: Electoral data from Tribunal Supremo Electoral and Consejo Nacional Electoral. Turnout data of 1996 from International IDEA, Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance.

**Provincial council members and municipal council members were also elected on by-elections in 1998, 2002, and 2006.*

*** Parish council members were elected for the first time in the year 2000.*

Pachakutik's leaders, from the outset, recognized the importance of these elections. The party presented candidates for prefects, provincial council members, mayors, municipal council members, and parish council members ever since its formation. Table 3.7 shows an overview of the number of candidates the party presented for every office and the number of elected candidates each year. In the following section, I focus on the elections of prefects, mayors, and parish council members.

⁴⁵ The full list of competencies can be found in article 261 of the Constitution.

Table 3.7 Pachakutik in subnational elections: candidates and elected candidates

	Year of elections					
	1996	2000	2004	2009	2014	2019
Prefects						
Seats	21	22	22	23	23	23
MUPP Candidates	9	15	14	12	12	18
MUPP Elected	0	5	5	5	5	5
Provincial Councils						
Seats	74	89	91	-	-	-
MUPP Candidates	47	67	67	-	-	-
MUPP Elected	12	15	22	-	-	-
Mayors						
Seats	198	215	219	221	221	221
MUPP Candidates	-	110	111	94	90	95
MUPP Elected	10	30	25	28	29	20
Municipal Councils						
Seats	819	887	893	1581	1305	1307
MUPP Candidates	-	534	545	743	592	633
MUPP Elected	45	113	118	137	123	119
Parish Councils						
Seats	-	3880	3960	3980	4079	4094
MUPP Candidates	-	1420	1815	1700	1700	1965
MUPP Elected	-	565	570	458	530	519

Source: Data from Tribunal Supremo Electoral (TSE) and Consejo Nacional Electoral (CNE).

Elections of prefects (provincial elections)

Prefects are the publicly elected head of the provincial executive government. They are elected in simple majority single round of votes. Table 3.8 summarizes data for all prefect elections between 1996 and 2019. The table shows the number (and percentage) of prefects elected per party category and the candidates' national vote percentage. I used data from CNE and TSE for the table. Votes for electoral alliances were allocated following the same rules discussed earlier for the allocation of legislative seats.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ This is different from what I did for the legislative votes as I used Polga-Hecimovich and Mustillo (2018) and they allocate alliances votes dividing them equally between partners. For the subnational elections I instead allocate alliances votes to party categories, and I allocate all votes for a candidate to these categories.

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The prefect elections largely reflect the trends of electoral support for parties found at the national level. From 1996 to 2004, most provincial prefects were elected under the ticket of a traditional party. The presence of these parties declined in 2009, but they made a comeback in 2019. Non-traditional parties slowly gained over the seats from traditional parties starting in 2004. However, by 2019, these parties lost many of their seats. Independent movements presence has increased since 1996.

Pachakutik has presented candidates for prefect since 1996. In that year, the party had no candidates elected. Since the elections in the year 2000, five Pachakutik's candidates have been elected prefects at every election. However, the overall share of Pachakutik's candidates' national vote has never been higher than 7.5%. In 2009 and 2014, the party had its worst years, receiving precisely 4.8% of the national votes. Interestingly in 2019, the party's votes increased, albeit not the party's number of elected prefects.

Figures 3.5 and 3.6 plot the data from table 3.8. These figures highlight the changes in support for parties in the different categories and Pachakutik's stable results. Pachakutik stability is not linked to strongholds, however. Only two provinces have consistently elected Pachakutik's candidates as prefect since 2000: Cotopaxi and Morona Santiago. All other prefects have been elected in different provinces throughout the years. Many of these prefects also ran under electoral alliances.⁴⁷ Figure 3.7 plots the provinces where Pachakutik's candidates competed for the seat of prefect in every election (in light blue) and the provinces where the candidates were elected (in dark blue).

Despite the variation amongst the provinces where Pachakutik's candidates were elected, these provinces have one characteristic in common: they are sparsely populated. On average, only 4.15% of all registered voters in the country vote in each of these provinces. This explains, in part, the fact that Pachakutik's electoral support overall is relatively small even when the party's candidates are elected in multiple provinces.

⁴⁷ These provinces are: Bolívar, Orellana, Sucumbíos, Imbabura, Tungurahua, Zamora Chinchipe, Pastaza, Napo, Azuay, and Chimborazo.

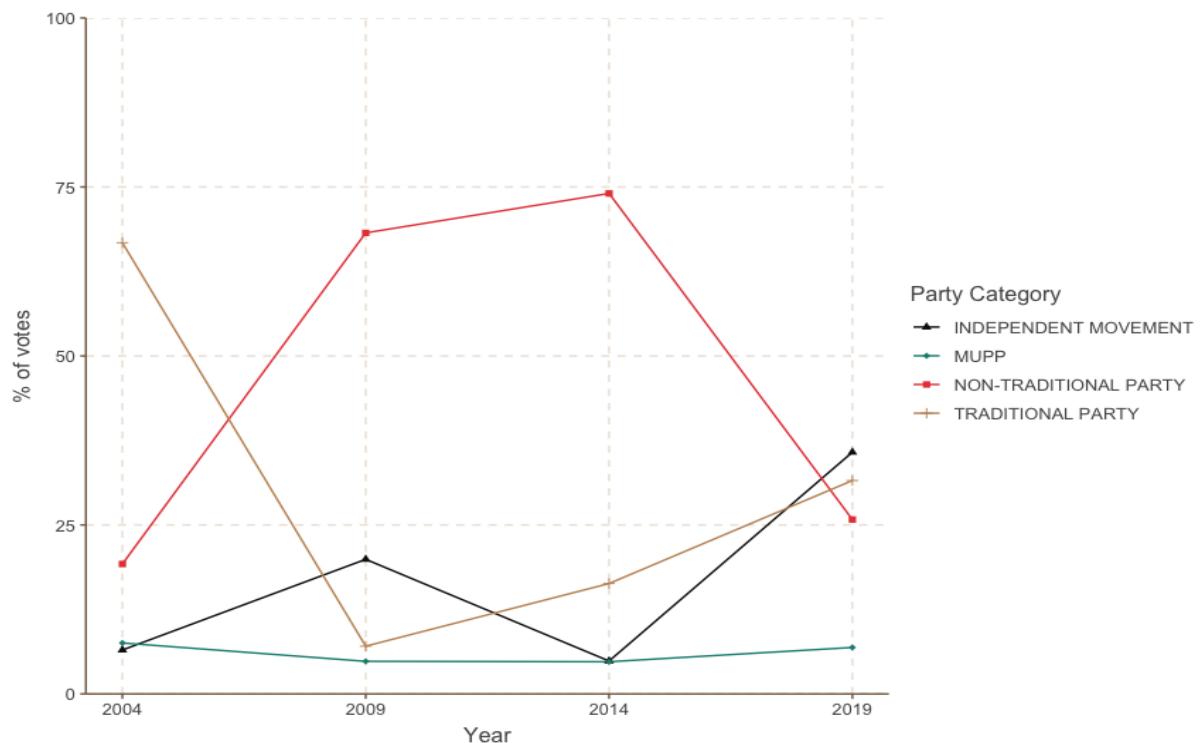
Table 3.8 Subnational elections: prefects elected between 1996 and 2019

Year	Independent Movements			Pachakutik			Non-traditional parties			Traditional Parties		
	Prefects (#)	Prefects (%)	Votes (%)	Prefects (#)	Prefects (%)	Votes (%)	Prefects (#)	Prefects (%)	Votes (%)	Prefects (#)	Prefects (%)	Votes (%)
1996	1	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	19	95	-
2000	2	9.1	-	5	22.7	-	-	-	-	15	68.2	-
2004	1	4.5	6.5	5	22.7	7.5	2	9.1	19.2	14	63.6	66.7
2009	5	21.7	19.9	5	21.7	4.8	11	47.8	68.2	2	8.7	7.1
2014	2	8.7	4.9	5	21.7	4.8	14	60.9	74.0	2	8.7	16.3
2019	4	17.4	35.8	5	21.7	6.9	4	17.4	25.8	10	43.5	31.6

Source: Electoral data from Tribunal Supremo Electoral (TSE) and Consejo Nacional Electoral (CNE). Prefects elected under electoral alliances were added to the party category of the alliance's partner with the largest number of elected prefects, except for Pachakutik. Pachakutik's number of prefects also includes candidates elected under an electoral alliance

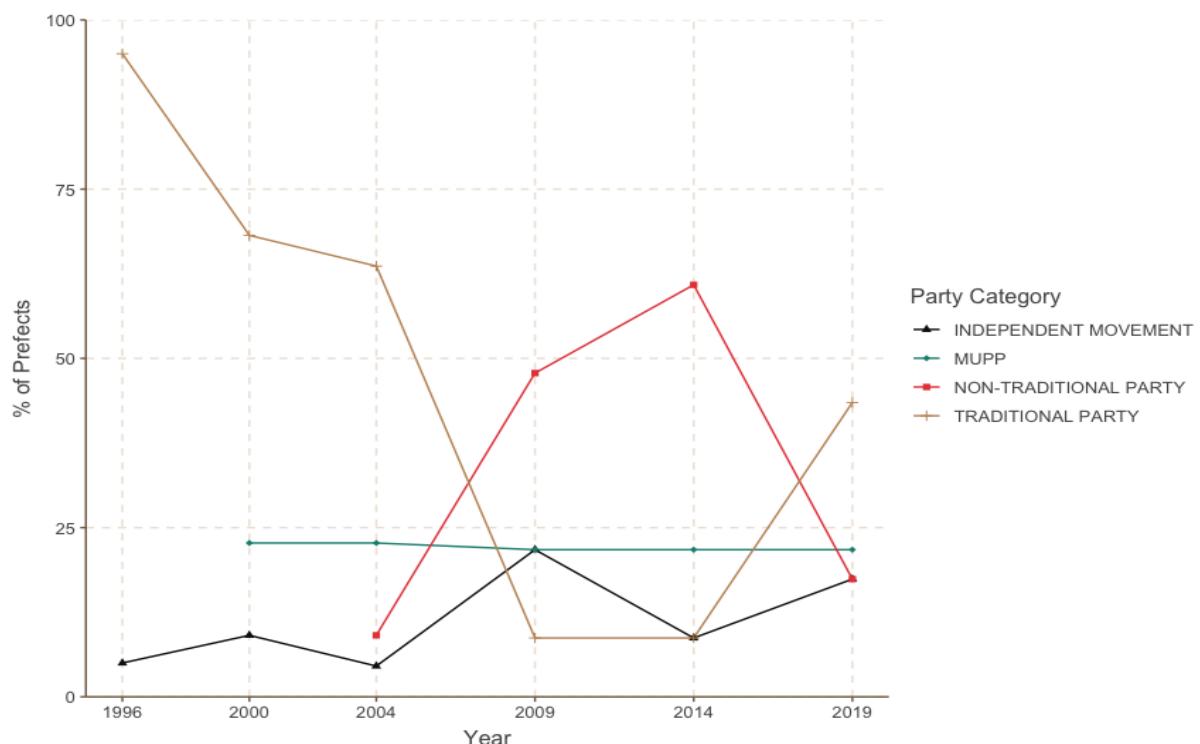
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Figure 3.5 Subnational elections: provincial prefects votes 2004-2019



