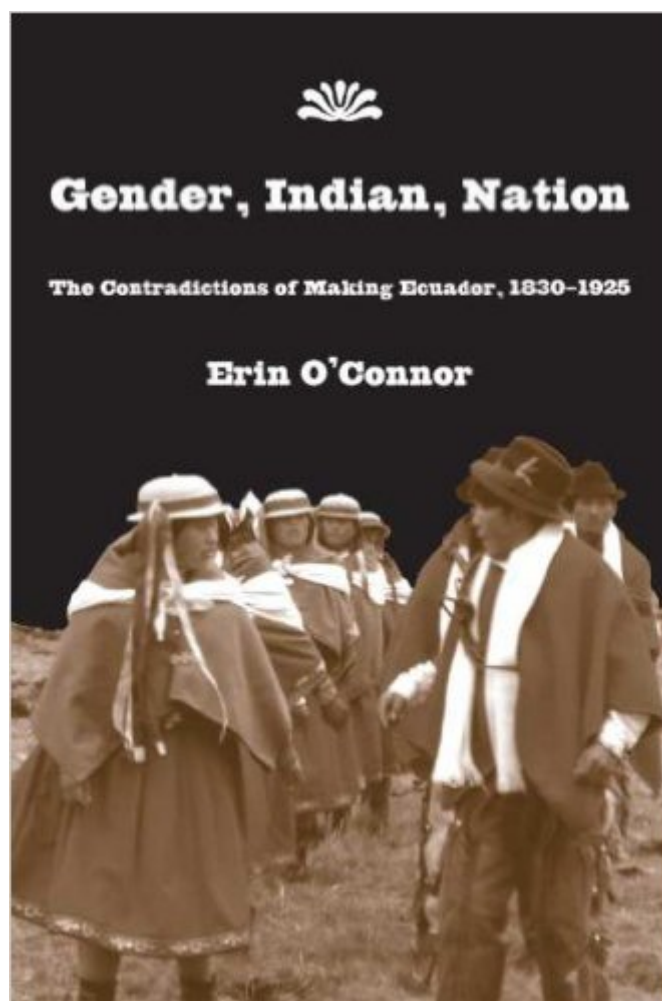


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# Gender, Indian, Nation: The Contradictions Of Making Ecuador, 1830-1925



## Synopsis

Until recently, few scholars outside of Ecuador studied the country's history. In the past few years, however, its rising tide of indigenous activism has brought unprecedented attention to this small Andean nation. Even so, until now the significance of gender issues to the development of modern Indian-state relations has not often been addressed. As she digs through Ecuador's past to find key events and developments that explain the simultaneous importance and marginalization of indigenous women in Ecuador today, Erin O'Connor usefully deploys gender analysis to illuminate broader relationships between nation-states and indigenous communities. O'Connor begins her investigations by examining the multilayered links between gender and Indian-state relations in nineteenth-century Ecuador. Disentangling issues of class and culture from issues of gender, she uncovers overlapping, conflicting, and ever-evolving patriarchies within both indigenous communities and the nation's governing bodies. She finds that gender influenced sociopolitical behavior in a variety of ways, mediating interethnic struggles and negotiations that ultimately created the modern nation. Her deep research into primary sources—including congressional debates, ministerial reports, court cases, and hacienda records—allows a richer, more complex, and better informed national history to emerge. Examining gender during Ecuadorian state building from above and below, O'Connor uncovers significant processes of interaction and agency during a critical period in the nation's history. On a larger scale, her work suggests the importance of gender as a shaping force in the formation of nation-states in general while it questions recountings of historical events that fail to demonstrate an awareness of the centrality of gender in the unfolding of those events.

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This is an important contribution to an understudied field. It will be valued for its contributions not only to gender history, but also to our understanding of ethnicity and state formation.

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