COSMOPOLITAN COMUNEROS: CELEBRATING INDIGENEITY THROUGH THE APPROPRIATION OF URBANITY IN THE QUITO BASIN

BY

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DISSERTATION

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Abstract

My dissertation examines urban indigenous identity in the Quito Basin in contrast to essentialized representations of indigenousness that emanate from emerging multicultural state policy and prominent indigenous movements in Ecuador. Based on ethnographic research I conducted between 2003-2011, I focus on the indigenous identity celebrated in Lumbisí, an urban indigenous community that borders Quito. Dominant national stereotypes of indigeneity position Lumbiseños as culturally and ethnically assimilated members of Ecuadorian society (mestizos) or as unrecognized citizens of the Cumbayá Valley community. By contrast, Lumbiseños reject claims of assimilation and assert an indigenous identity rooted in their communal land rights, ancestry, traditions, and social networks. While Lumbiseños adhere to their own conventional markers of indigeneity, they also depend on urban earned salaries and related social capital to reinvest in their community. I argue that the local indigeneity recognized and practiced within Lumbisí represents a distinct urban indigeneity that selectively draws on urban capital, education, and interactions with non-indigenous others to reinvest in their community and bolster their indigenous identity outside the processes of acculturation, hybridity, and mestizaje.

This dissertation contributes to long-standing discussions in the social sciences regarding the apparent tensions between indigeneity and urban modernity with relation to race, class, and emerging concepts of plurinational citizenship in Ecuador. I engage the influential ideologies of the folk-urban continuum (Redfield 1941) and blanqueamiento or the process of cultural and ethnic whitening through assimilation from various academic perspectives (Hurtado 2007, Quijia et al 2006, Stutzman 1981, Whitten 1981, Whitten 2003), which correlate increased indigenous contact with urban spaces with the loss of indigenous culture in favor of modernity and an
idealized mestizo citizenship. In the case of Lumbisí, I argue that the more contact indigenous people experience within the city, the stronger and more empowered their indigenous identity becomes. I demonstrate that urban indigenous peoples choose to reinvest in their home community and identity by appropriating urban capital and prestige goods as an integral part of their indigeneity without implications of assimilation. I also provide insight to local symbolic, ideological, and performative interpretations of urban and global experiences in Lumbisí through the ritual analysis of large-scale, local festival production. Building upon recent Ecuadorianist research that underscores festivals as sites for the negotiation of new forms of rural indigeneity (e.g. Corr 2004, 2010, Wogan 2003, Wibbelsman 2005, 2008, and Fine-Dare 2006), my dissertation examines comparable processes in an overlooked urban case.
To the people of the Comuna San Bartolomé de Lumbisí, especially the abuelitos, whose stories give these pages their meaning. Dios le pague.
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I would like to acknowledge and give my sincere gratitude to the “village” of people that helped me throughout my journey to achieve this milestone. This village spans many geographic spaces and time and consists of a vast range of people including academics and non-academics, mentors, colleagues, family, neighbors, and friends, who chose to believe in a little tomboy from the deep, rural south, and her ability to achieve great things. While this journey has delivered tremendous highs and lows, triumphs and defeats, gifts and sacrifices, the people in my village never wavered in their support of me. I could never thank everyone enough for all they have done, but I would like to share my success with that entire village and credit the people within it for helping me achieve my goals.

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I especially would like to thank the people of Lumbísí, the heart of this project, who gave me the chance to live with them and trusted me with their words after many years of shared work, stories, and meals. They taught me to see, understand, and appreciate their lifestyle and community. I am indebted to the people of Lumbísí and only hope that this dissertation serves as a beginning of my repayment for their generosity. Don Luis Cajas and family, Don Miguel
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I feel very fortunate to have worked within a larger academic network, which has influenced my work tremendously over the years. I left South Iredell High School in 1994 to pursue a bachelor’s degree (in what I thought would be environmental studies) with the encouragement of three principal people. My tennis coach, Col. Richard Barba, who told me I could accomplish anything if I managed my time and worked hard; my Spanish instructor, Nancy Slagle, who gave me an insatiable international travel bug and taught me the fundamentals of Spanish; and Barry Henline, my physical science instructor, who always thought I had what it took to be a scientist and believed I could go far. None of them could have known how their encouragement and inspiration influences me to this day, and I hope they know how thankful I am to have them as members of my village.

