

The Bodily Logics of Production: Intergenerational Perspectives on Adolescence,  
Exchange, and Aspiration among Kichwa Women in the Ecuadorian Amazon

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To Jeff and Georgiabelle—who reach for the moon nightly—for teaching me that nothing is impossible.

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## CHAPTER 1: THE BODILY LOGICS OF PRODUCTION

The sun blazed overhead as Don Nemar's eyes seared into mine. After a long weekend at his farm an hour's walk deeper inside the rain forest, Nemar had returned, drenched in sweat, to find more than his wife and manioc homebrew awaiting him. "I dabble in investigation myself," he quipped and continued:

Pardon me for asking this, but how is it that [foreigners have the gall] to come to our turf? It's a little ridiculous.... Many foreigners come to see us and take us as objects, I mean, as some kind of animal. They take our picture, they ask about natural medicine, or about this and that typical food. Then they take that home with them. They make their presentations, their books, their projects.... What good is your research for us [Kichwa]? And what good is your research for you?

He crossed his legs and rested his case. In a way, this dissertation is a response to the challenge Nemar posed that day: a tribute to the Kichwa of Sacha Loma<sup>1</sup>, a small, primarily indigenous community located on the banks of the Napo River in eastern Ecuador.

This criticism of the objectification and exploitation of Kichwa by researchers was one of several Nemar voiced that day. In the tense conversation that followed, Nemar returned repeatedly to what he felt was a lack of responsibility of Kichwa youth toward their Kichwa kin. Their behavior was a stark contrast to how he and his siblings had grown up with a sense of duty, respect, and hard work that was part of their everyday lives at a time when technology, education, and "hanging out" with peers were not. Nowadays, he lamented, "boys and girls don't look back [toward the community], and they only look forward." At the same time, Nemar desired deeply for Kichwa youth, including his own children, to *seguir adelante* (get ahead, literally move forward, Sp.) by completing their high school degrees and securing good jobs. These days it is very difficult to survive on farming alone, and education is at a premium. Yet, even getting ahead, he reasoned, should be done in service of the community.

The same went for me as a researcher. If I got ahead by using my work among the Kichwa, then my research should benefit them in some way. After interviewing many more Kichwa elders, I realized that Nemar was not alone. Parents and grandparents worried genuinely about what was to become of their children and grandchildren, and, in turn, what was to become of their family and the community. A lot seemed to depend on the decisions that young people were making.

Seen through their eyes, my role as a researcher became clear. In order to make my study relevant to Kichwa in a way acceptable to Nemar and others, I needed to address what was perhaps the most critical concern for Kichwa themselves: the future as it would be made by Kichwa youth. This dissertation examines the formation and transformation of Napo Kichwa youth, in particular adolescents, who are intermediaries of change for their families and community.

What processes of endurance and rupture, of formation, transformation, and dissolution, of rethinking and forgetting take place when Kichwa youth mediate between the identity paths their elders followed, and the new routes that they are beginning to pioneer? How do Kichwa young people negotiate and embody the tensions between the focus on family and community that is a long-standing Kichwa principle and the achievement-oriented individualism driving many of the more recent influences that are becoming fixtures of everyday life? What futures are in-the-making for contemporary teens, cobbling together their identities as they navigate the possibilities, pressures, and tensions never before open to them? Untangling competing demands and opportunities in the lives of these Kichwa youth, this dissertation highlights intergenerational differences and continuities. It shows how long-standing principles persist, are repurposed, and are sometimes cast aside by the younger generation, and how elders are responding to these developments with their own creative efforts and repurposings.

### **The Kichwa of Sacha Loma**

The Napo Kichwa of Sacha Loma are indigenous people who live in Ecuador on the western edge of the Amazon. The Kichwa are a lowland indigenous group of about 80,000 people who traditionally made their living as hunters, fishermen, cash croppers, and subsistence cultivators. Sacha Loma Kichwa identify as ethnically Kichwa, sometimes referring to themselves as *indios* (Indians, Sp.), *nativos* (natives, Sp.), *la raza indigena* (the indigenous race, Sp.) or *Kichwas*. The principal founding families of Sacha Loma first converged on this stretch of the Napo in the 1970s, in response to changes that occurred in the wake of agrarian reform laws. They came from disparate locations in eastern Ecuador (also known as the Oriente) near Archidona, Puerto Napo, and Tena, where they had been bulldozed by expanding urban infrastructure, bullied by surveyors taking over their farming and hunting territories, and beleaguered by the depletion of native flora and fauna with increasing human habitation of formerly forested areas. Others came from areas near Arajuno. They wanted something better for their lives.

The founding families did not move as a unit or congregate all at once in what became Sacha Loma proper. Some landed further downriver in a mixed *colono*-Kichwa hamlet. (*Colonos* are non-indigenous settlers, whom some might consider to be “white” or *mestizo*, depending on who is doing the labeling.) Disagreements with *colono* residents led Kichwa to move up and across the river to territory inhabited by the indigenous Waorani who—according to elder Sacha Lomans—welcomed Kichwa “warmly” with their spears.

The Kichwa families who moved upriver eventually established their own community in the *communal* sense of the word a little over two decades ago. The founding of the riverside Sacha Loma village was a gradual process. It began when a few from the great-grandparent generation snatched up farm parcels in and around what is now Sacha Loma; others, including some of the current parent generation, later obtained farm parcels *adentro* (inside [the rain forest], Sp.) away from the river. At first, after a small school was built, the families *adentro* decided to commute to the school from their farms. However, commuting quickly became untenable. Fearing for their children’s safety when hiking through the forest unaccompanied by adults, and believing that education was worth the economic risks of leaving the farm, elders altered the organization of their lives in order to provide their children the education that they never

had. Moving to what would become Sacha Loma, they made a shift from subsisting exclusively as cash croppers and subsistence cultivators, living on separate farms *adentro*, to residing in a cluster of families on the shore of the Napo River. This happened after a non-governmental organization (NGO) entered the community and promised to expand the school and health clinic. Families still have their farms *adentro*, but their lives are firmly rooted in this riverside community.

One of many rain forest Kichwa communities in the Napo Province, Sacha Loma is an ideal site to study issues of change. It is a place in transition. This 18-household village is home to an eco-tourism lodge (turned international charitable organization right after my fieldwork), a public high school, and a regional health clinic. It was formerly home to a private, primarily indigenous, boarding school, where I taught from August of 2006 to July of 2007. Rather than farming, hunting, and fishing exclusively for subsistence, Sacha Lomans now engage in a variety of occupations. All families continue to farm, even if only manioc and plantains, and a few still make their way *adentro* each day to work at their farms an hour away. Some men and women work for the local eco-hotel, clinic, and public school in jobs such as cooks, gardeners, maintenance personnel, and intake nurses. Many women are full-time, stay-at-home mothers. In general, most adult men and many adult women have taken up nine-to-five jobs—living lives dramatically different than those just a couple of decades ago—with the express purpose of making ends meet and funding their children’s education.

At the heart of the changing daily engagements of Kichwa in Sacha Loma is a broadening and shifting set of social relationships which, as Blanca Muratorio points out, “impl[ies] varying degrees of intellectual and affective intimacy, accommodation, negotiation, and conflict” (1991:203). These are the relationships that unsettle Nemar. Sacha Loman Kichwa are indigenous people with dark skin inhabiting a remote, rural community. Despite their distant location, Sacha Lomans are very connected to the world beyond Sacha Loma, and young Kichwa increasingly are striking out to explore what this world has to offer. As they have come to find out, issues of race, ethnicity, and class color the image that others, especially those who live in and come from the city, have of them. Relationships with non-Kichwa are often positive, but not always. I will show how relationships with both kin and non-kin are central to young people’s navigation of modernity’s frontiers.

Encounters with non-kin outsiders are not new. Sacha Lomans, like other Kichwa and non-Kichwa indigenous groups in the Oriente, have been re-parceled, “saved,” speared, terrorized, stolen from, deceived, “civilized,” and murdered many times by outsiders. For centuries they worked alongside, against, on behalf of, or under the compulsion of early explorers, non-Kichwa Amazonian indigenous groups, missionaries, government officials, merchants, teachers, and wealthy, landowning *patrones* (bosses, Sp.). With these outsiders came the booms, busts, and epidemics associated with new regional economic engagements with rubber, gold, cattle, and, since the mid-twentieth century, oil extraction and agrarian reform. Both oil and agrarian reform have contributed to mass colonization and influxes of migrants from elsewhere in Ecuador (see Macdonald 1999; Muratorio 1991).

Most recently, the exoticism of the Oriente—its diversity of flora, fauna, and indigenous inhabitants—has attracted new kinds of outsiders: the wealthy, often white tourists, NGOs, and a host of researchers, scholars, and investigators, including

anthropologists like me. Just as first-time Christianization attempts were in the seventeenth century, or contacts with oil extractors were in the 1940s, such encounters are unprecedented in Kichwa experience. At the same time, public schooling, both widely accessible and compulsory, and mass mediated images on television, DVDs, and in music videos have brought Kichwa into contact with ideas and influences from distant places. These are key factors shaping aspirations of and for the current generation of Kichwa youth.

For Sacha Lomans, to be Kichwa means to be agriculturalists, to consume manioc home brew, to work in groups, to speak Kichwa, and to live in a tight-knit community. If one has Kichwa parents, they say, one stays Kichwa no matter what. It is in the blood. But what it means to be Kichwa is always changing. For instance, the popularity of Sacha Loma with tourists—who desire certain kinds of cultural performances, especially seed jewelry, pottery, and images of a “simpler” way of life—influences how Sacha Lomans represent themselves. Cultural performances expressly for tourists are common at the local eco-hotel. Their identification as Kichwa is complicated further by the contemporary contexts, commodities, and conveniences with which Sacha Lomans engage as indigenous people who want to *seguir adelante*, to realize their longings for a better life for themselves and future generations. To be Kichwa has been and is about adaptability.

I explore this adaptability, focusing on Sacha Loma’s young people and their changing identities, roles, and aspirations. I will demonstrate how Kichwa orientations to embrace complex, fluid identities are finding expression in new forms through the community’s youth. When young Sacha Lomans come to a fork in the road, sometimes they figure out a way to take both paths.

This study documents transformations of Kichwa ways of being as they unfold in the largely unexplored context of an indigenous Latin American community on the frontlines of modernity. Through detailed ethnography, this research provides a snapshot of indigenous young people in the twenty-first century in which they are bringing Kichwa orientations into their strategies for entering new educational and professional openings. These new openings are pried apart by young Kichwa, but are structured, by and large, by the outsiders that make appearances throughout this dissertation—teachers, tourists, prospective employers—as well as those whose presence is implied and powerful but are not dealt with as extensively, like oil companies and the Ecuadorian nation-state. A lot is working against Kichwa in their exploration of new options. Kichwa, too, recognize the limitations on their aspirational potential—lack of money is atop the list. They remain expectant, however. Even when things do not go as hoped, the possibility that one day they might continue to flicker. Success stories of a few young community residents who have secured jobs or attended college, couple with images of success inspired by NGO speeches, school promises, and television, stoke individual and community optimism that things can and do get better.

At the time of this study, the contingency of teenagers in the community was small, perhaps a dozen permanent residents (many more fluctuated in and out as students at the local public school). Some had found jobs; some had not. And those who had not found jobs were still few enough to not discourage parents and grandparents from putting younger siblings through school, too. Each year the number of teenagers ready to enter an unfavorable job market expands. Time will tell what the response of employers will

be to these teens and what the response of parents and grandparents will be if aspirations are dashed. While many studies position youngsters in a precarious situation of risk and impending disappointment, this study highlights the “plurality of visions of the good life” (Appadurai 2013:300; see also Fischer 2014) that entice Kichwa teens and their elders to continue aspiring.

### **Why Focus on Indigenous Youth?**

The lives of Kichwa in Sacha Loma have changed dramatically in the twenty-first century. Young people are marrying later. Instead of accepting an arranged marriage, they insist on choosing their own partners. People want fewer kids. Farming is no longer the occupation of choice. Instead, white-collar jobs are desirable. Television and travel bring a variety of foreign influences into the community.

While these changes are felt by all, Kichwa youth experience a unique set of pressures. Along with intense socio-cultural changes, the spread of regional, national, and global movements and policies promoting native people’s cultural identity and empowerment have granted indigenous youths access to new, unprecedented opportunities as well as unprecedented challenges. No sooner had they become teenagers, than young Sacha Lomans took over the post of intermediaries of change for their families and community. Kichwa elders now look expectantly to the community’s youth as those who are going to make the future for everyone. In many ways this is an ethnography of people and events in-the-making.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) reported in their “World Data on Education, Ecuador 2010-2011” that, according to the 2001 census, “7% of Ecuador’s population...self-identifies as indigenous and of these, almost half are boys, girls, and adolescents” (2010:27, my translation). Other agencies cite indigenous representation in the general population of Ecuador as conceivably double that number, reaching as high as 25-30% (Minority Rights Group International 2008).

Regardless of the possible underestimation of indigenous numbers in the national census, the data on the Napo, the regional location of this study, suggest that indigenous youth have the potential to make serious waves in the future directions of the province. Based on the 2010 census, 58.6% of inhabitants of the Napo were 24 years old and under; the average age of the total population was 24 years old; and 56.8% of inhabitants self-identified as indigenous. In other words, not just young people, but young, indigenous people are a significant and growing presence in the Napo.

Studies dedicated to the relationship between youth and indigeneity are rare. Pirjo Virtanen’s outstanding 2012 book, *Indigenous Youth in Brazilian Amazonia*, is one of the first in-depth, scholarly studies in the field. For many indigenous groups worldwide, adolescence is a recent acquisition. Also recent is the rise of young people as critical advocates for their indigenous kin, a trend that is happening at a pace concomitant with the swift growth of young people’s access to educational, professional, and political capital. Young indigenous people are exploring these opportunities, many of which come to them by virtue of their youth, such that their aspirations, and the identities linked to them, are constantly evolving.

To tell the story of Sacha Loma is to present the messy complexity of a community whose residents occupy many “threshold” positions simultaneously. This

threshold position is embodied by Kichwa youth. Young people are in-information, at a transitional stage in which their identities and bodies are still crystallizing. They also are transformational, actively engaged in developing new, perhaps even revolutionary, futures of their own making. They embrace cheap jeans, cable TV, and *costumbre* (customs, tradition, Sp.) and consider each a viable avenue to the future. Young people desire cosmopolitanism—the cross-cultural savvy that comes with the excitement of city life, the unknown, and buying things. Yet they cherish their indigenous heritage, relish ethnic cultural performances, and laud life in the uncontaminated, fresh air of the community where survival, they say, is less dependent on cash. In this social landscape of expanding aspirational horizons, the primacy of the kin group is never far from their minds. They navigate between individualistic motivations that push them to succeed in new and different ways and sociocentric commitments to family and community that pull their attention back to an unshakeable core of support. They are at once becoming and being, tempted to leave the community in order to make something of themselves while (as this study will show) professing to make something of themselves in order not to leave Sacha Loma in their wake.

### **Why Focus on Women?**

I focus on young Kichwa women. I do so in part because young indigenous women are understudied in this region and partly because of their centrality to youth identity, development, and wellbeing. Young women are caretakers in their families at the same time that they are actively seeking new opportunities for self-development through education and new kinds of careers. Women, in other words, ensure the future generation of change-makers is well fed, is not sick, goes to school on time, and turns in assignments. Once their children are taken care of, these women begin their personal journeys of self-realization, often for others just as much as for themselves.

As the United Nations and other international organizations have recognized, women in developing countries are a huge, untapped source of human capital. Development programs worldwide have begun to calculate the benefits of a stronger focus on women. The World Bank's *World Development Report 2012* is dedicated to documenting how gender equality is linked to a country's economic and social development (The World Bank 2011). Investing in young women's health, education, and civic participation can promote brighter futures for the next generation, because women tend to re-invest financial gains in their families and communities (The World Bank 2011:xx). Women's tendency to contribute to the wellbeing of others in new ways as opportunities outside the home increase is consistent with their steady, historical role as producers of their families and reproducers of certain principles from one generation to the next (cf. Graeber 2001). At the same time, women are claiming economic, professional, and political spheres, in addition to the household sphere, as rightful domains of their involvement.

The fluidity of social and cultural formations in the contemporary world has positioned women uniquely at a point of "friction" (Appadurai 1996:44). First, the work of social and cultural reproduction is hard, as it has always been (Appadurai 1996:180), but this work is engaging a new set of challenges. Arjun Appadurai contends that, "habitus now has to be painstakingly reinforced in the face of life-worlds that are frequently in flux" (1996:56). Women in far-flung places are exposed to alternative life

worlds through mass media and travel that throw the practices of their day-to-day existence into high relief. Sometimes the “possible lives” (Appadurai 1996:53) that are most attractive are not their own. Second, indigenous women confront friction in ways specific to their indigenous, female identities. On the one hand, they are modern, mobile, and taking great strides to improve their own bottom lines in a world that demands they be educated and employed. On the other hand, as many notable scholars have observed (Nelson 1999; Wiesmantel 2001), that same world desires indigenous women in particular to remain postcard-primed as the cultural centerpieces of their countries. Indigenous women are savvy when dealing with these competing demands on their identities and self-images. Some invoke exoticness and perform it in tourist settings to get ahead. When the cameras are off, they crack open their textbooks.

This is not to say that men, young and old, are not doing novel, community-building things. But it is a recent development in Sacha Loma and elsewhere to put stock in young women as capable of doing anything outside of the domestic sphere. Young women in Sacha Loma are for the first time viewed on a more or less level playing field with young men. This study aims to demonstrate what this newfound community (and global) investment and “speculation” in young women means for future Kichwa generations.

## Methods

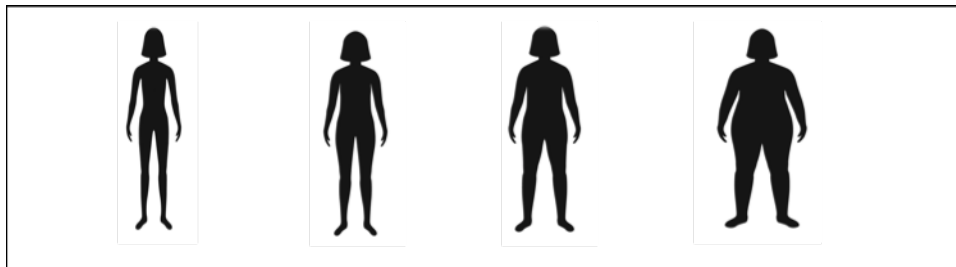
This study is based on data collected during a total of two years that I lived in Sacha Loma. From August 2006 until July 2007, I taught English as a foreign language at the indigenous boarding high school. In the summer of 2010, I returned to follow up on issues, primarily associated with body image, that I had observed among my female high school students. From August 2011 until July 2012, I conducted intensive ethnographic research in the broader community. I used a mixed-methods approach that included participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and focus groups, supplemented by quantitative data collection and analysis (see Creswell 2009; Creswell and Plano Clark 2007). In mixed methods research, different approaches and sets of data speak to different aspects of the research question, or may work together to provide a more holistic understanding of the research problem (Creswell 2009). This dual, qualitative-quantitative approach has been shown to be especially productive for studying problems related to adolescence (e.g., Béhague, et al. 2012). As Dominique Béhague, et al. note, “we cannot assume that associations shown to be statistically significant are intrinsic or self-evident” (2012:436). Ethnography is essential to contextualize quantitative data; quantitative data, in turn, concretize ethnography.

Qualitative methods provide a rich source of data to illuminate complex questions that a quantitative approach alone may overlook. (See Carpenter 2002 and 2010 as examples of the advantage of qualitative methods for exploring especially sensitive topics like gender, sexuality, and the body.) As part of my qualitative research strategy, I spent afternoons on women’s porches conversing with them about their goals, interests, and fears. I shopped alongside them in the market and ate with them as both a host and a guest. I shared their sorrows during life’s most traumatic moments. I danced with them at parties, cooked with and for them in the evenings, and babysat their children. I went to their farms, watched their televisions, and celebrated their children’s successes in school. I chatted with them at the sports courts, visited them when they were sick or had just

given birth, and bandaged their little ones' wounds when the clinic was closed. In sum, I lived as a Sacha Loman as much as I could have been without pretending to be someone I was not and without forgetting who I was: a white person who would not stay there permanently. Through intense participant-observation and long-term immersion, I aimed to gain critical insight into the opportunities and challenges that Kichwa in Sacha Loma are encountering today.

My quantitative data collection included administering three quantitative assessments to evaluate body image, bodily self-esteem, and media usage. To evaluate body image and body-esteem, I used instruments and procedures modeled after the Body Mass Index Silhouette Matching Test (BMI-SMT; cf. Peterson, et al. 2003) and the Body-Esteem Scale (BES; cf. Franzoi and Shields 1984). These two questionnaires were modified for brevity and simplified to target the concerns of my study. T-tests were performed to assess possible significant differences, with generational comparisons as a prime focus.

The version of Peterson's BMI-SMT, hereafter referred to as Body Silhouette Test (BST), that I used in this study assesses how someone sees her actual body in relation to her ideal, by asking her to select her ideal body and actual body from pictures of progressively larger figures. It should be noted that the gradation options between silhouette figures were central to Peterson, et al.'s (2003) study, but were not critical for mine because my study concerned Kichwas' general impressions of their figures and not specific body-mass index numbers.



**Image 1: Modified BST from Peterson, et al. 2003**

The version of Franzoi and Shield's BES that I used, hereafter referred to as Body-Esteem Test (BET), measures someone's overall positive or negative self-image by asking her to rate physical/performance features of her body as "good" or "bad" (e.g., eyes, weight, coordination), as opposed to the 1-to-5 Likert scale used in the original BES. The third and final quantitative assessment I employed, the Media Exposure Questionnaire (MEQ), quantifies the amount of TV, Internet, and magazines that someone consumes on a regular basis (cf. Eddy, et al. 2007).

Participants ranged in age from 15 to 64 years. I divided the women into two groups: Kichwa youth, 15 to 27 years old; and Kichwa elders, 28 to 64 years old. For the purposes of these quantitative analyses, women in their late twenties were categorized as "elders" because they tended to have more in common with their grandmothers than they did with their youngest of siblings. Almost all women aged 28 and over had no more than a sixth grade education, had an arranged marriage, and had more than five children. In contrast, women in the 15 to 27 year age group had at least partially experienced some version of an adolescence with greater educational opportunities (see Chapter 3). I administered all three of these assessments to most of my female, semi-structured



interview participants, though a few declined due to time constraints.

Tracking down those who agreed to do an interview or a survey was often difficult. People had farms, babies, sick loved ones, schoolwork, chores, and dinner as competing concerns. Many were shy. There were numerous instances in which I showed up, and my consultant did not. All participation was voluntary, and as soon as anyone hinted that she might not want to continue with an interview or survey, I offered to save it for later or to discontinue altogether. Consultants received no pay or material compensation.

The research questions, methodology, and analytic perspectives developed in this study are based in recognition of the significance of young women's agency and points of view. In particular, I take special care to use Kichwa women's own words to illustrate their perspectives and ensure that their voices inform our understanding of their realities.

### **The Bodily Logics of Production**

The social appropriation of bodiliness...is the prototype of all social production; the person constituted by a socialized and embodied subjectivity is the prototype of all products.

--Turner 1995:145

The core of this study is an elaboration of my original concept of the bodily logics of production. *The bodily logics of production are the complex of principles and aspirations that direct how individual and social identities are (re)made through productive activities carried out on and through the body.*

In Sacha Loma the guiding bodily logic for Kichwa women is based in the social value ascribed to producing persons and supportive social relationships. For older women, this is most often expressed in producing crops, food, and children through manual labor. For younger women, this bodily logic is taking new forms. What is considered productive is mediated increasingly by foreign influences such as education, non-Kichwa outsiders, and the mass media, all of which shape bodies and subsequently identities in new and changing ways. That is, all of these influences have their own attendant bodily logics that reflect and advocate particular notions of production/productivity that Kichwa women, young and old, engage with on a regular basis. While bodies are essential to this concept, its key contribution is to foreground production as a Kichwa-centered notion that not only illuminates contemporary Kichwa experiences of social change, but also suggests an angle of reflection for interrogating social theory of globalization and local modernities.

Through a focus on the bodily logics of production, this study explores three primary issues: the lives, aspirations, and expanding social relationships of indigenous youth; socio-cultural (dis)continuities; and the (female) body as a prime resource for crafting the self in pursuit of aspirations. Intergenerational dynamics are central, as cultural continuities weave through processes of dramatic social change. In examining the body's role among Kichwa youth who have emerged as critical transformers of their families and communities, my approach develops novel perspectives that complement the well-established regional ethnographic and theoretical paradigms of Amazonian production and sociality. I show how these indigenous orientations are taking new forms in engagement with "Western" influences relating to "progress," aesthetics, and identity.

Mass media, advertising, and consumer goods have become powerful factors in Kichwa lives. These influences are complicated and crosscut by questions of ethnicity, race, and gender, which are tied inextricably to considerations of bodies.

### ***Bodies***

Following a theoretical tide that shifted during the 1980s, social theory focused on the body as a dynamic locus of “practices, discourses, images, institutional arrangements, and specific places and projects” (Lock and Farquhar 2007:1). This move toward an “embodied theory” more broadly in the social sciences already had deep roots within Amazonian studies.

For many lowland indigenous groups in Amazonia, the body is relational—dependent upon others for its psychological, physical, social, cultural wellbeing—and involved in continual processes of cultivation that entail not only individual subjectivities but also how these subjectivities are contingent upon others’ view of oneself (see Turner 1995:166 and Virtanen 2012:14). A rich body of scholarship shows the relational Amazonian body to be powerfully transformational. For example, “altering embodiments” is Virtanen’s (2012:85) term for the various bodily transformations involved in young indigenous Brazilian Manchinieris’ engagement with kin and Indian/non-Indian others in contemporary contexts of increasing mobility and interconnectedness. My research fleshes out the precise complexes of Kichwa bodily practices and politics involved in social transformations that create a situation in which, as Virtanen observes, “native youth have various native and nonnative bodies, enabling them to benefit from distinct social contexts and make new ethnic and interethnic relations” (2012:17). Major works on questions of Amazonian embodiment, personhood, and (inter)subjectivity available in English include Descola 1996, Conklin and Morgan 1996, Ewart 2013, Gow 1991, Kohn 2013, Londoño Sulkin 2012, McCallum 2001, Oakdale and Course 2014, Overing and Passes 2001, Rival and Whitehead 2001, Santos-Granero 2009, 2012, Seeger 1981, Seeger, da Matta, and Viveiros de Castro 1979, Turner 1995, Taylor 1996, Uzendoski 2005b, Vilaça 2002, 2005, Virtanen 2012, Viveiros de Castro 1998, 2004, Walker 2012, Whitten 1976, and papers in special issues of *Tipiti: Journal of the Society for the Anthropology of Lowland South America*, volume 3(2), edited by Laura Rival, and volume 4(1-2), edited by Fernando Santos-Granero and George Mentore.

Bodies are a vital platform through which young Amazonians construct their evolving relationships to and within the world, and bodies are fashioned concurrently in the process. With close attention to women’s bodies, younger and older, I explore the formations and transformations inherent in the rise of the concept of adolescence as a life phase in Sacha Loma; how teens’ new productive endeavors relate to the perduring principles of production and kin-centered sociality; and how their young bodily logics take shape in the context of the new aspirations emerging in Sacha Loma, aspirations that often hinge on exchange and relationships with outsiders.

### ***Production: Theoretical Grounding***

The scholarly genealogy of the term production is complex. My assessment of Kichwa-centered production is informed by the work of several key scholars who deal

with production through value.

Marilyn Strathern's (1988) analysis of gender and the intricacies of production and consumption in Melanesia is a useful heuristic. In particular, her distinction between the making of "things-in-themselves" contrasted with "the 'making'(-ification) of persons and things" is significant (Strathern 1988:176; see also Gregory 1982). For the Melanesian groups she examines, work does not merely produce things; "work ('production') thus appears to produce relations" (Strathern 1988:176-177). This occurs through the "(social) separation of persons as distinct from one another" (Strathern 1988:176-177) ascribing to them value for the different types of work they perform. Strathern terms this process "personification": persons are the "objectified form of social relationships" (1988:294). For the Hagen of Melanesia, and for the Kichwa of Sacha Loma, social relations are inextricable from work and the products of work—"motivation ('mind') and intentionality as well as commitment to their relationship" are bound up with work (Strathern 1988:160). In short, work makes things, things make relationships, relationships make people, and things represent the relationships of which they have been a part (Strathern 1988:164; see also Guzmán Gallegos 1997). Strathern redirects our attention away from production as solely related to *things*, to a focus on the social lives of objects (Appadurai 1986) as necessarily made of people and for people.

David Graeber (2001, 2006) unpacks value as it relates to production and social relationships by dialoguing with, and unifying the ideas of, a spectrum of scholars from Mauss to Marx. While Strathern's (1988) goal was to craft a singular theory of value in Melanesia, Graeber's intention is to upend prevailing theories of value through a grand synthesis. He defines value as human action: people do some things regularly, do some things not others, and what they do is important to them. Specifically, his treatment of *production* in relation to value is most relevant for this Kichwa study. Graeber starts by turning production inside out:

The key mistake of the mode of production model was to define "production" simply as the production of material objects; any adequate theory of "production" would have to give at least equal place to the production of people and social relations. [Graeber 2006:69]

Like Strathern, Graeber proposes that the production of things is equally about *social* production, and while this cannot but involve *things* themselves, production is fundamentally about the making of human beings. As part of Graeber's aim to distill one anthropological theory of value defined in terms of human action, he focuses especially on the humanity embedded in things:

Rather than having to choose between the desirability of objects and the importance of human relations, one can now see both as refractions of the same thing. Commodities have to be produced..., social relations have to be created and maintained; all of this requires an investment of human time, energy, intelligence, concern. If one sees value as a matter of distribution of *that*, then one has a common denominator. [Graeber 2001:47]

Graeber is talking about production in the domestic sphere within the context of kin,

which is the primary focus of this research; the capitalist sphere, too, he argues, cannot survive without the productive efforts of the domestic sphere, which maintains, revives, and personifies once again the commoditized laborers producing the commodities (commodities, which have a role in human agency and the creative production of identity) (Graeber 2001:79-81). *In sum, most people throughout human history have devoted their productive energies to creating one another as valued, proper, socialized human beings from the womb to the tomb.*

Domestic types of production are inherently transformational in two ways: first, they involve people, and people grow, change, and die, as do relationships—socialization is a lifelong process (Graeber 2001:68; Graeber 2006:73). Moreover, a person's role in social reproduction and consequently the person's role in shaping his personal and social self are generally processes of which the person is unaware. Second, they bear the seeds of not only of their continued cultivation but also their transformation:

Of course, most historical change is not nearly so self-conscious: it is the fact that people are not, for the most part, self-consciously trying to reproduce their own societies but simply pursuing value that makes it so easy for them to transform those same societies as a result. [Graeber 2001:88]

Change is built into continuity. Graeber defines structure as “not a set of static forms or principles but way in which changes—or in the case of social structure, action—is patterned; it consists...of the invariable principles that regulate a system of transformations” (Graeber 2001:259). His definition of structure demonstrates how largely unconscious guiding cultural logics (Fischer 2001)—like Kichwa-centered production in this study—adapt over time as an essential feature of these logics' operation and expression. (Appadurai 1996 antedates in some ways Graeber's elaboration of this idea; see especially pp. 184-185.)

In sum, Graeber's outline of production is: (1) production meets the needs of the producer materially but also as contains something of the producer—his mind, intention, and so on—embodied in what is produced; (2) human beings produce social relations, and these social relations guide productive efforts; (3) production also reproduces the person “as a specific sort of person;” in other words, it impacts how he views himself and how others view him; and (4) each of the foregoing aspects of production is “open-ended...and thus bearing within it the potential for its own transformation” (Graeber 2001:58-59).

This well-rounded definition of production fits the Kichwa-centered model of production detailed in this dissertation well, at least in part because Graeber developed it after ethnographic models of production in highly relational societies (Graeber 2001:68) which depend on the household economy for the production of bodies, persons, identities, and the social group. At the same time, several chapters in this study examine how what is considered productive is being transformed by Kichwa who are very much involved with Western markets in consumer goods and images. Graeber entwines household and market production under a single broadened theory of *value*. Through thinking about *production* in equally broad terms, this study entwines long-standing cultural logics and new globalized tendencies in the bodily endeavors of Kichwa women acting for themselves, their kin, and their community based on what they value as good people

seeking “the good life” (Fischer 2012, 2014).

The body is a prime focus in Terence Turner’s work, which has been the impetus for some of Graeber’s key ideas. Turner’s description of the “integration of body and social relations” as “a single continuum of material activity” (1995:168) has some of the characteristics of Graeber’s definition of value. Yet, Turner emphasizes that the body is inseparable from social and cultural context in its role as producer and produced. For the indigenous Amazonian Kayapó in Brazil, he examines the production of proper Kayapó members of the body social through physical modifications—body painting, ear piecing, lip disks, coiffures, cleanliness, and so on—of individual bodies. Individual bodies, however, are fundamentally social bodies, or products of the social world:

The social appropriation of bodiliness...is the prototype of all social production; the person constituted by a socialized and embodied subjectivity is the prototype of all products. The “socially informed body,” to use Bourdieu’s (1977) phrase, acts as both product and producer of this process of appropriation.... [Turner 1995:145]

Bodiliness, subjectivity, and agency are produced through interactions between self and others in a perpetual process of production and circulation:

...[B]odiliness, in the sense of participation in the life of a body, is not restricted to the individual body, but may involve the individual in direct participation in the living bodies of others, specifically others involved in producing her or his own bodily existence, or with whom she or he is involved in (re)producing the bodily existence of others. [Turner 1995:150]

One of Turner’s primary contributions is his insight into how “the body serves as the paradigm, not only of individuality, but of the limitations of individuality” (Turner 1995:145). As occupiers of our bodies, we experience the world through a body essentially shaped by others; this is undoubtedly a personal and singular experience. This individuality, or separate bodily existence from others, is a driving idea behind Western individualism, or the principle of self-reliance and achievement. A key notion in this study is how individualism in Sacha Loma is often socially-directed—individual achievements are reinvested back into the kin group. When one considers Turner’s expanded notion of individuality as inescapably social, it becomes clear how the cultivation of individual bodies in aspirational projects of self- and future-making can also be projects for cultivating collective wellbeing.

### ***Intergenerational, Kichwa-Centered Production: Bodies, Exchange, and Transformation***

For Kichwa, production is inseparable from bodies; production is inseparable from social relationships involving circulation and exchange. These are the essential features of the bodily logics of production. Production and sociality have long been guiding logics of Kichwa being, becoming, and behavior. Producers, their products, and the making of social relationships are inextricably linked (Muratorio 1998; Uzendoski 2004b, 2005b).

Bodies that do, transform things, or alter themselves are productive bodies. By “productive” I mean any activity that cultivates the development of oneself and others; self- and other-cultivation through productive endeavors, new and old, *entail* one another. It is rare to have one without the other. As I will show, production continues to mean hard, physical labor involved in the maintenance of farms and family as an essential, long-standing Kichwa principle upheld by Kichwa elders. More metaphorically, production means generating identities through activities—like education and watching television, which are popular among the younger generation—that develop new self-images. These new self-images, I will show, are often capitalized on for the benefit of one’s family and community. Productive activities—from clearing and processing manioc to applying for jobs and dressing for success—are identity-defining, bodily-based, and socially sustained and sustaining. These activities simultaneously (trans)form the producer as well as instigate desired ends in the world, ends that for Kichwa women are most often conceptualized in terms of others.

What counts as productive is determined increasingly by a widening array of social actors with whom Kichwa youth are engaging: from the intimacy of kin in the community, within which Kichwa are enfolded from before they are born, to public school teachers, tourists, and NGO workers that cycle in and out of the community, to the imagined connections forged with distant actresses on the television screen. In other words, the relationships in which Kichwa are embedded at any given moment influence which bodily logics are invoked and to what ends: a daughter wears rubber boots to farm with her mother on Sunday, but returns home in time to wash and bleach her uniform blouse to be presentable for school on Monday. Neither the boots nor the white blouse would serve in each other’s context. Turner (1995), similarly, makes the case that, among Kayapó, the “circulation” of physically non-circulatable “visual display,” like seeing a fellow Kayapó’s painted body, is a way through which “complex semiotic codes” are communicated (Turner 1995:147); this is an intensely communal and culturally significant process. Now, Kayapó regularly transmit these same visual semiotic codes into foreign contexts through film. While visual display for Kayapó takes on new meaning when recorded on videotape for the world to see, Turner (1992) demonstrates that body paint on film solidifies Kayapó group identity in other equally powerful ways. The individual body and body social are remarkably flexible in how they incorporate and produce one another from one context to the next.

This study’s focus on production in a variety of contexts foregrounds the creative efforts of indigenous teens as they integrate both tradition and technology into transformation of their “historical present” (Appadurai 1996:64). In later chapters, I elaborate the distinction between *intercambio* (Kichwa exchange with outsiders) and sociality (Kichwa exchange with kin and community). This distinction is especially interesting when one considers how the new consumer items attendant to modern contexts perform many of the same roles producing bodies and social relationships that more traditionally circulated objects have in the community. For example, new clothing begins as a product of exchange—money changes hands in the market with interethnic others. Clothing becomes afterward an object of circulation—literally, siblings, cousins, and parents share the clothing. In another sense, clothing used as professional attire may be seen as an object of circulation, too, when used as a platform to secure jobs Kichwa see as *beneficial to all*, which was Nemar’s point at the opening of this chapter (see

Chapter 5).

Lastly, transformation is an indispensable attribute of the bodily logics of production: “when value is about the production of people, it is always entirely implicated in processes of transformation” (Graeber 2006:73). In other words, to produce something often involves the transformation of one thing into another: manioc into *chicha* (manioc homebrew, Kichwa), *chicha* into a bond between *compadres* (godparents, Sp.), or bamboo into a schoolhouse. Concurrently with the production of things, the producers (re)make themselves and those to whom the productive efforts are directed: mothers express themselves as caregivers, children as their dependents; older siblings as tutors to younger siblings; or teachers as mentors to students. Furthermore, productive efforts—like growing and cooking food for others—are almost always about literally transforming another person’s body or identity: making a sick person once again well, making a child grow into a strong adolescent, making a husband renowned for his wife’s cooking and so on. Michael Uzendoski (2005b), for instance, details how the Napo Kichwa of his study take purchased alcohol and transform it a symbolic object that represents their most basic understanding of what it means to be proper, social human beings (Uzendoski 2005b:77-78). How bodily logics and their productive emphases are being transformed in Sacha Loma has a lot to do with young Kichwas’ shifting aspirations.

### ***Kichwa Aspirations***

I define aspirations as hopes for the future, specifically what one may bring to or achieve in the future. Though I talk about Kichwa futures in terms of aspirations and values, I give special attention to aspiration. The term “value” has a fixed quality. The term “aspiration” implicates the present as a moment-in-motion; aspirations stretch present actions and longings into future projects and realizations. To achieve their aspirations, Kichwa emphasize the necessity of *seguir adelante* (a term that itself implies moving into the future) in everyday life with an eye on the past and a gaze toward the future.

	Young (n=12)	Old (n=8)	Total (N=20)
Immediate	84%	77%	81%
Educational	7%	13%	10%
Other Future	9%	10%	9%

**Table 1: What five things do you want most in the world?**

Table 1 concretizes what aspirations looked like at the time of this research for Kichwa women, young and old. The table summarizes thematically Kichwa women’s responses the question, “What five things do you want most in the world?” Their answers encapsulate a tension between individualism and sociocentrism present in young people’s productive engagements and bring to the fore several questions: What is self-interest like when the interests of the self are relational? How do we talk about individual productive efforts when they are synonymous in many ways with social reproduction? What are future aspirations like when futurity is still very much immediacy?

I was surprised to discover the extent to which individual aspirations in the community were relational, socially reproductive, and set in the immediate future. I broke down Kichwa women's responses into three categories: "immediate," "educational," or "other future." I categorized as "immediate" those aspirations that fulfilled a woman or her family's basic subsistence needs such as rice, chicken, oranges, a refrigerator, an oven, and so on. I categorized as "educational" those responses that related to achieving or providing education including schoolbooks, computers, or a house near an urban school. I categorized as "other future" those responses that entailed non-agricultural jobs or the means to them like buying a bus to jumpstart a chauffeur business or owning one's own store.

Kichwa women tended to aspire *first* for the basic needs of their families to be met. *Immediate aspirations made up over 80% of total responses.* What is remarkable is that this is the case even for young women (84%) and more so for them than their mothers and grandmothers (77%). The reason for young women's more near-future-oriented aspirations became clear when I asked them about each of their choices. When a young woman said she wanted food, it was food for her family so that they would not feel hunger pangs or so that they would have enough stamina to study; when she said she wanted extra cash, it was to repay her older siblings for looking after her following their mother's passing; or when she listed a bed, it was so that each family member would have a comfortable place to sleep. Elder women gave similar justifications. In other words, in Sacha Loma, *people seemed to be aspiring not from rags to riches, but from rags to rice.*

This is not to say that young Kichwa do not dream big—a young woman wanted to own an organic farm where tourists could buy local honey, some dreamed of owning and operating their own hotels, and others wanted to be accountants. Rather, their responses suggest that as immediate needs are met, Kichwa aspirations become *lengthened*—people begin to dream a little bit bigger, wider, and longer. This has a lot to do with what Appadurai (2013) terms people's "capacity to aspire," a capacity that must be cultivated, especially in contexts in which agency is limited by real structural constraints like lack of money or other resources. Aspirations, moreover, are always in dialogue with "sedimented traditions" and values (Appadurai 2013:195)—that is, aspirations are broadened by building upon one's existing notions of what it means to be successful or live the good life. In Sacha Loma, this means putting food on the table and is only starting to mean high school degrees and beyond. It is undeniable that the journey to futurity still requires more well-trodden routes to livelihood—along with a sense of social responsibility—for many worldwide. Riches could come later after rice for everyone was guaranteed.

### **Interrogating Indigenous Modernities**

...[E]verywhere...modernity is not one but many; modernity is not new but old and familiar; modernity is incomplete and necessarily so.

--Gaonkar 2001:23

Indigenous people around the world are experiencing and instigating some of the most impressive changes today. Modernity is turning out to be one of those particularly universal particulars. Thus, it is critical perhaps now more than ever to modernize our



own understandings of modernity by looking at how indigenous peoples renovate the concept through their lived realities. My work provides an in-depth case study of Kichwa modernity that highlights the multiple identity paths for contemporary Kichwa that parallel each other and occasionally intersect or overlap. These various identity paths appeal to Kichwa for different reasons, as I will show throughout this dissertation.

The notion that there is no coherent version of modernity is not new; the same has been argued for tradition. What it means to be “modern” or “traditional” has long been up for debate. Bruno Latour (1993) famously argued that any claims by Westerners to be modern as defined by the West are misleading. Some would argue that long-standing ways of being, or traditions, are contrived, too—creations of modernity itself (Giddens 2002:39). Indeed, the phrase “indigenous modernity” might, just decades ago, have seemed a contradiction in terms. However, no matter how hybrid even Western modernity is, and no matter how fabricated tradition may be, human beings are good at convincing themselves that discrete versions of modernity and tradition exist, when in fact the two intermingle. This study highlights this intermingling, while paying careful attention to the fact that Kichwa in Sacha Loma have very specific ideas about what tradition and modernity mean, though they may not use these terms. I will refer to both tradition and modernity throughout this study, but always with the implicit recognition that these categories are seldom bounded and always changing.

Such intermingling of tradition and change has been described in detail in anthropological scholarship on indigenous modernities. This work has sought to unpack the original ways in which indigenous peoples worldwide are interpreting forces such as capitalism and consumerism, which for some social theorists (e.g., Baudrillard 1998) seem unstoppable. As Bruce Knauft puts it, “Against the modern as hegemonic, these views [of vernacular modernities] emphasize how different world areas refract the trends of so-called modernity in ways that do not exemplify either Western modernity or non-Western traditions” (2002:17; if looking for a comprehensive, historical, reflective, forward-thinking analysis of modernity[ies], look no further than this edited volume). Caroline Merrifield et al. (2013) agree: “Modernity is both a top-down discourse riven with hegemonic ideologies and a product of everyday tactics through which individuals and collectives manipulate the social possibilities available to them.” Yet when scholars characterize modernity as not hegemonic, they rarely acknowledge that hegemony is not always totally hegemonic either. This study will show how images, ideas, and ideals that we might consider “Western” are infrequently taken up in a way that could be described as purely submissive. This is not to say that they do not exert a powerful influence, but that influence is not totalizing.

At its most basic, modernity may be defined as the here-and-now or “the global now” (Appadurai 1996:2); it is characterized everywhere by the “work of the imagination” (Appadurai 1996:3). This imaginative work is necessarily becoming more multifaceted as the number of resources people worldwide have with which to imagine is ever-expanding, primarily through processes of “deterritorialization” prompted by the mass media and migration (Appadurai 1996). Appadurai suggests that anthropologists pay attention to something like horizontal, cosmopolitan webs of interconnected localities in the present through a comparison of “complex, transnational cultural flows” (1996:64) that he illustrates through “scapes.” Local aspirations for the “global now” require continued inputs of productive efforts, especially as people worldwide imagine other life

outcomes and actively work toward them (see Appadurai 2013, Chapter 9). As Appadurai says so well:

...[T]he imagination has become an organized field of social practices, a form of work (in the sense of both labor and culturally organized practice), and a form of negotiation between sites of agency (individuals) and globally defined fields of possibility. [Appadurai 1996:31]

How much agency individuals possess as they imagine other possible life outcomes, especially as there is much convergence on what it means to live and succeed in the here-and-now, has generated a fertile debate surrounding potential alternative expressions of modernity.

Dealing with the multiplicity of modernity's many dimensions and how people everywhere are re-imagining them, scholars have rechristened the term in a number of ways: "regimes of modernity" (Merrifield, et al. 2013), "conjuncture," "crossroads," "alternatives to modernity," "alternative modernities," and "non-modernity" (Escobar 2010), "vernacular modernities" (see Knauff 2002:19; Donham 1999), "indigenous modernity" (Singh 2011:63), the hybrid/hybridity (García Canclini 1995; García Canclini, et al. 1993), "indigenous cosmopolitanism" (Goodale 2006), and "pluralization" (e.g., Knauff 2002:18; also cf. Watanabe and Fischer 2004). Because an all-encompassing definition of modernity is so difficult to pin down—Dilip Gaonkar, for instance, settles on a "leap into the air of the present as history" (2001:7)—anthropologists have developed a plethora of loosely changing notions of what modernity means. As Merrifield et al. (2013) note, "some say that modernity comes unequivocally from Europe; some say that we have never been modern, that modernity is a fiction imposed on the world by powerful actors seeking to dominate others; and others say that everyone is potentially modern in her own alternative way." Some, like Arif Dirlik (2013), would suggest that even efforts to account for modernity's "iridescent quality" (Gaonkar 2001:15) are mistaken. For modernity to have alternatives, modernity must exist—in other words, "the ceaseless production of alternatives is a defining characteristic of modernity" rather than a feature of its contemporary interpretations by a range of people and groups (Dirlik 2013:17).

It is not easy to pluralize modernity. The pluralization that anthropology highlights often means adding a lot of s's to things—identities, communities, cultures, modernities, hybridities, intersections, or agents—to solve the problem of representing complex experiences. These multiplying plurals index the challenge of reasoning through and representing scrupulously the all-too-elusive nature of modern experiences, especially those of our indigenous consultants. Perhaps, then, it is best to keep in mind a distinction that Appadurai surfaces: the difference between "modernization as fact and as theory" (Appadurai 1996:2). There is probably a gap between our informants, interlocutors, and communities' experience of unquestionably fluctuating contexts and perspectives and our ability to represent them with a theoretical construct.

Though I recognize use of "modernity" is open to criticism, I do invoke modernity throughout this study. The word does a good job of encapsulating the Kichwas' own lived understandings of progress, advancement, and civilization—understandings that stem from encounters with institutional, educational, and foreign

others—that drive much of their decision-making and aspirations. Kichwa frame modernity as radical change often away from the past and talk about it in terms of being “*civilizado*” (civilized, Sp.) and *seguir adelante* (versus maintaining *costumbre*). As Gaonkar and colleagues stress, modernity is “global and multiple,” but sometimes localized perspectives do coincide with what might be considered the “master-narratives” (2001:14). And while “globalization is not the story of cultural homogenization” (Appadurai 1996:11), modernity studies should not become an excuse for “kneejerk localism” (Appadurai 1996:17) regularly guised in the language of resistance and hybridization.

This study’s guiding definition of modernity and its alternatives follows Knauft’s definition:

...[M]odernity can be defined as the images and institutions associated with Western-style progress and development in a contemporary world. The images of “progress” and institutions of “development” in this formulation do not have to *be* Western in a direct sense, but they do resonate with Western-style notions of economic and material progress and link these with images of social and cultural development—in whatever way these are locally or nationally defined (cf. Anderson 1991). Reciprocally, modernity in a contemporary world is often associated with either the incitement or the threat of individual desire to improve social life by subordinating or superseding what is locally configured as backward, undeveloped, or superstitious (Berman 1994:3). To phrase Trouillot... modernity is a geography of imagination that creates progress through the projection and management of alterity. [Knauft 2002:18]

Crucially, images of “progress” are not possible without notions of the past from which the progression is developing. Knauft terms these “alternative modernities,” in which,

...actors negotiate their desire for economic success or development vis-à-vis their sense of value and commitment to longer-standing beliefs and practices.... [T]he alternatively modern may be said to address the figure-ground relationship between modernity and tradition as these are locally or nationally perceived and configured. Though these features are often viewed as antithetical to one another, they are in fact intricately and importantly intertwined.... [T]he alternatively modern is the articulatory space through which notions of modernity and tradition are co-constructed as progress and history in the context of culture and political economy. [Knauft 2002:25-26]

Latour’s (1993) emphasis on hybridity suggests this figure-ground relationship between tradition and modernity. Latour makes a distinction between “lengthened networks”—Western concepts that have extensive reach—and “loops”—indigenous principles that are narrower in scope:

The Pythagorean theorem and Planck's constant spread into schools and rockets, machines and instruments, but they do not exit from their worlds any more than the Achuar leave their villages. The former constitute lengthened networks, the

latter territories or loops: the difference is important and must be respected, but let us not use it to justify transforming the former into universals and the latter into localities. [Latour 1993:119-120]

What Knauff and Latour have in common, and what this Kichwa case study seeks to show, is how lengthened networks get bent into loops by indigenous agents.

Between modernity as a monolith and the notion of micromodernities (see Knauff 2002) is the middle road that leads to Sacha Loma and probably other rural, indigenous, communities. To be modern in Sacha Loma means being educated, having fewer children, marrying later, having enough money and consumer goods to be comfortable beyond everyday survival, and being able to provide one's children with money and education. For some, it also means speaking English. While the aspirations of both older and younger generations to achieve in new, different, and modern ways of life often are consistent with Western ideals of success, Kichwa modernity also encompasses knowledge, discourse, and practices based in more long-standing cultural logics (cf. Fischer 2001). Uzendoski argues that Amazonians are "at the fore of 'alternative modernities,' or sites of creative adaptation by which people question the present order by way of cultural knowledge" (2005a:225). Kichwa modernity, then, is about living the good life in ways that are distinctly Kichwa, yet thoroughly modern. In a global cosmopolitan society in which traditions are lived less and less traditionally (Giddens 2002:43), Kichwa youth in particular are in the crossfire of sometimes contradictory and coexisting versions of modernity.

### **Indigenous Youth in Latin America**

...[A specifically Latin American modernity]...might be...: a sphere of signification, a code of conduct, a production of meaning and thus a way of life that cannot be categorized within traditional sociological concepts. It is hybrid, colorful, expressive and springs from many layers of culture, history, and tradition.

--Tufte 2000:198

One way to characterize modernity is as a struggle for self-definition (Giddens 2002) *in terms of or against an other* (see Foster 2008:xii-xiii). Appadurai's exploration of the production of locality, for instance, recognizes that the sweep of modernity involves the identity projects of some bristling against the "ethnic projects of Others" (1996:183). Indigenous Latin American youths struggle for self-definition in relation to multiple others: the West, the various Latin American nation-states in which they live, and the elders of their families and communities.

To some extent, these indigenous youth are part of the broader struggles for self-definition that cut across many groups in Latin American nation-states. This broader struggle is shaped by tensions among at least three competing emphases: to define a national image in terms of the West; to balance this by strategically evoking a distinctive national identity, which often invokes the original inhabitants, that is, indigenous cultures; and to create something wholly different by rejecting outright Western ways of being (e.g., "post-developmental" arguments in Ecuador; see Escobar 2010:20). Scholars have argued for Latin America's unique position at a "crossroads" where searches for

modernity, alternative modernities, and alternatives to modernity coexist in ways unlike anywhere else around the globe, in part because of Latin America's fraught history with the West (Escobar 2010:2; see also Martín-Barbero 1993, Kraidy 2005:8, and Tufte 2000 for more on Latin American exceptionalism).

Indigenous groups throughout Latin America have open to them a number of paths to forge self-definitions, including the traditional, the mass-mediated modern, the sentiments of the nation-state with respect to its views of how "forward" or "backward" they are at any given time, and political movements for self-determination that must contend with outsiders' preconceptions about indigenous identity and authenticity (Conklin 1997). With the mounting popularity of travel, tourism, and television, native peoples' interpretations can be heavily influenced by (and always must contend with) Western images, ideas, and ideals. A contribution of this study is to bring *young* indigeneity into academic scholarship on modernity.

Criss-crossed by these self-definitional struggles, indigenous, Latin American youths like the young people of Sacha Loma are enmeshed in their local communities but gaze toward the global. As key culture brokers for their families and communities (Virtanen 2012), indigenous adolescents encounter competing and complementary influences: the long-standing principles of their elders that both persist and fall away; the newer ways of being advertised by conduits of modernity like school and television; and the political paths that have opened with the surge of indigenous activism and organizations (Muratorio 1998:411). School has a special bearing on these teens because classrooms are where youths are taught to be "proper" citizens (Rival 2000), particularly through institutionalized techniques of socialization.

### **Close Encounters of the Kichwa Kind: Strategies of Sociality**

The characteristics of a working class are thus determined not only by the wage nexus but also by ties of kinship, locality, and association, spanning the distance between villages and towns of origin and the new neighborhoods of industrial locations. There are connections to parents and siblings, fiancés, wives and children back home; to kinsmen in the new place of residence; to labor bosses, emigrant agents, moneylenders, priests; to friends, neighbors, fellow workers, relationships formed in boarding house, taverns, and union halls; to comembers of parish sodalities, burial societies, and kite-flying clubs.

--Wolf 1982:359-360

...[A]spirations to the good life tend to quickly dissolve into more densely local ideas about marriage, work, leisure, convenience, respectability, friendship, health, and virtue.... [T]hese intermediate norms often stay beneath the surface and emerge only as specific wants and choices: for this piece of land or that, for that marriage connection or another one, for this job in the bureaucracy as opposed to that job overseas, for this pair of shoes over that pair of trousers....

--Appadurai 2013:187-188

Kichwa are simultaneously cultivating and transforming their social networks. Their shifting strategies of sociality are a variation on what has been a long historical

journey of ethnogenesis through intercultural exchange (e.g., Whitten 2008; Whitten and Whitten 2008).

One key dimension of multiple experiences of modernity navigated by Kichwa young people concerns how they relate to a widening array of new others using their bodies. These relationships communicate particular ideas about productivity to the body social, an idea consistent with the characterization of modernity as self-definition in terms of an other that occurs in the here-and-now.

Kichwa are engaged in continual processes of shifting inclinations toward outsiders and their things as well as re-making (in the sense of both re-establishing and revising) their commitments to one another. Their strategies of sociality involve circulation of body- and person-building substances among kin in more traditional forms of sociality (like manioc home brew); they also involve what Sacha Lomans described as *intercambio*, or the cultural and social exchanges between Kichwa and non-Kichwa that have the potential to rebalance historical relationships of inequality through reciprocity. I develop *intercambio* at length in Chapter 4. What I found for Kichwa is that even as they were concerned with what education and jobs, for instance, meant for their monetary wealth, they were concerned as much for their social assets—their relationships with one another.

Anthropologists have labored to break down the distinction between the individual and the social, arguing that individual persons and bodies are ultimately products of social interaction and reflection. In native Amazonian scholarship, this has been salient in analyses of the production, consumption, and circulation of human products—food, brew, blood, and other bodily secretions (see, for example, Conklin and Morgan 1996; McCallum 2001; Uzendoski 2004b, 2005b). While there has been extensive exploration of interlinkages among labor, the products of labor, and the (re)production of persons, there has been less consideration of how changing body images reflect different productive emphases in shifting social contexts.

As in other Amazonian indigenous groups, sharing, solidarity, and reciprocity are prime social obligations for Kichwa. But, increasingly, socially-directed motivations compete with individualistic impulses, and this tension is a focal dynamic in young people's lives.

Sacha Loma, after all, was established after conviviality—or a lack thereof—drove the original founding families to split from the mixed *colono*-Kichwa hamlet downriver. Kichwa were fed up with their white, peasant counterparts who refused to join in *minkas*, the collective work groups Kichwa organize to complete large-scale projects like building a home or school. A fixture of *minkas* is *chicha*, a homebrew typically made of manioc, and sometimes of ripe plantains or corn. The production, consumption, and circulation of *chicha* are key social performances that affirm and reaffirm group membership for Kichwa. When the *colonos* failed to supply sugar for making *chicha* during a *minka*, that was the last straw that drove Kichwa families to leave.

In Sacha Loma, forms of exchange like the *minka* and *chicha* continue to be instantiations of Kichwa sharing that demarcate group inclusivity and the unspoken “moral obligation to give” (Uzendoski 2005a:113) that guides everyday interactions. Through exchange, Kichwa produce themselves as Kichwa (by being givers), are produced as Kichwa (by being receivers), and produce the Kichwa community as a whole

(by maintaining the fundamental reciprocal relationships of the collective body social). While exchange with outsiders has been central since pre-colonial times, the time period of concern for this dissertation is the recent years in which both productive and destructive exchange relations with non-kin outsiders (through school, travel, tourism, and television) have had profound effects on kin relations in Sacha Loma.

### *Aspirations and Relationships of Intercambio*

Norm Whitten and Dorothea Whitten have described the fulfillment of aspirations by Canelos Kichwa in Pastaza Province, Ecuador as made possible through a “conjuncture” or “duality” of “our” cultural knowledge and “other” cultural knowledge—the “dynamic indigenous desirable life in a vortex of modern capitalist transformation” (Whitten and Whitten in press; n.d.). In Sacha Loma, we might reframe this process as modern transformations suspended within the dynamics of the indigenous desirable life. This is not to downplay the significant effects of mainstream ideologies on how Kichwa act and interact in the world and the extent to which structural factors like discrimination and economic inequality shape these interactions (which Whitten and Whitten in press; n.d. delineate so well). Rather, it is to foreground the importance of indigenous cultural dynamics in guiding individual imaginations—imagination that are inescapably social—that direct Kichwa aspirations for the good life. What the good life is for contemporary Kichwa involves farm and city, machetes and minds, face-to-face interactions and Facebook, manioc and money, family and foreigners. The paths to the good life are as many and varied as interpretations of what the good life is (cf. Fischer 2014). Yet, at the core of Sacha Loma Kichwa aspirations for “something different” or “something better” (cf. Fischer and Benson 2006) is a very basic understanding of the good life—*freedom from hardship for oneself, one’s family, and one’s community*. Whether this is through farming or fashion, Kichwa aspirations are surely individual wants but are, at the same time, achieved for and through others: “Aspirations are never simply individual.... They are always formed in interaction and in the thick of social life” (Appadurai 2013:187). This same social life helps Kichwa adjust when individual aspirations remain unfulfilled.

A primary contention in my analysis is that the aspirations of Kichwa youth are the aspirations of kinship (a twist on Gow’s [1991:2] insight; see Walker 2013 for more on dynamics of autonomy and dependency in Amazonia). On one hand, relationships with outsiders—like those with loggers and road builders—can damage existing kin relations by directing attention to more outward-oriented (city) rather than inward-focused (community) affairs. On the other hand, productive relationships with outsiders—like those with teachers—may strengthen family and community relationships through the expected re-investment back into the kin group of gains brought about by working with these outsiders. Teachers, NGO workers, health clinic personnel, and anthropologists make very attractive candidates for *compadres* (godparents, Sp.) and as such become incorporated as vital, exchanging members of Kichwa families. The dissertation shows how critical encounters with others have the potential to shore up more long-standing forms of Kichwa sociality in some contexts.

The Kichwa have been dealing with encounters with interethnic others since prior to European contact (see Whitten 2008:27; see also Oberem 1980 and Reeve 2014). Encounters with these others, European or otherwise, have contributed to Kichwas’ self-identification as Kichwa. No one has detailed this more completely than Whitten in his

career-long elaboration of processes of Canelos Kichwa ethnogenesis (Whitten 2008 and Whitten 2011 are two recent examples of the expansive work Whitten has done on this topic). Rather than emphasizing “attributes of culture loss, acculturation, hybridization, Incaization, Quichuaization...to create a murky miasma of misunderstanding” (Whitten 2008:24)—attributes that suggests Kichwa culture giving way to foreign influences or attitudes—Whitten prefers interculturalism. Interculturalism may be defined as the “the intertwining of modernity and its indigenization” (Whitten 2008:26). It is an age-old, give-and-take process through which Kichwa gain new understanding of—and possibly alter—their own knowledge and ways of being through integrating others’ knowledge and ways of being.

Such interculturality has been described for the Napo Kichwa. Muratorio describes historical relationships of exchange of Kichwa with non-Kichwa as “power encounters” (1991:204). She demonstrates how peaceful relationships with non-Indian outsiders, from first colonization attempts through the oil boom, were used by Kichwa to maintain their socio-cultural structure in a variety of ways, such as by facilitating the acquisition of much-needed material goods while not necessarily disrupting farming and hunting. Moreover, Muratorio argues that group cohesion may have been fortified when confrontation with whites generated “a source of resistance to avoid their total incorporation into an economy and a cultural world always kept under white domination” (1991:204). Theodore Macdonald (1999) picks up where Muratorio leaves off. Macdonald unpacks what it means for Kichwa to live amidst “new neighbors” since agrarian reform in Ecuador. Kichwa “ethnicity,” he maintains, was very much a reaction to “forays into the domains of their indigenous neighbors, non-Indian colonists, and the *supai* [spirits, Kichwa]” that served to heighten understanding of and identification with their own community (1999:30):

Critical “encounters,” they say, produce either antagonism or cooperation. Others, though equally revealing of norms, priorities, and social boundaries, are more emotionally neutral and thus fall outside the paradigm.... “Personal knowledge derives from interpersonal intimacy.” Intimacy, in turn, often demands nearly complete identification with some “other.” [Macdonald 1999:31]

Macdonald emphasizes the formation of ethnic federations in response to fraught and lop-sided relationships with non-Indians, which led Kichwa to erect boundaries and develop a “heightened sense of ethnic distinctiveness” (1999:86). While Macdonald suggests that non-kin others on the whole do not play roles of reciprocal exchange in a way that would make them literal community members, other scholars of the Kichwa have established that affinal incorporation through marriage may eventually turn into consanguineal relationships, sometimes even with non-Kichwa, when the couple has children (see Uzendoski 2005b).

Modern relationships of interculturality have implications for individual bodies and the body social. Virtanen (2012) describes interethnic relations among the Manchineri in Brazil as a form of “recreating relatedness,” a concept that reflects the broadening of Manchineri circles of sociality (see her Chapter 6). Many parallels can be drawn between Manchineri youngsters’ experiences and Sacha Loma Kichwa youth’s, especially regarding the role of outsiders that Virtanen describes:



Although they may never become real affines or kin, they [outsiders] play a vital role in constructing kinship. These continuous embodied transformations are also understood to result from people's production of images of themselves for others. Alterity is a crucial element of identity in Amerindian sociocosmology, explaining its dynamism and its transformative aspects. [Virtanen 2012:14-15]

The concept of bodily logics of production takes the centrality of relationality in Amazonia as discussed by Virtanen (2012) and others, including and especially its recreated forms, and extends it. My contribution is to examine how the socially-formed individual body sustains the body social while engaging with modern contexts in which "who" is the social and "what" counts as bodily formation are changing. I find that, importantly, though the "who" and the "what" are changing, the "why," in many (but certainly not all) cases, remains the same.

Exploring strategies of sociality is crucial now more than ever. Interculturalism has reached new heights as political rhetoric. The word "intercultural" or a variant (e.g., interculturalism) appears at least 23 times in Ecuador's most recent 2008 Constitution, which ranks among the most progressive in the world, at least in its rhetoric and promises. The usage of "interculturalism" in the nation-state's modern mission statement is designed to imply a mutual dynamic: mainstream culture takes into account indigenous perspectives, and indigenous people "indigenize" mainstream culture. Whether exchange is in reality mutual is another story. Sacha Loma Kichwa use *intercambio* as their term to denote a similar understanding of relationships with outsiders. It could be that some of the current appeal of *intercambio* for the Kichwa in my study is born of the national advertising campaign that champions just such relationships of exchange as a nationwide goal. This goal gains traction most often in the classroom.

### **Education as Intergenerational Exchange**

Anthropological studies of young people were rejuvenated in the 1980s. With some important exceptions (e.g., Amit-Talai and Wulff, et al. 1995), scholarship in this period tended to focus on biological and psychological aspects of young people's development in cross-cultural contexts, with a view of adolescence as a function of young people's reproductive capacities or as a time of turmoil and identity crises (see Bucholtz 2002:528). Fighting their own battles to foreground youth studies, this work 20 years ago laid the groundwork for the anthropology of youth today (reviewed in Chapter 2). Contemporary anthropology emphasizes a view of youth as agentive, and researchers are interested in "the entirety of youth cultural practice, ...how identities emerge in new cultural formations that creatively combine elements of global capitalism, transnationalism, and local culture" (Bucholtz 2002:abstract, 525). New kinds of adolescence are emerging globally, and these point anthropologists away from a one-size-fits-all view. While young people everywhere are experiencing change of a kind and intensity almost unprecedented in world history, indigenous youth are undergoing some of the most sweeping changes.

My work takes as its starting point the recognition of adolescence as a constructed category. While the West is one influence, I am concerned with how Kichwa live and reinterpret this new life phase that is becoming an essential feature of their children's

upbringing. The construction of adolescence by Kichwa has implications beyond carving out a space between childhood and adulthood. This dissertation explores how the effects of the development of adolescence a social category ramify outward to influence social relationships, aspirations, body, and identity.

The emergent process of “adolescentization” in Sacha Loma involves major shifts in young people’s transition to adulthood (including later, chosen marriages and delayed childbearing), their professional development (e.g., jobs away from the farm), women’s health issues (e.g., birth control), and ideal body images (e.g., a growing preference for slimness and whiteness). Young people’s education and mobility have never before been options, and now they are not just options but expectations. The fun-focused, free adolescent who is single and childless, attends school, and has time to search for role models on television is the “ideal type” of adolescent in Sacha Loma. This is totally unlike the experience their grandparents had growing up. For the first time, Kichwa, young and old, are learning what it means for the majority of community members to go to school rather than to the farm, to stay up late watching television rather than get up early to bathe in cold river water, to cultivate themselves rather than to cultivate the land.

As a key element in their changing notions of success and a prime mover of aspirations, education has become a new linchpin of sociality for Kichwa in Sacha Loma. Not only is education the object of exchange—as elder Kichwa work tirelessly to feed, clothe, and fund their students—but also families and communities anticipate benefiting from the social and economic capital of the educated. Furthermore, relationships with the non-kin, non-Kichwa outsiders, who by and large comprise the squad of educators in Sacha Loma, are relationships of *intercambio*, a resource for aspirational striving which I detail in Chapter 4. Nemar, whose critique of anthropological research opened this study, explains:

Better is the kid who is worried about other people. This is the kid who wants to get ahead, to overcome, not only for himself but also for the rest. And even better still would be the person who says, “I am going to get capacitated by the foreigner, and learn more things, and help other people.”

The original efforts of parents and grandparents, in other words, are expected to be matched by the efforts of the educated.

The primacy of education and being educated, which has contributed to the turning of the Kichwa aspirational gaze almost entirely toward Kichwa young people as the proverbial “future,” is a novel development in recent decades. Muratorio, writing passionately about “the life and times” of Alonso, a Kichwa *rucuyaya* (grandfather, Kichwa), describes how throughout history, the *rucuyayas* were the arbiters of change and continuity. They were “the heart and the spokesmen of violent and peaceful protests. They fought against the forces threatening their right to subsist in the Amazon rain forest and against whoever tried to obliterate or simplify the wealth of meanings of their symbolic world” (1991:202). In the 1970s, as Macdonald points out, the role of go-between, though shared intergenerationally, shifted from *rucuyayas* toward a budding generation of increasingly educated Kichwa youth who were exposed to “a range of new theories...for the general political and economic situation of Latin America and the status of indigenous people within it” (Macdonald 1999:85).

The current position of Kichwa young people is similar to that of indigenous youth worldwide. In Brazil, Virtanen notes that while older Manchineri continue to be heralded as “libraries” (2012:160) of valuable information, Manchineri young people have risen to become key “spokespeople” (2012:25) for their communities. Their position as spokespeople entails a certain cultural fluency, including speaking Portuguese and literacy. This dissertation investigates how the younger generation of Sacha Lomans works alongside the older generation to make change, all the while integrating long-standing principles associated with production and exchange into new ideals of achievement shared by both generations.

### **What Does It Mean To Be “Authentically” Kichwa?: Bodies, Body Image, and Social Mirrors**

Along with the socially-directed goals bundled with young Kichwas’ growing aspirations come competing pressures for individual achievement through one’s body that may have problematic implications. Body image is defined here to include physical appearance (i.e., size and shape), adornment (e.g., clothing, make-up, nail polish), and subjective experiences and bodily self-perceptions.

For Kichwa in Sacha Loma, interactions with non-kin—even those on television—can initiate a process of self-reflection in which they begin to devalue their bodies, their heritage, and their capacities based on how they think they compare with non-kin others. This recalls early twentieth-century sociologist Charles Cooley’s (1902) “looking glass self”—the idea that I am whom I imagine others think I am. Evaluation of the self through others has been theorized more recently in social psychology as processes of social comparison and reflected appraisal (see Milkie 1999). Social comparison theories propose that people tend to compare themselves to others, particularly similar others; reflected appraisals is the term used to describe how people imagine others view them. Young Kichwa women are modeling their body-selves after how they view themselves in a variety of social mirrors: in the mirror of Sacha Loma Kichwa, in the mirror of the wealthy (white) tourists, and in the mirror of television.

Of late, in light of struggles for indigenous rights and representation, Amazonian scholars have addressed questions of indigenous identity and cultural survival as native people contest and embrace swiftly globalizing and modernizing trends. There are salient connections between how visibly “native” a body appears and non-indigenous outsiders’ perceptions of the political meanings of that body (Conklin 1997; Turner 1992); in general, exoticism and public attention are positively correlated. In many Latin American countries, the “traditionally” clothed native is an icon of national identity. Yet the persons with these iconic bodies often continue to be denied social, political, and economic rights and benefits.

Indigenous bodies have most often been considered in light of the deployment as social, cultural, and political capital. Diane Nelson analyzes the *traje* (traditional dress, Sp.) of Maya women in the Guatemalan highlands as a “hieroglyph” (1999:184) of sorts, a way of signifying identity that is able to be read by the Maya and by outsiders, and which also offers a temporary brush with the exotic (1999:170). Mark Rogers (1998) describes a similar situation for indigenous women in Ecuador, but highlights the within-group (Kichwa evaluation of Kichwa) significance of cultural symbols among beauty pageant participants. In many beauty pageants in Ecuador (e.g., Chonta Warmi in Napo),

the most important criterion for evaluating an indigenous participant is her “authenticity,” which is established with demonstrations of indigenous language mastery and physical cultural indicators. Ocelot skirts, beaded necklaces, seed bras, baskets, gourd bowls, feathers, and even monkeys perched on shoulders (Rogers 1998:66) are “authentic” markers of Kichwa identity for both Kichwa and outsiders alike. Calls for authenticity for and by indigenous participants in beauty pageants are, according to Rogers, an example of “folklorization” (1998:58). He claims that this search for authenticity comes at the “price of contributing to the totalization of an identity that transcends them” (Rogers 1998:60)—in other words, Kichwa women may be “self-essentializing” (Sahlins 1994) based on how they think they mirror perceptions of Kichwa held by their Kichwa peers and the non-indigenous tourists and other audiences for whom they frequently perform.

In Sacha Loma the everyday use of skinny jeans and eyeliner has replaced “traditional” costume and ornamentation, which now are relegated to ethnic pageants and tourist performances. This begs the question: Who is more authentically Kichwa, the teenager decked out in an ocelot skirt presenting a gourd bowl to a panel of *mestizo* judges; the Kichwa mother-sophomore, pursuing her education while nursing her toddler on classroom breaks, so that she can potentially raise her family’s quality of life; or the young Kichwa woman dressed in high heels with an edgy haircut who is just beginning her career as an English teacher with high hopes to be a tour guide and breadwinner for her future family? All three images of femininity are socially constructed, socially motivated, and socially sustained and sustaining. All are productive of bodily-based identities. No one image is more “Kichwa” than the other, as what “Kichwa” is or signifies is always fluctuating. In fact, the latter two, street-clothed Kichwa women arguably are in some ways conforming to long-standing principles to a greater extent than the pageant participant who is enacting a distilled, tourist-version of Kichwa identity. Aside from advancing community and Kichwa pride—for which there is substantial build-up and preparation—the pageant participant’s role is a one-time transaction, while the student and teacher make continual investments of work toward the future of their families and community. What these three examples suggest is that what it means to be, behave, and become Kichwa is changing, as is the mirror in which a Kichwa woman views herself at a given point in time.

Much Kichwa instruction with respect to new bodies and identities comes from television—the modern, electrified, “mirror” occupying a prominent place in their homes. Television has become a space for fantasy and corporeal imagination. As they engage with televised bodies, Kichwa teens aspire to a whole package of possible (rarely indigenous, and usually wealthy and white) modernities that accessorize stars and their characters. Yet, while undeniably an individual endeavor, even thin-idealizing is not wholly discontinuous with long-standing Kichwa cultural logics. As I will discuss in Chapter 5, young women who are fixed up according to the rules of *buena presencia* (literally, good appearances, Sp.)—hiring practices openly based on “conventional” standards of attractiveness like being well-dressed and made-up, in other words, non-rural—are adhering to a concept of productivity that is analogous to elder Kichwa women’s relationships to the farm and family.

These pressures, along with increasing consumption of mass-mediated images of thin, white bodies, have coincided with rising negative body esteem and nascent risky food behaviors.

While teaching at the community's indigenous boarding school in 2006, I was stunned to discover the insecurity that some of my indigenous students felt in relation to appearance and food. At mealtimes, some girls used smaller plates that cut their portions in half; some hid bowls of uneaten rice in dormitory cubbies. Until recently, most experts assumed that indigenous populations were relatively immune to body image concerns and eating disorders because they tend to value plumper figures and have socially supportive community structures (Soh, et al. 2006). However, the idea that certain ethnic groups have special "protective factors" is fading (Szabo and Le Grange 2001). Indeed, Anne Becker (2004) concludes that indigenous girls in societies undergoing rapid social and economic change may be more vulnerable to body image disorders because they lack traditional role models to navigate these changes and often do not understand that what they see on television and in advertising is largely fabricated. Eating disorders linked in part to body dissatisfaction are common concomitants of modernization and globalization worldwide (see Le Grange, et al. 2004). Exactly how and why this happens is poorly understood (cf. Nasser, et al. 2001). As I will discuss in Chapter 6, body image disorders loom as a potential consequence of the social changes Sacha Loma youth are experiencing.

My investigation of rising negative body esteem and its relation to media among female Kichwa youth toes a delicate line. I take a middle ground approach in my analyses of media influence (e.g., Pace and Hinote 2013). While I do not advocate one-sided evaluations of media imagery's inevitable impact upon viewing audiences, at the same time, I do not want to argue that Kichwa are in some way impervious to, totally aware of, or entirely able to outwit media messaging. Media messages are powerful. But Kichwa viewers are not powerless.

Indigenous women as serious participants in practices of consumption (of mass media) as related to the consumption of non-consumption (dieting and food restriction) have seldom been studied, though there are important exceptions in studies of indigenous groups in Australia and the South Pacific (Becker 1995; Becker 2004; Becker, et al. 2002; Becker, et al. 2003; Becker, et al. 2005; McCabe 2005; Ricciardelli, et al. 2004; Williams, et al. 2006). Some research has been done on indigenous body images and professional and educational success, notably in the work of Anne Becker. Though a more indigenous body image can mean more jobs in tourist industries that seek "exotic" representatives, current literature suggests that native women with thinner physiques and a more Western style may be more likely to obtain administrative or white-collar positions (see discussion of *buena presencia* in Chapters 5 and 6).

