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## VERNACULAR SOVEREIGNTIES

INDIGENOUS WOMEN CHALLENGING WORLD POLITICS

**MANUELA LAVINAS PICQ**

*Expanding beyond the system of state sovereignty*

Indigenous women are rarely accounted for in world politics. Imagined as passive subjects at the margins of political decision-making, they often epitomize the antithesis of international relations. Yet from their positions of marginality they are shaping sovereignty.

In *Vernacular Sovereignties*, Manuela Lavinás Picq shows that Indigenous women have long been dynamic political actors who have partaken in international politics and have shaped state practices carrying different forms of resistance. Her research on Ecuador shows that although Kichwa women face overlapping oppressions from socioeconomic exclusions to sexual violence, they are achieving rights unparalleled in the world. They successfully advocated for women's participation in the administration of Indigenous justice during the 2008 constitutional reform, creating the first constitution in Latin America to explicitly guarantee the rights of Indigenous women, and the first worldwide to require gender parity in the administration of justice.

Picq argues that Indigenous women are among the important forces reshaping states in Latin America. She offers empirical research that shows the significance of Indigenous women in international politics and the sophistication of their activism. Indigenous women strategically use international norms to shape legal authority locally, defying Western practices of authority as they build what the author calls *vernacular sovereignties*. Weaving feminist perspectives with Indigenous studies, this interdisciplinary work expands conceptual debates on state sovereignty.

Picq persuasively suggests that the invisibility of Indigenous women in high politics is more a consequence of our failure to recognize their agency than a result of their *de facto* absence. It is an invitation not merely to recognize their achievements but to also understand why they matter to world politics.

MANUELA LAVINAS PICQ, scholar and journalist, is a professor of international relations at Universidad San Francisco de Quito in Ecuador and a visiting professor at Amherst College in Massachusetts. She is the co-editor of *Sexualities in World Politics* and *Queering Narratives of Modernity*.

*"Vernacular Sovereignties presents an important corrective to the writing-out of Indigenous women from the history of the Western state; it offers the compelling argument that Indigenous women have always engaged with the modern state and, in so doing, defined it."*

—Andrew Canessa, author of *Intimate Indigeneities: Race, Sex, and History in the Small Spaces of Andean Life*

*"In this thoughtful and compelling book, Picq effectively restores Indigenous women to their rightful place in academic and political discourse, thus making a groundbreaking contribution to the fields of gender and Native studies."*

—Marc Becker, author of *Pachakutik: Indigenous Movements and Electoral Politics in Ecuador*

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