

## History and culture of the indigenous communities of Quindigua Bajo and Quinoacorral, parish of Guanujo, Guaranda, province of Bolivar (Ecuador)

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### Abstract

This paper presents a historical overview and characterization of activities typical of the indigenous communities of Quinoacorral and Quindigua Bajo, in the Bolívar province, located in the Sierra region of Ecuador. It is the rescue of the heritage of humanity, the survival of its cultural diversity and the preservation of peoples' roots, present interests. As a method in the study, in addition to the bibliographic review, interviews with its actors, elderly people, and the elderly who keep their memories and transmit the history heard from their ancestors or their own experiences were used as the only way to recover and transmit knowledge ancestors of certain cultures. As results, the referred communities settled in regions suitable for production and cultivation in the high moors are identified due to the fertility of their soils; Kichwa speech predominates, or the expression of "chawpi shimi" whose cultural element characterizes them; the festivities of San Pedro are the most relevant in the region within a cultural syncretism; and the participation of the community members of these areas in the history of this Ecuadorian region is relevant to the claim of their rights as citizens at all times, from their emergence to the present day.

**Keywords:** indigenous communities, cultural diversity, Guaranda communities.

### INTRODUCTION

In today's world, the rescue of humanity's heritage has been substantially incorporated, with respect for cultural diversity and the preservation of its roots being an essential element to achieve this.

The formation of a community with its own identity requires a long time, a period in which customs, habits and culture are forged for its inhabitants; the same that is transmitted to their descendants and rooted in the community as a feeling and a sense of relevance.

Ordoñez (2019), affirms the importance of the historical past due to its impact on individual identity, which generates social roots, which must be preserved for current and subsequent generations.

Ecuador is a country with a predominantly mestizo population as reported by the National Institute of Statistics and Censuses (Villacís & Carrillo, 2011), being identified by the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE) as indigenous population 45% of the total of Ecuadorians. Regarding legality, it was established in the Political

Constitution of Ecuador (1998) to be a pluralist State, given by the coexistence of the variety of cultures within the same territory as part of the coexistence and historical identity. On the other hand, the Constitution approved in 2008 recognizes the Ecuadorian State as plurinational and intercultural, it declares recognition of the historical identities that have coexisted for centuries in the Ecuadorian territory.

In the province of Bolívar, according to the Census (INEC, 2010) 25.4% of the population is indigenous, predominant characteristics in the inhabitants of the canton. It is their daily customs given in the forms of production, language, rites, traditions that give it its identity, and it is the claim of this population to respect it. It is the knowledge of the knowledge of the nationalities of interest for the history of the peoples, where the recovery and visibility of their ancient customs are necessary for their continuity. The characterization of the Quinoacorrall and Quindigua Bajo communities regarding their history and cultural values is described here.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

A bibliographic review is carried out and the author's thesis is taken as a basis, information that is updated in a pertinent way.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **GENERALITIES**

The population of the province of Bolívar since its ancestor, has been a predominantly indigenous people, located in various communities and parishes: Guanujo, San Simón, Salinas, Facundo Vela, Julio Moreno, Veintimilla, Simiatug, among others.

Guaranda is the head city of the province of Bolívar, nestled in the Western Cordillera of the Andes, with a spectacular view of the Chimborazo volcano and located at 2,668 meters above sea level. Its characteristic is that the indigenous economy depends on

agricultural and livestock production, not on state institutions.

Wanuku (Guanujo) was a partiality (groups with ethnic identity, customs, history in common, descendants of pre-Hispanic societies), as were Callanayacu, Pucarapamba and Chalata, which today are the communities with the largest population, inhabited by indigenous Kichwa people, And Spanish speakers.

These partialities underwent transformations in the presence of new social forms that generated cultural changes to a greater or lesser degree, led in regards to their political structure by people of "reason", who managed to introduce the use of technologies, intensive irrigation, and a centralized administration.