Much work has been done on indigenous video-making in projects of social reproduction, cultural preservation, and political engagement (Ginsburg 1991; Turner 1992). But there is room for research on what happens when indigenous people are on the receiving end of videos and television programs that are produced in distant places without the indigenous viewer as the intended target. Intriguingly, both making and watching television implicate indigenous *bodies*: indigenous actors dress and adorn their bodies in culturally conscious and politically salient ways; young indigenous female

viewers in Sacha Loma begin to imagine reshaping their bodies after those they see on television.

How indigenous bodies interact with the production or consumption of media, however, involves elements of both change and continuity. Indigenous film producers among Kayapó, for instance, remark that they “have the hands, the eyes, the heads it takes to do this work” (Turner 1992:8). These are body parts that Kayapó have fashioned historically, socially, and ritually that have now taken on new meaning as camera-holders, film-editors, and view-finders (see Turner 1995:153). Turner demonstrates how there is a certain symmetry between the indigenous film producer and the indigenous actors he films because they both operate “with the same set of cultural categories, notions of representation, principles of mimesis, and aesthetic values and notions of what is socially and politically important” (1992:8). The symmetry of indigenous video-making, however, is not a feature of much of the tele-viewing that goes on in Sacha Loma, as when a teenage Kichwa girl watches her favorite *telenovela*. I explore what young women in Sacha Loma do, say, and say they think about television stars and their characters as they form relationships with them, relationships that both work through and succumb to the oft-asymmetrical relationships between the televised and the tele-viewer.

### **Organization of the Dissertation**

A focus on production as a motivator of long-standing principles and new aspirations captures the constructive and creative relationship that Kichwa have to the present: producing involves making, remaking, and transforming. Production draws our attention to the day-to-day handiwork of Kichwa as the generations work together to make Kichwa futures. Kichwa women’s lived bodily logics of production illustrate how enduring principles stay the same, change, or are repurposed by Kichwa who are engaged in processes of both social (re)production and transformation that help them achieve their broadening aspirations.

The first two chapters of the dissertation explore adolescence as a constructed category. Chapter 2 reviews the anthropological literature on adolescence and youth, highlighting scholarship over the last decade. While there has been a recent turn in anthropology away from studying adolescence in favor of studying youth—youth, some argue, has fewer preconceptions about biopsychological or cultural concomitants—this chapter argues that it is precisely the standard, often stereotypical, features of difference in adolescence—the fact that teens occupy a transitional state—that allow young people to effect change for their families and community.

Chapter 3 presents an ethnographic overview of Sacha Loma. After providing a brief community history and a broad survey of how attitudes toward children, education, and women are changing, I look at how adolescence is being constructed and cultivated by Kichwa grandparents, parents, and (pre)teens in this community. I focus on the shifting aspirations of Kichwa women, young and old. What Kichwa want for young people’s life outcomes powerfully shapes the expectations associated with “ideal” adolescence and thus how young people live this social category. Understandings of adolescence in Sacha Loma, in general, coalesce around five themes: a time to be carefree (and lazy), a time to delay marriage and childbirth, a time to get an education, a time to be mobile, and a time to watch television and develop the skills and appearance to succeed in the world beyond the community. Institutions like the local public school and

the regional health clinic contribute to the image of adolescence as a transitional phase in which young people must be educated, nurtured, and permitted a certain degree of freedom.

Each subsequent chapter elaborates Kichwa ideas about how people produce others, are produced by others, and produce for others; about how bodies and body images are formed through community sociality and/or intercultural exchange; and about how identities are made, the social group reaffirmed, and aspirations imagined and realized in rapidly changing social and cultural contexts.

In modern contexts, what sorts of relationships are privileged? In Chapter 4, I explore how theories of native Amazonian perspectivism (e.g., Viveiros de Castro 1998) and constructionism (e.g., Santos-Granero 2012) may apply to interpretations of young people's associations with ethnic others through the lens of kinship relations in which persons, bodies, and identities are built through exchange with others. At the center of the phenomenon of adolescentization has been a steadfast devotion to education by young people; education is possible only through relationships with *mestizo/a* teachers and students. These new relationships, and the appreciation of multiple perspectives involved in *intercambio*, are essential for young people to, as Sacha Lomans say, *seguir adelante*. Interestingly, these relationships with outsiders can fortify existing kin relations by advancing not only the student but also her family and community. Put another way, education as a product of interethnic relationships is a productive, transformational tool that is "exchanged" among Kichwa as a modern Kichwa community-building "substance." At the same time, interethnic interactions are worrisome to some Kichwa insofar as they draw people away from more familiar and familial relationships. When Kichwa prefer new, potentially more destructive relationships with outsiders (e.g., loggers, oil extractors), these preferred relationships destroy the forest and, by extension, the spirit world.

In Chapter 5, I explore shifting relations among body, identity, and production through a discussion of race and ethnicity in Ecuador, mass-mediated body images, and young women's navigation of the shifting expectations placed on them by their families, peers, educators, and number of more distant others, like tourists and television stars. More traditional forms of production, like farm work, may seem to work against new domains of production, like schoolwork and modeling the body in ways consistent with foreign body aesthetics. I demonstrate how farm work, schoolwork, and work on the body (including work toward being white, "civilized," and thin) might all be considered "productive" engagements—socially-directed actions that benefit families and communities.

Television is becoming a significant influence on Kichwa attitudes and bodies. Chapter 6 investigates how Kichwa women engage with the new forms of mass media that are entering their communities. I examine how television shows, particularly *telenovelas*, and music videos serve as what I call apparatuses of aspirations—as tools representing what is possible to achieve in life. Engagements with mass media instigate processes of imagination and new practices aimed at reaching these possibilities. As was highlighted in Chapter 5, aspirations and bodies are often linked, and television and televised bodies invite young Kichwa to achieve in more individualistic ways.

In the mid-twentieth century, when the founders of Sacha Loma, fleeing from roads and what would travel them, wanted to go somewhere else, they faced a unique set

of challenges in order to uproot their families and grow a new community in relatively uncharted territory. Today, Kichwa youth are striking out in ways unprecedented to their parents and grandparents. Chapter 7 takes a close look at potential stumbling blocks Kichwa youth confront as they attempt to realize their dreams.

### **Nemar's Challenge**

On that scorching day when I sat in Don Nemar's kitchen, I was frankly terrified. Nemar was the first (and only) community member to challenge my presence in Sacha Loma. He made me feel like the proverbial anthropologist-zookeeper-thief, pickpocketing Kichwa cultural currency, only to launder it later through a tidy, "tell-all" dissertation.

I took a breath and explained my project. I told Nemar of the service activities like English classes that I was undertaking in the community, highlighting the *intercambio* between Sacha Lomans and me that had taken place over the past six years of my off-and-on visits. I gave him the opportunity to end the interview if he desired. But we persevered.

When I mentioned the word *intercambio*, it was as if a pressure valve was momentarily released. "An exchange," Nemar mused. "OK," he consented. As long as I agreed to continue to do my best in service of his family and community, Nemar would be a willing interlocutor.

The following week I found out that Nemar and his family had gotten together that night to talk about me. Nemar's primary contention was that I had not asked permission to enter his household. Dorotea had stood up for me. With a mother's intuition for locating lost possessions, she rifled through a stack of scratch papers in the corner of her kitchen and found the consent form I dispensed to all interviewees. "See? Right here," she said, pointing to the introductory paragraph. In the end, Nemar agreed with Dorotea's defense of my project. The dissertation that follows is a product of our collaboration, the *intercambio* between me and Sacha Lomans, including even Nemar, as they taught me about their broadening aspirational horizons. I hope this dissertation answers Nemar's challenge.



## CHAPTER 2: THEMATIC ORIENTATIONS IN THE STUDY OF ADOLESCENCE AND YOUTH

### Concepts Versus Lived Realities

Next door to Nemar's house is the home of 52-year-old Micaela, her husband Pepe, and their many children. Though her oldest daughters are married, have children, and have their own homes, Micaela's is the family base. Her youngest children—Pedro, Elsa, and Romeo, ranging in age from six to fifteen—still live with their parents. The afternoon I spent interviewing her centered on the changing experiences of the growing number of young people in the community, especially teenagers. Micaela is a ceaseless wife, mother, and employee—at any moment of the day, one can find her laboring as the public school's groundskeeper, cooking food for her husband and children, washing the family's clothes by hand, or harvesting plantains and manioc that she grows on a nearby island in the Napo River. A moment from our interview demonstrates her torn sentiments with regard to young Kichwas' free time, school attendance, unsupervised socializing, and declining farm work ethic, in other words, their entry into adolescence:

I want my kids to be participative in the community, to volunteer in the community, to help.... I most worry about my job for my kids' studies. Kids are most concerned about their studies. They are concerned with studying and how to have fun. Being young, they say. Being single, they say. To have fun, so much fun. They really don't think about jobs. More about studying, having fun, and being free. In these times, young people really don't have any worries, and they don't really concern themselves with getting a job to make money to help out with things. It's all about having fun.... Sometimes I just don't understand why we parents let them roam free. I demand that they listen to me about how when I was a kid, I didn't have a single moment to play. I didn't have a single second to go about gossiping and hanging out with my girlfriends. What if I did this now at my job? I am going to be waiting to get paid, and I'd die of hunger. I advise my kids—"hey, look, I don't wait around for my paycheck to just appear. You have to work around the house." There is always something to do around the house. There is always something to do to survive in our home, in our studies, something. They want to live as though someone is just going to hand them money. Why do I do this for my kids? I don't have my own farm [nearby]. Where would I even take them to work? ... I think that's a reason [for their laziness]—if they could work every day, then they would be helping. Only every once in a while do I go *limpiar* (clean, clear debris, Sp.) the farm. For this reason, they dedicate themselves to free time. They almost have too much free time. They dedicate themselves only to playing....

Stopping mid-sentence, Micaela yelled to her 15-year-old son: "Romeo—didn't you say

you were going to help with this [grilling the chicken]?” He ignored her and marched up the steps into their house to blast Katy Perry on his boombox. She turned to me and nodded: “Case and point.”

It always surprised me how, given what a tireless worker Micaela is, she often let her children off the hook when it came to disciplining their irresponsibility. This irresponsibility, however, is one of the newfound plusses of being an adolescent in Sacha Loma. As I will explain at length in Chapter 3, adolescence is a new life phase in Sacha Loma, arising here only about two decades ago. Young people in Sacha Loma enjoy being able to stretch their legs with the increased freedoms that adolescence has to offer. Teens here know no other way of growing up, though the arranged marriages of many of their older siblings are reminders of how things once were. Like Micaela, Sacha Loma elders, while not always entirely in agreement with adolescents’ new engagements—technology, bodily projects, laziness, lovers, mobility, and so on—support their teens and children in pursuit of an ideal of modernity that is heavily shaped by foreign influences entering their community such as schooling, the mass media, and the health clinic, all of which have standards with regard to how young people are to be defined and treated.

The goal of this chapter is to provide a literature review of studies of adolescence and youth in anthropology. Most relevant to this study is how social categories and views of young people shape subjectivity and sociality. A key question is whether the concepts of adolescence and youth in some ways determine how young people and their social groups experience these categories. A major point that will emerge is that these are flexible categories that—while theorized, medicalized, institutionalized, and advertised heavily—are constructed and deployed in local ways.

A starting point for considering the concepts of adolescence and youth is the *Annual Review* article by Mary Bucholtz (2002), which synthesizes studies of young people in anthropology to date in 2002. Bucholtz (2002) takes issue with adolescence the category as an object of continued anthropological inquiry because of its conceptual baggage. She declares adolescence to be too “burdened” by its scholastic history, “at once too broad (because universalized) and too narrow (because psychologized)” (Bucholtz 2002:526). A primary point of contention for Bucholtz is that adolescence implies transitionality and “incompleteness” in young people, whereas adulthood suggests finality and “completion” (Bucholtz 2002:532). This transitionality, she argues, does not reflect young people’s role as protagonists of real and important change and their inhabiting complex lived worlds. The teleology of adolescence leads researchers to possibly overlook crucial questions concerning young people’s agency and identity:

Although researchers are careful not to imply that cultural change has a teleology, they are less careful about this point in discussions of the changes that young people experience (and bring about) in the adolescent period. In fact, it is precisely the teleology of the developmental process from adolescent to adult that motivates this research tradition.... The lived experience of young people is not limited to the uneasy occupation of a developmental way station en route to full-fledged cultural standing. It also involves its own distinctive identities and practices, which are neither rehearsals for the adult “real thing” nor even necessarily oriented to adults at all. These practices and identities, which might be classified as the concerns of youth rather than simply of adolescence, provide a

firmer cultural ground on which to conduct research than the definitionally unstable terrain of adolescence alone. [Bucholtz 2002:531-532]

Nancy Lesko (1996:139-161) delineates clearly some of the stereotypes attendant to the study of adolescence that Bucholtz would identify as distracting from young people's agency. Lesko contends that characterizations of adolescence as "universal" leave little room to account for diversity in the adolescent experience. She claims that when characterized as "transitional," adolescents are inserted into a hierarchy in which adulthood ranks above adolescence. When described as "biological," adolescents take on an image as out of control and beholden to their hormones. And when adolescents are classified as "peer-oriented," such characterizations suggest that they lack the independence inherent to adulthood. Lesko calls for a more practice-based definition of adolescence, one that moves away from creating an adolescent-adult binary. These critiques, and those of Bucholtz, are valid.

Reacting to portrayals of adolescents such as these, Bucholtz (2002) advocates for a shift from studying adolescence to studying youth. Youth has fewer preconceptions about biopsychological or cultural concomitants. By not assuming that this life phase is necessarily liminal or problematic, she maintains that focusing on "youth" opens up scholarly inquiry into young people's agency and global participation:

Youth foregrounds age not as trajectory, but as identity, where identity is intended to invoke neither the familiar psychological formulation of adolescence as a prolonged "search for identity," nor the rigid and essentialized concept that has been the target of a great deal of recent critique. Rather, identity is agentive, flexible, and ever-changing—but no more for youth than for people of any age. Where the study of adolescence generally concentrates on how bodies and minds are shaped for adult futures, the study of youth emphasizes instead the here-and-now of young people's experience, the social and cultural practices through which they shape their worlds (see also Wulff 1995a). [Bucholtz 2002:532]

The concept of adolescence has a long history in scholarly and popular understanding; it is clothed with stereotypes that are difficult to shed. There are many, however, who would contend that to deny adolescence as universal, transitional, biological, and peer-oriented is to deny reality; furthermore, they argue, adolescents are by definition in a special "in-between" state, a state that may position them as at-risk. Indeed, the risks associated with teens who are "out of control"—early pregnancy, dropping out of school, suicide—and its twin concern—a pessimistic cast on the future in which young people's aspirations are dashed because of circumstances out of their control—are common research problems because, as an abundance of scholarship has shown, they are common obstacles that adolescents and their families face. Assumptions (and realities) surrounding the at-riskness of youth both shape and threaten "the here-and-now of young people's experience, the social and cultural practices through which they shape their worlds" (Bucholtz 2002:532). Dominique Béhague, et al. (2011) provide a powerful example of this double hermeneutic (Giddens 1984) of at-riskness in an urban, Brazilian context in which life-cycle norms become stigmatizing and constraining for young mothers.

Scholars are not the only ones producing young people through how they choose to label them. In the here-and-now of Sacha Lomans' experience, people marshal categories of "adolescence" and "youth" for a variety of contextual ends. This study shows how Kichwa use the possibility of labeling *the young as young, as adolescents*, to produce and cultivate teens in this community for whom adolescence is often empowering and liberating, if troubling at times. Notions of bodies and production figure prominently in Sacha Lomans' cultivation of their young people.

### **Adolescence: Thematic Orientations**

Anthropology's role in the study of young people has shifted in scope, depth, and intensity over time. Nearly a century ago, Margaret Mead pioneered youth studies in anthropology through her investigation of the experience of young Samoan women. Her *Coming of Age in Samoa* (1961[1928]) sought to determine whether adolescence, and the "crises" inherent therein, were a construct of culture. She famously found that, due to candidness of Samoan society with respect to human sexuality and other topics normally taboo in the West, young Samoan women did not experience the sexual distress and awkwardness that seemed to plague U.S. American youth.

Anthropologists who followed Mead did not completely leave out young people in their analyses, but rarely were they the focus. When adolescents were examined, it was almost exclusively in terms of sexuality (e.g., Malinowski 1987[1929]) or puberty rituals (e.g., Turner 1969) (see Bucholtz 2002:529). In the late 1980s, the anthropology of young people entered a period of florescence, which has carried on steadily.

Though we often talk about it as if it has existed since time immemorial, adolescence is a recent creation in and of human history, which of course was Mead's point. It is a cultural category that has gradually become equated with a very specific set of biological and psychological characteristics that consistently coincide with the years for which adolescence "accounts" in the medical, sociological, and psychological literature. Starting most rapidly and permanently in the wake of nineteenth century industrialization, adults in the West constructed adolescence as they began to make decisions that shifted their children's life paths in unfamiliar directions, from the assembly line to, for boys, the classroom, and for girls, domestic grooming at home. Young people gradually became seen as something quite different than the semi-adult wage earners of previous times (see Chudacoff 2004). That is to say, at one point, Western parents and those who became teenagers were dealing with an emergent, first-time category. Their "struggles" were the inspiration for the turn-of-the-twentieth century work in which scholars like G. Stanley Hall and Sigmund Freud felt compelled to figure out just who adolescents were and to what they were responding. These early and important scholars articulated adolescence the category into a series of check boxes, personality traits, and conflicting roles and expectations. Now, Westerners—whether teenagers or adults—have become experts in how to "manage" adolescence. Adolescence has become routinized.

What follows are the primary thematic orientations that have guided research of adolescence.

#### *Age*

Even among those scholars attempting to standardize the category of adolescence through something as seemingly definite as age, there is not complete consensus.

Seeking to render a cross-cultural picture of adolescence, the researchers of the Harvard Adolescence Project (HAP) of the late 1980s broadly defined adolescence as “the transitional period between the end of childhood and the attainment of adult social status” (Whiting and Whiting in Davis and Davis 1989:xiii). In their cross-cultural examination of changing reproductive and marriage practices, John Caldwell et al. (1998) offer a slightly different definition. “Adolescent” refers to those post-puberty up until the age of 20. Caldwell and colleagues term those older than 20, but still considered in some ways not fully on their own, as “young adult” (1998:137). The United Nations Population Fund has three such categories. Young people are aged 10-24 years, adolescents 10-19 years, and youth 15-24 years (UNFPA 2010). Their categories, purely distinguished by age, blur and overlap.

Sociologists resolve some of these issues by examining “age” versus “cohort” (see Kovach and Knapp 1989). Age accounts for a person’s experience in terms of years since birth. People the same age may share certain occurrences (e.g., age of first menses). Cohort accounts for a person’s experience in terms of time in history at which the person was born; people born in the same general time period may have shared experience and thus belong to the same cohort.

Definitions of adolescence through age matter because they establish which young people are studied and which young people are not.

### *Schooling*

Apart from age, perhaps the most defining feature of adolescence is its association with schooling. In general, those nearing or attending high school fall into the 10-19 years of age category and are considered adolescents. Schools generate a multiplicity of expectations for their students. And, in terms of the social category of adolescence as it is most often conceived (see Schlegel 2000), the expectations associated with both schooling and adolescence are mutually-constituting (see Davis and Davis 1989:59). That is, schools exist because young people attend them; adolescence exists, in part, because schools further carve out a space for young people to do activities distinctive to being young. As part of the HAP team of the 1980s, Marida Hollos and Philip Leis’ (1989) work among the Ijo in Nigeria (spelled alternatively Ijaw) described schooling’s fundamental effect on the restructuring of age categories. Previously, near-pubertal girls known as *ereso* (young “nubile” woman) were expected to move to their future husband’s compound. After the introduction of schooling, many *ereso* girls were no longer preparing for marriage and were enrolled instead in secondary school. Without an age category with which to label these girls, Ijo referred to them as “big schoolgirls” (1989:152).

Another theme of schooling relates to Pierre Bourdieu’s notion of habitus and Michel Foucault’s “micro-technologies” of power. Bourdieu’s habitus involves socially learned “uses” of the body, which he defines as “systems of durable, transposable dispositions” that take on the appearance of common sense (2003[1977]:72). Habitus produces actions that are historically and contextually influenced, and individuals performing these actions ultimately reproduce habitus. In *Discipline and Punish* (1977) Foucault explores the great changes in technologies of power through punishment during

the eighteenth century from public, example-making, torture to the regimented discipline of carceral society. Specifically, Foucault (1977:136) describes the rise of the self-surveilling, docile body. In this way, he augments earlier notions of habitus with elements of manipulation: “it was a question...of exercising upon it [the body] a subtle coercion, of obtaining holds upon it at the level of the mechanism itself—movements, gestures, attitudes, rapidity: an infinitesimal power over the active body” (1977:137). What both habitus and these subtle micro-technologies of power indicate is that power structures are everywhere localized in individual, eventually institution-reinforcing, actions. These actions are performed on and through bodies. School is an institution in which some of these habitual, micromanaged bodily behaviors are cultivated.

School is embodied in physical movements and personal predilections. Burbank, for instance, writes eloquently of the disciplining of Aboriginal students’ bodies:

The missionaries instructed them in schedules and scriptures and taught them to brush their teeth, to excuse themselves when they belched, to garden, to chop wood, and wash their clothes and dishes. The Department of Education teachers continued some of these lessons, teaching their pupils such things as proper classroom comportment and the Western versions of punctuality, grooming, and cleanliness. [Burbank 1988:21]

In general, educated bodies know when and how to speak, the importance of looking good (practicing good hygiene, wearing clean clothes), and how to interact well with others (instructors, potential employers). It is the expressed goal of many educators to discipline bodies away from more “traditional” means of production—such as farming and child bearing and rearing—and shape these bodies in ways acceptable for “modern” world citizens (see Ames 2002).

A second key issue is the idea of school as a placeholder for marriage and reproductive responsibility (e.g., Burbank 1988; Davis and Davis 1989; Hollos and Leis 1989). For example, Victoria Burbank (1988) described virginity for young Australian Aboriginal women of Mangrove. Virginity here emerged in a context in which schooling, government and missionary instruction, television, and various leisure activities began to dominate young women’s daily routines. Susan Davis and Douglas Davis reported that more and more young people in Zawiya, Morocco were considered “no longer children, but not married and parents, and therefore not full adults” (1989:61). This period of “extended education and delayed marriage” (Davis and Davis 1989:61), which also commonly involved gender mixing in school, often contributed to generational conflict.

A third key dimension of schooling is that it produces new forms of sociality—exchange between people—that have implications for individual personhood and identity formation. These new socialities at times move away from (Burbank 1988) and at times are consistent with (Hollos and Leis 1989) previous forms of social practice and organization. Burbank observed that traditional food gathering practices for Aboriginal youth were “limited to weekends and holidays” (1988:22) during the school session. This meant fewer opportunities for young women to learn gathering techniques from their mothers and grandmothers. While little girls were not entirely detached from the community’s older women, their exposure to foreign value systems generated

intergenerational tension surrounding sex and marriage (Burbank 1988:23). For the Ijo of Nigeria, in contrast, being a student fit squarely within existing Ijo kin relations which, as “buffers” to modernity, both constrained and nourished young people’s pursuits (Hollos and Leis 1989:153). Hollos and Leis found that schooling ranked with feeding and clothing among responsibilities to be fulfilled by the adult community for well-behaving young people: “a clever, good student who wishes to advance can do so, but... advancement will be achieved by finding a sponsor among the members of the kin group” (1989:154). Young Ijo people did value independence. But because they esteemed “continuity with the past, with the kin group and its ancestors” (1989:154), they did not place the same emphasis on autonomy, a fine distinction that Hollos and Leis formulate expertly.

Schooling, finally, can amplify existing social organization. Among the Canadian Inuit, young people were traditionally granted a good deal of autonomy which, in the wake of the emergence of adolescence, merged with new ideas of young people as an “age set” (Condon 1987:131). Condon (1987, 1990, 1995) determined that, because of schooling, Inuit adolescence was often characterized by more intense reliance on new peer groups and a shift away from immersion primarily within a family centered on adults.

### *Adolescents in Love, in Crisis, and in Transition*

In the earliest studies of adolescence by anthropologists, adolescence was treated primarily as a *rite de passage* to adulthood, a liminal phase. Scholars emphasized puberty and initiation rituals, marital customs, age-grade ceremonies, and sexual practices (Bucholtz 2002:525; see Mead 1961[1928]; Malinowski 1987[1929]; Turner 1969). Throughout the twentieth century until the 1980s, adolescents were rarely the central focus of anthropological inquiry.

The idea of adolescence as a liminal, often tumultuous, phase has been a prominent theme in anthropology and other social sciences. Some have focused on issues of psychological growth and development and the specific challenges for young people to grapple with identity, social-emotional, and behavioral issues. Mead (1961[1928]) discussed the “restlessness of youth,” the “growing children’s plight” the “awkward age” (see also Erikson 1968). Other scholars have emphasized how the storms and stresses of adolescence (Hall 1904) may be marked by disjuncture between the generations (Burbank 1988) or delinquent/criminal behavior and suicide (see Condon 1990:274; for a counter example, see Hollos and Leis 1989:156). The idea of young people as “at-risk” has been a continuing topic of interest (e.g., Kral 2013; Saraví and Makowski 2011).

A second area of concern in adolescence as a transitional phase has been age of first marriage. Sexual preparedness and marriage figured prominently in early analyses as a critical impetus for the development of adolescence as an accepted social category and for the development of adolescents themselves (Caldwell, et al. 1998). Scholars saw this as a life stage that hinged on physical changes, such as maturing reproductive capacities (Schlegel 1995b), as well as a period in which a person prepared to become an adult, which was often defined through sexual “readiness” and ability to marry. For example, Alice Schlegel, perhaps the most prolific writer on adolescence, originally studied adolescence among young Hopi women. Schlegel depicted Hopi adolescence as characterized by “moodiness, intergenerational conflict, and anxiety over sex and love”

(1973:461). Focusing on the gender-specific realities of Hopi girls—finding and marrying a mate, dealing with pressures from their mothers—she found socialization pressures and adolescent crises to be positively related, even when a clear life path centered on acquiring a partner had been delineated for the young woman. In their cross-cultural analysis of adolescence in 186 societies, Schlegel and Barry reported that the length of the adolescent period is “determined by marriage considerations” (1991:92), which include economic and reproductive concerns (1991:106). Other scholars have explored what happens when aspirations for romantic love are thrown into generational disagreements over a young woman’s marriage prospects (Burbank 1988). Burbank’s (1988) keen insight revealed that premarital pregnancy among Australian Aboriginal young women in Mangrove might in some ways have been freeing, as several couples became pregnant as a means of marrying a chosen partner, though this was no doubt a complicated expression of young women’s new decision-making power (see also Burbank 1995).

A final theme concerns adolescence as a time for expanding aspirational horizons, which may be both promising and problematic. On one hand, some might view this life phase as a “time out” (Schlegel 1995a:11) in which adolescents are able to experience more or less carefree entertainment and socializing while working toward goals by and large cultivated in school settings. On the other hand, young people are faced with the hard realities of limited availability of ways of earning a livelihood (Condon 1990, 1995; Sachdev 1990).

Early scholars of adolescence have advocated studying this age group on its own terms. Schlegel and Barry suggest, “Adolescence can be studied as a stage *sui generis* rather than as simply a marginal or transitional period” (1991:6). Yet, at times their analyses treat adults, not adolescents, as the prime agents. In their own words, “we need to examine how adults use peer groups to structure the lives of adolescence until they are safely absorbed into the adult population and how the community, as well as family, uses its adolescent children as a source of productive labor or for other ends” (Schlegel and Barry 1991:10). The authors, nonetheless, note crucially that adolescents as transitional and adolescents as agents are not mutually exclusive ideas:

...[A]dolescence is not only a time for learning adult roles, ...but also a time during which young people are often making important contributions to society: observations from many societies indicate that adolescents are *useful* to their families and communities, an impression that one rarely gets if one studies only Western adolescence. [Schlegel and Barry 1991:6]

A focus on adolescence as *purely* a category of biological or psychological development limits our understanding of young people’s experiences, which is a lesson that recent youth scholarship, especially Bucholtz (2002), has taught us (see also Worthman 1998). Yet, it would be difficult to deny that a bio-psychological component to young people’s growing up is nonexistent or unimportant to how adolescence is lived and experienced.

### *Adolescence and Social Change*

Adolescence and social change has been a popular area of research. A critical



step in contextualizing cross-culturally the experience of adolescents, the work of the HAP contributors of the 1980s was part of the *Adolescence in a Changing World Series* (Burbank 1988; Condon 1987; Davis and Davis 1989; Hollos and Leis 1989). Included in their analyses was a focus on the new and changing contexts of adolescent development, emphasizing intergenerational relations and aspirational dreams, desires, and dilemmas. These ethnographies richly detailed the interactions of young people in their respective communities with their peers, families, and communities, often including vignettes of individual adolescents with an eye toward everyday realities as well as the future. The later work of Richard Condon of HAP, like his 1990 study of Canadian Inuits, continued to document the demographic, social (e.g., exposure to “southern values”), and economic changes affecting Inuit teens. Not only did these changes generate an expanded adolescent life phase previously nonexistent, but also they made former ways of the elders impossible (see especially the excellent diagram on Condon 1990:271).

Few researchers have put the question of adolescence and social change better than Mark Liechty (1995) did, working in Kathmandu, Nepal, nearly twenty years ago:

What happens when perceptions of reality are in flux, when identities are imagined, when lives are no longer confined within local frames of reference, when a multiplicity of meaning systems vie for the status of ‘common sense’, when local socializing mechanisms no longer enjoy an unquestioned, hegemonic authority?  
[Liechty 1995:167]

Liechty is not talking about the burgeoning technoscape unilaterally overtaking the lives of non-Western youngsters as they sit mesmerized in front of their television screens. He is not talking about Western culture as a monolithic juggernaut erasing tradition and eradicating social networks. He is addressing young people as crucial decision-makers at a time in which their social and cultural contexts are changing at a pace never before seen in human history. He is directing our attention to adolescents as a dynamic, under-researched population engrossed in “an experience of engagement, experimentation and critique that is lived at the interface between consumer modernity, state modernism and the realities of everyday life” (Liechty 1995:183). Within this interface, young people are change-makers and game-changers as they imagine new futures for themselves and navigate the bumpy and curvy path between becoming and being, which is all-too-often befuddling.

More recently, adolescence as related to the possibilities, pressures, and tensions of modernity has become a focus of scholarly attention. In an article examining the present applicability of early twentieth century psychologist G. Stanley Hall’s conclusions regarding social change and adolescent development, Martin Pinquart and Reiner Silbereisen (2005) tease apart issues associated with modern demands on adolescent lives. While their primary focus seems to be Western adolescents, Pinquart and Silbereisen (2005:402-403) address contemporary issues relevant to young people everywhere, such as the bidirectional relationship between social change and adolescents. Bidirectionality means that while social processes no doubt influence adolescents, the decisions adolescents make feed back into social processes—an example of this would be consumer marketing (Pinquart and Silbereisen 2005:402-403). Some of their assertions

regarding a monolithic global youth culture and uncertain futures facing young people paint a grim picture and do not take into account scholarship on young people as savvy negotiators of the changes and challenges of modernity (see “Creativity in Transition” below).

Robert LeVine (2011) puts forth a cohort-based model of social change. Following Norman Ryder (1965) who built on Karl Mannheim’s (1972[1952]) notion of “fresh contact,” LeVine recognizes that social and cultural changes occur through the actions of *individuals* (see LeVine 2011:427). To better understand adolescents as protagonists of historical transformations, Levine supports the idea of analyzing “social change by cohorts” (2011:427). Again, the social and the adolescent are mutually-constituting (see also Marzullo and Herdt 2011 on LGBTQ youth and public perceptions of marriage equity and adoption). Using LeVine’s model, I envision tradition as a map of accepted guidelines and values. Cohorts of elders have their own accepted routes to arrive at particular cultural practices; cohorts of adolescents share their own shortcuts and paths of travel, “freshly” interpreting the itineraries of their forebears. Routes of adolescents may coincide with or diverge from those of their elders. Within cohorts, individuals may travel the map slightly differently—some may have quicker paces than others. As LeVine concludes, “viewing culture as cohort-specific brings the culture concept closer to the point at which it informs action, with a focus on how adolescents during their personal transitions may contribute to change the received traditions of their societies” (2011:427). Over time, through repeated detours off the roads traveled by their elders, cohorts of adolescents can re-route the map of cultural tradition and value (see LeVine 2011:429 for an example).

Recent anthropological scholarship has moved toward greater recognition of young people as agents. Ann Miles’ (2000) examination of the disjunctures among aspirations, structural limitations, and potential for achievement among poor adolescent girls in Cuenca, Ecuador, is an excellent example. Among the issues remaining to be developed is the question of how adolescence itself, as an identity and life phase, is enacted, constructed, and cobbled together by young people along with their peers, families, elders, and communities (see Bucholtz 2002:536-537). This has been a focus of much of the recent anthropology of youth.

Looming over the field of adolescence research is a question of which researchers must be aware: To what extent is adolescence a homogenizing Western imposition, if it is one at all? Is there a globalized, medicalized, institutionalized, and/or mediatized version of adolescence as a biosocial phenomenon that is more or less similarly approximated around the globe? An abundance of anthropological research shows that people in developing countries strategically interpret and resist commoditized images and orientations and reshape these to fit their own cultural and personal identities and social situations. Adolescence research walks a tightrope between overgeneralizing and overlocalizing.

### **Youthful Imaginings and Imaginings of Youth: “Dual”-ing Thematic Orientations in Research of Young People**

Though not all anthropologists of youth are, like Bucholtz (2002), arguing for a conceptual shift from adolescence to youth, the heart of their analyses is by and large the same. Contemporary anthropology’s youth is agentic, and researchers are interested in

“the entirety of youth cultural practice, ...how identities emerge in new cultural formations that creatively combine elements of global capitalism, transnationalism, and local culture” (Bucholtz 2002:525, abstract; for an outstanding example, see Amit-Talai and Wulff et al. 1995). The two terms, adolescence and youth, have somewhat different meanings and entail somewhat different investigative and theoretical approaches.

For Bucholtz, the question is, “What are the consequences of large-scale social and cultural transformations that disproportionately affect the lives of young people?” (2002:529). How do we examine young people as the principal protagonists in these transformations? At the root of these questions is a concern with what people are up to, up against, and how they change their social and cultural contexts. The varied approaches to studying young people in current scholarship often coalesce around “dual”-ing thematic orientations.

### ***(Dis)Continuity: Traditional Versus Modern, Old Versus Young***

The focus of many who ponder adolescence and global youth culture in a changing, shrinking world is often the attraction of “out with the old and in with the new.” Margaret Mead’s *New Lives for Old: Cultural Transformation* (1956) is emblematic. Mead considered the abandonment of tradition among the Manus of New Guinea within one generation after U.S. American soldiers in the Second World War introduced them to novel commodities and practices. Her interpretations described the benefit to society of leaving behind old ways as quickly as possible, rather than experiencing the uncertainties of cultural flux.

Mead wrote nearly a half century ago, but the topic of young people—especially native young people tempted away from “tradition”—quickly snatching up new things and abandoning outmoded ways of being continues to be of scholarly interest (Schlegel 2000). This could mean small shifts like a North American teen shelving trendy clothing from last season to more fashion-forward looks; or it could mean more significant shifts like a generation of young women attending secondary school for the first time. As with Mead, sometimes these shifts are seen as impositions of the West: hip-hop music, immodest clothing, romantic love, and eating disorders have all been discussed as Western exports emanating from the distribution of Western television shows, films, and so on. Others talk about how social change starts from within, grounded in the contexts in which young people live and learn. As Bucholtz so fittingly puts it, “...many of the resources of present-day *bricoleurs* are in a certain sense self-appropriations—borrowings and adaptations of one’s own cultural background to create new youth styles” (2002:542).

As Lisa Crockett and Rainer Silbereisen write, “Social change on one or more dimensions must be documented, the complex processes through which social change may affect adolescents must be identified, and the hypothesized causal processes must be linked empirically to adolescent outcomes” (2000:1). The work of Crockett, Silbereisen, and other contributors to their volume provides solid insight into understanding the processes of social change that young people are experiencing. Social change *does* have powerful effects on adolescent biological, psychological, behavioral, and identity development. And adolescents everywhere are looking and acting more the same (Schlegel 2000:71). However, scholars must also recognize young people as negotiators and creators of such conditions, rather than just homogenized or victimized by them.

While anthropologists are always careful to no longer approach studying change from a “salvage” perspective, and they are wary of writing about young people as slaves to novelty, a certainty remains: change happens.

Or does it? Following in the footsteps of many of the early researchers of young people reviewed above (e.g., Hollos and Leis 1989), youth studies have begun to theorize cultural *continuation* along with transformation. This is part of a general trend within the social sciences to examine modernity’s fabric as comprised of both traditional threads and threads of change knitted into complex and shifting patterns. Edward Fischer’s ethnography of Kaqchikel Maya examines “cultural stickiness” (2001:8) through his concept of cultural logics. Fischer’s practice-based cultural logics encapsulate “how [both idiosyncratic and cultural] webs of meaning are woven between structural elements supplied by the material and social environment” (2001:8). Like nesting dolls of continuity and change, individuals receive cultural logics but also creatively interpret them within the bounds of material, cultural, and structural influences (Fischer 2001:16). Change may come, but it gets woven within preexisting webs of individual and cultural meaning.

Fischer’s emphasis on the continuing influence of cultural logics has come to inform much current scholarship in the anthropology of youth. Building on Patricia Greenfield’s (2009) theory of social change and human development, Adriana Manago and Patricia Greenfield (2011) stress the importance of identifying the ways in which “modern” values and “traditional” values may “blend” for more community-centered individuals during times of modernization (rather than the former replacing the latter). To demonstrate these ideas, Manago and Greenfield recount the life histories of four Maya women in Chiapas, Mexico. For example, one of the women, Petu’, while individually goal-oriented for reasons of self-advancement, retains her collectivist tendencies: “personal self-worth leads to a valuing of one’s family” (Manago and Greenfield 2011:12). However, her collectivist framework has morphed from her childhood days. Valuation of oneself and one’s family comes from “a mutual sense of respect based on individualistic values for equality, rather than a concept of respect based on a more collectivistic concept of subordination to more powerful elders” (Manago and Greenfield 2011:12).

Migration is a prime force for discontinuity—“rupture” (Coe, et al. 2011)—in the most literal sense. People, families, and communities are separated by geographical distance; cultural beliefs and social values are stretched. Examining children and youth within the context of migration, Cati Coe, et al. explain that, though migration is most often analyzed in terms of discontinuity, rupture “occurs alongside the mundane” (2011:1). Much continues as before: “disjunctures and breaks” on the one hand, and “the consistency that accompanies everyday life” on the other (Coe, et al. 2011:1). Julia Hess’ examination of Tibetan youth hip-hoppers in the United States, many often three generations removed from their families’ homeland, demonstrates that “rupture...affords opportunities to express long-held beliefs and attitudes in new forms that are readily understood in new contexts” (2011:42). Young Tibetan rappers are part of (often) politically-conscious global hip-hop culture and, at the same time, reflect their and their families’ particular struggles as immigrants to the United States (Hess 2011:51). When Tibetan teenagers rap about the distress of low-paid wage work or the politics of Tibetan-Chinese relations, their messages are seen by the older generation as “right”—any qualms

about the medium of the message are irrelevant (Hess 2011:42). Similarly, just as they contributed to household chores when they were children, so the Tlalcuapeño son and daughter migrants to California in Roger Magazine and Martha Ramirez Sanchez's study contribute remittances to their parents in Mexico. By continuing to support their parents and younger siblings from a distance, their financial aid nurtures processes of social reproduction rooted in the value of interdependence that has been cultivated in them since they were toddlers (Magazine and Ramirez Sanchez 2007:53). Whereas previously they might have as children fed the chickens or as teens worked as domestic servants, Tlalcuapeño migrants to the United States working in the service sector recall the nourishment of their parents in the form of food and education and repay that nourishment from afar (Magazine and Ramirez Sanchez 2007:53).

Migration and the pressures of engagement with industrial economies create the potential for generational rupture, but this is not a given. Working among Wolof men in rural Senegal, Donna Perry (2009) is critical of the youth-elder/modern-traditional dichotomies that often dominate African studies, especially themes of the urban youth crisis and criminality popularized by scholars and news reporters alike. Scholars hasty to write resistance fetishize the delinquency of youth who are supposedly quick to defy authority (Perry 2009:58). Perry demonstrates that among rural youth, displays of nonconformity and resistance to their elders are exceptions to the rule, because economic conditions keep them tied to their farms out of necessity (2009:56). Fathers find severe ways to punish insubordinate sons very visibly through harsh corporeal punishment carried out by local gendarme. Perry's study defies binary stereotypes of youth as "rebels" and elders as "benign" (2009:34). While Wolof elders feel forced to use "the coercive power of the modern state to enact novel forms of violence that could potentially rend the family" (Perry 2009:34), rural Wolof youths tend to maintain the moral and productive economy of the household.

Schooling's repercussions for the (dis)continuities of social life, especially possible generational ruptures, has been a major topic in recent youth scholarship. Amy Stambach's (2000) insightful ethnography of the indigenous Chagga in East Africa explored the interplay between long-standing Chagga principles and the modern African schooling system. She found that schooling's impact on young Chagga men and women, while significant, is not "totalizing" (Stambach 2000:160). Stambach emphasizes "the kind of gendered and generational transformations associated with schools emerge through a dialectical interrelation of school practices with local culture" (2000:167). One especially powerful example she gives is the symbolic relationship between the *kihamba* (banana grove) and education:

At one level, banana groves and schools symbolize different levels of sociality: *kihamba* land signifies tradition and custom; schooling signifies modernity and the commercial economy. Both the school and the banana grove provide an inheritance, though they orient people to what many perceive to be asymmetrical social systems—the former toward urban centers and international markets, the latter toward a system of affective relations in which social rank is predicated on agnatic hierarchy. [Stambach 2000:38]

With an acute ethnographer's sensibility, Stambach shows that schooling has the

potential to alter Chagga perspectives, but fundamental transformation is not inevitable. The Chagga see school policies and practices through tradition-tinted lenses (Stambach 2000:46). The messages of various sites of “education” (Stambach 2000:166) like the classroom and the banana grove—and the knowledge and practices associated with them—are cobbled together in assorted ways by Chagga youth, yielding variegated life paths.

Mariell Espinoza-Herald (2007) discusses the encouragement enfolded in the *dichos* (sayings, Sp.) of Latina mothers. These folk oral traditions have taken on new meaning as inspirations offered by working-class mothers to their daughters who are getting an education. These traditional motivators “continue to create constructive paths and structures to meet new and changing challenges and environments” (Espinoza-Herald 2007:274).

An example from my own fieldwork illustrates such dynamic interactions between continuity and transformation. Kichwa mothers in the Ecuadorian Amazon, buying into a very specific, image-based idea of what it means to be modern, will harvest cacao (beans from which chocolate is made) or manioc to pay for the debutante dresses for their daughters’ regional or high school beauty queen competitions. Thus, more “traditional” logics of production (farming) facilitate modern logics of production (producing an identity as an educated, poised beauty queen). Conversely, Kichwa youth integrate long-standing Kichwa principles like sociality into their new experiences. For instance, individual pursuits like getting a high school education are often viewed as having a family or community benefit.

The challenge of the current anthropology of youth has been to take situations in which change seems the inevitable end result—like migration and the harsh realities of wage work—and look more closely at how individuals actually experience and respond to these processes. One strategy has been to look inward, toward social organization and intergenerational relationships. In relation to young people, transactions between adjacent age categories, and the indeterminacy of boundaries of age categories, may be major factors. Jennifer Cole, Deborah Durham, and colleagues call this taking “age itself as an analytic” (2007:14), which is “to understand age as essentially relational, and fundamentally tied to processes of social reproduction” (2007:14). They term their practice-based approach “regeneration” (Cole, et al. 2007:17), a term that encompasses “the mutually constitutive interplay between intergenerational relations and wider historical and social processes” (2007:17). Regeneration, they write, builds on Mannheim’s (1972[1952]) concept of “fresh contact,” or the ability of cohorts of young people, armed with their accumulated experience, to bring a “novel perspective” (Cole and Durham 2007:18) to “traditional” understandings, discourse, and practices of their communities. With these “fresh” interpretations, young people facilitate social change. Regeneration accounts for how intergenerational relations necessarily imbricate with young people’s new experiences and decision-making (Cole and Durham 2007:18). The anthropology of youth, especially of indigenous youth, must continue to theorize mutually-constitutive change and continuity. On one hand, we should avoid over-emphasis on rapid abandonment of indigenous tradition (e.g., Mead 1956). At the other extreme, over-emphasis on “tradition” at the expense of change ignores young people’s agency and global involvement.

### ***No Child Left Behind?: When Social Bonds are Not Enough or Not an Option***

What happens when the integration of subjectivity, sociality, and modernity are not seamless? When the pressures and tensions are so burdensome that social ties fail instead of flourish? Jocelyn Marrow investigates cases of “clenched teeth” illness among non-elite, middle class, northeastern Indian young women as a psychosomatic manifestation of stress surrounding academic achievement. In what Marrow terms the “triple pain of childhood” (2013:351), young, non-elite girls are subjected to three types of assault: “pedagogical violence” through harsh expectations surrounding rote memorization; the hard realities of a work force unable and sometimes unwilling to accept them; and public scorn for attempting to realize their educational and occupational aspirations. On top of this, mothers and daughters clash over young women’s changing aspirations. Mothers want their daughters to succeed, but fear “their safety in a public sphere that would reject them” (Marrow 2013:358). These tensions come to a head in young Indian girls’ frenzied, dizzied, “clenched” bodies.

Working with Canadian Inuit youth in Nunavut, Michael Kral (2013) explores the dissolution of social bonds both between the generations and within broken romantic love relationships that, in contexts of severe postcolonial stress and historical trauma, sometimes lead to young male suicides. Without the solid embrace of the family social network that historically has been integral to Inuit wellbeing, Inuit young men are unable to handle the “emotional intensity” of the “romantic individualism” advertised on television as a key feature of the southern values penetrating their communities (Kral 2013:70-71).

Homeless youth have been a special focus of recent scholarship. Gonzalo Saraví and Sara Makowski examine the production of what they term “perforated subjectivities” among street youth in Mexico City, Mexico and Buenos Aires, Argentina. Perforated subjectivities are characterized by street children’s “incorporating and reproducing social isolation” (Saraví and Makowski 2011:331). Young people on the street can no longer imagine themselves as part of the body social. When fully incorporated members of the body social fear and avoid them or the spaces they normally occupy, street children literally become socially excluded no-bodies. Similarly, among the Honduran youths of Jon Wolseth’s research, horrific street violence victimizes their peers, and limited job opportunities cripple their productivity at home (2008:327). Leaving their family and friends to migrate to the United States for work is perhaps the only viable money-making option to save them from both “physical and social death” (Wolseth 2008:311). As a way of dealing with such social suffering (Wolseth 2008:314), these troubled young men literally wander the streets of Honduras and tell stories about transnational migration (Wolseth 2008:315). Like the street youth of Saraví and Makowski’s study, working-class Honduran youth, unable to grieve and with limited options to break the cycle of loss, are stuck in spaces of social liminality (Wolseth 2008:314, 332). Excluded young people embody—at times in the most visceral of ways, through suicide and homicide—their experiences of stress, isolation, and abandonment.

### ***(Non)Production: Passively Consuming Media Versus Making Something of Themselves***

Amazonian youths blast Katy Perry on stereo systems powered by generators in

their free time after school. *Wazee wazima* young men in East Africa show off their latest caps and jeans to other secondary school students (Stambach 2000:154). Urban Chinese adolescents fashion mock copies of Western clothing (Schlegel 2000). As young people around the world become increasingly interconnected through consuming pre-fabricated material goods, cultivating similar tastes, and desiring kindred kitsch, must we fear the banality of a homogenized adolescent culture overrunning the world with “intellectual and emotional ‘fast food’” (Schlegel 2000:86)? Is there room for creativity within mass-marketed “ephemeral enthusiasms of the young” (Schlegel 2000:86)?

This mass-mediated, brain-drain, junk food model of youth development can be juxtaposed with the burgeoning global emphasis on educating the world’s young people. As education initiatives sweep the globe, shifting young people’s primary involvements away from family-centered productive, often physical, activities toward work within the classroom, how do parents and youth understand young people’s new and changing roles and contributions?

To unpack the issues and questions outlined above, I review recent work in youth studies that highlights the multi-dimensional nature of production. Within the “dual”-ing thread of production (producing something socially valuable) versus non-production (not contributing productively to the social group) are other “dual”-ing threads: production versus consumption and individual versus social motivations. Each of these themes and tensions surrounding production are addressed throughout the chapters that follow.

Production can be understood in a literal sense: making something through physical labor. For generations of rural youth, productive activities have meant producing food or income for the family. Those who no longer engage in such activities might be viewed as non-productive (i.e., feeding off of others). Alternatively, non-productive individuals may be perceived as purely consumptive (i.e., purchasing to fulfill their needs). Such language is particularly popular in mass media and modernity studies.

Anthropologists tend toward more nuanced views, considering productive activities in light of what motivates them. For many indigenous Amazonians, for instance, practices like farming, hunting, or food-sharing serve to further enmesh the individual within webs of social relations while strengthening the body social as a whole (e.g., McCallum 2001). Extending this perspective to studies of youth may highlight how individual and social motivations may be complementary (not contradictory) for youth making their place in today’s world. In other words, the form of productive practices may change while their function remains the same. To understand production, I propose, is to get a sense of generational conflict *and consensus* surrounding young people’s activities.

Here, I focus on the embodied capital in modes of production, specifically the hard, physical labor involved in the maintenance of farms and family. Troubling the “dual”-ing thread of production versus non-production, I examine youth scholarship in which the meaning of production may be altered to incorporate identity-building activities that develop new body and self-images, like getting an education and experimenting with fashion and mass media consumption. “Productive” activities—from clearing fields to consuming the latest hip-hop album—are equally identity-defining and bodily-based. These are the key ideas of the concept of the bodily logics of production.



### *Production and Consumption: One and the Same?*

Until very recently, with the introduction of school to the majority of the world's young people, production has meant hard physical labor for youngsters, their families, and their communities. As part of a larger piece on the "logic of 'development'" (Worthman 2011:433) guiding many policy decisions with respect to young people, Carol Worthman (2011) examines the ways in which the purpose of young people may be reevaluated by parents and grandparents during times of rapid social change and increasing global interconnection. Though she does not talk specifically about production, her discussion of embodied capital ("skills and capacities," 2011:442) versus social capital ("status, relationships, competence," 2011:442) hits at the heart of changing notions of what constitutes young people's productive social roles. Following John Caldwell (2006), she explains that within dynamic social and cultural contexts, the balance of power between embodied capital and social capital may shift. For instance, among hunter-gatherers, survival skills are both embodied capital and social capital, because the survival skill set is "locally acquired through kin and residential groups, and becomes embodied in the course of physical, cognitive-emotional, and behavioral development" (Worthman 2011:443). With the introduction of schooling, however, new types of embodied capital are favored by students and are typically obtained individually, not through social relationships with kin (although some, like Stambach 2000, have observed otherwise). Additionally, claims Worthman, older forms of embodied capital become devalued.

Schooling and other institutionalized agents of socio-cultural change can fundamentally alter what kinds of embodied capital are desired by both individuals and their social groups. Yet, as the literature reviewed below suggests, embodied capital generated through schooling does not always disrupt "traditional" embodied capital. Instead, it may complement traditional skill sets and principles.

Holly Wardlow (2002), in her ethnographic sketch of the uncertain relationship between work and value among Huli of Papua New Guinea, describes a female friend who buried Cheese-Pops in her home garden for her young daughter to dig up while she harvested sweet potatoes. Her friend was

...worried that her daughter would come to believe that packaged foods and other desirable goods just appeared and had no relationship to productive activity. She wanted her daughter to learn that human desire must always be connected to purposeful human labor. [Wardlow 2002:157]

Wardlow argues that the "planting" (2002:157) of commodities is her Melanesian friend's creative way to reassert the connection between work and value; in other words, the "planting" is a response "to the devaluation of embodied and socially embedded labor in the context of increasingly commoditized social relations" (Wardlow 2002:145). Processed food for consumption is combined with local practices of social reproduction to generate new forms of identity production consistent between generations of Huli women.

This anecdote encapsulates the emphasis on the creativity of indigenous peoples' engagements with consumer commodities that has become a major stream in recent

anthropological scholarship. Durham (2004:591) warns against over-emphasis on “playfulness” in accounts of a consumerism that is inevitably tied to the Western concept of adolescence. However, Wardlow’s (2002) conscientious ethnography transcends such criticisms.

As the link between physical work and identity has become increasingly tenuous for young people, they are seeking new avenues for identity production, primarily through consuming items that can be purchased. Some scholars contend that these new avenues—like television-watching, experiments with fashion, and so on—are not “a style of life” (Schlegel 2000:72); they do little to “build bonds of understanding and cooperation” (Schlegel 2000:86). While this is a sentiment with which many the world round would agree, especially many parents and grandparents, it is imperative to consider the ways in which such things can be consumed strategically and critically to produce social relationships and individual identities.

Consumption and production are two sides of the same coin trying to gain purchase on young people’s identity. Anoop Nayak and Mary Jane Kehily (2008:127) discuss the changing meanings of the word “consumption” throughout history. In the nineteenth century, during rapid industrialization in the West, “consumption came to be understood as the opposite of production—the end point in a process which involved turning raw materials into products to be marketed and sold” (Nayak and Kehily 2008:127). The meaning of the word has shifted slightly today to the “purchase and use” of mass-produced goods (Nayak and Kehily 2008:127).

Consumption is never entirely passive. Eating a bag of potato chips may seem inconsequential. But when a Latina puts lime and chili on them, the banalities of consumption become the stuff of identity production (Camarota 2008). As Tim O’Sullivan, et al. (1994:244) state, “the consumption of messages...is simultaneously an act of production of meanings” (Nayak and Kehily 2008:127). Following Daniel Miller (1997), who highlights the sociality inherent in consumption, Nayak and Kehily explore how “social relationships engaged in practices of consumption make subject positions available to young people” (2008:127-128). Through consumption of popular culture—like engaging in what Barker (1998) calls “soap talk” (Nayak and Kehily 2008:147) while watching daytime melodramas—young people find a space to perform and make new identities and navigate the constraints of gender, class, and race constructions (Nayak and Kehily 2008:156). I would add that such activities reinforce expectations surrounding the enactment of being young.

Just as “traditional” modes of production and agency are embodied, so too are modern youth engagements with identity production through various forms of consumption. “Modern” bodies are disciplined and identities are born through things like soap operas, classroom discussion, and cultural stereotypes.

A major question at the heart of the foregoing analysis is to what extent adolescence or youth as a Western export may be homogenizing, especially with young people as primary targets of consumer advertising and products. There are two poles of this debate: those who stress the potency of Western influences and those who stress the creativity of young consumers. The former often speak in terms of adolescent culture, or “the sum of the ways that adolescents behave; it refers to the body of norms, values, attitudes, and practices shared by members of the adolescent society” (Dolgin 2011:405). “Youth culture” is another popular phrase. Researchers who, on the other hand, highlight

consumer creativity point out that talking about adolescence as homogenizing does its own part to homogenize the experiences of a diversity of young people.

Western images, ideas, and ideals have very real effects. But the notion that we need to discover how adolescence manifests similarly everywhere—to distill some universal adolescent experience—cannot be the whole story. A harder and vital question has to do with what is happening on thresholds where the gears of modernity are interlocking with the cogs of existent structures in indigenous communities like Sacha Loma, among gay youths in a rural Kentucky town (Gray 2009), or on the street corners in bustling cities like Dar es Salaam (Moyer 2004), to name a few. *Universal may mean everywhere, but it does not have to mean everywhere the same.*

### ***New Forms of Identity Production: Schooling as a Form of Non-Farm Cultivation***

As elaborated in the discussion of youth and schooling above, education is a project that parents often view as desirable for their children, whereas this may not so easily be the case with television-watching or fashion experiments. Part of the reason for schooling's wide acceptance is the ease with which the older generations can envision the utility of its supposed final product: school prepares educated youngsters to enter the global economy. The situation is especially complex for indigenous parents for whom educating their kids often means walking a tightrope between "cultural heritage" and "hegemonic culture" (Espinosa 2012:452), though the two are not mutually exclusive. A link between the two, I argue, is the multiply-inflected nature of "production," as parents and grandparents accept gradually new and different "productive" endeavors of young people.

Oscar Espinosa (2012) details beautifully the intersection of young indigenous Peruvian Shipibo's new productive activities like schooling with long-standing principles of sociality, or the exchange of material and immaterial goods that concurrently builds individual identities and social bonds. This mixture breeds generational conflicts but does not rule out consensus. On one hand, Shipibo elders view education as crucial for Shipibo youngsters to be able to avoid back-breaking physical labor and at the same time "protect themselves, their lands, and their culture" (Espinosa 2012:455). On the other hand, elders are "shocked" and dismayed when they realize that Shipibo traditions like their stories and native language are losing traction among their children and grandchildren (Espinosa 2012:455). What Espinosa demonstrates masterfully is that Shipibo principles of sociality that make a person *jakon joni* (a good person) are still alive and well among the younger generation who are actively involved in school and youth associations. To be *jakon joni*, a Shipibo person must be generous with others, especially his/her children, but also relatives and neighbors (Espinosa 2012:458). Through education, young Shipibo cultivate the skills that will enable them to provide for their families in the future. While Espinosa does not describe Shipibo educational pursuits in terms of production, schooling's place among the repertoire of acceptable productive engagements is clear:

It is not enough to provide food by fishing, hunting, or cultivating staple foods. As responsible future parents they need to attend school in order to be able to raise their own children properly. Schooling will also provide the skills to obtain money to buy things for their families. [Espinosa 2012:466]

Furthermore, to be *jakon joni* involves being *shinan jakon joni*, or thinking critically (Espinosa 2012:467). Critical thinking skills are developed inside the classroom, but perhaps even more so within the many Shipibo youth organizations through which youth “deal collectively with pressing social and individual issues” that go hand-in-hand with the pressures of modernity (Espinosa 2012:467). In the case of schooling, one can identify individual motivations for success driven by Western values of independence. What Espinosa’s Shipibo case study shows is that schooling and youth organizations play an integral role in socially reproductive processes based in Shipibo values of interdependence.

Schooling itself, however, can send conflicting messages about what sorts of images and identities young people should be producing and emulating. Stambach (2000) describes the dual-ing images that home economics classes proffer young Chagga women on Mount Kilimanjaro. On one hand, in line with the achievement mentality that is the foundation of the educational enterprise, young educated Chagga women believe they have the potential for self-advancement. They are modern, “big sisters of the city,” a message reinforced by the dress-making and textiles unit of the home economics curriculum, which feeds the notion that the well-dressed body is the modern and educated body (Stambach 2000:56). According to some Chagga elders, female graduates were “urban-oriented, fashion-conscious, and impatient with the ways of their mothers” (Stambach 2000:62). On the other hand, the infant care lessons of the home economics curriculum send the message that a woman’s place is in the home, opposing the category of “women of the house” to that of “big sisters of the city” (Stambach 2000:60). Education is often considered at odds—by instructors and the instructed alike—with “traditional” modes of being, with education seen as a positive force for moving forward, and tradition as a weight dragging people backward. Espinosa (2012:455) cites one elder Shipibo woman’s explanation that she wants education for her kids in order to “civilize” them. For many, schooling provides a venue through which non-majority culture students can obtain what Jerry Dávila (2003:27) terms a highly desirable “diploma of whiteness” (Roth-Gordon 2013:298).

### ***Bars of Soap, Soap Operas and Soapbox Hip-Hopping—Mass Media, Modernity’s Accessories, and the Production of Identities***

What do bar soap, soap operas, and hip-hop artists on a political mission have in common? They are all products for consumption available to modernity’s youth for their identity-cobbling pursuits. Consumption never entails only consumption for consumption’s sake—production is always involved simultaneously. Jennifer Roth-Gordon (2013) shows how this works in the context of racial malleability in Brazil in her analysis of the black youth rap scene. Brazilian hip-hop artists openly reject “whiteness” and practices associated with *boa aparência* (“good appearance,” Port.) (Roth-Gordon 2013:298). Preferring to be *manos* (black brothers) and eschewing the *playboys* (rich white male youth) and the black youth who “sell out” to be like them, rappers produce identities of blackness through bodily and consumptive practices (Roth-Gordon 2013:304): braided or kinky, not straight, hair; hip hop, not rock and roll; baggy clothing and caps with Yankees logos, not expensive *playboy* dress for “white” clubs (Roth-Gordon 2013:302-303). Roth-Gordon validates that consumptive practices are not

frivolous. They alter people's sense of self. They change how bodies look and act; and sometimes this transformation is both desired and permanent (Roth-Gordon 2013:299-300, following Weinbaum, et al. 2008:18).

While Roth-Gordon's Brazilian hip-hop case study demonstrates how consumptive practices may affirm or even heighten one's evolving identity, more often scholars have emphasized how the possibilities of consumption direct people toward other lifestyles or appearances. Television is a primary medium. Just as the introduction of soap was nineteenth and twentieth century colonizers' attempt to physically clean and metaphorically whiten non-white bodies (Roth-Gordon 2013:298-299), so television programs like soap operas encourage ways of looking, behaving, and consuming "white." Erynn Masi de Casanova (2004) details the increasing standardization of beauty—which often includes a preference for white skin—among young women in Ecuador due to their overwhelming consumption of, among other things, foreign media. Shows like Colombian-produced *telenovela* "Yo Soy Betty, la Fea" (I Am Ugly Betty) are consistent with national race rhetoric, which foregrounds "whiteness and its characteristics: light skin; delicate features; straight/wavy, light-colored hair; and light eyes" (Masi de Casanova 2004:291). These are features that, like the Brazilian *boa aparência* mentioned above, have real implications for young women's life outcomes (e.g., job prospects) (Masi de Casanova 2004:298). The young women of Masi de Casanova's study emphasize these ideals; however, within the supportive folds of their peer groups they also are able to have a more positive and flexible view of "real-life women" who they understand as not being able to reasonably achieve these standards (Masi de Casanova 2004:301-302). The impossibility of these ideals inspires a slightly different reaction in the poor adolescent girls in Cuenca, Ecuador described in Ann Miles' (2000) study. These young women struggle with tensions between the hopes advertised by glamorous European-looking women of television and the freedoms they enjoy, and their lived reality of no *palanca* (networking available to well-connected people), gender discrimination, and a "real longing for social transformation" (Miles 2000:18). Recognizing the emptiness of state-sponsored education's promises (see also Marrow 2013:352), these girls choose to wear sexy clothing and make-up as a visual protest against those who discriminate against them (Miles 2000:18). Their choices are a stark contrast to those of their mothers, who often worked within the system that oppressed them—donning modest clothing, for instance—to provide better opportunities for their daughters (Miles 2000:18).

Patterns of consumption, neither benign nor banal, are strategies with which young people creatively negotiate and find their place within modernity. Few researchers have done a more meticulous, ear-to-the-ground analysis of the complexities faced by modernizing youth than Mark Liechty (1995) in his research among Nepalese youth in Kathmandu. His three-pronged definition of modernity focuses on how state modernism (ideologies of progress) and consumer modernity (identities for purchase through manufactured goods) intersect in the experience of modernity as the lived reticulation of "old and new patterns of social organization and opportunities on the one hand, and the realities of limited resources and unequal power on the other" (Liechty 1995:169). Modern youth in Nepal receive an education in two senses. In addition to formal schooling, mass media is a pervasive educative influence. Yet, in contrast to Schlegel (2000), Liechty explains that while youth culture may be highly expressive—their

yearnings magnified by the mediatized “imaginative resources” that “deterritorialize” (Appadurai 1991:196) their local experiences (Liechty 1995:188)—the deception of modernity is no less real for young people who want to buy into these images, but often come up broke (see Liechty 1995:188 and 194). Similarly, Suzanne Scheld (2007) uncovers the creative ways through which young people in Dakar, Senegal buy into media images with no money. Young people in contexts of extreme poverty in Dakar actively maintain social ties through “committing and tolerating” (Scheld 2007:236) acts of dishonesty centered on the consumption of stylish clothing. The modernity of Dakar’s youth and Dakar itself hinges upon elaborate exchange, theft, and display of clothing, which is a defining feature of “youth cosmopolitanism” there (Scheld 2007:236).

By way of transitioning into the final “dual”-ing theme—liminality versus completeness—I turn to Amy Stambach’s (2000) wide-reaching analysis of Chagga youth experience. *Wazee wazima*, literally wise old men, is a term Chagga young people use to distinguish themselves from their un-hip elders, to highlight their having health (*wazima*), and to emphasize their place as “masters of their own ways” (Stambach 2000:154), especially as they “consume the commodities that they associate with education and modernity” (Stambach 2000:155). *Wazima*’s singular form, *mzima*, has a second meaning—completeness. In light of young people’s associations with being in-process, this terminology is striking. Stambach explains:

Applied to *wazee wazima*, who position themselves as the most successful and fit products of the school experience, the ideal state of personhood is reflected in their personal control of cassettes, clothes, videos, and the like. Their ability to consume luxury items in general is an expression of their full social integrity. [Stambach 2000:156]

Stambach’s insight demonstrates the power of an analytic approach that examines young people on their own terms while at the same time acknowledging their being in-transition. Agency co-exists with community and global involvement and personal growth.

### **Liminality, In-Betweenness, Becoming**

A final “dual”-ing thread within youth studies has been a tendency to tack back and forth between considering young people as liminal or not. Liminality, Agnes Horvath et al. write,

...refers to in-between situations and conditions that are characterized by the dislocation of established structures, the reversal of hierarchies, and uncertainty regarding the continuity of tradition and future outcomes. The central idea is that such liminal conditions of uncertainty, fluidity, and malleability are situations to be studied on their own right where lived experience transforms human beings cognitively, emotionally, and morally, and therefore significantly contributes to the transmission of ideas and to the formation of structures. [Horvath, et al. 2009:3]

This definition, of course, is based on the work of anthropologist Victor Turner (1969, after Arnold Van Gennep 1960) who detailed his theory of ritual process through

exploring Ndembu puberty rituals. For Turner, liminal individuals are outside of established social structure in a position of “anti-structure,” where new opportunities for creativity, perhaps challenging or dangerous, occur in the interstices of the social order. However, Turner’s model emphasizes that ultimately, once the transitional phase passes, people re-incorporate and reaffirm the existing social order, thereby quashing any significant upending of social norms.

It is plain to see how adolescence might be construed as an especially liminal time. Sociology and psychology long have emphasized the transitional nature of adolescence, the former in terms of socialization into (or resistance of) adult roles (e.g., British Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in the 1970s) and the latter in terms of personality and identity development (e.g., G. Stanley Hall 1904 and Erik Erikson 1968). Anthropologists, Turner prominent among them, have thoroughly examined the rituals and liminality of youth cross-culturally. Critics of viewing adolescents as merely on the journey to adulthood— that is, adolescents as “newly arrived players, standing in the wings of the adult stage” (Schlegel 1995a:11)— see danger in this focus. Virginia Caputo warns that children are often depicted as “partly cultural”: “Their contemporaneity with adult cultures is dismissed as well, along with the ‘present’ of their life experiences” (1995:29). Seeing adolescents as wholly transitional ignores the important role of young people as “not solely cultural reproducers in the midst of becoming, but producers of culture in themselves” (Coe, et al. 2011:11).

While some scholars today interrogate liminality directly, others highlight a more general “in-betweenness” or “becoming” experienced by young people. “In-betweenness” foregrounds issues such as the role of present realities versus future hopes, childhood versus adulthood. “Becoming” emphasizes the formative dimension of young people’s lives. Both terms can point to the creativity with which young people thrive, sometimes of necessity, in transitional contexts. An infant with his hand stuck in a jar of sticky honey ponders “the formal properties of solids and liquids and the essential relation between the subjective experiencing self and the experienced world” (Douglas 2002 [1966]:39 on Jean Paul Sartre). Like the ambiguities of the cultural stickiness highlighted by both Fischer (2001) and Douglas (2002[1966]:38-39), so too Turner’s (1969) liminality and current analytic notions of in-betweenness and becoming may not be merely limiting, but also empowering.

### *Creativity in Transition*

Opposing characterizations of adolescence can often be boiled down to being versus becoming. Worthman outlines the issues at hand:

On the one side, the content and experience of this life stage can be taken phenomenologically as lived personal history; on the other, it can be construed in terms of the adult outcomes to which it leads. Adolescents are frequently seen as not quite being “themselves”; rather they are seen as being either in a special state or in transit to some ultimate maturational destination. [Worthman1998:28]

Do we examine young people as adults-in-training (becoming)? Or do we examine them on their own terms (being)? Bringing together these two arguments, I ask, can we think about becoming as always being and being as always, in some ways, becoming?

Recent ethnography offers provocative examples. For instance, queer identities undulate between being and becoming in Mary Gray's (2009) analysis of the identity work of rural homosexual youths in Kentucky and small towns along its borders with other mid-Southern states. By examining rural queer-youth identity as "performative, socially-mediated moments of being and becoming" (2009:21), Gray avoids implying that queerness could ever be a "stable state of being" while crediting their queerness as more than "just a phase" of becoming (2009:21). Queerness, for these youths, is the lived work of persons in-process "crafting, articulating, and pushing the boundaries of identities" (Gray 2009:21).

Becoming and being manifest in competing yet complimentary ways for various indigenous Amazonian peoples of South America. Personhood is a category continually constructed through processes of sociality (e.g., exchange of food, brew, bodily substances) in which "real" people are perpetually made (McCallum 2001). Michael Uzendoski (2005b) describes how Ecuadorian Kichwa children are considered "soft" in their early years, especially after birth, and are progressively "hardened" through social acts of older community members. Young indigenous Kichwa are essentially "becoming" and, through the actions of others, reach fuller states of "being." These and other scholars recognize that young people's in-betweenness is frequently the source of their adaptability.

The creativity of young people wrestling with their own ideas about becoming versus being—or caught between these two realities—has been a fertile topic of academic inquiry of late. Julio Cammarota (2008) elucidates the experience of second-generation Latina/o youths in El Pueblo, California. Like the child and youth immigrants from disparate global locations in Coe et al.'s (2011) edited volume, *El Pueblo Latina/os* sway between two worlds, endeavoring to realize the American dream—what they want to become—while not losing sight of their "Latina/o-ness"—who they are (Cammarota 2008:6). Again, putting chili and lime on potato chips might seem trivial. But such transformations, small or big, are examples of young Latina/os' "creative restructuring of human experience to fluidly link it with self-created identities" (Cammarota 2008:11). Cammarota calls this "cultural organizing" (2008:11).

Working with young men in Meerut, India, Craig Jeffrey (2010) makes vivid the experience of lower middle-class men who are unemployed and are therefore engaged in "timepass," a perpetual state of becoming. Yet as they are passing time—displaying unemployment at tea stalls, for instance (Jeffrey 2010:473)—young men are constructing "new masculinities" (even masculinities of pottering). These masculinities may—in some cases—bring together young men from diverse backgrounds, even crossing castes and religions (Jeffrey 2010:473-474). The tea stall is similar to the maskani—street corners, in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania—of which Eileen Moyer writes in her description of those who simultaneously "negotiate and challenge them" (2004:134). Following Michel de Certeau (1984), Moyer describes maskani as places of "rupture," places of sleep and work, of humiliation and humor, of danger and bread-winning, and, I would suggest, becoming and being. Young people in maskani use such "interstitial spaces" for their own economic purposes in a burgeoning informal economy while recognizing the "mechanisms of exclusion that keep them on the fringes" (Moyer 2004:119).

The Nepalese young people portrayed in Liechty's (1995) work face similar challenges. Liechty writes,



For youth in Kathmandu, life in the present is the experience of modernity. It is a life in the “in between” space: between expectations and reality; between past and future; between village and external, modern and metropole; between child- and adulthood; between high and low class; between education and meaningful employment. [Liechty 1995:191]

Occupying, in his informant’s words, “this nowhere place” (Liechty 1995:188), the new class of teenagers in Kathmandu are pinned “between the future as a distant foreign commodity, and the past as a commodity for distant foreigners”; between unpromising past poverty and impossibly imagined futures (Liechty 1995:189). Yet, facing these hard realities, young men in Kathmandu have developed a distinctive youth culture grounded in modernity’s expressive outlets and consumerism (Liechty 1995:192). For teenagers here, modernity means living the ever-widening gap between imagining what one can become and the reality of who one is (Liechty 1995:194). Like young Indian men engaged in “timepass” or the salesmen of maskani, Nepalese teenage boys hang out on street corners or in tea stalls displaying their youth, the good and the bad, for all to see (Liechty 1995:192). While no doubt a source of dysfunction and disappointment at times, their position in between becoming and being can serve as a source of autonomy and creative expression (Liechty 1995:193).

If liminality implies “in-betweenness,” then should there not be an “other side”? Does not transition suggest an end point? In their work with Navajo, Christopher Dole and Thomas Csordas (2003) reveal that liminality, to an extent, may not just be a feature of adolescence but may be a permanent state of being. Young Navajo are struggling with how to triangulate among their self-identity, Navajo tradition, and the pervasive “Anglo way” advertised in their communities. Challenging teleological understandings of adolescence and youth in which adults are completed, their identities established, the authors explain,

Rather than conceptualizing adolescence as a liminal stage within which identities solidify and crystallize, our discussion of Navajo youth is grounded in an understanding of adolescence as a period in which youth acquire the tools for a lifetime of ever-solidifying, but never crystallized, identity negotiation. As Navajo youth move out of adolescence, they do not emerge with a necessarily stable, unproblematic identity. Adolescence is not an end but a beginning. [Dole and Csordas 2003:358; Liechty (1995:167) makes similar warnings]

As many of the authors here reviewed suggest, out of the ruptures and grey areas of modernity emerge young people with the creative potential to navigate a modern landscape that is all-too-often pitted with disappointments and roadblocks. It is their agility and adaptability that engender perseverance through this difficult terrain.

### ***The Flexible and Fixed Features of Adolescence and Adolescents***

A final point to recognize is the tension between reification of adolescence-the-category as something to be defined (and/or standardized, applied, searched for, discovered) cross-culturally, and adolescence-the-category as indeterminate. This

indeterminacy appears in the scholarship I have reviewed: are young people change-makers, figuring the future, or cores of continuity? Are youth producing anything or just consuming everything? In what ways do young people worldwide confront similar pressures differently?

Scholars recently have highlighted the irresoluteness of youth. Cole, Durham and colleagues' (2007) concept of "regeneration" admits this, and Durham (2004) demonstrates the blurred nature of youth as a category. Based on work in Botswana, Durham asserts that youth is "culturally contingent" and "relational," defined in relation to other categories of being, including age and seniority (2004:592). Other categories might include marital status, occupation, educational attainment, or aspirational potential. Thus, Durham identifies youth as an endogamous category for some in Botswana that could include people well into their forties and fifties who "had yet to establish independent households" (2004:592). Definitions of youth, and youths themselves, are "social shifters" (Durham 2004) that change based on time, place, and context (see Bucholtz 2002 and Coe, et al. 2011).

Like youth, adolescence has the potential to be many things at once, not defined solely by preconceptions. At the same time, definitions of adolescence must be bounded in some ways. Adolescence, as I argue it here, encompasses most accurately the experiences of teenagers usually attending school, a category of preteens and teens that would exclude the experience of, for instance, forty- and fifty-year-old individuals. While it is essential that flexibility must be a feature of a category used to capture the teenage experience, it may be useful to describe more fixed elements of the category—elements that make it distinctive, have justified historically and cross-culturally the many socio-cultural practices marking its existence, and presently make it worth the sometimes dramatic changes that must happen for its cultivation.

### **Conclusion: Producing Adolescence**

Focusing on creativity in spaces of in-betweenness, this study acknowledges that processes of becoming are sometimes empowering. Becoming, in fact, is a state of being in which young people have their own knowledge, discourse, and practices. As a period of transition, the space of adolescence (typically involving school-age youngsters) affords young people the time to engage in processes of identity formation that are productive and embodied.

Anthropology today must treat adolescence not solely as something given or taken-for-granted; not bound by biology or psychology; not defined by exotic sexual practices or rebellious behavior; not as a pit stop on the way to adulthood—though elements of each of the foregoing ideas may be included in, and even facilitate, the experience of this category. Adolescents are full-fledged participants in modernity and its offerings; they are always changing; and they matter for their peers, other generations, communities, regions, nations, and the world. This focus on adolescents as actively constructing their identities recognizes that their perspectives are often a composite of long-standing principles and ideas—such as those of their parents and other elders—rather than an abandonment of the "traditional" in exchange for something entirely new, modern, and so on.