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Ethnographic fieldwork requires the researcher as a curious observer to be open to random encounters and the opportunities they extend. Ethnography is a method insofar as we gain glimpses of culture in details we are often not looking for, but are fortunate to witness and trained to notice. (Wibbelsman 2009)

This ethnographic journey began in 1997, when I travelled to Quito, Ecuador for the first time to study at the Universidad San Francisco de Quito (USFQ). This university, previously housed in the city, transferred to its new campus in the Cumbayá Valley in 1992. I travelled back and forth, an hour each way, on the interparroquial buses to and from the valley everyday for class. The valley seemed vacant and unpopulated at the time, a mere shadow of its current urban expansion. The university’s campus, just four buildings, stood in an isolated corner off of the Interoceanic Highway. The rest of “modern” Cumbayá consisted of a small strip shopping center with a supermarket and a handful of restaurants constructed in front of the university. University authorities warned us that the historical central plaza of Cumbayá was dangerous and should be avoided, especially at night when young men and women would go to the park to socialize and get intoxicated.

My Introduction to Cultural Anthropology professor, Paulina Terán González, introduced me to Lumbisí, an indigenous community located just a few miles from the university. That fall, the entire class went to Lumbisí to conduct surveys as a part of our methodological training. We traveled down a desolate road, parts paved and others just compacted dirt and gravel, and arrived at the central plaza of Lumbisí. We stayed in the main square for a class briefing before we separated into groups and set out to conduct our surveys. I remember following the dirt path that ran alongside the elementary school on the main plaza. We walked for what seemed like ages downhill until we came across a woman washing clothes outside her adobe brick and ceramic tile roofed home. Fascinated by the idea of studying the Day of the Dead, my group fashioned
questions about that ritual celebration, which we incorporated into a pool of hundreds of questions generated by our classmates. We gathered several more interviews by the time our 1:00 p.m. departure time arrived.

Each group reported on the data they gathered according to the themes they chose for the end of the semester course project. Themes ranged from traditional agricultural practices and the introduction of pesticides to the history of traditional dress previously worn by Lumbiseños (the native residents of Lumbisí). The results reported indicated that Lumbiseños were in a process of losing their “traditional” culture. They dressed in modern, western clothes, few spoke Kichwa, and new home construction seemed to replace adobe brick houses with modern concrete block construction. At the time, I agreed. From the little knowledge we had, it seemed that Lumbiseños’ lives had shifted dramatically from their historical beginnings in the valley. They appeared to be in the very recent process of acculturation leading to the widely accepted ideology of Ecuadorian nationalism and citizenship, _el mestizaje_ (Stutzman 1981, Whitten 1981, Whitten 2003, Whitten 2011). We thought we saw mestizaje unfolding. We thought.

Three years later, I returned to Lumbisí for master’s thesis summer research. I continued to have questions about the community of Lumbisí and the contradictions I knew existed between the indigenous people who I witnessed and the identity they proclaimed even when claiming indigeneity meant refusing modernity and national acceptance. The indigeneity in Lumbisí differed from the indigenousness discussed in classic anthropological literature throughout the Andes that described indigenous communities on a trajectory of culture and identity loss (Allen 1988, Belote and Belote 1977, Gose 1994, Isbel 1978, and Murra et al 1986) and varied still from contemporary literature that described urban migration as the impetus for indigenous assimilation and identity loss or as a form of cultural “hybridity” (García Canclini...
Urban migration created a burgeoning tension that pitted rural migrants as invaders of urban spaces against the white and mestizo populations who traditionally occupied it. Survival in urban space for indigenous migrants required geographically and symbolically distancing themselves from their “rural origins” and compel them to leave behind their homes, ancestry, beliefs, native language, traditional dress, and indigeneity to establish new urban, mestizo lives in the city or on its boarders (Gill 2000:27-30, Lyons 2006: 283, Andolina et al 2009:118).