Among the communities that correspond to the parish of Guanujo, Quindigua Bajo and Quinoacorrall are identified, located north of Guaranda on the right bank of the main Guaranda-Ambato road, with a distance between 7 and 12 km from the provincial capital to the central part of the communities.

For the purpose of this document, it is interesting and important to analyze the term "community" before proceeding to the characterization of the aforementioned, finding:

It is found in the bibliographic review as "communities" to the populations because they have a link given to their place of settlement, because they share common interest and perspectives, for which they develop joint actions through social ties that may be family or other (Family Health International (FHI), 2005).

Raffino (2020) refers to the fact that a community is the people who spontaneously group together because they have in common the territory they inhabit, the tasks they perform, the objectives they pursue, their values, the language they speak or religious beliefs.

On the other hand, communities that are culturally different, settled in specific spaces, are identified as communities, their identity, spiritual values and means of subsistence being

closely linked to the natural resources of the region in which they reside (World Bank, 2020).

And from my perspective it is AYLLU LLACTA (community in Kichwa) symbolic space where a group of families share and transmit the same language, eating habits, soil, feelings, affection, ways of dressing, traditions, forms of production and forms of education.

## GEOGRAPHICAL CHARACTERIZATION

These are communities with an eminently cold climate because they are located on the slopes of the snowy Chimborazo.

It is the Quindigua River that gives its name to the surrounding communities, it is formed from the waters that come from the Arenal and bathes the east side of the Quindigua Alto community, and when joining the slopes of the Illangama they form the great Illangama, the one that adjoins the south of Quindigua Bajo.

These communities are characterized by the presence of heavy rains accompanied by hailstorms and wind, which are more frequent between the months of October or November until March or April. As of July it is the summer being very frequent strong winds, as well as frosts, which damages the cultivation and the agricultural production.

On the other hand, Quinoacorrall is surrounded to the north by the community of Larcaloma and Larcapamba, to the west by the small rivers called Llamaquinlla and Curiquingue; to the west by the Arrayan and Shulala rivers.

The two communities are characterized by their very fertile soils, without degradation, constituting areas suitable for production and cultivation in the high moorlands.

## HISTORICAL REVIEW

Quindigua comes from two Kichwa terms Quindi, means hummingbird and "gua" from "hua", expresses affection, appreciation, tenderness; From its top view you can see the figure of a hummingbird, it is also assumed that

the area was abundant with these brightly colored birds.

Quinoacorrall comes from "quinoa" it is a small plant with a purple flower, its fruit is valuable for its high protein value, "corral" indicates buildings or closed spaces. Quinoacorrall was the site of predilection for the cultivation and abundance of quinoa.

In its beginnings in the community of Quinoacorrall a tambo (word of Inka origin that means place of rest or refuge) was built that at first was a storage site, which was expanded at the time it began with the presence of the Inka Tupac Yupanqui who they controlled and administered the new domains. The Spanish destroyed the Inca structure due to the complexity of the control over the indigenous population.

The haciendas were political structures created by the State, within this the estate of Quinoacorrall arises under the administration of the Catholic Church of the Mothers Conceptas. In the Ecuadorian highlands, haciendas secure themselves with the best lands and displace the populations of the indigenous communities and lose the protected lands and communal assets under the pretext of lacking titles or not being able to use them.

Later it depended on the Development Bank and was finally sold by lots to people with the greatest economic possibility, giving rise to the formation of micro-farms. Over time the lands were sold to the indigenous people who worked them and were their servants.

In the highlands, workers were recruited by means of the concentration originated in a royal cedula in which it authorizes the Indians to sell their work, for weeks or days in exchange for a payment. This contract became a lifetime job for the Indian.

The obligation extended to his family, who had to collaborate in agricultural tasks and provide domestic services; In exchange, they received an advance of money, animals, a quarterly or monthly quota of grains, a change of clothes, use of the water from the farm, collect firewood

from the mountains and have a place to graze the animals.