Adolescents in Sacha Loma are both in-formation and making change. In the chapters that follow, I examine how adolescence in this community is produced by young

people who live it and by elders who work hard to maintain it, especially through their bodies. A key finding of this study is that both adults and young people in Sacha Loma have embraced the new concept of adolescence as a marked life stage. I consider how the current experiences of young people are opposed to those of the grandmother generation and how youngsters and their families in the community make sense of the Western standard of adolescence that is implicit in formal schooling and the mass media. Laziness, secondary schooling, dependence upon adults, and space and time for growing up are all new developments in Sacha Loma. These developments mark young people as transitional in this community. *Transitional and marginal, however, are not synonyms.*

It is precisely the standard, often stereotypical, features of difference in adolescence—the fact that teens occupy a transitional state—that allow young people to act in ways that have significant effects in changing their own life outcomes and that of their families and community. Elders cultivate their youngsters through nourishing, clothing, educating, entertaining, and excusing the behavior of young, growing bodies, persons, and citizens. Adolescents, in turn, are charged with a range of new productive endeavors, which have their attendant bodily logics.

The choices that Kichwa teens make today are transforming the terrain that will cultivate the Kichwa youth of tomorrow.

## CHAPTER 3: GROWING UP KICHWA: THE ETHNOGRAPHIC TERRAIN IN WHICH ADOLESCENCE IS CULTIVATED

There are more classrooms, houses, Internet, and advanced education. There are fewer parties, which means fewer drunken people fighting. There are more TVs and more sports. Before it was really boring. What luck that I am living in this time!

--15-year-old Victor

It [education] is a total change of life. Because they are “prepared,” we can’t impede them. Studying transforms a person; young people feel proud, valued, and changed.

--49-year-old Dorotea

### A Local Expression of Adolescence

In this chapter, I examine the rise of adolescence as a social and cultural norm in Sacha Loma. Prominent among the immense changes of the last two decades in this primarily-indigenous community has been the recent emergence of a labeled, delineated, expected life phase carved out for young people. Although technology, travel, and tourism are influences, schooling, which has become the single most important daily engagement of young people here, is the primary impetus for this development. Sacha Loma was literally built around a school, and the education of Kichwa children and adolescents has become an aspiration of Kichwa, both young and old. As Dorotea states, young people’s new involvements like education literally transform them. The generation of parents and grandparents recognizes that these personal transformations—becoming “prepared” as she says—enable young people to carry out important transformations of their own, like getting desirable non-agricultural jobs and paving the way for other youngsters to do the same. Because of the newness of adolescence here, the category and those who occupy it are carefully cultivated, which requires a considerable amount of effort on the part of parents and grandparents. This is because a lot is riding on young people’s emergence from this life phase as educated, employed Ecuadorians.

This chapter takes as its starting point adolescence as a constructed category imbued with local meanings, not as a given or as a “Western” imposition. In Sacha Loma, Kichwa are grappling with the process of adolescentization in distinctly local ways. They were introduced to a model (the “Western” model) of adolescence and ideas about youth propagated by structures—a public school, a non-governmental organization (NGO), the health clinic, televised teenagers—in their community. But Sacha Lomans create their own brand of adolescence through how they re-imagine this category both consciously and unconsciously. Just as it is everywhere, adolescence above all is *lived* in Sacha Loma, not served up for uncritical consumption.

This local, lived adolescence is also deeply relational. Adolescence has been reformulated by Sacha Loma Kichwa as an intergenerational project in which older people support youngsters' efforts to *seguir adelante* (get ahead, Sp.). Young people, in turn, are expected to re-invest their education in their own family and community.

I begin by examining the terrain in which adolescence is cultivated by Kichwa adolescents, parents, and grandparents through elaborating the ethnographic setting of this research. After a summary of community history and geography, I explore the educational context for Sacha Lomans and changing gender norms, both of which have had profound impacts on the cultivation of adolescence-the-category and adolescents' lives. With the ethnographic groundwork laid, in the second half of the chapter, I move on to an intergenerational conversation about the shifting aspirations of Kichwa women, young and old. The fun-focused, free student (generally 10-19 years of age) who is single and childless and who has time to search for role models on television and on the Internet is the ideal type of adolescent in Sacha Loma. What Kichwa want for young people's life outcomes powerfully shapes the expectations associated with "ideal" adolescence and thus how young people live this category.

Sacha Lomans' understandings of adolescence, in general, coalesce around five themes for young people: a time to be carefree (and lazy), a time to delay marriage and childbirth, a time to get an education, a time to watch television and develop the skills and appearance to succeed in the social world beyond the community, and a time to be mobile. I examine how Kichwa, young and old, embody, experience, live within, and push up against the boundaries of these understandings.

Modernity fosters new imaginings of what could be. To be modern in Sacha Loma means being educated, having fewer children, marrying later, having enough money to be comfortable beyond everyday survival (e.g., owning a house, having televisions, computers, cameras, clothing, accessories), and being able to provide one's children with money and education. For some, it also means speaking English. This idea, shared by both generations, has powerful effects on the life expectations, outcomes, and lived realities for Kichwa teens. Yet, grand aspirations for what young people in Sacha Loma want to become frequently collide with the realities of structural constraints (e.g., lack of financial resources, discrimination, inadequate birth control). The community's young people may aspire to live, study, and work elsewhere, but inevitably many are tethered to Sacha Loma.

The imperfect fits between the expectations entailed in the category of adolescence and the possibilities available to young Sacha Lomans are painfully felt by community members and trouble the idea of what it means to be an adolescent. For instance, teenage pregnancy in Sacha Loma did not exist two decades ago. This is because *teenagers* did not exist in Sacha Loma two decades ago. As I will discuss further later, grandparents, parents, and teenagers in the community are still trying to figure out how to deal with the difficulties inherent to a prolonged experience of youth, the conflict between delaying and desiring sexuality, and the inevitable result of teenage pregnancy. Examples abound of adolescent women who, according to one older *mestiza* resident, are forced to abandon their youth *por la barriga* (because of their [pregnant] bellies, Sp.).

Hence, there are multiple experiences of adolescence: among them are teenagers who are attempting to fulfill the community ideal for a young person; and teenagers who have assumed the role of adults earlier than is now expected, but are considered too

young to fully strike out on their own.

This chapter ends by looking forward to issues that will be examined in the following two chapters, specifically the new relationships that contribute to the cultivation of adolescence and the adolescent experience: the relationships of adolescents with each other (courtship, friendship) and with non-kin others, especially in educational contexts.

### Youth Versus Adolescence

“Youth” may be too nonspecific a term to account for the remarkable space that older Kichwa have cultivated for young people in which to grow and flourish. The idea of “adolescence” makes a distinction that older Kichwa themselves find relevant and important. Adolescence, as a bracketed life phase, signifies that they, as parents and grandparents, are able to provide experiences and resources to their children and grandchildren that they themselves never enjoyed. Children and adolescents are *supposed* to be different than older people in Sacha Loma. Youngsters enjoy the perks of being perceived as different.

My use of cultivation when talking about Kichwa adolescence purposefully indexes agriculture, the most significant vocation for Kichwa in the past and an important source of livelihoods in the present. Though farming is now not the only occupation of adult Kichwa, it is still a revered one. However, a different type of cultivation is becoming the focal point of Kichwa adults: elder Kichwa have “grown” a new kind of adolescence, one that sees young people as in-formation, as maturing, as projects of investment. Framing the production of young persons by Kichwa in terms of cultivation, moreover, foregrounds the persistent and repeated input of elders’ efforts—their time, patience, money, and encouragement—in the production of Kichwa teens. Young people, in turn, utilize the transformational space of adolescence for activities of self-cultivation—like higher education or watching television—that they pursue in order to be able to do non-agricultural endeavors (desk jobs, technical school, and so on) later.

The direct Spanish equivalent for adolescent, *adolescente*, was used rarely in the community, though Sacha Lomans knew what it meant when I used the term to ask about young people. Their knowledge of the word *adolescente* stemmed mostly from usage by the school, the local clinic, and the state. For example, the Ecuadorian government passed the Law of Childhood and Adolescence in 2003, which protects the “liberty, dignity and equality” of children and adolescents in Ecuador (Congreso 2003, my translation). School personnel heavily advertised this law.

*Jóvenes* or *wambras* were the most common labels for young people. *Jóvenes* in Spanish means “young men” or “young women”; in Sacha Loma, use of the label is directed at school-age adolescents and children. That is, a young adult—like a mom in her twenties—who does not fall into the adolescent category might be described as *joven* (youth, adjective), but probably not as a *joven* (youth, noun). *Wambra* is the closest Kichwa term. It means “child/adolescent” with a connotation of “greenness,” a greenness that needs to be managed, guided, or cultivated into maturity. (This term has crossed over into mainstream Ecuadorian-speak amongst non-Kichwa urban youth. It is used to describe someone young or immature.) For Kichwa in Sacha Loma, this “greenness” gives young people a pass to explore new things. For instance, 36-year-old Piedra observes, “*Wambras*, they are nothing but *wambras*. But, we can’t just keep them tied up

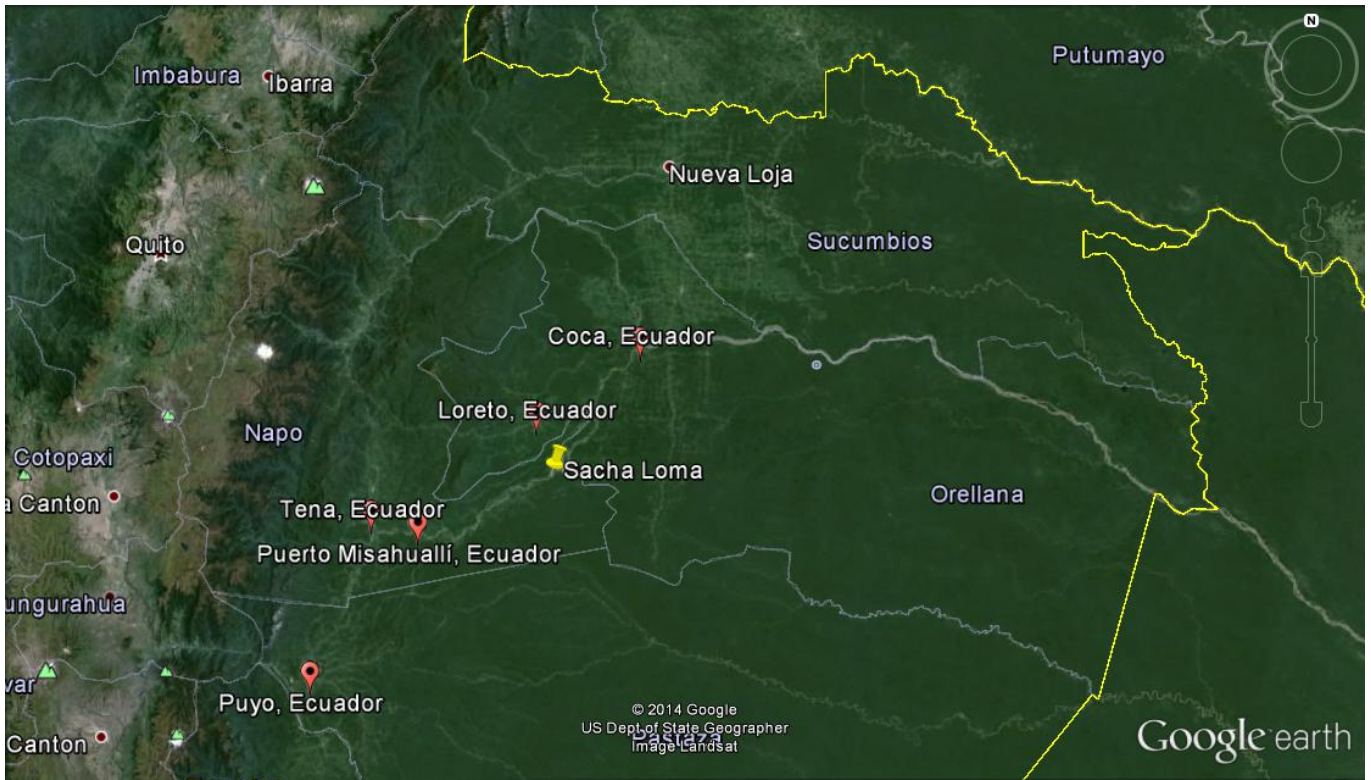
in the house! Because they are free to do what they please, they *walk* about wherever they want.” This singling out of *wambras* as special is why it makes sense to talk about young Sacha Lomans as adolescents and reserve the term “youth” for other contexts.

### The Community

Kichwa people in their daily life—well, really, it was this way long ago—they have dedicated themselves to what is agriculture and fishing. Their food is *chicha*. When they have nothing else to eat, there is always *chicha*.... They drink *wayusa* (a strong tea, Kichwa) in the mornings. Women dedicate themselves to the *chakra*. Men sometimes have their other engagements. They work in *minkas* (communal work group, Kichwa). They have their own music, which is Kichwa music. Their way of speaking is distinct. Old people speak more Kichwa these days. The majority of women spend their days gossiping in groups. I don’t know about what.

--23-year-old María

Sacha Loma is a small Kichwa community located on the banks of the Napo River in the Ecuadorian Amazon, three hours away from the nearest city of Tena. This 18-household community, composed of a handful of extended families, is a place in transition, a rain forest agricultural community that saw the arrival of a regional kindergarten-through-high-school public school and a medical clinic in the early 1990s, an eco-tourism hotel in 1995 (concerned with operating sustainably and teaching sustainability), and an innovative, private boarding school in 2005. All of these institutions have been assisted in start-up or run by a local NGO, founded by Mr. E, a social entrepreneur who came to the community in the 1990s. The private boarding school has since closed, and ownership of the eco-hotel has transferred to a Canadian organization interested in bringing in international, college-aged students to carry out development projects in the region. Though recreational tourism has declined, “development tourism” persists with the young humanitarians who rotate in and out of Sacha Loma. In the analyses that follow, I will speak of the boarding school and eco-hotel, which continue to have lasting impacts, as though they were *still in operation* to reflect the context of my study.



**Map 1: Eastern Ecuador Cities, Shenton, n.d.**



**Map 2: Getting to Sacha Loma, Shenton, n.d.**

Most permanent community residents are Kichwa, though there is one permanent



*mestizo* household, of the hotel gardener, Doña Flor, whose family has been in Sacha Loma for decades. The transitory teachers employed at the local public school are mostly *mestizo* as well. Every Monday, over a dozen teachers make a several-hour journey from Tena, some coming from over six hours away from *sierra* (mountain, Sp.) cities, to a small port upriver where a school canoe retrieves them. They reside in the community during the school week in cement row houses provided by the school, and on Friday leave to rejoin their families in urban centers. The school canoe also collects students from smaller communities both upriver and downriver. Sacha Loma is a unique hub of intercommunity and interethnic relations, which have had powerful impacts on young Sacha Lomans' identities and expectations for the future.

Though their importance has diminished, farms remain a significant facet of everyday life. Nearly all Kichwa families continue to farm, even if only to grow staple foods like manioc and plantains. Many have small *chakras* (gardens, Kichwa) alongside their homes, on little islands in the middle of the Napo River, or a short distance away on the *otro lado* (the other side [of the river], Sp.). These garden plots provide the bulk of the calories that families consume, though purchased comestibles—rice, canned goods, vegetables, and so on—comprise a substantial portion of many families' diet. A few families still daily make their way *adentro* (inside, Sp.), through the dense rain forest to their farms an hour from the community and currently not accessible by road. On their farms *adentro* they produce goods for household consumption or for sale at the local markets, which occur twice a week. The lack of roads—a huge point of contention in the community—makes transport of any goods to port a challenge. Indeed, no roads connect directly with Sacha Loma, though roads can be reached across the river or by traveling a short distance by canoe either upriver or downriver. Technically, the houses on the *otro lado* immediately in front of Sacha Loma proper are considered to be Sacha Loma as well; however, community meetings and events almost always take place in Sacha Loma proper. A third component to the community is the *segunda línea* (second line, Sp.), an hour's walk away and the frequent destination for those going *adentro*. On the *segunda línea* are many families' primary farms, the farms on which they used to reside before they made a permanent move to Sacha Loma after the public school was established. Some of these farms are visited only occasionally and have become more or less abandoned and overgrown. A few families have plans to move to their *segunda línea* farms once a road is built skirting their farms' edge to connect them to the main road that leads to cities upriver and downriver.

Both men and women farm. Many young men and women in the community believe that men and women can and should be capable of doing the same things. But others have strict opinions about a proper division of labor. They assert that men work much harder than women. Women can last in the fields at most until noon. Men are in charge of planting and harvesting coffee, cacao (beans from which chocolate is made), and corn (in other words, the cash crops); the domain of women is plantains and manioc (or, those crops which are for family consumption and are household staples and the foods commonly exchanged between kin). Yet, the separation of men as cash croppers and women as gardeners is not as hard and fast as elders say it used to be. Fifty-four-year-old Medicio, community president and local *curandero* (healer, Sp.), jokes,

I grow manioc and plantains. My wife helps me. If I plant manioc, I end up producing more. When she plants it, it doesn't produce as much. When I plant it, whoosh, so much!

Jamie: Then why do they say that men don't do it?

Medicio: Because men are lazy! They wait for the women to just go ahead and do it. Men have to help as well. These are all *costumbres* (customs, traditions Sp.) that we Kichwa had long ago.

While life in the city is attractive because of conveniences, Kichwa young and old have deep affection for the perks of rural community life. Forty-nine-year-old Dolores elaborates,

Life in the city is different than living here in the *campo* (countryside, Sp.)... Everything there is only money. Rent. Buying food daily. Of course we buy things here, but we don't have to pay for electricity, but there they pay for electricity. We don't have to pay rent. Our house is our own. We don't pay for any of these things. And here we have our own produce.

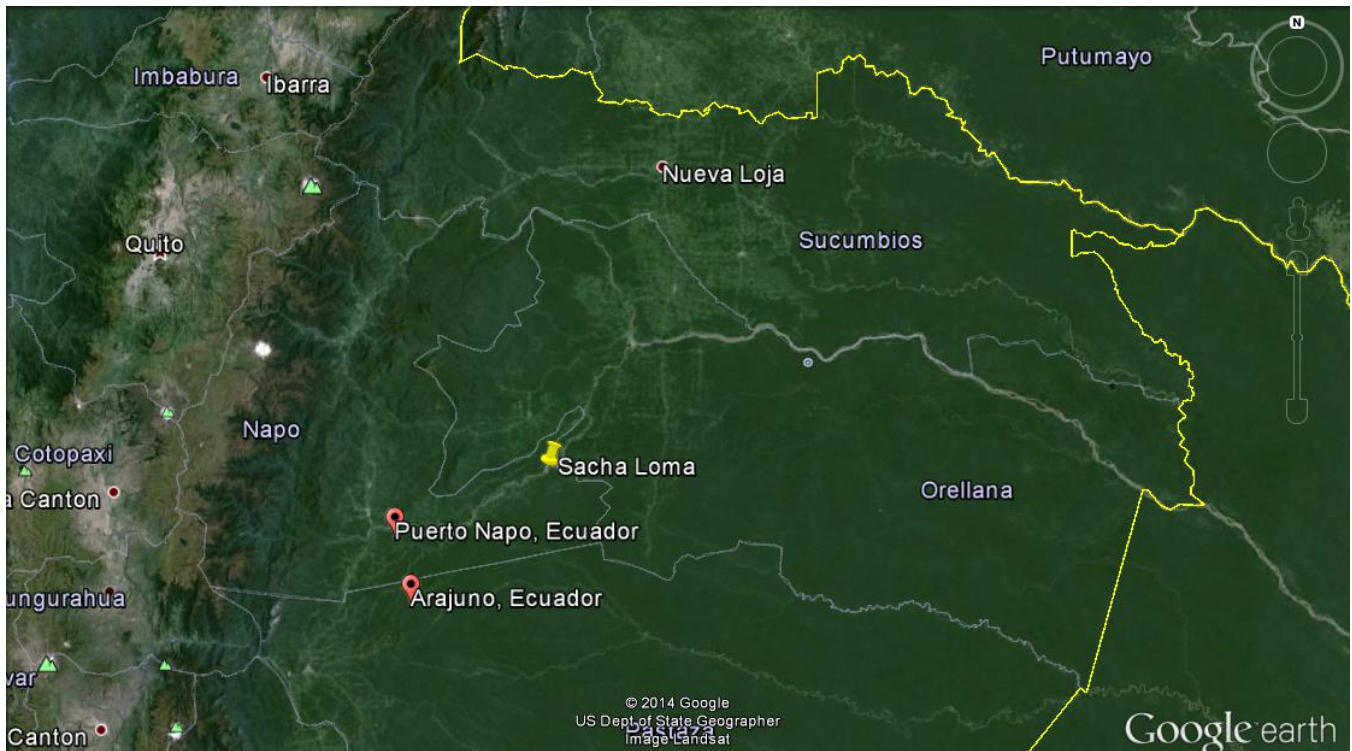
While young people complain that life in the *campo* can be boring, slow, or routine, they and their parents admire the *aire puro* (fresh air, Sp.), lack of contamination and noise, safety, and nutritious, fresh-picked food. City food is characterized as *puro químico* (only chemicals, Sp.) and potentially damaging to one's health, not to mention expensive. Yet, as stated, many families in Sacha Loma rely on packaged foods like tuna and noodles as staples in their household's diet; sometimes these convenience foods are advertised by children as status symbols.

There are non-agricultural occupations as well. Many are "nine-to-five" jobs that Kichwa elders have chosen in lieu of (or in addition to) farm work in order to provide their children with the means to pursue a widening array of educational and professional ambitions. Some men work at the eco-hotel as landscapers, canoe operators, chefs, or managers. Other men work at the local school as maintenance personnel or canoe bus drivers. Women are hotel gardeners, hotel housekeepers, kindergarten and public school teachers, clinic nurses, and homemakers. Elders nostalgically look back on the days when they were just farmers, but believe in education as the salvation for their children's futures. New professions are part and parcel of the changing influences permeating the community.

## The Founding

Most families moved to the general vicinity of Sacha Loma over three decades ago, in the mid-1960s and 1970s. Older community members whom I interviewed were fuzzy on the details of the community's founding, which was an organic process over time that involved the buying, selling, and donating of land that changed hands quite a bit. The majority agree that the founders were made up of both *colono* and Kichwa families who came in search of farmland. (*Colonos* are non-indigenous settlers, whom some might consider "white" or *mestizo*.) The current generation of Sacha Loma

grandparents principally came from the Puerto Napo area near Tena, Archidona, and neighboring communities; some journeyed from Arajuno. Tired of working for wealthy landowners and armed with the knowledge of coffee and cacao cultivation they had acquired on these landowners' farms, Kichwa families moved *en masse* to the Sacha Loma area (see Shenton n.d.). There they saw the potential for hunting and fishing as well as respite from the terrifying and noisy machines that were bulldozing the land surrounding their homes.



**Map 3: Eastern Ecuador, Sacha Loma Provenance, Shenton, n.d.**

At first, Sacha Loma was located about fifteen minutes downriver, at the site of a missionary school attended by both Kichwa and *colonos*. After a short time, exasperated by the non-collaboration of their *colono* counterparts, the Kichwa families decided to travel upriver to found their own community and school. Sacha Loma downriver became known as Sacha Loma Baja; Sacha Loma upriver became known as Sacha Loma Alta. Crucially, Sacha Loma Alta was situated on the south bank of the Napo River, in what was then Waorani territory. The Waorani are another native Amazonian group who are famously called *Auca* (savage, Kichwa) for their rumored violent behavior. According to 44-year-old Anselmo, the pioneering families who moved to Sacha Loma Alta encountered *puro monte* (nothing but overgrowth, Sp.). When the founders first arrived, Waorani still occupied the area and, according to Sacha Loma Kichwa, were eager to use their spears. On more than one occasion I heard stories from older Kichwa women of fleeing Waorani raids in the middle of the night with young babies clutched to their chests. Yet, families stayed. By this time, the Ecuadorian government was pushing for agrarian reform, in which landholdings needed to be demarcated and a certain percentage under cultivation in order to secure ownership. The Sacha Loma founding families,

along with several *mestizos*, grabbed land parcels and worked to establish their title to them. The *mestizo* families, and a few Kichwa families of the great-grandparent generation, were successful in obtaining attractive riverside parcels. Later, the current parent generation (the children of the great-grandparents) acquired some farms *adentro* that remain theirs today (see Shenton n.d. for a more detailed account of this process). Little by little, residents constructed a small, ramshackle school on the site of the current community. With the school came a few more families. This meant that Kichwa children *adentro* had to commute to the small school in Sacha Loma proper.

It was after these seeds were planted that Mr. E, a U.S. American, arrived in Sacha Loma in the 1990s. Bursting with social entrepreneurial spirit and a self-proclaimed knack for “going native,” Mr. E quickly ingratiated himself with Sacha Lomans and used funds from his NGO to expand the seedling school and to add a much-needed clinic. The description of the community’s founding by the older Kichwa I interviewed depicted Mr. E strategically buying, selling, and building on plots of land in and around Sacha Loma. From the family of Doña Flor, a 41-year-old *mestiza*, Mr. E purchased the hotel property; from the father of Roberta, a 44-year-old Kichwa woman, Mr. E acquired the land on which the public school was built.

In the beginning, many families sent their children to the small school in Sacha Loma from their farms *adentro*. Once the clinic and school in Sacha Loma became well-established, and parents committed to sending their children there, these families had a problem: how to access these beneficial institutions safely and conveniently from over an hour’s walk away in the rain forest. Their children made this walk daily, unaccompanied, because the adults were off working on their farms. Parents were concerned about their little ones’ safety, especially during the rain. In tears, 44-year-old Roberta confided in me one rainy afternoon,

My daughter Nicola went to school every day, rain or shine. She had to leave the house at six in the morning, the little bitty thing. Then she had to return at noon, arriving here at two, the big kids having abandoned her on the path—the poor little thing, soaking wet, all morning soaking wet, with her little notebook, cold, with wet clothes. It brings tears to my eyes.... Oh how she suffered!

Distraught parents like Roberta went to Mr. E and asked,

Why don’t you give us a small plot of land in order to make a little house, a place where our children can escape on rainy school days—a place where our children can flee when it rains, leave their things, store their boots, and where we parents can come to rest when there is a school program?

Seeing the need, Mr. E redistributed plots, at first to five individual families who now have houses scattered about the center of community; along with Medicio and his father who live in a separate parts of the community, these are the five families that most residents consider the original Sacha Loma families. Later, he distributed plots to those families who have farms on the *otro lado* who asked Mr. E for land in Sacha Loma proper so that their children would not have to make the daily harrowing river crossing to school by dugout canoe. Families with farms *adentro* still hold grudges with the *otro*

*lado* families who they see as unnecessarily taking precious plots from Mr. E because, they believe, the *otro lado* families lived but a short canoe ride away rather than a long trek through the rain forest (For an exhaustive look at Mr. E's hand in education in the community, see Shenton n.d.).

Most residents hold great respect for Mr. E, who has done much good for Sacha Loma. A good many consider him a father figure and a friend. And a few view him as a dreamer who overestimates the depth of his pockets. He and the community have had their disagreements, especially about to what extent the eco-hotel should be operated exclusively by and for the community. Medicio describes his initial dealings with Mr. E many years ago as follows: "He brainwashed me really good, and I accepted," and "there were many problems because projects would be started and only finished halfway." Always candid, Mr. E maintains, that he has forever been motivated by a desire to bring education and health security to the region, even if the journey and the outcomes have not always been perfect. Moreover, from an outsider's perspective, it is clear that Mr. E is driven by a compassionate longing to help the region's young people; he does the best he can—including a tireless search for hard-to-come-by funding—to provide Sacha Loma with resources that are unheard of even in well-connected areas of Ecuador. I have met few other people as dedicated as he is to serving others before himself. Mr. E is remarkably cross-culturally fluent, has spent a great deal of time in this remote location, and has a keen understanding of community dynamics, gender relations, gossip, and drama.

### **The Community's Geography**

At the edge of the community furthest upriver is the deck and bar of the eco-hotel—Mr. E's "million dollar view" of the Napo River. Downriver, at the end of the neatly manicured and lushly gardened cement paths that snake through the hotel's tourist cabins and the personnel housing, is Doña Flor's house, the only permanent *mestizo* household and the house most physically removed from the community center. Past Doña Flor's house, across a small bridge, is the regional medical clinic, founded by Mr. E and eventually taken over by the Ecuadorian government. The government asks doctors, typically in their final years of residency, to complete one year of care in a region in need. City slickers with good intentions, community doctors primarily treat skin infections, parasites, and diarrheal diseases. Pregnant women receive prenatal care here. Basic dental cleanings and fillings are also provided. In the event of an emergency, there is a "canoe ambulance" on-call 24 hours a day, which can rush patients upriver to catch a vehicle to Tena.

From the waiting area of the local clinic, the main expanse of the community is visible. This includes eight residences with the following female heads of household: 25-year-old Nicola, 49-year-old Dorotea, 44-year-old Roberta, 52-year-old Micaela, 22-year-old Paloma, 29-year-old Nora, 64-year-old Valerie, 25-year-old Imelda (and 64-year-old Valerie who shares Imelda's home), and 47-year-old Beatrix. These houses skirt the local public school, in which classes run from kindergarten through *tercer año bachillerato* (third year baccalaureate, equivalent to twelfth grade). The school's campus, which includes teachers' apartments and administrative offices, comprises more than half of the community's grounds. Five houses located on the upper level of the community, which is built into a hill, belong to 41-year-old Nomaní, 20-year-old

Maximiliana, 52-year-old Cristina, 25-year-old Sirena, and 36-year-old Piedra. The backdrop of Sacha Loma is dense rain forest, through which some residents must hike to get to their farms on the *segunda línea*.

There are three stores, one alongside the main volleyball court and administered by Micaela's family. The other two are run out of the local homes. A Catholic Church sits atop the hill. It is a cement building with a functioning bell, an engineering marvel for the region, and a dozen or so pews. Aside from the occasional prayer session headed by Piedra's son, a youth minister, the church is rarely utilized save for a *minka* (collective work party, Kichwa) every few months to clean out the cobwebs and bat droppings, especially around Easter time and for baptisms. A regulation-sized covered, cement basketball and *indor* (soccer-like game, Sp.) is the church's neighbor. The covered court competes with the volleyball court for athletes' attention every afternoon. Community members, male and female, young and old, are devoted sports fans. They often play volleyball and *indor* well into the night, and games are almost always played for money. Bets have reached as high as several hundred dollars, or a typical month's salary.

Past the covered court and further up the hill is a neighborhood of four houses called "Rebirth." This cluster of houses is made up of one extended family—headed by Medicio—that chose to build apart from the community proper. Female heads of household include 35-year-old Tímida, 28-year-old Chela, 28-year-old Carlota, and 45-year-old Soledad, Medicio's wife. Rebirth residents have had disagreements with the households further upriver, but now both sides of Sacha Loma have more or less unified. Medicio used to own his own store complete with a bar and pool table, which was popular with the local boarding school. However, once the school downsized in anticipation of closing, his store did not survive.

### **The Boarding High School**

Past Rebirth neighborhood and up a hill behind Medicio and Soledad's house are the grounds of the boarding school, which include two dormitories, several classrooms, a cafeteria, a microenterprise workshop, and its own farm. I worked at this school from 2006 to 2007 as an English teacher, when it was wildly popular with students in the region. The boarding school is run privately though Mr. E's NGO, though it is also a governmentally recognized high school with academic concentrations in ecotourism and sustainable development. The majority of students are male; though in recent years there have been quite successful efforts to represent the genders equally. Since my time there, several students have travelled internationally to various environmental and entrepreneurial conferences; at least four have attended one year of college in the United States.

Kichwa are well-represented in the student body, though over the years more students have begun to come from urban *mestizo* families. With its progressive, skills- and empowerment-centered orientation, the boarding high school attracts and cultivates politically aware teens who are taught to value their indigenous heritage. The same student body also has a high concentration of technological savvy, along with cameras, mp3 players, and school laptops with Internet connections.

The boarding school setup exposes youth to novel influences beyond the traditional Kichwa family network: a social setting in which young men and women are in constant contact and living with adolescent peers their own age who are not kin. The

school also represents a microcosm of tensions between the educational and professional paths promoted by the progressive, indigenous-oriented school and NGOs; the new educational, professional, and body ideals advertised on television and DVDs; and the realities and structural constraints that persist in Kichwa lives.

When I arrived again in July of 2011 to do this dissertation fieldwork, boarding school students were in the midst of a “gap year,” the months between their junior and senior years. They had been sent to various highly ranked hotels and bed and breakfasts throughout Ecuador to intern and put their theoretical training into practice. The gap year was cut short when the boarding school, due to lack of financing, closed early in 2012.

### **The Public High School**

Education in the region is not new. Most parents have at least a primary education, which has been compulsory since the 1945 Constitution. Many parents were educated in mission schools. However, it was not until the current class of adults now in their mid to late twenties entered high school that secondary schooling became an expected part of growing up. Currently, *Educación General Básica* (General Education; ages 5-15) is required by the government; *Educación Bachillerato* (Baccalaureate; ages 15-18)—the equivalent of a high school diploma—is not. Parents strive for their children to complete *bachillerato* even though non-compulsory and an added expense.

Sacha Lomans viewed the closing of the boarding high school as unfortunate but expected. During my final weeks in the field, there were talks of merging the boarding school with the local public school so that current boarding school students could still get their degrees, and public school students could benefit from Mr. E’s extensive social and funding networks. Current boarding school students felt uncertain about the changes because education at the public school in Sacha Loma is piecemeal at best.

The public school is structured such that each grade, from kindergarten to *tercer año bachillerato* (12<sup>th</sup> grade), has its own homeroom. Teachers circulate from class to class to teach the various subjects as required by government curriculum standards. There is a generator if electricity is required. Classrooms on the whole are equipped with sufficient desks and chalkboards. Most teachers are well-intentioned and put effort into their lesson plans, but they are underpaid, overworked, and far away from their families and homes. The rain forest is not an easy place to live for those who come from milder climates without winged and fanged pests and who are used to the conveniences of city living, such as access to fast and supermarket food, entertainment, and better medical care. Teachers are in no hurry to show up on Monday and are in a big hurry to leave on Friday. Unnecessary bureaucratic checklists and requirements and school programs like dances and appreciation days are common reasons for short workdays.

When classes are held, instruction is often through rote memorization. Teachers can be heard yelling at students for wrong answers, and shaming is an acceptable teaching tool. Part of the reason is that all teaching is literally by the book; teachers are not allowed to stray from government-developed curricula and textbooks. Homework often consists of students mindlessly filling in blanks. Both teachers and students are bored by the form and content of lessons. However, teachers are skillful at making do with what they have, though materials are in short supply and rapidly deteriorate in the humidity.

One of the mostly highly prized classes is English, but there is one English

teacher for the entire school. Yolanda is one of three ethnically Kichwa instructors, and the only teacher born and raised in Sacha Loma. While Yolanda is among the most advanced English-speakers in the community, her skills (and confidence in her skills) are fit for an elementary-level English course, not for high school-level instruction. Often she relies heavily on the teacher's manual with the responses already filled-in. The English textbooks are extremely advanced (because they are poorly designed), with little to no explanation of grammar or vocabulary. Grammar and spelling mistakes are not uncommon. Much of what is taught is either idiomatic expressions in British English or content that has little relevance to the students' lives. The 11<sup>th</sup> grade (*segundo año bachillerato*) English textbook, for example, came equipped with a detailed lesson on sexually transmitted diseases. Students were learning words like "gonorrhea" and "chlamydia" rather than "how are you" and "where's the bathroom." There were large pictures of condoms and the male and female reproductive system. Themes in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade (*tercer año bachillerato*) English textbook included dieting and weight loss, divorce, drug use, and pedophilic and incestuous relatives. The upshot of many of these lessons was a discussion in the textbook of teenage pregnancy, particularly how pregnant young women must drop out of school, stay home, and are bored and lonely.

Sacha Lomans' mixed feelings about the quality of education the public school provides were evident when, in the midst of the inaugural celebrations of the 2011 school year, there was a large meeting of school directors, teachers, and *padres de familia* (parents, heads of house, Sp.) that turned sour as parents began airing their concerns. Parents griped that there was too much theoretical instruction and not enough practical engagements. Medicio, the community president, explained that his son, Edmundo (named after Mr. E), took two semesters of computer classes but remains computer-illiterate. The sub-director responded to this complaint by pointing out that the school cycled through three computer teachers last year because the teachers could not *acostumbrarse* (adjust, Sp.) to the rain forest, which made it very difficult for students to learn anything. The sub-director claimed that the school could not be held responsible for the poor retention of teachers. After all, he said, few teachers are willing to make a commitment to teaching in a remote community, far from the city. Moreover, the pay for teachers that year was cut back by a third. The sub-director expressed the need to recruit more "homegrown" instructors like Yolanda, born and raised in Sacha Loma, and a graduate of the community's public school. Autochthonous teachers are more likely to "stay put," he said.

Perhaps the most contentious issue was the relationship between students and teachers. *Padres de familia* were sick and tired of the conspicuous consumption of alcohol by teachers in the open-air cafeteria and alongside sports courts after school. Drunken teachers set poor examples. The teachers maintained that what they do on their own time is their business. Lastly, Medicio firmly issued a *reclamación* (formal complaint, Sp.) against the school for permitting romances to occur between male instructors and female students. Though the sub-director assured parents that this inappropriate behavior would not happen again, by the end of the first semester a sophomore was forced to drop out and an algebra teacher fired due to their sexual involvement with one another.

In spite of these problems, students of all ages beamed with excitement as the new school year approached. They looked forward to crisp new uniforms; notebooks with



clean, blank pages; and the opportunity to spend hours daily chatting with their friends and working on projects. Many could not wait for the first *programa* (school program/event, Sp.), which meant music, dancing, early release from school, and ice pop vendors. Parents, too, enjoyed the several hours of childcare daily for the duration of the school year.

All these accouterments of schooling marked young people as in need of special attention: sowing the seeds of knowledge in their minds, tending to their still immature bodies and behaviors, and eventually reaping a fresh crop of educated Ecuadorian citizens. Students here are only recently learning how to be students; and Sacha Loma parents are for the first time learning how to be parents of students. As discussed in Chapter 2, education requires shifts in bodily comportments, social habits, and ways of learning (Rival 2000). Accepting education in Sacha Loma has meant accepting other modes of being as “productive.” As one Kichwa elder, 49-year-old Dorotea, phrased it: children now use their minds and not their machetes. It also means believing that young people are different in ways they have not been different before. They should be engaged in activities away from the farm. They should spend a great deal of time with their peers. They should have more freedoms and fewer responsibilities than their parents and grandparents had while growing up.

Indeed, education is one of (if not *the*) the primary factors that have contributed to the rise of adolescence in Sacha Loma. While this is an experiment still in progress, and there are frequent disappointments (e.g., students romantically involved with teachers), the space carved out for youngsters to plough ahead in their mental and social development is a highly valued aspiration toward which parents and grandparents devote much time, money, emotional, and physical effort. Indeed, school’s most crucial contribution may be the cultivation of new life goals among children and parents alike.

### **Changing Gender Norms in Sacha Loma**

Most women over the age of 28 or so in Sacha Loma had *pedidas* (arranged marriages, Sp.) and married shortly after puberty. Women in their early to mid-twenties are in a grey area—some have had arranged marriages, some have not. Women in their early and late teens are overwhelmingly moving toward romantic love and chosen partnerships. Households formed by arranged marriages typically have more than five children, and quite a few have over ten. Though few elder women talk about arranged marriage as being a positive experience as it was happening for them, most agree that it turned out to be the best option and that, over the years, they and their husbands have come to a “mutual understanding” (*nos comprendemos bien*, Sp.) and even affection. Arranged marriage seems to have, in the long run, worked out reasonably well for these families; yet mothers and grandmothers are more and more convinced that their children should choose whom and when they marry. Thus, getting married is no longer the transitional phase from childhood to adulthood for women.

Part of the reason for mothers and grandmothers’ encouragement to delay marriage and childbirth seems to be their own traumatic experiences as young wives. Take, for instance, Roberta and Anselmo’s experience. Both of them are now in their forties:

Anselmo and I hadn’t even talked for one second before in our lives, not for two

minutes, nothing, and here come the elders and Anselmo's grandfather.... Sometimes there are rumors, gossip.... And Anselmo's grandfather had heard this.... That this had been the truth, that my father had castigated [their family].... But Anselmo knew as little as I did. And only the elders sat down and conversed. Anselmo's grandfather said to my father, my late father, that they had come to make a *pedida*.

Once her family had made the decision to marry her off, Roberta had little say in the matter:

But I said, "No. No I am not going." What was I to think? I didn't have any intention of doing anything, innocent as I was. I said to my sister, "Let's go." I didn't want this...crying, "What are they going to do to me?" I cried and cried. I said, "No!" They said that they had already arranged the *pedida* and that I had to get married. All of my family said this. My sister, "You have to get married." "What will be of me?" I said. "What will be of me?"

Anselmo, too, was reluctant to marry. The *pedida* took him totally by surprise:

I didn't think she would accept. And I thought, "Better—I'll get out of this predicament. If she says no—shoot—I am happy!" But after I asked, she accepted. Then my heart dropped to the floor. "Now I am screwed," I thought.... I went to my house...and I was in a bad state. It was like my life as a child was over. It was like [that part of me] died. I was not a child. I was a married man.

Though she maintains she was lucky because she ended up with a good man, she and Anselmo agree that it is up to their children to shape their love lives. Roberta explains:

Nowadays...to each his own to make that decision; it's the decision of each person to whom they marry or with whom they sleep. "To get married or not to get married," so they say. In those days, no. It was by obligation of your parents that you got married. And after that get together as a couple and live.

Roberta and Anselmo regret their childhood being taken away from them at an early age. Roberta describes this as her innocence. Anselmo talks about the child inside him dying. Roberta did not have an adolescence, though some might say the initial weeks after her marriage, in which she enjoyed reduced responsibilities and some alone time to ponder the loss of her childhood, could constitute some respite (Schlegel and Barry 1991). By the age of 12, she had been socialized sufficiently by her mother to be able to assume responsibility for a household, though she was not married until the age of 16. Anselmo was plucked literally from the middle of a soccer game by a "delegation" that called him to a counsel of *padres de familia*. Sitting around the soccer court, the elders informed him that, in a few days, he, too, would be a head of household. He thought, "I knew that once there is an engagement, I have to be a provider—to provide food, a ton of things." Thirty-six-year-old Piedra had a similar experience:

I got married at the age of thirteen. My father, as it was in the old days, was prone to demanding that we young people got married. You couldn't be seen laughing with just any young guy. If you made a joke with a young man, then they thought that you were secretly with him.... Now it's different. Now they get to know each other as boyfriend and girlfriend. Then they get married.... I suffered in order to be part of a couple. I cried.... I was still in school.

Added to the feeling that *pedidas* are traumatic and outmoded is acknowledgement that marriage and motherhood almost never mix with finishing school, a now-necessary undertaking for youth. At present, two young women have chosen their partners in Sacha Loma: 22-year-old Paloma who lives with Felipe, a much-older man not yet divorced from his first wife who lives on the Ecuadorian coast, and 26-year-old Nicola whose parents—Roberta and Anselmo—turned extremely progressive as they aged and let her marry her “true love.” Paloma loves Felipe and dreads losing him—her greatest fear is that he would return to his first wife abandoning her and the two children they have together. Nicola, too, is very much in love with her husband Rico, a *mestizo* man from upriver who denies her little and has built her one of the most desirable homes in the community. Though both women chose their partners, they revealed to me in separate interviews a top motivation behind their choices: financial help in getting their education. These promises made by their husbands came on the heels of pregnancies early in their relationships.

Yet, what stands out in their marriages of choice is the question of how much “choice” they may have actually had. Neither Paloma nor Nicola could afford the education they desired without their husbands' help; and neither Felipe nor Rico has held up his end of the bargain. Paloma has yet to graduate from high school. And something always comes up when Nicola tries to enroll in college *a distancia* (in a distance enrollment program similar to getting one's degree online). But the situation is changing rapidly. Whereas in the past a woman might have to beg, borrow, and betroth in order to get an education, today the established position of adolescence guarantees access to higher learning.

Some men see women's attempts to break barriers as an affront to their masculinity. Both women and men in Sacha Loma still are working through these first time situations, and domestic violence—sometimes linked to women's attempts to challenge their traditional roles in the *chakra* and childbearing—is a problem. Moreover, like the elder women of Muratorio's intergenerational study, women in Sacha Loma who choose other “productive” avenues might be assumed to have failed elsewhere. Muratorio writes, “Except for jealousy, a woman's perceived failings in performing all the household duties expected of her is the most common excuse given by the husband for physically abusing her” (1998:412).

Twenty-five-year-old Sirena, who is pursuing a college degree in nursing, confronts gossiping men and a violent husband:

Now I am going to Tena [for weeks at a time]. I am taking classes. And one guy says, “Sirena, in addition to taking classes, she is dancing, and drinking in karaoke clubs, and bars,” and all sorts of gossip that we [Kichwa] sometimes say. Lies!

The fact that Sirena is pursuing her degree in Tena means that she lives there for long stretches of time, coming back only to visit her children every couple of weeks. It also means that she has had to hire a *muchacha* (literally “young woman,” but this signifies “domestic helper” in practice, Sp.) to take over her wifely duties, which her husband sees as outside the purview of his responsibility. Her husband views Sirena as not fulfilling her expected roles, and likely feels inadequate because Sirena is more educated, makes more money, and travels more often than he does as maintenance personnel at the public school. On several occasions after she has returned from her school trips, her husband has threatened her or beaten her publicly.

In the 1980s, sociologist Arlie Hochschild with Anne Machung (2003[1989]) characterized the dual expectations that employed mothers in the West face: to maintain a functioning and harmonious household while holding down a job to contribute to the family’s income. They termed this the “second shift.” Mothers and grandmothers in Sacha Loma are experiencing something akin to the “second shift,” as more of them enter the workforce full-time or pick up side jobs to supplement their family’s livelihood. Women’s wage work is becoming increasingly necessary as adolescents stay in school instead of helping with the family farm. Medicio calculated that it costs him about \$50 per child per year for schoolbooks. Fifty dollars is roughly equivalent to a good week’s pay. At the same time, women’s responsibilities around the house have not decreased. In fact, one could argue that the second shift is really more like a third shift for older women because their attention has always been divided between the household and farm work.

Facing accusations of failed productivity, some, like Sirena, have found solutions in hiring a *muchacha* to pick up the slack. Others, like Nicola, seek help on an *ad hoc* basis—Nicola pays 17-year-old Clorinda three dollars per load to wash her family’s clothes while she and Rico save up to buy a washing machine. These pressures take their toll on Sacha Loma mothers. Sirena says that with all of her travel to Tena for nursing courses, she has lost weight. Nicola suffers from frequent headaches. Micaela confides that sometimes she is so bothered about life’s obligations—especially putting food on the table—she does not eat out of “anger or worry,” which leads to headaches and vomiting. Men in Sacha Loma have been introduced only recently to alternatives to the traditional gendered division of labor, though this is slowly changing with respect to their daughters.

All of this is to say that the cultivation of new identity categories is not harmonious. In part, this is an effect of the rise of adolescence as a social category. Because both genders are supposedly equal in the eyes of state-sponsored education, Kichwa parents must now see the potential of their sons and daughters on a more or less level playing field. This shift is not isolated to young people; as the case of Sirena shows, gender norms for adults are also being reworked.

### **Competing Ideals of (Wo)manhood**

Reflecting on news that the girlfriend of one of the most prized graduates of the boarding high school had become pregnant, Mr. E commented that in Sacha Loma a young couple nowadays has their first child to “prove” to the community that they can have children, and then waits to continue expanding their family. At the time I thought his assessment was a little shocking in its candor, but the more I saw how Sacha Lomans reacted to me, in my late twenties, and my husband, in his early thirties, being childless,

the more Mr. E's assessment did not seem too off the mark. Once 55-year-old Pepe turned to me and asked, "So...how do you all 'do it'?" He wondered how my husband and I could be married and childless. I told him about "the pill" and explained that shots are available at the local clinic. He squinted in disbelief about the idea of a birth control shot. On a weekly, if not daily, basis, I would get questions about when my husband and I planned to have children, whether our parents were upset that we had yet to have a baby, and, jokingly, whether we would "please make a baby so that we could leave it in Sacha Loma," or at least trade the assuredly blue-eyed baby for a brown-eyed one from the community. When my husband and I announced that we were pregnant toward the end of our stay in Sacha Loma, we were able to relate to community members of our same gender on another level: suddenly women touched my belly, told me what I was to expect, made guesses as to the gender of the baby, showed me how to fashion a sheet into a baby sling, and welcomed me into the new identity of motherhood in a way that suggested that I was now "one of them" or a "real woman." My husband, too, recovered a masculinity that up until that point had been in question, at least in part because—no matter how many times we insisted we were planning for the right time—few men in the community believed that it could take this long to get a woman pregnant. In combination with the fact that he was the primary caretaker of the manioc in our garden, this spelled disaster for his manliness among Sacha Lomans!

There exist a number of competing ideals for femininity and masculinity in Sacha Loma in the wake of enormous changes in expectations for young women and men. One of these changing norms is the later age of marriage—women are expected to stay single longer. Among women of all ages who were married at the time of my interviews, the average age at marriage was 16.9, but they all agreed that the ideal age was older. Nearly half of all female Kichwa interviewed preferred an age of marriage over 25. All of those who did not specify an age responded simply "after study," which I estimated conservatively as 18, though many hope that they or their children will attend college, which would put the age of marriage at around 21 to 22. While every elder Kichwa woman had an arranged marriage, these women all expressed the belief that it was better to marry later.

At the same time, it was almost unheard of for a woman in this community to reach her twenties without having married or borne a child. There are still quite a few young women in their teens who are forced to stop schooling, as they say, *por la barriga*. Though birth control is widely available, teenage pregnancy is not uncommon. The nurse at the local clinic reported that birth control is primarily used for the purposes of "family planning" by women who have children and want no more or want to space out the next child(ren). It is rarely if ever used so that young people can be sexually active in their teen years without risking a first pregnancy.

Almost immediately after I concluded my field research, two of the single, childless teenagers in this study—Yolanda and Clorinda—became pregnant. To my knowledge, 21-year-old Finca and 16-year-old Moreina are the only two high school-aged young women in the community who (so far) have avoided both marriage and motherhood. Moreover, no married couple in the community has remained childless for any length of time; newlywed couples begin immediately trying to have children. Beyond poor sexual education with respect to birth control and women's rights in the bedroom, I suspect that another factor is the entrenched attitudes with respect to

“traditional” femininity and masculinity: having children is part of being a “successful” (socially capable and socially productive) Kichwa adult. Motherhood remains a vital component of a woman’s identity. Not only do little girls play with dolls—when they have them—but from the time they are able to wrap a sling around their neck and shoulders, girls trot about the community with their baby brothers, sisters, and cousins draped from their necks.

Thus, young women have a variety of expressions of womanhood to negotiate: showing off their mothering potential; working the second shift, which will be more and more the case as they form their households but seek non-agricultural positions; or perhaps putting off marriage and childbirth altogether in order to pursue a widening array of educational and professional aspirations.

The focus of this study is women in Sacha Loma, but there are also competing pressures for men, especially pressure is to be a provider. Not every man in the community has had the good fortune to have a stable job. Many, like Sirena’s husband Paco and Maximiliana’s husband Martín, have low-paid menial wage work like mowing the grass of the public school or cleaning its classrooms. The tensions associated with failure to earn enough money to support a family make abuse of alcohol and women common. Drunkenness is an acceptable escape, almost exclusively associated with men. Sixteen-year-old Sarafina says that, “Alcohol makes you go down the wrong path. It makes a man hit a woman, makes him feel strong, even though in reality he is weak.” Eighteen-year-old Yolanda agrees: “A drunk person feels complete abandonment and becomes like a ‘leader,’ always talking like he knows about everything. Alcohol makes the person feel strong, though he doesn’t know who he is.” And finally I asked 22-year-old Paloma after our interview if she had any questions for me. She nodded her head: “Why do men, after they get drunk, come home and want to have sex with women?”

If Kichwa women now must cope with the second shift, Kichwa men are confronting the “secondary shift,” feeling secondary, insignificant, in light of the changing demands placed on them. As in the case of Sirena, men may feel their employment puts them less in a gender complementary position (see Uzendoski 2005b) and more in a gender competitive position, with wives sometimes more gainfully employed than their husbands.

### **Adolescence and Aspirations: A “Dialogue” Between Elders and Teens**

Could it be because we as mothers let them do it? Mothers didn’t used to let their children roam free before. They didn’t let them roam free. Many times, my mother didn’t let us roam freely, go here or there to parties, to hang out with guy friends or girl friends. She didn’t let us. So we were accustomed to spending our whole lives in the house. Nowadays, life is changing a lot. It’s changing because of schooling. Children are learning things. Education is teaching them a lot of things. So their knowledge is advancing, and they are advancing. They say it’s their prerogative. Kids say that they should have their boyfriend, their lover, their friends. They say that we as mothers should impede them. That’s what our kids tell us. That’s why they have their friends, their boyfriends and girlfriends.

That’s the mindset of our children.

--44-year-old Roberta

When discussing the emergence of the adolescence concept—with deep roots in the Western imagination as a period of identity crises, disobedience, broken hearts, and dependence on the parental dole—it is easy to describe the presence of this new age category in an indigenous community as an imposition of sorts, an invasive, nonnative concept squeezing out traditional Kichwa ways of being. Yet while adolescence has germinated undeniably from foreign ideas and ideals in state-sponsored education, mass media, tourists, and travel, still adolescence in Sacha Loma is a homegrown category. It is a product of both the actions of the younger generation and the investments of the older generation.

How does the older generation conceive of this new phase in their children and grandchildren's lives? How is it different than what they experienced growing up? How does the younger generation experience this new category? Though the older generation and younger generation do butt heads, and adolescents occasionally are viewed lazy, Kichwa adults continue to cultivate their youngsters. And more often than not, Kichwa youngsters defy adults' expectations of laziness. Here I bring elders and teens, primarily women, into conversation with one another about this new category of experience, contrasting their experiences growing up. I focus on aspirations for young people's life outcomes and how these aspirations have shifted substantially over the course of a couple of decades. Kichwa expectations for adolescence cluster around five themes: a time to be carefree (i.e., a time for tolerated laziness), a time to delay childbirth and marriage, a time to get an education, a time to watch television and develop the skills and appearance to succeed in the social world beyond the community, and a time to be mobile.

### *A Time to Be “Fat, Well, and Healthy” (and Lazy)*

My mother used to take us out early at three in the morning to be able to finish up taking out the cacao. She would take us out with a homemade candle in an old bottle of amoxicillin...so we could work at three in the morning...so that we could finish off a mountain of cacao...with a machete.... I was 12 years old. At a young age, she used to take me to pan for gold. At three in the morning, at two in the morning, we'd get up to go down river to pan for gold.

--44-year-old Roberta

I wake up at five in the morning, make breakfast, and then go to school. I am there until 1:30 in the afternoon; then I do homework for about an hour. When my schoolwork is finished, I play sports and chat with friends. At seven at night, I have dinner before going over to Nicola's house to watch *novelas* until I fall asleep.

--16-year-old Moreina

Adolescence in Sacha Loma means freedom and duty-free opportunities for going to school, learning, socializing, and relaxing, rather than farming, helping one's parents around the house, or having babies. As 17-year-old Dolores explains, “Nowadays playing with friends is what interests young people. They leave for the city to walk about. In the city, they go to visit their family members. They go out to dance, to have fun with their friends.” Though parents are sometimes supremely disappointed in the distracted behavior of their teens, providing a carefree developmental period for their

children has become an aspiration of elders. This is a stark contrast to elders' own experiences growing up. Forty-five-year-old Soledad distilled the new ideal of adolescence into three words: it is a time when youth can be "fat, well, and healthy."

Yet, older Sacha Loma women are seldom "fat, well, and healthy." Soledad describes her daily existence working on the farm: "I am in so much pain, but there we are. What are we going to do? We continue, crying and crying." Dorotea, Soledad's sister, expresses similar woes, "And now that I am 49 years old, I don't make it working.... My hands hurt. My back hurts. And so I suffer." Soledad, Dorotea and other elder women work so that their children do not have to, in Dorotea's words, "suffer with a machete."

This new adolescence includes time built in to be carefree. Young people are allowed to have free time in a way that parents like Roberta never knew. This leads to a struggle between wanting adolescents to use the mind and not the machete and needing them to contribute to the household in some way. Twenty-five-year-old Sirena comments,

In the past, women worked hard. They worked night and day, and they woke up to make breakfast at four in the morning in order to leave for work. But now, in these days, things have changed greatly. Young girls don't get up at four in the morning. And they don't work hard, only every now and then.

Farm trips for young people are like visits to the museum of Kichwa culture. Farm work is low on the list of priorities of young people who, under the care of their parents and encased within the expectations of an adolescent lifestyle, lead a more sheltered existence than their parents and older siblings. When I asked Moreina if she goes to her parents' farm she said, "Sometimes I go when I am not lazy! When it's sunny, I prefer not to." However, she admits that sometimes she tags along because "I want to be able to help and for us to be able to feed ourselves." Young people, moreover, insist that they no longer "know how" to work on the farms. Sixteen-year-old Sarafina remarks, "Working with a machete is hard work. If you are not *acostumbrado* (accustomed, used to it, Sp.), then you get blisters." Seventeen-year-old Dolores thinks fondly about farm work as though it were a special occasion. She remembers the time her dad took her to get *verdes* (unripe plantains, Sp.) from their farm when she returned from a long hospitalization in Quito: "I was happy because my dad took me to the farm to help him.... It's nice to be on the farm."

This is a dramatic shift from just over a decade ago. Moreina's sister, 25-year-old Sirena, describes a very different upbringing than her younger sibling. Sirena's childhood was filled with frequent punishments by her parents if she did not tend to the cattle after school or if she arrived home after dark because of after-school engagements. In addition to verbal lashings, sometimes her father would swat her with *hortiga* (stinging nettle, Sp.) or her mother would threaten her with *aji* (hot peppers, Sp.) in her eyes. Sirena had an arranged marriage at her parents' behest after she was spotted talking with her current partner, Paco. Moreina barely knew this reality because most of her years have been spent in Sacha Loma and not *adentro* like her older sister. The fact that arranged marriages have by and large fallen by the wayside has had a huge impact on the life trajectory of young women. Chosen partners are a second theme in the construction



of adolescence.

### *A Time to Delay Marriage and Childbirth*

God wants men and women to marry, but at the right age.

--41-year-old Nomaní

My dream is [when I am 25] to be with a partner who loves and respects me, especially my opinions and my work. I would live in the *sierra* (mountains, Sp.), and I would be a tour guide. I would have to hire a woman to watch my son because I would be out working.

--18-year-old Yolanda

[Being young] is to be single. I am not thinking about getting married. If I find my *media naranja* (the other half of my orange, i.e., soul mate, Sp.), then I'll get married.

--Libertad, 23-years-old and *mestiza*, raised in Sacha Loma

In the past, a young Kichwa woman was groomed from a very early age on how to assume charge of a household, but this seems more and more to be considered undesirable. Thirty-six-year-old Piedra explains:

As young people age, then they will get experience. Know how better to work, to cook, to wash clothes. If they are too young, *wambras* get together and they don't know what's what. They can't maintain a husband.... Some are bad, and they hit. They mistreat their wives. That's why it's better [to get married] when girls are older. Then they are complete women. That's my dream for my oldest daughter. I am always advising her.

Currently, most young people delay being tied down and instead gravitate toward a series of harmless flirtations and *novios* (boyfriends, Sp.). Sixteen-year-old Moreina described young women's greatest preoccupation as "boyfriends, because studying doesn't interest them!" Moreina's joking aside, young Kichwa women, by and large, are refocusing their energies toward education first and foremost. Older women encourage this. Though she has been married nearly 30 years, 45-year-old Soledad respects her 21-year-old daughter's decision to stay single:

My one daughter Finca is already in her twenties and she does not want to get married. She would rather study. This is fine. It is her choice. My husband and I still abide by the *pedida* in some ways. Suitors come regularly to ask for Finca's hand—we tell her it's her decision. She just says "no" and that's that. She does not have to get married.

Perhaps the most vocal proponent of delaying marriage, 52-year-old Micaela laments her situation compared to her aspirations for her children:

It is not important to marry. It is a hard life to live in the home. It is better to live single. It is better to work to move oneself forward without problems [associated with marriage]. It's good to live alone. No one gets in my way. I can go out to work whenever I want to.... Husbands and wives may not understand each other. I live suffering to this day. I tell my children to live alone as long as they can until they have acquired everything they need. Then they can think about marriage.

Though older Kichwa women have, since they were teens, defined their identities as workers, mothers, and caretakers of gardens and homes, young women concentrate on using the time they gain by delaying marriage to construct their identities as modern, educated women. If a young woman does start a family early, she usually limits her family to two or fewer children.

In the past, sexuality was only subtly referenced in Kichwa song and dance, such as when women praised their partners upon return from the hunt; explicit sexuality was shunned (see Muratorio 1998:416 for specifics). Older women in Sacha Loma stressed to me that they would never have dared to openly pursue, much less talk to, a young man before marriage. Today, young women are for the first time experiencing more open expressions of sexuality in the form of flirtations with young male suitors. At the same time, they must walk a fine line between experimenting with new forms of bodily adornment and comportment and tempering their sexuality to avoid potentially pair-bonding provocations, which might lead to their parents "suggesting" that they marry. Indeed, some young couples have made the mistake of calling too much attention to their relationships and have been made to *juntar* (pair, sometimes marry, Sp.), leading to children, responsibility, and loss of the freedoms of youth.

Teenage pregnancy in Sacha Loma is a new phenomenon. Now that delayed childbearing is becoming a valued goal, parents in Sacha Loma are for the first time trying to deal with the phenomenon of their daughters' unexpectedly expecting. Teenage pregnancy is the most common reason for a young woman not to finish high school, although parents attempt to keep their daughters in school even if they are pregnant or mothers. Yet teenage pregnancy is not as socially traumatic as it often is for Westerners. The traditional family infrastructure remains to absorb the young mother and her baby into her parents' or her husband's parents' household (see Uzendoski 2005b). When 23-year-old María had her first son at the age of 16, her parents kept her enrolled in the private boarding high school. She would take breaks between classes to breastfeed her son, who is now seven years old and still lives with his grandparents, though María lives near Tena with her husband and second child. While her husband works elsewhere picking up construction jobs, 17-year-old Dolores lives with her parents who help her care for her young son. Twenty-year-old Maximiliana only recently left her mother-in-law's household for a home of her own; her daughter is three years old. Moving the young couple and the baby into the baby's grandparents' house has occurred with every teenage pregnancy in the community in recent history.

The new terrain in which adolescence is being constructed is rocky and has few reliable signposts. Parents do their best to coach their children, but the proverbial "sex talk," if it does happen, is uncharted territory. Fifteen-year-old Víctor made clear to me that his dad Anselmo has told him on several occasions that he wants Víctor to have

nothing to do with the opposite sex. Víctor said, “My biggest fear is that I disappoint my parents as far as the young ladies who, sometimes, cause problems. That my dad would throw me out of the house.” I asked, “You mean if you hook up with a girl?” He blushed and replied, “No, no...never in my wildest dreams would I think of hooking up with a girl! But...if I ever did...he would throw me out of the house.” Here parental advice seems to be “avoid sex,” and this comes from the Anselmo who is the head nurse at the clinic.

In general, the sexual education that happens in school *charlas* (talks, Sp.) is poor. Birth control is an option, but, as mentioned earlier, it is used as a baby-spacer, rather than premarital protection.

Elders are very aware of the tendency of young people to separate from each other much more than in the past. Though they are increasingly supportive of relationships of romantic love, they have their doubts, as Roberta makes clear:

Nowadays young people say they are in love, that they love each other. But I see that this only brings more problems, and they continue to separate. They speak of this girl or that boy, and they separate. They are in love so much, and then it is over. I don't know how it will turn out. Some do well; some don't.

In Chapter 6, I will discuss how chosen partnerships in many ways reflect love ideals advertised in the *telenovelas* that have become a popular nighttime activity. The image of romance that has taken the place of the *pedida*, guided by television couples, is one of irresponsible flings.

Unattached, 23-year-old Libertad is the one extended adolescent—a single, childless woman in her twenties who still relies on her parents. While Libertad is *mestiza*, not Kichwa, as the daughter of Doña Flor who has lived in Sacha Loma on and off since its founding, she has roots in the community as deep as any Kichwa teen. A walking billboard for Western images and ideals, Libertad comes and goes as she pleases, feels in no hurry to find a husband, expects to be cared for by her parents, dresses in the latest trendy fashions, travels to the cities of Quito and Lima on her own dime (which she earns selling crafts at the eco-hotel), and is tended to and tolerated in every way by her parents. Kichwa women want to learn how to make her handicrafts. Teenage girls want to wear her clothes. Young men very obviously want to date her. The fact that Libertad is waiting for, in her words, her *media naranja* (the other half of her orange, i.e., soul mate, Sp.), could inspire teens like Moreina and Víctor to wait for their “soul mates” as well. The respect community women have for Libertad suggests that her experience of extended adolescence may become a new standard to which girls aspire.

### *A Time to Get an Education*

We are not going to advance working on the farm. Working on the farm is hard work. Working with a machete is hard work. It is much easier to work [at a store], to only be thinking, to use the mind and not the machete. Sometimes [my children] dedicate themselves to the farm, but they dedicate themselves more to study. It is good that they study—it is easier than working on the farm. Studying means they don't have to suffer with a machete.... Before we were not studied, so we worked in the *campo*. Modern life demands that children be studied and

prepared. That's why we're abandoning the farm.

--49-year-old Dorotea

Everything is changing and young people want to change as well. They want to know more, as if they were drawn to things of the city. I think that it is because in the old days [Kichwa people] did not used to study. Kichwa people did not study. Now we have dedicated ourselves to studying. And there is no time to be going with our parents to the farm. In the past, from the moment you were born you were *pedido* (asked for, Sp.) by someone to be his spouse. Now no. Now is different.

--23-year-old María

The reasons why parents unconditionally and wholeheartedly support education are not clear. Some say that education is to gain more *conocimiento* (knowledge, Sp.). But government propaganda also has played a role. María, a 23-year-old mother and graduate of the private boarding high school, recalls:

It's because foreigners come here. The medical clinic was placed here. From the advice of doctors, outsiders, and [visits] to the city. There were [government] talks as well. Then the *padres de familia* got excited about education. They began saying that studying is really important. They would say, "This man can give education to his children, and I can't," and there started a kind of competition.

Twenty-five-year-old Sirena describes the shift in her parents' opinions about education not in terms of competition but civilization:

In the past, parents were very angry people. They didn't care about providing education to their kids. It wasn't important to them. They used to live like bad people in the forest. Education didn't matter the least bit to them. Only recently are they civilizing themselves and beginning to give education to their children.

María and Sirena are part of the young generation of parents in the community; so it is not surprising that they are tuned in to the shifting values of their families and communities. But even most parents of the elder generation agree that education is important enough for their children to, for the most part, leave the farm behind. Twenty-nine-year-old Nora states:

Studying is important for them, so that they learn more.... Teachers say that we parents take them to work on the farm, and so they don't do their homework. That's what some of them say. Yes, we take them to the farm, but only for a short time. Then they come back. They do their homework. That's the way it is.

Her comments laden with hints of "civilizing" rhetoric, Roberta, 44-years-old, explains:

Education serves so that one can survive within one's family, one's home, one's

community. If we don't know, if we don't study, if we don't overcome... then what we are left with is nothing—of living for the sake of living, that's all, only grabbing animals, taking this and that. With education, comes more thinking, more ideas: how to take care of one's health, how not to have too many children [and so on]. In a short time, there will be no farms. There won't even be any animals. It will all come to an end, and we won't have any place to be.

Roberta touches on a significant point—farmland is rapidly disappearing and is not an easy “fall back” job. Parents and young people are looking for income supplements or alternatives. Education and the farm, however, are not mutually exclusive. Some parents emphasize to their children the necessity of maintaining a farm even while having a desk job, not only so that they will always have food in tough times, but also so that they can use their privilege to give work to other people. María says,

Because now even a maid needs to have a high school degree, to have a college degree. Everything is so complicated in the city. I think young people will [return to the farms] because everything is so expensive. I have seen in the city college graduates, doctors, lawyers who still maintain a farm because they say they can't make ends meet. So they plant.

Some also say that studying in school helps one be a better farmer through the broader skill set and general inquisitiveness that education is supposed to encourage. Combining the theoretical and the practical, the boarding school has an agricultural and animal husbandry component.

In some ways education is just as important for elder Kichwas' identity—good parents are supposed to put their children through school. This is a perennial source of anxiety for parents, who frequently have limited incomes and many children. Fifty-two-year-old Nemar vented his frustration one day:

Some of us [elders] have studied up through the sixth grade. My father isn't learned. He didn't even reach the sixth grade, and now I have accomplished the sixth grade. They didn't give me more study than that. And now I am making my children study six more years [through high school]. So, little by little we [Kichwa] are doing this. And now the government is telling us that they should be studying six more years [through college]. Where, where, where are they going to reach?

To be a good parent, one has to be educated, too. María explains, “If parents can't help their children with homework, how do they expect them to do it?” Nicola, a 26-year-old mother of two, states that education is important so that wives and mothers can “defend” themselves (in case they have a deadbeat husband). Her education, she claims, will be “the legacy” that she leaves her children. Twenty-five-year-old Sirena would agree:

I decided to finish high school because I wanted to be something. It was my decision. I said, “I am going to finish. I am going to finish. I have to finish so that I can be something in life.” In order to be “prepared,” in order to be able to

provide for my children.

Parents realize that education is profoundly linked to a person's social worth: without education, you are nobody. Twenty-five-year-old Imelda explains, "My ideal job would be a job that allows me to stay with my family, so that I would be able to defend myself. Otherwise, people don't value you. They will say, 'You aren't studied! Who are you?'"

Mothers and grandmothers, however, rarely aspire to big changes for themselves—switching jobs or finishing school are opportunities too far-gone. They instead focus on their children and grandchildren, who, they believe, have more opportunities to be change-makers and game-changers for their families and communities. The most effective use of limited resources is to produce a fresh crop of bright young Kichwa adults. Thirty-five-year-old Tímida weighs in,

If I would continue to study, it would be a waste of money. It's preferable to give this education to my children.... My kids can get their degrees, they can be teachers, they can be whatever they want to be. I as their mother can't tell them that they can't study something. Only they can decide.

Twenty-five-year-old Sirena says, similarly,

For my children, I want them to have their own profession, so that one day it doesn't seem convenient to them to do things that they shouldn't, to steal, or to not get a job because they haven't studied.... I want my children to be prepared. That they have something for themselves.... [My one dream for the future] is to have a secure job and to give education to my children. Nothing else.

Sirena not only points out that it is her duty to educate her children, but she emphasizes that education somehow stifles the urge for misdeeds. This point relates to a larger guiding ideal of Kichwa behavior—"civilization"—an ideal which I will address in-depth in Chapter 5.

Education is used in Sacha Loma as a synonym, in many situations, for "being civilized." Sirena, quoted above, perceives education as mitigating uncivilized behaviors like theft and sloth. Dorotea, also quoted above, compares farming to a kind of suffering that is antithetical to more "modern" engagements like schooling. This is the same comparison her husband 52-year-old Nemar draws as he discusses the gradual movement of Kichwa toward "civilization" through an appreciation of education:

Because, before, we were not studied. Thus, we worked on the farm. And, accordingly, modern life demands that our children have an education. For this reason, we came here [to Sacha Loma], almost abandoning the farm entirely, in order to give our youngsters the attention they deserve to give them an education.

Kichwa parents, seeing their children scurry off to school every day, consider this an emblem of their, in Dorotea's words, having "advanced." Though parents are not educated, their children can be. To not take advantage of education is to move backward, and this is unacceptable. Moreover, the advancement parents provide to their children is

expected to come full circle. Ideally, when teenagers become adults they will re-invest the fruits of their and their parents' labor back into their family and community. Forty-four-year-old Roberta equates studying with the ability to cultivate a rich, meaningful family-centered life:

In my dreams I would hope that my children would desire to study..., that each one would end up with his/her job, that they would live in their own home, that they would have good families, that they would continue, as they say, changing their lives, that they would get better, that they would study...in order to have a more or less good house, and in order to be surrounded by their family.

That young people do not always recognize the unprecedented opportunity they are receiving from their parents is a testament to the paradigm shift that has occurred with regard to the structure and function of a young person's life. Young people now see education as an inalienable aspect of their existence, which they take for granted.

Education takes working bodies from the farm and puts them behind desks; it takes machetes from young hands and replaces them with pencils and pens. Young women who formerly used *chalos* (tumpline baskets, Kichwa) to haul products from *adentro* are now using backpacks to carrying notebooks for eight subjects. Through education and its status symbols, young women and men are creating for themselves new identities that they hope to realize in the future—being college educated, having a cushy job in the city, starting their own organic farming business, and so on.

But sometimes going to school is not enough. Micaela, a 52-year-old groundskeeper at the local school, highlights what others in the community avoid pointing out:

Young people graduate and they can't go any further because they don't have the money. They want to study but there is no money, no road. If someone does not have a degree, then they don't get paid well and they don't get a good job. Nobody in the community who has graduated is studying [in college] now. They have no support from institutions. Parents attempt to do what they can to help their children by themselves. But, because we have so many children, we don't have the money to support them all.

I asked whether some high school graduates have been successful. She replied, frankly, the majority of young people, still at home, are “pretty *jodidos* (screwed, Sp.) at the moment.”

### *A Time to Watch Television and Develop Appearance Skills*

Nowadays, they grow up real nice (*criando bonito*, Sp.).... They have too many clothes nowadays. It wasn't like this long ago. Nice and neat they walk about. Calmly, carefree, they walk about. Right alongside their little brothers and sisters, they don't even know how to watch them well. “Why don't you watch the *wawa*?” (child, Kichwa) I ask them. Then they scream [because of the request]. Poor little thing! She runs off crying.... Before, when we didn't watch our younger siblings...right away my mom would smack us: “Why don't you watch

the *wawas*,” she’d yell. “You have to watch them.”...I was the first daughter [the oldest]. “Why don’t you hold them? Why don’t you carry them?” Right away she’d smack me. Then I’d stand there holding the *wawas* until my mother finished working.... Now every chance they get, they are watching television. That’s how young people spend their days.

--64-year-old Valerie

They [young female students] are interested in being “dolloed up”; they want a *lindo cuerpo* (pretty body, Sp.) that is *bien formado* (well-formed, Sp.) and *más sexy* (sexier, Sp.); now they are brushing their hair and fixing themselves up. They want to be tall, but our culture is of medium stature. They also want to be skinny. Some stop eating, they don’t eat rice, they don’t eat *cosas pesadas* (heavy things, Sp.), and they take pills, the ones they see on TV called *adelgazantes* (fat-blasters, Sp.); they also get messages on their cell phones on how to lose weight.

--18-year-old Yolanda

Young Kichwa of both sexes are increasingly concerned with their evolving body images—how to be creative with uniforms at school, which Yanbal (mail-order cosmetics magazine) product to buy this week, bangs or no bangs, how to dress when going to the city over the weekend.

Whereas in the past, a young woman was often spoken for shortly after puberty and had little say in the matter of whom she married, today young women and men work hard to attract or best one another with clothing and hairstyles. Forty-four-year-old Roberta observes:

In the past, it wasn’t like this. We didn’t know what a mirror was. We would leave the house half-brushed, half-clothed. Now in these times I see that everything has to be in style. These clothes: do they fit me well, or don’t they fit me well?... Do these clothes, pants, shoes, suit me? How about these earrings? And what do I know? Everything [is this way]. Models’ hairstyles. Everything is changing. Even models’ hairstyles change! Boys just as much as girls. With these sorts of things they say they advance. They say that their character (*modalidad*, Sp.) advances.

All of these identity experiments—high school degrees and haircuts—are, Kichwa recognize, tools for continued Kichwa advancement.

A productive body image involves the latest in clothes, shoes, jewelry and hair. Bodily adornment traditionally has been important in Kichwa aesthetics, which favored body painting with achiote (a seed pod with red pigment), long, dark hair, and adornments made of seeds and other forest products (see Muratorio 1998). In the past, the primary concern was with how the body was used on a daily basis, for producing and maintaining crops, food, and children. Although young Kichwa women are not entirely unfamiliar with physical labor (many still go a couple of times a month with their parents, and most are an extra pair of hands around the house, especially for childcare), hard manual labor is not the base of their existence as it was for their mothers and



grandmothers.