I formulated a thesis project to expand my initial survey research on the Day of the Dead in Lumbísí to include inquiry about qualities of Lumbiseño indigeneity, but I still viewed their identity as bifurcated between the traditional and the modern, much like hybridization described in the post-colonial literature that instead of escaping cultural essentialism fell to the same homogeneity and neatness within and between cultural categories (García Canclini 1990). I undertook two summers and three weeks of ethnographic field research during the observation of the Day of the Dead. My interest in ritual celebrations shifted after my arrival during that initial summer of independent research in 2000.

I boarded the interparroquial bus to Cumbayá from the Plaza Artigas in Quito like I had every day during my semester at USFQ. I arrived at the familiar circle drive of the Interoceanic Highway in the Cumbayá Valley near the university, where I disembarked and waited for the bus to Lumbísí. I had only been to the community once before with my classmates and found my way back alone the second time around. I rode the bus to the end of the line, the central plaza of Lumbísí. Everyone exited the bus and I rushed to gather my things to do the same. As I reached the front door of the bus and thanked the bus driver for his service, the bus doors slammed closed. The bus driver turned to me and asked, “¿Usted está perdida, señorita?” (Are you lost, young lady?). I smiled and quickly responded “¿Esto es Lumbísí, verdad?” (This is Lumbísí,
right?). He affirmed we were sitting in the main town square of Lumbisí, but refused to let me off the bus. To which I replied, “No, no estoy perdida, señor. Por favor dejéme bajar.” (No, I’m not lost, sir. Please let me off [the bus].) He looked at me again and said, “Pero señorita, no le puedo dejar a usted aquí. Es peligroso. Hay indios aquí. Mejor le llevo de regreso a Quito.” (But young lady, I can’t leave you here. It is dangerous. There are [pejorative] Indians here. [I] better take you back to Quito.).

The bus driver associated my physical whiteness with Quito, the nearest urban center of mostly blanco-mestizo populations and a popular tourist destination, despite picking me up from the circle drive in Cumbayá. He identified me as a foreigner and addressed me in formal Spanish, careful to use usted (the formal “you” construction) to show respect. My whiteness seemingly provoked the bus driver, a complete stranger to me, to “protect” me from the community. He identified Lumbisí as a community of indios, a pejorative identifier of indigeneity that distanced the driver from any ethnic association with the indigenous people who resided there. This distancing signaled the bus driver’s whiteness and positioned him as a working-class mestizo bus driver, perceived as socially and economically privileged over the general Lumbiseño population. Ultimately, after arguing for what seemed like better part of 10-15 minutes, the bus driver shaking his head, reluctantly opened the door, and allowed me to disembark.

When we arrived, the main square was full of activity. Vendors had their storefronts open selling their wares. Ambulant vendors sold “fast food” in the form of cooked hominy, toasted corn, and fried pork from their baskets, handing clients small plastic bags full of food in exchange for just over 10,000 Sucres,¹ around .40 cents. A few young children played together, running about in the square. After the conversation with the bus driver, when I finally left the

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¹ Sucres were the official currency of Ecuador until March 13, 2000 when the country adopted the US dollar. The currency exchange topped out at 25,000 Sucres per US dollar.
bus, the plaza stood bare. Everyone fled in the elapsed time of my discussion with the bus driver. The ambulant vendors literally dropped their baskets where they stood and fled, store owners closed their storefronts, and the children ran and hid. As I turned back around, second guessing my stay in Lumbisí and contemplating going back to Quito to attempt to find the community president another day, the bus pulled away. Alone in the square, I noticed a solitary storefront open. I approached the storefront and talked with the owner, a mestizo woman from the coast who had travelled to the highlands in search of a better life for her and her four children. I explained how I wanted to live in Lumbisí and work there with their children in the local school teaching English, as I knew there had been a English as a Second Language program taught by a local native. In addition, I would work for her teaching extra English lessons to her children in trade for a makeshift room, formerly occupied by the family’s chickens, and one cooked meal a day during my field research. Sra. Carmen, herself a marginalized citizen within Lumbiseño boundaries, shared her home and helped me gain access to community leaders and eventually the school, which helped to further the community’s trust in me.