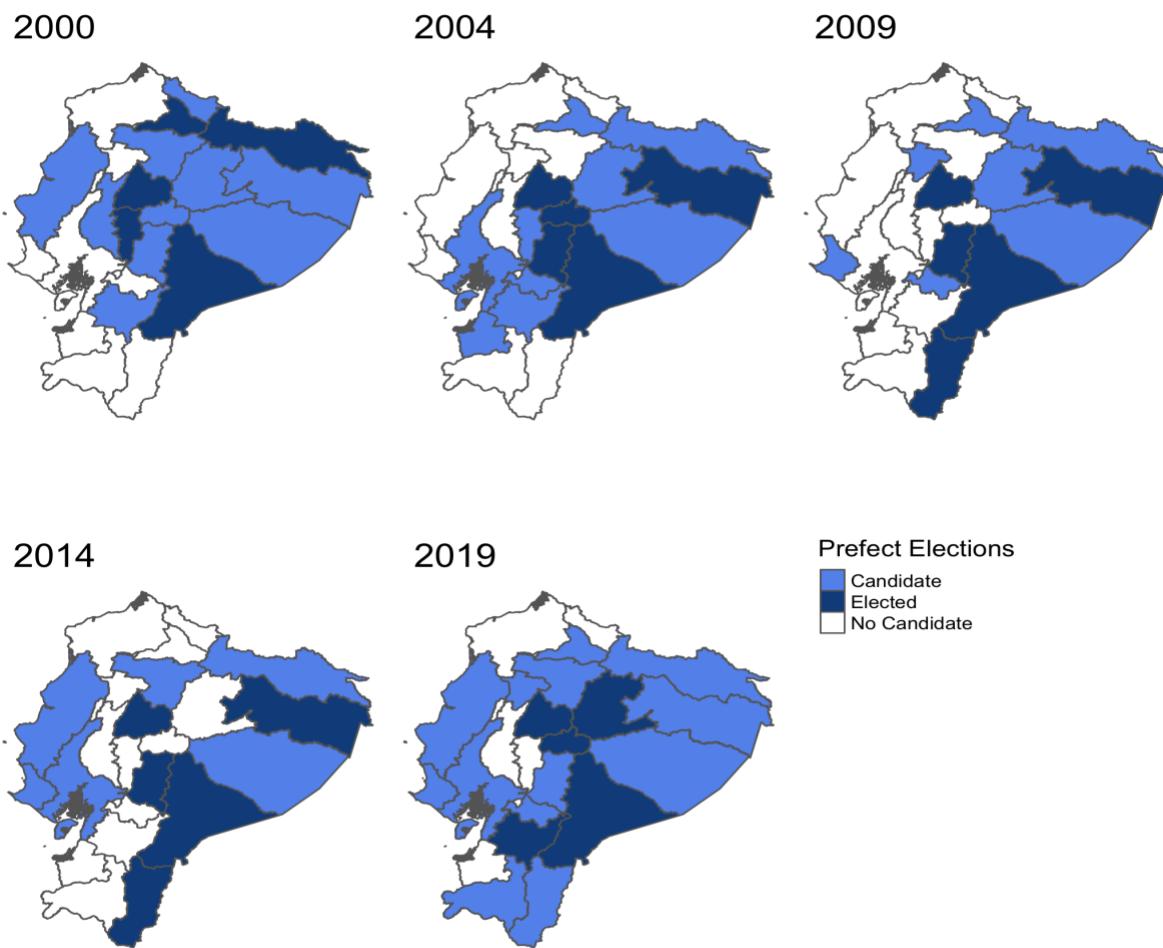
Source: Electoral data from Tribunal Supremo Electoral (TSE) and Consejo Nacional Electoral (CNE)

Figure 3.6 Subnational elections: provincial prefects 1996-2019



Source: Electoral data from Tribunal Supremo Electoral (TSE) and Consejo Nacional Electoral (CNE)

Figure 3.7 Provinces where Pachakutik presented candidates for prefects

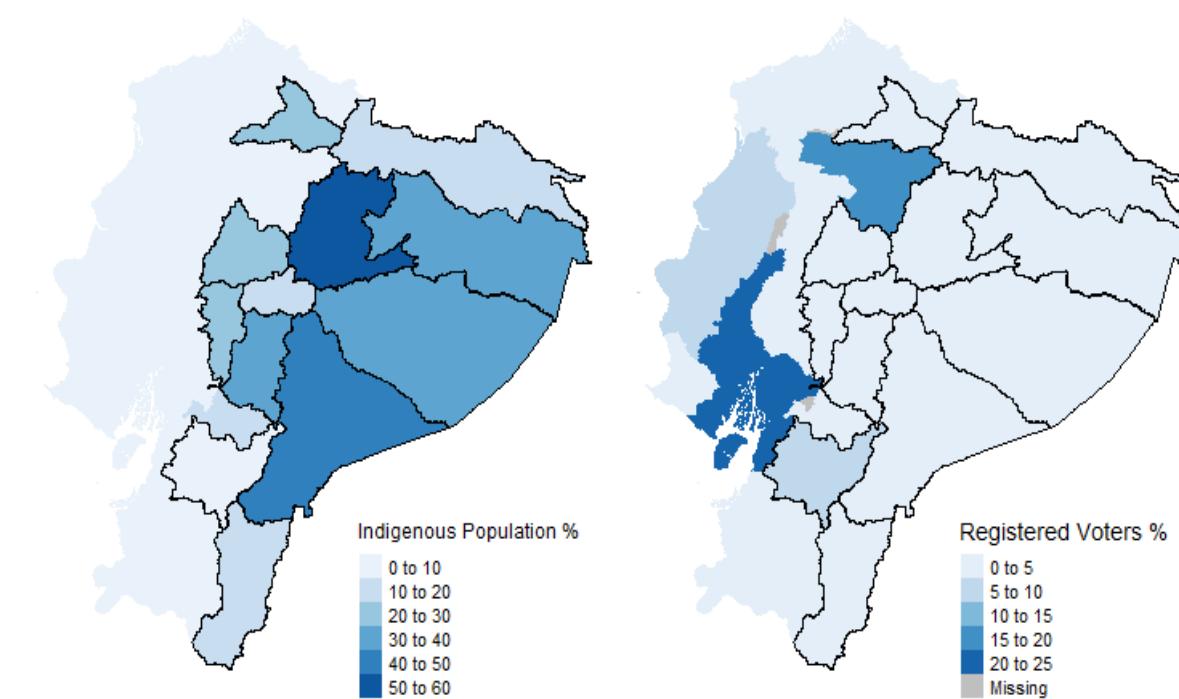


Source: Electoral data from Tribunal Supremo Electoral (TSE) and Consejo Nacional Electoral (CNE)

Figure 3.8 is useful to understand the concentration of registered voters and the indigenous population's concentration in the provinces where Pachakutik's candidates were elected. In the map on the left, the provinces highlighted with black lines are where Pachakutik has had a prefect elected between 2000 and 2019. The color fill of each province represents the percentage of the indigenous population in the province. Pachakutik's prefects were often elected in the provinces with the highest percentages of the country's indigenous population. The right-hand side map shows that these provinces also have the smallest percentages of registered voters in the country. This map also shows that the largest concentration of registered voters can be found in the provinces of Pichincha, Guayas, and Manabí, where no candidate of the party has ever been elected.

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Figure 3.8 Provinces where Pachakutik's candidates were elected prefects (2000-2019)



Source: Indigenous population data from the 2010 National Socio-economic census and registered voters' data from Consejo Nacional Electoral (CNE)

Pachakutik's performance at the provincial elections is impressive primarily due to the number of elected prefects throughout the years. However, Pachakutik does not seem to have strongholds. The five elected prefects in one year were rarely re-elected on the next. Pachakutik's candidates seem to perform differently in different provinces in every election. Intuitively, one would expect the party to receive consistent electoral support from the indigenous population. However, this is not the case. In every election, the party receives different shares of the provinces' votes. This indicates that there is no stable link between the electorate in these provinces and the party. The data shows that although the indigenous voters may support the party's candidates, they do not do so in every election, or at least not in proportions that would help the party's candidates get consistently elected.

Elections of mayors (municipal elections)

More than 200 mayors have been elected in Ecuador every four and five years since the return to democracy.⁴⁸ Mayors are elected using the method of plurality. Table 3.9 summarizes data for all mayor elections between 1996 and 2019. The table shows the number (and percentage) of mayors elected per party category and the party's percentage of the national vote. I used data from CNE and TSE for the table. Votes for electoral alliances were allocated following the same rules discussed earlier.

The support trends for party categories resemble broadly the already discussed trends. Traditional parties held most of the mayoral seats until 2009. They received the lion's share of the national vote until that year as well. Non-traditional parties slowly won over the seats and votes. These parties peaked in 2014. Independent movements also gained space throughout the years, getting as many mayors as non-traditional parties in 2019. Traditional parties, as discussed already, also made a comeback in 2019, regaining seats and votes.

Pachakutik's performance is again stable. The party's candidates have been consistently elected throughout the years. Nonetheless, in terms of votes, the party's candidates have received fewer votes as the years advance. Figures 3.9 and 3.10 plot the data from table 3.9. The figures are useful to visualize the changes in electoral support for party categories. The figures show, in particular, Pachakutik's stability and the increasing support for independent movements.

Pachakutik's candidates for mayor, as was the case with the candidates for prefects, are rarely re-elected. At the cantonal level, Pachakutik has no strongholds. There is no single canton where the party has held control of the municipality during this period (1996-2019). The only canton where the party has had a mayor in five out of the six periods is the canton Taisha in Morona Santiago. In some other cantons, the party has held the mayoral seat in three out of the six periods. It is most common that the party does not hold the mayor's seat in a canton a second time.