Muratorio (1998) reports elder Kichwa women's disappointment with new forms of self-expression—make-up, especially—used by Kichwa teens. Face painting with achiote used to be a “form of knowledge transmission through bodily practices, . . . an integral part of socialization, since usually older women painted younger ones in the process of forming their social and sexual selves” (1998:416). Other than for school programs, women's painting each other with achiote is no longer common in Sacha Loma. Instead, as Muratorio points out, make-up and nail polish are bodily forms of self-expression taking its place. Some elder Kichwa women in Sacha Loma would agree with Muratorio's findings in which these types of bodily expressions were criticized by elder Kichwa in Tena because “a young woman looks at herself in the mirror and attempts to create an image of the woman she wants to be, *all by herself*” (1998:417). Projects of individual self-presentation frustrate elder Kichwa women in Muratorio's study who view them as an affront to projects, like group painting with achiote, in which the self is a collective project.

Others see these body projects as benign, simply part of what young women do nowadays. Moreover, nail-painting or making oneself up—rather than being strictly individual projects reflecting some foreign ideal—have a distinctly communal aspect. In nail painting and makeover sessions, groups of young women make each other beautiful, in relations of sociality and exchange not so different from earlier practices. And the red pigment of lip rouge serves much the same purpose as achiote, as a tool to facilitate girls' maturation.

Young women pursue these projects of self-realization within a context in which expectations for women are both changing and staying the same. On the one hand, their Kichwaness is to be valued. Young women themselves remark that their indigenous heritage is, says Sirena, “part of their blood” and can never be taken away from them. Recreational tourism in the area, which often involves white, well-off tourists watching Kichwa teens dance around in seed bras and grass skirts, confirms being Kichwa as something attractively “exotic,” and therefore valuable and marketable. The Ecuadorian government feeds this romantic indigenous imagery by propagandistically praising multicultural heritage as one thing that makes Ecuador interesting and special.

At the same time, young Kichwa women are constantly bombarded by messages that promote the mainstream ideals of thinness and whiteness plastered on television screens during popular *telenovelas* and magazine covers like those of *Yanbal*, which circulate among young women in the community. School classes are taught in Spanish, and most Kichwa adults no longer speak Kichwa with children. Discrimination against Kichwas is not uncommon in the cities. Tension and confusion surround the mixed messages that young women receive regarding their identity as Kichwa.

Young men's opinions also can have lasting effects on female self-esteem and body image, and girls are preoccupied with putting on a show for interested teenage boys. Yolanda commented that boys tend to talk to the girl who “looks good”—who has the nicest clothes and is “sexy,” who “calls their attention.” She said that young women in the community believe men: “Women, especially indigenous women, listen to men.”

### *A Time to be Mobile*

Sometimes kids *go off* to other parts. *Wambras*, they are nothing but *wambras*.

But, we can't just keep them tied up in the house! Because they are free to do what they please, they *walk* about wherever they want.

--36-year-old Piedra; emphasis added

Sometimes I just don't understand why we parents let them *roam* free.

--52-year-old Micaela, emphasis added

Nice and neat they *walk about*. Calmly, carefree, they *walk about*.

--64-year-old Valerie, emphasis added

In the past, it was practically unheard-of for young women to “walk about” unattended for fear that their “virtues” would be called into question. Roberta’s mother kept her at an arm’s length:

My mother would say, “You should not walk about alone. Men are going to snatch you up and rape you. Don’t you go walking by yourself.” She would make us walk with her. She didn’t know how to leave us alone. She would only take us to work alongside her.

The parental protectiveness that prevailed in the past is changing. Muratorio (1998) describes elder Napo Kichwa women’s anxieties about the new paths to identity that they are traversing in rapidly modernizing contexts. Part of growing up, the elder women in her study assert, involves the progressive hardening and strengthening of a woman’s body through physical labor, like gardening, and through traveling by foot (1998:414-415). Elder women worry that their granddaughters are developing “soft feet,” which Muratorio interprets as “a symbol of lack of freedom of movement, of sedentarization, of the fact that young women now spend hours sitting, or otherwise immobilized, in the confined spaces of a school, an office, or a bus” (1998:415). Indeed, Muratorio (1998:415) points out that “walking” and “going places” are favorite themes for Kichwa elders when talking about intergeneration disconnects. One woman asks, “How are young women ever going to learn to walk if they never take their shoes off and always travel by bus” (Muratorio 1998:415)? Walking is a learning opportunity, part of the composite of experiences that build up a person over time. For the elder Kichwa women in Muratorio’s study, anxiety surrounding movement had to do with the convenience of modern transportation and its robbing young women of crucial formative experiences (see also High’s 2009 discussion of *durani bai* and young Waorani men).

Elder Kichwa women in Sacha Loma have formulated a slightly different interpretation of young people’s newfound mobility. First, Sacha Loma residents have an obsession with being connected to the outside world. Living in a remote rural community with no direct linkage to a road is a never-ending source of frustration. For years, older community members have petitioned the regional government to put in a road to their farms on the *segunda linea* in order to make transport of farm goods and access to quality medical attention easier. At the same time, Sacha Loma is more connected to the outside world than at any other time in the community’s history. After a short canoe trip, young people can (and do) hop buses to nearby cities. Young women are no longer under the hawkish gaze of parents intently protecting their “defenseless”

daughters. This means that young men and women are spending an increasing amount of time hanging out with each other in friendship circles that may only loosely coincide with networks of kin.

While community elders crave being connected to the outside world, they simultaneously fear what this expanding access could mean. Much of the language they use to portray the troubling activities of their daughters and granddaughters, as in Muratorio's analysis, entails walking. For example, 29-year-old Nora is but a few years older than some of the high school girls she critiques. She does not really understand young women today who she sees as too focused on things of *este mundo* (this world, Sp.):

They have boyfriends, friends, I don't know. We didn't used to behave this way. Things have changed so much.... I don't know why they have changed. Moms don't watch them closely enough. And their daughters *walk* wherever they want. They don't watch their *wambras*. Oh! My mother watched us like a hawk: [She would say,] "you have to *walk* calmly, you'd better not go about talking with boys." She didn't know how to leave us alone. That's how it was. Nowadays, moms don't pay enough attention. They leave them alone. That's why they have boyfriends, friends. [emphasis added]

Not only is Nora concerned by teenaged girls' mobility, but also she is critical of mothers like herself for not watching them closely enough.

Mothers and grandmothers are uneasy about young women's walking about and roaming free. As Muratorio (1998) elaborated, mobility on some level may deny them experiences that elder women consider important. Mobility may also allow them a little too much freedom. As Nora says, girls "walk wherever they want," with little concern for any risks that may be involved. Yet Sacha Loma elders, while skeptical, also recognize young people's new mobility as a path to new experiences that ultimately build their character. In the words of Roberta, "With these sorts of things they say they advance. They say that their character (*modalidad*, Sp.) advances." Thirty-six-year-old Piedra sees "walking" as part of preparation for life's challenges, though it makes her sad that her children could go far away from her:

It's good that they prepare so that they can walk about [in the city]. Children, when they are prepared, go far away and separate from their mothers. Mothers cry in their houses so that their children will return so that they can be together again. When children are prepared, they go far away in order to be able to work. This is a requirement of professional employment these days.

Walking (and stumbling) for elder Kichwa women is a cultivating process—it is a way for young people to gain experience. Teens who walk are teens who learn (or fail to learn) particular modes of being that compete with or complement the ways of their elders.

### **The Lived Realities of Adolescents**

The ethnographic terrain I have outlined up to this point is a terrain not traversed

previously by Kichwa. The lived category of adolescence has been cobbled together from a fast-forwarded importation and interpretation of a fully-formed model of this age category received primarily from school, but also from other foreign influences like television, print, Internet, and travel to urban centers. By “fast-forwarded” I mean that, almost within the same decade, schooling through high school arrived along with a variety of foreign influences, and these generated a very specific, locally adapted, idea of what it should mean to grow up. Adolescence has been easily adopted by young people, and parents resoundingly support it. It is a coherent category—that is to say, there is an ideal of adolescence—and this ideal is remarkably similar to the Western definition of the concept because many of its core ideas are based on this model, but it cannot be reduced to this definition.

In this section, I include three case studies of adolescent women in the community to explore how the lived experience of adolescence diverges from the ideal model that emerges in the intergenerational “conversation” in Sacha Loma. The ideal, to reiterate, is that adolescents should be measuredly carefree, lazy, mobile, expressive through their bodies, avidly motivated toward education, and cautious when it comes to marriage and childbearing. The three young women on whom I focus—16-year-old Moreina, 17-year-old Dolores, and 16-year-old Sarafina—have, to different extents, experienced this “in-between” life phase in which they are still becoming formed but also are doing what they can to transform their and their families’ life situations. There is an ideal of adolescence, but harsh realities and structural constraints mean that individual experiences of this category vary.

The narratives of Moreina, Dolores, and Sarafina illustrate different facets of the current face of this new space for growth and self-discovery. They also show how the development of this concept ripples across generations, with adults split into more “traditional” elders and young adults usually in their twenties with some education. Looking ahead to the next two chapters in which I consider inter- and intra-community relationships, these narratives show how adolescence engenders relationships that, along with practices of exchange-based sociality, build the identities of adolescents as agentive producers of their bodies, identities, social relationships, and futures.

***“Marriage is not necessary—it is the decision of each person”: Moreina***

Sixteen-year-old Moreina comes from one of the most dynamic families in the community. Her father, Pepe, is the primary owner of a popular local convenience store, though he maintains a farm *adentro* which he visits several times month. Her mother, Micaela, is the groundskeeper of the local public school. Micaela also goes to the farm on occasion to harvest products, which they sell at the market or consume at home. When the community was not much more than a hub for the school and the clinic, Pepe and Micaela would send Moreina’s older siblings on foot to Sacha Loma, about an hour’s walk from their farm *adentro*. The children would also walk back after school. This was particularly treacherous in the rainy season, and the threat of snakes and bugs were always a problem. Not only were her parents fearful that something terrible would befall their commuting children, but the children themselves arrived at school dirty and exhausted, with a long school day and trip home still ahead of them. Her older sisters, Sirena and Maximiliana describe a difficult childhood that ended with arranged marriages after they were spotted talking with their current partners.

Moreina had a very different upbringing; the years she can remember have been spent in Sacha Loma. When the opportunity arose to build a house in the community proper, the family quickly seized it, meaning that Moreina spent only a few years on her family's farm before coming to Sacha Loma more or less permanently. It seems that once the family was relocated riverside the parents experienced a shift in their approach to raising Moreina and the children to come after her. Pepe and Micaela remain stern, but their requests fall on deaf ears. Moreina and her younger siblings are good, but they are disobedient. While Pepe is concerned with his daughters' (Moreina has a younger sister, Elsa) behavior, the girls come and go as they please, flirting with young male classmates.

Moreina and her mother are constantly butting heads. With her rambunctious brother, Romeo, and independent-minded Moreina on her hands, Micaela often feels defeated. While adults like Micaela find it necessary to cultivate the space of adolescence for their children, it is not always easy to tolerate this new conduct. Like other teenagers in the community, Moreina was experimenting with the various paths to identity-making available to teens in the community. Most of the time, this meant ways of shaping and adorning the body. Young women in the community, explains Micaela,

dedicate themselves to [their appearances]. They paint themselves. They dress well. They brush their hair neatly. [This is a dangerous distraction] because some are only interested in this, as well as dancing and drinking. They are not focusing on the future. They want to lead bad lives.

She goes on about Moreina whose behavior she finds particularly disturbing. Like other young women in Sacha Loma, says Micaela, Moreina asserts "fat is ugly." She protests her mother's attempts to feed her: "I don't want to eat rice. I will get fat. I won't eat, then." But Micaela persists, "If you don't eat," she tells her, "then you are going to get sick. If you don't want rice, then you will have to eat something else." Moreina ignores her mother. Rather than bickering with her, Moreina spends her time outside of the house. Because of their strained relationship, Micaela finds herself yelling at Moreina, only further diminishing Moreina's desire to eat. Micaela is left scratching her head in frustration. On the one hand, she is invested completely in her children's wellbeing. On the other hand, she feels like she gets nothing in return: "My kids don't pull their own weight. They eat. They sleep. But they don't work."

Moreina describes her day as follows. She wakes up at five in the morning, makes breakfast, and then goes to school. She is there until 1:30 in the afternoon, after which she does homework for about an hour. Then she makes time for sports, socializing with girl friends, and watching TV until she retires for the night. Her comments that "studying doesn't interest" young people (see above) point to the shifting priorities of young people who lead a more sheltered existence than their parents and older siblings. As much as Micaela believes that she has no control over her children, Moreina laments that she is stifled by her parents and older siblings who monitor her behavior. At the same time, Moreina enjoys the smallness and isolation of Sacha Loma because she is "free from danger" and does not have to be "attached" to Micaela.

Moreina is intent on transforming the trajectory of her life path away from that of her mother. Currently single, Moreina does not plan to marry or have a child until she is 25. She remarked, "Marriage is not necessary—it is the decision of each person [whether

or not to marry].” Though she fears that there will be no money for her to do so, Moreina wants to attend college in order to become a nurse, so she can “secure a real job and show my children that I studied and that they can, too.” She goes to the farm approximately two days per month, but feels like she does not know as much about the farm as her parents, though she would like to know more. Visiting the city one weekend per month, Moreina enjoys urban life because in the city she “can watch *novelas*, meet friends, chat with neighbors, become familiar with other places, and have fun.” She is a big fan of Facebook, and her favorite actress is Jennifer Lopez.

***“I was pained because it is our custom that after one marries, parents can know nothing about their [married] children”: Dolores***

When I was a little girl, I used to play. As I was the only little girl (of my siblings), I used to leave the house to play with other little girls. Because I only have brothers, as a little girl, it wasn’t like I could play with dolls or stuffed animals.... So I would go to play with other little girls elsewhere. I would play, but then in the afternoons I would come home to help my *mami* (mommy, Sp.). I would help with whatever little thing my *mami* needed doing.... And then I grew up a little, and then I began to just do these things on my own. I have led a good life.... I help my *mami*, my *papi* (daddy, Sp.), and all of my family: with the cooking, and the cleaning, and washing the clothes, and—when my *mami* is busy—watching her baby.

--17-year-old Dolores

From a young age, and especially as the only female child, Dolores has been close with her mother; her calling her parents *mami* and *papi* hints at her continuing familial dependency. Dolores describes her typical daily activities as waking up before dawn, depending on when the babies in the house stir. Born prematurely, one baby boy, nearly a year old, is hers; the other baby boy is her mother’s. She makes breakfast daily for her family. While her mother is at work, she is in charge of the household. She sweeps, carries water, cleans rice, and tends to whichever assortment of children remains at home.

Dolores’ freedoms were curtailed by the birth of her son when she was 16. She had completed a half-year of high school before dropping out after becoming pregnant. Almost immediately, she married the alleged father of the baby: “The whole family was together when they [my parents] made us get married. I was only 16. We just got married, and that was it.” Tragically, though Dolores is a mother twice over, only one baby is living today.

Dolores is 17 and has taken on adult roles out of necessity, but a desire to recapture a lost adolescence surfaces at times. Though she is a wife and a mother, she lives in her parents’ home almost no differently than before her children and marriage, especially because the baby’s father spends much of his time away. She continues to enjoy dancing and dressing up for community festivities; her late night celebrating borders on the irresponsible. She is highly dependent upon the soothing of her mother, Nomaní, who through all of Dolores’ traumas, continues to bail her out faithfully and unconditionally. Dolores longs for freedom from responsibilities, but cannot break away from her mother or her sense of duty. Indeed, after her make-shift wedding,

I felt pained because it is our custom that after one marries, parents can know nothing about their [married] children. Some even separate from the family. I was pained because we [planned to] separate from the family. We are going to make another home, another family between husband and wife and our children.

***“I want to do something with my life”: Sarafina***

Sixteen-year-old Sarafina lives with her sister Paloma, her sister’s partner Felipe, and their children. Her daily activities are typical of a student. She attends class and does her homework. But Sarafina is a somber young woman who relishes time alone. “When I am alone, I sing,” she says. “Or I go somewhere to sit by myself.” She ends her day falling asleep watching television.

In her bedroom, there is a full bed, which Sarafina shares with her younger niece. The wooden plank walls are plastered from floor to ceiling with magazine images of tall, thin, light-skinned Latina women selling clothes, make-up, sexiness, and whiteness—the termites consumed the pulpy models as avidly as she did. Her pageant ribbons hang along the wall opposite her bed.

When I asked Sarafina if she would have more or better options than her parents she responded yes, because her parents studied, but did not finish school. “Back then,” she went on, “when men and women ‘talked,’ they made them get together. They stopped studying.” Sarafina’s mother and father’s “conversation courtship” led to teenage marriage and ultimately her mother’s untimely death. According to Sarafina, her mother died some years ago from her husband’s beating her relentlessly, so much that she *no soportó más* (could bear no more, Sp.), and poisoned herself. Her autopsy revealed, however, that the beatings rather than the poison were the cause of death. The children left their father’s house and were scattered all over the region with relatives. She, her sister Paloma, and her two brothers were sent to Sacha Loma to live with their extended family.

An excellent student and always among the top choices for representing her class in school beauty pageants, Sarafina wanted nothing more than “to do something with my life.” During our interview, she expressed the importance of women’s getting an education in order to get a job so that “we women can defend ourselves,” “leave a husband who mistreats us,” and “not be so maintained by our husbands.” As I interviewed her in her room, the magazine images of women, clothing, and baubles staring down on us, she talked about her dreams in a hushed tone. Sarafina desired to attend university, find someone there with whom she might fall in love and who might love her back, have a family, and provide her children with *todo camino* (every opportunity, Sp.). However, she did not want to be married before the age of 25 and two children would be enough. “I want my children to be happy because I haven’t been very happy,” she sighed. As she spoke, she gazed at the female role models on her walls—“*son espectaculares* (they are spectacular, Sp.),” she said dreamily. When I asked what she wanted for her future she responded: “a good home—to be happy.”

Considering Sarafina’s troubled past, I was surprised by the turn her situation took. After Christmas break, Sacha Loma’s students trickled in, resigned to begin the second semester. Sarafina did not rejoin her classmates. Her sister Paloma was also noticeably absent. I learned later that Sarafina, a tenth grader, had her own “conversation courtship” with the high school mathematics teacher. Paloma, her guardian, “fixed” the

situation by negotiating a marriage between her and the teacher, whose contract was soon revoked. Sarafina and her new husband were forced to move to the nearby city of Tena.

Limited possibilities run in Sarafina's family. Like Sarafina, her 22-year-old sister Paloma has suffered difficulties. When I asked her about her biggest preoccupation, Paloma explained, "Kids need to study. There is no money when kids want it [for big things like school but also small pleasures like lollipops]. Some families can't even afford food." She went on, "[When I was young], my biggest concern was education.... I needed to study. No one could help me. So I had to both work and study. Then I met Felipe. I thought he would help me [study], so I got engaged." She slammed her fist on the bed and said with an embarrassed grin, "Then he didn't help me! I hope after my new baby is one year old I can go back to school." Paloma now faces domestic violence. For a time, Paloma says, Felipe "had the profession of being drunk." She faced both beatings and forced intercourse from her partner. Felipe is still legally married to another woman, and Paloma fears that he will never get divorced and will one day abandon her. Her dream is to marry Felipe and to have a happy family life—what she and Sarafina have been denied their entire lives.

### *Adolescence: Real Versus Ideal*

I interviewed Moreina months after I had interviewed her mother, and the difference between their demeanors and perspectives was striking. Micaela was a woman frustrated by her swelling obligations and disobedient children. We spoke for several hours, and she was deeply interested in the conversation. Moreina, in contrast, was frequently flippant in her responses. Her mind wandered. She giggled and rolled her eyes. She was unburdened in a way that her mother could never be. The two times during my tenure in Sacha Loma that I saw Moreina the least bit upset were when she was up for the junior class's queen and she lost, and when she dropped and damaged a friend's digital camera and was on the hook for its replacement. In that case, Micaela suffered as much as Moreina; both cried, wondering from where to scrape together the large sum of money. As a carefree, single, childless teenager, Moreina preoccupied herself with highlighting her hair, cutting her bangs, buying make-up and clothes, flirting with boys, and learning English. She would likely never know what it felt like to have an arranged marriage like her mother and older sisters. Her role models come from the pages of *Yanbal*, with their sexy, light-skinned models, or from *telenovelas* like *Huracán* (Hurricane, Sp.), which showcases betrayal and complicated romantic relationships. With high school graduation just around the corner and aspirations to attend nursing school, Moreina embodies the changing face of adolescence in Sacha Loma.

Dolores' history is very different: an unplanned marriage, two unplanned pregnancies, and the loss of her prematurely born son. She is a teenager with the weight of the adult world on her shoulders. Her parents recognize this; she and they intend that she will complete high school once her baby gets a little older. Her aspirations have already been burned by the harsh reality imposed by poor sex education and the continued inability of many young women to insist on protection in the bedroom. Yet, hope to one day transform her lot still glimmers. After completing high school, Dolores dreams of opening her own clothing store stocked with items that she herself knits. She told me this as she pulled out the unused, handmade clothing of her lost baby while rocking her mother's newborn in her arms. She plans to return to school after her son



turns two and then hopes to apply to university to pursue clothing design.

Sarafina wanted nothing more than to transform the fate that had befallen all strong female figures in her life. As a top student and articulate pageant winner, she was well on her way to garnering the educational and social capital necessary to achieve her goals. The fact that an older man took advantage of her under the guise of romance—the very romance that wooed her from the walls of her bedroom—does not diminish her hopes to break free. She wants desperately to provide something different to her children, so that they, unlike her, will be happy.

Sarafina and her teenage peers are the first generation of Kichwa in Sacha Loma for whom adolescence and its new possibilities are an expected part of growing up. Their decisions will transform what the next generation, their children, can imagine and aspire. Issues of agency versus structure run through these life stories. Young people in Sacha Loma and their parents and grandparents want new and different things. They talk of attending college, moving to the city, becoming doctors and nurses, learning new languages, and traveling to faraway lands. Whether these aspirations can be realized is a question to be answered over the next decade. Micaela's prognosis is grim:

But here...where are they going to go? Those that have graduated from [the boarding high school], a few miserable ones are teachers. Of those who have graduated from the public school, only a lonely one is working here. Other than that, everyone else is stuck at home. Now, as the government says, studying is everything. Only the top students get jobs. And the students here hardly hack it.

### *Cultivating a New Category of Young Adults*

Regenerative interplay (Cole and Durham 2007)—the mutual interactions among generations such that influences, effects, or changes in one may affect others—has cultivated a new category of adulthood alongside adolescence: young adults in their twenties with some education. This is not as distinguished a phase as adolescence.

As explained, most women over the age of 28 in Sacha Loma had *pedidas*. Women in their early to mid-twenties are in a grey area—some have had arranged marriages, some have not. Young adult Kichwa women in their twenties possess more “modern” outlooks, high school degrees, and husbands and children. Thus, they straddle the teen and elder adult generation in their characteristics.

When these young adults were teenagers, they were among the first Kichwa youngsters to have secondary education as an option, though there were still intense pressures on young women to begin forming their families early. The first steps that these Kichwa women took toward advanced education have now turned into great strides among the current teenage generation. Young adults, as products of the recent movement in favor of educating young people, value few things more highly than the education of their own children.

The distinction I make here between young adults and elder adults is not a lived distinction for Kichwa in which there are divides or palpable disagreements between these two groups. I mention young adulthood because the changes that transformed the experiences of young adult Kichwas have been amplified through gradual regenerative interplay, which has, in turn, contributed to the rise of adolescence in Sacha Loma. As adolescence becomes taken-for-granted to an even larger extent, and the current

generation of adolescents enters adulthood, the present generation of children, who are on the verge of their adolescent years, will have possibly greater freedoms and more intense expectations for educational and professional achievement.

### **Courtship, Friendship, Citizenship: Modernity's New Relationships**

In her ethnography of the changing experiences of Manchineri youth in Brazil, Pirjo Virtanen (2012) digs deeply into how young people, especially young men, have taken up the role of “spokespeople” for their communities. Spokespeople act as intermediaries between Manchineri and non-Indian outsiders through “entering into a new discourse and representing things from different viewpoints, using other discourses and ways...to bring mobility and dynamics to the community by embodying the power of these others” (Virtanen 2012:126). Virtanen’s work on indigenous youth as spokespeople, especially her insight into the potency of interethnic relationships for influencing the identities of these young people, points us to look more closely at youth as major players on the “shifting middle ground” of modernity. This terrain is defined not only in terms of issues associated with outsiders’ views of indigenous symbolism and authenticity, as Beth Conklin and Laura Graham (1995) elaborated in their analysis of the rise of indigenous activism in the 1990s. It also emerges in new social spaces like schools, cities, eco-lodges, and seats in front of a television set. Most recently, a global pool of others has come together on Facebook, expanding social networks to include complete strangers just a click away.

The dynamics of interpersonal relationships, exchange, and sociality are changing in Sacha Loma. For the Manchineri, Virtanen describes how,

...in various social environments, indigenous adolescents integrate, exclude themselves, and play a part in new encounters with their own indigenous groups, other indigenous groups, age groups, and the various subgroups of the dominant society, creating new ways of relating. Their process of sociality is therefore multidimensional. [Virtanen 2012:182]

In Sacha Loma, Kichwa are learning to relate in new, sometimes quite foreign, ways. For instance, 18-year-old Yolanda, as the English teacher at the local public school, must learn how to position herself within the hierarchy of teachers and relate to her boss, the school’s *director* (principal, Sp.). In turn, she must also learn how to position herself with respect to her students, a mix of Kichwa and *mestizo* teens, some of whom are her age or older. Whereas until recently, Kichwa like her parents and grandparents were their own bosses, working on the farm, now even her parents, along with other elders in the community, have taken nine-to-five jobs that necessitate relationships with outsiders.

The primary relationships in which Sacha Loma teens are engaged consist of courtship (young romances between girls and boys); friendship (nonsexual same-sex and cross-sex close relationships); and citizenship (or the status of being a proper member of the Ecuadorian nation). Courtship is very much influenced by television. Role models come from the tempestuous *telenovelas* like *Mañana es para siempre* or the inaccessible world of upper class Orange County, California in shows like *The O.C.*, a dramatic serial produced in the United States. These actor-others are role models for friendship as well, but television friendships are characterized by back-stabbing, cheating, and lies as much

as or more than by support. Inspired by the extravagant and fancy-free lifestyles of particular actresses, young women like Nicola have formed imaginative relationships with these actresses. Nicola idolizes entertainment news spokeswoman Carolina Jaume because she is “beautiful and intelligent,” and once ripped a page from a pop magazine I had with Jaume’s image.

As seen throughout this chapter, school fosters new relationships between Kichwa teens and non-kin, often *mestizo*, teachers, and between indigenous and non-indigenous youngsters. It also solidifies existing relationships between Kichwa teens from the region in their quest to become educated, “modern,” Ecuadorian citizens.

Kichwa teens’ quest for citizenship on a grander scale is a quest for global belonging that is evident in a burgeoning trend in the community: to engage heavily with Facebook and other forms of social media. In web-based social interactions using networking sites like Facebook, information and ideas are exchanged, simulated friendships are forged, and users become united in virtual communities that are held together by little other than make-believe “pokes” and “likes.” While sites like Facebook can and are used to keep in touch people who have at one point physically met one another, they are also used in what Megan Christenson calls a “cocktail party” fashion, for meeting new people who are for all intents and purposes strangers (personal communication, 12/3/2013).

While doing a study of social media usage in rural Ecuador, Christenson investigated social media usage among high schoolers, both boarding and public, in Sacha Loma. Surprisingly, she found that “while only 72% of those surveyed have access to Internet in their home towns, more than 92% indicated they use some form of social media—namely Facebook” (personal communication, 12/3/2013). This meant that “those without internet are literally *seeking out* ways to get an account and making time (and spending lots of money) at internet cafes” (personal communication 12/13/2013). The closest Internet cafes to Sacha Loma are located over three hours away by canoe and then bus, which means that these new networking possibilities must be important to the teens who go through the trouble of traveling to and paying for them. Christenson’s study included students, both rural and urban, both Kichwa and *mestizo*, who happened to be attending high school in Sacha Loma. I posed similar questions exclusively to Sacha Loma teens and found similar numbers. Among those I interviewed who were under 18 years of age, 83% reported having no Internet at home. Yet, 67% reported using Facebook on a regular basis. Sacha Loma just had an Internet tower installed by the Ecuadorian government on the grounds of the public school, making instant connection to the outside world from the comfort of their own community a possibility. As Christenson put it, “A week ago it was difficult to communicate with the other side of the river, but now that you’ve created an account on Facebook, you can pretty much communicate with the rest of the world” (personal communication, 12/3/2013).

### **Conclusion: The Future of Adolescence and Adolescents’ Futures**

Although the self-disciplined ritual life of the *chagra mama* [garden mother, Kichwa]...are increasingly in tension with the jobs and lifestyles of young people, younger gardeners are finding new ways to carry on the gardening piety of their grandmothers.

--Swanson 2009:64

Better is the kid who is worried about other people. This is the kid who wants to get ahead, to overcome, not only for himself but for the rest.

--52-year-old Nemar

Tod Swanson (2009) describes how cultivating manioc has continued to flourish among the young Kichwa women with whom he works in the Pastaza and Upper Napo river valleys of Ecuador. A kind of “gardening piety” expresses intergenerational transformations of long-standing cultural orientations. Young Kichwa women continue to garden. They hold great respect for manioc and the elder women who first taught them to cultivate it. Their gardening piety is demonstrative of their being an “*ali runa warmi* (a good Runa [Kichwa] woman)” (Swanson 2009:64).

My study of Sacha Loma adolescence finds similar dynamics extending beyond the *chakra* to broadening aspirational horizons. There are clear intergenerational differences among Kichwa women, but there also are less obvious continuities in Kichwa knowledge, discourse, and practice that impact bodies and identities. Kichwa elders have taken it upon themselves to direct the attention and energy they used to spend making sure their farms were productive and well looked after, to ensuring that their children are productive and well looked after as they navigate adolescence. (Traditional cultivation still plays a role in the cultivation of youngsters, as farms continue to be a reliable source of food and income; both help keep children in schools.) Kichwa, of course, have always tended to their children; the contexts and purpose of this care, however, have shifted significantly. Young people are expected to grow their minds in the classroom in order to be later harvested as a fresh crop of Ecuadorian citizens with new types of job opportunities. Agricultural cultivation has become adolescent cultivation.

Kichwa teens in Sacha Loma are, with the help of their parents and grandparents, figuring out just what it means to live and (re)produce adolescence. And what it means to live adolescence is being negotiated within the framework of existing Kichwa logics of sociality and production. In other words, the individual productive goals of Kichwa youngsters have important socially-directed components. This is the return of sorts the elder generation hopes to get on its investments in youth. Those children who look backward toward the community while moving forward are the “good kids” of whom Nemar speaks.

Adolescence has been treated generally, in academic analyses, as an etic (exogenous) imposition of the West. Yet, in Sacha Loma, adolescence is not only a product of television, travel, and tourism, but also an emic (endogenous) concept that the Kichwa here have appropriated and are re-imagining. The concept of adolescence encapsulates the sense of being “in production” that characterizes perceptions of the young in Sacha Loma. This processual state permits them the freedom to be lazy, delay marriage and children, get an education, watch television and engage in projects of self-presentation, and be mobile. They can do these things and aspire for change while still in the protective folds of their kin groups who watchfully cultivate them.

The next ten years will be critical. As Micaela observed, job opportunities are still limited, even for the educated. Will pre-teens feel inspired to study like their older, still mostly out-of-work siblings? Will the elder adults and aging young adults continue to work hard to support educational pursuits that are not necessarily panning out? What

are adolescents' futures, and what is the future of adolescence? The rise of adolescence will have to vie with the decline of real professional possibilities for Kichwa graduates.

## CHAPTER 4: PRODUCTIVE ENDEAVORS, NEW AND OLD: *INTERCAMBIO*, SOCIALITY, AND CULTIVATING PROPER TEENS

### Relationships that Move Kichwa Forward

*Intercambio* is a key word in Sacha Loma. People use it to describe relationships with non-kin and the exchanges —of education, information, and things— that may put historically unequal relationships (especially interethnic relations between Kichwa, *colonos* [*mestizos*]<sup>2</sup>, and whites) on a more equal footing. Interethnic relationships, particularly with teachers, are crucial for young people’s expanding aspirations and possibilities to *seguir adelante* (get ahead, Sp.).

This chapter explores how Sacha Lomans’ attitudes toward adolescence, and parental support for the education that enables young people to navigate relationships with non-indigenous outsiders, relate to Kichwa principles of sociality that foreground the centrality of exchange and cultivation in producing proper persons. I locate this analysis in relation to debates over how interactions with whites, and the adoption of clothing and other “foreign” bodily markers of modernity, fit with native Amazonian concepts of body and spirit, and notions of kinship and ethnicity based in “communities of substance” (Seeger, Da Matta, and Viveiros de Castro 1979).

This chapter, along with the chapters that follow, introduces Kichwa-centered production to the discourse on indigeneity, youth culture, globalization, and modernity. Here I describe how relationships of *intercambio* are affecting what counts as productive—particularly through an emphasis on education. Kichwa social networks are incorporating non-kin others. Young people relate to these new others through their bodies. Whereas more traditional bodily logics foreground physical labor and the exchange of its produce with kin, the bodily and productive endeavors associated with new images, ideas, and ideals born of relationships with outsiders simultaneously strain and (re)produce the Kichwa body social.

The primary foundational logic of sociality operating on a daily basis in Kichwa engagements with the world and with each other involves practices of person-making grounded in exchanges of substance. Traditional manifestations of sociality—especially the exchange of food, brew, and body substance (e.g., breast milk)—are crucial to the social formation of teens (and everyone else); processes of social formation entail physical acts. At the same time, the older generation has come together, determined to cultivate their young people in ways consistent with their producing the newly emergent category of adolescence. This cultivation takes place through the actions of the younger generation who live it and the investments of the older generation who recognize young people in a formative state that they are supposed to nourish, feed, and grow. On the surface, the cultivation of modern teens eager to go out into the world and engage in projects that take them away from their farms and families might seem antithetical to the emphasis on family and kin, but I argue that it reinforces these values in interesting ways.

While the most visible, and what some elder Kichwa have described as

“toilsome,” expressions of Kichwa identity and tradition may gradually drop away (e.g., the painting of *chicha mukawas* [bowls, Kichwa] with intricate patterns using a woman’s hair), the emphasis on sociality, exchange, and sharing with kin endures and plays an integral part in young people’s formation. It may not matter to 49-year-old Dorotea that she serves her husband *chicha* from a dented metal bowl dipped in an old 5-gallon paint bucket; what does matter is that she is sharing the product of her labor to nourish her loved ones. If Kichwa elders are like palimpsests, layering the new possibilities, pressures, and tensions on top of a “traditional” tablet of experience from which traces of what has come before have not been removed entirely, Kichwa adolescents are persons drawing on an Etch-A-Sketch, navigating new paths to identity but with a continuous line not breaking completely with the past, while changing direction as needed along the way.

Perhaps the most dramatically new tool for the production of youngsters in Sacha Loma is education. Education alters Kichwa bodies, behaviors, and identities. The school in Sacha Loma views itself as producing proper, “modern,” Ecuadorian citizens. As the product of relationships with non-Kichwa outsiders, education is, arguably, the epitome of a foreign intervention in the formation and transformation of Kichwa youth. Yet, as this chapter will show, education has emerged as an important “substance” of exchange among Kichwa, young and old. Young people aspire to college degrees; older Kichwa work hard to provide them with the resources to achieve these goals; and Kichwa, in general, then expect education to be re-invested in the family and community so that everyone “moves forward.” Thus, though education is about exchange with the outsiders, education is enabled by, and reinforces, traditional kinship and social values. These are the foundation upon which *intercambio* with ethnic outsiders takes place. This notion of *intercambio* contrasts with interpretations put forth by scholars who see education as a form of bodily transformation through which indigenous subjects take on the perspectives of white people.

### Perspectivism

In the two decades since the publication of Eduardo Viveiros de Castro’s (1992) *From the Enemy’s Point of View* and his later, oft cited, “Cosmological Deixis and Amerindian Perspectivism” (1998), perspectivism has developed as a key model of native Amazonian thought. Perspectivism contends that whereas Western society assumes the universality of nature—the biological baseline—and a plurality of cultures, Amazonian societies, in contrast, recognize “spiritual unity and corporal diversity,” a multinatural ontology—varying bodies—rather than a multicultural ontology (Viveiros de Castro 1998:477-479). Amazonian peoples, explains Viveiros de Castro (1998:480), recognize a certain “somatic perspectivism”—humans, animals, and spirits have deeply dissimilar ways of being in and experiencing the world by way of the bodies they and others inhabit at any point in time; differing bodies enable differing points of view. To cite a common example from the ethnographic literature, for indigenous Amazonians, a human being would see a jaguar consuming a carcass as a jaguar consuming a carcass; the jaguar would see himself drinking the dead animal’s blood as a human enjoying manioc brew (Viveiros de Castro 1998:470; Vilaça 2007:174). The body is “the great differentiator in Amazonian cosmologies” because it acts as “that which unites beings of the same type, to the extent that it differentiates them from others” (Viveiros de Castro 1998:479). Differentiation depends on how different Amazonian groups treat their multinatural

exteriors—how they clothe, adorn, feed, and manipulate ritually their bodies and appearances is preeminently important (see Seeger 1975 and Turner 1980 for classic examples).

One vital contribution of perspectivism is its emphasis on the body as something to be interrogated as an essential component to the lived realities of Amazonians. Perspectivism proposes that the external form of an animal species is like “clothing” and differs from the internal, human form, which is only visible to certain animal species and sometimes shamans: “This internal form is the soul or spirit of the animal: an intentionality or subjectivity formally identical to human consciousness, materialisable...in a human bodily schema concealed behind an animal mask” (Viveiros de Castro 2012:48). Conceiving the external form of animal species to be a sort of “envelope” enables “reversals of perspective, especially shifts between human and animal identities and points of view” (Conklin 2001:192). In fact, just because the external form of animal species acts as an “envelope” or “clothing” does not mean it is discardable or unimportant:

It is not so much that the body is a clothing but rather that clothing is a body. We are dealing with societies which inscribe efficacious meanings onto the skin, and which use animal masks...endowed with the power to metaphysically transform the identities of those who wear them, if used in the appropriate ritual contexts.... The animal clothes that shamans use to travel to the cosmos are not fantasies but instruments: they are akin to diving equipment, or space suits, and not to carnival masks. [Viveiros de Castro 1998:482]

Michael Uzendoski, discussing the Napo Kichwa of Ecuador and their understandings of the will, writes, “The exterior, however, is neither superficial nor meant to hide the true substance of a person. The external form of a being is an object of continual refabrication and purpose” (2005b:39). The human form is especially unpredictable because fraudulent beings (animals, spirits) can masquerade as human—being anchored to one’s social group by having them near may be necessary to “secure [one’s] point of view” (Vilaça 2005:451). Fernando Santos-Granero puts it neatly—the body as understood by perspectivism is “shaped by exchange of glances with Others” (2012:189). Thus, the “other” is a necessary evil in the Amazonian politics of intersubjectivity. As Aparecida Vilaça says concerning the Wari: “The Wari’ experience a constantly unstable situation, always risking living on the border between human and nonhuman—as though only by knowing what it is to be *kawara* [non-human] can they experience what it really is to be human” (2007:180). It is through exchange of glances with others that self and group differentiation is possible (Kelly 2011). While simultaneously constituted by it, human subjectivity always runs the risk of being overtaken by potentially predatory others (Virtanen 2009:344).

Importantly, bodies are “chronically unstable” (Vilaça 2005), not “a synonym for distinctive substance or fixed shape” (Viveiros de Castro 1998:478). Amazonian bodies are likened to *habitus*, an aggregation of “affects and capacities” (Viveiros de Castro 1998:478; see Santos-Granero 2012:189) that determine perspective. As I will discuss further later, transformation of bodies, Viveiros de Castro (1998:480) points out, involves not only shifts in perspective, but also continual input from and exchange with one’s



social group like food, brew, sex, or kinship relations.

In sum, the points of view of “animals and other subjectivities” (Viveiros de Castro 2012:47), and the recognition of Amazonian indigenous peoples that these other subjectivities *are* subjectivities (that is, have human points of view) are key to perspectivism. In other words, “The original common condition of both humans and animals is not animality, but rather humanity” (Viveiros de Castro 2012:56). Points of view depend on their bodies as well as a relational hierarchy (human-animal; predator-prey) with the other interacting bodies. Animals, especially in myth, figure prominently in Amerindians’ perspectivist accounts. The intersubjective possibilities of humans and animals point to a highly mythologized, “virtually universal” Amerindian notion of “an original state of undifferentiation or ‘undifference’ (don’t mistake this for ‘indifference’ or ‘sameness’) between human and animals” (Viveiros de Castro 2012:55). Meaning, this shared humanity does not confer harmony, union, democracy of perspective, or guaranteed personhood; instead, it turns Western multiculturalism on its head and advocates multinaturalism with humanity as a cultural baseline.

### *Perspectivism and Interethnic Relations*

Recently, scholarly attention has shifted away from human interrelations with animals and spirits toward interethnic interactions and the increasing presence of higher-educated indigenous people on the world stage (Lasmar 2005; Vilaça 2007; Virtanen 2009, 2012). A number of scholars have interpreted interethnic encounters in terms of shamanic practice and journey.

When bringing this perspectivist model to bear on questions of how indigenous Amazonians relate with non-Indian and Indian outsiders in modernizing contexts, the notion of bodily habitus (Viveiros de Castro 1998:478) is a central concern. New “affects and capacities” include ways of speaking (e.g., language), dressing (e.g., “Western” garb), and comportment (e.g., classroom etiquette, business savvy). Some have shown how native Amazonians constantly must shift bodily codes in relation to a variety of outsiders, both white and native. Virtanen (2012:125) describes how Brazilian Manchineri young people have become key culture brokers—she calls them “spokespeople”—for their communities. Their position as spokespeople entails a certain cultural fluency tied to their bodily habitus. Virtanen terms this fluency their “altering embodiments” (2012:185). Speaking Portuguese, literacy, particular clothing and hairstyles are among altering embodiments required of youngsters.

Others have demonstrated how indigenous people may hold two bodies at once. Vilaça (2007:179) describes the Brazilian Wari’ as having a “double body,” simultaneously Wari’ and white. Part of their changing habitus, clothing plays a significant role in their bodily constitution (Vilaça 2007:185). Citing Viveiros de Castro’s (1998:475) interpretation of Claude Lévi-Strauss’ infamous and popular anecdote of Spanish-Indian contact in which the humanity of the colonial invaders was determined by the decay of their corpses (i.e., their bodies; Vilaça 2007:176), Vilaça makes the case “that indigenous sociology is above all ‘physiology,’ so that in place of ‘acculturation’ or ‘friction,’ what we have is transubstantiation and metamorphosis” (2007:183). Hence, the Wari’ resolve interethnic interaction using their bodies. By holding both bodies, they are able to experience (maintain the perspective of) both the worlds of Wari’ and whites (Vilaça 2007:188).

In Venezuela, José Kelly (2011) explores a parallel double-bodiedness or what he terms the “nape transformational axis” (nape means non-Yanomami whites). The nape transformational axis is a continuum of being Yanomami to being white (or a bit of both) that the Yanomami traverse largely based on their bodily habitus—access clothes and other manufactured goods, as well as their control of these goods’ distribution (Kelly 2011:91). Kelly emphasizes that shifts in habitus toward acquiring more nape affects are discussed among the Yanomami as “napeprou” (“being civilized” but also “becoming nape”), what is for them an “ongoing state of transformation into nape” that is never fully realized (2011:77-78).

Finally, Cristiane Lasmar (2005:148) advances a similar position in her ethnography of indigenous women in Brazil’s Upper Rio Negro. Lasmar describes a continuum with a white pole and an indigenous pole. At any point in time in the city “there are those [Indians] closest to the white mode [of living] and those closer to the indigenous mode [of living] (that is, closer to life in the community or ‘within’ [the forest])” (Lasmar 2005:148, my translation). Moving along the continuum involves lifestyle transformations (e.g., habits picked up in the city), how long one has resided in the city, and which group, white or indigenous, serves as the reference group of comparison (Lasmar 2005:148). But “an Indian never stops being an Indian” (Lasmar 2005:258, my translation). Lasmar contends that education is among the bodily affects, which indigenous Amazonians have appropriated to access the “white world” (2005:243, my translation). Education, she explains, has potential transformative power that “rebalances” (Lasmar 2005:243, my translation) asymmetrical power relations with whites.

Shamans are the archetypal representation of perspectivism because they, more than any other being, are able to change “clothes” and shift perspectives thereby crossing the boundaries of animal and spirit worlds. Because they are able to hold two bodies at once—their own and the body of the other they assume—shamans and their “bodily excursions” (Vilaça 2007:186) have been utilized frequently for comparison with modern interethnic situations. Virtanen writes, “Like the hallucinogens taken by shamans to alter their point of view, [modern, typically, young male] intermediaries seek to adopt different viewpoints though different methods, such as studying and embodying other capabilities, skills, and resources” (2009:344-345). Vilaça likens the trips Wari’ make to cities and the bodily experiences associated therewith—“the food they shared with whites, the physical aggression, and the cramped living in the same dwellings” (2007:186)—to shamanic journeys. Thus, if some Wari’ today profess, “we are whites,” this does not mean they are not Wari’; just as shamans “are simultaneously human and animal, the Wari’ today possess a double identity” (Vilaça 2007:179). Kelly (2011:82) describes one particular Yanomami nurse who, accessorized with whiteness (shoes, a T-shirt, notebook), was able to zigzag between the white world and Yanomami world, contrasting modern health initiatives to Yanomami *yopo* (a psychotropic plant) sessions. While asserting that his argument is not that Yanomami perceive Yanomami intermediaries (he calls them “interface Yanomami” [Kelly 2011:83]) as shamans, Kelly acknowledges “the possibility that their mediation is grounded on the same ontological premises as shamanism: true knowledge comes from becoming an Other and taking that Other’s point of view. Mediation between both worlds is possible for those who have a foot in both” (2011:83). These authors suggest that the intersubjective toolkit associated

with a perspectivist worldview promotes navigation of modern contexts for the Amazonian indigenous groups with whom they work.

Some Amazonian scholars talk about the body itself as an “envelope” that *enables* interethnic relationships. In this interpretation, perspectivist worldviews provide indigenous people with a leg up on assuming the body and therefore point of view of others. Virtanen writes,

When Manchineri people in the reserve said that without schooling they would be like dogs, they meant that they have to strengthen and develop particular human capacities in order to act in human-to-human relations and thereby maintain their subjectivity as real humans. Dogs, they point out, do not know how to speak for themselves or how to represent their way of being to others, orally or through writing.... Amazonian native thought identifies a continuous risk of certain animals dominating human subjectivity and turning them into animals or non-humans.... State education protects the Manchineri from becoming animals, since they gain educated persons in the reserve who know how to act in the world and are accustomed to the views of different kinds of people. [Virtanen 2009:344]

Is this purely about human versus dog perspectives, or do social hierarchies and cross-cultural savvy also inform Manchineri attitudes? Virtanen’s ethnography shows that alongside Manchineri concerns with turning into dogs are other concerns with social inferiority in interethnic relations. The Manchineri now view state-sponsored education as an integral part of their modern identities—without it, they are in some ways less than human or less able to communicate with other humans. They are expressing these sentiments, moreover, in what sounds like a European rhetoric of “being civilized,” a point that is relevant to the Kichwa of Sacha Loma that I will develop in a later chapter.

In Ramos’ view, “perspectivism bypasses the political reality of interethnic conflict to concentrate on the principles of ontology and cosmology internal to indigenous cultures” (2012:482). Vilaça (2007) frames the interpretive debate around contrasting emphases on bodily metamorphosis and “friction,” pitting the scholarship of Viveiros de Castro (perspectivism) against the scholarship of Roberto Cardoso de Oliveira (interethnic friction) (Ramos 2012:482). Vilaça (2007:171) illustrates her argument with examples of bodily aesthetics and image “authenticity” in situations of indigenous (eco)political representation. One example involved Nambikwara who remade a video of a female initiation rite after deciding that they were too clothed in the original version; in their updated version they remained partially clothed, but men wore shorter shorts and women wore tiny strips of cloth for skirts. A second example is of two native North American Indians who, in “Western” dress, were prohibited entry into an ecological conference in Brazil by Kayapó; they returned the next day in native regalia to be admitted unproblematically (Vilaça 2007:177). Both instances were excerpted from an article by Beth Conklin. Whereas Conklin (1997) discusses these cases in terms of the (body) politics of outsiders’ views of indigenous self-representation and authenticity, Vilaça relocates the analysis away from issues of interethnic power relations to cosmology:

If these transformations are the product of a political consciousness, they are only

possible or only take place in this form as a result of their compatibility with structuring aspects of thought, such as the dualist logic that...is related to the structural openness of Amerindians to the Other, and the notion of corporality as central to the constitution of the person. [Vilaça 2007:177]

Does this mean that without the beads and feathers, Amazonian Indians *could* not (an issue of literal bodily-based perspective) or *would* not (an issue of politics) see the native North Americans as Indian? Just as the Nambikwara, according to Vilaça, had not “introjected our [Western] notion of modesty” (2007:171) so much so that they could not go naked—perhaps assuming some sort of “double identity” (2007:172)—Amazonian political activists are bodily conscious first and politically conscious second (Vilaça 2007:177). Indigenous political actors’ capacity for pursuing self-determination through *clothing the body* is secondary to an emphasis on their determination of the self through the *body as clothing*.

What is not at issue is whether or not specific bodily configurations and transformations are relevant to native Amazonian identity—they are, as all Amazonianist scholars agree. What is at stake, according to Ramos, is applying a reductionist perspectivist logic—“even when it is not quite appropriate” (2012:482). Setting aside the plethora of examples of interethnic relationships in the Amazon that are far from harmonious, in perspectivism itself switching perspectives is supposed to be risky business (Virtanen 2009:350), characterized by negotiating subjectivity-threatening predation and cannibalism (see Ramos 2012:485).

Viveiros de Castro (2012:75) illustrates these dangers by citing at length from Vilaça’s description of how Wari’ shamans are able to tap into the jaguar perspective by “occupying” a jaguar body and “seeing” through it:

Shamans possess two simultaneous bodies, one human, the other animal. They can alternate their points of view by manipulating their sense of sight. When he wishes to change his vision, a shaman rubs his eyes for a few seconds: if he was seeing humans as animals—this being the point of view of his animal body—then he starts seeing them as humans; if he was seeing some particular animal as a person, then he will start seeing it as an animal and will then feel free to kill and eat it. The problem, as Topa explained to me, is that these different points of view alternate too quickly, and a shaman always runs the risk of suddenly realizing that the animal he had just killed was actually some relative of his.... Orowan, who is a shaman, told me he made this “mistake” once, while he was in his jaguar body: he killed and ate a man because he saw him from the jaguar’s point of view, as an enemy or game. [Vilaça 1998:25–26]

Viveiros de Castro’s larger point is that, “You do not ‘see a difference’—a difference is what makes you see” (2012:77). These sorts of human-animal interactions typical of more “traditional” perspectivist analyses—with their emphasis on literal vision through the other’s body and literal becoming of that other’s body (and the deadly consequences thereof)—seem to me quite different from the modern interethnic encounter, which involves a metaphorical, what Viveiros de Castro might term a “representational,” understanding of another’s point of view (which can, of course, entail use of particular

bodily adornments, affects, and capacities). Seeing difference, rather than seeing from difference, is a crucial element of *intercambio* (not to mention discrimination and racism). Talking about these new relationships in terms of perspectivism risks obscuring how interethnic encounters involve seeing difference off the bat; difference guides everyday life. And it is not difference that comes only from or is realized only through these new “white” bodily adornments or habits. It is difference that pervades the unequal power relations that are the terrain of native Amazonian life.

Must interspecies communication through the putting on of animal clothing be the same as interethnic communication through donning Western clothing, habits picked up while working in an office, or the affects associated with education? It does *not have to be* (see Rival 2000). For the Kichwa of Sacha Loma, appropriating something of a more “Western appearance” is not about assuming the position of the other’s I (i.e., literal subjectivity through altering the body, or “seeing” like a white person). It is more about fashioning oneself as knowing or having something belonging to this other, foreign, world (i.e., perceived social and cultural capital). Such fashioning has become inescapably bodily, and changes in bodily adornment and behavior facilitate intersubjective communication (e.g., Sacha Loma Kichwa might say Western clothing has made it easier for them to work within mainstream society). However, these new bodily adornments and behaviors have more to do with self-representation in the service of broadening one’s own, or metaphorically gaining access to another’s, *perspective* (epistemology, not ontology). To borrow Viveiros de Castro’s own words, (though he was making a slightly different argument about the nature/culture dichotomy): the varied perspectives of the interethnic encounter “are not ontological provinces, but rather refer to exchangeable perspectives and relational-positional contexts; in brief, points of view” (2012:47).

Bodily transformations occur on both sides of the equation. Vilaça suggests that “feather decorations are the *way for the whites to become Indian*” (2007:175). Virtanen points out that urban shamanic rituals involving both Manchineri and non-Manchineri—rituals that require a bodily control and manipulation—produce the non-indigenous body in new and different ways just as it would the indigenous body (Virtanen 2012:105). I recall an instance from my own work. I was enjoying a warm afternoon by the river when some local women commented on my white, unblemished (i.e., un-bug-bitten) arms. They praised the fact that I was at long last *acostumbrándome* (becoming accustomed/used to the environment, Sp.). My body had been transformed in some fundamental physical way: its chemistry was now unaffected by bug bites, and my body therefore belonged in the rain forest. Yet, I was in no way less white or more Kichwa. My becoming accustomed did mean we could relate to each other a bit better because I had now proven my durability. The larger significance of this was, however, that I was not going anywhere. I had chosen to stick around in what was for me an unfamiliar environment (and they knew this because they had seen many white people before me come and go, often covered head-to-toe in bug bites). But it ended at that. They and I made great efforts to understand one another. Kichwa could shift their perspective, just as I could shift mine, though it was not about cosmology but rather about cultural sensitivity.

Returning to the infamous anecdote of European invaders, it is clear from other historical writings that colonizers held Indians’ bodies in question as much, perhaps, as

their souls. Specifically they keyed on indigenous bodies as related to sexuality, a sexuality that could call their humanity into doubt. The examples are chosen from a piece by Neil Whitehead (2012) in which he compiles and analyzes a variety of historical writings on Brazil, from missionaries to lay colonists, including their reactions to the indigenous population. These authors tended to highlight the “material, fleshy, and naked cannibal body,” especially their “exotic sexuality” (Whitehead 2012:645). For instance, Gabriel Soares de Sousa, a Portuguese colonist of Brazil, reacts to what he perceives as the Tupi Indians’ animalistic sexual behavior:

They are addicted to sodomy and do not consider it a shame. The one who acts as the male regards himself as virile and they boast of such *bestiality*. In their villages in the bush there are such men who keep shop to all those who want them, like prostitutes.... They are not satisfied with their penises as nature made them, but many of them expose theirs to the bites of poisonous animals which causes their penises to swell.... [Whitehead 2012:645-646, emphasis added]

The sodomizing natives are compared to beasts—their souls might be worth saving, but they are like animals, less than human. Writing of his Brazilian excursions, Amerigo Vespucci also comments about Tupi Indians’ exotic sexuality: “Another custom among them is sufficiently shameful, and beyond all *human* credibility. The women being very libidinous, make the penis of their husbands swell to such a size as to appear deformed...” (Whitehead 2012:643, emphasis added). Indeed, Vespucci remarks, their sexual practices—rooted in strange manipulations of the body—are “beyond all *human* credibility,” not to mention their cannibalistic tendencies (Whitehead 2012:64, emphasis added). If the native South Americans were human, this humanity was only tenuously secured from the point of view of the early explorers. Vilaça’s observation that the Indians wanted to know “what type of humans these whites were...through studying the peculiarities of their bodies” (2007:176) might also hold true for the colonizers who took ample opportunity to dehumanize those they encountered by focusing on their bodily affects and capacities. Viveiros de Castro himself asserts: “As bundles of affects and sites of perspective, rather than material organisms, bodies are ‘souls,’ just, incidentally, as souls and spirits ‘are’ bodies” (1998:481).

Ramos (2012) emphasizes the inappropriateness of treating the Amazon as a homogenized culture area. Just as there is variability among Amazonian groups, there is diversity among Kichwa with whom I work. “Kichwa” is not a universalizing term or a leveler of experience. It is with this sentiment that I move on to discuss themes of production and sociality as related to teens in Sacha Loma with a focus on perspectives, not perspectivism.

### **Spiritual, Animal, and Human Encounters among Contemporary Kichwa**

Amazonian scholars have described Kichwa as perspectivists. Perhaps most notable is Eduardo Kohn’s adept examination of Kichwa ecological knowledge as a product of an intimately aware relationship with the environment that he designates as “aesthetic orientations” and “lived engagement” (2002:1). Writing of the Ávila Runa (*Runa* is a word that means person in Kichwa as well as an ethnonym) in the Ecuadorian Amazon, Kohn elaborates what he terms the “perspectival aesthetic,” and shies away

from equating this with the “important pan-Amazonian cosmological model known as ‘perspectivism’” (2002:108). Kohn does this to avoid applying a “*sui generis* cosmology” in favor of examining how the aesthetic develops out of “the practical ecological challenge of understanding interactions among different kinds of beings” (2002:109).

The Ávila Runa perspectival aesthetic may be defined as a mindfulness of and “an empathy towards how other beings experience the world” (Kohn 2002:111), which, in turn, ramifies into Ávila Runa being in the world. Central to the perspectival aesthetic is “the attempt to imagine the world from the perspective of another being” (Kohn 2002:121). For instance, as Kichwa gender complementarity (mutually dependent labors of men and women) would predict, hunters after a successful trip see their job as done, but recognize that, from the perspective of their wives, the work has just begun. Women are the ones who must process the meat— butcher and smoke it—for later circulation among kin (Kohn 2002:112). Another example Kohn (2002, 2013) draws on extensively is the relationship the Ávila Runa have with their dogs. He relates an incident in which two Kichwa women attempt to make sense of the death of their dogs by interpreting the barks they had heard from a distance as their dogs were presumably attacked by a mountain lion. They put themselves in their dogs’ paws, using how they remember the dogs’ cries, to recreate what the dogs must have been seeing from the point of view of the hounds (Kohn 2002:113-114).

These examples have less to do with Kichwa ontological commitments—that is, perspectivism in the flesh—than the empathy that Kohn goes to great pains to illustrate: “The aesthetic orientation that I have labeled, ‘perspectival’ . . . is one possible response to the universal human problem of intersubjective and—in the case of hunting, transpecific—empathy” (2002:141). This “intersubjective empathy,” I suggest, is a productive starting point for conceptualizing modern interethnic encounters; but we must be careful, as Kohn cautions, to not confuse analogies to the “perspectival model” with the realities of “everyday activities and challenges” (2002:141). (However, interpreting the wearing of a white man’s backpack as an instance of “shamanic acts,” Kohn writes about the Ávila Runa in more “traditionally” perspectivist terms in his 2013 book, especially, pp. 92-97 and 215.)

Michael Uzendoski (2005b) also addresses perspectivism among Kichwa. For Kichwa of Yacu Llaeta in the Napo Province of the Ecuadorian Amazon, Uzendoski, like Kohn, does not reproduce the perspectival model but rather emphasizes perspectivist threads that, it seems, fit most closely with sociality, another guiding principle for Kichwa. He focuses on “external appearances—not only bodies but also behavior—as fabrications that reflect individuals’ internal states of being, specifically their vital energy” (Uzendoski 2005b:39). In Uzendoski’s analysis, constructionist and perspectivist models blend, as Kichwa bodies become objects of “continual refabrication and purpose” by others (Uzendoski 2005b:39; Viveiros de Castro [1998:480] makes this connection, too). Uzendoski compares Kichwa perspectivist orientations to Viveiros de Castro’s (1998) discussion of bodies as clothing. The external “envelope” or “clothing” theorized by Viveiros de Castro takes on a new life in Uzendoski’s analysis, as a social project of communal cultivation in which persons are formed and reformed physically, a project that interweaves with the development of their internal vital energies. For instance, children are continual objects of such formations because their bodies—and

wills—are considered “soft” (Uzendoski 2005b:40). Uzendoski (2005b:54) also examines more literal bodily transformations for Kichwa, in which humans shape-shift and incorporate features of animals.

For Kichwa in Sacha Loma, on a daily basis, relationships with community members—and now a broadening array of ethnic outsiders—matter more than relationships with animals and spirits, though this is not to say the latter relationships were absent or unimportant. When trans-species relationships were discussed, they were most often referenced as belonging to the past or as working against the Kichwa project of becoming *civilizado* (civilized, Sp.); other times, as when 20-year-old Maximiliana talked about her dead grandmother returning as a jaguar (referred to as *tigre*, Sp.), such transformations were explained away as “something my dad said.” Education and shamanism were mutually exclusive for many Kichwa: to be educated meant, as 44-year-old Anselmo told me, “to not have beliefs in bad spirits, shamanism, the devil, evil eye, or *mal viento* (bad air, Sp., that can cause illness)” but instead to trust in “Western medicine (*medicina occidental*, Sp.), scientific medicine.” Anselmo was not alone in his reasoning. The fact that Kichwa saw themselves as maintaining a dual identity—proud of their heritage but also seeking to be *civilizado*, some might even say more “white” in practice through getting their degrees—cannot be explained by a perspectivist logic that allows them to maintain or shift between two bodies.

The case of 20-year-old Modesto, a young man from a community downriver (what used to be known as Sacha Loma Baja), illustrates these points. Modesto spends most of his time in Sacha Loma as a tour guide for the eco-hotel. In some ways, he seems more from Sacha Loma than his natal community. He also graduated from the private boarding school, spent one year abroad at a small liberal arts college in the United States, and speaks English fluently. Modesto is fairly singular in his staunch defense of tradition alongside a clear desire for intercultural exchange. Son of one of the only local men to have shamanic capacities, Modesto is a special amalgam of traditional beliefs and modern aspirations, in other words, he personifies Kichwa modernity.

One afternoon, Modesto came to my house worn out from a restless night. In the wee hours of the morning, he had heard what he thought was a cricket, “hunting” him. The abnormal chirping seemed to surround him, darting from one side of the bed to the other. He was convinced that the cricket was a spirit stalking him. He was terrified. From there Modesto went on to relate a complicated and nuanced picture of his personal experience with the spirit world.

The world is alive with spirits, he said. Human beings are able to see spirits unveil their identities primarily in two contexts: in states of dreaming or under the influence of the psychotrope *ayawaska*. Animals, humans, and spirits all have something like a soul; their souls are all formally similar. Even inanimate objects like rocks and trees have an animating spirit, which comes to life when one takes *ayawaska*, Modesto explained:

If one takes *ayawaska*, then boas appear as *gringos* (white people, Sp.); they are tall, white, and attractive. If you are a man, then they appear as women. If you are a woman, they appear as men. Shamans can take the form of animals: bears, jaguars, lions, bats, and horses. Animals have human spirits, too.



Spirits act as the protector of shamans; *boas* (anacondas, but also a term used in Sacha Loma to designate boa constrictors and snakes more generally) most often perform this role. Male shamans have female boa protective spirits; female shamans have male boa protector spirits. These spirits are, again, tall, white and sexy. While potentially protective, boa spirits can also be dangerous. Modesto cautions, “One has to be careful because when spirits smile at you, it could be a sign of bad things to come. They are deceptive when inviting. Dogs and horses are devils—horses have wings, which is why they are able to run so fast.” Others have written about the significance of powerful snakes in Kichwa mythology (Whitten and Whitten 1988). The idea that spirits are white has also been reported elsewhere, which has been interpreted as superimposing the social order onto their interactions with the forest (see Kohn 2002, Chapter 6). I will discuss the relationship of Kichwa to whiteness in Chapter 5.

There are also a variety of other spirit beings that appear especially threatening to young children: *duendes*, or gnome-like creatures who live in trees and run about as nuisances, especially at night; *cucos*, or bogeyman-type spirits, who can be big or small (child-sized) and also come out at night. *Cucos* tend to be black, and, according to Modesto, they have a “tense facial expression like Michael Jackson or *lucha libre* (Mexican wrestlers, Sp.)” Their presence often makes one feel cold, and they grab parts of people’s body. When one is grabbed by a *cuco*, one’s best defense is use of the left arm to swat him away. Modesto’s dad insists that the left arm is stronger for this purpose because, at night, the right arm is exhausted after working all day.

The alternative realities occupied by spirits, says Modesto, are the “true reality of things; to see this is to see truth.” This true reality can only be detected by taking *ayawaska*, which unmasks how things really are. In fact, the forest is populated by entire *pueblos de espíritus* (spirit towns, Sp.), especially near treacherous places like caves and waterfalls. If a person wanders into one of these *pueblos*, an entirely other reality is open to him/her. If he/she makes it back to “Earth,” he/she is graced with shamanic powers based in this new knowledge. Once, Modesto claimed, a young boy went fishing in the forest with his brother. The two got separated. On his way home with a *shikra* (woven bag, Kichwa) full of fish, he was distracted by a beautiful woman with long hair. He tried to run away, but would run 50 meters and find himself in the same spot. Tired and confused, he eventually gave himself over to the woman, closed his eyes, and all of a sudden was in the world of the spirits. One year later, the boy appeared back in the forest at the same spot with a *shikra* full of rotten fish and a body infused with otherworldly knowledge and power.

Modesto found no conflict between the spiritual events recounted by his father and his engagements as a young, educated, well-traveled Kichwa man. In fact, while attending college in the United States, he had his own encounters with spirits. When asked whether there were spirits in the United States he said, “Definitely. People in the United States choose to forget. They don’t know what a soul is.” For instance, one night after studying until after midnight, just as he was about to fall asleep, Modesto heard the sounds of what appeared to be a cell phone vibrating. He and his roommate looked high and low for the mysterious sound, but they could not find anything amiss. Rather than the chirps of a creepy cricket signaling the presence of spirits the night before, the vibrations of a cell phone indicated spiritual proximity in his dorm room. Trying to console Modesto, his roommate told him, “Maybe you have been out of the forest for too

long. You are forgetting where you came from. This is the spirit world's way of making you remember." Modesto smiled at the insight of his friend—he agreed that he was too in tune with technology at that time and was forgetting the forest.

This conversation with Modesto was an *entrée* into discussing larger problems concerning how Kichwa relations to the forest are changing. Kichwa, his family included, are attracted to the cities. They say, "I like TV. I like cars. I like buses." Modesto accuses some Kichwa of being "sell-outs," who see few alternatives to *vender ahora para no perder* (selling now in order to not lose out, Sp.). Selling a large, old tree for \$100 is an alluring offer for people strapped for cash. But once trees are gone, says Modesto, the spirits have no reason to stay.

Hence, instead of going to the *pueblos de espíritus*, Kichwa are frequenting just plain *pueblos* (city, Sp.; a contrast with the countryside is almost always implied). The *pueblo*, according to Modesto, is a frivolous place filled with chemicals and contamination, especially in the food. The forest, on the other hand, has *nada de química* (no chemicals whatsoever, Sp.). These fundamental differences between the city and the forest are deeply consequential for Kichwa who chose the *aire acondicionado* (air conditioning, Sp.) of the city over the *aire puro* (pure air, Sp.) of the countryside. "When one changes how one eats," says Modesto,

One changes one's way of being. Your farm is your life, the life of your children, your food—it doesn't just amount to \$100. The Secoya [another group indigenous to Ecuador] are now almost extinct: they wear clothing, live in the cities, and have cement houses.

(It should be pointed out that Modesto does not view himself as any less Kichwa though he, like the Secoya, wears clothes, frequents the city, and has a cement house in Tena, a point I will address later.) What one eats, those with whom one interacts, and how one relates to the land and takes care of one's family are all integral components to Kichwa identity that are, according to Modesto, under attack from the trivial pursuits of modernizing life: "Money comes and goes, but your life and the life of your family last—for this reason you have to preserve culture, language, and the forest."

The forest transforms one's body, says Modesto; this is fundamentally a relationship of exchange. Blanca Muratorio (1991), in her history of the Napo region told through the stories of Grandfather Alonso, relates how the Kichwa form exchange relationships with the forest and its spirits. The more often a Kichwa man hunts, the more his body absorbs the smell of the forest, the more the animals get used to his presence, and the more his body becomes a part of its surroundings. Modesto makes the same point when he discusses the Kichwa "way of being" as transformed while partaking of city conveniences. When these relationships change—when Kichwa eat chemical foods or make their home in the cities—Modesto suggests that Kichwa identity is threatened. This is an identity tied to place (the forest community) and kinship; the two are profoundly linked. The city, as Modesto's college experience illuminates, implies a forgetting of the relationships so integrally important for Kichwa existence. As Jeff Shenton (n.d.) explains,

These evolving [structural] conditions have not so much *enabled* the fluidity in

self-definition, which has long been central to Kichwa sociality and relationship to the forest, and to majority culture Ecuador. Instead, it has increased both its scale and its manifest destiny; it has changed the kinds of people young people strive to be, and the mobility they have to explore those new options.

Modesto laments that when the city comes to the forest—that is, when machines plough through trees—the animals and birds leave; according to him, the spirits vacate as well. Kichwas' relationship with the forest, then, cannot be as it was before. And when people's relationships to the forest and its contents change, their relationship to one another also changes. This is a subtle but important twist on Virtanen's (2009) proposal that the perspectivist logic enables interethnic relationships. In contrast, as Modesto sees it, when the relationship of Kichwa to the forest changes, a valuable trove of perspectives on the world perishes. When these perspectives are lost, relationships between Kichwa people change, too. In this sense, what is interesting in light of human-to-human relationships is not the shedding and picking up of new exteriors like Western clothing or behaviors (e.g., education), and thus facilitation of perspectival shifts. Instead, Modesto is pointing us to a limiting of the range of available viewpoints on being in the world—human beings' relationships with non-humans—and consequently the potential hindering of how Kichwa interact with other Kichwa. Kichwa become more outward-focused (city) rather than inward-oriented (community). Interethnic interactions matter to Modesto insofar as they draw people away from more familiar and familial relationships. When Kichwa prefer what Modesto characterizes as modernity's new, more destructive relationships with outsiders, these preferred relationships destroy the forest and, by extension, the spirit world. The potential for the "intersubjective empathy" of which Kohn (2002) speaks for the *Ávila Runa*, which is similar to what Modesto is driving at, is greatly reduced. In the United States, when Modesto was extracted from the forest, spirits—through technology—intervened to call him back (see also "soul blindness" in Kohn 2013).

Ever appreciative of different outlooks on reality, Modesto acknowledges that both engagements with the world have their benefits: "I am always desiring to learn more academically, culturally, technologically, but I don't want to lose my life here." What's more, the forest is resilient:

If you plant a tree where there is contamination it can grow. Trees can grow anywhere. And it will take the contamination inside of it, and it will send it back to the atmosphere, and it will come down as rain, and it will water the tree, and this process will happen over and over. Over time, the forest will get clean again.

### **Cultivating Transformational Teens Through Kichwa Sociality**

You know that the Kichwa culture is different? If there is a *minka*, the pair goes. For work, I mean, the couple goes. The woman brings food, her little bit of *chicha*, something. They share. But in the Hispanic culture, it's not this way.... So the Kichwa didn't like this. It didn't sit well with them. They began to indemnify the *mestizos*: "Why don't you all bring something, too?" Because the *padres de familia* offered *chicha* to everyone. So they asked for collaboration. For sugar. For something.

--44-year-old Anselmo, speaking of the friction that resulted when the Sacha Loma Kichwa and *mestizos* occupied the same community (Sacha Loma Baja) in the 1970s

A propensity for community and congenial sociality has been identified as a strong orientation in much of native Amazonia (e.g. McCallum 2001; Overing and Passes 2000). Indeed, Sacha Loma was founded on desire for this collaborative spirit. Anselmo explained,

After a year, there were internal problems with the *padres de familia*, so the school broke up. There was a racist situation [the lack of collaboration described above]. Let's say that the indigenous and the Hispanics did not get along. There was a division. So the *padres* said, "enough." They had already gotten experience, more or less, with how to form a community, so the Kichwa withdrew. So they formed the current Sacha Loma, which they called Sacha Loma Alta, and began to build the school in Sacha Loma. During this time, the children could not study in what then became Sacha Loma Baja [the original community from which they withdrew; it has since changed names].

For Kichwa in Sacha Loma, being in the world involves continual processes of becoming produced through exchange with others. This exchange is most often between familiar human members of one's socio-cultural group. More recently, formation has depended on a broadening base of ethnic outsiders, but the importance of kin ties remains strong. Kichwa of Sacha Loma are conscious of the essentialness of relationships of exchange among them; it is a source of pride, a marker that distinguishes them from outsiders. To this day, the first step toward organizing a *minka* is making a large vat of *chicha* to be distributed among contributing community members.

Michael Uzendoski (2005b) discusses notions of value among the Napo Kichwa, as it is constructed in relation to personhood, kinship, and exchange of visible and invisible substances like food, brew, and spirit (*samai*, Kichwa). (*Samai* is a Kichwa concept used to encapsulate the spirit or vital energy that is present and circulates in all things; it is not equivalent to soul [Uzendoski 2005b:18]. More prevalent than the use of *samai*, "soul" is referred to by Kichwa in Sacha Loma through the Spanish term *alma*.) Relationships of exchange begin at birth. According to Uzendoski (2005b:25-26), Napo Runa view infants as "soft" like corn and formless, not yet *sinzhi* (strong, Kichwa). He writes, "Napo Runa socioculture shapes birth and the upbringing of children through the development of the will, a social awareness and power it locates in the human heart (*shungu*)" (Uzendoski 2005b:25). Babies are born with will, but it is not yet formed. Following La Fontaine (1985), Uzendoski stresses the completed person as the product of social action and reproduction in a process that takes place over time (2005b:26). He details the intimate relationship of exchange between a mother and baby:

The mother-child bond is the first and most intimate relation in Runa society. It is never forgotten. Runa children have only one "true" mother (*mama*), but lots of other women assist in the mothering role. This love, moreover, it not just a

feeling. It is thought to make the child grow, to become strong. Babies who are not loved are said to be *pucchi*, or perennial runts, for love is thought to transfer bodily energy from mother to child. Love is a means of substance nourishment, a complement to bodily feeling directed at the development of strength. [Uzendoski 2005:27]

Beyond love, babies may receive “straightness” and health from their parents and others who hold them, but others may hold them only after the first month, or babies risk becoming “twisted” (Uzendoski 2005b:31; see also Uzendoski 2004b:896). Moreover, as with other Amazonian groups, Napo Kichwa mothers and fathers must observe a period of *couvade* (post-birth restrictions). Mothers not only eat for two, but they follow taboos for two, consuming the meat only of free-range fowl for two weeks after the child is born. They would never eat nocturnal game, for example, lest the qualities of the nightly restless animal be transferred to their baby (Uzendoski 2005b:31). Kichwa fathers abstain from eating certain game animals, heavy physical activity, and sex for several weeks after a child’s birth.

Uzendoski links observance of the *couvade* to Napo Kichwa cosmology and animistic beliefs:

The *couvade* demonstrates the complex cosmological and symbolic principles of animism in Amazonia and the circulation of energy between visible and invisible realms.... During the *sasina* [taboo] period, Runa fathers and mothers resist eating anything that could harm or damage the child. They say if the restrictions are not followed...the child might grow crooked, turn colors, or become weak and ill.... [Uzendoski 2005:32]

In Sacha Loma, when a baby is born, most fathers observe at least a loose *couvade*. Twenty-two-year-old Paloma’s partner, Felipe, was chastised for killing a snake within a 15-day window after their baby girl was born. The killing of the snake caused the baby to twist and turn almost to her death. She was saved by someone’s quick-thinking act of passing her over a candle.

As the child gets older, strengthening can include punishment and poking fun (Uzendoski 2005b:33-36). Certain activities like hunting for boys and cooking for girls are also seen as part of the formative process. In the words of one elder Kichwa woman in Sacha Loma, when “girls are older—then they are complete women.” “Complete” women continue to reproduce themselves and others through productive activities like maintaining the *chakra* or making *chicha*. Completeness, however, is not something ever really achieved because Kichwa identities continue to be re-formed as they make others through the circulation of products of labor.

Crucial for the production and development of proper persons, the consumption and exchange of food are just as essential for the nourishment of relationships. Food items are often vital objects of exchange. Perhaps one of the commonly shared food substances is a fermented brew made of manioc or plantain mash, called *chicha* in Sacha Loma (for the Napo Kichwa of Uzendoski’s ethnography, *chicha* is referred to as *asua*). The various brews are highly valued for their conversion of raw substance into something “cooked,” that is, finished, which then can be consumed (converting the brew into bodily

nourishment and strength) or exchanged (converting the brew into social bonds).