The employer, administrator or butler was in charge of keeping track of the accounts, the debts acquired, the working days; if he died, his family continued in the huasipungo, and his family inherited the debt.

The forms of indebtedness implemented contributed to exerting different conditions of force on the indigenous people. If the debtor kept his obligations in arrears or the employer considered that his functions were not being fulfilled, he would go to the authorities to be reduced to prison until the debt was canceled or a punishment was applied for his faults.

The concept of being "Indian" provoked the systematic contempt of the dominant culture and power groups, who had the power to sanction through the hands of the boss who used the punishment of whipping and imprisonment. Despite the mistreatment and injustices received by the indigenous people from the mestizos, the haciendas allowed their survival by being the only accessible means of employment. The landowner had semi-free labor for work and free domestic service.

From the history it is known by the opposition of the indigenous population in the province of Bolívar from the presence of the Incas, after that of the uprising at the Quinoacorral hacienda in the colonial stage before the tributes demanded by the landowners.

In the Republican era, the struggle of the Bolivarian peoples appears in a particular way in the communities located in Veintimillas, Guanujo, Salinas, Simiatug, Facundo Vela, San Simón and Julio Moreno, adhering to their own indigenous organizations.

It is in March 1973 that the Federation of Peasant Organizations of Bolívar (FECAB) is constituted, affiliated with the National Federation of Peasant Organizations (FENOC). This organization kept unionized workers united in their fight against the State and its representatives. With the passing of time, the FECAB continued to group indigenous

communities and popular sectors, becoming an autonomous indigenous organization.

In April 1990, the indigenous uprising was organized in Bolívar based on the resolution of the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE), in the face of the government's neglect of the problems of the Ecuadorian indigenous peoples and its policy favoring only the sectors oligarchic.

The indigenous peoples of the Guaranda canton carried out actions to paralyze the region, such as cutting off the water supply to the city and blocking the carts that lead to Riobamba, Ambato and Los Ríos. On June 5 of the same year, more than 5,000 indigenous people from 120 communities in the rural sector took over the city of Guaranda at an hour close to noon. His claim was, among others, the suspension of the eviction of several cooperatives, fair prices for agricultural products in the market, a claim for basic services such as water, communication routes, and budget for education, technical assistance, legalization of land, respect and recognition of Ecuador as a plurinational and multicultural State.

The participation of the community members of Quindigua and Quinoacorral in the indigenous revolt of 1990 was essentially due to the claim before mestizo society and authorities of the rights to education and respect for their culture as indigenous, tired of receiving mistreatment and humiliation on their part. . Their protest was fruitful given the resistance achieved, favored by the geographical location of these communities, the fact that the population was entirely indigenous Kichwa, and the socio-organizational level reached.

In an interview with the elderly, Aurelio Chacha states that:

"To go to the uprising the chub was whistled, all the children, young people, old people and women left, but the women came back to bring tonguitas, they fed us and came back."

It should be noted that in Ecuador, indigenous mobilizations as an act of protest and a symbol of demands, have consequences, which

highlights in the current era the strength of the indigenous movement since the colonial era, reaching the end of the nineties and the beginning of the 2000s. , his leading role in the demonstrations that ended with the overthrow of the presidents in office.

Most recently, the so-called “national strike” of October 2019, in protest of economic measures to be implemented by the government, in compliance with the letter of intent established by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and in which they acted in the decision of the building of the Government of the Bolívar province was one of the significant events, as well as the repeal of said measures.

## THE CULTURE

It is argued that the Kichwa language arose in highland regions of Bolivia, others consider it to be native to the southern region of Peru. In the Peruvian-Bolivian Andes, three linguistic groups were spoken: Puquina, Quechua, and Aru.