Figure 3.11 shows the cantons where the party's candidates competed (light blue) and where candidates were elected in every election (dark blue).

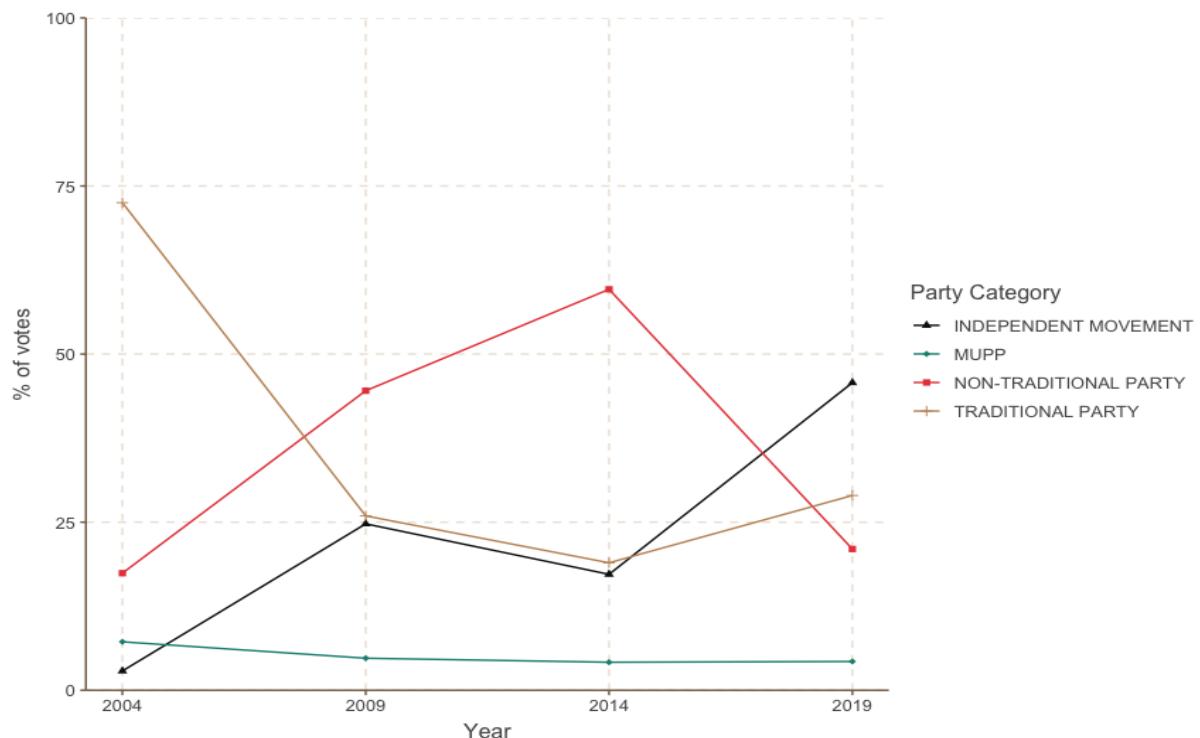
⁴⁸ Until the year 1996 the electoral system differentiated between mayors and municipal presidents. The title of "mayor" was used only for the person in charge of the municipal government of the larger urban cantons in the country such as Guayaquil and Quito. All other smaller cantons' government heads were called municipal presidents. Since the year 2000, all heads of the municipal government are known as mayors. To avoid unnecessary confusion, I only use the term mayor.

Table 3.9 Subnational elections: Mayors elected between 1996 and 2019

Year	Independent Movements			Pachakutik			Non-traditional parties			Traditional Parties		
	Mayors (#)	Mayors (%)	Votes (%)	Mayors (#)	Mayors (%)	Votes (%)	Mayors (#)	Mayors (%)	Votes (%)	Mayors (#)	Mayors (%)	Votes (%)
1996	5	2.5	-	10	5	-	-	-	-	185	92.5	-
2000	15	6.98	-	30	13.95	-	-	-	-	170	79.07	-
2004	12	5.48	2.9	25	11.42	7.2	50	22.83	17.4	132	60.27	72.5
2009	55	24.89	24.8	28	12.67	4.8	104	47.06	44.5	34	15.38	25.9
2014	21	9.50	17.2	29	13.12	4.2	141	63.80	59.6	30	13.57	19.0
2019	72	32.58	45.7	20	9.05	4.3	75	33.94	21.0	54	24.43	29.0

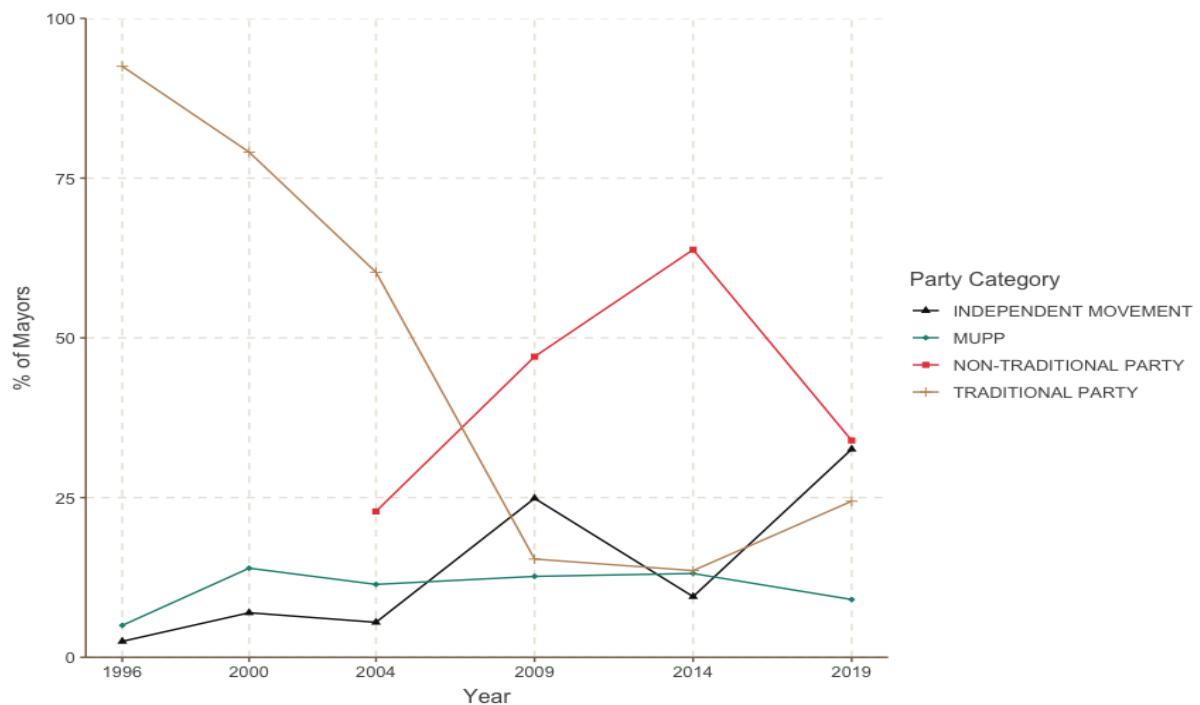
Source: Electoral data from Tribunal Supremo Electoral (TSE) and Consejo Nacional Electoral (CNE). Mayors elected under electoral alliances were added to the party category of the alliance's partner with the largest number of elected Mayors, except for Pachakutik. Pachakutik's number of Mayors also include candidates elected under an electoral alliance.

Figure 3.9 Subnational elections: Votes for mayors (2004-2019)



Source: Data from Tribunal Supremo Electoral (TSE) and Consejo Nacional Electoral (CNE)

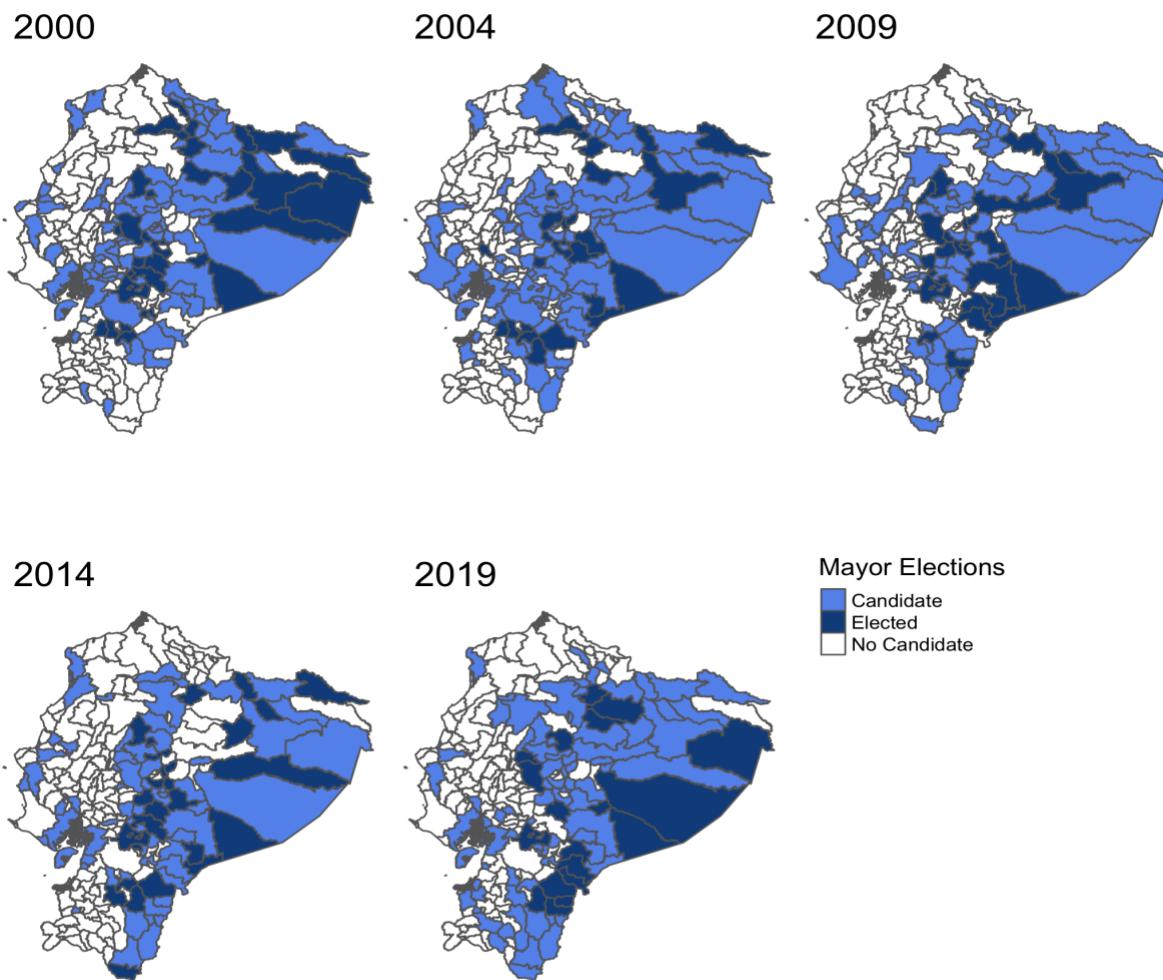
Figure 3.10 Subnational elections: mayors elected by party category (1996-2019)