It is worth taking a few moments to describe how *chicha* is made traditionally. A Kichwa woman, after cleaning her *chakra* and waiting for her manioc plants to fully mature, harvests the tubers. After carting them home in a sack or *chalo* (tumpline basket, Kichwa), she peels the tubers and boils them until soft. Then she takes hunks of the mash, chews them, and spits them into a bucket. The mash is left for a couple days to ferment until it is *dulce* (sweet, Sp.); if it is left for a couple more days, it becomes *fuerte* (strong, Sp.). On innumerable occasions people reiterated the importance of *chicha* to me in the following ways: it is our juice. It gives us energy. When you are thirsty, it takes away your thirst. When one drinks it, one is no longer hungry and can work all day.

After babies are weaned, *chicha* becomes a primary food. When there is nothing else to eat, there is always *chicha*. At every gathering, large vats of *chicha* are served to guests. *Chicha is conviviality* (see Overing and Passes 2000). As a product of woman's labor and literally of *herself* by using her saliva, the circulation of *chicha* in some ways involves the circulation of its women makers (see Whitten 1976 for a discussion of *chicha* [*asua*], the life-blood of the house, as integrated with a Kichwa woman's body). Today, women insist, they no longer use their saliva; instead they add sweet potato to the mash to initiate the fermentation process.

The consumption of *chicha*, as well as game meat, is crucial for the circulation of *samai* (spirit substance, Kichwa) as well (Uzendoski 2004b). Uzendoski (2005b) explains that *asua* (feminine) and game meat (masculine) among the Kichwa are important components of gender complementarity and formation. *Asua* begins as a feminine product, though it is most circulated "throughout the community through the thoughts, stomachs, and even the names of men" (Uzendoski 2005b:137). Game meat, on the other hand, begins as a masculine object but is transformed into a feminine product after being processed by Kichwa women cooks (cf. Uzendoski 2004b). Because offering good *chicha* is so crucial for men's status, there can be serious repercussions for failure to produce it. Forty-four-year-old Roberta details her first months as a new wife to Anselmo: "His family said that I was worthless, that I didn't do anything, that I didn't make *chicha*, that I didn't offer *chicha* to the family." Her lazy behavior reflected poorly on Anselmo, so he punished her by submerging her in a river and yelling at her.

Food is consumed in groups. As 52-year-old Micaela asserts, "Food does not enter me when I am alone." Similarly, when asked what five things she wants most in the world, 35-year-old Nomaní listed food first "because it is necessary for life and for my children to be able to study." Her responses were very similar to other adult women in the community. Twenty-six-year-old Nicola, for instance, listed chicken and oranges; the former was her children's favorite food, and the latter had Vitamin C, which preventing them from falling ill. I am reminded, too, of an interview that I conducted with 25-year-old Imelda. About halfway through, all of a sudden, Imelda, who was still breastfeeding her infant son Alberto, began to leak milk, which quickly stained her shirt. She giggled and cheered, "*Colada* for Alberto! *Colada* for Alberto!" (*Coladas* are a warm oat drink made for breakfast.) She immediately latched him to her breast. Her young daughter Adriana also returned home during my interview with Imelda and brought with her soy-based sandwich cookies that are part of the government-sponsored school snack program. She handed the bright green packet to her mother, who divided the four cookies amongst the group—one to Adriana, one to grandmother Valerie, one to

Alberto, and one for her (they had already offered me *chicha*). As she and I spoke, she broke small pieces into Alberto's mouth. Valerie, in the meantime, continued in the background to prepare a large cauldron of *chicha*. Kichwa in Sacha Loma live immersed in exchanges of food both because they need food and because they need *each other*.

This may be changing somewhat as Kichwa turn more to convenience foods—*comida del pueblo* (city food, Sp.). Nicola, for instance, claims she does not consume *chicha* from other people's houses because she does not know if it is contaminated with parasites. This says as much about her food preferences as it does about her shifting identity as a Kichwa woman who would prefer a bottle of water to a bowl of brew.

Marriage also is an important form of exchange. Uzendoski (2005b) describes marriage primarily in terms of differing levels of value (in terms of both things and people). For the Kichwa, marriage transforms kin ties of affinity (relations by marriage) into kin ties of consanguinity (relations by blood). Uzendoski stresses that for the Kichwa “exchange relates but substance defines” (2005b:18). That is, ritual marriage converts things, which are exchanged between the couples' families, into people, and thereby into social relationships. Over time, marriage relationships, which begin as relationships of *exchange*, may be transformed into relationships of *substance* (blood) when the couple has children.

Gender complementarity—the recognition “that life is not possible without masculine-feminine combinations” (Uzendoski 2005:45)—means that even adults are, in a sense, in-production. Adult identities are defined in terms of their social relationships and exchange with others. Muratorio notes, “a strong *samai* embodies intelligence and social skills, both considered to be the product of time. It encapsulates the experiences of a lifetime...” (1998:415). Put simply, a Kichwa person's life is about the perpetual interplay between the individual and the social in processes of personhood formation that continue throughout adulthood.

Harry Walker's (2012) recent ethnography of the Urarina in Peruvian Amazonia demonstrates the interconnectedness of personal identity and individual pursuits, on the one hand, and solidarity and community, on the other. As with the socially-directed goals of individual pursuits among the Kichwa, so with individual labor and the products of labor among the Urarina: “As much as people were adamant that they did whatever they pleased, the stated reason for doing any particular activity involved meeting the needs and desires of one's kinsfolk” (Walker 2012:2). “Standing-leaned-together” is the translation of an Urarina phrase used to describe how Urarina people do and should live—the phrase encapsulates the dynamic of “autonomy and mutual support” (Walker 2012:4) that guide Urarina notions of what it means to “live well” (Walker 2012:4). Walker details what he suggests is “the heart of Amazonian sociality” (2012:17), or a feedback loop in which a person makes himself upon making others who make themselves upon making that person. Autonomy and dependency for Urarina involve

...a continual movement in which individual autonomy emerges from relations of mutual engagement and reciprocity but is then immediately directed at the reestablishment and re-creation of solidarity and connectedness, and in turn to the production of the autonomy of others. [Walker 2012:15]

Walker, moreover, shows that it is impossible for individual labor and its fruits to

“belong” exclusively to an individual because the individual owes his existence and ability to produce to the continued inputs of his kin and community (Walker 2012:118). This interaction between individual doings and their being done for others, the basis of Kichwa production and productivity, is at the root of the way many Kichwa characterized to me their motivations for personal success.

### ***Choclo, Chakras, and Children: Persons In-Production and Adolescence in Sacha Loma***

While in large part adolescence is a product of both later age of first marriage and the rise of schooling, both of which have helped carve a space for young people to experiment with new modes of agency, neither of these influences operates independently of Kichwa values and practices. Adolescence in Sacha Loma has become a period of social investment in which young individuals need to be nourished, both physically and mentally. As discussed previously, Kichwa view children, especially infants, as “soft” like corn and formless (Uzendoski 2005b:25-26). Indeed, a nickname for a particularly “soft” or impressionable young person—one who still has a lot of growing to do—is *choclo* (corn, Sp.). When adults in Sacha Loma cultivate the space of adolescence, they are investing in young people’s advancement—their hopes to *seguir adelante*—and nourishing their still “soft,” parent-dependent bodies. Education, leisure activities like watching television, and adornment of the teenage body in more cosmopolitan and trendy ways are all examples of the new productive pursuits supported by adults as part and parcel of the cultivation of their teens.

Cultivation of this life phase is not seamless; it is hard work. As Sacha Loma adolescents pursue their aspirations for the future guided by the families and communities, there is friction. Much of this friction centers on what seems to be a perennial, if stereotypical, problem with adolescents everywhere—they can be lazy!

Muratorio (1998) describes the tension between Napo Kichwa mothers and grandmothers in the nearest urban center to Sacha Loma, Tena, a city on the western edge of the Ecuadorian Amazon. The female teens of her study are experiencing “growing pains” (Muratorio 1998:411), while trying to

...walk through the uncertain and shifting boundaries of at least three main identity paths: the contested one already traveled by their elders, the glamorous and appealing one drawn by the mass media and shared with their peers, and the politically compelling one offered by the indigenous organizations. [Muratorio 1998:411]

Though she touches on the latter two, her focus is the first. I take up the second in the next chapter, and others like Oscar Espinosa (2012) have examined Amazonian youth experience of the third of Muratorio’s identity paths. For the elder women that Muratorio interviews, laziness, along with overt sexual availability, is perhaps the greatest negative behavior that young Kichwa women are manifesting in the rapidly changing contexts of modernity. For them, a lazy woman is a bad woman because laziness is the “quintessential antisocial behavior” (Muratorio 1998:414), inhibiting activities, like the production and circulation of food, that would otherwise link the young Kichwa woman to her social group. I have vivid memories of 44-year-old Roberta asking her son, 15-



year-old Víctor, if he was going to do an interview with me because, as she said within his earshot, “it’s not like he’s doing anything else anyway.” When 52-year-old Micaela pestered 16-year-old Moreina on a daily basis to do the laundry, I have never seen Moreina’s feet drag more slowly, as Micaela’s eyebrows furrowed in contempt.

Tod Swanson (2009) provides insight into the Kichwa work ethic through his analysis of human-plant relationships depicted in song as an exchange between estranged lovers or disobedient children. Fraught human-plant relationships are due to the manioc plants’ being *killa* (alternatively spelled *quilla*), a Kichwa term that Swanson translates as lazy, sexually loose, or immature (Swanson 2009:48). These, interestingly, are all traits of the younger female generation that Muratorio (1998) highlights as especially distressing to elder women in Tena. While their knowledge of the Kichwa language may be thin, young people in Sacha Loma do know the word *killa* (which may be a moniker assigned to them regularly by angry parents?). Micaela’s other school age daughter, 13-year-old Elsa, frequently berated her brothers, 6-year-old Pedro and 15-year-old Romeo, for being *killa*—not wanting to do the dishes or the laundry, not wanting to go to the farm or to do their homework. More often than *killa*, however, I heard young people referred to as *vago/a* (lazy, Sp.).

While children are made fun of for their laziness, laziness can be serious business—beatings in the past were not uncommon punishments for wives who were considered lazy; and, presently, at least two women are contending with particularly judgmental and fist-reactive husbands who consider them unfit domestic caretakers. Most often, however, criticism for laziness is part of the “hardening” process that I, and others like Uzendoski (2005b), describe as routine in the cultivation of children. To harden is to develop the will (see also Uzendoski 2005:140-141).

Returning to Swanson (2009), what is remarkable about his analysis is the connection that these Kichwa make between a plant’s laziness and passionate cultivation. Plants that are considered unruly or immature are not given up on; rather they are cared for more intensely and efforts to cultivate them are redoubled (Swanson 2009:38):

Manioc and other garden plants are treated like children who have withdrawn from a *quilla* or immature mother.... They are children who have been burned by parental abandonment.... They respond only to another expression of mature femininity, the sensuous and disciplined mothering of a *chagra mama* (garden mother, Kichwa). [Swanson 2009:58-59]

He continues, “When manioc is finally harvested, the area around the plant is first cleaned with much greater care than necessary” (Swanson 2009:59). Indeed, manioc cuttings sprout almost magically after insertion into the earth and need very little watchful tending to produce; however, to *limpiar* (clean, clear, Sp.) their gardens and crops is at least a weekly preoccupation of adult women in Sacha Loma.

The connection I make between nourishing plants like children and nourishing children like plants is not necessarily a connection that Kichwa in Sacha Loma would articulate themselves; and I am not implying that Kichwa parents cultivate their children as they would their gardens. However, other scholars have recorded such a connection. Muratorio writes, “When advising a younger person, an elder must keep the voice tone low and the manner calm. Nurturing is a slow process; it requires patience, like women’s

work of plant domestication” (1998:415). Muratorio cites the advice one of her elder informants gave to her husband who was yelling at their adolescent daughter: “You can never grow plants with violence; you always must talk softly to them” (1998:415). Uzendoski describes the direct association of the cultivation of manioc and the growing of children:

People say that gardens must be kept tidy and neat, “just like one grooms the bodies of one’s children.” Harvested manioc roots, as well, must be carefully cleaned and handled, as if they were *llullu* [tender, Kichwa]—the same language used to deal with the care of children. As well, people say that one must not place harvested manioc roots sideways or upside down in the carrying basket, or else the woman’s next child will be a breech birth. [Uzendoski 2005:126; see also Swanson 2009:64]

The generally positive parental attitudes toward the new aspirational engagements of their children are analogous to a model of adolescence as cultivated similarly to how Kichwa mothers have long lovingly cultivated their *chakras*.

### **From Cosmology To Cosmopolitanism: Other Transformations**

The formative aspects of adolescence—getting educated, traveling, laziness—are being nourished by adult Kichwa in ways consistent with fundamental features of traditional Kichwa personhood. Because to be Kichwa in Sacha Loma is to be in-process and linked with others, being produced is not a negative state. Transitionality proffers a space for growth, for social contribution and exchange, for building identities that can change over time and context.

At the same time, young Kichwa like Modesto are actively bringing about some of the biggest changes for their families and communities—they are producing others with their handiwork. In Chapter 2, I examined how the fact that adolescence is a time of becoming or transition does not necessarily prevent adolescents from being game-changers or change-makers. Considering youth in terms of their productive capacities directs attention from cosmology to cosmopolitanism—that is, how worldly and cross-culturally savvy teenage Kichwa negotiate the requisites and contexts of modernity.

The emergent process of “adolescentization” in Sacha Loma has occurred in tandem with major shifts in young people’s transition to adulthood. These changes are an essential part of Kichwas’, young and old, aspirations for the future. Young people in Sacha Loma are instigating political campaigns. Laptop-toting, internet-surfing young people have led technological revolutions here. Eighteen-year-old Yolanda demonstrates how teens in Sacha Loma are transforming their community’s future prospects.

### ***Education as Transformation***

Yolanda’s typical day begins at daybreak. She gets up and makes breakfast for herself. After dressing in skin tight jeans, a graphic T-shirt or button-down blouse, and high, open-toed heels, she goes to work as the English teacher for the local public school located about ten paces outside the back door of her parents’ (Roberta and Anselmo) house where she resides. Her high heels leave puncture tracks in the mud. Her day is

long and filled with wading through pages of government-issued textbooks with students ranging in age from first graders to seniors in high school.

When she gets off work, she returns to her parents' house to help with the chores. Most days she spends part of the afternoon planning English classes, and she almost always socializes at the volleyball or *indor* (soccer-like game) courts afterward. It is not uncommon to see Yolanda lounging in the open-air school cafeteria, with her ear resting on a suitor's shoulder, giggling and twirling her hair between her painted fingernails. When she is not at the courts, she passes the afternoon on Nicola's (her sister) porch watching television, paging through *Yanbal* magazines, or tending the store that Nicola runs out of her living room. In the evenings, she attends *indor* matches, after which she goes home, takes a shower, and relaxes.

Yolanda describes young women's current worries as keeping their families small (that is, birth control) and managing scholastic versus romantic obligations. She wants only one son so that she can provide him with all he will need to excel in life, especially a top-notch education. She plans to marry and have her child in her mid-twenties, and her biggest fear is "if, all of a sudden, I would have to get married." Adulthood ideally would take her to the mountains of Ecuador, where she would be madly in love and highly in demand as a tour guide with a live-in caregiver for her son.

Her dream is to be able to travel to faraway places. She recognizes the benefits of cross-cultural fluency. This is one reason she is an English teacher (in addition to being bilingual in Kichwa and Spanish). In her own words, "To learn another language is to know other people and to have options."

Her cosmopolitan aspirations diverge from her family's *campo* origins—both Roberta and Anselmo still frequent the farm, though Roberta's day job is as one of several kindergarten teachers, and Anselmo is the chief medical assistant/nurse at the local clinic. Yolanda does not like to go to the farm, though she appreciates the fact that cultivating one's own food means that, "No one will say anything to you or tell you what you are doing is wrong. You don't have to buy your own food." She gets this mentality from her parents. Anselmo once told me, "In the past, [arranging a marriage] was the pride of parents. Now it's different—the pride of parents is that their children study."

Yolanda enjoys spending her weekends in Tena where she goes for business—to turn in paperwork required by the high school—and for pleasure—to dance, to walk around the charming city squares, and to buy clothing.

As a recent high school graduate, she is now employed as the local "homegrown" English teacher. In fact, she is the only Kichwa woman instructor at the local school; and she is the only person under 20 employed at the local school. Single and (at the time of this study) childless, but not yet in her twenties or independent from her parents and their household, the image Yolanda presents is of a young woman who has successfully engaged with the community's transformed expectations for young women. The choices she makes are choices unprecedented in Sacha Loma's history—at the time of this fieldwork, there was no other adolescent Kichwa woman in the community who had completed secondary education and remained unattached to a child or partner. She represents the power and potential of female Kichwa youth to, with the continued support of their family and community, transform the outlooks and outcomes of young indigenous women in the region.

Young people's efforts to be educated are clearly driven by individual

motivations and desires. Many Kichwa teens dream big: they want to run hotels, to be accountants, manage organic farms for tourism, or attend college for additional education or nursing degrees. Their ambitions are a source of personal pride. Yet, these new aspirations are still fundamentally social and, as Anselmo indicates, a source of family and community pride as well. While in the past, Kichwa sociality was made and maintained primarily through the production, consumption, and circulation of products of labor like food, in current contexts, these types of relationship-building activities continue alongside a major community movement to educate Sacha Loma's youth. The experience of education is very much integrated into more traditional methods of maintaining Kichwa "communities of substance" (Seeger, Da Matta, and Viveiros de Castro 1979) and producing persons. Mothers may still make small batches of *chicha* for household consumption, but they are also responsible for cooking, on a rotating basis, the *coladas* for the school snack program. Grandmothers will spend four days a week harvesting cacao on their farms, but return with a *chalo* full of beans for sale at the Thursday market in order to fund their granddaughter's month-long internship. The entire community will butcher 20 or so prized chickens to share with teachers during Faculty Appreciation Day. These efforts on the part of parents and grandparents, while necessary for their children's education, are a source of gratification for them as well.

At the same time, the educated must uphold their end of the bargain and make use of their new opportunities and productive avenues as students. The symbolic, social, and educational capital that they develop in school is not only productive of bodies and identities (see Chapter 5), but also is considered productive as a platform on which community aspirations are built and possibly achieved. The educated are expected to one day provide that same chance for their children.

The Spanish phrase that Kichwa use when talking about education and their children—*darles estudio*—hints at education as something to be given or exchanged. *Dar* in Spanish means "to give" and *estudio* means "education/studies"; *darles estudio* means, then, "to give education/studies." This is in contrast to understanding education as purely a product of individual achievement—as in "I want my children to educate themselves" (*educarse*, Sp.). While *darles estudio* is not an exclusively Kichwa phrasing, it does reflect the Kichwa manner of conceptualizing the role of parents, family, and community in producing teens. As something to be "given," the substance of parental legacies, the education of teenagers has become a new form of strengthening, (re)building, and transforming Kichwa kinship, as children and parents to work together to realize unprecedented aspirations.

At the beginning of the interview that opened this dissertation, 52-year-old Nemar agreed to speak with me as a means of initiating what he called an *intercambio de ideas, cultura, de social* (an exchange of ideas, culture, and the social, Sp.) between him, a Kichwa man, and me, a white, foreigner anthropologist. Nemar expressed his hopes for the children of Sacha Loma:

We hope that our kids study.... For example, the son who studies has tended of late to abandon things. The son who studies, say agriculture, instead of cultivating the earth, raising his livestock, making his crops, what we would consider helping...instead [he abandons his farm] because the animals are dying, the plants aren't producing much, and all of this.... So he goes and gets a [desk]

job, only getting his salary, abandoning the farm, not helping the community prosper. So then, sometimes, things change because boys and girls don't look back [toward the community] and they only look forward. So the kids who have a degree say "I am only worried about myself; I am not looking back. I am not going to worry about the people who aren't educated and prepared like I am." Better is the kid who is worried about other people. This is the kid who wants to get ahead, to overcome, not only for himself but for the rest. And even better still would be the person who says, "I am going to get capacitated by the foreigner, and learn more things, and help other people." That's great, right? There are some who get educated and they say, "How important I am." They don't value other people. They don't value what is ours. It becomes alien or foreign to them.

Nemar's perspective combines what he saw as two essential components for the current development of young people: taking advantage of what outsiders have to offer and taking care of one's family and community. The best child is not necessarily the most successful child. The best child advances others as he advances himself, looking back with a watchful eye on the community as he moves forward. Yet, Nemar is obviously conflicted. His criticism of kids these days in the same breath as his praise of their potential demonstrates that the balance of individual and social motivations and obligations is still being worked out.

#### ***"Diversity of Human Perspectives": Kinship, a Means and an End***

"Learning to interact within the contemporary diversity of human perspectives," says Virtanen of the Brazilian Machineri, "forms the main passage from adolescence to adulthood, involving elders, parents, adults, and other younger people in embodying new knowledge" (2012:52). As for the indigenous youth of Virtanen's study, learning to maximize the "diversity of human perspectives" active in teenagers' lives is a central preoccupation of Kichwa in Sacha Loma. Relationships with ethnic others are a source of friction, especially in the local public school where *padres de familia* and school administrators often disagree. Trips to the city bring different challenges; discrimination is a problem.

Despite the hurdles involved with forging relationships with non-kin, these relationships are highly sought after. English is the class in which most parents want their children to excel; likewise speaking English is at the top of the list of any young person's aspirations. Kichwa want their children to learn English as the first step on a path toward the most commonly-cited goal when it came to interacting with foreigners: exchange (what Nemar calls *intercambio*), which is seen as character-building. This "diversity of human perspectives," is not necessarily perspectivism. It is, rather, an appreciation of the perspectives of others. Some might go so far as a comparison with cosmopolitanism in the philosophical sense of a shared moral community, or trying to come to a common ground in diversity, in what Kohn (2002) calls a "perspectival aesthetic."

Kelly (2011:102) describes Amazonian relationships with outsiders as "dangerous but necessary others." He elaborates:

Affinity [relatedness through marriage] always has an ambiguous value. It both

connects (as a channel for economic, political, marital, and ritual exchange) and separates (as a root source of community friction and fission)... It is precisely this process of successive obviation of alterity, from extreme outside to close identity, that places the domestication of criollos and the construction of kinship on a continuum. [Kelly 2011:102]

In Sacha Loma, the intensity of kin bonds developed through exchange (and its absence among outsiders) was a reason for the founding of the community. Kinship is a springboard for the newly emergent class of adolescents in Sacha Loma to pursue a widening array of aspirations. These aspirations bring them into contact with ethnic others who are crucial for the realization of their aspirations. At the same time, a prime goal of individual achievement continues to be the advancement of one's family and community. Not only does it take a village to educate a child; an educated child takes on village advancement as a responsibility. As Peter Gow writes of the Piro in Peru: "Their values are the values of kinship" (1991:2). For Kichwa, I would say, their aspirations are often the aspirations of kinship.

### **Conclusion: Modern *Minkas* for Producing Teens**

The cultivation of teens is a concept that incorporates the sense that adolescents are in-formation in ways that are different than, but consistent with, Kichwa constructionist logics of personhood, bodies, and identity. Yet teens are agents of change in their own right. Through teens and their elders' productive efforts, Kichwa adolescents establish themselves, both in terms of literal place and shifting identity.

Here the cases of Modesto and Yolanda served as starting posts for larger theoretical discussions, as in recent work by scholars who have begun to integrate lifecourse narratives of young people into their research (Dyson 2010; Halperin and Scheld 2007; Marrow 2013; McGinnis 2009; Worthman 2011). This not only brings an ethnographic perspective to more global issues, but also provides insight into what is becoming an increasingly prominent question of anthropological interest: as young people's aspirational horizons expand, do their educational and professional attainments follow suit? In the conclusion, I take up this question of aspirations versus hard realities in this community.

At the heart of the changing aspirations of Kichwa young and old, I argue, is a renewed commitment to kin. Older Kichwa carry out a continual *minka* for their children under construction; younger Kichwa are taught to re-invest their personal gains into the community.

I would like to close with a personal experience that drew me to think about *intercambio*. One wakeful night, as I slept in my small home amidst the swaying rain forest trees, I had a dream that an angry female spirit was attacking me. She thrashed at me with her arms, scowled and yelled at me profusely. My dream-self lunged at her with my left arm, and she vanished. Disturbed, I brought it up with Modesto and his Shiwiar friend Julio. "You have a *cuca*," they said, concerned. "She's probably jealous of you and your husband." I am not going to make the case that my tenure in the rain forest fundamentally altered my body in such a way that I was now more prone to commune with spirits. But the similarity of my experience and that of Modesto while he was studying abroad in the United States suggests that when far from home, spirits may call

us back to relationships we find deeply important.

## CHAPTER 5: MIND OVER MACHETE?: INTERGENERATIONAL SHIFTS IN KICHWA WOMEN'S BODILY LOGICS OF PRODUCTION

Nowadays, it's hard to work because my body hurts, and I suffer day in and day out. Sometimes I get sad thinking about my children's prospects on the farm—we are not going to advance only working on the farm. Working on the farm is hard work; working with a machete is hard work. It is much easier to work [at a store], to only use the head, the mind, and not the machete.

--49-year-old Dorotea

### On Bodies and Aspirations

As Dorotea spoke, she dipped her hand into a pot of *chicha*, carefully straining the floating bits of manioc before serving her husband a brimming bowl of the home brew. Having just returned from the farm, she wore a ripped, extra-large, once-white T-shirt on her weathered but tough frame, her clothes soaked through with sweat at the shoulders and neck. She was comfortably barefoot. We spoke for several hours about the future of Kichwa teens. Though she did not always agree with her daughters and nieces using nail polish and refusing to carry *chalos*, she has always supported their efforts to study: "If they don't want to work [on the farm]," she said, "then they are going to have to study so that they don't suffer with a machete."

The sturdy, stained Kichwa woman who served me *chicha* that day is a stark contrast to her grandniece. Twenty-six-year-old Nicola is the entrepreneur of the community. Owner of a small storefront and the sole cosmetic saleswoman in the community, she originated the red wristwatch fad 2012. Nicola rarely leaves the house without skinny jeans or short shorts and a full face of make-up. She is slender, her hair fashionably styled, her fingers always manicured with the latest polish colors. Recently, she purchased a white netbook computer—she searched for weeks for a color to her liking, feeling that black was not flashy enough—so that she could enroll in a distance-learning college program. She, like her great-aunt, views education as indispensable: "With education we [women] can defend ourselves. We can have our own money. My education will be the legacy I leave my children."

Twenty-five-year-old Sirena, Nicola's cousin, is the resident feminist of the community. She takes time to care for her appearance—putting on gold earrings and painting her nails—but most often all she manages to do is to slick back her hip-length hair and throw on some leggings before she heads off to work at her new job as a community health worker. She let nothing, not even an abusive husband, stand in the way of the education she needed to advance in this career:

I don't know why he yelled at me, he hit me, but I put myself in high school. I enrolled.... I never asked him why he hit me, why he yelled at me and called me lazy. Never did I say I was going to dropout. I said, "even though this may be the



end of me, I will finish my studies.” Night and day I studied and did my homework. I said, “I need to graduate, I need to graduate, I need to be somebody.”

Sirena recounted her long history of torment and spousal troubles at dusk during a rainstorm with tears in her eyes. Just the week before, her husband had hit her again at a public party. This, she promised, was the last time. Earlier that afternoon, she told him they were separating. The next morning she was off to a nearby city for another round of nursing certifications.

This chapter explores how the expanding aspirational horizons of Kichwa women in Sacha Loma are interwoven with relations among body, identity, and production through a comparison of two generations of Kichwa women. For Kichwa, bodies are integral to projects of self-identity. Bodies are about doing—that is, producing the things that women produce. Specifically, I examine education and media imagery, and what they communicate about race, ethnicity, and gender. I investigate these new influences’ relationship to young Kichwa bodies as they are shaped through a broadened understanding of productivity. To do something “productive” is to perform any activity that cultivates the development of oneself and, by extension, others. I compare intergenerational dynamics in bodily logics in terms of what bodies are doing, why, and for whom.

This chapter stresses intergenerational continuity. To say that Kichwa bodily logics are *continuous* does not mean that they are the *same*. What is happening with young Kichwa women is novel for their community, and this is part of broader global trends. Young people worldwide find themselves at the nexus of (1) intense desires for social and economic mobility that have been promised to them in their schools, on television, and by governments buying into and selling neoliberal ideals; (2) the ways of their elders who remain powerful influences in their everyday lives; and (3) the harsh reality that much of what is promised does not come easily or at all (see Liechty 1995, for example). While Kichwa youth may be part of a wider global contingent of teens and young adults confronting modernity’s experiments in similar ways, this chapter shows how local Kichwa expressions of tradition and modernity play a critical role in shaping the experiences of this trailblazing generation.

Dorotea, Nicola, and Sirena are all critical “producers” for the community. Dorotea is the most “traditionally” Kichwa of the three. She grows, harvests, processes, transports, and sells the farm goods necessary for her family’s survival. With greatly expanded opportunities for women, young adults and transformational teens extend this Kichwa logic in a new direction, producing the educational capital to propel themselves, their families, and their community forward. Yet, for all of these women, their role as producers is firmly rooted in bodies and body images that reflect their shifting aspirations in sturdy farm bodies or stylish student bodies. Farming is quickly disappearing as a tenable occupation, and education has risen in importance for Kichwa.

Middle-aged Dorotea, like her peers, is less concerned with how her body looks than with how her body functions. For her, what counts is manual labor, not manicures. In contrast, Sirena and Nicola are preoccupied with aesthetics. They recognize that one’s outside appearance often is viewed as reflecting one’s capacities, intelligence, station, and so on. Yet, Nicola’s make-up and Dorotea’s farm-stained apparel may share more

similarities than are immediately apparent.

Because education is a major motivating factor in Kichwa women's changing bodily logics of production—and young adults are often high school educated—adolescents and young adults tend to have similar body images. In this chapter, I will treat these age groups as a unit and often refer to them as “youth.” “Intergenerational” refers to the distinction between women 27 and under, and women 28 and over; as explained earlier, these are age categories that cleave along lines of educational attainment.

### **Kichwa Bodily Logics**

In the story of Modesto's experience in the United States told in Chapter 4, a focus on technology and other endeavors away from farm and family eventually led to his being called by spirits to remember things of true value in his life. This technological turn was part and parcel of other transformations that Modesto experienced while abroad. As he consumed more U.S. American cuisine with his host family—pizza, turkey, mashed potatoes, and gravy were his favorites—and abandoned the farm for the desk, his physique changed. His “jeans became tighter” and his body became “more sluggish.” He needed to go to the gym to maintain his build rather than its upkeep being the inevitable result of the physicality of daily existence in his community. These bodily transformations made him rediscover a longing for his own social group that he missed terribly, especially his mother's food and sweating with a machete. His two bodily ways of being—in schoolwork and farm work—were productive and social in contrasting, identity-forming ways that shaped his body itself.

Native Amazonian theories of how persons are formed through sociality and substance exchange are key to understanding the complex nature of producing personhood among lowland indigenous groups including the Kichwa (see Santos-Granero 2012). In the case of Sacha Loma, a rapidly changing socio-cultural environment has engendered new expectations: proper persons must be educated, modern, and “civilized.” As goals for individual achievement, these new aspirations are ego-centric; but they are still fundamentally Kichwa, that is, fundamentally social. Young women commonly emphasize that individual success—getting a high school degree, for instance—not only furthers their wellbeing but also as furthers the future success of their children.

The collective support for education constitutes a new “vital energy” of sorts (see Uzendoski 2005b) animating Sacha Lomans across generations. The question of how “modern” endeavors may be seen as complementing traditional knowledge, discourse, and practice has been taken up by other scholars of Amazonia such as Casey High. High (2009) notes that the masculinity of Waorani youths who are pressured by their parents to pursue wage work for oil companies is not defined in ways contradictory to the past but, instead, in very similar terms as traditional male gendered agency: providing abundance for one's family.

As young indigenous women in Sacha Loma increasingly are exposed to distant people, places, and ideas, their aspirational horizons are expanding to, for the first time, include opportunities outside agricultural work in higher education and professional careers. Their parents and grandparents also are experiencing shifting aspirations—not for themselves, but for their children and grandchildren. Older people are willing to endure the tough daily duties of farm work and nine-to-five jobs in order to encourage their children and grandchildren to pursue schooling and employment that far exceed

what they ever imagined for themselves.

It could be argued that the ideals of success and new body images to which Kichwa, young and old, are gravitating are a product of “Western” ideals and motivations. While there are undeniably many new pressures and attractions, there are also strong generational continuities. Kichwa for centuries have been deeply involved in the global economy, and they have persistently interpreted and responded to new and changing ideas and ideologies in their own creative ways (Hudelson 1981; Muratorio 1991; Oberem 1980; Taylor 2008[1999]; Uzendoski 2004a; Whitten 2008, 2011). By exploring a growing preference for what appear to be more Western body images and aspirations, I am neither depicting these as monolithically washing over Kichwa youth, nor am I romanticizing older women’s relationship with the land and forest. Kichwa women are not “selling out.” They are “buying in” to new visions of the future and their possibilities.

### **“We are people of manioc and plantains”: Production, Sociality, and Kichwa Identities**

Jamie: If you had all the money in the world, would you still go to the farm?

Nora: No, at that point, no. Except in order to plant manioc and plantains, yes. In order to not buy these things from other people. We are people of manioc and plantains.

--excerpt from an interview with 29-year-old Nora

Production and sociality are two key organizing principles that are essential for the making of proper Kichwa persons. Often the two are inextricably linked in practice. The proper person cannot be understood apart from the processes of social action, including labor and the products of labor, through which she is (re)produced and (re)produces others (cf. Uzendoski 2005b). Individually-produced items immediately enter the economy of social relations as they are consumed and exchanged, thereby building and fortifying social relationships, persons, and identities. A woman who chews manioc all day to make *chicha* for her family, not only nourishes her husband and children (and probably her neighbors and kin)—a process Michael Uzendoski describes as “the fermentation of life” (2005b:135)—but also reproduces herself within her family and community as a strong Kichwa woman, wife, and mother. High, exploring young Waoranis’ navigation of their shifting masculine identities, says it well when he observes that it is necessary to explore “how specific embodied processes attributed to men and women enable particular roles, capacities, and relations and how these processes change from one generation to the next” (2009:755). At the same time, modern Waorani masculinity needs to be “understood in the context of indigenous understandings of personhood and sociality as well as translocal imagery and discourses” (High 2009:754).

Traditionally, the primary mode of production for older Kichwa women has been work, or hard physical labor at home and in the fields. Work—which typically revolves around the production, consumption, and circulation of food—not only makes something, but also serves to make the person. Blanca Muratorio (1998:413) explains that hard labor is not valued among Kichwa women because it is “entertaining.” To be sure, there were

few women in Sacha Loma who did not describe farming as a form of suffering. Instead, Muratorio continues, “They choose rather to emphasize their physical strength in performing...tasks in the fields and to talk about the beauty of a well-socialized and productive garden as an attribute of their own identity, a metaphor of self” (1998:413). Twenty-three-year-old María describes the new appreciation she has found for farm work, now that she is making her own home as a wife and mother:

Because sometimes just being around the house, I feel a little bit stressed out. So I go out to work and to plant. I plant something and after a little bit of time I am already harvesting—how cool is that? I like it because it helps me; better said, it helps my health. Sometimes if I am feeling ill, I go out to plant....

For María, as for many other women in Sacha Loma, planting and harvesting are tied to physical and emotional wellbeing. Such labor has a “somatic quality” (Uzendoski 2005b:121): a woman literally embodies her work. Such an argument is reminiscent of Marilyn Strathern’s analysis of production and personhood among the Hagen in Melanesia (see Chapter 1 of this dissertation). Similarly, writing of the Paraiyar caste of southern India, Margaret Trawick (1988) calls them “people of the body.” Their extreme “bodiliness” is partly a result of their social standing as “untouchables,” but also a source of self-respect achieved through work:

When they weeded the fields, when they built the roads, when they lifted water, when they guided the powerful buffaloes pulling the ploughs, when they carried great loads on their heads, they were pictures of grace and strength, and they knew this about themselves, and were proud of it. [Trawick 1988:196]

A similar pride in hard, physical labor, with bodies able to keep up, is expressed by both older and younger Kichwa. Physical manifestations of work, like beads of sweat, are highly valued (cf. Uzendoski 2005b:121). Kichwa women expect a lot from their bodies: their identities as women and as Kichwa (not to mention their livelihoods) depend on them.

A powerful and persistent discourse of bodily strength and weakness surrounds talk about women as producers. As María Guzmán Gallegos explains, “It is common to hear that a [Kichwa] woman...who achieves large harvests of manioc...has a strong and well-formed body” (1997:60, my translation). Women who “do not succeed in achieving a large harvest and who have little *chicha* in the house are criticized for their weak bodies” (Guzmán Gallegos 1997:60, my translation). Alicia Garcés Dávila (2006) emphasizes a similar point when describing the intimate connection between older Kichwa women’s identity and the fruits of the land, primarily manioc. However, she notes that this is changing among the younger generation. Older women lament “the loss of a place for learning values and knowledge of work and the role of women, which has been traditionally defined by the farming plot” (Dávila 2006:101, my translation). As 35-year-old Tímida says, “With manioc, Kichwa people live; it is much better than potatoes.”

Production—producing substances like body-building food and brew, and “producing” one’s kin and neighbors through exchange of these substances—is accomplished through the body (as elaborated in Chapter 4). Today, these traditional

Kichwa bodily logics of production are in competition with bodily logics associated with schooling, professional careers, and images from television and travel.

Sociality is the second key principle. As emphasized earlier, in Sacha Loma, highly individualistic activities may actually be socially-directed. Uzendoski notes, “The notion of kinship carries with it the idea that people share not only a common substance but a common destiny” (2005b:65). What may look, from an outsider’s perspective, like a focus on personal advancement is often motivated by a concern for family and community.

Perhaps the most obvious example of the importance of Kichwa sociality is the *minka*. In Sacha Loma, large projects for individual families, as well as communal institutions such as the kindergartens, are almost always achieved through communal work gatherings, during which heads of households join forces to complete in a weekend or two a project that would take any single person months. Always brimming with people and *chicha*, *minkas* are powerful mechanisms to achieve family and community goals while at the same time (re)producing social relationships.

The same elements of sociality apply to the new projects of self-realization through education and body image, as I will show. Education is a joint effort by parents and children to advance individuals, families, and communities. Arguably the most private of undertakings, young women’s body images are on one hand certainly a personal endeavor (Muratorio 1998:417) and product of individual creativity; on the other, they are social projects. Adornment is a form of “play” for women. At times it is the mothers and grandmothers who desire particular body images for their children, à la Kichwa stage moms. And it is older women who bankroll the younger generation’s experimentation with clothing, make-up, and the like.

### ***“It’s like store-bought chickens versus campo chickens”: What Work Means***

I asked Kichwa men and women, young and old, about what physical production—work on the farm with a machete—means for them. The most common response was along the lines of what 21-year-old Finca told me: “Work is work. Working in the *campo* (countryside, woods, Sp.). I don’t know.” Work is just work; it is what Kichwa do. Part of the reason that Kichwa highly value such work is that when all else fails, there is always land, even just a small plot alongside one’s house. If there is nothing to eat, one generally has some manioc or plantains to harvest. If not, a relative likely has an overabundance of manioc or plantains freshly cut or some plantains on the verge of overripe and in need of being eaten. In short, there is rarely a shortage of these staple crops, and these things come from working the land. Forty-five-year-old Soledad puts it plainly:

Farming is important. Farms are where one plants plantains in order to be able to eat. That’s how life is. It’s what we like. I am not studied to be able to work in the *pueblo*.... I don’t ever see the need to move to the city because we have plantains and manioc here.

Working the land also is a source of pride, including pride in one’s body’s endurance, strength, and resilience. Admiration for her elders is apparent in 25-year-old Sirena’s words:

In the past, women worked hard. They worked night and day, and they woke up to make breakfast at four in the morning in order to leave for work. But now, in these days, things have changed greatly. Young girls don't get up at four in the morning. And they don't work hard, only every now and then.

Twenty-five-year-old Imelda makes a vivid comparison of *campo* residents and city slickers, which emphasizes their respective strength and weakness: "In the city, people are isolated in their houses. Women of the *campo* are stronger—they work; they can walk. City people get tired quickly. It's like store-bought chickens versus *pollos criollos* (free-range, *campo* chickens, Sp.)" Store-bought chickens are decidedly tender, having been fattened on industrial farms—pumped full of chemicals, Sacha Lomans say—and they are easily chewed and swallowed. Highly prized and very expensive (costing twice as much as store-bought chickens), *pollos criollos* are free-range chickens who wander about the community, roosting happily in bushes; they are lean, mean insect-eating machines. Anyone who has eaten both can tell the difference as soon as he tries to bite meat off of the chicken's bones. If the chicken is a *pollo criollo*, he will be there for a while. Big and strong, the *pollo criollo's* meat is tough, and so are the Kichwa women who raise them in the countryside, according to Imelda.

That elder Kichwa women's pride is bound up with the productive capacities of their bodies is evident. Sixty-four-year-old Valerie complained about her and her husband's failing bodies:

Now we can't work too hard. We can't carry all that much. Anything heavy we can't do. My husband is even worse. He can't even carry a little sliver of manioc! Only I can work a *little* bit.... Before I worked a lot, a *chakra* of manioc, plantains. Wood with an axe. Now I can't cut wood with an axe. Only little pieces of wood with a machete. Looking for it and carrying it in a tiny basket. This makes me a little sad.

The fact that her husband has grown weaker means that when she travels *adentro*, she may leave him home for days at a time with a single five-gallon bucket of manioc brew for sustenance as she commutes back and forth to Sacha Loma to drop off her farm products to be sold. Forty-five-year-old Soledad, mourning the loss of functioning in her arthritic hands, said that daily she is on the verge of tears because she can no longer wield a machete—her hands are useless. Forty-nine-year-old Dorotea and 52-year-old Nemar weigh in:

Nemar: We have to struggle until death!

Dorotea: Yes, until death! If we're doing OK, then we're going to go off to work, little by little.... Before I worked a lot when I was about 28-years-old. I worked in a downpour. I worked in the sun. Now that I am getting older, I can't get wet.

Nemar: And she wants a divorce!

Dorotea: Yes, I want to file for one!

Nemar: Yes, because she can't work as she did before!

Behind their joking is an intense preoccupation with no longer being able to keep up the pace as they used to. Nemar pokes fun at his wife for her slowing down, and threatens divorce as a possible solution—even if in jest—to her declining productivity. This conversation, it should be noted, came on the heels of the scene that I relayed at the beginning of this chapter. Dorotea had just returned from the farm and, still dirty and unfed, unfailingly served Nemar a brimming bowl of *chicha*.

One day, as I spoke with María on her sister Nicola's porch, a drizzle turned into a downpour. María, Nicola, Sirena and I stared at 52-year-old Micaela who, squatting at a spigot, scrubbed her family's clothes while shielded only by a thin poncho. She had worked until four in the afternoon at the public school and had a *minka* scheduled for the following day, but two hours of laundry could not wait—a little rain did not faze her. Nicola looked at me, “Ooosh, the rain gives me *pereza* (laziness, Sp.)” Sirena echoed, “I was about to go do my family's laundry, but it started to pour, and *allí se quedó* (there it sits, Sp.)!” This scene suggests how outlooks on work may be changing between generations.

At the top of the list of concerns for parents and grandparents is that they will be unable to leave land for their youngsters. Thirty-six-year-old Piedra explains:

Well, there isn't any now. One must buy land. And in order to buy it, you pay through the nose. In the old days, people snatched up land as fast as they could (and as much as they could). They just took it. Now, there isn't any for the grabbing. I don't even have a farm. I just have this little house plot that Mr. E gave me.

When I asked Piedra what her dream for the future would be, she said, “To give all of my children some land.” When I asked her what her greatest fear is she replied, “Not having a farm.” Because this is a common problem, 23-year-old María does not have a farm either. However, she has come up with several solutions:

Me, for example, I don't have a “*farm farm*” at my house. But my house plot is pretty big. I have planted almost 40 plantain seeds and manioc.... One could, at the very least, cultivate a small plot [alongside one's house]. Raising chickens is another good option.

Cultivating a small *chakra* on the house plot is something that nearly every household in Sacha Loma does; if not there, then some have a nearby plot in the middle of the river on small islands. Parents blame themselves for their children's declining interests in farming. Because they do not have farmland to spare for their children, because their farmland is too far away to be useful on a day-to-day basis, or because they themselves have stopped frequenting the farm, elder Kichwa express a “what can we expect” mentality concerning the lackluster manual labor values of Sacha Loma's youth. Forty-four-year-old Anselmo clarifies,

The situation is that, here, I don't have my own farm, let's say. I am on a small plot, with a house and nothing else. When I take [15-year-old] Víctor to the farm *adentro*, yes he wants to work. With his age and his development now, he is like an adolescent. He does want to help me, but because we are far from the farm, it can be difficult sometimes. Now I work here [in Sacha Loma as a nurse]. I am busy here. Before I worked on the farm.

In the wake of the shifting land situation for Sacha Lomans and the rearranging of their priorities away from the farm and toward the classroom, parents and grandparents are more and more recognizing an expanding definition of what counts as productive work. As we saw at the beginning of this chapter, 49-year-old Dorotea evoked this idea in her comparison of working with the machete versus working with the mind.

The rest of this chapter examines how and in what ways these changing ideas about work and production impact perceptions of and behaviors toward bodies. Education has influenced what types of bodies are considered productive and therefore successful. This includes altering bodies in ways traditionally associated with schooling: uniforms, regimented classroom comportment, and so on. It also includes valuing other types of bodies—white, “civilized,” and thin—that are typically bodies of the educated and those most often haloed with success in the media. Lila Abu-Lughod draws an explicit connection between the types of citizens created by school and television—the two new productive institutions discussed in this chapter—which, for her consultants in Egypt, work together in similar ways to help achieve the state's aims for its people:

What *Dream of the Southerner* and numerous other television serials teach is the value of education and devotion to the nation. The same lessons are taught in the schools, and are part of what might be called state culture. Although there are differences in the ways people take in the messages of television and of school, the latter associated with authority and the former with entertainment, the cross-references and similarities make them worth juxtaposing for a sense of the elements of national pedagogy. [Abu-Lughod 2005:60-61]

In Sacha Loma, formal education in the classroom and informal learning in front of the television set teach the young how to be good global citizens (that is, consumers) and how to be good “modern” citizens (that is, how to not be “backward” and instead *seguir adelante*).

### **Wasp-Free but “Wasp-Like”: Education and Educated Bodies**

Jamie: What is your mom most worried about?

Finca: My mom worries about working [in the *campo*].

Jamie: And what are you most worried about?

Finca: My studies.

Jamie: And why does your mom worry about the farm?



Finca: ...My mother concerns herself with the farm in order to be able to help us with our education.

Jamie: Why?

Finca: She wants us to study, to finish high school so that—as my parents say—we don't end up like them: illiterate.... That's why they want to achieve this for their children.

--excerpt from interview with 21-year-old Finca

It was May 24<sup>th</sup>, Flag Day (Battle of Pichincha), one of the most buzzed-about days of the school year. The entire student body was in formation at the local cement soccer court, marching in step as the senior flag bearers made their way to the interior of the structure. The graduating class was the center of attention as they swore their allegiance to the Ecuadorian flag, a ritual that each student must perform before graduating. All their parents were in attendance, dressed in their finest outfits. Each senior, fully uniformed, the boys in jackets and ties, the girls in skirts and heels, came up to the flag one by one, took off the white glove from his/her right hand, knelt down, and kissed the flag, proclaiming “I swear,” after which each received a round of applause. Then one parent of each student approached to pin a tri-colored bow (in Ecuadorian national colors) on his/her lapel. Some seniors and most parents had tears in their eyes.



**Image 2: Flag Day**

Education in Ecuador provides an unprecedented space in which indigenous individuals learn to be “modern” (Rival 2000:111). (In Sacha Loma, Kichwa individuals employ the concepts of *costumbre* [custom, Sp.] and *civilización* [civilization, Sp.] or *seguir adelante* when discussing the “traditional” and “modern.”) Sacha Lomans value a focus on education for their children with great dignity and pride. The ceremony described above represented the accomplishments of Kichwa students *and* their parents in not only achieving a high school degree, but also in becoming even more, in their own

words, “civilized” in knowledge, behavior, and appearance. As one parent commented to me, “Studying transforms a person. Young people feel proud, valued, and changed.” Though not the only source of new conceptualizations of success, education is a key component of changing aspirations.

Older women encourage the younger generation to rely on “the mind and not the machete.” Working with a machete is hard, they emphasize. Thirty-six-year-old Piedra explains,

Working with a machete, we go to the farm. Sometimes *hace solazo* (there is a “super-sun,” i.e., it’s really hot, Sp.), and we still work. And sometimes it rains, and we still must work. It’s hard. And if we *macheteamos* (are using a machete, Sp.), and something goes wrong? If there is an accident or a snake? This makes it more difficult. At an office, it’s hard work, but one works more with one’s mind. One looks for a place to sit down in one spot in order to work with the mind and the hand.

Like Piedra and Dolores, quoted at the beginning of this chapter, 45-year-old Soledad juxtaposes farm work to schoolwork, machete work to mind work:

Some of my kids are studying and *han de salir* (are going to get out of here, Sp.). If they don’t study, then they will be stuck here. Some cry and say that their hands hurt when they work. Or they cry and say a wasp or a bee stung me. You need to study if you want to work in an office—*tlin, tlin, tlin* [motions with her hands typing on an imaginary computer keyboard]—or on a machine with no wasps and no bees.

Soledad’s choice of *tlin, tlin, tlin* to illustrate keyboard-typing is interesting. Eduardo Kohn identifies *tlin* as “a sound symbolic adverb [in Kichwa] describing the action of effortlessly slicing branches while clearing a trail, this image is based on the ringing sound that a machete makes as it makes clean slices through vegetation” (2002:268). I do not want to overemphasize *tlin*’s redeployment as a noise associated with mind work from being a noise associated with machete work. However, Soledad’s vivid description of machines, machetes, and minds speaks to the connection between traditional labor and newer forms of productivity like education.

While schooling is often promoted as a physically less strenuous alternative to farming and working with a machete, at the same time, parents and grandparents acknowledge that schoolwork is difficult in ways that farm work is not. Forty-four-year-old Anselmo says it best: “When the road comes *adentro*, I’ll take my children to the farm to learn about it. It only takes 15-20 minutes to learn how to grow rice or beans. Like that, they’ll know the reality of agriculture.” In some ways, Anselmo implies farm work is a no brainer. It does not take a college degree to figure it out, whereas for desk jobs many years of education are a prerequisite. Anselmo, moreover, is passionate about education, which he sees as key to the advancement of his children and all Kichwa. It means a great deal to him to be able to provide what his own parents could not provide him to his large brood.

I, too, have begun to—not study—but to learn things through practice [at the

clinic]. One could say things of the West. Things like the computer, projection equipment, cameras, cell phones, televisions.... I try to buy these things for my children. I said, "You guys, at the very least, learn something! If you all don't learn to read, to write, to add, to subtract, to speak Spanish, then you all won't be able to live without discrimination!" I said to them, "If you all don't know how to use a computer, then you all are nothing!" ... I have given them everything. They have never wanted for anything. In contrast to them, I suffered to be able to finish primary school. I didn't have direct support.... The same road of my parents, I am not going to follow. "I am going to be different," I say. I am going to help my children. The one thing that I can give my children is an education. I don't promise them a car, a big house, land, nothing, not money, not anything like that. What I can offer them is an education. At the very least I have to help every single one of them through high school. From there, they are on their own as young women and young men. If they want to continue, then they are going to have to sacrifice like me.

Almost always positively characterized, education is closely linked with ideas of success. People who are educated get good jobs and make good money. They are not hungry and can go to the city if they want. They can buy their own food and do not have to grow it. Thirty-five-year-old Tímida described a person with many years of education as someone who "wears boots if it rains," meaning that a well-educated person cannot show up to her place of work with dirty feet, shoes, or clothes because this demonstrates a lack of self-respect and respect for the job.

One of the most striking examples of older women's stress on the importance of education came during a focus group I conducted in which I posed a series of questions about the role of ethnicity in accessing resources. When asked to choose whether a *mestiza* woman or a Kichwa woman, both equally qualified, would be hired for a job at a store, a couple of women said the Kichwa woman would win out because she would likely be bilingual in Kichwa and Spanish and thus could relate to the senior Kichwa folk coming to the store. However, others criticized Kichwa women for not being as "advanced" in speaking and behavior as *mestizas*, and saw them as likely losing out on the job. Fifty-two-year-old Micaela claimed *mestizas* tend to be "sharper" and more "wasp-like" (*avispadas*, Sp.) than their indigenous counterparts. In her eyes, the mark of a highly educated, successful woman is to work in an office, surrounded by computers not wasps, while maintaining an aggressive, "wasp-like" personality.

Education, parents in Sacha Loma believe, produces knowledgeable persons, trains minds in analytical thinking, and generates identities as modern, socially savvy individuals with ambitious future plans. Education manufactures its own bodily logics, too, principally through disciplining bodies away from agricultural production and shaping these bodies in ways acceptable for modern Ecuadorian citizens. Educated persons know when and how to speak, the importance of looking good (practicing good hygiene, wearing clean clothes), and how to interact well with others (tourists, potential employers). Laura Rival (2000:112) describes how for the Waorani of the Ecuadorian Amazon, being educated requires a total restructuring of their habitus down to eating oat flakes, using toothpaste and wearing uniforms; walking eyes straight-ahead with notebooks in arm, washing mud from one's legs, and combing one's hair. The

accessories of this corporeal reformation are backpacks not *chalos*, pens not machetes, polished black heels not bare feet.

Rival observes that, for the Waorani, schooling produces the two new social categories of “parents” and “children”:

“[C]hildren”...go to school and become dependent consumers....  
“Parents”...produce food and do not go to school.... [P]arents become responsible for the village’s agricultural production, and children (“those who work mentally”) become dependent consumers. [Rival 2000:114]

Just as farm work results in a tangible output of manioc, plantains, rice, corn and the like, schooling yields other tangible products—performing well on tests, speaking well in front of audiences, or behaving properly when dealing with paying customers like tourists.

Parents in Sacha Loma no longer expect their children to accompany them to the farm in order to help with planting and harvesting on a regular basis. Instead, it is their children’s responsibility to cultivate their minds, and not the earth. These two forms of production support each other. Without the farm work done by their parents, students would not have the resources (money, food, time) with which to study; and without students’ dedication to schooling, Kichwa parents would have less incentive to continue arduous farm labor. Kichwa parents here insist that they proudly continue to suffer on a daily basis so that their children will not have to. These findings are almost identical to those of Oscar Espinosa’s work with the Shipibo in the Peruvian Amazon, who are also adjusting to the reality of full-time education for their youngsters:

Indigenous parents and elders want their children to be familiar with the state’s official language and with the modern ideas and cultural practices of the white and “mestizo” population. They strongly believe that through formal schooling the younger generations will be able to protect themselves, their lands, and their culture, and also earn money for a “decent” living. It is commonplace today to hear indigenous parents expressing how they do not want their children to do physical work, “sweating in the fields” and “breaking their backs.” One of the most extreme cases I have come across was that of a Shawi (or Chayahuita) mother expressing her desire for her children to become “civilized”: “I want my children to study, to become civilized, so they won’t suffer like I do.” [Espinosa 2012:454-455]

The vignette of the flag ceremony demonstrates the social effort and value involved with educating youth. Yet, young people’s efforts are also clearly driven by individual motivations and aspirations. Many young women dream big: they want to run hotels, manage organic farms for tourism, or attend college or training for nursing degrees. Their ambitions are a source of personal pride. Efforts on the part of parents and grandparents to make education possible for their children are a source of gratification for them as well. Twenty-five-year-old Sirena says it well,

I would say that in the old days our parents did not know how to provide education for their children. Now, because I am preparing [at nursing school] and

figuring out more how it is, [I recognize that education] is the right of children—well no, not only of children—but that education is a *human right*. And I plan that one day my kids will study.

Forty-four-year-old Roberta concurs: “Education serves so that the family can survive.”

An example from the 10<sup>th</sup> grade English as a foreign language textbook (*primer año bachillerato*) demonstrates how classroom education may complement what teens are seeing on television, which is a concern of the following section. In a unit called “Men and Women,” and a sub-section entitled “Male and Female Stereotypes,” an exercise titled “Perfect Men and Women” read:

Television and magazines sell us images of perfect men and women. Ms. Perfect is about 34 years old (but looks younger). She is tall, slim and beautiful. She has long, shiny hair and her skin is like a peach. She likes jogging in the park early in the morning, and later has the time to prepare a nutritious breakfast for her “perfect” family. At work she is popular because she is ambitious, professional, dynamic, independent and trustworthy, and, at the same time, kind and friendly to her colleagues. She works all day long but when she arrives home she does not look tired. She prepares dinner for her children and reads them stories.

Mr. Perfect is tall, handsome, elegant and always in a good mood. Mr. Perfect is athletic. He has huge biceps and exercises daily. He acts like a gentleman on all occasions. At work he is generous, successful and always drives a brand new car. At home he is collaborative and tender and, of course, his wife is Ms. Perfect.

When I look at these images I start to laugh. Then I say out loud: “Are you crazy? Nobody...I repeat nobody in this world...is really like that!” [Ponce, et al. 2011:38]

Sophomore students did not get the intended irony. For them, it read more as a recipe for success rather than a commentary on impossible stereotypes that should be challenged, not pursued.

### **Being White, Civilized, and Thin: Bodily Logics for Producing Success**

*Mestizas* really are pretty. On the other hand, native women—of course we are intelligent—but we are not pretty, we are not white, we have eyes...that are of a medium brown color. Bosses take note of this.

--26-year-old Nicola

Exposure to Western media images and ideas may further contribute to disordered eating by first promoting comparisons that result in perceived economic and social disadvantage and then promoting the notion that efforts to reshape the body will enhance social status.

--Becker 2004:553

The rise of adolescence, which creates a space to be young with fewer

responsibilities, allows more time to be spent cultivating one's self-image and body image. The shifts in bodily habitus that education requires go hand-in-hand with new preferences for bodies, which must be adorned with the latest in clothes, shoes, jewelry, and hair.

The changing body styles of young Kichwa women have not been as easy to digest for older women as has a focus on education. Yet, mothers and grandmothers support young women's "character" experimentation if it means more chances to gain access to the world of higher education and professionalization. More and more, young women in Sacha Loma desire the thin and white bodies they see in the media, which they often stereotype as "successful." A growing number find "native," and thus more "uncivilized," body images a hindrance.

### ***Background: Race and Racism in Ecuador***

He changed because, little by little, Kichwa were changing, becoming better, knowing more things [through education], or Kichwa were finding jobs.

--25-year-old Sirena on why people like her father became less *bravo* (aggressive, Sp.) and more "civilized" over the years

Historically, race in Ecuador and much of Latin America has been talked about as something fixed and unchangeable—and therefore as a tool to justify subjugation—in the same breath as it is discussed as malleable, able to be "diluted," or even intensified—and thus as a tool to rationalize supposedly "whitening" practices and policies (see Roth-Gordon 2013). Sometimes difference—which for indigenous Amazonian peoples is often stereotyped as a noble "closeness to nature"—is valued as something unique and worth preserving. At other times this difference—described as savagery or wildness—is viewed as dangerous, undesirable traits to be overcome.

Kichwa of Sacha Loma often speak of their being part of a *raza indígena* (the indigenous "race," Sp.). This "race," in Sacha Lomans' words, is characterized by dark skin and dark eyes, drinking *chicha*, carrying a *chalo*, eating manioc and plantains, and speaking Kichwa; at the same time, this "race," they point out, has long been engaged deeply in the process of "progress" through education and through changing eating habits, dress, forms of speaking, and so on. Kichwa refer to themselves to the exclusion of other indigenous groups in Ecuador; that is, they recognize that they are different—more advanced, for instance—than the Waorani, a common group of reference. Kichwa talk of "advancing" and "civilizing" is a clear indication of their having internalized discriminatory perceptions of themselves in everyday self-comparison with, and sometimes real-time interactions with, ethnic others.

For Sacha Lomans, whiteness and being *civilizado* are similar but distinct. Both are desirable; both are positively associated with professional and educational success. To be white is above all about physical features—light skin, eyes, and hair. Also associated with whiteness are attractiveness and more "manipulable" aspects of body image like fine clothing and make-up. The whiteness of one's skin correlates to his perceived status in the social hierarchy, though other things—wealth, job title, or presumed place of birth (North America, Germany, a city like Quito), for example—affect a person's perception as white. According to Kichwa, Kichwa are not white;

*mestizos* (people of “mixed” heritage, typically indigenous and European) or *colonos* (settlers, Sp.) are whiter; wealthy urban Quiteños are white, but not *gringos*; and foreigners—U.S. American tourists, Mr. E, light-skinned people on television—are whitest. White English-speakers fall into the categories of *turista* (tourist, Sp.), *gringo*, and *Americano*, which are often treated as synonymous, though any foreigner can be considered a *turista* (see Pace and Hinote 2013:114 for similar experience in Brazil). Even in my last month in Sacha Loma, to my dismay, Imelda turned to me and asked, “You are a *turista*, right?” My presence was not permanent; I was only visiting. People from the United States are exclusively considered to be white. Sacha Lomans refuse to believe that African American tourists from the United States, for instance, are indeed from the United States. They must be from Africa. White people, who are assumed to be highly educated, are the epitome of civilization. Kichwa highly value whiteness as both an ascribed status, which they hope for their babies’ skin, and a status that can be approximated—to a degree—through a teen’s professional accomplishments, for example.

Ideas of whiteness and of being civilized are tangled. To be civilized is also about physical appearance—clearly white people are civilized; dark people are not *unquestionably* civilized, but they may achieve civilization through practices like having good hygiene or going to school. Many of the same physical symbols of whiteness are also symbols of being civilized. Thus, wearing shoes is something that white people do, but it is also something that civilized people do. White people are educated, and Kichwa can become more civilized through education. To be white is to be categorically successful. To become civilized is also a mark of success or, to use a common phrase in Sacha Loma, to *seguir adelante*. To be modern, in short, one must be in Kichwas’ words, “civilized,” which is described increasingly in terms of *appearing* (e.g., wearing certain clothes), *having* (e.g., owning a computer), and *doing* (e.g., watching television) “white.”

Mark Rogers found a similar notion of being “civilized” among the lowland Kichwa of his study. One of Rogers’ Kichwa consultants described the Kichwa in “semi-civilized” (Rogers 1995:88) vocabularies as “progressing (*avanzándose*) and learning to make themselves equal with *colonos*.... [W]e’re Shuar but now we’re civilized” (Rogers 1995:91). (Shuar, a Jivaro-speaking indigenous group in Ecuador, is a term denoting uncivilizedness in its usage by those in Rogers’ study.)

Kichwa have contended since the initial colonization of Ecuador with what Rogers identifies as “the civilization-versus-savagery master narrative which in one form or another has governed virtually all social processes since the conquest” (1995:39). In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Kichwa speakers were considered to be “tame,” “domesticable,” able-to-be-Christianized in comparison to other more “savage” groups with whom Kichwa were often utilized as “mediators” or “go-betweens” (see Hudelson 1981; Rogers 1995:39; Taylor 2008[1999]). Indeed, Kichwa have been characterized as a borderland indigenous group, whether as integral links in the pre-Hispanic “horizontal archipelago” held together by symmetrical exchange and marriage alliances (Uzendoski 2004a), or as “buffers” for colonial Spanish interactions with the “wild” Indians who could not otherwise be contacted (Taylor 2008[1999]), or as the reputedly most “willing” of the Indians during the conquest to facilitate exchange between the capital and the frontier settlers as they marched with Spaniards physically on their backs over the Andes to the Oriente (see Muratorio 1991). (Whitten [2008:24] cautions against examining

historical relationships of exchange managed by Kichwa in terms of acculturation or mixing, preferring interculturalism, which does not imply submission and instead foregrounds Kichwa cultural agility and agency.) These ideas persist into the present day:

Quichuas also often become schoolteachers and are assigned to remote areas, where they represent the dominant culture on the assimilationist scale of racial and cultural mixing, or *mestizaje*. The ideology of white racial and cultural superiority, with its implicit positioning of Quichua as a mediating influence, is accepted even at the far edge of this process, at least among those who decide to transculturate from non-Quichua to Quichua identities. [Rogers 1995:40]

The history of Ecuadorian nation formation has been a long process of swinging back and forth between valuing native peoples and rejecting them—or valuing some groups and rejecting others—in the service of building up whatever structure of inclusiveness/exclusiveness seemed appropriate to construct the nation state at particular historical moments (see Rogers 1995:57-58 and Radcliffe 2000). As Rogers puts it: “This simultaneous incorporation of the indian as citizen and exclusion of the indian as naturally subordinate other characterized the discourse in which the project of liberal democracy advanced in the nineteenth century” (1995:58). Kohn explains:

...[B]efore the arrival of Europeans naked “wild” savages were the Amazon’s only inhabitants; through a process of “taming” that spanned the colonial and early republican periods and continues to this day some of these wild savages became civilized, clothed, monogamous, salt-eating, and unthreatening Runa; they became, according to the colonial terminology, *indios mansos*, or tame Indians (Taylor 1999). [Kohn 2013:198]

Agrarian reform in the mid-1960s and especially following the pursuit of oil in the region in the 1970s, explains Rogers (1995), meant a renewed lust for “conquering” the far-flung Oriente, both the place and the people. Imaginings of the oil-rich territory oscillated between the heart of darkness and the start of progress:

...[T]he very notions of progress and incorporation that guided the “development” of the region presupposed that wildness. And indeed...the most recent moment in this historical process finds ecological groups, NGOs (non-governmental organizations), and even state agencies revindicating that wildness in the name of conservation and “sustainable development” based on “indigenous knowledge.” [Rogers 1995:66]

Sarah Radcliffe notes the recent turn toward multiculturalism, especially as related to the increasing “‘value’ of indigenous-ness” (2000:167) to tourism that occurred in the 1980s. At the same time, young people currently in school in Sacha Loma are encouraged tacitly to drop that traditional indigenous knowledge in an effort to become more modern. They are taught to value it only as a relic of some former heritage nearly unimportant to the road ahead.



“Ecuadorian racism is alive and well,” asserts Jean Rahier (1998:428). The national identity of Ecuador is built on the notion of *mestizaje* or race mixing of *blancos* (European whites, Sp.) with Afrodescendants or indigenous peoples (see Floyd 2008:2). The mixing happened “long ago” and “emanates from the elites, those self-identifying *blancos* who are lineal descendants of fair Europeans” (Whitten, Whitten, and Chango 1997:357). These *blancos* label the middle class with various terminologies meaning mixed; if one is neither *blanco* nor *mestizo*, one could be *indio* (Indian) or *negro* (black) (Whitten, Whitten, and Chango 1997:357). But *mestizo*, explain Norm Whitten and colleagues (1997), is not a category with which Ecuadorian individuals openly identify (though Kichwa in Sacha Loma directly identify various temporary members of their community or other visitors as *mestizos*, but more often *colonos*).

A certainty in *mestizaje* is that whiteness is desirable. *Blanqueamiento* (whitening, Sp.) is promoted in national rhetoric and in the media (see Masi de Casanova 2004): it “means moving away from any *mancha* (taint) of the hybrid category, as well as denying the sources of *indio* and *negro*” (Whitten, Whitten, and Chango 1997:357). Citing Whitten (1984), Rahier explains, “This ideology of Ecuadorianness as ‘mestizo-ness’ does not suggest that the white is ‘Indianizing’ himself but, on the contrary, that the Indian ‘whitens’ himself racially...and culturally” (1998:422). Many indigenous people may find it necessary to “approximate features of ‘mestizo’ culture,” evident in the switch to the use of Spanish in many rural communities (Floyd 2008:2).

Race is tied to place. For Rahier (1998), race relations in Ecuador manifest in what he terms the “racial/spatial order,” in which areas of the country typically occupied by various nonwhites—Afrodescendants or indigenous groups—are conceived as inferior and backward. Where people are physically located influences their position in the racial hierarchy. A lowered position in the racial hierarchy, moreover, speaks to their character and what they are assumed likely or not likely to do (e.g., commit violence, or represent the country well in an international beauty pageant) (Rahier 1998:425).

Perhaps most important for the purposes of this research is how Kichwa themselves imagine their place within this racial hierarchy and imagine others’ perceptions of themselves. To be “civilized” in Sacha Loma is a distinction Kichwa make along a continuum. The continuum involves both physical appearance—proper hygiene, wearing clothing, whiteness of skin—and practice—not eating too much hunted meat, being well-spoken, and going to school, which are also considered to be particularly “white” behaviors. At the furthest extreme of the continuum are the Waorani—whom Kichwa call *auca* (savage, Kichwa; “*auca/s*” is also used interchangeably with Waorani to refer to them)—who inhabited the territory of Sacha Loma decades ago. Not used to wearing clothes, Waorani have in the past been stereotyped as much less “civilized” than Kichwa, though Kichwa acknowledge that this has changed in recent years as Waorani attend school. Kichwa consider themselves to be somewhere just this side of the middle, well on their way to “civilization.” As 54-year-old Medicio defined it, to be “civilized” is when one takes

...a man living in the woods, who doesn’t know you, doesn’t know anything, nothing, nothing. And after meeting this man [from the woods], you [the civilizer] teach him what is food, how to put on clothes, and how to speak the civilizer’s language.... To make friends. To change what they are made of.

Although this language sounds like an internalization of destructive and discriminatory colonial rhetoric, Kichwa know who they are, who they want to be, and continue, as they have for centuries, to resist and reinterpret creatively what some outsiders might see as cultural homogenizers.

***“Send more missionaries to Ecuador; the last ones were delicious”: Whiteness and Being “Civilizado”***

Young and old Kichwa women agree that whiteness opens doors and fosters success. Historically, the color of their skin has meant different treatment in cities and different expectations for quality of life. Mimi, a 30-year-old *mestiza* woman, comments that, “When older native women go to the cities, I’ve seen how people stare at them because they know they are from the farm.” Twenty-three-year-old María says that employers “know dark-skinned people don’t have a lot of money or jobs, and that they live far from the city.” Living daily with discrimination based on their skin color, mothers and grandmothers in Sacha Loma secretly wish whiteness for their children and grandchildren, and colored *ojos de gato* (cat eyes, Sp.) are highly coveted.

Nicola has an obsession for white babies; her young daughter was “so white when she was a baby,” but now is disappointingly dark. Even if she herself could not achieve whiteness, she had hoped her daughter—half Kichwa, half *mestiza*—would be whiter than she. When I asked one day if she would like her children to maintain their Kichwa customs, she looked at me puzzled: “My children aren’t Kichwa. They are *mestizos*. They have my husband’s last name, a *mestizo* last name. If I had been the man in the relationship, then they’d be Kichwa.” For Nicola, the *mestizaje* of her children was a point of pride; it was clear that she thought herself and her children “whitened” by her marriage to a *mestizo* man (who she referred to as white). Nicola also described a failed off-the-books adoption between her and her *mestiza* sister-in-law. Two years ago, her sister-in-law was going to give an expected baby to Nicola if the baby turned out a girl, because her sister-in-law had all girls and only wanted a boy. When the baby was born, she turned out to be a little girl—a blonde, blue-eyed, light-skinned girl. Her sister-in-law changed her mind and decided she wanted the little “white” girl. Nicola was heart-broken: “Oh how darling she was! She was so delicate. She got a rash at the slightest bug bite.”

As mentioned earlier, skin sensitive to bug bites suggests foreignness to the region, an inadaptability insinuating the baby belongs elsewhere among others, typically white others, who are also susceptible to the unapologetic environment. In fact, one female volunteer from the Peace Corps was renowned for bringing her new daughter back to Sacha Loma years after her tenure in the community; however, both of them were forced to leave after a few days because the baby *no se acostumbró* (did not adjust, Sp.), was too *delicada* (delicate, Sp.), and quickly became covered in a bug-induced rash. My husband and I were pestered on a daily basis to produce a child that we could leave behind in Sacha Loma or trade for a baby in the community. Sensitive skin and noticeable bug bites, in a sense, are indexical of whiteness and civilization and manifest in a bodily composition fundamentally distinct from that of the Kichwa. Having a baby *bien blanquito* (very white, Sp.) is like winning the lottery.

While they desire white skin for their daughters and granddaughters, white skin is *not* a priority for elder women *themselves*. Young Kichwa women in this community, on

the other hand, do express desires to be white. For them, unlike their elders, bodily manipulations aimed at whitening are worth attempting. At the same time, the young and the old realize that quests for literal whiteness are a fool's errand. When 15-year-old Jacqueline wondered aloud how she could become whiter, she was told sarcastically: "If you want to be whiter, go bathe yourself in milk."

A desire for whiteness was apparent in the interviews I conducted with female Kichwa of all ages. As they examined magazine images that included A-list Western actresses (described further in Chapter 6), I asked them questions about the women they saw, including "Would you like to be like them?" Nearly all older women (89%) answered "yes." When I asked them why, those who had a reason almost always said something like 52-year-old Micaela: "Of course," she snorted, "they have studied, they move their families forward, and they can provide their kids with food and education!" Older women's most frequent distress was lack of money to feed and educate their children. Yet, most older women laughed at the thought that they could ever have or be anything like the women they saw in the magazines.

About half (47%) of the younger women responded "yes" to the question of wanting to be like white actresses, and most said it was because the women are "pretty" or "have elegant clothes." A cursory analysis of "pretty" might attribute this to the shift in young women's beauty preferences to value being taller, thinner, and/or whiter. Yet, a deeper reading indicates that the younger generation, like the older generation, attaches success to the white figures. The actresses have something they want—beauty, attention, money, boyfriends, a carefree existence. Unlike older women, the younger generation sees the image the white actresses give off as in some way attainable—they can buy these clothes, cut or dye their hair, use this make-up, and maybe they will be a little more successful (and maybe a little "whiter").

Also telling were both groups' responses to the images of indigenous women in postcards I showed them along with the magazines. While 44% of older women said they would like to be like the indigenous women on the postcards, only 12% of young women said so. Of those older women who provided justifications, wanting to be like the women in the postcards was tied to a desire to have a job. According to older Kichwa women here, indigenous women like those in the postcards are educated nowadays. However, younger Kichwa women almost every time replied "no" to the question "Would you like to be like them?" As one put it, "I like to wear clothes." It could be that the essentialized images of Amazonian indigeneity were too "distilled" for young modernizing Kichwa women who are no doubt proud of their Kichwa heritage but sometimes feel as though they must forsake it to get ahead in a discriminatory world.

In the view of many women in Sacha Loma, bodily whiteness seems productive of success. White anthropologists, for example, can travel to faraway lands, and live comfortably without, apparently, having any sort of *real* job. Some women over 50 in this community have never traveled farther than the nearest rain forest city, three hours away by bus. One of the most prominent figures in the community is Mr. E, the U.S. American ex-pat head of the local NGO. He has lived there for over 20 years as owner of the local hotel, possesses over 4,000 hectares of rain forest, and seems always to be working on his next project, all of which require considerable financial capital. Sacha Loma's eco-hotel brings in tourists from all over the world. The tourists walk around with digital cameras and other gadgets hanging from their necks, sunglasses and tropical

gear, which locals see as status symbols. Foreignness is valued because it brings with it such commodities, as well as an apparently worry-free lifestyle. A foreigner's life is a life without borders. While most people in Sacha Loma can only dream of a trip to the United States (and are often worried about affording bus fare to the nearest city), hundreds of North American tourists a year pass through their community. Fifteen-year-old Víctor notes what distinguishes him from the tourists who visit his community: "They are white, more civilized, more developed, and more advanced economically."

Foreign ideals of beauty advertised in the media, in tandem with racist ideologies of *blancamiento* in Ecuador, have generated what Erynn Masi de Casanova terms "'the whiter the better' ideal of beauty" (2004:291). And becoming white, Gabriela Valdivia writes, "is about being able to manipulate bodies (e.g., through clothing, make-up) in ways that obscure the corporeality shaped by non-white everyday experiences, to render these less visible in a world of racial and class power hierarchies" (2009:540-541). When I speak of Kichwa in Sacha Loma wanting to "become white," I do not mean that Kichwa think they are literally becoming white, though Kichwa do hope babies are born with lighter skin. I mean that a Kichwa person may be perceived as having or doing "white" or "civilized" things or behaviors, and this may position the person more favorably within the social hierarchy.