It was the official language of the Incas, so its expansion of what is today Ecuador brought with it the establishment of this language in the population, given the needs of trade and other transactions. The Spaniards upon arrival found a country with dissimilar different ancestral languages.

Due to the difficulties of communication, the conquerors decided on the one hand to prohibit the use. The Catholic Church, due to the complexity of communication through the religious in charge of indoctrination, turned to Kichwa as the language of communication for the preparation of doctrines and catechisms.

Colonizers and missionaries were forced to learn Kichwa, as well as the indigenous people to learn Spanish to fulfill the forced or voluntary mission of serving as interpreters, mediators or advisers of the Spanish in the administrative order.

It is noteworthy that, under the conditions of Spanish domination and its intellectual conquest, the indigenous peoples of the highlands assumed the Kichwa language as a

symbol of union and identity in the face of the Hispanic aggressor.

As a result of this assimilation and preservation in the indigenous communities of the sierra, in the Bolívar province and in particular those of the Guaranda canton, the Kichwa language is spoken.

The predominant communication between the populations of the communities is in the mother tongue; As for Castilian, little is used among the natives, and if they do it is in a defective way due to the expression of the “chawpi shimi”, that is, half Kichwa and the remaining Castilian. This cultural element characterizes the indigenous people of the Quinoacorrall and Quindigua communities, as heirs and transmitters of the Kichwa language that is given from generation to generation.

## PARTIES AND CELEBRATIONS

The main festivals of the communities of Quinoacorrall and Quindigua Bajo are: carnivals (February or March), San Pedro (July), Holy Week (April), El Niño (November) and New Year (December), the first two being the greater relevance in the communities. These constitute a manifestation of the economic, political and religious environment of indigenous society.

It should be noted that most of the members of both communities have been and continue to be priostes of San Pedro, their patron is in the Cathedral Church in the center of the city of Guanujo, a parish of the same name. Indigenous community members, in their interviews with the author, describe the forms of celebration of these festivals in a coincidental manner, being considered by all the greatest festival of the inhabitants of the area and nearby places.

Taita Juan Bayas stated:

“The festival of San Pedrito takes place in Guanujo, it is celebrated with various games: bulls, warship, dancers loaded with drums and flutes accompanied by a band, as well as disguised as clowns, bears, dogs, sacharuna (mountain man) ; and the companions are

loaded with chamizas (pumín, chilca, reeds, myrtle and pizan)"

This festival takes place from July 15 for eight days, with the participation of the indigenous people in the majority in the last three days, in which they take place, the festival, vespers and mass. During these days in the city, sports games and art shows are held.

It is of greater joy for the natives to be considered prioste. They are the people in charge of paying for religious festivals, responsible for the care of the altars, setting up the cults for the processions, their cleaning, as well as the change of the clothing of the religious images.

The person called prioste carries within him a great responsibility, the indigenous festival is of deep concern, in which he invests the economic income from his work, who even pawn lands or sell part of his livestock as ways to cover expenses.

On the other hand, the community members, neighbors, relatives and compadres rush to know the dates of the celebration in order to carry out work, complete the pending ones and be free on holidays to be present at them.

The way of committing the prioste is with faith and devotion, it not only binds the owner of the party, but also the whole family and members of the community, those who collaborate in its organization.

It does not only imply help in preparation activities, but also requires effective collaboration with "jocha" who require higher expenses than those given by the companions. The festival reproduces the status of the division of labor carried out in the community by family members and community members.

It is tradition that the prioste moves with a bottle of liquor to the compadre and asks him to become a "washayuk", which once accepted goes through the houses of the commoners, the arrival at each home is with the sound of chub.

The compadre goes through the neighborhoods toasting a drink, what he calls "traguchi". This mission is in order to find labor to cut native

plants of the area (pumín, chilca, carrizo de cerro, suro, pizan and myrtle) and then let them dry and carry them in small loads adjusted with ropes (chamizas) on the day of the festival, they are transported to the plaza at noon on the day of the vespers.