Despite every attempt I made to breach the boundaries and stereotypes inherent for Lumbiseños in my pale, white skin, blonde hair, and blue eyes, years passed before I understood the local mythology of the Pishtaco2 (Weismantel 2003) and how my presence in the community caused an initial reaction of fear, confusion, and distrust. No other phenotypically white female had ever come to stay in the community, and only one other white male lived in the community during the 1970s, nearly 30 years prior to my arrival. Initially, community members associated me with Gils, the other white foreigner with whom they had contact, and often asked if I knew

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2 A *pishtaco* represents a hypersexual, phenotypically white, tall, blonde, blue-eyed bogeyman, who kidnaps indigenous children and sucks out their fat and lurks in the dark to scare his victims. While generally engendered male, the pishtaco takes various forms throughout recorded Andean history and its embodiment can include white female figures.
him or had news from him. He became revered in the community as the Frenchman who lived
with them for some time and helped them organize different community commissions, and they
continue to long for his return. Expectations ran high, while accusations abounded about my
presence in the community. Not only did I appear to be a female version of the pishtaco figure,
but I also heard accusations brujería (witchcraft) or even spying for the United States’ Central
Intelligence Agency (CIA).

After much reflection on that summer of my arrival in 2000, the examples of the
competing prejudices, stereotypes, and racialized tensions expressed by the bus driver, the
community’s reaction to my initial arrival, and the empathy I received from an equally
marginalized citizen within Lumbisi’s borders became clear. Marginalization, discrimination,
and rigid stereotypes frame many of the daily interactions Lumbiseños experience outside their
community in different encuentros (encounters) (Wibblesman 2005b) with non-indigenous
others. At the same time, Lumbiseños have and exhibit power within their community, and they
use it to enforce local boundaries of value and identity that often create equally rigid stereotypes
and distrust of others (Lugo 2000).

My dissertation project grew out of this experience in 2000. It began as a simple
comparison between those groups of indigenous peoples of Ecuador and elsewhere in Latin
America, who were recognized by the government and gained power and recognition as a part of
indigenous grassroots movements of the early 1990s, and those groups, like Lumbisi, who did
not seem to fit the popular, grassroots, legal, or national discourses of indigeneity. The
community of Lumbisí remained distinct, not only by its geographic proximity to the urban
capital, Quito, but also because of the strict boundaries they establish yet constantly transcend.
This project draws on ethnographic field research spanning my initial pre-dissertation and dissertation research from 2003-2009 at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. I conducted this multi-sited research project in the Pichincha Province with interviews and undertook participant observation in the city limits of Quito as well as indigenous communities within the Metropolitan District of Quito including Lumbisí, Cotocollao, and Calderón through the support of the Tinker Foundation, a Fulbright Hayes Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad Fellowship, and a University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Graduate College Dissertation Travel Grant. Lumbisí became the primary focus of my research and other indigenous communities provided a comparative framework within the same region of the highlands, while the city provided alternative views from a range of upper and middle class Quiteños. In this dissertation, I argue that the local indigeneity recognized and practiced within Lumbisí represents a distinct urban indigeneity that selectively draws on urban capital, education, and interactions with non-indigenous others to reinvest in their community and bolster their indigenous identity outside the processes of acculturation, hybridity, and mestizaje.
Figure 1.1 Provinces of Ecuador Map. This project centers in the Pichincha Province. Map courtesy of http://mapsof.net/map/provinces-of-ecuador
Figure 1.2 Incomplete Map of Urban and Rural Parishes in the Metropolitan District of Quito. The central concentration in the map marks the urban parishes of Quito, while Cumbayá remains a “rural” parish to the southeast. Lumbisí is located within the Cumbayá Parish and the approximation of its location is marked above with a red circle. Map modified by author. Original source: http://www.quitoambiente.gob.ec/gestiondelconocimiento/general/mapa_3_parroquias_rurales_y Urbanas.pdf
The estimated population of permanent residents in Cumbayá reaches just over 30,000, while 40,000 additional residents commute back and forth to Quito daily (El Hoy 2011). As a part of the Metropolitan District of Quito, the city government invests in the Cumbayá Valley as the thruway to neighboring Tumbaco, the home of the new Ecuadorian international airport scheduled to open in 2012. City planners have worked to reinforce the district’s infrastructure to accommodate the increase in national and international traffic flow through the valley. The increased migration of wealthy, socially prominent blanco-mestizos into the valley also precipitated a local demand for increased access to urban amenities. In response, new high-class restaurants, state of the art gyms, and swank shopping centers accompanied the gentrification of Cumbayá’s main town plaza, exclusive private school expansions at all academic levels, and the mass construction of gated communities complete with 24 hour guards and high voltage electric fences.