Kichwa teens actively experiment with various malleable aspects of their body image. Young women are fascinated by the accessory, make-up, and perfume catalogue, *Yanbal*. High-fashion, light-skinned Latinas pepper the pages of its magazine, selling the latest in priming, perfuming, and adorning the body. Fashionista Nicola has the monopoly on Yanbal sales, and once a month she paints her face and makes her way around the community taking orders. Yanbal does not just sell cosmetics; it sells the image of success (like well-known Avon and Mary Kay in the United States). Self-made women can work their way up in the ranks and have their own income while being able to stay at home, if they so choose. And whoever buys the products can possibly be like the magazine models—jet-setting, tall, white, carefree women who resemble their favorite *telenovela* actresses. "Accessorized whiteness," therefore, is a bodily logic that many young women find productive of their modern, educated identities (see also Pace and Hinote 2013:165).

The politics of racial malleability have been discussed at length by Jennifer Roth-Gordon (2013). "Partial whiteness" (Roth-Gordon 2013:297) can be achieved through multifarious (especially bodily) disciplines. Roth-Gordon specifically discusses the race situation in Brazil and the enduring "legacy of *embranquecimento*" (whitening, Port.) there. Policies and practices of whitening in Brazil were both biological—based on the Lamarckian notions of progressive blended inheritance, which Roth-Gordon terms "'soft' eugenics" (Roth-Gordon 2013:297)—and social—through indoctrination into "'white' behaviors" (Roth-Gordon 2013:297) like good washing habits that took place in public schools where children could receive a "diploma of whiteness" (Davila 2003:27; Roth-Gordon 2013:297-298). The effects and assumptions of *embranquecimento* persist today:

Brazilians attempt to manipulate their racial appearance and 'manage' the stigma of blackness.... [S]tudies have documented the ways that individuals seek to improve themselves through practices and procedures that alter the visual signifiers of race: this includes the use of skin lighteners, hair straighteners, and

cosmetic surgery operations such as rhinoplasty.... [Roth-Gordon 2013:298]

Brazilians of African and indigenous descent are encouraged to maintain *boa aparencia* (a good appearance, Port.; see discussions of *buena presencia* below), a requirement listed explicitly in many job postings (Roth-Gordon 2013:298). *Boa aparencia* includes a range of bodily-based “sensory modalities,” including being well-spoken, good-smelling, clean and so on (Roth-Gordon 2013:298).

Roth-Gordon suggests that whiteness can be bought: “commodities help construct race through the ways that they alter bodies” (2013:298-299); and bodies are most often altered in pursuit of some idea of what it means to be “modern” (see Roth-Gordon 2013:299-300). Soap, she writes, was “perhaps colonization’s quintessential commodity” and was tied especially “to civilization and whiteness throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries” (Roth-Gordon 2013:299). A similar preoccupation with cleanliness is prevalent in Sacha Loma, where the selling of soap’s influence on Kichwa self-identity is still evident. Forty-four-year-old Anselmo, educated in a Catholic missionary school a short distance downriver from Sacha Loma, talks about his persistent quest to be clean, which has been indoctrinated in him since he was a young boy. He links bathing to use of Western medicine, both of which he sees as making him and other Kichwa more advanced.

I do not like to be in environments filled with trash, without cleanliness. I have always liked to be clean [since I was a little boy]. I bathe myself almost three times a day. At midnight I get up, and I go to take a shower. My family is different so much so that they do believe in shamans, witches, in a ton of things like that. If medication doesn’t cure someone, then it’s his destiny, and that’s that.

School requires that youngsters attend classes in crisp white shirts with neat hair and tidy shoes. Their grades are lowered if their hair is too long. Laundry is a daily task for nearly all women and most children, who help their mothers, because mud-free clothes and shoes are valued at a premium.

In Sacha Loma, there is perhaps no whitening or civilizing tool more flaunted than clothing. Adolescents constantly are on the hunt to stay ahead of the fashion curve. Even Nicola’s four-year-old daughter came running out of the house one day with brand-new pink ballet flats embellished with rhinestones and flowers. She paraded them about before flicking them off to the side and running barefoot to her grandmother’s house. Nicola explained that she had bought these in Tena for her daughter who “wouldn’t stop pestering me about them.” Nicola claimed she bought a knock-off, ten-dollar pair (versus the thirty-dollar pair her daughter originally fell in love with) because she knew her daughter would “destroy them within a matter of days.”

Parents and grandparents have not escaped pressures to be well dressed. Nicola beseeched me for weeks to bring her back a shirt “like the one you are wearing” from the United States, which she insisted were “much more *bonitos* (pretty, Sp.)” and of “much higher quality” than anything she could find in Tena. When I brought her one a few weeks afterward, she was over the moon. A couple of weeks later she gave me my reimbursement for the shirt—a Yanbal lipstick. Into the economy of household exchange in which foods like plantains and *chicha* traditionally circulate have entered commodities

like lipstick and T-shirts, which imply relationships with whites.

To civilize one's body and behavior is to become more "white," and to become "white" and "civilized" is to be "modern." Yet, this process is rarely entirely successful in the eyes of others. As Radcliffe elucidates regarding indigenous women in the Ecuadorian highlands:

...[B]ringing indigenous women into the white, urban and modern nation rests upon the ambivalence of the resulting hybrids. In migrating to cities to undertake domestic work, indigenous women became *cholitas*, and to paraphrase Bhaba, almost white but not quite (Bhaba 1994:85). Despite cutting hair, wearing make-up and changing clothes, *cholitas* remained "unmoderns", ambivalent mimics of the goal of *mestizaje* nationhood. [Radcliffe 2000:179]

Kichwa are and have been the object of discriminatory gazes for centuries. In two of the large cities nearest to Sacha Loma, I have seen signs posted on stores saying, "Good-looking women need only apply" (*de buena presencia* [a good appearance, Sp.]). *Buena presencia* frequently means, among other things, "non-indigenous." Thirty-year-old *mestiza* Mimi explains:

I think that stores, in order to boost their clientele, ask for *buena presencia*. *Buena presencia* means to be presentable, fixed up, all of this. This is to captivate the people who come in the store. For example, when one goes to an interview, suppose they are asking for a good-looking girl in the ad. When you go to that interview, you need to go all dolled up—with your high heels, very pretty. You need to learn how to speak well, especially how to organize your thoughts so that you don't stick your foot in your mouth. Before talking, you need to think long and hard about what you plan to say. And you need to speak the truth.... It's the same for women from [Sacha Loma]. I think they tend to be very submissive. They tend to be dull, that is to say, they are indifferent as to whether things go well or don't go well. Because we are in a rural sector..., good-looking appearances aren't really necessary.... You have to dress yourself according to where you are. I have seen city people stare at the elder Kichwa women when they arrive [from *adentro* on buses]; they look at them from head to toe.... They know just where they come from, and they just stare at them. And when they stare at them, it makes them feel bad—it's not good to do this.... They are staring at them because of their way of dressing, their way of standing, their way of speaking.

To be good-looking, according to Mimi, is defined by one's clothes, manner of speaking, behavior (being confident versus submissive), and being fixed up. As Rahier (1998) points out, assumptions about race often are tied to place; people from rural regions are assumed to be lacking in all of the above. Mimi further elaborates how the color of one's skin engenders assumptions about character that can determine hiring practices:

[Between a Kichwa woman and a *mestiza*], a business owner will hire the *mestiza*. This is because of the ethnicity of the Kichwa woman. This could be because the

person doing the hiring...doesn't want a Kichwa employee. Nowadays, there are people, especially men, ... who are racist. Logically, if a racist interviews you, the racist will choose the *mestiza*.

Twenty-three-year-old *mestiza* Libertad agrees: "Many people think that people with darker skin are not that responsible. In politics, there aren't that many dark-skinned participants and people think they aren't as educated." She went on,

In the case that a woman is going to work selling something, [prettier] women call the attention of the consumer more.... If [a Kichwa woman and a *mestiza* woman] are of the same attractiveness, the *mestiza* would be hired because the owner might be a little racist.

Mimi and Libertad are both very aware of racism in the cities. As women deeply interconnected with a Kichwa community—Mimi is a *comadre* (godmother, Sp.) to Kichwa children in Sacha Loma several times over, and Libertad has lived in Sacha Loma almost all of her life—they spoke in hushed tones and seemed uncomfortable with the topic.

The "halo effect," Courtney Martin (2007) explains, is the generation of an array of assumptions about an individual after viewing a single aspect of him or her. This operates, for example, in assumptions that if a woman has a pretty face and a nice body, she most likely has many suitors, a good job, and an excellent education (Martin 2007:16). J. T. Hart (1994:76) reports that attractive people are more likely to be hired and promoted by executives, to receive assistance from strangers, and to have an easier time attracting mates, while unattractive people are less likely to be hired, more likely to be charged criminally, and more likely to have failed relationships. Masi de Casanova (2004) cites one especially disturbing example collected from the Ecuadorian newspaper *Expreso* that speaks to the persistent prejudices that shape everyday hiring and firing practices in the country. Among a list of racist comments in the *Expreso* piece ("El País de los Prejuicios" 2001:8-9) polled from people on the street was, "She is ugly, she shouldn't work here" (Masi de Casanova 2004:292).

In an effort to conform to their own ideas of what it means to be "modern," some young women in Sacha Loma are embracing non-native images that, in their own words, make them more "civilized." One day after an especially heavy downpour, I was taking a canoe up to the bus stop when I saw Edgardo, a local from downriver sprinting along the banks to hitch a ride. When we both got on the bus, he looked at me and said, "So, you're wearing boots, aren't you?" I replied, "Of course, the path to our house is pure mud! Why?" He back-pedaled, "No, no, it's OK; it's OK for *you* to wear your boots." I pushed, "Don't you wear yours?" He said, "No, no, never, my family makes fun of me. People from the *campo* try never to wear boots in the city. People laugh." Arriving in the city with boots on, I looked more from the *campo* than he did, which is why Sacha Lomans reserve boot-wearing for trips into the forest to their farms. During an interview in which I showed up in boots and Finca arrived in spotless sneakers, the 21-year-old specified:

[I don't wear boots to the city] because there are people there who look at us.

There are times in Sacha Loma that we don't even wear boots, even worse when there is a school program. This is because people here are ashamed, young people more than anything, so much so that it's common knowledge among young people that wearing boots isn't cool.

Fellow high schooler Angela agreed with her, "People in the city criticize; they say, 'Look they come from the woods.'" Fifty-two-year-old Micaela echoes these sentiments: "People from the city say that we live among the monkeys." However, Micaela also believes that city life is not all it is cracked up to be: "In the city, they charge for everything. Life in the city is super expensive.... In the *campo* we only think about work. City people get diarrhea from *chicha*. City clothes always have to be in style." Kichwa have a hard time shaking opinions held by city folk. One elderly, old-moneyed, white, Quiteño once cautioned me before I headed back to Sacha Loma, "Be careful—they'll shrink your head." In another telling example, visiting paramedics administered a quick tutorial on basic first aid to Sacha Loma high schoolers. The nurses began the resuscitation lesson with, "Suppose one of your friends is choking on a *mayón* (large grub resident of the chonta palm, Sp.)...." Grubs—unappetizing worms to many outsiders—were assumed by the nurse to be foods common enough to pose a choking hazard for these mostly-Kichwa students.

Sirena puts this self-criticism in the context of ethnic discrimination:

Sirena: In the first place...maybe it's because I am comparing myself with other people more, especially with people from the city.... We people [from Sacha Loma] dress normally. But seeing city people who dress in the latest styles—shoes, clothing—we think we have to dress in the same way.

Jamie: And what about you when you go to the city?

Sirena: Me? Yes I have compared myself to them. I maintain that I have never liked to dress well. I have never liked to fix myself up. But I have realized that sometimes I do ask myself, "Why can't I be like them, dress myself like them?" I ask myself, "Why?" ...

Jamie: And what about the "less mature" audience? Teenagers who go to the city? How do they feel?

Sirena: I think that they see other people there and they criticize themselves. They criticize their bodies, their dress. [They think], "look at them and how they dress themselves!" And we are in dirty clothes without being fixed up. We are, as they say, *indios*!

To combat these stereotypes, young women pack extra tissue in their backpacks so they can wipe off muck from their black school heels on muddy days. Most girls have stopped using the *chalo* to carry goods back from the farm or river. Some refuse to drink *chicha*. And the Kichwa language is falling into disuse among young people. Fifty-two-year-old Micaela laments, "When I speak Kichwa, my kids are like the hearing



impaired.” Older women and their husbands grumble that these actions are a rejection of Kichwa heritage. Nevertheless, they see these new choices as inevitably a part of larger shifts in expectations for Kichwa youth.

“Civilizing” tactics can go only so far. When talking during the focus group about whether dressing up in city attire, dropping the Kichwa language, or changing food habits could fundamentally alter Kichwa identity, 16-year-old Moreina reasoned: “The monkey dressed in silk is still a monkey” (*Aunque el mono vista de seda, mono queda*, Sp.). Moreina’s use of this saying to describe Kichwa ethnic identity is revealing—no amount of altering the outside will ever strip a Kichwa woman of her ethnic heritage. She and the other women in the focus group agreed with Sirena’s take on the issue:

I say that a Kichwa woman can forget her language, her *raza*, her culture. In my case, I can’t change. Being Kichwa, I can be changed by no one. Even if I forget my ancestral customs that I used to do in my community, no one can change me. I can forget everything, and I continue to be Kichwa.... I was born Kichwa, I come from a Kichwa father, a Kichwa mother. I can forget the language, but I am still Kichwa.... I can say “I am not Kichwa,” but I am still Kichwa.... [It doesn’t matter] that I am not practicing what is my culture, my activities that make me Kichwa: I don’t have manioc, I don’t have a *chakra*, all of that, that I am not practicing that. Only for these things doesn’t mean I can say that I am not Kichwa. If I stop watching television...if I only eat food from the farm, if I return to the farm, I will be the same Kichwa person that I was before I was doing these things.

Forty-four-year-old Roberta put the focus group’s position succinctly: “I can’t forget my culture. My parents were Kichwa, therefore I continue to be Kichwa no matter where I live even for years and years.... It’s the same after death. Blood doesn’t change.”

Being uncivilized is a threat. Sacha Lomans often use Waorani as a point of comparison. According to Kichwa, Waorani are uneducated (or only recently becoming educated), they do not wear clothes, and they eat hunted meat almost exclusively. Twenty-three-year-old María spent some time teaching English to Waorani in a remote rain forest community accessible only by a long walk, but quit her job. Though she found the Waorani to be “eager to learn,” the community was just too *adentro* for her—what her cousin Maximiliana described as “*campo campo*” (*country country*, Sp.)—and María found their habits laughably strange. Kichwa stereotypes of the Waorani were most abundantly clear when a group of around 20 Waorani visited the eco-hotel for a crash certification course in Amazonian tourist-guiding. One night, both Kichwa boarding school students and the visiting Waorani guides decided to put on a traditional dance performance for guests of the eco-hotel. The Kichwa students went first, bedecked in seed bras, grass skirts, and lances; their dance consisted of feet-shuffles and gentle hip swivels, as is standard. The Waorani presented what looked like a Waorani marriage ceremony. A large group of men ran around two women in the middle of the circle. The women made a high-pitched “ey ey ey.” The men made a low-pitched “uh uh uh.” At the end, one of the Waorani men sat on the lap of one of the Waorani women. One of the tour guides told me that this meant, “The pair were now bonded for life, even though they had never met one another.”

The Kichwa employees and boarding school students who saw the dance thought it was comical. They mimicked the “ey ey ey” and the “uh uh uh” of the Waorani dancers. One remarked, “our dance is much more civilized than their dance in which they steal women.” The Waorani poked fun at stereotypes of their own exoticism. One tour guide wore a T-shirt emblazoned with: “Send more missionaries to Ecuador; The last ones were delicious.” Next to the text were images of a mosquito. The double entendre is clear—mosquitoes feast on tourists, but so does the savage Waorani T-shirt wearer.

In the last chapter, I examined the importance of *intercambio*—relationships of exchange with outsiders—and sociality—Kichwa relations with one another. Both are seen as valuable for Kichwa young people as their aspirational horizons expand. Among the Ávila Runa, Eduardo Kohn (2013:202-204) identifies concurrent white and Kichwa identity, but sees this as nothing new: Kichwa—as master hunters and thus powerful predators—must be white. An association stretching back to colonial times, to be a master (*amo*, Sp.; *amu*, Kichwa) is to be white.

*Amu*, like Runa and *puma* [the privileged jaguar-predator], marks a subject position. And all of these nouns, which we might otherwise only take to mark, respectively, white, indigenous, or animal essences additionally mark a vantage point—the position of *I*. The term *amu*, without losing its historical association to particular people with particular physical characteristics and a particular position in a power hierarchy...has also come to mark any self’s point of view. The living *I*, the self, any self—qua self—in this ecology of selves, is *amu*. That self is by definition a master, and therefore in a certain sense “white.” [Kohn 2013:204]

This clearly is a complicated association because *amu*, master, and whiteness bring with them the tumultuous history of colonial domination, a point that Kohn makes in spades (2013:191, 202, 203, 213 for some examples). As Kohn explains, “whiteness is just one element in a series of partially overlapping hierarchical correspondences that are superimposed in the spirit realm of the masters of the forest” (2013:168).

Kohn describes how clothing and other bodily accessories for the Ávila Runa can be used to engender shifts in perspective. Kohn submits that the *you* perspective—being the object of someone else’s gaze—is in some sense dangerous and undesirable because it is analogous to inhabiting the position of prey. Thus, Ávila Runa attempt to make the *you* perspective their own *I* perspective through utilizing the “equipment” of the other being with whom they are engaging. Kohn writes,

How does one inhabit the *you* perspective? How does one make it one’s own *I*? One does so by donning what we might call clothing—the equipment, the bodily accouterments, and attributes that allow a particular kind of being to inhabit a particular kind of world. Such equipment includes the canines and pelts of the jaguar (see Wavrin 1927:328), the pants of the white man (see also Vilaça 2007, 2010), the robes of the priest, and the face paints of the “Auca.” All such clothing can also be shed. [Kohn 2013:215]

As I suggested in the last chapter, applying perspectivism as a framework to analyze Sacha Lomans’ interethnic encounters risks missing an important dimension of the

shifting human-to-human relationships in which they are involved. In the case of Nicola, for instance, her appeal for and donning of the shirt from the United States are because she *wants others to perceive her in a particular way*, not necessarily to take on the perspective of the other; greater communication with whites like me or tourists could also be a goal. Similarly, Soledad, Medicio's wife, carefully washes and dries what she calls Medicio's "good pants"—a cuffed pair of gray slacks—before every trip he takes to the city. These pants play a crucial role in how he is perceived by others who could be interested in the traditional Chinese medicines he has taken to selling as a hobby. At *programas* it is common to see grandmothers in monochromatic pantsuits, though more old-fashioned elder Kichwa women prefer skirts, a preference likely tied to their usage of *campalinas* (tunics, Sp.) as young women.

An integral part of everyday identity-construction in contemporary contexts for indigenous and non-indigenous people alike is the question of how one is perceived by others. This is about more than adopting the "you perspective" through wearing another being's "clothing" (pants, pelts, paints, included). It is about one being intensely aware of what a *you*—"the other taken as other subject" (Viveiros de Castro 1998:483)—thinks of oneself. For Kichwa of Sacha Loma, this not a matter of predator/prey relations. But it may be risky in other ways through their subjecting themselves to the discriminatory, analogously predatory gaze of outsiders.

Kohn describes these shifts in bodily affects like wearing "white" clothing as "little shamanic acts—attempts to appropriate something of what is imagined as a more powerful *you*" (2013:215). He relates a particular moment in which a Kichwa man asked for a family portrait to be taken, all members dressed in their finest clothes and the Kichwa man wearing Kohn's backpack. These types of photo set-ups were commonplace in Sacha Loma. Just as common were requests to be the picture-taker, that is, the operator of a digital camera, and thus the possessor of a technological know-how that one could show off. In the case of the Sacha Loma Kichwa, I do not think that using Western garb or stuff has anything expressly to do with shamanism, though I do believe that appropriation of "what is imagined to be a more powerful *you*" (Kohn 2013:215)—what are perceived to be white "powers," privileges, or possessions, which are almost always desirable—is an objective. Sacha Loma Kichwa—experiencing difference daily in school, the cities, and the comfort of their own homes while watching television—regularly reckon with racial realities. Kichwa are well aware of racial hierarchies as structuring their everyday interactions. Their decisions have to do with how they think *others*, indigenous and white, view them.

Eduardo Viveiros de Castro states, "A perspective is not a representation because representations are a property of the mind or spirit, whereas the point of view is located in the body" (1998:478). Yet perhaps modern encounters require shifting our attention to these mindful representations—what one thinks of oneself and others, and how one thinks others perceive oneself—and how bodies are entangled inescapably with them. For Sacha Loma Kichwa, being an *I* is about savvy multi-perspectivalism rather than perspectivist ontological commitments. How does a Kichwa *I* choose to represent himself to the outside world? Kichwa *I*'s are more and more finding it important to represent themselves as knowing, having, or doing something belonging to this other, foreign, thought-to-be-more-powerful, "white" world. A concern for outsiders' perceptions would explain why, too, requests to have one's picture taken doing something

“particularly Kichwa,” like wielding a machete, were also regular—Kichwa wanted to prove to me, the white, tourist-anthropologist writing about them, that they were “authentic.” On occasion, Kichwa know that it is just as advantageous or productive to foreground their indigeneity, whether for the purposes of tourism, government support of the community, or presenting/preserving a heritage that they see as falling away.

If we reconsider Vilaça’s notion of double identity (2007:179) achieved through a double body (2007:172), and reframe this in terms of representing oneself to others, the concept becomes interesting in light of what of indigenous people, like Kichwa in Sacha Loma, do. *A physically white but ethnically Kichwa person has become the ideal.* As discussed, when babies are born, parents and grandparents hope for white skin, though a Kichwa baby, no matter her skin color, will always be Kichwa. No amount of re-working one’s exterior can change what is on the inside, what is in the blood, as Sirena and Roberta remarked. When Kichwa are not physically white, they attempt to have or do whiteness, in a sense maintaining a double identity. Kichwa can be both, though they can never not be Kichwa.

Pageants are a blatant example of the politics of representation. Indigenous pageants are venues in which how well one performs *both whiteness and Kichwaness*, particularly through one’s body, produces success. Modeled after their Western, Miss America-type counterparts, the pageants I have witnessed in rural Ecuador have both indigenous and non-indigenous components. In order to win, a participant must do both well. Conceptions of femininity are boiled down to a few very visible, performative elements—make-up and bathing suits for the Western aesthetic, *chicha* and foliage apparel to mark indigeneity. Acting in accordance with their own as well as what they perceive to be outsiders’ “ideal of indigenous womanhood” (Rogers 1998:74), Kichwa participants enact what Mark Rogers terms “folklorization,” or “a process in which a social group fixes a part of itself in a timeless manner as an anchor for its own distinctiveness” (1998:58; see Rahier 1999:104-105). These enactments entail their “bodily hexis” or “durable ways of walking, talking, speaking and thinking” through which they stage what is thought to be “authentically Kichwa” (Rogers 1998:76). When young indigenous women are judged to not perform their indigeneity well enough, they do not take home a title. Eighteen-year-old Yolanda suffered this fate. She returned to the community after a weekend away defending Sacha Loma’s honor in a regional *reina* (queen, Sp.) pageant in which she had competed fiercely but came in second. Many Sacha Lomans believed that her loss was due to her lack of long hair, a stereotypical marker of indigeneity. Yolanda had purchased a long black hairpiece to affix beneath her fashion-forward, medium-length haircut, but had forgotten the hairpiece at home. Others felt it probably had more to do with the fact that Yolanda cannot speak Kichwa fluently. The winner had long hair and spoke Kichwa reasonably well.

In another instructive example—the “Emblem of Motherhood” (*madre símbolo*, Sp.) competition—Kichwa and mothers and grandmothers and one young, *mestiza* teacher competed to be crowned the best representative of the feminine ideal in Sacha Loma. There were two phases to the competition: a catwalk and traditional Kichwa dance. For the catwalk, organizer Yolanda (not a mother and thus not a participant) modeled the appropriate strut up and down the covered soccer court. She bounced to the left, she bounced to the right, she trotted up, she trotted back, and she finished by blowing kisses to the audience. Twenty-plus Kichwa mothers and grandmothers stumbled

through the steps, giggling as they catwalked to electronic dance music. The *mestiza* also modeled, to hefty applause. It was in the traditional dance portion that the top contenders really stood out. It came down to three Kichwa women who hopped highest and had the most exaggerated hip swivels while presenting their imaginary bowls of *chicha* and the one *mestiza* participant who was, with full make-up and a short denim skirt, the most conventionally pretty of the four, or so agreed the women around me. In the end, Rosamaría, a Kichwa woman in her mid-forties, was crowned “Emblem of Motherhood” and was presented with flowers and a gift bag. What won Rosamaría the competition was not her catwalk performance, because none of the mothers and grandmothers seamlessly maneuvered the high fashion swaggering and none outperformed the *mestiza* participant who was dressed most appropriately for the catwalk and who showered the audience with kisses. Rosamaría’s victory was clinched by her mastery of Kichwa dance; her long hair swayed across her back, and she was light on her feet.

To say that whiteness and being “civilizado” are valued bodily logics, then, is neither to say that Kichwa identity and associated bodily logics are no longer appreciated as productive, nor is it to say that whiteness is never seen as threatening or invasive. Fifty-two-year-old Nemar says it best:

Our grandfathers, our great-grandfathers—how they must have been! I have seen a movie about Atalwalpa and Rumiñawi. Have you heard of them? Because we are descendants of these men! And they were true warriors! They were huge men. Aggressive. They didn’t eat *comida del pueblo* (city food, Sp.); they ate *comida típica* (traditional foods, Sp.). And they lived longer. From them we come.

What is notable here is the admiration for these prominent sixteenth century figures of Spanish resistance for not only their fighting capacities and imposing stature, but also their presumed consumption of typical cuisine, which made them stronger, virile, and long-lived. Kichwa of Sacha Loma are convinced that they eat city food only out of necessity and that to grow and subsist on purely cultivated foods would be preferable.

Whiteness can be dangerous, too. Mark Rogers refers to the “lethal civilized white” (1995:92), which has any number of connotations from Spanish conquistadors, to nineteenth century rubber barons, to oil extractors. Perhaps most famous is the *ñakaq*, or *pishtaco*, of the Andes, a “creature [that] attacks unsuspecting Indians then drags them off to secret caves, where he hangs them upside down and extracts their body fat” (Weismantel 2001:xxv-xxvi). The *pishtaco* is usually a large white man in a jacket and heavy boots.

While talk of *pishtacos* is nonexistent in Sacha Loma, a related monster menace, the *sacaojo* (eye-snatcher, Sp.) is widely rumored. *Sacaojos* are associated with organ theft, or the physical snatching of eyes, internal organs, even breasts of unsuspecting victims, especially women and children, for sale on the black market. There have been half a dozen instances of organ theft rumors circulating in the community during my tenure in Sacha Loma. Organ theft is said to be perpetuated almost always by Colombian guerillas assisted by white doctors. Gastón Antonio Zapata, examining analogous rumors in Peru, sheds light on the fraught historical relationships with whites that seem to be at the heart of such rumors:

The dominator represents the foreign, the modern, his terrible enforcement in daily reality (the *gringos*, the author, the weapons, the special apparatuses, the dollars) mobilize feelings often ambivalent (the rejection and the desire to be like him)... [T]he “eye snatcher” is “a *gringo*, a foreigner,” a non-native, making contemporary the colonial white-Indian relationship. We have then a personification of power, in its most complete sense. [Zapata 1989:144, my translation]

Modern-day *sacajos* are better termed *saca-fotos* (picture-takers, Sp.). Tourists visiting the community descend upon young children like flashbulb locusts. Nemar claims they make him feel like an animal in the zoo when they take pictures without permission. For example, a large group of female tourists on a missionary trip came into the community one afternoon. They walked up to the dining area of the public school, found two small children, and started snapping “postcard” candid pictures. They straightaway got to work pied-piper-ing all the community children, rounding them up to play and sing, holding some in their arms and placing others on their shoulders. Three-year-old Kimberly started wailing when one tourist swooped her up. I walked over to her. She stared up at me with tears still in her eyes and said, “*Hay bastantes gringos. Bastantes gringos* (There are a lot of *gringos*. A lot of *gringos*, Sp.)” The next day, Maximiliana, her mother, visited me at home. She recalled that Kimberly found her after the incident and whined, “*Hay bastantes gringos, y me dan susto* (There are too many *gringos*, and they scare me, Sp.)” Maximiliana and her husband tried to explain to her that *gringos* “are not *gringos*, they are *amigos* (friends, Sp.)” While Maximiliana is obviously tolerant of *gringo* visitors, including me, she on more than one occasion used my “scary” presence to get Kimberly to behave. Maximiliana would say, “You stop that, or Jamie will give you an injection.” When her husband resumed physically punishing Maximiliana, she told him that I would come “pull him by the ears” if he did not stop. The threat of my administering an injection is reminiscent of the technologically capable *gringo* doctor accompanying the *sacajos* on their organ ordeals. Whiteness is a source of attraction-repulsion for Sacha Lomans.

### *Thinness*

Like whiteness, thinness is increasingly preferred. Thinness is the bodily logic on which the older and younger generations most diverge. Some older women prefer thicker bodies, which they view as healthier, but all agree one should not have too heavy a body, though not necessarily for aesthetic reasons. In general, older women desire sturdy, strong bodies in order to be able to work their farms and *chakras*. Excess fat, say elder women in Sacha Loma, weighs the body down, tires a woman out quickly, and prevents her from keeping up with her husband and children.

Most Kichwa women of the older generation worried only about specific body parts as related to their ability to complete daily chores. During my 2010 period of fieldwork, a then-43-year-old Soledad described skinny women as having “*bicho* (parasite, Sp.) bodies”—meaning their bodies must be riddled with parasites who divest them of their health and energies. She believed that smaller frames suggest disease (e.g., anemia, cancer). Soledad was unhappy with her own body, which she viewed as too thin and too weak to carry

out necessary farm work, and she experienced intense anguish over her stiff, painful hands. Nomaní, a then-39-year-old employee of the local eco-hotel, had the most negative perception of her body of all the Kichwa women I interviewed, young or old. She explained that her body often failed her. Her nose itched and burned and doctors could not figure out why, her coordination suffered because she was often sick, she was malnourished and could not regain a healthy weight, her appetite was nonexistent, and her thighs, biceps, and shoulders were almost always in pain, preventing her from completing her day-to-day tasks. As a gardener for the eco-hotel (and sometimes room tender, linens washer, and sous-chef) as well as a mother and wife, she worked very long days. Nomaní said that she needed her body to sustain her, but that it hurt more often than not, and frequently she did not have energy to work because she was without appetite and therefore did not eat. Older women like Soledad and Nomaní speak about their bodies using discourses of strength/weakness, health/disease, and work/laziness.

Though this language of bodily strength persists in the younger generation of Kichwa women, this is slowly changing, as traditional understandings of the body are weighed against a preoccupation with being *too big* rather than being too small (i.e., weak). Young women are certain that they do not want to be fat. Common reasons given include: fatness weighs down the body such that work cannot be done; thinness (or being *normal* [normal, Sp.]) just looks better, while fatness makes the body ugly; it is painful to have to search through stacks of clothes to find ones that fit if you gain weight; and if you are fat, people assume you are lazy.

Fiel, a woman in her early twenties, described a growing anxiety among women her age with *guatas* (tummies, Sp.). Though Fiel herself admitted that she was unhealthy and underweight (she just had a baby who, she explained, sapped her energy), she said other women, like her sister, worry about their *guatas* and want to lose weight. In the past, said Fiel, *guatas* were not a problem—no woman had one. But now that women are studying and doing desk jobs (e.g., secretarial positions) rather than working in the fields, their weight and shape have become an issue. I asked Fiel how young women could lose weight if they wanted to. She said that they could eat less and consult what foods are best in order to *adelgazar* (to get skinny, Sp.), such as grapefruit juice and other citrus drinks. Rice, Fiel claimed, is the food most think makes them *sacar las guatas* (get little tummies, Sp.).

Like their mothers and grandmothers, many young women claim that their interest in slimming down has to do with a feeling of sluggishness because, as 20-year-old Maximiliana says, they “feel too heavy,” which can inhibit physical (and mental) productivity. Her sister, 25-year-old Sirena, notes the ease with which skinny bodies move about and get things done.

I would say that, by my own standards, I would say that I am skinny. I mean, I am normal.... By my own criteria, I can walk calmly with ease, and I can do exercises with ease. On the other hand, a heavy person I would say.... Every person has his own body, mind you—we should respect our own bodies. For a heavy person it's hard for him to do extreme exercises. For him, every type of activity makes his body feel heavy.

Twenty-five-year-old Imelda, who I overheard being criticized by two young men in the community for being plump, weighs in:

Young women try to dress better, talk with their friends, study. But they are more focused on their weight: whether they go up or down. They want to be “normal”—not too skinny, not too fat. They don’t like being fat. *When you are fat, you are very tired. Your body can’t do anything; it can’t run fast or anything.* [emphasis added]

Seventeen-year-old Dolores associates thinness with increased movement and better overall health as well:

Jamie: Dolores, do you know what a diet is?

Dolores: To not eat fatty foods so that you don’t get fat. Diets are good, but I have never been on a diet. One of my high school teachers complained of being overweight and having difficulty climbing the stairs; so she said she needs to go on a diet.

Jamie: In this community?

Dolores: Yes. My high school teacher when I was in school. The teacher went on a diet because she was really fat. She said that it wore her out to climb the stairs. She said she wanted to go on a diet in order to get skinny.

Jamie: And what about young women in the community?

Dolores: They are worrying about their weight so that they don’t get sick.... They say that when one gets fat, this brings many sicknesses.

Jamie: Why do they want to be skinny?

Dolores: They say they want to be skinny because when one is skinny one is pretty.

Jamie: Are young women dieting in the community?

Dolores: Dieting for them is to make their bodies lighter (*livianos*, Sp.) in order to be able to play, they say, in championships, like, in order to run harder and faster.

While these preferences do seem related to shifting weight and shape ideals as to what counts as healthy, something else also seems to be driving young women’s inclination toward thinner bodies: Thin bodies are beautiful bodies, and beautiful bodies are successful (explained further in Chapter 6). During a focus group aimed at understanding the link between body image and access to resources, I asked who, in a choice between a heavy woman or a thin woman, both equally qualified, would be hired for an office job. The old women almost immediately chose the heavy woman because office jobs just require sitting, at which, they reasoned, she would naturally and



necessarily be better, while farm work requires light bodies that can walk. Young women, however, gravitated toward the thin woman. Sixteen-year-old Moreina explained, “Of course the skinny woman... is a beautiful woman. She’ll attract more customers.” She went on to select the heavy woman, however, because “they’re not as flighty as thin women” and “they tend to stay in the same place.” Nicola, expectedly, selected the thin woman inferring, “Thin women are always faster in doing whichever task.” Thirty-year-old Mimi adds, “The good-looking one will get the job. The boss will choose the good-looking one because she has fine qualities. It betters the image of the business.” Pressures to “have” and “do” white, to be civilized, and to be thin or conventionally attractive come from a similar place linked to discrimination. *Buena presencia* encompasses all of these pressures.

Examples of weight discrimination abound in more industrialized, urban environments. For instance, Oscar Meehan and Melanie Katzman describe the new challenges facing Argentina’s women. For Argentinean women, “The possibility of controlling the size and appearance of one’s body holds not only a psychic sense of mastery but potential economic gain as the current culture recruits and reinforces unreal physical characteristics” (2001:157). With newspaper ads like, “We are looking for female students aiming to improve their incomes. Excellent figure is the only requirement,” or “Good/nice physical appearance, previous experience not essential,” some young Argentinean women feel pressured to achieve a particular body type for educational or professional advancement. Meehan and Katzman suggest that this blatant weight discrimination may lead to eating disorders among Argentina’s women.

Anne Becker (2004:544-545) unpacks adolescent ethnic Fijian women’s attachment of competitive social positioning to slender bodies. To be overweight was to be lazy and unable to secure a good job. Some girls described skinny bodies as necessary for cushy flight attendant positions; others identified and admired television actresses (e.g., Scully from *The X-Files*) as able to have superior jobs because of their slim figures. Eileen Anderson-Fye (2004) documents beauty ideals in San Andrés, Belize, a tourist destination undergoing rapid socio-cultural and economic change. The shape of women’s bodies—a Coca-Cola or Fanta bottle shape, both curvy in different ways—was more important than size. Most young women reported wanting to be “normal,” or not too fat, not too thin. (“Normal” is a common descriptor of a desirable weight by young women in Sacha Loma, too.) In Belize, the idea among young women of “never leave yourself”—an ethnopsychological concept relating to standing up for oneself that elevates behaviors of self-care—is cited as a potential protective factor against disordered eating behavior (Anderson-Fye 2004:577). The “never leave yourself” mentality mediates young women’s interactions with transnational media by providing a basis to reject images that do not conform to it (Anderson-Fye 2004:578). A few young women in San Andrés, however, did feel compelled to diet their way to a figure thought to be more pleasing to foreign tourists’ notions of beauty: “Perceiving U.S. tourists would be more likely to choose their shop over others if Kara were thin, pretty and friendly, Kara’s parents, especially her mother, overtly instructed her on her weight” (Anderson-Fye 2004:579). This meant Kara exercised, took diet pills, and cut out sweets from her meals—her thin body became “a sort of family commodity” (Anderson-Fye 2004:588). Furthermore, skinny women (with BMI of 24 or less), writes Anderson-Fye, were up to five times more likely to have a job in the touristy section of town. Women with disordered eating

behaviors, however, were not the norm, and those that did exhibit some pathological behaviors tended, like Kara, to be motivated by reasons other than a personal preference for thinner physiques:

Having a thin body was found to have instrumental meaning for job success among these young women, and eating disordered symptomatology appears to be related to economic gain and family obligation rather than aesthetic preference or individual psychological turmoil. [Anderson-Fye 2004:563]

These types of economic pressures and incentives suggest some reasons why young women in Sacha Loma and elsewhere differ from their mothers and grandmothers in body preferences.

To get a general sense of the body esteem of Kichwa women in Sacha Loma, I administered a modified version of the Body-Esteem Scale (BES; Franzoi and Shields 1984) to 23 Kichwa women aged 15-64. This study's Body-Esteem Test (BET) asked women to rank 21 physical/performance features of their body as "good" or "bad." I divided Kichwa women into elder (28-64) and youth age groups (15-27). With only a primary education, 25-year-old Imelda is the odd one out in the youth category. The percentages represented in the table below are the percentages that responded that a particular feature is "bad."

Young women responded negatively most often (>20% or more of respondents) to the following physical/performance features of their bodies, in decreasing order: muscles (46%), coordination (31%), hips (20%), weight (20%), appetite (20%), and shoulders (20%). Older women responded negatively most often (>20% or more of respondents) to the following physical/performance features of their bodies, in decreasing order: eyes (50%), arms (30%), smell (23%), waist (20%), muscles (20%), figure (20%), weight (20%), shoulders (20%), and legs (20%).

It is important to note that just because younger women and older women responded negatively to the same feature—for instance, weight—does not mean that they responded for the same reasons. When I received a negative response to the BET, I asked for an explanation. Younger women almost always reported dissatisfaction with their weight because they felt they were too *heavy*. Older women, on the other hand, responded negatively because they believed they were too *thin*.

At the same time, young women and elder Kichwa women have much in common. Dissatisfactions with muscles, coordination, and shoulders for young women and arms, waist, muscles, shoulders, and legs for older women primarily involved impairments in their ability to work. Younger women continue to maintain a considerable appreciation for physical work even though manual labor may not be a desirable occupation. Likewise, because elder Kichwa women still maintain themselves and their families through hard, physical work, their failing bodies are a huge source of anguish. Complaints about waists, for example, for older women generally had to do with being in pain. Roberta had an umbilical hernia, which she refused to have surgically treated because of her fear of hospitals. This made it very difficult for her to work on her farm or at the local kindergarten where she was employed. At the same time, Yolanda, Roberta's daughter, revealed that Roberta was self-conscious about her *guata*, which could also have contributed to her negative view.

	All Kichwa Women	Young Women (15-27)	Elder Women (28-64)
Smell	22%	15%	23%
Nose	4%	8%	0%
Muscles	35%	46%	20%
Ears	0%	0%	0%
Chin	4%	8%	0%
Coordination	17%	31%	0%
Arms	22%	15%	30%
Eyes	26%	8%	50%
Hips	22%	23%	20%
Figure	13%	15%	10%
Weight	22%	23%	20%
Appetite	22%	23%	20%
Lips	0%	0%	0%
Waist	22%	15%	30%
Thighs	9%	8%	10%
Biceps	9%	8%	10%
Shoulders	22%	23%	20%
Cheeks	0%	0%	0%
Legs	13%	8%	20%
Skin color	9%	15%	0%

**Table 2: Percentage of Negative Responses to BET**

### **Vintage Bodily Logics of Production: Will the Farm Come Back into Style?**

This chapter elaborated the recent trend away from farm work as a productive engagement for teenagers and toward school and bodily projects as new types of (identity) productive activities of social significance. Part of the reason for this trend has been the rise of education and foreign influences—like television, print, and Internet—in the community. Another reason brought up time and again by Sacha Lomans is insufficient farmland for their children. Many parents either do not have land to bequeath or have so many children that any land inheritance involves vanishingly small parcels. Twenty-nine-year-old Nora explains, “I worked the farm when I was a little girl. My mother taught me. Now that we don’t have *propia finca* (our own farm, Sp.), I don’t take my children. We don’t have a big enough farm. We only have ¼ of a hectare.” Others complain that land they do own is located on the *segunda línea*, too far for them to work on a daily basis or to be a teaching resource for their children. Forty-four-year-old Anselmo laments, “The situation is that in Sacha Loma, I don’t have my own farm.... I have only a small plot with a house and nothing else.” All of these reasons combined have meant the decline of farm work as an immediate aspiration for adolescents and young adults. In other words, young people’s bodies and identities are being developed through productive activities that do not generally involve the machete, and instead use the mind, to use Dorotea’s words.

However, while I expected a different response, when I asked Sacha Lomans, young and old, if this meant the demise of agricultural jobs in favor of non-agricultural jobs, almost every time they responded that it did not. In fact, the consensus was *someone who has really made it—who is very successful—can just buy his own farm in the future*. Thus, an admirable life trajectory would be to forsake the farm to get one's high school and college degrees, to work for a time to save up money, and then to be able to purchase a chunk of the hot, endangered commodity that is farmland. Twenty-five-year-old Sirena thinks through this possibility:

I think that farm work is also good.... Even though one is not studied, on the farm it's good to plant crops. There is good money to be found on the farm. In my case, I'd like to be able to farm. One has to be prepared to do anything. With a high school degree, it's no different [one should know how to work the farm].

Later, she continues,

In the future, I plan to return to the farm. I am going to be something. I already have a high school degree. I am preparing to be something more. That is to say that I am going to work at some sort of institution. And with this money that I earn, I am going to go back to work on a farm.... One day my children will study, and then they'll get their own farms, and they they'll start to learn what it is to work on the farm.

There are a number of suppositions operating behind Sirena's statements. First, schoolwork is not inherently a better financial opportunity than farm work because, as she says, "There is good money to be found on the farm." Twenty-three-year-old María provides some insight:

I have seen in the city people who are college-educated, doctors, lawyers, and all of them have farms. They say that they can't make ends meet [even with their professions]. So they plant. I think that [young people] will return to the farms. My sister, Nicola, she has begun to grow her own cacao, plantains, and manioc.

The problem arises when one does not have enough time to work the land one has (because it is too far away) or when one does not have enough land to make a living (the primary complaint of Sacha Lomans).

Farm work is assumed to take less time to master than schoolwork. In order to get a high school degree, one must attend school for over a decade. Behind Sirena's belief that her children can just pick up farm work after they get their degrees is the notion that farm work, when compared to schoolwork, is easy to grasp and there is no big rush to learn how to do it. As Anselmo once told me, "It only takes 15-20 minutes to learn how to grow rice or beans."

While new productive activities like education are desirable, farm work, it seems, remains an aspiration, albeit one to put off until the future when one has enough time, money, and resources to make returning to the land a workable enterprise. Sixty-four-year-old Valerie says, "With any job, you can still work on the farm.... If I had another

profession, like being a secretary, I would still go to the farm. Yes, there are those who work in an office who still go to the farm.” Forty-nine-year-old Dorotea agrees: “I tell my children that even the president of the country has his farm.... They have *haciendas*. They too *sacan plata* (earn their living, Sp.) from the *campo*.” It seems that vintage aspirations for the security and productivity of agriculture persist as a subsurface continuity across generations.

### **Conclusion: (Dis)Continuous Bodily Logics?**

Below the surface contrasts between barefoot women farmers with sturdy frames and long pulled-back hair versus made-up students with bangs, highlighted hair, jeans and heels, the older and younger generations are more similar than one might suppose. Often both desire the same things (e.g., whiteness), though older people may not wish these for themselves or desire them for the same reasons (e.g., thinness). Rather than seeing external influences and new aspirations as replacements for more traditional social, cultural, and bodily orientations among the Kichwa, this study reveals a more dynamic synergy between the two.

There is a continuous generational bodily logic rooted in production. For mothers the logic is expressed in producing crops, food, and children and hardened farm bodies. For their daughters and granddaughters the logic is expressed in producing new identities as educated career women utilizing the complex of these new, aspirational body images. While their body images may be drastically different, their motivations are similar: socially-directed goals for which the female body as a prime channel for achieving them. Having or doing “whiteness,” say Kichwa women, brings access to resources that can benefit oneself and family. Thinness, or general attractiveness, and being “civilized” make it easier to get a job providing much-needed household income.

Many Kichwa women, young and old, recognize this bodily logic as a stepping-stone to family and community success. As in Nicola’s case, her choices, bodily or otherwise, are in part inspired by a desire for the future success of her children whom she hopes will be supported by her efforts. Her full face of make-up is the perfect billboard for the products she sells, an income that helps her efforts to attend college, with her education being the “legacy” she will leave her children. The strong, sturdy body of Dorotea, likewise, has been an unswerving producer of food and *chicha*, making her a crucial contributor to sustaining her family and the community.

Individualism is not absent in the community, and it is especially evident as a trait of the very young (teens). Eighteen-year-old Yolanda stands out because of her more individualistic perspective on life. When asked what she expects Sacha Loma to be like 20 years from now, she depicted quite a different community:

There will be lots of people, but each person will have his own job. Each person will keep to himself. It won’t be a community. It won’t be organized as a community. Instead each family will be organized as a unit. They will say, “I have my family. What can I do about the rest?”

This is a contrast to the tangled web of social relations that exists currently in Sacha Loma, in which families build up social credit through an almost non-stop daily exchange of *lo que sobra* (what is in excess, Sp.) after their own immediate family’s needs are met.

Additionally, Yolanda sings education's praises for its capacity to *socializar los jóvenes* (to socialize young people, i.e., to transmit values necessary for their participating in larger society, Sp.), similar to what this dissertation refers to as *intercambio*. Socializing, in Yolanda's sense, and *intercambio* are both similar and different to the Kichwa principle of sociality, previously elaborated. Both socializing and sociality involve sharing. Socializing takes place beyond community boundaries within the context of ethnic others, through institutions such as state-sponsored schooling; sociality, however, is kin-based exchange. Both are community-building. Socializing expands what can be considered a community through linking young Kichwa and ultimately Sacha Loma with a growing regional, national, and global community of people; sociality reaffirms kin ties. Both are person-building. Socializing is crucial in the formation of modern Ecuadorian citizens able to participate in extra-community situations and places, like cities, conferences, and universities; sociality is a necessary component of what it means to be Kichwa through sharing the items that people produce. Moreover, new productive avenues are expected to reinforce and sustain more long-standing productive avenues. Thus, young Kichwa may utilize their new interactive skills outside Sacha Loma in order to bring about changes that benefit their family and community: *Socializing becomes an integral part of traditional sociality, in other words*. Espinosa describes similar thinking among the Shipibo:

Schooling will also provide the skills to obtain money to buy things for their families. Yet they still have to maintain their generosity and solidarity, even among the harsh conditions that urban life imposes. Thus, the Shipibo youth associations help these young people become *jakon joni* [a good Shipibo person] in the contemporary world. [Espinosa 2012:466-467]

Older women accept these experiments of individual self-development as part of the larger picture and promise of success. Change, as mothers and grandmothers see it, is inevitable. While they may not identify with or desire the latest fads, they want success for their children and grandchildren, even if that means giving them more freedoms than they had as young women.

### ***Young People May Not Be Able to Walk the Walk or Talk the Talk***

There are discontents among the older generation for what they perceive as loss of culture, especially loss of language. Muratorio (1998) emphasizes how elder Kichwa in her study feared that, by no longer physically walking about because of new forms of transportation, and enamored by cars and buses, young Kichwa women were losing a valuable teaching tool. There are similar fears in Sacha Loma, though, as explained earlier, they are balanced with recognition that modernity's mobility is necessary. Kichwa mothers and grandmothers see that their children are slowly choosing to no longer walk the walk—carry *chalos*, consume *chicha*, and so on—or talk the talk—speak Kichwa at home and amongst themselves. Forty-nine-year-old Dorotea weighs in:

It is said that we Kichwa are changing because we are now studying. But it's our culture that we should not be forgetting. Kids need to study more, but at the same time they need to work, that is, they need to carry *chalos*. That's how they have

to *andar* (walk about, Sp.). To my children, more than anything I tell them, if you guys want to study, to graduate, fine, but you guys need to carry your *chalos*. This you don't leave behind. Always you must carry forward our customs. Don't go throwing your *chalo* to the side! ... More than studying, more than being prepared, you all have to carry the *chalo* behind you!

Her sister, 64-year-old Valerie, agrees:

But my kids, they don't know how to *andar* (walk, Sp.). They walk about badly. Just like this I am used to walking while carrying things.... It's beautiful to carry [babies or produce] about. Why doesn't your body hurt? People ask me. How are you so youthful? They wonder. I don't know. I am how I am.

*Chicha* and the *chalo* are two indexically Kichwa and important symbols of older women's productivity. *Chicha* is significant not only for a woman's identity as Kichwa, but also her identity as a woman, because *chicha* has been crucial for and still plays an important role in the physical and social nourishment of families. In the past, a woman was defined by (and considered marriageable for) her *chicha*-making abilities. Today, older folks lament the loss of *chicha* as a prominent aspect of Kichwa culture. Segundo, a 33-year-old man, ruminates on the matter: "Here we are 'culturalizing' all that is Spanish. That is to say, *chicha*, most times people don't even have it in the house. ... Nowadays, you don't see this, more you see *comida del pueblo* (city food, Sp.)."

Like *chicha*, the *chalo* is falling into disuse. Nemar expressed his frustration to me one day:

Not even young women want to use *chalos* these days.... In order to bring whichever product from the *chakra* to the house, it was always a carried *chalo*.... Now they prefer to paint their nails, they don't want to help their mothers or their fathers, and so it is we are losing [our culture].

Young women are exchanging certain images for others, searching for new ways to define themselves that differ from the experience of their mothers and grandmothers—city food not *chicha*, nail polish not *chalos*.

Segundo, like Micaela quoted above, fears the total loss of the Kichwa language:

We are acculturating more to all that is Spanish; we are losing our culture, the culture that is conversing with our children. But it is never too late to teach one's children.... Because there is a lack of this link that comes from when everyone speaks in Kichwa.

Sixty-four-year-old Valerie complains:

Now kids don't say anything in Kichwa. When I am saying something in Kichwa, they are like, "What is grandma saying? What is grandma saying?" I say to them, "Where were you born? Where were you raised?" I say, "Here you were born. Here you were raised." ... They need to study all languages: Kichwa,

Spanish, English. I say, “You all need to speak in Kichwa, too. You can’t throw this away. It is our language.”

Thus, to acknowledge continuities is not to say that there are not discontinuities that trouble the elder generation. To look at both continuities and discontinuities is to develop a fuller picture of how Kichwa shoulder the weight of the possibilities, perks, choices, and challenges of modernity—even if that is only sometimes in a *chalo*.

***(Body) Images of the Future***

The Kichwa of Sacha Loma show how socially oriented values can take new forms in pursuit of success, prestige, and modernity. The bodily logics of production for young Kichwa women are expressed in new and changing forms, but there is much continuity as well. The challenge for Sacha Loma’s Kichwa youths is a challenge Muratorio elaborated for Kichwa youth in and around Tena: how they “are going to incorporate modernity through the many neocolonial mirrors...is a crucial question facing many indigenous women (and men) in Latin America today” (1998:417).



## CHAPTER 6: MIRROR, MIRROR, PLUGGED INTO THE WALL: (TELE)VISIONS OF FUTURES, BODIES, AND THE FUTURE OF BODIES

Yes they have affected me. I realize when I see them talk that they are taller than I am. I notice their manner of dress. All of this. I ask myself, “Why can’t I? Why can’t I be like them—be tall, be white?” Yes, I have imagined these things. But this happens most often when I am in the city. There I see many things on television.

--26-year-old Nicola

These young girls look at themselves through the television looking glass, but only mirror the whites. And then...like mirrors they break.

--Elder Napo Kichwa woman in Muratorio  
1998:409

They immediately capture such things.... And in their minds these things remain—to kill, to die, to fall in love, to put on make-up, to be skinny. The good things they forget, and the bad things they record (*grabar*, Sp.) right away.

--52-year-old Micaela

### Television and Aspirations: Media Practices, Mediating Identities

“My kids can watch cartoons all day. But from four to six the television is mine for *mis novelas* (my dramatic serials, Sp.),” Nicola told me as she cleared a spot for me on her front porch. She swept away the dried mud from the wood plank floor and unstacked a plastic chair from the others in the corner for me to sit on. Nicola had asked me if I would come teach her how to make banana bread. “You are here on time! I am not ready. I look like a witch (*hecho bruja*, Sp.),” she said as she stood in front of the mirror hanging on the wall of her bedroom, which was right off the living room. She slicked back her hair into a tangled heap, clipped stray bangs on top of her head, and put on pink lipstick, black eyeliner, and black mascara. She showed me her nails. They were painted white with black stripes and dots for embellishment: “I bought this at the market upriver. It’s cheap and flakes off when I do the dishes. It is definitely not Yanbal.”

Nicola and Rico have the most luxurious home in the community. There are separate bedrooms for them and their two children, a screened-in porch that doubles as the living room, a small storefront, a kitchen, and—most lavishly—an indoor bathroom with its own sink, shower, and toilet. Rico had paid handsomely for the construction workers employed at the eco-hotel to plumb and tile it on their days off. Their porch did not always have a screen. For most of my time in Sacha Loma, the screenless window openings above the railings that surrounded the porch were unobstructed. Children and teenagers could (and did) hang over them because built prominently into the back wall of

the porch was a color television. The couple subscribed monthly to beam in DirectTV through a satellite dish that sat conspicuously in the middle of their front yard. This meant the family had access to hundreds of channels, including TL Novelas, Cartoon Network, and a variety of news and film channels. Nicola convinced Rico to screen-in their porch due to the constant nuisance of young neighbors hopping the rails to indulge in free entertainment. More well-connected than other members of the community, Rico (the eco-hotel manager) and Nicola were able to hook up their home to the power supply of both the eco-hotel and the health clinic. This meant that if either of these was operating its generator during the day, the family had free electricity; if not, they had their own generator, though television alone was rarely an important enough excuse to power it up. At night, the eco-hotel, clinic, and public school ran generators until nine o'clock or slightly later, and television was guaranteed.



**Image 3: Nicola's open porch before the screening-in**

What did Nicola mean by “witch,” a comparison that I heard other young women in the community make to themselves? Deceptive female spirits and *brujería* (witchcraft, Sp.) indicated very different things for Kichwa in the past, and fears of witchcraft are not unheard of in the community today. That morning “witch” referred to the image of an unkempt woman, hair untamed in mounds of frizzy knots and warts on her nose. Perhaps she picked up this image from a trip to the city? Or maybe a witch once appeared on one of her *telenovelas*?

Tele-viewing in Sacha Loma is a recent, but catching, phenomenon, only just getting started as a competitor for people’s time and attention. It is not a pervasive and saturating resource for identity articulation in the way that many would argue it is in the West. Habits of spectatorship (see Pace 2009) are not yet sedimented. However, trips to the city where television is rampant are increasingly common; and it is apparent that, gradually, images, ideas, and ideals presented in the media are contending with those that

have had a longer tenure for Kichwa in Sacha Loma.

This chapter aims to talk about media influence and the potential power of media texts while highlighting concurrently other mediating factors, such as preexisting social relationships in Sacha Loma, that may *enhance or disrupt* this influence. Following in the footsteps of anthropologists like Purnima Mankekar (1999) and Lila Abu-Lughod (2005), I emphasize that careful ethnographic observations can reveal the role of media as “raw material for interpretative design and purposive use” (Corner 2000:394) in the production of women’s identities and bodies without ignoring media’s powerful influence on women’s choices, conscious or otherwise. Media content, in other words, is not a destination but rather a central waypoint in a more complex journey of meaning-making carried out by a socially and historically situated person. Whether media messages are accepted, rejected, or modified, they are received in some way. What they “produce” in viewers, what viewers “produce” with them, and where the balance of power lies, are empirical questions.

When young women in Sacha Loma look into the modern, electrified mirrors sometimes literally on their walls, what do they see staring back at them? The previous two chapters examined the production of Kichwa identities in terms of more long-standing principles and their reinterpretation in contemporary contexts. This chapter focuses on the bodily logics of production as related to media consumption with special attention to media consumption as a “productive” activity that cultivates modes of *self*-development and *self*-expression, though the cultivation of others is not wholly absent. I demonstrate how Kichwa women are beginning to use what they see on television as a key element in the production of their self- and body images and aspirations..

Through a fine-grained analysis of Sacha Lomans’ practices—what people do, say, and say they think about the media they consume—related to television, magazine images, and domestically-produced music videos, this chapter unfolds the dynamics of media consumption in this rural, indigenous community. By focusing on media practice in Sacha Loma, I am able to talk about media *consumption* in terms of *production*—media consumption and media production are, in fact, two sides of the same coin (see Chapter 2). Put differently, *mediation for Kichwa is a process of consumption-production: Media is not consumed without something being produced as a result of this consumption*. Influences from the media are increasingly incorporated into the production of female identity and body image in this community.

To do this, I explore mass media as an *apparatus of aspirations*—as a tool representing what is possible to achieve in life that instigates processes of imagination and practices aimed at reaching these possibilities. (Television, moreover, is very literally an apparatus representing Kichwas’ aspirations.) Television acts as an apparatus of aspirations by introducing the known, with which people can identify, and the unknown, which has the potential to bring about shifting ideas and preferences. The known may clear a path for, or be a barrier to, the insertion of new images, ideas, and ideals advertised in the media into everyday knowledge, discourse, and practice (see Martín-Barbero’s [1993] discussion of recognition; Tufte 2000:204).

As with more traditional bodily logics of production, bodies are one of the presumed means to achieve new productive endeavors—like better jobs—consistent with models of success promoted on television. Ethnic discrimination, however, also makes bodies a stumbling block to achieving certain aspirations. Music videos, I argue, may be

an antidote to poor body image or, at the very least, a source of ethnic pride in a polarized world of ambivalent attitudes toward indigenous identities. To what extent self- and body-esteem might be influenced negatively by media is a primary concern as young Sacha Loma women have begun to consider shaping their bodies in ways modeled after the stars through potentially harmful means.

To explore Kichwa women's shifting (bodily) aspirations, I draw on a number of strands of media theory, the genealogy of which I elaborate at length in this chapter. I have chosen to describe media consumption in Sacha Loma in terms of *mediation*. As I will discuss further later, mediation looks at how broadcasted material meets with audience members who are embedded already within other webs of meaning, particularly social networks, that influence their everyday lives. Sometimes media and these other webs of meaning reinforce one another; at other times, they are at cross-purposes. Mediation neither assumes total audience freedom, nor does it assume total media power. Viewers are often creative with how they engage and employ media content for their own ends. Yet, consumption of media content does not always entail resistance or alternative interpretations. In fact, individual and group consumption may also generate more intense "heeding" that coalesces more or less around a single theme intended by media producers (Pace 2009; Pace and Hinote 2013).

What does mediation look like in Sacha Loma? In Sacha Loma, mediation of the media text involves the Kichwa cultural dynamics (detailed in the previous chapters of this study) in "dialogue" (Appadurai 2013:195) with aspirations engendered by new influences from the media. The productive work of consuming media, or any other foreign influence, has to contend with other daily productive engagements—tending to one's family, going to school, working on the farm—and the lived realities of close-knit community life in which other perspectives on being and behavior are valued—sociocentrism over individualism, for instance. Sometimes these perspectives coincide. The strong family ties played up in *telenovelas*, for example, serve as a point of identification rather than difference for the Latin American families who watch them (e.g., Martín-Barbero 1993). Sometimes these perspectives conflict with one another, as when some Kichwa women noted to me how a media focus on thin bodies does not always jive with their "I accept myself as I am" mentality, which is explained below. The fact that media texts are not always coherent, or singularly taken up, is a given, though as many have pointed out, media do have the potential to exert a hegemonic ideological rendering of reality that many consciously or unconsciously take up (cf. Pace and Hinote 2013).

But does mediation really exist? Where does power reside in media production and media consumption? While most media researchers currently take a tempered approach in which both audience agency and media power are acknowledged, historically, there have been two easily identifiable poles in theoretical expositions of what people do with the media they consume: media effects and audience agency. Theories of media effects place power in the hands of the media producers as those who structure meaning for the viewer. Theories of audience agency put the power in the hands of media consumers as those who creatively engage with and repurpose what they see in the media. I detail these poles more completely below.

Part of the reason there has been such intense debate concerning media effects and audience agency is that what is going on is much more complex than can be captured

neatly, easily, or in a few paragraphs or pages. There are advertisements with blatant messages. There are programs with tacit, subsurface messages. Certain viewers may be more receptive to some messages than others. These same viewers may be more resistant to messages in other instances. At other times a viewer may miss a message entirely (Pace and Hinote 2013). Any testament to a one-size-fits-all model is bound for criticism. As Richard Wilk (2002:290) observes, every viewer is capable of each type of engagement with the media—dominated, oppositional, and negotiated—at some point in his or her tele-viewing life. Any theory of media consumption, then, is but a “consciously simplified description in graphic form of a piece of reality” (McQuail and Windahl 1993:2; Steele and Brown 1995:571).

This chapter’s focus on mediation mirrors the perspective of Jeanne Steele and Jane Brown (1995). Steele and Brown developed the Media Practice Model to study media effects, media practice, and teenage viewers. By conducting a “room culture project” (Steele and Brown 1995:552), in which they interviewed Western adolescents about the media—magazines, television, and so on—that were an intimate part of their personal sanctuaries within their parents’ home, Steele and Brown (1995) crafted

...a model that emphasizes a dialectical process in which media are important cultural agents whose influence on audiences is both *amplified* and *restrained* by active individuals who interact with the media from “where they live” (Schwichtenberg 1989:293), developmentally, socially, and culturally. The model does not diminish the importance of media content, but it recognizes that individuals shape and transform media encounters in a continual cycle of meaning making. The difference between amplified or restrained effects lies in individual...and group *practices*—the everyday activities, gestures, and routines that define social relations. [Steele and Brown: 1995:553]

There are three components to their Media Practice Model. First, “[i]nstead of worrying about where the power lies—with a powerful media or an active audience—practice theory sees media as an integral part of the continuous process of cultural production and reproduction that characterizes everyday life” (Steele and Brown 1995:556). Second, “lived experience” (Vygotsky 1978)—which involves a constant embodied “bridging” between teens’ existing sociocultural frameworks and behaviors and the new, “shared sociocultural knowledge” communicated through the media—is key to teens’ consumption of the media (Steele and Brown 1995:557). Lastly, Steele and Brown elaborate a duality of identity formation, analogous to the duality inherent in the bodily logics of production: “teens’ sense of who they are shapes their encounters with the media, and those encounters in turn shape their sense of themselves in the ongoing process of cultural production and reproduction” (Steele and Brown 1995:557).

The mass media of Steele and Brown’s study are very much an apparatus of aspirations for room-dwelling Western teenagers. In this way, Steele and Brown (1995) characterize the media as a “tool kit” (1995:553). Their Media Practice Model demonstrates the explanatory power of a combined, holistic, effects-practice (what I call a consumption-production) approach:

Lived Experience governs—holds the potential for amplifying or restraining—what is possible when specific adolescents and particular media come into contact. But it is through everyday activities and routines—in other words, practice—that the difference is played out. [Steele and Brown 1995:558]

Because their model relies on teenagers as having been immersed for substantial amounts of time in processes of media-viewing—what George Gerbner (2002) and colleagues would call “cultivation”—something which has not quite come to pass in Sacha Loma, I prefer to describe nascent media consumption-production behaviors in broader terms of mediation rather than in terms of a delineated model.

Theories of media practice and media effects are not incompatible (Pace and Hinote 2013:15), though they have been made out to be locked in a “paradigmatic impasse...[through] polemic critiques of opposing approaches” (Pace 2009:407). This has been in part due to overcompensation in either direction of the theoretical spectrum, what Richard Pace and Brian Hinote call “ideological renderings and overreactions to previous positivistic approaches” (2013:193 n.2). More recent discussions of mediation, hybridity, identity, and media consumption are attempts to resolve some of this knee-jerk theoretical heel-planting. While media effects and media practice have been interpreted as totalizing schemes, clearly what is happening on the ground is much more complex. In other words, it is impossible to examine media effects without looking at what people do with the media; just as it is impossible to look at what people do with the media without looking at the media text to which they are responding, either positively or negatively.

This chapter, then, walks a tightrope between media power and audience practice. A focus on mediation means that I examine how Kichwa women are threading media content—what these programs communicate about family, love, friendship, success, and appearances—into their identity projects, particularly through their bodies. The phrase apparatus of aspirations straddles the theoretical divide—“apparatus” speaks to the disseminated content and messages of media producers; “aspirations” hints at the agency of viewers who take up these messages to produce their identities, often through their bodies. There is, of course, interplay between the two. Aspirations, as I have said, are often structured by foreign influences; even though individual agents imagine them, aspirations are not sought after in a vacuum (Appadurai 1996). Also tele-viewers are equipped with more than one apparatus for aspiring. Kichwa come with their own cultural apparatuses for mediating media content, namely the long-standing principles addressed throughout this study.

The reason media become a pervasive influence anywhere is because viewers have a keen ability to take what they see and make it relevant to meaning-making in their own lives—*people and their contexts mediate the media*. Content, characters, and commodities become woven into the texture of everyday life—mass media is converted into an intimate space for engaging with the self and social group, a new frontier for identity construction. As Michael Storper writes,

...[C]onsumerism, however it begins, ultimately sustains itself by becoming an intimate part of the action framework of individuals, how they see themselves and define their interests, how they approach the world, and how they present

themselves to others. [Storper 2001:105-106]

### ***Research on Body Image, Media Influence, and Indigenous Subjects***

Scholars recognize that rapid social change can precipitate body dissatisfaction and eating disorders in developing countries (e.g., Becker 2004; Szabo and Le Grange 2001). Some see this linked to identity struggles along lines of ethnicity, traditional family roles, or cultural expectations of femininity (e.g., Davis and Yager 1992; Nasser, et al. 2001; Szabo and Le Grange 2001). Others point to influences from tourism, media, consumerism, and the globalization of Western body ideals (Anderson-Fye 2004; Eddy, et al. 2007). Until recently, eating disorders have been studied primarily within psychology and sociology, mostly involving young, middle class, white girls preoccupied with the thin ideal. We know surprisingly little about what happens when Western beauty ideals go global, and what we do know comes mostly from urban settings (e.g., Lee 1993), with a few path-breaking studies of media consumption in more remote contexts (e.g., Abu-Lughod 2005).

While the literature on the body image of understudied ethnic groups—particularly African-American, Hispanic, and Asian women—has increased substantially in recent years (Le Grange, et al. 2004; Lee 1993; Masi de Casanova 2004; Milkie 1999; especially Nasser, et al. 2001; Poran 2002), there is still little research on the body image and body image concerns of indigenous individuals. Most work has focused on indigenous groups of Australia and the South Pacific (Becker 1995; Becker 2004; Becker, et al. 2002; Becker, et al. 2003; Becker, et al. 2005; McCabe, et al. 2005; Ricciardelli, et al. 2004; Ricciardelli, et al. 2007; Williams, et al. 2006). Nerissa Soh, Stephen Touyz, and Lois Surgenor (2006:54-55) point out that previously eating disorders were thought to be exceptional in these populations because of the assumptions that these populations valued plumper figures and that “collectivist” family and social structures were protective. It also may be that eating disorders simply went unrecognized.

Much of the current, limited literature on indigenous body image suffers from the same pitfalls as investigations of Western populations—application of complex quantitative methods with statistical analyses and little ethnographic support to give context and meaning to consultants’ responses (see Becker 2004:534 for this critique; for examples see McCabe, et al. 2005; Mellor, et al. 2004). As Anne Becker notes, “conventional quantitative methodology has been unable to unpack the complex ways in which media imagery permeates identity in Western contexts” (2004:535). The same is true for many non-Western studies. Most current studies of body image, media, and indigenous populations do not consider other mediating factors aside from the media and by and large emphasize media “exposure” as causal.

Anne Becker is a notable exception. In her studies of adolescent Fijian women, she does an exceptional job illuminating the developing body image concerns of her study group, using a mixed methods approach. Over a three-year period (1995-1998), Becker, et al. (2002) investigated body images of Fijian adolescent girls both before and after the introduction of television to see whether their attitudes toward body and food changed. Their principal findings suggest the importance of factoring cultural context into studies of eating disorders and the potential role of Western media imagery in the genesis of body dissatisfaction and disordered eating tendencies. Becker (2004:554-555)

concludes that adolescent girls in indigenous societies undergoing rapid social and economic change may be more vulnerable to media exposure because they lack traditional role models to be able to navigate changing socio-economic and political environments. In societies in which status is more often ascribed than achieved, media suggest the possibility to negotiate social position through changes in self-presentation. In addition, girls have no reference for comparison with which to deconstruct the fabricated “realities” they see on television. The idea that indigenous girls may be especially vulnerable emerges in the work of Latin American scholars as well.

In Ecuador, Blanca Muratorio (1998:416-417) describes the unease of elder Napo Kichwa women with the new engagements dividing young women’s attention. Prominent among these are what Muratorio calls the “screen mirror” (or television) and actual mirrors for the purposes of self-styling. In the past, the Kichwa grandmothers in Muratorio’s study confronted “mirrors” of a different sort: images of themselves reflected back from interactions not only with their kin but also non-kin others like “state officials, nuns, or local white colonists” (Muratorio 1998:416). Muratorio explains that elder Kichwa shaped their identities as women and as Kichwa by “accommodating and resisting previous racial aesthetic and moral models” imposed by non-kin in ways that young women today cannot do with televised role models:

These individual people [the nuns, officials, and colonists], however, could be talked back to, sabotaged, or eventually emulated, as a process of daily interaction. Instead, the television images do not provide the cultural clues to create meaning because the characters embodied in them do not engage in dialogue with the audience: they just talk “to” themselves. [Muratorio 1998:416]

Role models on television are rarely indigenous and are “racially coded to represent the aesthetic and social superiority of whiteness” (Muratorio 1998:416). In Muratorio’s (1998:418) analyses, young Kichwa women’s identity work or creative self-fashioning with television content is downplayed in favor of her emphasis on tele-viewing and other consumer practices as fogging up the mirrors in which they see their own identity, though she does talk briefly about processes of hybridization. Becker (2004:553) comes to a similar conclusion. Becker’s pioneering work demonstrates how young women in Fiji associate material success and work on the body, in ways comparable to the Sacha Loma patterns discussed in the previous chapter and further elaborated below. Becker argues that television and media images showing thin, attractive, prosperous women lead to a demoralization of young, female viewers in Fiji:

It is as though a mirror was held up to these girls in which they perhaps saw themselves as poor and overweight. The eagerness they express in grooming themselves to be hard workers or perhaps obtain competitive jobs perhaps reflects their collective energy and anxiety about how they, as individuals, and as Fijian people, are going to fare in a globalizing world. [Becker 2004:553]

Television, according to Becker and her consultants, pushes these girls to reflect on themselves, their position in Fijian society, and their position in the world. Sometimes these associations can be instructive, as when viewers engage in a sort of “media



sociality” in which they envision themselves as part of an “imagined community” (Anderson 1991) of viewers (Peterson 2003:147; see also “cultural citizenship” in Tufte 2000:228-230). At the same time, as the previous chapter emphasized for Kichwa, interactions with non-kin others—even on television—can sometimes initiate a process of self-reflection in which young women begin to devalue their bodies, their heritage, and their capacities based on how they think they compare. This self-comparison recalls Charles Cooley’s “looking-glass self” (1902) and the idea that one is whom one imagines others think one is. To Kichwa, the world of television is a fragment of a larger global community that might think less of those who are dark-skinned, rural, cannot dress well, and so on. Mark Peterson explains:

When individuals encounter in the media elements of their own identity—their sense of gender, ethnicity, sexuality, age, caste, and so forth—presented in powerful and compelling ways, they begin to measure themselves against the screen images.... [T]he media powerfully shape our subjectivity by presenting possible selves to us in a way that engages us in this process of self-articulation.... Jacques Lacan (1968) argues that media images present us with Others who reflect back possible selves against which we measure ourselves: “I am a woman—why isn’t my body image like that woman’s?” [Peterson 2003:195]

This type of evaluation of the self through others has been theorized in social psychology as processes of social comparison and reflected appraisal. Social comparison theories propose that people tend to compare themselves to others, particularly similar others; reflected appraisals is the term used to describe “how people believe others view them” (Milkie 1999:193). While many studies focus on the direct effects the media could have on viewers, Milkie suggests that media could have an *indirect* or “third party effect”—a person thinks others are affected by the media more than he is (1999:193). The person, in turn, could then be “*influenced by perceptions of the way others see the media-distorted world*” (Milkie 1999:193): “Media images may alter ideas of what is normative or ideal or of what one thinks others believe is normative or ideal, while offering an additional pervasive standard of comparison that goes beyond local cultures” (Milkie 1999:193). Moreover, Milkie points out that reflected appraisals tend to be based on the person’s assumption that these are the assessments of an entire group rather than a single individual. The notion that people tend to base their self-evaluations on what they presume others think of them is a key idea in the analysis that follows.

The literature reviewed so far in this section has studied indigeneity and body image as related to media consumption. I would like to briefly mention here the work of Faye Ginsburg (1991), who has made huge inroads into the study of mediation and indigenous peoples, but has done so from the point of view of Aboriginal media *producers*. Ginsburg cites the *American College Dictionary* definition of media as “an intervening substance, through which a force acts or an effect is produced, [2] an agency, means or instrument. Related to mediate: to act between parties to effect an understanding, compromise, reconciliation” (1991:104). Thus, there is in her work a de-emphasis on the media as “text” and an emphasis instead on “the cultural mediations” through which indigenous video functions (Ginsburg 1991:94): how media are used

“effectively to mediate, literally, historically produced social ruptures and to help construct identities that link past and present in ways appropriate to contemporary conditions” (Ginsburg 1991:94). The work of Ginsburg is significant because she is among the first to demonstrate how indigenous agents are marshaling the power of the media for their own purposes and goals, specifically the power of the media messages they are *producing* and disseminating as an outlet of “self-expression” with the “potential for the expansion of community-generated production” (Ginsburg 1991:97). Moreover, indigenous media are utilized to work toward “creating understanding between two groups [majority culture and indigenous groups] separated by space and social practice” (Ginsburg 1991:104). Videos made by indigenous producers have become a crucial component of “the *processes* of identity construction” (Ginsburg 1991:105). Identity work associated with these indigenous videos involves multiple players (indigenous, white) and paths (production of videos and the consumption of videos). She concludes with respect to young Aboriginal media producers: “Many in this generation want to engage in image-making that offers a face and a narrative that reflects them in the present, connects them to a history, and directs them toward a future as well” (Ginsburg 1991:106).

Media consumption by people in Sacha Loma is future-directed. When describing their futures as educated, employed citizens, teens here often invoke a streamlined idea of what it means to be modern, captured from their exposures to foreign people, places, and things. Older community members do, too, to a more limited degree. Some of their instruction on “how to be modern” comes from the television sets that now occupy prominent places in their homes. Rarely indigenous, the people they see on television are often wealthy, white, and surrounded by electronic devices and other material possessions, all of which are fodder for young people’s aspirational longings.

I found that Kichwa women have a lot to say about television and its relationship to their aspirations and self-fashioning. Yet indigenous women have seldom been studied as serious participants in practices of consumption (of mass media) and non-consumption (dieting and food restriction), though there are exceptions (e.g., Becker 1995, 2004; Becker, et al. 2002; Becker, et al. 2003; Becker, et al. 2005; Floyd 2008; High 2009).

Body image is a key dimension of women’s responses to media. Body image is multi-dimensional and may include one’s physical appearance (i.e., size and shape), how one chooses to adorn one’s body (e.g., clothing), and even how one feels about one’s body. When the gap between one’s actual and ideal body is felt to be problematic, this may lead to potentially pathological, self-harming actions and emotions like eating disorders (see Bordo 1993 and Orbach 1978 for classic analyses), which now are found all over the world (Nasser, et al. 2001).