This is done by the community members to win the square and leave the site of the prioste located. Once this activity is completed, everyone returns to the prioste's house and returns in the afternoon or evening to burn at midnight, after Holy Mass.

Within these three days the "elders" and those who have "passed the post" receive a special place and treatment. For their part, women are responsible for household chores and the preparation of food and beverages, generally assisted by their blood and related relatives; children are in charge of caring for pets and their younger siblings.

The celebration of the mass takes place in a church adorned with flowers, singing candles, souvenirs. The procession consists of carrying the image of San Pedro on the shoulder, traveling through the main streets of the city of Guanujo, accompanied by all the priostes with the traditional games.

In addition to the above, it is assumed that the hiring of the musical band for several days, as well as that the food and drinks constitute an appreciable public waste, that the dresses of the attendees are the best and that the presence of guests is greater.

The feast of Saint Peter plays a role of socialization and the creation of a value system for the indigenous community. It is customary during these days of celebration to visit with the family those who lie in the cemetery, go together to games, dance, share in food and drinks.

On the other hand, it is to emphasize their religious conception, the admiration of their Saint, who is not only God the only one in the universe, but also that there are beings of semi-divinity such as "Saint Peter" for them. Within this dynamic, cultural syncretism is envisaged for the conservation of the Andean festivals of

the inti, pawka Raymi, under the principles of the minga, reciprocity and complementarity as cultural values that organize life.

While indigenous peoples try to pragmatize their conception of paying tribute with their activities and offerings so that "the image" does not bring them "bad luck" in their daily lives, for the church and its organizers, it becomes economic benefit, mechanisms of exploitation for the indigenous community.

### RITUALITY BEFORE DEATH

They are the customs and ceremonies repeated according to established norms, some solemn, others festive or mythological, all according to the traditions of the populations and communities, which are called rites. These have the purpose that the activities inherited from the ancestors remain in time.

Rituals are moments in which communication takes place between the spiritual world, the natural world and society. This orderly and balanced relationship of these three worlds is what allows living, rituals can be considered instruments to maintain the order of the world in the three dimensions of kay, jawa and uku pacha.

To demonstrate the functionality of the three dimensions, I will start from the death or death of a community member, each member of the community, whether family member, friend, neighbor, come to visit the home of the mourner to give money, drink, corn, beans that are received by the parents of the deceased, who deliver them to the women who are responsible for collecting these products in sacks, as they arrive.

During this act, the division of labor occurs: women are in charge of the kitchen in the preparation of food. The men for their part are in charge of distributing the drink to the assistants, splitting the firewood and providing food (aulajano). These activities are carried out by people outside the family.

While this is happening inside the home, relatives worry about getting a funeral box made of lead-colored tin in the city, padded inside and adorned with small silver chains and

mirror parts on the outside. They also rent a wooden cross, covered with gray Formica with Jesus Christ crucified stuck in the middle, two aluminum vases, four lamps and four candle holders, the same ones that are returned on the fourth day of the vigil. The deceased is dressed in his best suits and accompanied with his favorite utensils, preparing him for his journey and to meet the divinity.

The relatives invite everyone present to a dinner that has rice soup, beef, sweet and milk as a menu. On the second day in the morning, people from other communities, friends, neighbors and compadres continue to arrive, forming a conglomerate of people who come to show solidarity.

In the afternoon they all prepare to accompany the burial in the Cuatro Esquinas cemetery. The church bells ring announcing the arrival of the deceased, the mass is celebrated preceded by the priest. The catechist passes among those present with a basket to receive donations, then the deceased is carried on their shoulders to the cemetery. Many mourn the disappearance during the journey, others walk silently, and others sing songs. Before burying the deceased, the relatives embrace the box, not allowing his burial, in manifest pain at the separation.

