

**PhD project:  
Indigenous rights and legal consciousness in Ecuador**

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With the Constitution of 1998, Ecuador legally acknowledged its pluri-cultural and multi-ethnic character. One of the remarkable features of this acceptance of cultural and ethnic diversity was the recognition of indigenous customary law along with state law. These considerations inspired this research, whose main topic is to analyse how the situation of formal legal pluralism works out in daily practice for ordinary Indians. Given the lack of coordinating rules that should make both legal systems compatible, in principle Indians can choose their legal forum in case of an “internal conflict”. The main theoretical concept that guides this research concerns legal consciousness. How does the extent to which Ecuadorian Indians are knowledgeable of their rights, and the extent to which they conceive themselves as plural rights-bearing subjects, affect their consideration of legitimate and effective resolutions in cases of internal conflicts?

This dissertation project is set up with the Anthropology Department of the Universiteit Utrecht.