Source: Data from Tribunal Supremo Electoral (TSE) and Consejo Nacional Electoral (CNE)

Pachakutik's electoral performance and organizational resources (1996-2019)

Figure 3.11 Cantons where Pachakutik presented candidates for Mayor



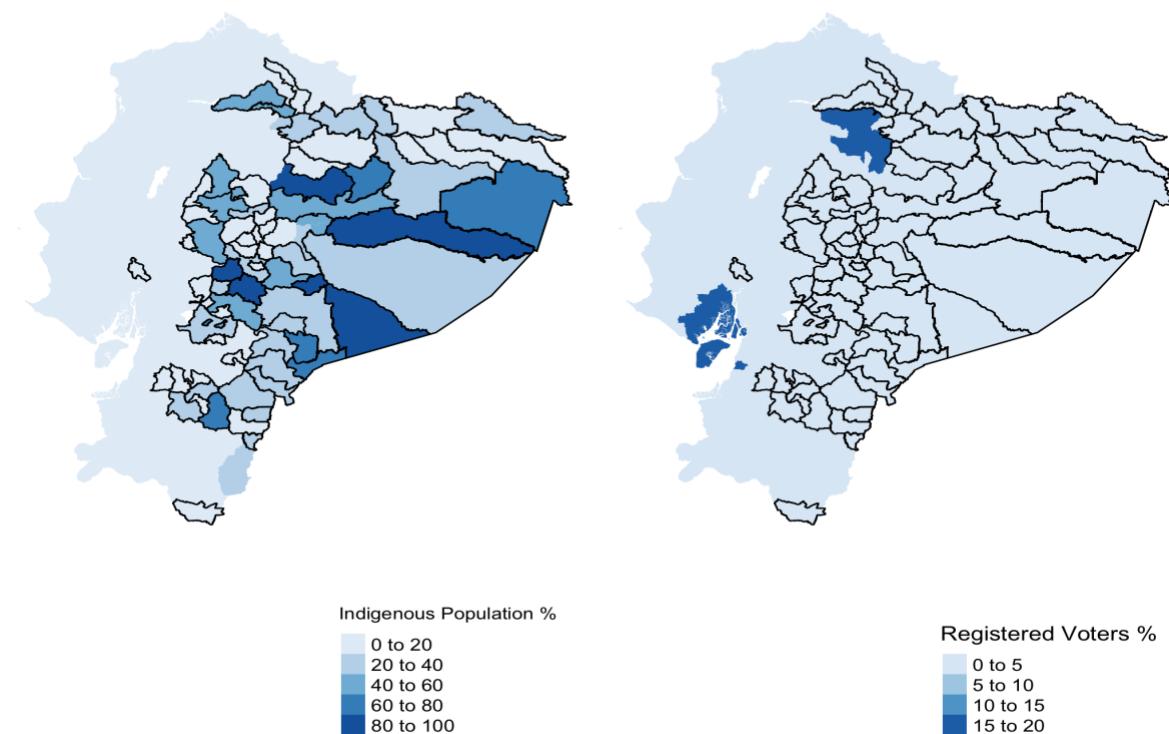
Source: Data from Tribunal Supremo Electoral (TSE) and Consejo Nacional Electoral (CNE)

Despite the absence of strongholds, Pachakutik holds around 10% of all mayoral seats throughout the years. The percentage of the national vote that the party receives continues to be small, however. One of the reasons for this seems to be the fact that the cantons where the party competes and wins are sparsely populated. Figure 3.12 shows two maps. The map on the left shows the cantons where a candidate from Pachakutik was elected between 1996 and 2019. Each canton is filled with color to reflect the share of the indigenous population in the canton. The map on the right shows the same cantons but is colored to reflect the registered voters' share in these cantons.

Figure 3.12 also shows one crucial fact about where Pachakutik's candidates are elected: candidates are both elected in cantons with indigenous majorities and in cantons with

indigenous minorities. This, added to the fact that only rarely the party has a mayor elected two times in the same cantons, highlights that the indigenous vote is not necessarily consistent for the party's candidates.

Figure 3.12 Cantons where Pachakutik's candidates were elected as mayors (2000-2019)



Source: Indigenous population data from the 2010 National Socio-economic census and registered voters' data from Consejo Nacional Electoral (CNE)

Elections of parish council members (rural parishes elections)

Rural parishes are the smallest administrative districts in Ecuador. Table 3.10 summarizes the number of seats (and their proportional equivalence) for each party category. This table does not include data on each party's vote share as parish council members are only elected in rural parishes. The added votes do not provide a national level snapshot of support.

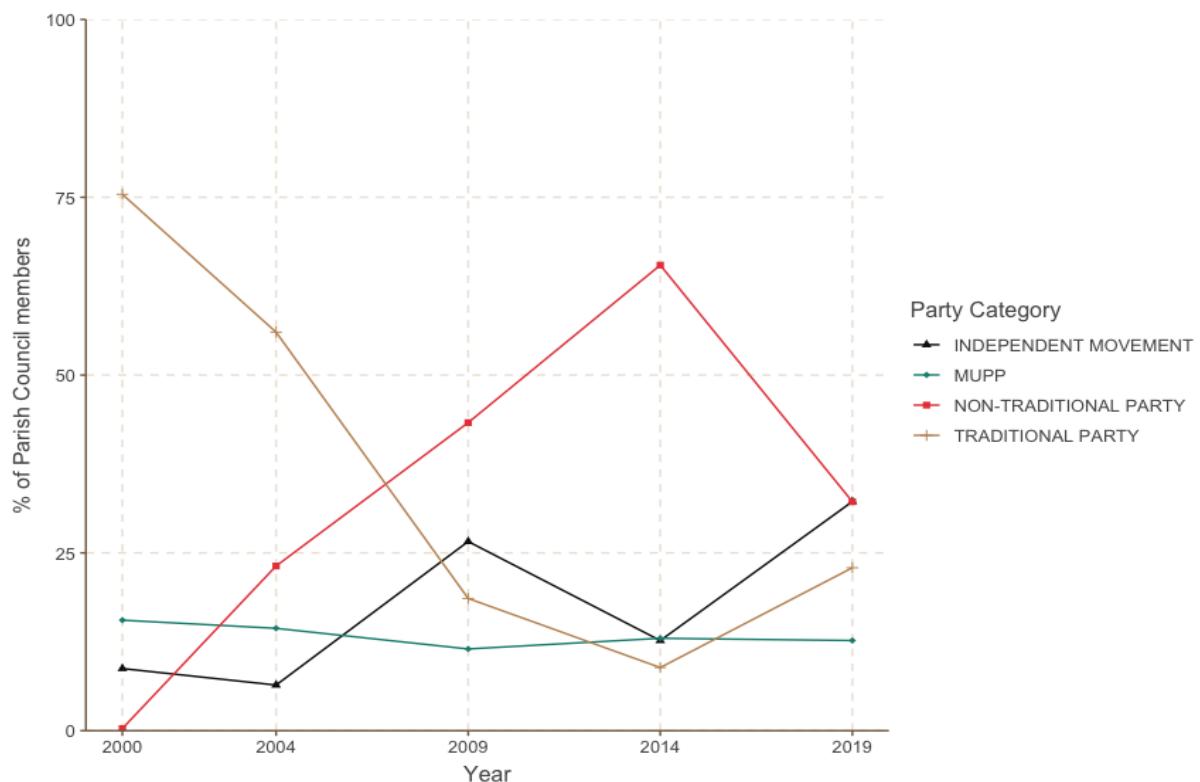
Table 3.10 Subnational elections: Parish (rural) council members elected between 2000 and 2019

Year	Independent Movements		Pachakutik		Non-Traditional Parties		Traditional Parties	
	Seats (#)	Seats (%)	Seats (#)	Seats (%)	Seats (#)	Seats (%)	Seats (#)	Seats (%)
2000	339	8.7	603	15.5	12	0.3	2926	75.4
2004	254	6.4	570	14.3	917	23.2	2219	56.1
2009	1060	26.6	458	11.5	1726	43.3	741	18.6
2014	517	12.7	530	13.0	2670	65.5	362	8.8
2019	1319	32.2	519	12.7	1318	32.2	938	22.9

Source: Electoral data from Tribunal Supremo Electoral (TSE) and Consejo Nacional Electoral (CNE). Parish council members elected under electoral alliances were added to the party category of the alliance's partner with the largest number of elected Parish council members, except for Pachakutik. Pachakutik's number of Parish Council members also include candidates elected under an electoral alliance.

Over 75% of all council members in the year 2000 were elected under a traditional party ticket. These parties continued to hold the majority of the seats in the councils in 2004. The 2014 election was the worst for these parties as they achieved only 8.8% of all seats at the parish councils. In 2019, just as they did at the other subnational elections, these parties regained space. In turn, non-traditional parties consistently gained seats until 2014. As could be expected, independent movements have a larger presence at the parish councils than at other elected offices. In 2019 these political movements held as many seats as the non-traditional parties. Pachakutik, in turn, has maintained a stable presence at these councils holding on average 13 % of all parish council seats between the years 2000 and 2019 (see figure 3.13).

Figure 3.13 Subnational elections: parish council members elected by party category (2000-2019)



Source: Data from Tribunal Supremo Electoral (TSE) and Consejo Nacional Electoral (CNE)

Pachakutik has a more stable presence at the parish councils than at the canton (mayors) and provincial (prefects) levels. Although the party's candidates are often elected in different parishes, their re-election rates (the party's) are higher than at any other subnational level elections (see table 3.11). On average, the party's candidates are elected in 271 parishes in every election. This is equivalent to close to 34% of all parishes in the country. Nevertheless,

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only in 99 parishes have Pachakutik's candidates been elected consistently between 2000 and 2019. From election to election, around 70% of the parishes that already had Pachakutik's council members re-elected at least one of Pachakutik's candidates.⁴⁹ Nonetheless, it is essential to highlight that these are multi-member districts that can help a party get its candidates elected.