At the time of burial, some try to clean their body with a handful of earth, others do it with flowers, at which time they request their own wishes. In the ceremony, a community elder is appointed, generally a woman, who expresses: "ñucata jahumanta ricunqui" (you take care of me from heaven). Once this activity is concluded, the family members invite all those accompanying them to return to the home of the mourner.

In the indigenous worldview, the human being materially disappears from the earth, but spiritually he remains with his people and relatives, it is the prolongation of his existence. These funeral practices constitute respect, veneration, and caring for their well-being. The deceased has the responsibility of carrying orders and communications of those who still remain on earth and in this way maintain communication between the livings.

The indigenous population assumes that death opens the doors to the mysterious world beyond, hence they try to make the ritual act the best and strive to satisfy the soul so that it can continue on its way. When there is a stumbling block during the ritual, it is said that the deceased returns in protest, dreams being the most frequent form of the return of the soul.

On the third day after death, friends continue to visit the family, who are provided food by the family, the most frequent being rice soup, beans, corn and cheese. Once the meal is finished, the family members invite them to go to the "lavatory", to which they bring bread, cigarettes, a drink, a fry, a nickname, coffee and panela.

The lavatory is considered a ritual and is performed at the junction of two rivers: Playa-lozan and Curifacha, an area called the Tingo, being the same one used since the ancestors for this practice. This place is considered by the inhabitants of the Quinoacorral community as a dual meeting place between different forces and spiritual values. When doing the bath, the balance and equilibrium of the opposing forces that allow the exchange from where something new will emerge is sought.

The organizers of the lavatory are the sons-in-law or daughters-in-law (older) and the compadres, the latter are responsible for distributing the drink and preparing food (the drink appears as a depository of ritual and symbolic charges). All the companions take turns bathing in the river, an activity that consists of simulating the use of soap but in reality they do it with zigsi leaves (plants with elongated leaves with sharp ends).

As they continue to bathe, they pass to the other side of the river, where they change into clean suits, which are blown with a drink and cigarette smoke, a gesture that is characteristic of the Andean population. The "blowing" is done for the purpose of invoking the sacred presence.

These activities are carried out with the intention of making bad luck go away while the bath is to refresh the pain and the fatigue of the body during the days of mourning.

On the fourth day of the death, the people who were present at the lavatory meet and the haircut and house cleaning (*ucu fichai*) are done. The son-in-law makes the cut to the men of the family similar to that in a hairdresser: with soap, scissors, towels, water and cologne. While the daughters-in-law cut the hair of the familiar women, only the ends. In the same way, it is the sons-in-law and daughters-in-law who clean the house, the image of the family in front of the rest of the community depends on them.

Despite the social evolution of the indigenous population and their incorporation into it, such as the inclusion of elements of the Catholic Church, they retain the activities described above.

It should be noted that indigenous peoples have special places to perform their rites, in which the spiritual world, the natural world and society are unified, an orderly relationship and whose balance allows them to live in harmony between the physical, social and spiritual body. That finally, they are dialectical and dependent on each other.

## CONCLUSIONS

The communities of Quindigua Bajo and Quinoacorral are located in regions suitable for production and cultivation in the high moorlands due to the fertility of their soils.

There is a predominance of speech in the Kichwa language, and the expression of "chaupi shimi", half Kichwa half Castilian, is also characteristic.

The San Pedro festivities are the most important in the region, the commitment of the priest with faith and devotion not only links the owner of the festival, but also the entire family and members of the community. The time of the deceased or the Day of the Dead transcends a spiritual and ancestral space, brings with it customs of the indigenous culture, in particular the spiritual and religious commemoration of venerating the deceased, maintaining family and community integration.



The indigenous population of the communities conserves the tradition of the ritual before death with the celebration of four funeral days in which communication between the spiritual world, the natural world and society is carried out.

The participation of the community members of these areas in the history of the Ecuadorian region stands out with the claim of their rights as citizens at all times, from its emergence to the present day.

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