Many young women in Sacha Loma have begun to speak about their bodies in terms of dissatisfaction. I noted this in 2006, and returned in July of 2010 to assess these palpable insecurities, using the Body Silhouette Test (BST). This test measures body image dissatisfaction by presenting drawings of figures ranging from very thin to overweight. I administered the BST to 28 women in Sacha Loma, ranging in age from 16 to 64. I divided them into two groups, 15 to 27 years old and 28 to 64 years old (as I explained elsewhere, women in the 28 and older cohort share similar life experiences of no secondary education, arranged marriage, and so on). I found a statistically significant difference between the two groups [ $t(28) = 2.22, p = 0.04$ ] in regard to body preference.

One hundred percent of the 28 to 64 cohort were either at their ideal body or smaller than their ideal body. However, among the 15 to 27 cohort, the majority were *larger* than their ideal body. This is evidence of an intergenerational shift in the values associated with body images, which in turn reflects the shifting aspirations of Kichwa youth—from sturdy farm bodies toward stylish student bodies.

A primary contention of this chapter is that consumption never happens without some sort of production. What scholars from Becker to Ginsburg have shown is that the practices and processes through which such production happen vary from group to group and even person to person, though this is not to say that there are no patterns or parallels.

Ted Fischer once told me that we have to consider Pikachu as much part of contemporary Maya culture as we would corn or copal (see the cover of Fischer and Hendrickson's 2002 book). Media influence is not entirely dominating, but it nonetheless is a potent influence in daily lives of many indigenous people. At the same time, audiences appropriate and (re)interpret media messages to their own ends. Television content is threaded into an already richly woven textile of social life in which it becomes one among various domains for identity work. Non-Westerners are not necessarily more resistant to particular media messages.

Though many studies of media, modernity, and bodies emphasize Western ideas, values, and/or media imagery as a potential *cause* of body image dissatisfaction among indigenous adolescent girls, most only test these presumed connections quantitatively and few studies engage media theory directly. Instead of assuming the inevitable impact of media exposure on body image, and therefore testing it through “exposure” correlations, it is more useful to explore the *how* and the *why* of media's influence. In contrast to theories that present globalization and the spread of Western aesthetics as a homogenizing monolith (cf. Baudrillard 1998), anthropologists analyze the interpretation of, modification of, and occasional resistance to media images in specific locales (e.g., Abu-Lughod 2005; High 2009; Pace and Hinote 2013). In Sacha Loma, women are active viewers and not passive recipients of often very persuasive, neatly packaged messages.

### **Power, Agency, Mediation: Reflections on Theories of Media Influence**

In general, media theory has fallen into three categories, which Peterson (2003:89) labels literalism (media text as powerful), idealism (audience as agent-interpreters who can resist media texts), and constructivism (text is mediated by particular relationships, experiences, and “social and cultural codes” that audience members bring to the table). Richard Wilk (2002) identifies these same categories as dominated, oppositional, and negotiated, respectively. This section is a brief review of the literature on media influence divided into a similar scheme: power versus agency, and then something in-between, or mediation.

#### ***Power Versus Agency***

David Morley's (1995) comprehensive review highlighted how media theory since its inception has grappled with efforts to discover the correct proportion of views of media as all-powerful, the audience as passive victims, media messages as polysemic (multiple meanings), and the audience as active, agentive, and purposeful decoders. To this end, the Frankfurt School of Social Research in Germany advanced the

“hypodermic” model of media influence, also known as Culture Industry or Mass Society studies. Developed in the 1940s in the wake of German Fascism, this model suggests that the media have total power to “inject” their audience with a specific message; the media presents a message and the audience internalizes it (Morley 1995:293-295). Emphases on media effects persist in recent scholarship (for instance see Tiggemann and Pickering 1996, Hargreaves and Tiggemann 2003 and Monro and Huon 2005 for examples related to body image).

In reaction against the hypodermic model, researchers in the United States in the 1940s and 1950s formed the “Sociology of Mass Persuasion” school, which conceded that the media might have an effect, but these effects are not givens and must be tested empirically (Morley 1995:295-296). From the Leicester Centre of Mass Communication in the 1960s, researchers generated the “uses and gratifications” approach. Recognizing the audience as active interpreters, proponents of “uses and gratifications” argue that media messages may be interpreted in innumerable ways; variations in the decoding of messages are due to “individual differences in personality or psychology” (Morley 1995:296). The variety of interpretations, therefore, could be infinite, a major problem highlighted by critics.

In the 1970s, Stuart Hall at the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in England attempted to strike a balance between the notion of media as hegemonic (hypodermic model) and the notion of the audience as active (uses and gratifications). Hall’s “encoding/decoding” model claims mass media is structured and institutionalized; yet there is an active viewer who makes his/her own meaning from the messages received. At the same time, a preferred reading of the message exists that the media disseminators hope the viewer will decode (which he/she often does) (Morley 1995:297). That is to say, contrary to the “uses and gratifications” model, audience responses may be “structured and patterned at a level beyond that of individual psychologies” in a sort of “structured polysemy” (Morley 1995:297). The 1980s brought a sharp increase in optimistic audience-centered case studies—called “new revisionist” or “interpretivist” schools.

Variations on traditional effects research continue. The work of Gerbner and colleagues on “Cultivation Analysis” examines the shaping of the social reality of viewers over time through their repeated exposure to and immersion in television’s version of reality. As the researchers assert,

Polysemy is not limitless, and preferred readings can have great power.... Through the process of mainstreaming [or the cultivation of common perspectives], television may have become the true “melting pot” of the American people—and increasingly of other countries around the globe. [Gerbner, et al. 2002:48-51]

“New Media Influence” (see below) is a brand of Cultivation Analysis, which further accounts for audience acceptance of, interpretation of, and resistance to preferred messages disseminated by the media (Pace 2009; Pace and Hinote 2013:10).

Some, like Morley (1995:306), argue that, just as the hypodermic models over-emphasized the power of media as oppressively dominant, more recent studies may overcompensate in the opposite direction. An extreme version of audience agency theory

is advocated by John Fiske who declares, “There is no text, there is no audience, there are only processes of viewing—that variety of cultural activities that take place in front of the screen...” (2013[1989]:56). In his interpretation, “moments of viewing” are inflected with an individual’s variegated social alliances, relations, and experiences as well as personal history and subjectivity. He uses “textuality” to refer to television’s “meaning-making potential,” its “potentiality rather than its concrete existence” (Fiske 2013[1989]:56). The viewer, characterized by “nomadic subjectivity” (Fiske 2013[1989]:57), is similarly potential-laden:

Any one viewer, then, may at different times be a different viewing subject, as constituted by his or her social determinants, as different social alliances may be mobilized for different moments of viewing: ...the socially constituted viewing subject may occupy different spaces within the determined terrain according to the social alliances appropriate to this specific moment of making sense of and finding pleasure in the television experience. [Fiske 2013[1989]:58]

Hence, the heroines of television show *Charlie’s Angels* might be read as representing female empowerment by some women (see Fiske 1987) and anti-feminist by others because its female leads are objectified blatantly.

Theories of media consumption based in the experience of Western audiences must be applied with care cross-culturally. Cultivation Analysis, for instance, depends upon long-term, “heavy” exposure to television and its messages, exposure which Sacha Lomans are acquiring only recently. The current generation of pre-teens is the first to have access to television since birth, and this access is decidedly sporadic. Likewise, media theory operates from the assumption that media messages make sense to Western audiences because they spring from a common socio-cultural context (after all, those writing the media messages are members of the viewing audience). Among audiences who are viewing imported television programming, media messages cannot be *assumed* to be relevant or to make (intended) sense, though that is not to rule out those types of effects. People may accept or creatively modify what they see, or simply disregard it (see Pace 2009:408; Pace and Hinote 2013).

### ***Mediation***

One would rarely consider it theoretically compelling to say that the answer to a question lies somewhere in the middle; yet social theorists who have done the difficult work of constructing a bridge between cultural and media studies have come to advance precisely an intermediate position, which some scholars have dubbed “mediation.”

As William Mazzarella puts it, the literature on media and globalization “foregrounds a problem that, ironically, it also largely disavows: namely, the question of *mediation as a general foundation of social life*” (2004:345, abstract, emphasis added). Striking a balance between the power of the media and audience interpretation is maddeningly difficult. A middle ground has not always been a meeting point for anthropologists, media theorists, or anthropologists of the media.

These opposing theoretical approaches echo other binary categories of analysis: modernity versus tradition, Western versus non-Western, hegemony versus subalternity, consumption versus production. Arjun Appadurai calls this “the tension between cultural

homogenization and cultural heterogenization” (1990:295). Mazzarella (2004:349) highlights the frustrating fancy footwork of “The Formula,” which arose “out of an increasingly desperate sense of the intransigence and inertia of these binaries—power and resistance, structure and agency, macro and micro, political economy and culture” (Mazzarella 2004:350). Daniel Miller proposes that the terms local and global be “productively dissolved” (1992:179) in media studies, to focus on how “a ‘local’... constructs itself in the consumption of the ‘global’” (1992:164). Yet the middle can also be a dangerous place if it produces only palindromic catchphrases, stalled creativity, please-all pitfalls, and tidy hybrid theories—of hetero-s, homo-s, inter-s, particular universals, and universal particulars (see Mazzarella 2004:349). As Nestor García Canclini observes,

We know that struggles through cultural mediations do not yield immediate or spectacular results. But it is the only way to ensure we do not go from the sham of hegemony to the sham of democracy.... [Martín-Barbero 1993:211-212]

In his analyses of Latin America, Jesus Martín-Barbero’s starting point is a middle ground: *mestizaje*, or

...the sense of the continuities in discontinuity and reconciliations between rhythms of life that are mutually exclusive...: the mixture of the indigenous Indian in the rural peasant culture, the rural in the urban, the folk culture in the popular cultures and the popular in mass culture. In this way we are not trying to avoid contradictions but move them out of established schemas so that we can take a fresh look at them in the process of their composition and decomposition. [Martín-Barbero 1993:188]

Acceptance of these *mestizajes*, explains Martín-Barbero, refocuses studies of the media toward a concept of mediation present among a “dense variety of strong, living popular cultures which provide a space for profound conflict and unstoppable cultural dynamism” (1993:2). Martín-Barbero’s notion of mediation embraces the inevitable *mestizajes* that originate out of popular consumption of mass media. He liberates “popular” from its negative association with the lowbrow, cultural absence, “cultural degradation” (Schlesinger 1993); as mediators, the masses become “protagonists of culture” and social movements, which make visible the extension of mass media like television beyond the living room (Martín-Barbero 1993:3).

One cannot talk about media consumption without talking about issues of class: the economic disparities between media-makers and the media-watchers; the selective, often damaging, portrayal of (or absence of) disadvantaged or minority groups and the haloed depiction of stars; and the power differentials inherent in the relationship between those with the authority to create media messages and those who accept, interpret, modify, and resist them (though likely never fabricate them for others’ consumption). Martín-Barbero maintains that daily consumption of television is an arena of “silent interiorization of social inequality” (1993:214). Yet, he also recognizes “freedom and initiative.... [N]ot all consumption is merely the acceptance of the values of other classes.

In the popular sectors consumption expresses just aspirations to a more human and respectful life” (Martín-Barbero 1993:213):

This is the area of each person’s relationship to his or her body, use of time, habitat and awareness of the potentialities in his or her life [this, I would point out, is analogous to the bodily logics of production]. It is also an area of rejection of limits to what can be legitimately hoped for, an area for the expansion of desires, a realm where one can subvert the code and express pleasures. Consumption is not just the reproduction of forces. It is a production of meanings and the site of a struggle that does not end with the possession of the object but extends to the uses, giving objects a social form in which are registered the demands and forms of action of different cultural competencies. [Martín-Barbero 1993:214]

With respect to the identity work that occurs while watching, Martín-Barbero develops the concept of “re-cognition,” which he defines as “‘to appeal to’, to interpellate” (1993:225). Processes of re-cognition are processes of self-constitution brought about through recognition by others (and others seeking the same recognition); this “symbolic web of interpellations and recognitions” comprises the “social contract” (Martín-Barbero 1993:225). It is the perpetual search for recognition that makes the melodrama so appealing to its viewers:

What moves the plot along is always the unawareness of identities, the struggle against bewitching spells and false appearances, trying to cut through all that hides and disguises. In short, it is a struggle to make oneself recognized. Is perhaps the secret thread between the melodrama and the history of Latin America this constant search for recognition? [Martín-Barbero 1993:225; see also La Pastina 2004; Straubhaar 2007:202; Tufté 2000]

Here Martín-Barbero is driving at something truly profound: the fact that drama necessarily is embedded in the multiple relationships of *telenovelas* is recognized by Latin American masses because they, too, see themselves as similarly embedded in relationships. The fraught, backstabbing, absurd, romantic, familial engagements (and broken engagements!) inherent to programming like *telenovelas* facilitate processes of recognition in the context of families and neighborhoods that watch them (Martín-Barbero 1993:226)—facing political contexts in which many feel ignored, Latin American tele-viewers see bits of themselves in *telenovela* programming. It is not necessarily on the level of the individual that melodrama has meaning, but on the level of the social networks with which the individual is surrounded: “If Latin American television still considers the family the ‘basic audience unit’, it is due to the fact that for the great majority family viewing is the prime context of recognition of sociocultural identity” (Martín-Barbero 1993:216).

Martín-Barbero ends on an uncommonly high note of hope: “This lesson is there for all who want and are able to hear and see it: melodrama and television, by allowing the people as a mass to recognize themselves as the authors of their own history, provided a language for ‘the popular forms of hope’” (1993:240). Appadurai would agree: “Its

[global culture's] brighter side is in the expansion of many individual horizons of hope and fantasy" (1990:308). However, there are obvious dangers—for Martín-Barbero deceptive political-economic practices with respect to "abstract inclusion and concrete exclusion" (1993:7); for Appadurai, "the mutual effort of sameness and difference to cannibalize one another" (1990:307-308) could lead to superficial celebration of difference and deep discrimination based on that same difference. It is useful to heed García Canclini's warning against "overly pleasant versions of *mestizaje*" in order to critically examine "the extent to which these processes are destructive, and *recognize what is left out of the fusion*" (1995:xxxii, emphasis added).

How are we, then, to utilize theories of mediation without falling victim to the "spectre of 'hybridity'" in the form of "the invocation of complexity [which] often seemed designed to allow a kind of joyous explanatory abdication" (Mazzarella 2004:355)? How do we productively navigate between, what García Canclini called "the sham of hegemony" and "the sham of democracy"? Kraidy describes hybridity as a "risky notion," "the varied and sometimes contradictory nature of its use points to the emptiness of employing hybridity as a universal description of culture" (2005:vi). Kraidy sees this almost as a justification for cultural globalization—it is tolerable because what came before supposedly remains, even if transformed (2005:viii). Pluralism holds the potential for bearable admixture: "Hybridity, then, is not just amenable to globalization. It is the cultural logic of globalization" (Kraidy 2005:148).

Mazzarella frames the stakes in what I think is a brilliant, slight variation on mediation theory that recalls Martín-Barbero's (1993) use of recognition (see above):

Similarly, although the discourse on globalization has foregrounded the question of the relation between the local and the global, this relation could usefully, I think, be read as a variation on the larger theme of close distance. Mediation produces and reproduces certain configurations of close-distance, mediated self-understandings that depend on the routing of the personal through the impersonal, the near through the far, and the self through the other. Close distance is therefore a figure for the dialectic of engagement and alienation inherent in all cultural politics. ... [D]ocumenting the play of close distance can be a useful way into an analysis of social projects of value across the board: the half-managed dialectics of desire and distance, engagement and fear that structure all our attempts to wring meaning, value, and permanence out of the contingencies of our lives. [Mazzarella 2004:361]

Though I will primarily refer to identity work in terms of mediation, social science theorists have produced a multitude of useful concepts to label the-give-and-take between agency and structure in projects of identity: close-distance (Mazzarella 2004), structuration (Giddens 1984), constructivism (Peterson 2003), negotiation (Wilk 2002), and hybridity (Straubhaar 2007, and many others).

### **New Media Influence**

Much twentieth-century theory has emphasized the power of "effects," with hypodermic or imperialist models of how mass media dominate unsuspecting audiences. Since the 1980s, there has been a strong reaction in the other direction toward



recognizing the reality of a highly knowledgeable and media-critical audience. The term media “effects” came to be seen as a “dirty word” that muddied the theoretical bathwater to such an extent, that the proverbial baby—media influence, or the “contested core of media research” (Corner 2000:380)—was tossed out, especially in anthropology.

As John Corner points out, there is a “nervous stand-off between ‘interpretation’ and ‘influence’” (2000:388) in media studies that “has closed down the definition of influence in a way that does not take full account of the consequential character of the range of media-social and media-individual relationships routinely occurring in modern societies” (2000:380). Corner underscores that acknowledging media audiences are critical, interpretive consumers of media texts is “ground for *revising, not abandoning*, an enquiry into media power” (2000:388, emphasis added).

As explained, early effects models saw a hypodermic, one-to-one relationship of change flowing from media to viewer. Constructivist (Peterson 2003) theories of media like Joseph Straubhaar’s also recognize that media have effects, or the power to change things. Even in the most staunchly anti-effects theorists of media (e.g., Fiske 2013[1989]) acknowledge that media have meaning-making potential, if only in the hands of viewers who are situated within their own social networks, personal experiences, and historical moments.

As Marwan Kraidy remarks, despite all of the criticism, still there is a “lack of a solid alternative” to cultural imperialism studies, which “do not warrant a sweeping dismissal” (2005:27-29). Scholars struggle with this dismissal because effects theories are so compelling—there does seem to be a lot of change going on globally in the direction of a “global village” (Askew and Wilk 2002:15; McLuhan 1994 [1964]), even if there is great diversity in this village. Yet, when media influence is too glaring to deny, scholars fail to note that there might be something to media imperialism.

Those who refuse to overlook media effects have taken this earlier strand of media theory in new, powerful directions. New Media Influence (cf. Kitzinger 2004; cf. Pace and Hinote 2013) is an approach that “allows researchers to hone in on the impact of socially and politically motivated representations of reality that are constructed from particular—hegemonic or ideological—points of view” (Pace 2009:408). Scholars who employ this approach are not timid in their acknowledgement of the scope and depth of media influence in people’s construction of reality. Whereas canonical effects research would dissect the media text and attempt to distill meanings, meanings that would be assumed to map onto individual readings of the media text, New Media Influence researchers recognize a number of responses to media, which they identify as a potent globalizing influence.

### **Media Consumption as Practice**

The telenovela set functions as an electronic storyteller, a bard (Fiske and Hartley, 1978), bringing into the community tales of “distant” lands and “foreign” practices. In this process, television exposes viewers to “practical inadequacies in the culture’s sense of itself” (p. 88). People incorporate and challenge values, norms, and beliefs presented in the telenovelas, which often destabilizes the culture from within. It is hard, if not impossible, to attribute causality between telenovelas and social change in Macambira. In this environment, television has created a bridge to another reality that slowly, even if some try to keep it at bay, is

permeating community life through fashion, language, behavior, ideals, and aspirations.

--La Pastina 2004:178

Also recent is the emergence of the “media as practice” paradigm. In *Theorising the Media as Practice*, Nick Couldry proposes seeing “the media as the open set of practices relating to, or oriented around, media” (2010:36). The researcher’s task is to study what people do in relation to the media. Clearly, there are varying levels of “doing” possible, rippling outward beginning with those that are directly related to media content to those that may be very distantly related (see Bird 2010:88). Couldry, however, cautions scholars from making the leap from interpretation of media text to “wider social processes” (2010:37) because this link becomes difficult to prove.

Hobart (2010) critiques Couldry’s approach, but nonetheless affirms its core shift to studying the range of practices associated with engaging with media. But, he asks, what is practice? Hobart maintains that this is an exceedingly difficult question; practice may include “skills, understandings, mind, intention, meaning, causation, language, logic, rules and much else besides” (2010:61). Moreover, Hobart stresses, in what has become a refrain of the social sciences: Studying “practice raises singular problems in that practices are not just historical and cultural but situated and so partly contingent. There may be moments of slippage, change, openness” (2010:61). In contrast to Couldry—whose definition Hobart claims privileges the media (i.e., assumes people are always doing things “anchored” [Couldry 2010:47] by the media)—Hobart prefers “media-related practice” because

...it includes, say: women cooking meals so that family can view favourite programmes; family decisions about capital investment in radio, television or computers; preferences in dress or other consumer items shown in advertising or programmes. [Hobart 2010:63]

He settles on practices as “those recognized, complex forms of social activity and articulation through which agents set out to maintain or change themselves, others and the world about them under varying conditions” (2010:63). Ultimately, Couldry and Hobart raise more questions than they answer, which, I think, was one of their goals at the outset: “...[I]f we are to take practice theory seriously, we have more or less to rethink how we set about the study of media and mediation from scratch” (Hobart 2010:65). Their stated purpose is to break away from Eurocentrism in media studies (Couldry 2010:37; Hobart 2010:69).

Hobart’s perspective resonates with what is happening in Sacha Loma, where media consumption is just only recently and gradually taking off and has yet to “anchor” practices on any consistent, reliable, or intractable basis, though the potential is there. To be sure, often television in Sacha Loma becomes inserted into an existing set of activities, though more and more it is treated as a separate event, as when Nicola carves out time in her day for *telenovelas*. For Hobart, “media-related practice is intended to simply provide an initial circumscription out of the whole range of identifiable practices in society at any moment” (2010:67). I get the sense from both Couldry and Hobart that, at bottom, they are describing the necessity of ethnography, deep, careful and situated

ethnography, commencing with the people themselves and not what we think the texts are saying to the people (though they do this from disparate starting points; in Couldry and Hobart 2010:77-82 they present their philosophical differences). Hobart's own short example of what could be media-related practice in Bali is simply ethnographic (Hobart 2010:67-68).

S. Elizabeth Bird contends taking media as practice is not really radical at all, essential as it is—"it offers continuing potential for the more nuanced study of what it means to live in a mediated world" (2010:101). Bird describes the reality of studying media-related practice as "haphazard" because, potentially, everything is practice and up for grabs; practices may be "deliberative" and "conscious" or "unconscious" and unexpected (2010:100). Researchers must be intellectually agile. Each strategy, of course, comes with its own suppositions and oppositions.

Wrestling with how to fit media theory with methodology in anthropology, Peterson emphasizes attention to what he terms the "sites of reception" in order to shift the focus from interpretation of media texts to "media functions," or "the ways in which sociality is constructed, family power is enacted or resisted, new forms of social behavior are tried out" (2003:137). In this chapter, in addition to these "media functions" or media practices, I also highlight elements of the media texts that Sacha Lomans are viewing, listening to, and reading. How can we study the social processes that could occur in relation to the media without knowing to what people are relating? In other words, studies of media functions and media texts are not mutually exclusive.

The give-and-take between structure and agency, text and viewer, the "core" of someone's identity and that which embellishes it is undeniable, but this does not mean that the give-and-take is equal. Kraidy conceives of a "lopsided articulation in which the dialogical aspects of communication must be analyzed concurrently with the dialectical dimensions" (2005:149; see, too, Pace and Hinote 2013). He calls this critical transculturalism. Straubhaar (1991) has developed a similar idea of "asymmetrical interdependence." The very term apparatus of aspirations employed in this chapter begs the question, "Whose aspirations?" In many ways, women's aspirations in Sacha Loma reflect a desire to enter into the "global village," to wear "jeans and trainers" or modernity's "uniform" (Hall 1992:302-303), to buy and to own certain things, to eat and to watch certain things, and even to dream and aspire in particular ways.

As the epigraph to this section by Antonio La Pastina expressed for the *telenovela*, media can introduce attractive (and repulsive) aspects of the foreign, has the potential to challenge and destabilize the accepted ways of doing things, and builds a "bridge to another reality" that can bring about transformation of "behavior, ideals, and aspirations," even if so slow as to go unnoticed (2004:178). Straubhaar sees television creating a "desired proximity to modernity.... People watched U.S. programs to see what global modernity looked like" (2007:200-201, referencing Featherstone 1990). Some have argued for a particularly Latin American version of aspiration, identity transformation, and modernity as related to the media, specifically *telenovelas* (e.g., Tufte 2000:225-226). Tufte (2000:222), for example, relates low-income Brazilian women's yearning for social mobility to their eager consumption of *telenovelas*, in which happy endings and rags-to-riches outcomes are not uncommon. What happens on the screen dramatizes their own deep-seated desire to one day supersede their economic situation.

Even when studying the potential influence of media texts, global homogenization

is never the whole story. Kraidy puts it well:

People's identities may be refracted through individual consumption, cultural or otherwise, but consumption alone is not tantamount to being.... Hybridity theory, and cultural theory at large, cannot consider people merely as individuals who constantly recreate themselves by way of consumption. Rather, agency must be grasped in terms of people's ability to accomplish things in the world they inhabit. [Kraidy 2005:151]

### **Hybrid Identities within the Context of Media and Modernity**

A major body of contemporary scholarship is based in theories of media influence and hybrid identities. These theories detail how images, ideas, and ideals advertised in the media

...bring change, but that change is adapted into existing ways of doing things via a historical process in which existing local forces mix with new global ones, producing neither global homogenization nor authentic local culture, but a complex new hybrid with multiple layers of culture, where older, traditional forms may persist alongside new ones. This situation is neither a complete resistance to rejoice about nor a complete loss of identity to despair about, but a complex contradiction of both continuity and change. [Straubhaar 2007:6]

The role of media in mediating the construction of identities, to summarize, has come to be described primarily as in-between processes of "becoming" through highly contextual and contingent rearrangements and (hybrid) formulations of elements of meaning influenced, though not constrained by, images, ideas, and ideals gathered from media content.

The consensus is that the media do influence viewers, even if viewers are protagonists of this influence. Media proffer "wells" of identity options—"wells" that the media creators may think they have artfully crafted for specific and penetrable purposes—which viewers dip into, bleed together, soak up, or pass over. As Peterson explains, "Media create reference sites from which symbols, texts, and other resources for the articulation of identities and selves can be drawn" (2003:145). Following Ernesto Laclau (1977), Chris Barker (1999) describes identity as a frozen "articulation," a moment in time during which competing frameworks for being momentarily coalesce, a "unique *historically specific* temporary stabilization or arbitrary closure of meaning" (Barker 1999:29). Barker continues:

Further, we do not *have* an identity; rather, we *are* a multiple weave of attitudes and beliefs, even though the historically specific and contingent cultural narratives of late modernity encourage us to see ourselves as "whole". To talk of identity is to "freeze" the unstable and proliferating meanings of language and to temporarily stabilize the narrative of the self in a cut or strategic positioning of meaning.... TV is the major communicative device for disseminating those representations which are constitutive of (and constituted by) cultural identity. [Barker 1999:31]

Straubhaar has referred to influences on identity generated by the media as deposited alongside existing identity frameworks in a sedimentary fashion:

Instead of genuine synthesis between cultural elements or parallel to it [, syntheses which do occur], multilayered cultures and identities can also coexist; older cultural elements survive in somewhat coherent layers while new ones are imposed or adopted over them in new layers. So cultures change in both hybrid and sedimentary ways as layers build, interact, change, and persist. [Straubhaar 2007:11]

Straubhaar (2007:227) argues that television viewers make sense of media content through other identity layers like space and place (particularly national-level identification), social class, ethnicity, race, and gender. Elsewhere, Straubhaar describes these layers as “general, interlinked pools of cultural knowledge from which individuals draw a personal repertoire of symbols and interpretive understanding” (2007:255-256). Hall (1997) referred to the relationship between texts and identities as “sutures” (Barker 1999:112). Straubhaar links his notion of layered identity to Martín-Barbero’s mediation (Straubhaar 2007:254). An inspiration for articulations, frozen moments, pools, sediments, or wells, television transmits a vast quantity of meaningful grist through which people enrich and make sense of their everyday lives.

Thus, television and its mediation inspire “identity projects” (Barker 1999:3). But people do not choose from a predetermined set of identities. Media creators may have an intended message in mind when creating their content, but this message is only one of many that may be gleaned by a viewer, even if it is frequently taken up. Likewise, there may be a stable core to a person’s identity, just as there may be a premeditated message to a bit of media. But surrounding the core of a person’s identity, many scholars have argued, is a momentarily frozen articulation of identity embellishments that may change at any given moment. Today I am a student; tomorrow I am a graduate. Today I am pregnant; tonight I am a mother. Yet, student, or graduate, pregnant, or mother, I continually identify as a woman. This nebulousness that *necessarily* pervades media and identity studies is what has generated the spectrum of theory concerning media-subject relations reviewed previously.

When scholars embrace the space where mediation between text and subject occurs, the nebulousness of media-subject relations becomes its clarity. Stuart Hall says, “Perhaps instead of thinking of identity as an already accomplished fact, which the new cultural practices then represent, we should think, instead, of identity as a production, which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation” (1990:222). Identity, according to Hall, is “a matter of ‘becoming’ as well as of ‘being’” (1990:225). Mankekar summarizes the complexity of the television-subject relationship: “...[N]ot only are texts polysemic, but subjectivities are multifarious as well” (1999:17). Viewer subjectivities are “in medias res, constantly being formed” (1999:17), “contradictory” (1999:17), and navigate multiple, potentially unlimited, meanings of television texts.

The question of identity construction has become an especially hot topic lately as an outgrowth of modernity and globalization studies. Interestingly, discussions of

globalization more generally (not exclusive to media) parallel categories of the arguments over media influence, ranging from notions of total cultural homogenization, to emphases on how particular localities are able to resist the encroachment of global ideas, to views of the synthesis of the global and the local in hybrid forms (see Hall 1992:300).

### **Ethnographic Case Studies of Media Influence and Identity**

...[W]e should be wary of telling any unilineal stories about modernity, melodrama, and individualism.

--Abu-Lughod 2002a:116

The case studies summarized below highlight the value of situating media theory within deep ethnography of the practices and social context of media consumption along with a consideration of what constitutes the media text.

Raul Reis' (1998) brief but noteworthy article about tele-viewing in Sao Joao de Pirabas, Brazil details how the introduction of television powerfully shook up the daily rhythms of this small city in the Amazon. People's sense of time shifted from a more qualitative understanding to a quantitative understanding so that they were able to tune in on time to their favorite television program. Both old and young residents alike skipped nighttime public events in favor of staying in the house so that they would not miss an episode. Reis reports that, after television, privacy became more valued, though he does not explicitly show what tele-viewing had to do with increasing secrecy. Television, Reis contends, meant that Pirabenses of all ages began to alter their notions of what it meant to be young and successful. One older gentleman lamented that television was brainwashing youngsters into wanting new things out of their reach; young people, in turn, admitted feeling as though what they wanted in life was only possible in bigger cities away from Pirabas. As other studies have shown (see Liechty 1995), young Pirabenses were persuaded by television that they could purchase their way to a "modern" lifestyle. Reis documents the sentiment of one teenager: "She told me that most of the money she made working as a waitress in her aunt's diner went to buying nice clothes and costume jewelry.... 'The fact that I live here doesn't mean I have to dress like a hillbilly,' she said" (translated by Reis, 1998:304). While it is not always clear that the sweeping changes taking place in Sao Joao de Pirabas were a result of television, Reis' study invites us to examine further the mechanisms of mass media's potential.

Attempting to flesh out these mechanisms and their associated behaviors in a cross-cultural study of media influence, Richard Pace and Brian Hinote (2013) acknowledge both media muscle and audience agency with their ethnography of tele-viewers in the Amazonian town of Gurupá, Brazil. As a long-term case study of media consumption and its impact on everyday socio-cultural realities, their *Amazon Town TV* is unmatched in its in-depth portrait of how a group of isolated people deal with the introduction of television over the span of nearly 30 years. The authors emphasize the power of the television text, but do not discount the agency of the Gurupá audience:

We start with the view that media power, media effects, and active audience readings of texts are not mutually exclusive processes. Instead, they are elements in a complex and likely uneven process of influence, negotiation, and subversion.

In some cases, viewers accept, identify with, and heed ideological themes in programming.... In cases in which they do not, the interesting questions that arise are why viewers sometimes still heed messages but at other times miss, ignore, and resist them. [Pace and Hinote 2013:15]

Pace and Hinote identify four types of media responses for Gurapaenses. In heeding (a response to what the authors identify as interpellation, or “calling,” by media messaging, referencing Althusser’s (1971) concept; see also Mankekar 1999:17), viewers recognize media messages because they have enough cultural capital (Bourdieu 1984), media literacy (Kilborn 1992), or cultural proximity (Straubhaar 1991, 2003, 2007) to the messages and their creators to do so (see Pace and Hinote 2013:10-11). Missing occurs when viewers do not possess the cultural capital to identify the messages promulgated. Ignoring happens when viewers note a message but interpret it as “uninteresting, unintelligible, or plainly false” (Pace and Hinote 2013:10). Finally, resisting occurs when messages are perceived as misleading, false, or threatening, and viewers formulate alternative viewpoints (Pace and Hinote 2013:10). The authors utilize insights gained from extensive participant-observation of TV-talk (discussion of television content amongst tele-viewers) to explore the ways in which Gurapaenses knit perceived television realities into their own personal identities, social world, and worldview. Conspicuous display of Christmas decorations, trendy Indian headscarves and soccer jerseys, equalizing perceptions of gender appropriateness for non-local jobs, and broadening employment aspirations offer convincing evidence of how “in today’s world much of the material used to construct identities comes from television’s representations of reality” (Pace and Hinote 2013:122). They are writing in the tradition of New Media Influence mentioned earlier.

Mark Liechty (1995) describes shifts and rifts in young Nepalese identities as individuals face the possibilities, pressures, and aspirations for the often unattainable, as advertised by the mass media in Kathmandu. Specifically, he traces the consumption of *Teens*, a subscription magazine providing discounts for subscribers at teen-appropriate locales (as determined by the publishers and interested shopkeeper-advertisers). The publishers’

...aim was to also move into this “in between” space of “teen” ambiguity with a product that would provide youth with answers to questions about what it means to be modern, “to *be* English”. From the outset they envisioned a magazine that would provide youth with a blueprint for what it means to be a modern “teen.” [Liechty 1995:173]

Nepalese youth subscribers to *Teens* literally and emblematically buy into this particular magazine’s messages concerning modern young adulthood, which Liechty outlines: equating the material as real, or the idea that one is what one looks like; opposing the development of a distinct personal style alongside keeping up with the ins-and-outs of fashion trends; and recognizing that clothing makes an impression and that one should actively seek the positive approval of others through apparel (1995:175-176). *Teens* magazine clearly links achieving a particular consumer status, especially through body adornment, with securing a valued social position. Young consumers’ imagined futures

directly implicate their bodies, that is, “they can purchase their own modern bodies” (Liechty 1995:190). The principal subscribing group, middle- and lower middle-class teens, are left to cope with what they see in the pages of *Teens*, limited by what they can afford to buy, and the harsh reality of newly acquired consumer identities that are frequently nothing more than “a space of longing, a sense of deprivation or an unfulfillable ‘dream of otherness’” (Liechty 1995:178).

Daniel Miller’s work in Trinidad undercuts views of the soap opera (and other agents of mass communication) as intrinsically a culture homogenizer, or in his words, “a symbolic token of a process termed ‘Americanization’ in which soap opera seems to form a triumvirate with Coca-Cola and McDonalds as key symbols of the global expansion of American culture” (1995:213). While not denying the potency of mass media as possibly superficial and commodifying, Miller challenges us to avoid assuming their culture-threatening ferocity as inexorable. Miller’s (1995:218-223) analysis links native concepts of morality like bacchanal (which is most often associated with sentiments surrounding carnival, but has a more nuanced daily usage in terms of scandal, disorder, truth) to Trinidadians’ making the imported *Young and the Restless* their own. Viewers in Trinidad rush to seamstresses after attractive clothing debuts on *Young and the Restless*; through copying their attire, soap fans not only identify with the protagonists, but do identity work for themselves. Miller (1995:225) locates Trinidadians’ affinity for trendy clothing styles in a larger cultural appreciation of the freedom of transience represented by bacchanal’s spontaneity. Clothing, for Trinidadians, far from representing a sellout to the phony (what Miller explains as a presupposed ontology of “depth”), “expresses a wider concern to avoid being institutionalized by hierarchical and oppressive forces and to retain the freedom of an identity based on transience and surface” (Miller 1995:226).

Casey High’s excellent case study from Ecuador is pioneering in its focus on rural, indigenous men. High demonstrates how local cultural conceptions of male agency among the Waorani—the “bravery, hostility, and autonomy...in older men who have killed in the past...evoked by the expression *durani bai*” or “like the ancient ones” (2009:757)—operate in tandem with mass media generated notions of masculinity through high-velocity fight films. Waorani men are unable to live out previous forms of male agency and instead look to other resources for their gendered constructions of identity, including mass-mediated images of men in action films as fantastically violent (High 2009:760): “In this context, elders, ancestors, mestizo Ecuadorians, and Bruce Lee constitute the multiple masculinities through which Waorani express their own ways of being men” (High 2009:766). Expectations for men remain the same as in the past—providing abundantly for one’s kin. How they go about being providers—as oil workers, students, and so on—is what has changed. High’s work demonstrates the mingling of long-standing cultural principles with new, external pressures rather than their absolute replacement.

A similar melding of tradition and modernity permeates the thoughtful, “conjunctural ethnography” (Mankekar 1999:50) of Purnima Mankekar, who looks at the co-construction of the Indian nation and the Indian woman and her identity through state-run television called Doordarshan. Mankekar condemns those social scientists who scoff at television as “‘mere’ entertainment or, less charitably, as kitsch”—Indian women become tightly bound to the characters on television “blurring...fiction and reality”



(1999:11). Texts are polysemic and identities in flux in this depiction of middle class Indian women's intermediate yet essential position as "eager to adopt modern lifestyles through the acquisition of consumer goods" but also "self-appointed protectors of tradition" (Mankekar 1999:9).

The television programming of Doordarshan explored in Mankekar's study had the explicit agenda of building a "national family" (1999:47) through targeting the family unit via themes concerning what it meant to be a proper Indian citizen, especially a female citizen (1999:7, 46-47). Moreover, the national family had to be modern. To be modern was to be a consumer of modern goods. The family unit was considered a "unit of consumption"; and the desirable position of belonging to the middle class was achieved through consumption (Mankekar 1999:48). Women occupied a central position as the fulcrum on which the balance of tradition and modernity rested. Bringing India into modernity was only possible through their fidelity to tradition and transactions, to culture and consumerism, to modesty and modernity. Such concurrent images were portrayed in Indian melodramas and the advertisements in them:

In these serials and in the advertisements that framed them, women were depicted as simultaneously modern and traditional: even as they ran their homes with modern appliances, they were portrayed as traditional because of their fidelity to their roles as dutiful housewives and nurturing mothers. [Mankekar 1999:91]

An illustrative example of the balancing act performed by modern Indian women is their navigation of formal education. While Indian families often recognized the need for women to be educated as part of modern aspirations, an educated woman was a potential "threat to the 'traditional' family" (Mankekar 1999:131). Clearly, for example, a woman would have to be out of the house to attend school. At the same time, if a woman could demonstrate her liberated behaviors would not interfere with her roles in the family, she often had support (e.g., if she promised to leave school once betrothed, Mankekar 1999:131-132; see also 160). Mankekar cites the permeation of women's everyday realities and aspirations with a larger political-economic agenda as an example of the crossover between the "local and the translocal" (1999:102).

Like Mankekar, Lila Abu-Lughod (2002a:115) finds that television has been used as an effective tool of "national consolidation" and "modernization" in Egypt (see also Abu-Lughod 2005). The teachings of television and those of school are often one and the same—lessons of "progress," rural inferiority, modernization and national pride (Abu-Lughod 1998:150-151). At the same time, enduring ties of kinship as well as intense religious identification divide Egyptians as they construct their modern identities with melodrama as one of their guides (Abu-Lughod 2002a:129).

## **Mediation as Consumption-Production: Television, Aspirations, and Shifting Bodily Logics in Sacha Loma**

### *Media Consumption in Sacha Loma*

"The whole world has one," a tour guide at the local eco-hotel told me when I asked about the popularity of television in Sacha Loma. Ninety-two percent of those interviewed report having a television in their home. The two respondents who report not

having a television at home claim that they have access to television outside of their home. Eighty-eight percent own a DVD player, 50% have magazines in the house, and 33% own a computer. Very few—8%—report Internet access in their own home. Though there are two wireless Internet towers in the community that capture a signal from satellite—one for the eco-hotel and one for the public school—this is probably due to the weak wireless signals and the fact that there are fewer personal computers than family televisions (cf. Eddy, et al. 2007 for a version of this survey on which the survey in this study is based). While television and DVDs rank as the media most consumed by Sacha Lomans, with magazines, computers, and Internet further behind—substantial portions of community members report having access to the scarcer media outside of the home. Notably, half of those interviewed report using computers and Internet outside of the home.

<b>Media Type, Ownership and/or Access to</b>	<b>Percentage Positive Response</b>
Do you have a TV in your house?	92%
Do you have a DVD player in your house?	88%
Do you have magazines in your house?	50%
Do you have a computer in your house?	33%
Do you have Internet access in your house?	8%
Outside of your house, do you have access to TV?	67%
Outside of your house, do you have access to DVDs?	63%
Outside of your house, do you have access to magazines?	54%
Outside of your house, do you have access to a computer?	50%
Outside of your house, do you have access to Internet?	46%

**Table 3: Media Type, Ownership, and/or Access to**  
24 Kichwa surveyed, male and female ages 15-64

But what counts as consumption? I asked those 24 Sacha Lomans about the quantity of media they consume on a regular basis. Nearly one third consume some hours of television—news, cable programming through Direct TV, foreign movies—daily.<sup>3</sup> Over two thirds report watching either “some hours per week” or “some hours per month,” with the majority finding time to watch television on a weekly basis. Very few—4%—report watching no television at all. Again, nearly one third report viewing DVDs daily, while most respondents (38%) watch DVDs on a weekly basis. Most Sacha Lomans interviewed find time to consume magazines and Internet on a monthly basis (46% and 33%, respectively), though large portions—almost a third in the case of magazines and over half in the case of Internet—do not engage with these media forms at all. These numbers are consistent with the data regarding ownership and access to media detailed above. Most families have television, and television ranks as the media form consumed most by Sacha Lomans; DVDs, magazines, and Internet follow in order of

their accessibility. The fact that 46% of respondents have access to Internet outside of their homes and 58% report not using Internet at all is not an inconsistency because usage and access are not the same thing.

Usage of TV	Never	Some hours/month	Some hours/week	Some hours/day
	4%	29%	38%	29%

Usage of Media Other than TV/ Travel	Never	Some times/month	Some times/week	Some times/day
DVDs	17%	17%	38%	29%
Magazines	29%	46%	17%	8%
Internet	58%	33%	8%	0%
Trips to City	8%	58%	33%	0%

**Table 4: Usage of Television and Other Media**  
24 Kichwa surveyed, male and female ages 15-64

Because the focus of this research was Kichwa youth, I broke down media consumption by age, for women only. The results are in the tables below. When elder and younger Kichwa women are separated, percentages of never using media increase in all categories for elder women while percentages of never using media decrease in all categories for their younger counterparts. Television is the only form of media that elder women consume on a regular basis with the majority (57%) watching some hours per week. DVDs are a close second with 43% watching some times per week. Young women report consuming television at the same rate as consuming DVDs. Nearly two thirds watch television and view DVDs some hours per day or some hours per week. Elder women report never using the Internet, while over half of young women (57%) utilize the Internet weekly or monthly. Travel to cities is also an important influence. Seventy-one percent of elder women say they visit the city some hours per month while the rest do not go at all. Half of young women interviewed go to the city some hours per week—no small undertaking—while the other half go some hours per month.

Usage of TV	Never	Some hours/month	Some hours/week	Some hours/day
	14%	14%	57%	14%

Usage of Media Other than TV/ Travel	Never	Some times/month	Some times/week	Some times/day
DVDs	43%	14%	43%	0%
Magazines	71%	29%	0%	0%
Internet	100%	0%	0%	0%
Trips to City	29%	71%	0%	0%

**Table 5: Usage of Television by Elder Women (28-64), n=7**

Usage of TV	Never	Some hours/month	Some hours/week	Some hours/day
	0%	36%	29%	36%

Usage of Media Other than TV/ Travel	Never	Some times/month	Some times/week	Some times/day
DVDs	0%	36%	29%	36%
Magazines	7%	14%	36%	43%
Internet	43%	43%	14%	0%
Trips to City	0%	50%	50%	0%

**Table 6: Usage of Television by Young Women (15-27), n=14**

***The (Un)Fairest of Them All?: Media Images as Apparatuses of Aspirations***

Telenovelas have many faces, but holding a mirror up to them can reveal what images of gender, sexuality, race and class are being reflected back.

--Beard 2010:130

In the form of a tango, a soap opera, a Mexican film or a cheap crime story, the melodrama taps into and stirs up a deep vein of collective cultural imagination. And there is no access to history memory or projection of dreams into the future which does not pass through this cultural imagination. This is where the matrix of cultural images feeding popular recognition of itself in mass culture becomes most visible.

--Martín-Barbero 1993:225

All mediation, then, involves a dual relation: a relation of simultaneous self-distancing and self-recognition.

Three among the two billion people worldwide who tune in regularly to *telenovelas* (Martínez 2010:62), Nicola, Yolanda, and Moreina sat with their eyes glued to the screen on Nicola's porch. The plot of the Mexican *telenovela* *Mañana es para siempre* ("Tomorrow is Forever"; hereafter *Mañana*) was unfolding (and re-tangling) itself before the entranced audience. Three girls under the age of thirteen watched as well; one hummed along with the show's theme song. In the episode of the day, Bárbara Greco, the icy adulteress, murderer, and now wife of patriarch millionaire Gonzálo Elizalde threatens Liliana, the family's oldest daughter, who is home visiting after being committed to a psychiatric hospital following being accused by Bárbara of murdering her own mother. Bárbara warns Liliana that she'd better stay in the asylum "unless the next time you visit you want to visit your father's widow!" After her time locked up, Liliana is obviously affected and quickly losing her faculties. Tensions come to a head at dinner when the whole Elizalde clan surrounds a long aristocratic, bountiful table. Bárbara serves soup on lavish china while eyeing Liliana knowingly. Viewers get the sense that something other than spinach might be seasoning Gonzálo's soup. As her father raises his spoon to his lips, Liliana swats it away, picks up a table knife, and lunges at Bárbara's neck, while her wild eyes and foaming mouth accuse Bárbara of trying to murder her father Gonzálo. Family members look on distraught (though they wait an inordinate amount of time before trying to snatch the knife from Liliana). Liliana is restrained; the doctor is called; and she is presumably carted away to the psychiatric hospital. As this is happening, the semi-estranged, artist son, Santiago Elizalde, proposes to Aurora in the small, rural town of "Pueblo Purificación" (The Town of Purity). Aurora is a beautiful young (apparently) peasant woman who, orphaned, is under the care of a slovenly drunkard woman who, throughout the entire episode, is never free of the influence of alcohol or her propensity to make a fool of herself. Viewers discover that Priscila, married to the power-hungry son Aníbal Elizalde, is pregnant, though Aníbal is infertile. Behind the scenes, Eduardo Juárez (alias Franco Santoro) is dealing with years of built up resentment toward the Elizalde family for separating him from his once true love Fernanda, the family's most attractive, sweet, and genuine daughter who remains unswervingly devoted to Liliana. Will Fernanda, now married to bad-intentioned Damian Gallardo (who is literally in bed with Bárbara), ever reunite with Eduardo?

As an example of a non-North American television genre consumed worldwide, *telenovelas* have been lauded by some as "reverse cultural imperialism" (Martínez 2010:62). Philip Schlesinger writes on Martín-Barbero's work, "[T]elenovelas...are the Latin American televisual genre, and...play a major role in popular culture by offering images and themes that evoke powerful forms of identification" (1993:xiii). What must Nicola, Yolanda, and Moreina think of scenes like the one described at the opening of this section? How do Kichwa tele-viewers pick and choose images, ideas, or ideals from the context and content of what they see on television to accept, interpret, modify, or resist? How does consuming mass media "produce" their aspirations and their body images? And how might aspirations and bodies be linked?

The consumption of media images, ideas, and ideals and their mediation, as I have said, is a form of production for Sacha Lomans, an emerging resource for identity construction (television as an apparatus for the production of individual aspirations) and

for the production of the body social (tele-viewing as a communal activity and subject of communal discourse). For some, the body images inspired by television programming are productive insofar as they are viewed as providing crucial insight into the self-styling required for particular professional positions. In contrast to the “media as practice” paradigm, which makes few claims about power as related to practice, my observation of practices associated with the media’s mediation in Sacha Loma fleshes out Kichwa women’s own analyses of how media and their messages may shape images of their bodies, their relationships, and their futures.

Important to media’s mediation in Sacha Loma is an underlying current of distancing and approximation that occurs as Kichwa women process what they see on television. For example, as women who are embedded in their own families, *telenovela* stars and their characters are at once like and unlike Kichwa women. Likewise, women on television are assumed to be educated, and so young women, also pursuing education, identify or connect with them, even if only in a small way. At the same time, clear class differences between many leading women on television and Kichwa tele-viewers generate mixed feelings of self- and ethnic-deprecation.

In addition to evaluating what women say, do, and say they think while watching television or about watching television, this section analyzes data from semi-structured interviews with women, young and old, in which I asked them their thoughts on a grouping of magazine images, which included light-skinned Latina actresses of global fame (e.g., Jennifer Lopez, Eva Mendez), European-looking white women (e.g., models and “A-list” U.S. American actresses), and (mostly) Ecuadorian socialites and local, small-scale performers (in something like the “society pages”). In this latter grouping were images of Carolina Jaume, Ecuadorian *telenovela* actress, TV hostess, member of Ecuadorian “high society,” and one of Nicola’s idols. Also included in the image assortment was a set of postcards of indigenous women doing “indigenous things,” like making home brew. While *telenovelas*, as one of the most frequently consumed genres of television in Sacha Loma, are the starting point of this section, I am also concerned with the consumption of images of fame and fortune more generally. Sarafina and others wallpapered their rooms with tear-outs of magazines. Children came regularly to my house to page through old entertainment magazines in English.

For good or for ill, television and its associated images are apparatuses influencing the broadening aspirations of Sacha Lomans; these aspirations are often associated with particular body images. The irony in their image of these women as “the fairest of them all” is that the reality of different life outcomes open to them as Kichwa is much more unfair.

### ***What Do Kichwa Women See in the Stars?***

No, [the images I see on television don’t affect me.] But I do imagine how I *would like to be* through them.

--15-year-old Moreina, emphasis added

“I am behind in my *novelas*,” Nicola grumbled during an evening visit to my house. “Our generator is broken, so I can only watch them in the evenings or when it is sunny enough for me to switch on the solar panel.” In addition to making clear how television has restructured Nicola’s sense of time in a community which, from an

interviewer's standpoint, understands time in generally qualitative terms (which others like Reis 1998 have noted), Nicola's statement demonstrates her dedication to following the lives of the characters whom she welcomes into her home on a daily basis. Missing an episode means missing a crucial piece of the plot. For some families in Sacha Loma, television is a social event, a reason for family members to gather around and occasionally make conversation (Pace 2009 and Reis 1998 also discuss shifts in socializing surrounding television). For instance, Nicola's 6-year-old son Olivio enjoys staying up until ten o'clock on Friday nights watching *telenovelas* with her. Nicola remembered one episode of *Huracán* in which a storm caused much rain, flooding, wind, and all-around destruction. An older woman in a threatened house knelt down and began to pray. As she prayed, she cried tears of blood. Olivio was immediately disturbed. He bowed his head and would talk to no one. After a moment, Olivio ran into his bedroom and got his younger sister. They both emerged and asked Nicola, "Why does Jesus cause so much death and destruction?" Nicola giggled and shook her head, "They're crazy." Feliz, who was also visiting me at the time, commented, "Yeah, the people in my house like to watch horror films, the kind where demented dolls eat human flesh." When it was time to leave, Nicola called her house: "I want to see if someone will come to escort me home. I don't want to cross the bridge by myself." Our conversation had made her a little on edge. I wondered whether the horror flick talk had mixed at all with the indigenous fear of *duendes* (elf-like nuisances that often live near water sources) that pops up every now and then in conversation. In the end, she braved the night alone.

Television stars and their characters are an important inspiration for meaning-making for Kichwa viewers. As in the case of Nicola, tele-viewers establish relationships with stars and the characters they play. For others, like Olivio and Feliz, they elicit deep emotions like fear and anxiety. And as we shall see in the discussion below, their images are a stimulus for mixed feelings like hope, longing, disappointment, envy, and even confusion.

The images of stars motivate identity work that clearly associates certain kinds of bodies with material success (jobs, education, money, and so on). For young women like Nicola and Sarafina, achieving these bodies becomes a crucial element in their expanding aspirational horizons for reasons including, but beyond, aesthetic preference. Interestingly these same kinds of bodies are frequently associated with another type of success that is valued highly among Kichwa—being surrounded by family and friends. As young Kichwa women processed media images, they chose to focus on some things and not others. At times, it was apparent that they were deeply affected by messages, especially thin-ideal messages. However, at other times, what I viewed as very obvious messages in media content—such as the vast socio-economic gap between them and most of the characters—was not brought up as a significant deterrent from watching these shows (Pace and Hinote 2013:153 have similar findings). What seemed very relevant to Kichwa viewers, and to their opinions of actors/actresses in general, had to do with their assumed success in family life and professional life.

I do not have the space to analyze *telenovelas* for all of the themes they communicate concerning gender, race, class, romance, business, beauty, achievement, and family. There are many scholars who have already taken a closer look at the genre, which recycles themes and content (e.g., the volumes edited by Robert Allen 1995 and Ilan Stavans 2010). Common to most, including *Manaña*, are beautiful, well made-up and

well-bred women as central and empowered figures, moral or immoral. In contrast, relationships between the genders do tend to uphold the traditional balance of power between men and women. Gonzálo Elizalde is a prominent business owner and head of the family with a gorgeous (albeit, plotting and diabolical) wife. Rags-to-riches or down-on-their-luck characters are incredibly popular. As Ibsen Martínez explains, “That focus is not surprising given the poverty that is endemic among Latin American women. Almost half of the 90 million people in the region’s female-headed households live in poverty” (2010:63). Yet, obscene wealth is a plot fixture. Gonzálo Elizalde makes the millions that maintain his *hacienda* through a dairy company. Rural characters are not infrequently portrayed as engaged in buffoonery (like Aurora’s inebriated caretaker). Though I cannot speak for all *telenovelas*, at least in *Manaña* there are no indigenous leads. (Beard 2010:128 describes “indigenous-looking” characters in a *telenovela* she analyzes as maintaining stereotypical roles like domestic employees.) *Telenovelas* tend to end on a note of hope, resurrection, or renewal. The underlying (sometimes unfulfilled) love stories of Eduardo and Fernanda and Santiago and Aurora, for instance, embitter and sweeten the plot of *Manaña*. As Patricio Willis puts it, these Latin American melodramas boil down to “a couple that wants to have a kiss and a writer who doesn’t allow them to for 200 episodes” (Martínez 2010:63). Opposed to reversals of fate, no *telenovela* would be complete without plot twists, backstabbing, vengeance, deceit, betrayal, loss, and/or death. These themes appear throughout other serial dramas mentioned by Sacha Lomans as potential entertainment: *Huracán de amor*, *La Rosa de Guadalupe*, *Dos hogares*, *Aurora*, *Cuidado con el ángel*, *Marimar*, *Un otoño en mi corazón*, *Mariana de la noche*, *El privilegio de amar*, *Más sabe el diablo*, and, from the United States, *The OC*.

*Telenovelas* are not the only thing on television in Sacha Loma. When asked about their favorite programming in addition to the *telenovelas* listed above, Sacha Lomans mentioned: fighting and action flicks with Jackie Chan, Rambo, Chuck Norris, Jet Lee, Van Dam, and The Rock (Dwayne Johnson); World Wrestling Entertainment; war films; children’s programs (*infantiles*, Sp.) like *Harry Potter*, *Ice Age*, *Lilo & Stitch*, *The Lion King*, *Tinkerbell*, *Tom & Jerry*, *The Haunted Mansion*, *Over the Hedge*, and *Dora the Explorer*; religious-themed films; Music Television (MTV); comedies like *The Three Stooges*; and documentary features on The Discovery Channel.

Most agree that television is a good addition to everyday life. Twenty-five-year-old Sirena weighs in:

I think, on the one hand, television is good. It’s good that [young children] watch television sometimes because there are movies that are really cool like educational films. But there are movies that [aren’t good]. Movies are good because one can buy movies for children, educational movies, movies about sexual education.

However, not everyone is a fan. Twenty-five-year-old Imelda avoids television at times because, “Seeing the news, people fight, people die, people are burned, people are run over. This makes me feel sad.” Twenty-three-year-old María believes that too much media consumption may be a slippery slope to immorality:



These are pictures that the majority of men and women like; they are attracted to them and they want to have their body or to buy their clothes. In a couple, if the woman wants to dress well this may lead to infidelity. Men are worse. Men are unfaithful only by looking at the image. Women ask that men spend money buying them the things they see.

Elder women like 64-year-old Valerie eschew the pastime entirely: “In my case, I don’t want to watch it. When one watches television, almost immediately one’s head gets nauseated. Only a little bit do I ever watch the news.” Like Valerie, 52-year-old Micaela says that television gives her a headache. Yet, good or bad, televisions are switched on when electricity is available.

Television generates a certain attraction-repulsion, a simultaneous dismissal of and fascination with its images. Returning to our afternoon of *telenovelas*, interspersed between the *Mañana* segments, of course, were plenty of commercials. One appeared to be for salad dressing, but concluded with a woman walking out of a salon and a tagline of “Make yourself feel beautiful.” Another for slimming leggings designed to lift butts and flatten tummies was replete with “befores” and “afters,” which demonstrated that not only were the leggings made of spandex but also magic. Recognizing the absurdity, Yolanda said with a half-smile, “I’ve got to get me some of those!”

Along with instant rejection there are reactions of immediate admiration. When I showed Nicola an image of *telenovela* star and television hostess Carolina Jaume, she asked if she could keep it and make a copy of it. “She’s my favorite,” she said. Additionally, I had a copy of several entertainment magazines in English. She asked to borrow them, acknowledging that she would not be able to read them but wanted “to enjoy the pictures.” I witnessed other instances of critical reflection on the reality of the created image in mass media. Modesto’s brother, Chuy, mentioned to me that he had recently seen the most current version of *King Kong* (2005) and was astounded by what he saw—a freakishly large gorilla manhandling people and battling all sorts of unbelievable prehistoric creatures like giant arachnids (which, by the way, are not so uncommon in the Amazon). Nearly convinced by the lifelike appearance of what he saw, Chuy went to Modesto to ask if what he saw was in fact real. Modesto explained, “Of course not. It’s more like a huge stuffed gorilla being put on some smaller buildings.” Chuy confessed that he was awe-struck by just how authentic movies appear nowadays. Twenty-year-old Maximiliana would agree: “[I admire people I see in the movies] because I have never seen some of these things in my life, the things that aren’t real. Like the people who are liars in the movies or in the *novelas*. Sometimes men and women lie.”

Meaning-making beyond the premeditated message of the producers—even if that means “missing” in Pace and Hinote’s (2013) usage—provides some insight into why, when characters in a *telenovela* encounter problems vanishingly relevant to impoverished, rural audiences, viewers continue to watch and become attached to these shows. Appadurai calls the creation of frequently shared “images of the world” by televiewers across the globe “mediascapes” (1990:299):

The lines between the “realistic” and the fictional landscapes they see are blurred, so that the further away they are from the direct experience of metropolitan life, the more likely they are to construct “imagined worlds”...[that] help to constitute

narratives of the “other” and proto-narratives of possible lives, fantasies which could become prolegomena to the desire for acquisition and movement.  
[Appadurai 1990:299]

For Chuy, *King Kong* does not matter for its symbolism regarding the tension between “savagery” and “civilization” (and the savagery of civilization); instead, he relishes it for its representation of technological potential to smudge the distinction between reality and fantasy. Concerning images more immediately relevant than larger-than-life mutated apes, Appadurai notes these images do become productive “metaphors by which people live” (1990:299). Through, for instance, becoming mechanisms for processes of recognition that Martín-Barbero (1993) describes, or through becoming apparatuses of aspirations described here, images advertised in the media have real implications for people’s conception of the possible trajectory of their lived realities (e.g., when the assumed success of those in the media leads to desiring to become educated, literate, thin, modern and so on). The sentiments of 15-year-old Moreina speak to how stars and their characters arouse imagination of what could be for young Kichwa women’s lives:

I do imagine how I *would like to be* through them. I often think they are better than I am because they have this beauty, this sensuality, this spark. They are happy. They have an...I don’t know what. Love is easier for them.... They are prettier than we are.

Moreina is producing an identity as a young, modern, Kichwa woman inspired partly by female *telenovela* and other stars; this identity hinges on particular logics of the body—“this beauty, this sensuality, this spark,” a *je ne sais quoi*—that make happiness and love come more easily for those women. I turn to this now: wanting to love and to be loved by somebody, wanting to be somebody, and all the while wanting to have some body.

### ***Changing Perceptions of Love, Marriage, and Family***

Could it be, as my mother says, that they watch too much television? And seeing the televisions...makes them think too much in things of this world.... Thinking like this, they separate. And she ends up going on to the next guy....  
--44-year-old Roberta

“Love is easier for them,” Moreina told me in our interview. She was obviously a fan of watching *telenovelas*. Her downtime in the evenings was consistently spent on Nicola’s porch keeping up with the serpentine plotlines. Her comments encapsulate the increasing inclination of young Sacha Lomans to want to love and be loved by somebody. Antonio La Pastina (2004) and Heloisa Buarque de Almeida (2003) note the connection between love as presented in *telenovelas* and viewers’ shifting notions of love in two Brazilian cities. La Pastina describes the uneasiness felt by residents of Macambira as they adjust to the “precocious sexualization” (2004:163) of youngsters, particularly young women, who they see as highly susceptible to television’s influence. In a context already riddled with uncertainties as gender roles have begun to change, media, says La Pastina, “perceived as foreign to the local values and traditions, became an important source of information and point of contention” (2004:170). Almeida (2003)

points to an element of *telenovelas*, and television shows more generally, that speaks to their potential for impact even though what they portray may be very distant from reality. *Telenovelas*, Almeida reasons, “are not considered realistic in a strict sense,” but rather in an “emotional sense” (2003:3). Resonant sentimentality can be extracted from unrealistic portrayals of romantic couples.

Jennifer Hirsch, Holly Wardlow and colleagues (2006) explore why romantic love and companionate marriage are more and more favored worldwide. Jane Collier (1997) calls this the shift from marriages of “duty” to marriages of “desire” (Reddy 2006:176). While they explore economic and demographic changes that have made this possible, Hirsch and Wardlow also mention mass media’s role: how images advertised “link this conjugal form to ideologies of modern progress” (2006:10; though this influence does not always stick; see Gregg’s [2006] discussion of *liberdade*). In other words, being in love rather than being forced into a relationship is partly a response to “the deployment of discourses about progressive gender relations as a means to claim a modern identity” (Hirsch and Wardlow 2006:14). This ideal, the editors emphasize, is “increasingly pervasive, but also locally variable” (Hirsch and Wardlow 2006:14).

As much as it is clear that young people in Sacha Loma are having fun with flirting and are moving headfirst (or heart first) into chosen relationships, marriage is not necessarily the be all and end all. Many are of the mindset that they can find “the one”—as Libertad put it, the other half to her orange—and settle down, and marriage is a bonus that can be squeezed in when they have the time and the money. Many in the community have gotten married civilly and are waiting to celebrate the union with a more traditional Kichwa *boda* (wedding, Sp.; sometimes *bura*, Kichwa). Even Nicola stressed that her civil ceremony was a practical decision in some ways: “Laws here say that married people have more rights, but even so, it was not that important to me to get married quickly. We had already been living together for 8 years and had children, so it was about time.” The bottom line, however, is that young Sacha Lomans consider partnership a choice, not an obligation.

Television is a main conduit through which Sacha Lomans get a sense of what it means to be modern and to engage in modern relationships; romantic relationships are especially salient. We watched two episodes on the day we viewed the episode of *Mañana* that I described above. The second was an episode of *Privilegio de amar* (The Privilege of Loving) in which the lead, Cristina, a beautiful young woman working in a camera store, finds out she is pregnant by a married man who has a family already. The pregnancies of Priscila and Cristina on television that day, as well as my own new pregnancy, prompted Nicola to ask me, *Tienen ‘baby shower’ donde vive usted?* (Jamie, are there baby showers where you live?, Sp.). “Baby shower” she said in English. I was taken aback by the term. I said that I would probably have one because the baby would have lots of grandmothers. She went on, “In the city I’ve been to a ‘baby shower.’ Everything was so cute. Really beautiful. The woman was given a whole bunch of tiny clothing.” I asked her if there would ever be a baby shower in Sacha Loma. “No,” she replied. “There are ‘baby showers’ in the cities. They are not something that is done in places like this.” Her affect insinuated, “People here just wouldn’t understand.” Nicola, while affectionate with her family and community, clearly wanted “bigger and better” things for herself and her children. In general from our conversations I got the impression that she felt she had outgrown Sacha Loma and that she thought at times that

the way they did things in the community—washing clothes by hand, drinking parasite-ridden *chicha*, not having baby showers—was not the way that more “advanced” people did things. And so she bought fake Under Armor T-shirts, nail polish, a netbook, a printer, a refrigerator, and an indoor bathroom. She was saving up for a washing machine.

Though her first civil marriage was more or less to formally recognize a union long-established, she was planning a wedding unlike anything Sacha Loma had ever experienced, the kind that seemed to me straight out of the *telenovelas* she watched daily. Recognizing the need to bridge her Kichwa family and his *mestizo* family, Nicola thought it might be nice to have the wedding in Sacha Loma (as opposed to Tena where Rico would prefer), but on the deck of the eco-hotel, at sunset, with its majestic view of the Napo River. However, the food she would do separately (as opposed to having it prepared by the eco-hotel) because most of her kin found specialties like turkey roulade unfamiliar and unappetizing. She added, “My grandparents would be uncomfortable because they don’t really like to sit in chairs.” With the undoubted expense of the impending twilight wedding, Nicola seemed literally to be buying into foreign images of romance. Undeniably, traditional Kichwa weddings, too, spare no expense, from large portions of meat served to family and guests, to liquor and beer and grandiose gifts—as Nicola put it, “Not just a plate or something.”

The shifting ideas of what it means to love and to be loved engendered (at least partly) by what they see in the media also extend to non-romantic love in the new notions of what family life is capable of being. Many like Sirena (see Chapter 3) describe their early years as full of torment by overly strict parents with high expectations for good behavior including working on the farm and avoiding premarital romantic engagements. Her mother Micaela says that *vivo sufriendo* (I live suffering, Sp.) to this day because of her marriage. This suffering translates to an unhappy and tumultuous family life in which her husband constantly yells at her, and she constantly yells at her children. For all of the rifts and hostilities that happen between *telenovela* characters, however, they are balanced by instances of passionate and deep affection; happy endings are commonplace. I asked 16-year-old Sarafina what she thinks about those she sees on television. She said, “They make me want to be like them, to be exactly like them. They dress well. *They have a good family. Their fathers and mothers live together*” (emphasis added).

Sarafina comes from a broken home (see Chapter 3). Her own early marriage would seem partially motivated by an attempt to fill a wide gap of self-identified loneliness stemming from the cruel behavior of her father toward her mother and the subsequent violent loss of her mother. For her, television stars have it all, including happy, united families. Thomas Tufte elaborates on the role of *telenovelas* in shaping desires for harmonious family life:

This media-created experience of family life [where harmony is reestablished] enters into their own self-narrative, becoming their inspiration in formulating and articulating their own identity as family members, and often as the de facto heads of family. Navigating between lived and media-created experience the women formulate their aspirations and dreams for future family life. [Tufte 2000:204]

Sarafina is not alone in her opinions. I asked the Kichwa women I interviewed about various magazine images, which included famous Latina actresses, indigenous women (Waorani, Shuar), white women (models, actresses), and Ecuadorian socialites and local performers.

I began by soliciting their initial impressions after viewing each grouping with the question, “Do you have any thoughts about these pictures?” Their responses, separated by age, are below. I recorded all responses that I received from Kichwa women in the chart. Responses, such as “pretty,” that were received more than once only appear once in the chart per image column or age row.

	<b>Latina Actresses</b>	<b>Indigenous Women Postcards</b>	<b>White Women</b>	<b>Ecuadorian Socialites</b>
<b>Older (28-64)</b>	Well-dressed, High heels, Models, Stylish clothes and Make-up, Pretty, Nice, Happy, Enjoying life, Healthy body, Skinny to the point of dying, Queens, Grandmothers	Not like “us,” Traditionally dressed, Making <i>chicha</i> , Pretty, <i>Aucas</i> (savage, Kichwa), Dangerous, Kill people within and outside their group, Shuar, Waorani, In the past, they were <i>aucas</i>	Wives and husbands, Mothers and children, Family, Pretty, Working, Enjoying, Playing, Models for clothing, Skinny, Weddings	Beauty pageant participants, Singers, Like to be on stage, Family, Happy, Boyfriends, Queens, Singers, Participate with guitars and traditional dress
<b>Young (15-27)</b>	Pretty, Tall, Well-dressed, Beautiful, Skinny, Spectacular, Good bodies, Good people, Attractive, People want their clothes, Inspire infidelity, Normal, Good Make-up, Fat, Selling Something	Have customs, “A shame” (said laughing), Attractive to outsiders, Waorani, Showing off culture and tradition, Waorani are like Kichwa but misbehave, Happy, As God made him, Enjoying his culture, Picture of a culture, Natural,	Pretty, Prepared, Successful, Work in politics, Famous, Singers, Actors, Have good families, Have good homes, Actresses, Models, Have to be apart from their husbands for travel, Family is separated, Beautiful	Lots of money, Good jobs, Happy boyfriends, Famous people showing off, Actors, Singers, Talented, Beautiful, Well-dressed, Some are skinny (barely dressed), Some are fat (covered up), Artists, Dancers, Happy people who have achieved

		Innocent, Clothes from the <i>monte</i> , Face paint, Not perfectly painted, but happy anyway, Waorani with traditional <i>traje</i> and feather crowns, How they look is no matter, only their personality, Nakedness could be offensive to outsiders, Don't want to lose their culture, which is why they dress and act as they do, Different from "us"	weddings, Divorce, Infidelity, Fleeting happiness, Work in hotels, Have money, Well-dressed, Happy family, Sick, United home, Happy, selfless relationships, Good bodies, Good children, Good boyfriends, Good lovers, Good friends, Different from "us," Show off clothes, Famous	their dreams, Models, Dedicated businesspeople, Young people who want to advance by doing promotions, Pretty, Different from "us," Presenters at parties and social functions
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**Table 7: Initial Impressions after Viewing Images**

From their initial impressions, there seems to be an association of particular looks with a particular social situation. For example, in addition to commenting that Latina actresses like Selena Gomez and Eva Mendez are “pretty,” “well-dressed,” “spectacular,” and have “good bodies” (one elder woman, however, characterized these women as “skinny to the point of dying”), Kichwa women presumed they were also “enjoying life” and “good people.” Similarly, white models and actresses like Angelina Jolie were also “pretty,” “skinny,” and “rich,” but to an even greater extent were perceived to have happy and healthy family lives; common descriptors were “wives and husbands,” “mothers and children,” “have good families,” “have good homes,” “united homes,” “selfless relationships,” “good children,” “good boyfriends,” “good lovers,” and “good friends.” Twenty-three-year-old María commented, “These are people who strive to make good couples and good relationships. They have given up something in order to have a united home.” Yet, white women did receive some negative comments with respect to their family life. Some young Kichwa women assumed that their demanding jobs would mean that they would be separated from their families and possibly risk “infidelity,” “divorce,” or “fleeting happiness.” Twenty-one-year-old Feliz says, “They get married beautifully and then they get divorced. They have affairs and problems. Happiness doesn’t last for them.” It should be noted that some young women did not identify stars like Selena Gomez, Eva Mendez, Angelina Jolie and others by name because they were unfamiliar

with them; instead they commented on the pictures based on the idea that they would not otherwise be in a magazine.

Ecuadorian socialites and local performers also received plenty of remarks praising their beauty. They also had good “family” and “happy boyfriends.” What is perhaps most striking is that, when asked the same questions about the pictures of indigenous men and women, happy families did not come up. In fact, Kichwa women described the indigenous men and women as “savage,” offensively “naked,” and “dangerous” in the same breath as “natural,” “innocent,” and “picture of a culture.” Kichwa women, moreover, focused on relationships they assumed the indigenous people in the postcards had with non-kin others rather than their family life. On one hand, they “kill people within and outside their own group” and “misbehave”; on the other hand, they are “attractive to outsiders” like tourists because of their traditional look and behavior.

The “halo effect” (cf. Martin 2007)—the assumption that attractive people are successful in other life domains—appears to be well-advanced in Kichwa women’s assessment of foreign images of the famous and the fortunate. At times, stars and their characters literally are illuminated with dramatic backlighting of their kisses. Their perception of indigenous people seems a little less luminous, except, perhaps, when referring to an essentialist ideal of nativeness, customs, and tradition. The irony, of course, is that in Sacha Loma and in many indigenous communities in the region residents are, without exaggeration, one big (sometimes happy) family. As elaborated in previous chapters, to live and to survive on a daily basis means to interact, exchange, and share with kin and the community in a way that likely is very foreign to what those in the magazines have ever experienced in their own families. It should be noted that the aversion of Kichwa women to those women represented in the postcards probably has something to do with their deep-seated opinions (fears) of Waorani as, in their words, “different from us,” “a shame,” and “savage.” Even so, given some similarities shared between Kichwa women and those women in the postcards—such as the Shuar women making home brew, a beverage staple in Kichwa households—it would not be unreasonable for there to be some comments regarding family associations (e.g., between the making of that home brew and its being served to the Shuar women’s family members). So what does it mean that famous people, but not other indigenous people, are interpreted as having happy family lives?

Martín-Barbero (1993:216) suggests the family-centeredness of Latin Americans—which he says is made anachronistic in the context of capitalism—is what drives acceptance of melodrama among the popular classes. As stated previously, the family is the “basic audience unit.” He references Richard Hoggart (1972) for his analyses. Among poor working class sectors of society

...events are not perceived except when they affect the life of the family group. A war is perceived as “the time when uncle died”, the capital is “where my sister-in-law” lives.... For the popular world, the family and the neighbourhood are, in spite of their contradictions and conflicts, the truest form of sociability. [Martín-Barbero 1993:226]

A central theme in *telenovelas* is the formation and rupture of family, as well as all the attendant spectacles that occur within family units. Sacha Lomans are family-centered, as has been documented throughout this dissertation (see Uzendoski 2005b for dynamics of Kichwa kinship, especially pp. 63-66). Expansive family networks help guide (inter)actions within modern contexts in a symbolic but also practical sense. While Kichwa persistently acknowledge their endeavors to get an education and good jobs as crucial for the advancement of family, community, and Kichwa in general, family connections enable young people to branch out beyond the community when searching for schools and jobs because—almost always—there is someone nearby who will offer them food and a warm bed, as well as the security of a familiar face. When Maximiliana and Paloma ventured to the highland city of Riobamba to pick tomatoes for some extra income, Riobamba became first *a dónde mi hermano* (where my [Maximiliana's] brother lives, Sp.) and second where tomatoes are. The city of Tena was first *a dónde mi tía* (where my aunt lives, Sp.) or *a dónde mi amigo* (where my friend lives, Sp.) and then where to find work. Extended kin mean extended mobility. Mobility facilitates engagements with modernity.

As I have said before, the aspirations of young Sacha Lomans tend to be the aspirations of kinship; yet their models of ideal kinship are more and more coming from those they see on television. This is not always the case, especially among elders. As Muratorio records from the Kichwa mothers and grandmothers she interviews in Tena, Ecuador: “The grandmothers worry about the fact that younger women are mirroring from that screen not only uncomely appearances but, worse, highly objectionable social practices” (1998:417). For them, white people on television may be models, but they are not models of good behavior; they may be social, but not social in the way Kichwa mothers and grandmothers are used to sociality. Also a concern for elders in Sacha Loma, overt sexual behavior—a new, objectionable form of interacting with others—is considered especially problematic. Intermixing with long-standing antecedents of sociality and kinship, television has become a key source for learning ways to love and be loved by others.

### ***Wanting to be Somebody and to be Some Body: Futures and Bodies***

Sarafina: They make me want to be like them, to be exactly like them. They dress well. They have a good family. Their fathers and mothers live together. I would like to have their bodies (*cuerpitos*, Sp.). They are tall and skinny with [good] waists and hips. They are truly beautiful.... I would like to be like them. If one day I have money, if I complete my dreams, then I will be like them.