Table 3.11 Number of Parishes where Pachakutik's candidates were elected and re-elected (2000-2019).

Year	Total parishes with PK members		Parishes with PK members re-elected		New parishes with PK members elected	
	Parishes (#)	Proportion (%)	Parishes (#)	Proportion (%)	Parishes (#)	Proportion (%)
2000	245	31.6				
2004	242	30.6	146	60.3	96	39.7
2009	298	37.4	194	65.1	104	34.9
2014	266	32.7	223	83.8	43	16.2
2019	304	37.3	223	73.4	81	26.6

Source: Electoral data from Tribunal Supremo Electoral (TSE) and Consejo Nacional Electoral (CNE). The number of parishes includes those in which Pachakutik's candidates were elected under an electoral alliance.

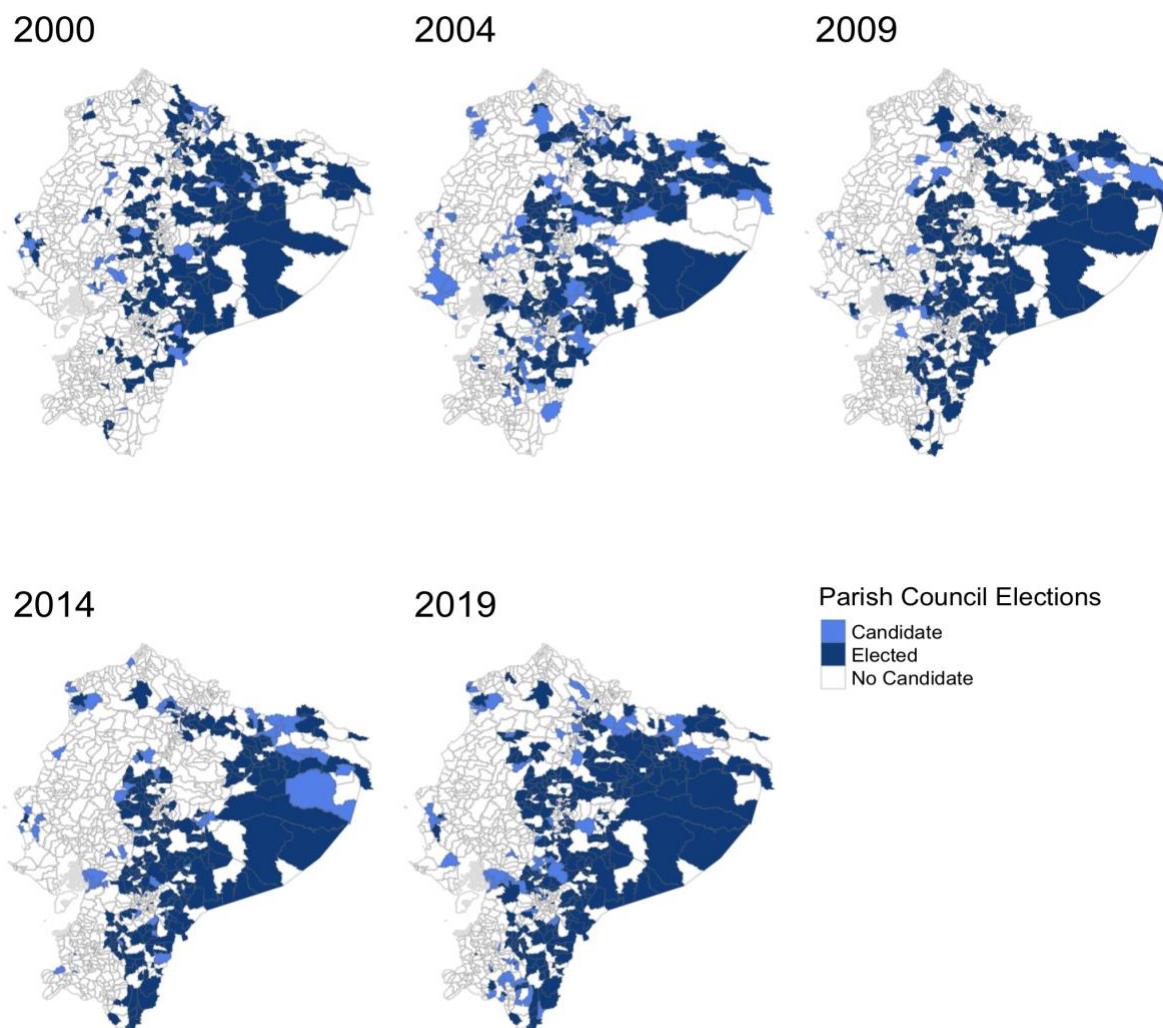
Figure 3.11 plots the parishes where Pachakutik's candidates were elected in all elections in maps. The parishes colored in light blue are the ones in which the party's candidates were not elected. The ones colored in dark blue are the ones in which at least one candidate was elected. The maps show the consistent election and re-election rates of Pachakutik's candidates at the parish councils. Moreover, the maps show that Pachakutik's candidates mostly compete in parishes in the Highlands and the Amazonia regions.

The lack of apparent strongholds (only 99 parishes) further highlights that the expected connection between indigenous voters and the party and its candidates might be spurious. Pachakutik's candidates are not always elected in cantons and provinces with indigenous majorities. The same happens in the case of parishes (see figure 3.15). The party's candidates

⁴⁹ I focus here on whether a candidate (any candidate) from Pachakutik is elected in consecutive he same parish in t. Due to the number of candidates and the inconsistencies on the data from CNE it is difficult to determine the rate of candidate re-election.

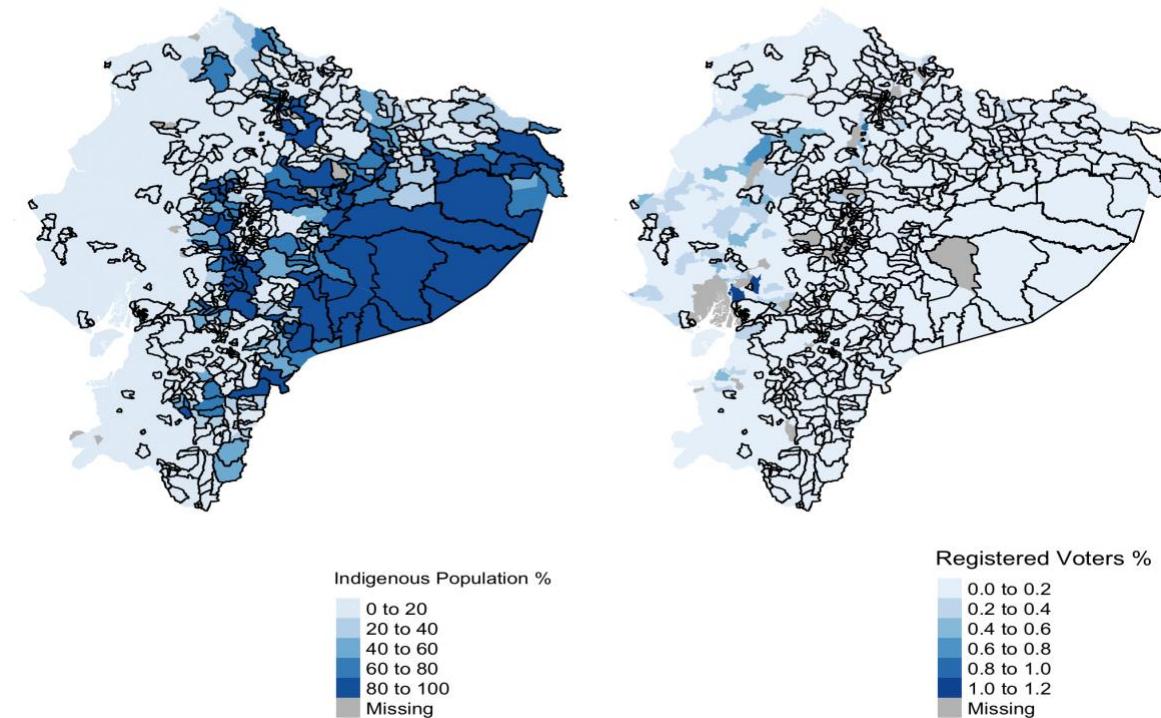
are elected in parishes with indigenous majorities and parishes with indigenous minorities. The map on the left shows the parishes where Pachakutik's candidates were elected at any point between 2000 and 2019. Each parish is filled to represent the percentage of the indigenous population. On the right, the parishes are filled with the color representing the percentage of the registered voters. These two maps help see that, Pachakutik's candidates are often elected in parishes with small percentages of registered voters (although this is common for many parishes) and that these elected candidates may not be necessarily linked to the indigenous vote.

Figure 3.14 Parishes where Pachakutik presented candidates for parish councils



Source: Data from Tribunal Supremo Electoral (TSE) and Consejo Nacional Electoral (CNE)

Figure 3.15 Parishes where Pachakutik's candidates were elected to the parish councils



Source: Indigenous population data from the 2010 National Socio-economic census and registered voters' data from Consejo Nacional Electoral (CNE)

Pachakutik is clearly a party with low levels of electoral support. At the subnational level, just as it was the case at the national level, the party receives few votes. Nonetheless, these few votes have a more significant pay-off at the subnational level than at the national level. Pachakutik has a constant and extensive presence within the subnational level elected officials.

3.5 Pachakutik as a party organization

Having discussed how Pachakutik performs electorally, it is necessary to discuss the party organization. The ethnic party Movimiento Unidad Plurinacional Pachakutik's (MUPP or

Pachakutik) was created in 1996.⁵⁰ The party's founding members were representatives of a very diverse *social alliance* comprised of leftist groups, syndicalist groups, and numerous smaller organizations connected to peasants' organizations, neighborhood organizations, and Cristian-left (liberation theology) organizations.⁵¹ At the center of the alliance was the *Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador* (Conaie), considered Latin America's "strongest, oldest, and most consequential indigenous movement" (Yashar, 2005, p. 85).⁵² Due to this social movement's primacy within the organization, Pachakutik has been considered an ethnic party from the outset. Nonetheless, the party leaders always contended that Pachakutik "represented the interests of all Ecuador's popular classes, [and] that it was not a political movement dedicated solely to the struggle for the country's indigenous peoples" (Mijeski & Beck, 2011, p. 40).

