



# **Crude Chronicles: Indigenous Politics, Multinational Oil, and Neoliberalism in Ecuador (American Encounters/Global Interactions)**

*Suzana Sawyer*

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Ecuador is the third-largest foreign supplier of crude oil to the western United States. As the source of this oil, the Ecuadorian Amazon has borne the far-reaching social and environmental consequences of a growing U.S. demand for petroleum and the dynamics of economic globalization it necessitates. *Crude Chronicles* traces the emergence during the 1990s of a highly organized indigenous movement and its struggles against a U.S. oil company and Ecuadorian neoliberal policies. Against the backdrop of mounting government attempts to privatize and liberalize the national economy, Suzana Sawyer shows how neoliberal reforms in Ecuador led to a crisis of governance, accountability, and representation that spurred one of twentieth-century Latin America's strongest indigenous movements.

Through her rich ethnography of indigenous marches, demonstrations, occupations, and negotiations, Sawyer tracks the growing sophistication of indigenous politics as Indians subverted, re-deployed, and, at times, capitulated to the dictates and desires of a transnational neoliberal logic. At the same time, she follows the multiple maneuvers and discourses that the multinational corporation and the Ecuadorian state used to circumscribe and contain indigenous opposition. Ultimately, Sawyer reveals that indigenous struggles over land and oil operations in Ecuador were as much about reconfiguring national and transnational inequality—that is, rupturing the silence around racial injustice, exacting spaces of accountability, and rewriting narratives of national belonging—as they were about the material use and extraction of rain-forest resources.

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