Jamie: Do you think young women in the community have image problems?

Sarafina: Some yes, and some no. They say that they are fat and that they don't want to be fat. Sometimes they jog or they play, and they don't want to eat. Sometimes I feel badly about my body because I see the images [on television or in magazines], and I want to be like them. But, the monkey who dresses in silk is still a monkey.

--excerpt from interview with 16-year-old  
Sarafina



The silk-clad monkey also was referenced by 15-year-old Moreina in the previous chapter. Moreina used this idiomatic expression as a way of indicating that her Kichwa identity is unchangeable, despite any modifications to her exterior through clothing, make-up, and the like. Here, Sarafina puts the monkey to work in a slightly different fashion. She is suggesting that, though she may aspire to be different through engaging various projects of the body, she will remain but a “monkey,” an impostor. What does she think she is hiding? Her broken family? Her rural background? Her lack of money? Her indigenous identity? What is certain is that she wants to use her body—a resource she has ready access to—in order to obscure certain aspects of her identity and to bring out others. Her aspirations, furthermore, are intimately tied with her body image. As she herself says of those on television, “They are tall and skinny with [good] waists and hips. They are truly beautiful.... I would like to be like them. If one day I have money, if I complete my dreams, then I will be like them.” These are the images, remember, that stared down on Sarafina from her bedroom walls.

In my semi-structured interviews with Kichwa women about who and what they watched and why, our discussions repeatedly centered on links between aspirations and bodies. Young Kichwa women, as Sirena once told me, “want to be somebody”; at the same time, they also, by and large, want to be some body, in particular, a thin, white body. These two desires are linked; that is to say, to be somebody frequently necessitates having some body. In the previous chapter, I discussed this linkage through showing how new, some might say more “Western,” body images may be considered by Kichwa women as productive in ways analogous to more “traditional” bodily images, because both have to do with socially-directed goals.

This section examines these issues in relation to images on television. To borrow again from Appadurai, televised images of stars, their characters and their respective lives “help constitute narratives of the ‘other’ and proto-narratives of possible lives, fantasies which could become prolegomena to the desire of acquisition and movement” (1990:299). As 22-year-old Fiel put it, “They [young Kichwa women] want to be like the women they see on the television who have *cueros bonitos* (pretty bodies, Sp.)” The increasing consumption of televised images of bodies, success, and successful bodies has coincided with rising negative body esteem and risky food behaviors as Kichwa women begin to interpret what they see on television by literally incorporating it into their bodies. Their behaviors may in part be socially-directed and their body images may be partially a result of the “looking glass self,” yet the ramifications of these are felt deeply on the individual level.

It is obvious to Sacha Lomans *themselves* that television makes them do things. Twenty-year-old Maximiliana has much to say on the subject:

Sometimes I am left speechless and I just watch them and think, “How stupid!” Sometimes they kill people, and we are stunned. My mother says it’s bad.... Sometimes people—not from this community—but seeing these things they learn how to do bad things. They learn to kill. For this reason my mom tells us that we should not watch fight movies, that we should not let our kids see it. Sometimes little kids see these films and they go over there [and imitate]. They say it’s a joke. They make a lance after seeing it in a movie, and they throw it. It can poke

out someone's eye! One group of kids, copying some ninjas, made a slingshot. And all of them pelted a woman from the other side! For this reason my mother complains that kids these days only spend time in front of the television.

She goes on to describe how television's influence extends to young people's adorning and fashioning of their bodies nowadays:

They dress more like models. They are seeing people from other places and this is influencing them—they are cutting their hair, dyeing their hair, putting on earrings. Boys, too, are wearing earrings. [It is dangerous because]... boys see children/boyfriends doing bad things; women see women depicted as prostitutes, in bars, or on the streets. Some are pretty, some are ugly.... *People want to do what people on TV are doing.* [emphasis added]

Seventeen-year-old Dolores agrees:

There are some who want to be taller. There are others who want to be shorter, normal. There are others who want to be white. White women are pretty, more attractive. On television, some are black and some are white. [Young women in the community] compare themselves [to each other] and they tend to have spats between them. There can be arguments like, "You are white, and I am dark."

Part of the attraction of television stars is that they have stuff, particularly nice clothes. Maximiliana spells it out plainly:

Sometimes [people on TV] scare me because they dress in an ugly way. They put on masks, and this is scary. More than anything we like skinny people, really skinny people, normal people. Not all that fat, you know, ugly. Men, too, [on TV] dress well. [And actors, actresses, singers] they dress well.

Pretty (skinny) people are appealing; ugly people are not. While she says, "It makes no difference to me," 23-year-old María maintains that young women are distracted by trying to achieve the bodies they see on television: Young women say, "I want to have Shakira's body. I want to copy everything. I want to be like the models I see on television. I want to dress like them." Seventeen-year-old Dolores is one of those young women:

[I see the images on television] and I want to be like them—skinny and pretty; and they have the money to dress well. [I only worry about my weight] just a little bit because I am already skinny. I like being skinny because when I see my really fat friends, they say, "What aren't you eating that you don't get fat?" I say, "I do eat, but it's my body that doesn't get fat."

Their nice appearances, moreover, mean that stars and their characters often have access to things beyond the material, such as professional success. Returning to the chart of Kichwa women's initial impressions of the four sets of images, young women

commonly associated success in terms of employment with the white actresses and Ecuadorian socialites, but not with the indigenous women on the postcards, who tended not to be described as successfully employed. The white women were described as “prepared,” “successful,” and “working in politics” (including promoting politicians with their beauty); the Ecuadorian socialites were characterized as “happy people who have achieved their dreams,” “dedicated businesspeople,” and “young people who want to advance by doing promotions.”

After probing for general impressions, I asked Kichwa women explicit yes/no questions about the sets of images, among them: “Are they pretty?”; “Have they been successful in life?”; “Are they educated?” (“educated” here meaning they have attended school); and “Would you like to be like them?” Separated by age, their answers are recorded in the table below.

<b>Question Prompt for Picture</b>	<b>Older Positive Response [n= 10]</b>	<b>Younger Positive Response [n=13]</b>	<b>Combined Positive Response [N=23]</b>
<b>Latina actresses: Are they pretty?</b>	100%	100%	100%
<b>Latina actresses: Have they been successful in life?</b>	100%	94%	96%
<b>Latina actresses: Are they educated?</b>	89%	94%	92%
<b>Latina actresses: Would you like to be like them?</b>	56%	35%	42%
<b>Indigenous women: Are they pretty?</b>	89%	71%	77%
<b>Indigenous women: Have they been successful in life?</b>	100%	41%	62%
<b>Indigenous women: Are they educated?</b>	78%	35%	50%
<b>Indigenous women: Would you like to be like them?</b>	44%	12%	23%
<b>White women: Are they pretty?</b>	100%	94%	97%
<b>White women: Have they been successful in life?</b>	100%	100%	100%
<b>White women: Are they educated?</b>	100%	94%	96%

<b>White women: Would you like to be like them?</b>	89%	52%	65%
<b>Ecuadorian socialites: Are they pretty?</b>	100%	94%	96%
<b>Ecuadorian socialites: Have they been successful in life?</b>	100%	94%	96%
<b>Ecuadorian socialites: Are they educated?</b>	100%	100%	100%
<b>Ecuadorian socialites: Would you like to be like them?</b>	90%	38%	58%

**Table 8: Responses to Magazine Image Prompts**

Especially in the case of younger women, the images of indigenous women on the postcards were considered pretty less often (only 71%) than the other three sets of images, which were unanimously regarded as pretty in the case of Latina actresses and Ecuadorian socialites and nearly so in the case of white women (97%). Latina actresses, white women, and Ecuadorian socialites were considered successful unanimously or nearly so. Interestingly, while older women considered indigenous women in the postcards to be successful in life, a smaller percentage of younger women (41%) deemed them successful. High percentages of Kichwa women thought Latina actresses, white women, and Ecuadorian socialites were educated; the indigenous women on the postcards were also believed to be educated fairly consistently by older women (78%), while younger women were less likely to think so (50%).

A negative response to the question of whether or not someone in an image was educated, which is overwhelmingly perceived as a positive trait, does not necessarily reflect a negative perception of that person. In the case of Latina actresses, white women, and Ecuadorian socialites, those in the images may not be educated because they do not have to be—they are already wealthy, their parents must be wealthy, or they are famous and do not have time for it (a necessary evil). Yet, in the case of the indigenous people in the postcards, not being educated is viewed almost exclusively as negative because it demonstrates that they are not “advancing” or “civilizing” themselves. What emerges from Kichwa responses to these questions is, again, that the famous persons are the beneficiaries of a certain halo effect in which, along with their beauty, they are held to be successful and educated (or too gainfully busy to go to school). The fact that most respondents, young and old, did not know who the stars in the magazines were by name, just that they clearly were famous because they were in a magazine, meant that my Kichwa colleagues were often making judgments based on appearance alone. They did not have the background knowledge that many Westerners might have from constant television immersion to color their suppositions with respect to the personages’ success,

body of work, character, and so on.

Perhaps most arresting were responses to the question, “Would you like to be like them?” Their responses at first glance seem to work against the idea that young women aspire to be like those they see on television. To begin, it is important to note that elder women responded positively more than younger women in the case of every set of images, including indigenous women on the postcards. Elder women responded most positively when asked about wanting to be like white women (89%) and Ecuadorian socialites (90%); Latina actresses were a bit further behind (56%). Forty-four percent of elder women responded positively to the question when asked about indigenous women. Younger women’s responses preferred the image sets in the same order—white women (52%), Ecuadorian socialites (38%), Latina actresses (35%), and indigenous women (12%)—but with a much smaller percentage of positive responses for each set. As discussed in Chapter 5, elder women almost always associated being any one of the people in the images as a good thing because it likely meant they would have more money or better jobs to support their family—an “almost anything else must be better than what I have” mentality. Even indigenous people, they recognized, are likely nowadays to be educated and thus to get decent jobs. As 52-year-old Micaela reasons regarding a Waorani postcard,

*Antes antes* (long ago, Sp.) they would have had no work. Now, more than us [Kichwas] they are professors and have *ingeniero* (an advanced degree, beyond Master’s level, Sp.) degrees. The government supports them a lot so that they don’t kill people anymore: *para que se enseñen con nosotros* (so that they get used to us, that is, other human beings, Sp.).

This is a backhanded compliment, of course. Micaela does not think very highly of the Waorani, considering her past experiences with them and their attacks when she first moved to Sacha Loma. Nor does it seem that she thinks very highly of herself as Kichwa, because she concedes to being less educated in some ways than her Waorani foes. Micaela and other elder women are prone to wish aloud for a different lot in life.

However, younger women, while owning up to admiring their favorite artists, often professed to have the *yo me acepto tal como soy* (I accept myself as I am, Sp.; variation: *yo me quiero como soy* [I love myself as I am, Sp.]) mentality, at least when asked directly about their feelings on the matter. That is to say, there is not unquestioning praise of stars and their characters; young women do resist these images through proclamations of high self-esteem. It is one thing to ruminate on what it might be like to be a particular star; it is another thing to admit to wanting to be a different person, though such thoughts were not out of the question. These assertions, however, were frequently followed up by statements such as the words of Libertad’s younger sister, “But it’s not like I eat fatty foods anyway.”

The other side to the self-acceptance coin is that young women in Sacha Loma want to be like those they see in the media, but realize that these images are unattainable. Such thoughts are a source of consternation for young Sacha Lomans:

Yes they have affected me. I realize when I see them talk that they are taller than I am. I notice their manner of dress. All of this. I ask myself, “Why can’t I?”

Why can't I be like them—be tall, be white?" Yes, I have imagined these things. But this happens most often when I am in the city. There I see many things on the television. [26-year-old Nicola]

Twenty-three-year-old *mestiza* Libertad expresses a similar sentiment of insecurity, frustration, and desire:

Yes. [TV images affect me.] They are beautiful. They have a great figure. They have no cellulite. I do have a little bit of envy. They take care of themselves a lot. They do exercises. They go on diets. Sometimes I want to be like them. Sometimes I get frustrated because I can't be like them. [I wonder], "What envy! Why not me?"

Eighteen-year-old Yolanda, however, makes an explicit reference to televised images as apparatuses of aspirations *because* they are unattainable. She says, "The majority of women on television are models and are pretty and skinny. Young women envy them *because* they can't be like them" (emphasis added). While the fact that these images are unattainable may be a source of dismay, perhaps their unattainability is what urges Kichwa women to fantasize about other life possibilities. That is, if everything and everyone on television were within reach, maybe tele-viewing would be less appealing—the unfairness, the great disparities, the unreality make them exciting. I address this further below.

### **Media, Mediations, and Kichwa Concerns with their Middles**

Some want to have their bodies in shape. So they don't eat. Or they eat and vomit. Or they only drink.... This can lead to sickness. This happened at the boarding school with the majority of the girls. They did not eat. They did not go to the cafeteria to eat. They hid in their rooms. They would throw away their food. And then they went every few minutes to the clinic because they had gastritis.

--23-year-old Maria

[Body image dissatisfaction] begins at age 13, but now it lasts even in the *señoras* (elder women, Sp.). Even my mother talks about her *guata* (tummy, Sp.). I tell my mother not to worry about her tummy because, yes, she has a belly, but she's had many children so she has a reason to have one.

--18-year-old Yolanda

Sitting on the couch of the local clinic, the nurse, a *mestiza* from the coast, turned to me: "I was down to 88 pounds. When I went up to 92 pounds, I was bawling." At one point diagnosed as clinically anorexic, the nurse has long been on the road to recovery, which is rarely permanently achieved by those who have had eating disorders. I asked her if she thought young women in the community could suffer with negative body esteem: "No. Women here don't worry about their weight. How could they? They are already skinny." Unintentionally, the nurse makes an important point—people in Sacha Loma still are plagued by food scarcity. Mothers sometimes wonder how to put food on

the table. Perhaps, then, the words of María and Yolanda are even more telling—restriction practices do not necessarily have to trail food abundance. A growing percentage of young women in Sacha Loma emphasize the importance of being thin, which “just looks better.” While *more talk about bodies in terms of being “normal”*—not too big, not too small—not an insignificant number discuss beauty in terms of thinness. As outlined in the previous section, television, while not the only factor influencing shifting body image preferences, is recognized as a crucial contributor to new beauty ideals. One manifestation of this ideal, as Libertad rattles off, is “90 60 90,” or the hourglass figure measured in centimeters with a skinny middle and more prominent chest and buttocks. Others want just to avoid a tummy. Still others cite being thin as a goal and being fat as ugly and undesirable.

This section examines motivations that crosscut television as an apparatus of (bodily) aspirations—particularly the thin ideal—focusing on the “looking glass self,” that is processes of social comparison and reflected appraisal that shape how young Kichwa women think others see them, and the “fat talk” associated with it. Fat talk may be defined as discussion of weight, including even “positive” comments like, “Have you lost weight?” This includes presumed criticism from Kichwa women and men and discrimination from outsiders. The confluence of body and beauty ideals advertised on television works in tandem with new emphases on social comparison with both kin and non-kin others.

Important to note, there is not a single woman in Sacha Loma who is at an unhealthy weight, or what Westerners might classify as excessively heavy. To live in this community is to be active—groceries must be carried up from the canoe ports, clothes are washed by hand, babies cannot be allowed to crawl due to dangerous terrains and surfaces and so must be carried by someone, and sports are the pastime. Being sedentary, however, is on the rise. Young people are not going to the farm as often, and convenience foods packed with flour, salt, sugar, and oil are more and more prevalent. If women say they want to be skinny, what they are really saying is that they want to be *skinnier*, or that they are overestimating their size to begin with.

Time and again, young women brought up food avoidance and other risky behaviors as a sanctioned method to achieve *cuerpos bonitos*. Twenty-six-year-old Nicola explained that sometimes for breakfast, often an orange or a glass of milk is enough. She adds: “I am a good size. Yes, I take care of my body. Sometimes I don’t eat or I’ll only eat lunch or only drink water or eat soup. I would prefer a skinny body to a fat body.”

This trend is especially common among adolescent women because, unlike any other period in history, they are in school contexts in constant contact with (non-kin) others of their own age. In other words, when not viewing themselves in terms of the mirror of television, they are incessantly eyeing themselves in the social mirror of school, enacting what 20-year-old Feliz calls the “I have to look better than all the rest” mentality. María identifies unsafe eating behavior as prevalent in the boarding school. Libertad, who worked as the school’s secretary until its recent closure, says that it continued to be a problem over the years:

Last year [at the boarding school] there were girls who did not eat a lot. It could have been that they did not want to get fat, in other words, that they were on a

diet. These girls have left.... The principal made them eat. They even bought smaller plates in order to get smaller portions. *A la fuerza comían* (they only would eat when forced, Sp.). [emphasis added]

Maximiliana provides additional insight into the importance of social comparison:

There are people who worry about their weight. They feel too heavy and it bothers them. They *constantly compare themselves* to other people: “Is she skinnier than I am?” They think they are too fat and so ugly. These people eat soup and drink juices often. They don’t eat rice. [emphasis added]

Pelcortita, a 21-year-old Kichwa boarding school student describes her fellow students as always *cuidando* (watching, Sp.) their bodies: “Many female students don’t eat a lot, and some don’t eat at all—they say eating gives them indigestion.” Offending foods tend to be rice, fried foods, and lentils. Safe foods tend to be juice, soup, and citrus. As 17-year-old Dolores observes: “They eat very little.... They don’t eat lentils because they say that lentils makes your body grow, that is, swell. And rice, too. They say that it’s not worth it to eat rice because it causes the body to swell and makes one fat.”

Smaller plates for smaller portions make food restriction very visible. These plates, at the same time, demonstrate to others that one is eating less. Girls did not want to heap their plates with rice for fear of what they thought others might think of them for having large portions. For body-conscious women, the reverse was also true: They did want to perceptibly limit their intake so that they could conform to an image they thought others might have of them for doing so. In other words, their reflected appraisals boiled down to *you are what you think others think you eat*.

### ***What People Say about Food and What Food Says about People***

Traditional dress is the custom of Amazonia. It is important to wear traditional dress instead of nice clothing when going to political rallies because it shows that the Amazon is representing itself well. *Traje* (traditional dress, Sp.) comes in the form of animals, birds, and snakes. People from other countries don’t know these customs and like to see them. Then they support Ecuador. When we wear leaves, it symbolizes that we work growing and harvesting manioc and plantains.

--20-year-old Maximiliana

The links Maximiliana makes between representations of Kichwa identity in political contexts, traditional dress, and homegrown food indexes a focal complex of body image issues with which young people are grappling. Let us return to the concepts of social comparison and reflected appraisal, specifically, in terms of the notion that you are what you think others think you eat, which is important to Kichwa identity work and, I found, is often implied in images. Regarding the sets of images from magazines and postcards, I asked Kichwa women what foods the people represented would probably consume. Again, non-indigenous Latina actresses, white women, and Ecuadorian socialites were assumed to eat *comida del pueblo* (city food, Sp.) and food from restaurants, which require more money that Sacha Lomans normally spend on food, along with diet-related foods like “vegetarian food,” “healthy food,” “light food,” and “low-fat



food” (Latina actresses); “no rice,” “no fat,” “everything, but nothing in excess,” “minerals,” “food to maintain their figures,” and “they don’t eat” (white women); and “low-fat convenience foods,” “low-fat foods,” and “drink lots of water” (Ecuadorian socialites) (see Table 8 below). Indigenous people in the postcards, however, were believed to eat *exclusively* grown or hunted foods. While still consumed on occasion, food from the *monte* (woods, Sp.), as we have seen in previous chapter, is more and more viewed as not civilized. Gradually replacing these foods as items of status among young Kichwa are pre-packaged goods like chips, sodas, candy, and chicken.

### What foods do they eat?

	<b>Latina actresses</b>	<b>Indigenous women</b>	<b>White women</b>	<b>Ecuadorian socialites</b>
<b>Old</b>	<i>Comida del pueblo</i> , Canned goods, Mostly vegetables, Food in a restaurant, Prepared foods	Fish, Every type of animal, <i>Monte</i> fruit, Meat, Chicha, Chicken, Monte meat	<i>Comida del pueblo</i> , Meat, Vegetables, Store-bought	<i>Comida del pueblo</i> , Chicken soup, Store-bought food
<b>Young</b>	Juice, Fruit, Not rice, Vegetables, Vegetarian food, Healthy foods, Normal food, City food, <i>Seco de pollo</i> (stewed chicken with rice), Light food, <i>Agua de algo</i> (teas, soups), Chicken, Fried meat, Low-fat food, Salads, Well-prepared food like shrimp, Shrimp, Vegetables	Cultivated products, Manioc, Plantains, Fish, Vegetables, Food from the <i>campo</i> and <i>monte</i> , Meat, <i>Monte</i> meat, <i>Wanta</i> , <i>Watusa</i> , Deer, Wild fruit, Turtles, Chicha, <i>Chonta kurus</i> (grubs), Whatever they grow	Juice, Fruit, No rice, No fat, Vegetables, Everything...but not in excess, Good food, Minerals, Legumes, Salad, Shrimp, Food to maintain their figures, Fish, Chicken, Chops, They don’t eat, Whatever they want, Restaurant food, Mixed rice	Rice, Chicken, Groceries, Vegetables, Fast food, Canned food, Fruit, Good food, Low-fat convenience foods, Avocado with rice, Scrambled eggs, Tortillas, Fruit, Low-fat foods, A little bit, Drink lots of water, Well-prepared foods, Coastal dishes, Ceviche

**Table 9: Foods Associated with Particular Bodies/Body Images**

Kichwa do not mince words about food or bodies. Body size and portion size were common topics of conversation around the lunch table. If someone gained a few pounds or lost a few pounds, it was discussed. For instance, one day during a *minka* to

spruce up the local kindergarten, 25-year-old Imelda was circulating *chicha*. Two young men began making fun of her by calling her fat. She replied defensively, “I only drink [*chicha*], wash, and work, and nothing happens [I don’t get any skinnier].” They retorted, “No, you drink and you sleep; that’s all. You don’t know how to work.”

Eating in a socially acceptable way is an art. The diner must eat just enough to be obviously satiated. Overdoing or underdoing opens them to criticism. Standard practice for any household is to serve guests, particularly at parties, more than they can eat so that they cannot finish or must take food home. Plates tend to be composed of mostly starch (mounds of rice, several pieces of manioc and plantains) and some meat, sauce, and a salad of some sort. Young women were referred to as *pájaros* (birds, Sp.) if they did not eat enough. Those who cleaned their plates on every occasion got reputations—one fellow’s epithet was “The Tank.” Nicknames like “The Fat One” or “The Skinny One” were not uncommon.

### *Fat Talk*

Examples of “fat talk,” which is increasingly common, are a reflection of young women’s engaging with their “looking glass selves.” Fifteen-year-old Moreina notices the highly self-critical nature of adolescents nowadays:

Some say, “We’re fat.” They are very critical of themselves. *They do not value themselves.* They are more critical of themselves because they do not like how they look. They don’t have the ease of presenting themselves in a certain way. They don’t like to be fat. Each year young people are concerned with how they compare with others, and they think they are the only game in town. [emphasis added]

Twenty-year-old Feliz has had much more experience than she would have liked with body image dissatisfaction surfacing in people close to her:

My niece from Tena, she is Kichwa. She noticed her sister was skinnier, and her sister trained, exercised. Her sister had a better body, and my niece felt badly. So my niece started training with her sister. But it didn’t do any good because she had always been a little heavy since she was young. And so she stopped eating and started a diet. Then she got sick. And instead of losing weight, she got gastritis. If she eats something and feels heavy, then she tries to vomit. She is always in front of the mirror saying she is fat. Another girl [from the boarding school] used to eat and throw up. She did not graduate. She married a guy from Spain, who later left her and went back to his country. Girls at the boarding school, in general, wanted to dress well and to look good—to put on small, tight clothes. Another tall, skinny young lady arrived [to the boarding school]. She, however, said she felt fat. She said she shouldn’t eat a lot. She was only worried about her body. She would ask other girls, “You eat that? That’s why you are fat.” Afterwards she got sick and had to leave when she was a junior. People at the boarding school lived by the “*I have to look better than all the rest*” mentality. It was hard for girls to live with other girls. They want to be skinny because of others, especially the boys. [emphasis added]

Not only do young women compare themselves to one another, but—as Feliz points out—they worry about what young men might think. Twenty-two-year-old Fiel comments, “Young men like women without *guatas* (tummies, Sp.). If we are too heavy, they are not going to want us.” Twenty-year-old Maximiliana remarks,

Men love skinny women because skinny women have *cuerpos bonitos* (pretty bodies, Sp.), figures. Sometimes skinny women walk around like models modeling. So, men become more interested in them than in fat women. Because they see fat women as having *mucho cuerpo* (a lot of body, Sp.). They’re uninterested in that. Men are almost entirely uninterested in heavy women because they see skinny women as having prettier bodies.

Feliz would agree:

[Young women in the community] are always ready to look good, to dress well, to be fixed up, to not be too fat. This is because they want to be the center of attraction for men: “I have to look good so that boys look at me.” Men are critical of heavier women. They would not want a fat woman. Girls don’t want to be fat so they won’t be criticized.

Kichwa women may be constructing their body images based on *perceived* ideas of what their significant others want—young men may want girlfriends with slim figures, like those of the characters on *telenovelas*—or based directly on ideals of masculine desires portrayed in the media. While they evaluate themselves based on a comparison with an ideal they presume that men hold, these reflected appraisals may not mirror men’s actual preferences. Twenty-year-old Robertson fantasizes about his ideal woman:

[I want a girl who] has a job and is educated. I don’t want a drop-dead gorgeous woman or a super sexy woman. I don’t want her to cut her hair or to put on make-up. I just want a girl who loves me—that we love each other very much—because I am not going to force someone to love me.

Yet, as we have seen with 15-year-old Victor who pokes fun at young women with what he calls “manly” traits, male preference may be changing as they are exposed to globalized feminine beauty ideals and globalized ideals of masculine desire both on television and in the cities. I was told by several young female students at the boarding school that heavier female students were often the butt of their male peers’ jokes.

These dangerous behaviors do not go unnoticed among the older generation of women, like 41-year-old *mestiza* Doña Flor: “I have heard some girls say, ‘I don’t want to eat because I am fat.’ They see other skinny girls, and they want to be the same, so they begin to *cuidarse* (watch themselves, e.g., their weight, what they eat, Sp.)” Food avoidance is a point of contention between 52-year-old Micaela and her daughter Moreina:

Young people are dedicating themselves to appearances. They put on make-up,

they dress well, and they brush their hair. ... They don't want to be too fat. For them, fat is ugly. My daughter will say, "Fat is ugly. I don't want to eat rice. I will get fat. I won't eat then."

Yet older women are not immune to issues of body image related to the thin ideal. Negative body esteem as related to declining productivity is already an issue, but fat talk happens just the same. I overheard the following conversation between 35-year-old Tímida and a second grade teacher, a *mestiza* in her fifties:

Teacher: I am on a diet, and I'm already losing weight. Look, my pants don't fit me.

In her honesty, Tímida responded: No. You're still pretty fat. Your pants don't fit you because [they've stretched out because] you've worn them all day.

As we saw from Yolanda's remarks above, mothers and daughters do engage in fat talk together. She and her mother discussed 44-year-old Roberta's bodily insecurities associated with her *guata*. It should be noted, however, that when asked if they knew what a diet is, many older women replied something to the effect of, "Yes. It's what a woman does when avoiding certain foods post-partum." They were referring to making sure that, after a woman has a baby, her diet did not include foods like hot peppers that could make her or her baby fall ill.

A factor contributing to declining body image also seems to be the pressure to buy things—or to look like one is able to buy things. This is apparent in the comments throughout this study in which dressing well or having nice clothes are cited as an integral part of looking good. Research has long shown that pressures associated with clothing tend to lower body esteem because bodies are made to fit the clothing rather than clothing to fit the body. Conforming to notions of *buena presencia* and potential discrimination because of lack of conformance were addressed in the last chapter.

Twenty-two-year-old Fiel, a boarding school graduate, thinks that television negatively impacts young Kichwa women's body image in a less expected way. Its impact does not necessarily emanate from overly thin or made-up characters, but rather *por ver* (the physical act of watching, Sp.). As people watch television on a regular basis, they become more sedentary, and their bodies change.

Also frequent was insistence that a young woman was not herself affected by the media, but that other people in the community were. Feliz, Moreina, Yolanda, María, and Sirena among others emphatically denied their caring about what they see on television or that it would have an effect on their body image, but then went on about how other young women in the community were susceptible. Milkie (1999) classifies this as a "third party effect," which—to reiterate—could signal that these young women are still affected by what they think *others* think of media imagery. Still others, like Nicola, Libertad, and Dolores, claimed that they were unaffected because they already had skinny bodies so they had nothing to worry about; if they were heavy, they said, then maybe they would start to worry.

These concerns are not all consuming. Kichwa women are able to be critical of what they see in the media. Fifty-two-year-old Micaela snipes, "[Actresses] are very

skinny, and they look ugly; they look like they are going to die. When a girl has a normal body, then she looks good.” Twenty-five-year-old Sirena says it best:

I think that, in my opinion, it’s not good to concern yourself so much with being well dressed—should I wear this? Should I buy that? For me, it’s not advisable. If I think about buying Yanbal, if I invest in these bad things, couldn’t I be using this money for something better? What if I were sick and needed to pay for treatment? Or needed to feed myself? Or needed to buy a house?

In sum, images on television have a complicated relationship with declining body esteem in Sacha Loma. Young women sometimes frame their body image concerns in those terms—that they want to be like those they see on television—but there is much more to the story. The same women on television that they watch increasingly regularly are haloed with other elements of success such that, as Anne Becker and others have argued, young women associate material success with bodily “success.” Successful bodies are those that conform to the rules of *buena presencia*. Aspirations for futures and for bodies become linked. As these body and beauty ideals begin to gain traction, young women begin to compare themselves with each other and with standards that they think that others—men, women, foreigners—may hold when it comes to appearances.

Similar preoccupations have been found elsewhere in Ecuador. Erynn Masi de Casanova (2004) investigated the beauty ideals of urban non-indigenous adolescent girls in Ecuador. She found that young women were able to be critical (media) consumers—while their beauty ideals were clearly consistent with the Caucasian ideal type of beauty, notably whiteness and thinness, these same ideals were “more flexible when applied to real-life rather than media women; style and personality may count as much as looks” (Masi de Casanova 2004:299). Ann Miles, however, emphasizes the sizable rift between the expanded “patently unattainable” (2000:2) life outcomes advertised on television and in state-sponsored schooling and the life outcomes actually open to adolescent female children of poor rural-to-urban migrants in Cuenca, Ecuador. In contrast to Masi de Casanova’s (2004) findings in which young women gave each other slack in real-life—the *no hay mujer fea sino mal arreglada* mentality (there are no ugly women, just women who need fixing up, Sp; my translation)—the adolescent girls in Miles’ study held a much harsher opinion of themselves in comparison with the ideals on television. Preaching in schools regarding promises for equal opportunity—especially rhetoric of valued multi-cultural heritage—fizzled when doused in societal discrimination based on their peasant heritage and household subordination based on their status as female (Miles 2000:4-5). Because young women, having made the shift from rural communities to the cities, were unable to find friends their own age, most leisure time was spent at home in front of the television. Miles writes, “The glamorous lives of the European-looking protagonists threw their own situations into high relief: ...there was a distinct lack of critical commentary about television programming and even some of the most racy and outrageous programs were universally described to me simply as *bonita* (nice, pretty)” (2000:14). *Mujeres arregladas*, more than likely, are *mujeres civilizadas*. Almeida (2003:7) finds in Brazil a similar dissatisfaction related, at least in part, to television.

### ***Conspicuous (Non-)Consumption***

In addition to (not) consuming food, there is rampant consumption of another sort in Sacha Loma: consumption of stuff. While people lament not making enough money, this is partly because they want to buy more things. If a family has a few extra dollars one month, parents might splurge on a digital camera or a netbook computer. Men bet large sums of money on volleyball games, which is also a marker of status. Alcohol, chicken, and clothing are other items worthy of investment. Nearly all of those interviewed report having a television in their home. On innumerable occasions, I was approached to borrow money for medical expenses, food, school field trips, and travel. Mothers and grandmothers were frustrated that they could not make ends meet, and this was at least partly because they were bankrolling the education of their children. Their children were having difficulty converting their degrees into jobs.

Community residents aspire through ownership of the television itself. Having a television and the means to use it are markers of status in the community. Now that nearly all households have a television and DVD player, cable beamed in through satellite, like Nicola has, is desired. Pace and Hinote report,

...[T]he TV set...is already a symbolic object *qua* item of household furnishing, a choice (of design, style, etc.) which expresses something about its owner's...tastes, and communicates that choice, as displayed by its position in the household. [2013:309; see also Liechty 1995:174]

Moreover, owning a television makes one part of a global community of television owners and television viewers (see Pace and Hinote 2013:119). Having and watching television are things that foreigners do.

Other examples of conspicuous consumption (Veblen 2005[1899]) would be the use of English vocabulary inserted into everyday discourse like Nicola's use of "baby shower." Common English words used on a daily basis were: baby, sexy, brother, Lodge (referring to the eco-hotel), cake, how are you, bye bye, hello, email, click, Yahoo, Hotmail, and Google. As Pace and Hinote point out, use of such terms link the speaker to a "discourse community" (2013:113). A most obvious display of attempts to belong to "an imagined community of consumption" (Pace and Hinote 2013:119) was the large brand emblem of the telecommunications company Movistar that Modesto and Chuy's family carved into their hedge in the spot on their property where they claimed the signal came through clearest. Proud of their handiwork, the family looked forward to landscaping a nearby spot with the symbol for Movistar's biggest competitor, Claro. Lastly, young Kichwa walk about with earbuds dangling on their shoulders, netbooks under their arms, and cell phones in their back pockets, flaunted for all to see. Thus, while technology may be utilized as an apparatus of future aspirations, the medium also plays a role in more immediate constructions of social positioning and identity through how Kichwa elect to situate the technology itself—in their yard, in their everyday conversations, hanging off their bodies or stuck in their ears.



**Image 4: The Movistar hedge on Modesto and Chuy's relatives' farm about 40 minutes from Tena**

Opposed to conspicuous consumption is, as discussed, conspicuous non-consumption. At the same time that young Kichwa women are consumers—buying clothing, shoes, make-up and so on—they are also literally non-consumers— buying into notions of dieting and sometimes avoiding food. A focus on thinness and dieting contrasts sharply with “traditional” attitudes toward food among the Kichwa who see food as “the basis of life and constantly engage in activities that surround the production, consumption, and circulation of food” (Uzendoski 2005b:120). That is to say, intended or not, non-consumption tends to be conspicuous. Young Kichwa women are increasingly basing their self-appraisals on what they think others think they are or are not eating. This applies to foods assumed to be fattening like rice and foods assumed to be indexically indigenous foods like hunted meat.

### **The Future of Bodies**

The mirrors consulted by in-production Kichwa teens are many; and some are only facsimiles of perceptions of mirrors. I do not want to suggest that the future of bodies in Sacha Loma is grim. While body preferences now include a dimension—thin, *cueros bonitos*—unknown to mothers and grandmothers in recent history, it is not a full-time obsession as it might be considered in the West. Women here do talk about the beauty of the famous and the fortunate. My observations in the community suggest that most young women do not let these new ideals affect their behaviors to a dangerous extent. For the most part, teens dress in jeans, paint their nails, highlight their hair, wear make-up, and talk about beauty trends—fashion is, among other things, a new context for sociality. This is a fortunate finding.

To close this chapter, I look at the ways in which regional media production may counteract some of the challenges posed by the consumption of foreign media ideals. However, this media form presents its own challenges to indigenous identity and culture.

***“The Rhythm of Our Culture”: Regional Music Videos and Constructions of Indigenous Identity***

[Actors, actresses, singers] they dress well. Not like *de la cultura* (that of our culture, Sp.). There are some that sing well, but there are others who don't capture well the rhythm of our culture.

--20-year-old Maximiliana

As I interviewed 17-year-old Dolores, a music video by Ecuadorian musician Bayron Caicedo blared in the background. A friend of hers had come to pass some time away from school and plopped down in front of the television, laughing hysterically at what appeared to be savage Waorani tormenting oilmen as the singer crooned about what a treasure the Amazon is. “It's Bayron Caicedo,” Dolores pointed out to me. Bayron Caicedo rung a bell. In May, 52-year-old Micaela approached me with a huge smile: “Bayron Caicedo is coming,” she exclaimed. “I am going to dance all night and not go to sleep!” In fact, the entire community uprooted for the evening to travel to nearby the parochial head, Chontapunta, for the Caicedo concert. Most slept underneath cement bleachers, their backs sore in the morning and their heads hung-over from too much dance. For them, seeing the star so close to home was unforgettable. Caicedo appears to be one of those artists who is, as Maximiliana says, *de la cultura* and captures the rhythm of regional life, unlike *telenovelas* that do not move to the beat of Kichwa culture.

The consumption of music videos is equally if not more prevalent than cable television. While bootlegged copies of mainstream artists like James Blunt, Britney Spears, and Katy Perry are purchased, local Kichwa soundtracks and homegrown Ecuadorian artists are also common choices. Many music video DVDs are of the local Kichwa variety, with Kichwa artists singing Kichwa songs with a backdrop of “local scenery such as parks, plazas, and lookout-points” (Floyd 2008:38). While Floyd is specifically describing the highland Ecuador pirate media economy, the same goes for lowland music video production and consumption. These expressions of indigenous identity in the videos are important because, unlike *telenovelas*, which frequently portray rural people as backward and ignorant and elevate the “Spanish-speaking white urban context, Quichua media provides a reinforcement of local ways of life” (Floyd 2008:37). As Floyd aptly puts it, “Instead of watching media that stems from precepts of racial and cultural inferiority of indigenous people, viewers have access to culturally affirming media that casts indigenous people in a positive and prominent role” (2008:38).

In Sacha Loma, and likely throughout much of the Oriente, few match the popularity of native Ecuadorian artist Bayron Caicedo, who can be heard blasting on speakers throughout the day in Sacha Loma and on near-infinite repeat during community celebrations. Touted by the city of Puyo, Ecuador ([www.guiapuyo.com](http://www.guiapuyo.com)) as “the singer and composer most prolific in all of Pastaza Province and the Ecuadorian Amazon,” Caicedo is not himself indigenous, but his music taps into values of friendship, family, and patriotism that many in Sacha Loma esteem highly. With songs like “Mi Bella Amazonia” (“My Beautiful Amazon”) and “Por mi Ecuador Saco la Cara” (“I'll Stick Up



For My Ecuador”), he appeals to a burgeoning base of fans across the country. The music video of the song “Mi Bella Amazonia” is a classic representation of his brand of artistry, which is characterized by calls for appreciation of all the diversity—of people, culture, geography—that Ecuador has to offer.

The music video of “Mi Bella Amazonia” commences with Caicedo rushing to catch a small private puddle jumper plane to visit what appears to be Waorani territory or what he calls “the only pure lands.... They have the lungs of Ecuadorians and the world.” He lands on a makeshift rain forest airstrip and is greeted by nearly naked warrior Waorani. The fact that he is being followed by video cameras is clear. He begins singing on a riverside beach. Scenes jump back and forth between him singing, playing a fiddle, and socializing with Waorani bedecked in feathers, spears, and body paint. He lauds “the rhythms of the Oriente” (eastern Ecuador). Naked women painted like butterflies and other rain forest fauna fan him as he dozes on the beach and extols the region’s beauty. Scenes continue to shift between stock images associated with the Amazon, like parrots, and the Waorani doing “traditional” performances of dance, including men in nothing but penis strings, as well as hunting displays. All of a sudden, oil contractors, identified by their hard hats, vests, and large maps, enter the picture with plans to begin mapping for extraction. The scene relocates to a vast swath of forest that has been clear-cut for oil extraction, at which point the singer entreats those involved to “not damage his flower.” Returning to images of Waorani men with raised spears in hot pursuit of a hunted target, Caicedo calls for the Waorani to “stick it to them hard.” The Waorani trackers hide in the trees, while fearful oil contractors scatter and make haste for their canoe. Unable to shake the Waorani hunters, the unfortunate oilmen are surrounded and captured. The group is brought to the communal house in the Waorani village where they are duly punished with lashings. Several beautiful Waorani women approach the bound captives, yank the maps and charts from one man’s pocket (he bears a striking resemblance to Caicedo), and shake their heads and wag their fingers in contempt. The contractors nod in assent and know their plans to drill have been defueled by the savvy natives who Caicedo paints as guardians of the forest. They are released and speedily sprint back from where they came. The rain forest is safe for another day.

The language of Caicedo’s video praises all the diversity the Amazon has to offer, including its indigenous peoples. Simeon Floyd (2008:34) notes the contrast between the light-skinned European-looking protagonists popular on Ecuadorian television stations and the indigenous Kichwa protagonists prominent in the DVDs produced by the pirate media economy. Kichwa video production foregrounding Kichwa culture and language has piggybacked on the illicit market for reproductions of big name films (Floyd 2008:36). Unlike scenes in *telenovelas*, regional music videos contain images—of people, places, dance moves, and so on—directly identifiable by and relatable to Kichwa viewers. Perhaps more importantly, they are made by Kichwa, for Kichwa, in Kichwa. While this is not exactly the case for Caicedo, the singer, known as “El Duro del Ecuador” (The Toughness of Ecuador), gets a pass for his apparent appreciation of his country and all of its contents as well as his zippy tunes.

Earlier in this chapter, I discussed Kichwa women’s comments on a set of postcard images of indigenous people around Ecuador. At the same time that these postcard images were described as “savage” and “dangerous,” many young Kichwa women pointed out that the people on the cards were “attractive to outsiders,” “showing

off culture and tradition,” “happy,” “as God made him,” “enjoying his culture,” “natural,” “innocent,” “not perfectly painted, but happy anyway,” and “don’t want to lose their culture, which is why they dress and act as they do.” Kichwa value their ethnicity as unchangeable, part of their blood. And they are proud of their Kichwa heritage. There is appreciation when others do the same.

Social comparison and attendant reflected appraisals are evident in the way that Kichwa who spend time in the city see themselves as dirty *indios* based on what they assume (probably rightly) that city dwellers think of their appearance. This third-party effect of deprecation works in the same way that third party “positive” self-essentializing constructions of indigeneity work—Kichwa construct their identity based on a notion of what images they think foreigners might approve of, what images they think could help them achieve their political aims, or what images they believe do the important work of preserving and foregrounding their indigenous heritage.

As representations of the vibrancy and vitality of indigenous culture, music videos (and just plain Kichwa music), which play whenever possible during the day and until the electricity gets cut off at night, are literally the soundtrack to Kichwa lives in Sacha Loma. These music videos’ positive constructions of indigeneity—even when overtly essentializing such as Caicedo’s depiction of Waorani warriors—play a huge part in generating more productively optimistic representations of indigenous language and culture.

### **Conclusion: Media(E)scapes and Transformations**

This chapter has examined television as an apparatus of aspirations for Kichwa in Sacha Loma. For young women, television is a medium through which their aspirations for the future are crystallized, in the sense of being produced but also in the sense of being sugarcoated. Through watching their favorite *telenovelas*, women develop their notions of the possible—good jobs, good lovers, and good bodies, which they see as interlinked. While television programming is a source of mediascapes in Appadurai’s (1990, 1996) sense—connecting tele-viewers with common media-induced aspirations across borders—the watching of television is a way to media(e)scape, that is, a chance to focus on things other than the everyday nitty-gritty that is often less than pleasurable. That is why, for Nicola and her viewing crew, the hours between four and six in the afternoon are theirs. It is not just what gets imagined that is important, but the fact that the process of media consumption is a safe space to imagine and to produce new (tele)visions of the future. As Tufte notes, “Telenovelas become popular because they always reach a happy ending in which personal dramas are cleared up—often thereby articulating a desire, a dream of similar happy endings in real life—a desire or dream that...help many women in their own lives” (2000:211, 229). While most studies of body image and the media implicitly treat media messages as a straightforwardly causal factor, this chapter has shown that, as an apparatus of aspirations, these Kichwa actively engage with television as a resource for meaning-making. This reflects a dynamic play between acceptance of preferred images and ideals (i.e., media power) advertised in the electrified mirror and perpetuated in the social mirror, and actively weaving (mediating) these new images and ideals into everyday knowledge, discourse, and, as these women themselves admit, sometimes practice.

The elder generation has not accepted tele-viewing as readily as other recent additions to their children's involvements. Muratorio links their rejection of television to the primacy Kichwa place on the spoken word:

[On television] one sees foolish *ahuallactas* and *rancias* (highlanders and foreigners) who speak idly, just for the sake of speaking, without waiting for a reply.... [T]elevision images turn us into *upa* [fools, idiots, Kichwa]. If dreams "make us think," as Rucuyaya [grandfather, Kichwa] Alonso says..., television implies intellectual passivity. [Muratorio 1991:208]

This is not the case for music videos. Even the staunchest opponents of the television in the community enjoy music, especially Kichwa-language music and music videos. Thirty-five-year-old Piedra explains, "I would like that they [my children] only watch music videos—singing over there—and *infantiles* (children's movies. Sp.). Those things, music videos and *infantiles*, I myself have purchased for them." For many older women, television programming like *telenovelas* is not really a media(e)scape; rather, sometimes they would like to escape from the media.

To some extent, body image among the older generation of Kichwa women "goes without saying," in Bourdieu's sense (2003[1977]). Bodies are meant to be strong, hard-working, and productive, and this knowledge gets passed onto daughters and granddaughters and (re)produced on a daily basis. Appadurai argues, however, that in a world in constant "cultural flux," "traditional" markers of identity become "slippery"—culture, he says, shifts from "a habitus" to an "arena for conscious choice, justification, and representation" (1996:44). Those body and beauty ideals advertised on television may very well become, for the younger generation of Kichwa women, an "arena of conscious choice, justification, and representation." These choices, moreover, are rooted in ideas of which kinds of bodies tend to be most successful in obtaining increasingly desired life outcomes. However, there are limits to young Kichwa women's ability to choose, because levels of awareness vary and structural constraints are a reality.

### ***Hard Bodies, Hard Realities***

Young women like Nicola sometimes are left asking, "Why can't I?" Even the nail polish and elaborate designs that Nicola showcases is disappointingly cheap and chips when she is engaged in routine productive work around the house, a tangible reminder of aspirations at her fingertips but ultimately just out of her grip. Why—given that what is shown on TV is often largely outside the realm of possibility for Sacha Lomans—do people continue to watch? Sacha Lomans were abundantly aware that they did not have a lot when compared to white tourists and light-skinned television stars.

Noting the lack of sentiments of social injustice among the impoverished tele-viewing Gurupáenses with whom they worked, Pace and Hinote (2013:153) cite Abu-Lughod's (2002b) work in Egypt looking at rural women's lived experience of difference in comparison with the wealthy women on Egyptian serial dramas. Abu-Lughod (2002b:387), explain the authors, suggests that television creates a world unto itself that is only a part of the daily existence of rural Egyptian women—it is not a "fantasy escape; it is a separate sphere of existence" (Pace and Hinote 2013:153). They compare her work with their own in Gurupá, noting that, "the gap between the world of the telenovela...and

that of Gurupá is so vast that a logical connection between the two may be impractical” (Pace and Hinote 2013:153). What is shown on television is understood to come from “a different time and place—foreign to their life but maybe possible to have in their future” (Pace and Hinote 2013:153). Abu-Lughod observes,

...[I]t was understood that these stars live in a world of their own, outside the bounds of people’s face-to-face moral communities. The affection viewers directed toward them came from their familiarity and the magic they wove into the serials as well as the spectacles they created to entertain people and enrich their ordinary lives. [Abu-Lughod 2005:241]

In Sacha Loma, televised media as an apparatus of aspirations informs what Kichwa believe their future selves might have in store. Kichwa-language media and domestic productions like Caicedo’s music videos represent, in spite of their stereotyped distillation of indigeneity, positive indigenous images. Whereas indigenous music videos provide something immediately familiar, the foreignness of television is fodder for futurity. While Kichwa recognize that chances for total transformation in line with their burgeoning aspirations may be difficult and require resources that they do not have, it was rare for me to hear anyone say that their dreams to be nurses, tour guides, high school graduates, and so on were impossible. Young Kichwa attempt to literally “buy into” these aspirations through consuming the latest fashions and being fluent in the language of television and technology. They attempt to purchase the appearance of more purchasing power—by proudly displaying their store-bought wares—along with doing what they can by getting an education—for which flashy white computers, like Nicola’s are necessary. All of this is to make change in a world that is hesitant to admit them as change-makers.

To be sure, the evolving, consumerist, bodily logics of young Kichwa women have not been as easy to digest for older women as has a focus on education or on carefree youth. Muratorio provides a pointed analysis of why that may be for her own consultants, an analysis that speaks clearly to the thoughts and feelings of elder women in Sacha Loma:

The strongest reason that I can give for the older women’s own anxieties is their belief that the fracturing of vital interpersonal kin ties does not allow those fragile young selves to be supported and nurtured back to “health” by the knowledge, closeness, and affection provided by older kin. Lonely, insecure selves are vulnerable: like mirrors, they break. [Muratorio 1998:417]

Yet, mothers and grandmothers support young women’s corporeal imaginings if it means accessing the world of higher education and professionalization; they work hard to maintain those “vital interpersonal kin ties” that allow young women to flourish.

More and more, young women in Sacha Loma desire the thin and white bodies they see in the media, which they often stereotype as “successful.” Despite the potential for individuality in new projects of self-development inspired and in some ways produced by television and televised bodies, these still entail endeavors cultivated with social support and exchange in line with more long-standing patterns of Kichwa production and

sociality. As I have shown, successful bodies may be productive of capital directly re-invested in one's family and community. Perhaps somewhere hidden in the "looking glass self" is an additional pane of reflection in which young Kichwa women see, staring back, not only what others might think of them but also what they, with their young, potential-laden bodies, must achieve for others. Overcoming deep-seated structural constraints, Kichwa must pioneer the future they envision. While not invulnerable to outside pressures, Kichwa youth's capacity to fashion modern, socially productive identities suggest that even mirror images may be negotiable.

## CHAPTER 7: MODERN DREAMS AND MODERN REALITIES

Ambiguity was an aspect of almost all Runa dreams they described. Uncertainty surrounded hunting and shamanic curing; they could not be sure of the cause or outcome of interaction because numerous, often conflicting, possibilities existed. But there was always an effort to organize these feelings of uncertainty.

--Macdonald 1999:144

### **Elder Enlightenment: An Interview with Valerie**

I would like to close this dissertation with an interview excerpt that puts Kichwa adolescents' expanding aspirational horizons into intergenerational context. Sixty-four-year-old Valerie is the oldest of elder women in Sacha Loma. Valerie's words, especially her occasional condemnation of "kids these days," have colored this dissertation. She lives atop the hill with her son, daughter-in-law, and three grandchildren as well as her feeble, hearing-impaired husband and cognitively-impaired sister. Securing an interview with Valerie was difficult—on our scheduled dates, there was always a pile of bat guano that needed urgent sweeping, or she had mysteriously "gone to the farm." She did not have much confidence in her Spanish, and she, like most elder women in Sacha Loma, did not think that anything she had to say could be of much use to me.

Fortunately, one afternoon in March she had forgotten that she promised me an interview. We sat down on a wobbly, wooden bench in her kitchen. The interview segment presented below suggests many of the complexities with which this dissertation has grappled. The interview appears as it progressed, punctuated by my explanatory analyses.

#### ***Transitions to Adulthood, Past and Present***

Jamie (J): Did you graduate from high school?

Valerie (V): No. Only grade school, *primaria*, like it was in the old days.

...

J: Can you tell me a little bit about how it was in the old days?

V: When we were tender little things, my mom would watch us; my dad would watch us. After about five or six years, we ourselves could begin to do a few things, make a little bit of food, work, straighten the kitchen. This is how it was.... My mom would take us to work—to the *chakra* to plant manioc, plantains. My mom taught me how to make *chicha*.... At 12 years old we already knew how to work on the farm. I went with my mother, with my father, to the farm. There we tended the *chakra*. My father had cattle. Coffee and

cacao, he had those, too. We—equally with my father, with my mother—went out to work. There, amongst brothers and sisters, we grew up.

J: When did you get married?

V: When I was 17.... There was a *pedida*. There was a conversation between the elders. With my father. With my mother. With my grandmother. [My husband and] I didn't have a say.... We had never met each other.... He and I hid in a corner.... When Anselmo [my son] was about six, we came [to what is now Sacha Loma].... Here we made the school.... We went to a parish official in Tena to ask for funds to make classrooms and to buy materials for the *wawas*....

J: So you all established Sacha Loma for the purpose of education?

V: Yes. For this reason we came here.... For a long time now, *wawas* are no longer used to going to the farm. *Wawas* no longer want to go to work. Now, because of school, elders no longer want to take their kids to work.... School is more important now [than it was in the old days]. Because nowadays there is so much education for kids. Nowadays we even have a high school nearby [and not solely in Tena]....

J: Why is the farm important for you?

V: For *plata* (money, literally silver, Sp.). If we don't work, where are we going to get money? ... We need food. We need clothes. Our *wawas* need money for their education. Our *wawas* need money.

...

J: Do you think your kids know as much about the farm as you do?

V: No. They want to work *afuera* (outside, Sp.). They say that farming is a lot of work. That farming doesn't produce much income. They want to work in the *pueblo* (city, Sp.)....

J: Do you support their decisions to work *afuera*?

V: In my opinion, no. If they meet a woman [her only living children are sons], where are they going to live? None of them has a farm. What are they going to do? Getting together with a woman requires a farm. Women need to work. And then, when they have kids, what are we going to be able to do to help them? [They'll ask their father,] "What work is there on the farm? We don't have anything, dad." And they insist on working *afuera*. But a woman needs to work [on the farm]. And *wawas* need to harvest cacao, coffee.... My grandkids are liable to tell me, "We need two pounds, three pounds of cacao [to sell], grandmother, [to buy things]." They say this to this day. This is why [my

husband and I] have to continue to work on the farm.... When they all leave [afuera], who is going to take care of me? ... This is why I don't want them to go afuera. They need to stay here and help me on the farm.... They need to stay here. If you want to study, study here. If you want to work, work here. "There is work by my side," I say.... I guess we are going to see. They [my grandkids] have yet to finish high school. But what am I going to say? I say, "Go on and study, then! Study for yourself! It is not for us, it is for you!"

\*\*\*\*\*

The changes that Valerie has seen over her life are the changes that mark the terrain in which adolescence is now cultivated for Sacha Loma teens. She grew up, like the other elder women in the community, on a bustling farm, with many siblings, and with parents who did not have expectations for her beyond what they themselves had accomplished: securing and working farmland. Education was not a huge priority, though her parents did send her to primary school, which for that time probably required a considerable commitment on the part of her family. They nurtured in her a great respect for hard work, the traditional model of productivity—producing crops, food, and children—that Valerie still lives out to this day when she makes her way weekly to plant, clean, and harvest products from her own farm that she inherited from her parents.

### ***The Bodily Logics of Production***

J: What is your biggest dream?

V: My dream? Oh, when one works really hard, one has *many* dreams. When one's body hurts just a little bit, then it is common for us to fall asleep right away. At right about seven o'clock at night, we are already in bed, and we fall asleep. Then we wake up in the middle of the night. At about three o'clock in the morning, we are again up and going off to work. In the old days, we'd get up in the middle of the night to work on our *shikras* (woven netted bags, Kichwa)...and baskets. He [my husband] would make baskets, and I would make *shikras*. Anything was possible in the middle of the night, after waking up at three o'clock in the morning and drinking *wayusa*.

J: Do you feel like your body is declining a bit?

V: My body hurts a little bit, especially after I work a little hard. My hands hurt....

J: What about in the past?

V: Healthy. *Very* happy.

J: How do you feel now that your body is in pain?



V: [My husband and I] can't work hard. We can't lift heavy things. Heavy things we cannot do. My husband is even worse. He can't even carry a little piece of manioc. He can only work a little tiny bit.... In the old days, I worked *chakras* of manioc and plantains. Wood with an axe. That's how I was. Now I can't work with an axe to chop wood. Only small bits of kindling with a machete, looking for them, carrying them, in a little basket.

J: How do you feel now that it's more difficult to work?

V: Sad! My husband, too! [My husband is here with me] because if I leave him on the farm, who is going to take care of him? There is no food.... There is no drink. There is only *chicha*, if I leave him with it. That's what I am working on right now, making him a small bucket of *chicha* [to leave with him on the farm].

...

J: What are the biggest changes you have seen in your lifetime?

V: In the old days, I think it was pretty much the same as it is now.

J: You don't think things are different, like technology?

V: Well, cars did come from Quito. My father used to walk to Quito on foot.... He would bring clothes from Quito.... Salt and matches.

J: What did you wear when you were a kid?

V: I was naked.... Our houses didn't have wooden floors. It was only on the dirt. We would crawl around like little armadillos.... Now, these *wawitos* are growing up these days, and all of them are changing. That's why now I tell young kids like my grandchildren that now they dress a little too well; instead of clothes, we need better food. And what's more, they don't want to study. "You guys only waste away the day playing," I often tell them. When I was little, I crawled around.... If my mom wasn't looking, we'd eat shit off the ground. But nowadays, we coddle them. We work, and they walk about as they please.... Nowadays, they grow up real nice.... They have too many clothes nowadays. It wasn't like this long ago. Nice and neat they walk about. Calmly, carefree, they walk about. Right alongside their little brothers and sisters, they don't even know how to watch them well. "Why don't you watch the *wawa*?" I ask them. Then they scream [because of the request]. Poor little thing! She runs off crying.... Before, when they didn't watch their younger siblings...right away my mom would smack us: "Why don't you watch the *wawas*," she'd yell. "You have to watch them"... I was the first daughter [the oldest]. "Why don't you hold them? Why don't you carry them?" Right away she'd smack me. Then I'd stand there holding the *wawas* until my mother finished working.... Now every chance they get, they are watching television. That's how young people spend their days. But

my kids, they don't know how to walk. They walk badly. Just like this I am used to walking while carrying things.... It's beautiful to carry [babies or produce] about. Why doesn't your body hurt? People ask me. How are you so youthful? They wonder. I don't know. I am how I am.

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Valerie's body is her livelihood. It feeds her and her family—"It's beautiful to carry [babies or produce] about," she says. She acknowledges that bodies are put to use for different ends by young Kichwa women today, though, as this dissertation has shown, "modern" bodies produce the livelihood of young women, even if in ways different from the ways of grandmothers like Valerie. Grandmothers do support these new bodily logics, though they are sometimes unsettled by them. Valerie directly opposes the bodily logics of older women like her and those of younger women, who she says walk about "calmly, carefree," "nice and neat," such that "they don't know how to walk" and "they walk badly." She, in contrast, was taught to "walk," directing her movements to support her family's productive work, just about as soon as she could physically walk. When her grandchildren's engagements are not controlled—when "they dress a little too well," she remarks, and go away too far for too long—she is wary and disappointed. As she says, "If you want to work, work here."

Valerie's grandchildren, who are well on their way to making it through formal schooling, face an entirely different set of possibilities and pressures than she did at their age. As part of a tight-knit Kichwa community, and especially as young members of this community, they are still learning. This is why Valerie and other elders like her recognize it as their duty to make them "comfortable" as they "walk about" and learn what it means to be Kichwa in a world that Valerie understands as constantly changing: "Our *wawas* need money for their education. Our *wawas* need money," she emphasizes. The idea that young people are in a special state of maturation, growth, and guided change, is neither new nor specific to Kichwa. However, this idea meshes neatly with the processual, relational nature of Kichwa personhood, which is continually (re)produced over time through interactions with others (cf. Conklin and Morgan 199:687). Kichwa persons are in a perpetual state of becoming actuated through exchanges with others. Educated youngsters are expected to continue to "exchange" the products of their education with Kichwa kin, that is, re-invest their gains in their family and community.

Sacha Loma's older generation has had a hand in encouraging this new, if sometimes troubling, mobility as well as the shifting priorities that take young people away from the farm. According to Valerie, she, along with the other elder founding families, brought education to Sacha Loma: "We went to a parish official in Tena to ask for funds...for the *wawas*.... For this reason we came here.... For a long time now, *wawas* are no longer used to going to the farm." One of her sons, moreover, is living and working near Tena; all of her grandchildren are enrolled in school with the help of the income she makes selling her farm produce. Like their children and grandchildren, elder women like Valerie face an entirely new set of pressures associated with bankrolling young people's education, a financial obligation that has ballooned markedly over the years.

***Consuming Culture: The Conflicting Demands of Long-standing Principles and Short-lived Trends***

J: And what do you think of television?

V: In my case, I don't want to watch it. When one watches television, almost immediately one's head gets nauseated. Only a little bit do I ever watch the news.

...

J: And you know [how to speak] Kichwa. What about your grandchildren?

V: Now kids don't say anything in Kichwa. When I am saying something in Kichwa, they are like "What is grandma saying? What is grandma saying?" I say to them, "Where were you born? Where were you raised?" I say, "Here you were born. Here you were raised." ... They need to study all languages: Kichwa, Spanish, English. I say, "You all need to speak in Kichwa, too. You can't throw this away. It is our language."

J: What do you think of young women nowadays?

V: On my part, my mother, my father, too, advised us: "You all shouldn't do these bad things." If one does bad, one gets hit. Punished. "You all have to be calm" [that is, not draw attention to yourself through questionable socializing], they would say. Now, in whatever little party, *wawas* walk about. In the old days, [we were advised] to not leave the house. They would say that we could get mixed up with a lover....

J: What do you think about young women using clothes and make-up?

V: It's good.

J: Is it very different than what you experienced [at their age]?

V: Yes. Everything is good now. Now that things are changing, that's how young men and women go about. Before, it was not like this. My dad and mother wouldn't permit anything like this. *Wawas* walk about freshly bathed with nice, shiny shoes. Young women are all made-up. Comfortably, they go about.

J: And that's good?

V: Well, for me, I guess I am so-so. For me, I don't have any, that is, I no longer have any daughters [they have all died]. I only have young men. I don't say anything to them. We can't say anything.

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Though how things are done and what things are considered worth doing have changed significantly since Valerie was a little girl, and this is a source of her trepidation, these are, she concludes, “good” dreams. It is worth the changes that are taking place—the changes that Valerie perceives as odd, even headache-inducing—to make them a reality. While she categorizes her present experience with her kids and grandkids as “so-so,” her actions—Valerie’s total devotion physically, emotionally, and financially to her family—speak louder than her criticisms. Her reflections on language loss, imprudent young lovers, and overt consumerism demonstrate that these changes are not incorporated seamlessly. Seams may be patent; still, sociality is potent.

### **Nemar’s Expectations: *Intercambio* and the Dissertation**

In writing this dissertation, I wanted to live up to the expectations for *intercambio* with which Nemar challenged my project, in part because I will never live them down. Perhaps Nemar has long forgotten that hot afternoon. I have not. Nemar consented to be interviewed on the condition that I do something to benefit Kichwa. At the time, that confrontation plunged me into an unrelenting depression for a couple of weeks. It was a classic moment of fieldwork crisis in the anthropological endeavor that is also a journey of self-discovery. Then, as anxiety turned to determination post-fieldwork, I dedicated this dissertation to fulfilling my half of the *intercambio* wagered that day.

This study has presented an intergenerational perspective on adolescentization in a small, indigenous community in the eastern rain forest of Ecuador. I have explored how Kichwa teens, their families, and their community have taken dreaming out of the bedroom and into the classroom. And they have exchanged midnight storytelling softly illuminated by the fireside for playful evening chatter by the light of silvery television screens.

I began by situating adolescence as an actively produced life phase in Sacha Loma in a review of youth studies in anthropology over the past decade (Chapter 2). After providing an ethnographic snapshot of the terrain in which modern Kichwa cultivate adolescence (Chapter 3), I positioned their expanding aspirations within the theoretical paradigms of Amazonian sociality and production. Through an in-depth consideration of relationships with non-kin others (*intercambio*) and how this multi-perspectival appreciation, in the end, often reaffirms the bonds of kinship (sociality), I demonstrated how education has entered the economy of “substance” exchange for Kichwa (Chapter 4).

My analyses have centered on the persistence of foundational relational logics of personhood and the body and their interrelation with new agents of influence, a relationship at the core of the bodily logics of production. Through understanding how Western values relating to “civilization,” aesthetics, aspiration, and identity have knit with these indigenous logics, and by exploring how these issues are crosscut with questions of ethnicity, race, and gender, I elaborated the intergenerational interplay surrounding what is considered productive on the farm, in the classroom, or in front of the television (Chapter 5). I showed that while Kichwa teens’ goals are socially-motivated, they use the sites of identity articulation provided by the mass media to dream in more individualistic ways, especially through their evolving body images (Chapter 6).

A variety of new mass media, ranging from television to magazines to music videos, have become what I call apparatuses of aspirations.

The guiding framework of the dissertation is my original concept of the bodily logics of production, which extends production, as a Kichwa-centered notion rooted in relationships of exchange and lived through the body, into the discourse on modernization and globalization. The bodily logics of production reflect how, for young indigenous Kichwa women, mass culture, particularly youth culture, is a dynamic mix of perduring cultural principles of their mothers and grandmothers conversing with widening aspirational horizons inspired by actresses, tourists, and policy-makers worlds away. Rural, indigenous women embody modernity through practices of consumption (clothing, tele-viewing) and non-consumption (eating disorders) that are part of the identity work at the heart of their future-oriented aspirations. “Western” influences relating to “progress,” aesthetics, and identity are forces of both change and continuity, generating new possibilities and pressures for young Ecuadorian citizens eager to stake a personal claim to the global consumer economy. Yet these influences are simultaneously powerful mechanisms for the production of proper Kichwa persons through the actions of Kichwa youth whose aspirations are often directed toward the body social. Kichwa teens are *bricoleurs* and border-crossers, participating in public life in unprecedented ways as *indigenous* global citizens.

In addition to the concept of bodily logics of production, this dissertation’s contributions are, chiefly, three-fold. My study has shown how one group of native Ecuadorians is coming to terms with the choices and challenges of modernity. I highlighted the local concept of *intercambio*, demonstrating how this is paired with long-standing values and practices of Amazonian sociality. And I have documented the increasingly prominent role of teens as the perpetrators of change for their families and community.

As outlined in the introductory chapter, modernity studies in the social sciences are grappling with how to encapsulate the alternatives that inevitably arise when traditions and modern trends intersect. Kichwa modernity revolves around competing paths to identity and the indigenization of global modernizing tendencies, which entail both continuity and discontinuity with the past, mediated by external influences like education and the mass media. Kichwa modernity is about the existence of multiple, sometimes contradictory, wells of meaning through which people make sense of their lives. As in the experiences of indigenous peoples globally, Kichwa modernity exists only as a construct of what people think, say, and do in space of “the here and the now” as this space is scaffolded onto “the there and the was” and always framed by aspirations of what will be. Everyone, West and rest, lives a version of this, whether alternative, hybrid, cosmopolitan, or otherwise. For Kichwa, these versions may coalesce in forms that appear to be common “Western” ways. And sometimes they form something uniquely Kichwa (see Kraidy 2005).

My analysis of the concept of *intercambio* has demonstrated how relationships of mutual exchange between Kichwa and non-kin outsiders may reinforce Kichwa relationships with one another. Professional and educational aspirations—in general achieved only with the help of outsiders—become aspirations for cultivating kinship commitments. Impulses to serve one’s family and community compete with and complement impulses to serve oneself. The salient concept of *intercambio* broadens

regional ethnographic theory by taking studies of relatedness out of the kin group, transforming this relatedness—as Virtanen (2012) says, “recreating” it—and then showing how this may be reinserted back into the kin group in order to strengthen it. Relatedness understood in this way is especially crucial in light of the constant affronts to sociality that new ways of being pose. Mobility takes teens from Sacha Loma to city schools or seasonal employment; television transports imaginations to unfamiliar contexts that challenge some of the principles that elders like Valerie wish to maintain; and education, with its focus on grades and working alone, redirects attention to success on an individual level. *Intercambio* is Kichwas’ model for capitalizing on relationships with outsiders in a socially productive manner.

A focus on teens is critical now more than ever for Kichwa. This point needs no further repeating save to emphasize that if Kichwa grandparents and parents are devoting all of their energies to young people, then this is a critical and revealing focus for understanding the changes taking place in this indigenous community.

### *Questions for the Future and Questionable Futures*

I titled this concluding commentary “Modern Dreams and Modern Realities” as a play on Theodore Macdonald’s (1999) introductory chapter, “Ancient Dreams and Modern Realities.” Macdonald does an exceptional job elaborating the significance of dreaming as a symbolic system through which an Amazonian Kichwa dreamer and his or her social group could interpret and reflect critically on the dreamer’s past, present, or future. One of Macdonald’s conclusions is that, despite contexts of rapid change for the people in his study, “there is obvious continuity of an image-organizing affective paradigm [i.e., dreams] among the Runa” (1999:139). Dreams, Macdonald shows, continue to serve as resources for Kichwa that “made a critical personal situation intelligible” (1999:144). However, dreams, while “good to think” with, were a source of ambiguity and uncertainty, of “numerous, often conflicting possibilities” (Macdonald 1999:144).

Sacha Loma Kichwa today reflect on their past, present, and future in a fundamental way through dreaming. They do so not so much during sleep, but rather in the feelings, images, and thoughts that express their shifting life aspirations. In every interview I conducted except Valerie’s, Kichwas’ responses to the question—“What is your biggest dream?”—had something to do with a hope for the future, typically along the lines of new professions, secure finances, or higher education. These aspirational horizons would not seem, on the surface, to distinguish them much from their Western counterparts. But, as this study has shown, these broadening aspirations are linked to tightening kin networks in distinctively Kichwa ways. The “good life” means aspirations directed toward ensuring the basic needs of the kin group are met (see Chapter 1) and aspirations for substantial change to individual life outcomes.

When I asked Valerie about her biggest dream, her response, shortened from the lengthy previous version, was:

My dream? Oh, when one works really hard, one has many dreams. When one’s body hurts just a little bit, then it is common for us to fall asleep right away. ... In the old days, we’d get up in the middle of the night to work.... Anything was

possible in the middle of the night, after waking up at three o'clock in the morning and drinking *wayusa*.

Her understanding of dream, a word that has become almost cliché in its usage when talking about youth and modernity—the American Dream, “chicken in every pot and car in every garage” dream, dreaming the impossible dream, and so on—reflects a very real and dramatic shift that has occurred between generations of Kichwa: from wakeful dreaming at night of what they might make with their hands, to daydreaming of what they might make of themselves.

But what happens when modern dreams confront modern realities? New dreams of personal becoming through higher education, jobs, and so on, comprise the “affective paradigms” that render intelligible modern teens’ new engagements. At the same time these are, like Macdonald’s ancient dreams, a source of ambiguity, often-conflicting possibilities, and uncertainty (Macdonald 1999:144). What will happen to Kichwas’ confidence in the promises of modernity if the images, ideas, and ideals Kichwa teens and their parents buy into are perpetually sold out?

Young Kichwa negotiate enticing possibilities concurrently with unavoidable pressures and structural constraints. Their grand aspirations are met with harsh realities. They have big dreams, but small bank accounts. They seek higher education, but the school system has low standards. They desire to be global players, but they are very much tethered to their local community. They hope to develop a colorful cosmopolitan outlook, but are discovering that the world is largely black and white. And, at least at the moment, while a few, in Soledad’s words, *han de salir* (are going to get out, succeed, Sp.), many kids are at home, *jodidos* (screwed, Sp.), as Micaela observed.

As Nemar put it so directly, “A foreigner comes to our community and asks us questions, but why? A foreigner comes, with a good heart, in order to say, ‘well, this community, how you all live, here there is a richness,’ but we can’t get ahead. Why?”

Kichwa modernity is about trying to forge ahead despite contrasting and sometimes contradictory messages generated when new influences swirl with long-standing logics, when the way things could be collides with the way things are. And while Kichwa have been taught that class could be what “saves” them—math class, English class—through a concerted movement to educate their kids, it is class of a different sort—social class—that makes their dreams all too often remain distant glimmers on the aspirational horizon. They are poor, and yet they are told that underneath them gurgles a natural bank of black wealth—lots and lots of oil—waiting for immediate withdrawal. They are Kichwa, but they must swap out their culture with the mainstream in order to be “cultured” when walking about the concrete jungles. They have dark skin, but they must “have” and “do” “white” in order to be able to more easily transform their lived realities.

Some might ask what makes the Kichwa in Sacha Loma any different than Westerners, especially as they undertake endeavors that are more and more the patterns of young people worldwide, in what some characterize as “youth culture” or “adolescent society.” Sacha Lomans are just impoverished, rural people dealing with “modern” problems like impoverished peasants everywhere: by going to school and buying things, staying hip to the latest fads, or watching television. Parents and grandparents in Sacha Loma are like parents and grandparents elsewhere who feel duty-bound to put their kids

through school and proud when their kids graduate. They foot the bill. They put food on the table. Kichwa are, in this view, just soon-to-be homogenized global citizens who happen to consume a lot of manioc and plantains; on top of that, they *want* to be among the homogenized global citizens.

I would respond by saying that, yes, *Kichwa are citizens of the global, but not all global citizens are Kichwa*. That is to say, there is something distinctively Kichwa about how Kichwa figure the future within the contexts of modernity. And this has to do with the guiding principles that this study has highlighted—production and the sociality of commitments to kin and community that are the grounding values to which Kichwa return again and again.

This sense of community that lies behind socially productive efforts is the feeling that one is deeply situated within a family whose boundaries coincide with the boundaries of the community. In Sacha Loma, this means a *minka* of mothers to cut the school's lawn, a pooling of chickens to feed teachers on Teacher Appreciation Day, a never-ending circulation of chicha and *lo que sobra* amongst family members, and the idea that even those, like Mr. E, who have been in the community as long as its present iteration has existed, are still just visiting. This deep reliance on community, and the framing of success in terms of the community, is what gives modernity here a Kichwa flavor. Yes, people here, especially young people, think of their goals in individual terms, and this is becoming more and more popular. But what this study has found remarkable is the extent to which sociality does not give way easily to purely individual goals. Moreover, Sacha Loma Kichwa conceptualize their communal goals as characteristically Kichwa; put differently, they see their own sharing as distinct from the behavior of non-Kichwa, who do not, and are not really expected to, fulfill and embody this sociality. The impetus for sharing is why Sacha Loma was founded, after all.

Young Kichwa and their elders continue to hope, act, and cobble things together. Grandparents like Valerie cheer from the sidelines: “Go on and study, then!” In other words, elders are telling the community's young people to walk about and figure the future just like they did two decades before, when they built a new community into the side of a hill in a remote riverside rain forest and when they took up nine-to-five jobs to fund unprecedented shifts in their offspring's future. With these and any number of other changes, the current generation of elders has tried to figure the future in their own way. How Kichwa teens will trailblaze the uncharted paths toward their aspirations, while felling, hacking through, and stumbling over deep-rooted structural constraints, is *terra incognita*. What pitfalls and promises, *cucas* or question marks, they might encounter are only just unfolding. This study has begun to document them. Others should follow to examine what the first generation of graduates confronts and conquers as they explore these unfamiliar waters.

My first chapter ended with a challenge from Nemar, questioning the value of my ethnographic project. If he were to revisit his grievances, I hope he would consider this analysis a fitting investment in the future of the Kichwa youth on whom he himself is banking.



## ENDNOTES

1. A pseudonym, as are all names in this dissertation.
2. The *colono/mestizo* category is difficult to define. I use the term *mestizo* throughout this dissertation to indicate people of “mixed” indigenous and European ancestry. *Colonos*, or colonists, are *mestizos* who have come to settle the rain forest alongside Kichwa, sometimes occupying land that Kichwa claimed historically. In practice, within the *mestizo* category there are gradations. *Mestizos* who are rural farmers are viewed sometimes as less well off (and less “white”) compared to *mestizos* who have other jobs in the countryside (like teachers or clinic personnel) or who live in the city. *Mestizos* are commonly seen by Kichwa as occupying a higher social status than Kichwa. For instance, Nicola married a *mestizo*, Rico. To her delight, her kids, according to Nicola, would now be *mestizos*. She referred to Rico as both *mestizo* and white. The term “white” is complex in its usage. White is used to describe skin color, but the term also designates certain behaviors and privileges (money, mobility, material possessions) associated with whiteness as an advantageous position within the social hierarchy. White was most often employed as an adjective, not a noun. The word *blancos* (whites, Sp.) was not as popular as the terms *turistas* (tourists, Sp), *Americanos* (Americans, Sp.), or *Alemanes* (Germans, Sp.) to characterize those of European descent who visited the community. For more on the nuances of race and ethnicity in Sacha Loma, see Chapter 5.
3. I did not define “some” for Sacha Lomans. My use of “some” was to obtain from women a general idea of their media consumption, whether on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis.

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