Several researchers have thoroughly analyzed Pachakutik's formation (e.g. Becker, 2010; Birnir, 2004; Mijeski & Beck, 2011; Van Cott, 2005). There was a combination of factors that contributed to the party's formation. First, the strength of the indigenous social movement;⁵³ second, the electoral system's openness (changes on the ballot entry requirements); and third,

⁵⁰ The party's original name was *Movimiento Unidad Plurinacional Pachakutik – Nuevo País* (MUPP-NP). The party changed its name to *Movimiento Unidad Plurinacional Pachakutik* (MUPP) in 2012 when all political parties in the country had to re-register to be able to participate in electoral processes. The 1996 name reflects the fact that the party was registered under an electoral alliance between Pachakutik and the independent political movement *Nuevo País* also known as *Movimiento de Ciudadanos por un Nuevo País*. *Nuevo País* was a mestizo led political organization connected to Pachakutik's first presidential candidate Freddy Ehlers. In 1996, when Pachakutik was registered as a party, it was registered alongside the candidacy of Ehlers and thus the names of both organizations were merged. Both organizations, however, maintained a differentiation throughout the years. In fact, *Nuevo País* participated in the following electoral processes (from 1998 onwards) as an independent political movement. Because of this I prefer to use the shortened initials MUPP when referring to Pachakutik even when I refer to the party prior to 2012.

⁵¹ Donna Lee Van Cott (2005) argues that these type of alliances took place in various countries in Latin America when cadres from diminished leftist parties joined ethnic parties (p. 38). The interesting aspect of these alliances, she asserts, is that for the first time in the region the ethnic organizations had the necessary strength and recognition to take in the experience of the cadres without tipping the power balance on the cadres' favor. In previous years the indigenous organizations had always been the minority partners within the alliances.

⁵² This organization was formed in 1986 and brought together all other regional indigenous organizations in Ecuador like the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of the Ecuadorian Amazon (CONFENIAE), the *Ecuador Runakunapak Rikcharimuy* organization also known as ECUARUNARI (also known as the Confederation of the Kichwa Peoples of Ecuador), and the Confederation of Nationalities and Pueblos from the Coastlands of Ecuador (CONAICE). It was under Conaie's umbrella that the 1990s *levantamientos* in Ecuador were organized, thus making the organization into a major Ecuadorian political actor (Mijeski & Beck, 2011, p. 16). For a detailed overview of the early 1990s *levantamientos* see: Almeida et al. (1992); Becker & Tutillo, (2009); Pallares,(2002)

⁵³ The indigenous movement was slowly recognized as a political actor starting in the mid-1980s and gained more importance and recognition after the 1990s *levantamiento* (uprising). In June 4, 1990 the indigenous population blocked most of the Ecuadorian highland's highways in a well-organized move. This was the first ever *levantamiento* that had effectively paralyzed the country. The then president Rodrigo Borja was forced to negotiate with the movement leaders and agreed to deal with the most pressing demands of the group that included the resolution of land disputes, the recognition of indigenous territories, and issues related to access to health and the creation of a bilingual education project. Yet, Conaie eschewed electoral politics up until 1996. The organization had often asked the indigenous population to stay away from electoral politics insisting on the fact

Ecuadorian voters were dissatisfied with political parties, including leftist parties. Pachakutik came into being as the anti-establishment alternative that would bring together left-leaning voters *and* the indigenous voters. From the outset, the party leaders claimed Pachakutik was not a political party but a political movement. This was done to put some distance between the new organization and the traditional political parties. In this section, I focus on this organization's evolution. The party has not remained static. The horizontal organization created in 1996 has been replaced by a multilayered (complex) organization.

3.5.1 Data generation methods

Before advancing with the analysis, it is necessary to emphasize that it is difficult to measure or quantify the resources that parties have in Latin America and concomitantly gauge the party organizations' changes effectively. This is because parties in the region often have a weak institutional memory. Only rarely parties have accurate registries of their party members. Moreover, party activists' work is often obscured due to a lack of accountability and registries. It can also be the case that party leaders can over-report or under-report a party's capacity (Cyr, 2017, p. 82).

In the case of Pachakutik, most of this holds true. The party has struggled with a lack of institutional memory. One of the reasons, one of my interviewees explained, was that the party's headquarters had suffered several robberies. "We do not have archives; all of our data was stolen" (PK-1, 2017). In 2004, the party reported six computers were taken from the party's headquarters. Although no other similar events have been reported in the media afterward, the party officials – when I talked to them – often stressed they had no access to party archives. Aside from the party's archives, the state's institutional memory is also lacking. This compounds the difficulties of producing a comprehensive overview of a party's performance and evolution. The *Consejo Nacional Electoral* (CNE), which replaced the *Tribunal Supremo Electoral* (TSE), has reported not having all records of parties, including data on the electoral results before 2002 (GOV- 1, 2017 and GOV-2, 2020).⁵⁴ This makes research challenging but

that the power of the indigenous organization resided on "actions not elections" (Freidenberg & Sánchez López, 1998, p. 70; Mijeski & Beck, 2011, p. 38). This phrase was used in 1992 when CONAIE called for abstention at the National elections (Freidenberg & Alcántara Sáez, 2001, p. 239). The position changed in late 1995. Leading this change was CONFENAIE which had started talks to support Freddy Ehlers' presidential candidacy (Mijeski & Beck, 2011, p. 40). Eventually Conaie responded to the pressure from CONFENAIE and decided to join electoral politics and form a new party.

⁵⁴ In one of my visits to CNE, officials reported most of the records had been moved to a warehouse and eventually lost to mold.

not impossible. There are different strategies to overcome these limitations. One of these is to use different methods of data generation to complement available information.

I employed the following data generation methods: interviews, archival work, and, when necessary, to contrast data, secondary sources. Between 2016 and 2020, I conducted over 30 interviews with Pachakutik's (former) leaders and party activists, key informants, party experts, government officials, and (former) leaders and activists of traditional parties that worked with Pachakutik's candidates directly or indirectly since the party's formation. As some of my interviewees preferred to be kept anonymous, all of the interviews have been anonymized. Appendix 1 contains a list of the interviews referred to in the text. Each interviewee was assigned a code in reference to their role/background, a number, and the year when the interview took place. Pachakutik's leaders, activists, and informants are referred to as PK plus a number and the year. Experts are referred to as EXP. Members of other parties are referred to as ID (for the party *Izquierda Democrática*) and PSC (for the party *Partido Social Cristiano*). Government officials are referred to as GOV. The interviews took place in Azuay, Cañar, Cotopaxi, Imbabura, and Pichincha and were conducted in Spanish.⁵⁵

The archival work focused on media outlets and government data. I worked at the *Biblioteca Aurelio Espinosa Polit* and the *Biblioteca de la Pontificia Universidad Católica del Ecuador (PUCE)* in Quito. At the Aurelio Espinosa Polit Library, I was granted access to their collection of hard copies of the newspaper *El Comercio* during the summers of 2017 and 2018.⁵⁶ I reviewed each *El Comercio* edition from January 1, 2001, to June 1, 2017. I took photographs of each page that contained editorial and short and long reports of all political processes. I cataloged and organized each of these photographs by date and transformed them into text-searchable pdfs. I returned to the archive during the summer of 2018 to re-take some of the photographs.

Through the *Universidad Católica del Ecuador* library, I had access to jpeg files of each page from the printed edition of *El Comercio* between January 1, 1995, and December 31, 2000. I reviewed these files, selected the pages with the same criteria applied to the newspaper's hard copies, transformed them into text-searchable pdfs, and stored them. At the University's library, I also reviewed all hard copies of the magazine *Vistazo* between 1995 and

⁵⁵ Adding references to the exact location of the interviews could affect the anonymity of my sources, hence I only report the provinces where the cities I met my informants are located.

⁵⁶ The library director was kind enough to let me access the library underground archive during the summer months despite the fact that the library was officially closed for the summer break.

2017, took photographs, organized them by date, and transformed them into text-searchable pdfs.

Through the library of *Universidad Politécnica Salesiana*, I got access to scanned copies of the magazine KIPU which specializes in clipping newspaper articles from all printed press in Ecuador relating to the indigenous population between 1995 and 2020. With this, I constructed a substantial archive of printed press resources spanning the period of investigation.

The second set of archival work focused on government documents. For this, I worked with CNE officials through information requests regarding electoral results data, party registration documents, and any other documents about Pachakutik between 1996 and 2018. I also worked with officials from the *Archivo Biblioteca Juan León Mera de la Asamblea Nacional* through information requests focusing on, primarily, Pachakutik's legislators' work. I requested information about all bills proposed between 1996 and 2017, data on legislative blocks, legislative debates transcripts, and the reports presented by the electoral management bodies (TSE and CNE) to the legislature. All of the information was delivered via CDs (from CNE) and an external hard drive from the legislature's library. With this, I constructed a substantial archive of government data to piece together Pachakutik's life and Ecuadorian politics between 1996 and 2017.

For each chapter I used a different set of data. Thus, each chapter has a section where I explain the use of the data. For this chapter, and in particular this section, I mostly employed archival data (a combination of news media reports, party documents, government documents, and secondary literature). Where it was necessary, either to triangulate contradicting information or clarify certain elements I resorted to interview data.

3.5.2 Pachakutik's registration and re-registration

Pachakutik has navigated its formal registration two times between 1996 and 2019. The first time when the movement was created and the second time in 2009 when, per the new Constitution, all political parties and political movements were required to re-register. On both occasions, officially, the party faced a similar set of registration requirements: a minimum number of signatures (1.5% of the registered voters' signatures), to have offices in at least half of all provinces in the country, and to have a government program, party statutes, and party symbols. However, research showed that in 1996 Pachakutik was partly exempted from these requirements, facilitating its registration. Pachakutik's registration was done following the

requirements for independent candidates. The party presented 100.000 support signatures (Lucas, 2015, p. 33). It was exempted from having to set-up offices in at least ten provinces (Van Cott, 2005, p. 118).

In 2009, by contrast, the party fulfilled all requirements and struggled greatly to do so. The requisite that challenged the party the most was gathering the signatures. “The organization was not ready to get the signatures. They struggled so much they had to get help from other parties. With the support from MPD,⁵⁷ they gathered the signatures.” (EXP-2, 2018).⁵⁸ Pachakutik’s leadership delivered the first batch of signatures in December 2011. The party reported a total of 250.000 signatures (Consejo Nacional Electoral, 2011). However, CNE did not recognize 66.000 of these signatures. Pachakutik had to go back into the field to collect new signatures. By late 2012 the party finally fulfilled all of its registration requirements, which in addition to the signatures included having offices in at least 12 provinces.

3.5.3 Pachakutik’s formal internal structure

The evolution of the party’s formal internal structure at the national and subnational level can be divided into four periods of time: the first spanning from 1996 to 1999, the second one from 1999 to 2005; the third between 2005 and 2016, and the fourth from 2016 to present time (see tables 3.12 and 3.13).

The party leaders, in 1996, presented the party as a horizontal nonhierarchical organization. The idea was that there should be little distance between the party members and the leadership (Freidenberg & Alcántara Sáez, 2001, p. 254). Between 1996 and 1999, Pachakutik did not have subnational level organizations. The national leadership dealt directly with provincial and cantonal social and indigenous organizations linked to existing *Organizaciones de Segundo Grado*⁵⁹ (Freidenberg & Alcántara Sáez, 2001, p. 256). The party organization mostly relayed on already existing local organizations, and these were considered

⁵⁷ The party *Movimiento Popular Democrático* (MPD) is one of the few leftist parties that have been active in Ecuador since the return to democracy in 1979. This party re-registered in 2014 under a new name: *Movimiento Unidad Popular*

⁵⁸ The struggles of Pachakutik on its most recent registration put in perspective how the signature collection in 1996 has been reported. Lucas (2015) reports that the signatures were collected in a record time of one week (p. 33). Birnir (2004) stressed that the party did not struggle to collect signatures given the size of the indigenous population (p. 17). Yet, as Barczak (1997) noted, for a new party organization, lest an independent candidate, gathering over 100.000 signatures without a backing already developed organization can be considerably challenging (p. 114).

⁵⁹ The *Organizaciones de Segundo Grado* bring together different interest groups within and across indigenous and mestizo communities. These organizations serve many different functions (Martínez Valle, 2006, p. 110). Most importantly they have become the most common recipients of development resources and as such often serve as links between the population and different sources of funding for projects.

Pachakutik's electoral performance and organizational resources (1996-2019)

the party's local branches. This structure was replaced in 1998. Pachakutik's leaders argued the party needed a centralized organization that would protect party members from falling into corruption (Miguel Lluco in Freidenberg & Alcántara Sáez, 2001, p. 254).

In 1999, at the party's first National Congress, the national and subnational organizations were changed. At the national level, three different governing bodies were created: the National Congress, the Political Committee, and the Executive Committee (see table 3.12) (Freidenberg & Alcántara Sáez, 2001, p. 255). At the subnational level, provincial party branches were created. The provincial organizations mirrored the national level organizations. These included a Provincial Assembly, a Political Committee, and an Executive Committee. At the cantonal level, the party established a cantonal council formed by all grassroots organizations from the same canton. This structure lasted until 2005.

Table 3.12 Pachakutik's national formal internal structure

Pachakutik's national formal internal structure		
1999-2005	2005-2016	2016 -2021
National Congress	National Congress	National Congress
Political Committee	Political Committee	Political Committee
Executive Committee	Executive Committee	Executive Committee
	National Coordinator	National Coordinator
	Ethics Commission	National Sub-coordinators
	Gender Committee	Ethics and Discipline Committee
	National Youth Committee	Ombudsman office for party members
	Subnational Government Coordination Office	National Electoral office
		National Secretariat office
		Secretariat for the Formation, Education, and Training in Politics and Ideology

Source: Compiled with data from the party's statutes and data from Freidenberg and Alcántara Saéz (2001).

In 2005, the national level formal structure was extended to include two new committees (the gender and national youth committees), an ethics commission, and the subnational government coordination office. Additionally, the National Coordinator's office was officially included as part of the party's formal structure. At the subnational level, the party's structures were extended to the parish level. The provincial and cantonal offices

mirrored the national level organizations. The parish offices did the same except that there was no ethics committee set up at this level.

In the last period, from 2016 onward, the party organization became even more complex, including a party's ombudsman at both national and sub-national levels. Additionally, the party established overseas electoral offices.

Table 3.13 Pachakutik's subnational formal internal structure

Pachakutik's subnational formal internal structure			
	1999-2005	2005-2016	2016 -
Provincial	Provincial Assembly Political Committee Executive Committee	Provincial Assembly Political Committee Executive Committee Provincial Coordinator Ethics and Discipline Committee	Provincial Assembly Political Committee Executive Committee Provincial Coordinator Provincial Sub-coordinator Ethics and Discipline Committee Ombudsman office Provincial Electoral Office Provincial Executive office
Cantonal		Cantonal Assembly Political Committee Executive Committee Ethics and Discipline Committee Cantonal Coordinator	Cantonal Assembly Cantonal Coordinator Cantonal Sub-coordinator Ethics and Discipline Committee Ombudsman office
Parish		Parish Assembly Executive Committee Parish Coordinator	Parish Assembly Parish Coordinator Parish sub-coordinators Ethics and Discipline Committee Ombudsman office
Overseas			Electoral Overseas office

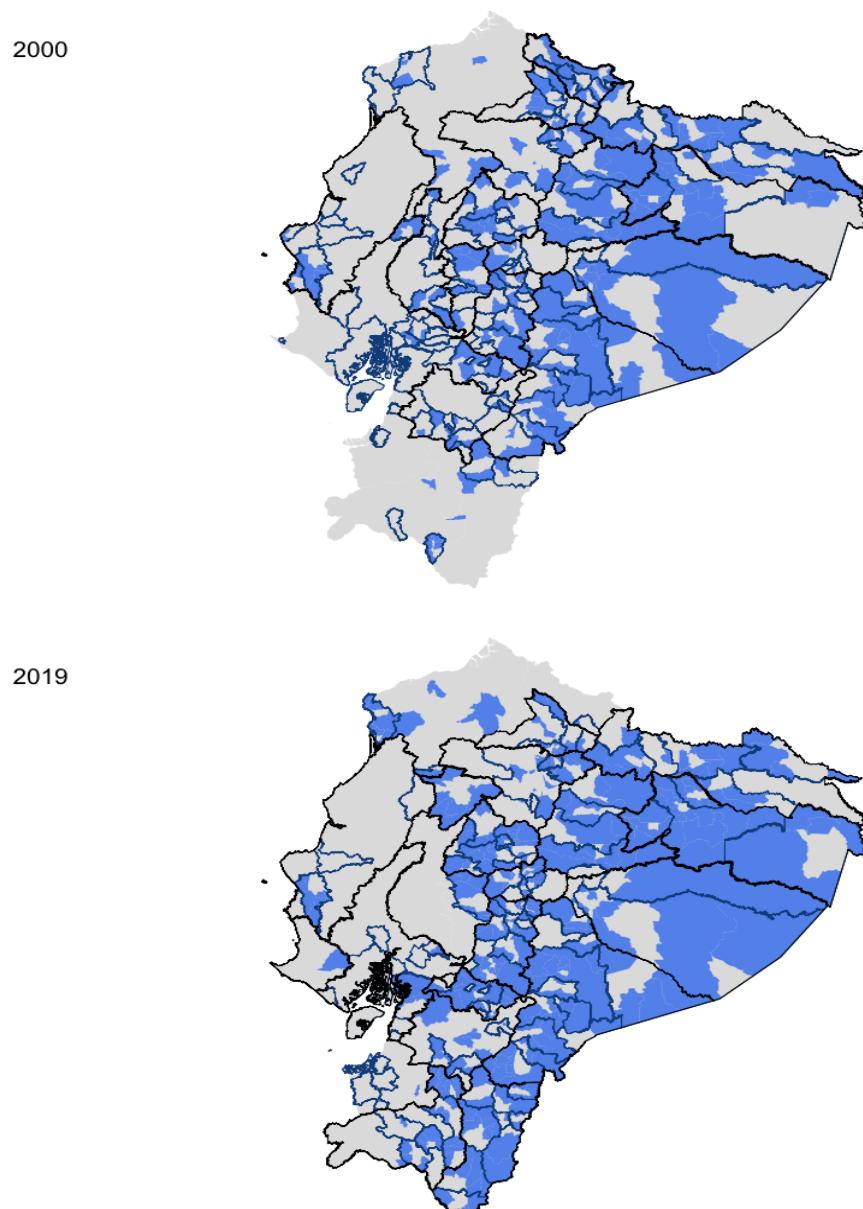
Source: Compiled with data from the party's statutes and data from Freidenberg and Alcántara Saéz (2001)

The evolution of Pachakutik's formal internal structure is clear. The number of national-level committees and offices has increased alongside the number of subnational

Pachakutik's electoral performance and organizational resources (1996-2019)

committees at the provincial, cantonal, and parish levels. This process has been accompanied by an expansion of the party's overall presence in Ecuador. Figure 3.16 includes two maps. The first map shows the parishes (filled with blue), cantons (outlined by a dark blue line), and provinces (outlined by a black line) where Pachakutik presented candidates at the subnational elections of the year 2000; the second map shows the same but for the 2019 elections. Taking candidates' presence as a sign of party branches' presence, these maps show how the party's branches have extended across the territory, especially towards the country's southern border.

Figure 3.16 Pachakutik's subnational branches (subnational elections 2000 and 2019)



Source: Data from Tribunal Supremo Electoral (TSE) and Consejo Nacional Electoral (CNE).

3.5.4 Pachakutik's leadership and National Congresses

Pachakutik has held in total nine national congresses since the first one in 1999. In each of these meetings, the party members elected the National Party Coordinator.⁶⁰ The meetings were held every two years, starting in 1999 until 2010. In the 1999 National Party Congress, Miguel Lluco was elected as the first coordinator of the party.⁶¹ He was re-elected at the 2001 National Congress.⁶² Gilberto Talahua replaced Miguel Lluco in 2003.⁶³ Talahua was re-elected in 2005. In 2007 Jorge Guamán was elected national party coordinator. He was replaced in 2010 by Rafael Antuni. Fanny Campos replaced Antuni in 2013. Campos had her tenure extended for a couple of months after the National Congress originally planned for late 2015 did not take place. In 2016 Campos was replaced by Marlon Santi. Santi was re-elected in 2019.

Pachakutik has never had a charismatic leader. Instead, several different leaders have – each in turn – been at the center of the party and worked as spokespersons. At the subnational level, according to the party statutes, provincial, cantonal, and parish coordinators have also been elected following a somewhat similar schedule starting in 2005. However, it is difficult to determine the level of alternation at these levels, and when these leaders were elected.⁶⁴

3.5.5 Pachakutik's membership

The party's members elect Pachakutik's leaders at national congresses. The fact that these meetings have taken place consistently shows that the party has an active set of members. However, calculating the party's members' number and their involvement with the party is challenging. As mentioned already, the party lacks proper archives, and data about membership is almost non-existent.

The party is officially registered as having 159.344 members plus 804 “valid adherents.”⁶⁵ This number corresponds to the number of signatures required to register any

⁶⁰ In these National Congresses the national sub-coordinators have also been elected. In 2001 Mario Echawua was elected. He was replaced by José Quenama in 2003. In 2005 the new sub-coordinator was Belisario Dahua. He was replaced in 2007 by Ricardo Carrillo. In 2010, Didimo Menendez became the party's sub-coordinator. In 2013 the place was taken by Cesar Gamboa and a second sub-coordinator. Since 2016, Cecilia Velazque has worked as Pachakutik's sub-coordinator alongside another sub-coordinator.

⁶¹ Before Miguel Lluco, José María Cabascango worked as party coordinator although it is unclear how he was appointed.

⁶² Before the 2003 Congress however, Miguel Lluco was ousted as he accepted to manage a trust fund created to manage the assets of the former *Empresa Electrica del Ecuador* (EMELEC).

⁶³ After a couple of months of acting as party coordinator, Talahua was officially elected by the National Congress in late 2003.

⁶⁴ The CNE since 2012 is in charge of also registering the subnational level party leadership yet I could not access official data on this matter.

⁶⁵ This is the number of signatures reported by CNE in the official documentation stating the registration of Pachakutik as a political party. The document is numbered *Notificación No. 000258* and dated April 3, 2012.

political party in Ecuador. Most political parties in the country report similar memberships.⁶⁶ This is because, as one official of CNE explained, “the law makes it that all parties have roughly the same number of members. No party reports more signatures than the strictly required. It is not a good measure of party membership” (GOV-1, 2017).⁶⁷

The number of registered members at CNE is used to construct the party’s selectorate list for the party’s primaries. Data from these procedures are useful to gauge the number of party members who actively engage with the party assuming that voting at primaries reflects a general commitment. Data on these procedures is scarce, however. There is only data for the 2016 presidential candidate selection. Out of a total of 159.344 registered party members who could cast a vote, only 5.200 effectively did (El Telégrafo, 2016). This means that approximately only 3.25% of the party’s total members effectively engaged with the party.⁶⁸

3.5.6 Pachakutik’s staff, locales, and funds

A subset of the *active party members* represents the party’s staff.⁶⁹ These are individuals who work for the party at the national and sub-national offices. I could not ascertain the number of these party operatives, nor their exact location. Nonetheless, what I could establish was that Pachakutik does not have a centralized bureaucracy. Party members that contribute to the party’s functioning are brought in with the party leaders (national and sub-national) and often leave when the leaders are replaced. The connection between the party staff and the leaders (at all levels) is based mostly on close personal relationships.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ The minimum number of signatures required for party registration in 2012 was 157.947 equivalent to 1.5% of the national registered voters. Yet, Pachakutik benefited from registering as a political movement which provided the party with leeway to present a slightly reduced number of signatures.

⁶⁷ There are additionally a number of problems with the registration of signatures and party members. A number of scandals about signature forgery have been reported all throughout Latin America (Cyr, 2017, p. 82). In Ecuador particularly, the original submission of Pachakutik’s signatures was contested by CNE arguing many of these signatures were not valid. In fact, CNE did not accept a total of 66.951 signatures from the original submission of 212.096. Pachakutik eventually provided an extra 12.802 signatures in late September 2012 to secure its registration as a party (El Telégrafo, 2012).

⁶⁸ CNE has more recent data relating to the selectorate of Pachakutik. The electoral rules require CNE to verify these primary election procedures. In late 2018 CNE officers had to participate in these procedures so Pachakutik could register its candidates for local party leaders. The data however has not been released.

⁶⁹ In this section I do not focus on the party-in-government i.e. the legislative party. Nonetheless, during my interviews I was told that unlike other parties which staff their offices with more specialized party operatives, at the legislature the elected members of Pachakutik make their own choices. “I brought my own staff, they are not connected to the party” (PK-6, 2017). This is not the norm in the country, however. Parties like *Partido Social Cristiano* use more specialized personnel “I have worked for years with the party [at the legislature] and I am now an expert on all procedures at the legislature. The party works like this. I have worked for three different legislators” (PSC-1, 2020).

⁷⁰ The person manning the headquarters had a clear close relationship with one the party leaders I met in Quito.

Despite the staff's lack of professionalization and their continuous mobility, some party operatives working at the subnational levels have been able to work their way up to the national level organization. Fanny Campos, for instance, worked for the Imbabura branch before becoming the national sub-coordinator and later on the national coordinator. Similarly, Marlon Santi,⁷¹ Miguel Lluco, and Rafael Antuni all developed their political profiles by first working in their provinces.

Pachakutik has – to my knowledge – only one well-known party locale, the national headquarters in Quito. There is no exact data on whether the party owns buildings at the subnational level. Most meetings at the subnational level are reported to have taken place (and I also determined through fieldwork) in locales linked to indigenous communities or social movements. For example, Pachakutik's Chimborazo branch met at the “*Casa Indigena de Riobamba*” to select the provincial party coordinators and committee members in 2014.⁷² Similarly, Pachakutik's Cotopaxi branch consistently meets at the headquarters of the *Movimiento Indígena Campesino de Cotopaxi* (MICC). In turn, Pachakutik's Cayambe branch often meets at the *casa comunal* (town hall) of different indigenous communities. Pachakutik, it appears, has not been able to build a portfolio of party locales. However, the party's connection to local grassroots organizations has ensured the party members' access to spaces connected to the indigenous communities, thus compensating for private offices' absence.

The absence of locales likely affected the party staff's professionalization, especially in districts where the party has not been electorally successful. In the districts where the party's candidates have been elected, the party's operatives have been included as part of these offices' staff. Nonetheless, this is limited to party members who already had a relationship with the candidates. Only these party members have gained access to more professionalization opportunities, salaries, and offices (EXP-1, 2017, EXP-2, 2018). However, due to the already discussed low rate of the re-election of the party's candidates, this access to offices and state funds has been limited and not consistent.

Another issue that constrains staff's professionalization is access to funds. Pachakutik did not receive state funding from 1996 to 2009.⁷³ Until 2009, the party's resources were limited to party members' contributions *and* elected officials' contributions, who contributed

⁷¹ Santi was CONAIE's national coordinator before his election as national coordinator of Pachakutik.

⁷² This is reported in another one of CNE's reports about the election of Pachakutik's provincial party leaders. This is data included in the document that summarizes the decisions taken by CNE's council on October 31, 2014. The document's number is *Acta Resolutiva No. 045-ple-cne-2017*.

⁷³ Pachakutik did get electoral campaign funds for all electoral processes between 1996 and 2009 as established by the electoral laws.

with a percentage of their salaries to the party's funding and still do so (PK-1, 2017). These private contributions were small and mostly employed to cover the party's staff and headquarters' expenses. Between 2010 and 2013, Pachakutik became a recipient of state funding. The party received upwards of a quarter of a million USD each year.⁷⁴ In 2014 and until 2018, CNE stopped paying Pachakutik, arguing that the party did not fulfill the requisites to be entitled to the subsidy. Pachakutik's leaders claimed this was not the case. In 2019 CNE changed its decision and transferred to Pachakutik USD 413.216,64.

3.6 The puzzle: Pachakutik's persistence.

Pachakutik is a party that persists with low levels of electoral support and with scarce resources. At the national level, the party receives fewer votes than necessary to maintain formal registration, i.e., 4% of the national votes, with the number of votes declining with every election. At the subnational level, the number of votes is "stable," albeit it rarely surpasses the 4% mark. At this level, the party's electoral trajectory could be described as "flat" (Mustillo, 2009, p. 329). A flat trajectory for a party like Pachakutik is not necessarily surprising; this party is considered an ethnic party likely to garner consistent support from indigenous voters. The data suggest, however, that this might not be the case. The *tell-tale signs* of this type of electoral support are absent, e.g., clear strongholds and consistent re-election in districts with indigenous majorities. Instead, Pachakutik's 'successes' (understood as candidates' election) appear as almost haphazard. The party's candidates are elected in different districts year after year. These districts rarely have similar characteristics, e.g., some have high percentages of indigenous population, while others do not. Moreover, although the party presents candidates in almost the same districts year after year, the votes the candidates get in each district fluctuate. It is difficult to identify a core set of voters per district.

Pachakutik's haphazard electoral support at the subnational level, instead of providing clues regarding the party's survival, opens up more questions about the party. Is there a relationship between the party and the indigenous voters? Does the party receive the indigenous vote? Furthermore, given that the party's candidates are often elected in districts where the indigenous population is not a majority, how does the party mobilize non-indigenous (mestizo) votes?

⁷⁴ In 2010 the party received USD 251.066, in 2011 the party received USD 367.269,03, in 2012 the party received USD 404.398,30, and in 2013: USD 557.968,05

Pachakutik's resources are multiple, but scarce. The party transformed from an almost horizontal organization in the late 1990s to a complex tiered organization with internal democracy and accountability procedures that expands throughout much of the Ecuadorian territory. In this process, Pachakutik has also established a consistent rotation of party leaders.⁷⁵ Nevertheless, the party's resources in terms of membership and infrastructure are limited, with few formal members and a lack of party locales. The organization's evolution analysis shows that the party created in 1996 has not remained static. The party's members and leaders have invested time and energy into it. Nevertheless, the party's active membership is small. Especially at the national level, the party seems to be run by a few members. At the subnational level, a similar phenomenon takes place. Few party members run the subnational branches. Although other members (not part of the officially appointed committees) participate in meetings and primary processes, it is difficult to determine whether their commitment to the party goes beyond these actions.⁷⁶

Neither the number of votes the party receives nor its resources suggest a conventional story of survival. As discussed in chapter 2, persisting parties are often presented as precisely the opposite: parties with strong party organizations and maintaining relevant electoral profiles. It is clear hence that understanding Pachakutik's persistence requires an approach that moves away from solely focusing on parties' votes or in parties' resources. In the following chapters, I take that approach to understand this party's persistence and the questions that this chapter opened up.

⁷⁵ Party leaders were initially elected every two years and since 2016 party leaders are elected every 3 years.

⁷⁶ Party meetings are fairly well attended. I participated in one of these meetings back in August of 2018 organized by the Cotopaxi branch and the room was at capacity with many persons not able to secure a seat. Notably, this meeting had been called to discuss the future subnational elections (that took place in 2019). The meeting was organized over 6 months prior to the start date for the registration of candidatures which could arguably signal the constant work of the party branches.