Figure 1.3 An affluent housing complex under construction on the street to Lumbísí. Note: The concrete walls measure approximately 9 feet in height with an additional 3 feet of high voltage electric wire above it. Guards protect the front gate 24-hours a day from behind the shaded windows to the left of the entrance.
One of the most popular, affluent addresses in the Cumbayá Valley shares the same main avenue with the indigenous community of Lumbisí. The land now occupied by the Quiteño white-mestizo upper-middle and upper class populations retained its original toponym, Lumbisí, despite its separation from the indigenous landholding of the same name during the Agrarian Reforms in 1964 and again in 1981. Contemporary wealthy and socially prominent Quiteños often recognize the location of Lumbisí in the Cumbayá Valley, but usually scoff at the suggestion that an indigenous community exists there. For this Quiteño population, Cumbayá and Lumbisí are spaces of white-mestizo exclusivity, wealth, and privilege.

Despite this Quiteño claim, the people of Lumbisí assert they occupied the Cumbayá Valley since time immemorial. This claim evokes their long history of ancestry, proprietorship, and “authentic” indigeneity in the valley. This mystical, immemorial time-space of the past connects with the present in the modern community, a fraction of the former land known as Lumbisí. The modern population comprises 15% of the valley’s permanent residents, approximately 4,000 native residents and approximately 1,000 migrants (Sacancela 2012). Far from the mythical beginnings described by originario (native-born) families, Lumbiseños currently live on some of the most expensive real estate in the Cumbayá Valley. They commute for work and higher education to the surrounding urban parishes of the Metropolitan District of Quito. Many professionals return to practice their vocations in Lumbisí, while others work in the urban spaces of Quito and Cumbayá. Lumbiseños have their own cellular phone tower, email accounts, cybercafés, arcades, and post videos of festival celebrations on YouTube. Contemporary originario families select and incorporate some modern amenities, symbols, and technology into their own local matrix of value, while maintaining their claims to a local indigeneity centered on ancestry, tradition, and authenticity rooted in time immemorial.
Chapter Orientation

In chapter 2, I describe four contemporary perspectives on indigeneity in Ecuador. These perspectives encompass both top-down and grass-roots perspectives ranging from popular discourse among middle-upper and upper class Quiteño populations and a survey of a private university’s students in Quito to the government represented by the current head of state, President Rafael Correa Delgado. These top-down perspectives on indigeneity utilize visual cues, stereotypes, popular images, authenticity, and “traditions” to define indigenousness in distinction to their own white-mestizo identity. This distinction distances indigenous peoples from blanco-mestizos and relegates indigenous peoples to stereotypes of ignorance, illiteracy, rural isolation, and anti-modernity. Grassroots organizations, including some of the most powerful indigenous organizations in Latin America, establish definitions of indigeneity based on same criteria but revere these qualities as essential to their identity or lament the “loss” of these qualities due to the process of blanqueamiento (cultural and ethnic whitening) (Quijia et al 2006). Indigenous people, according to the narrow, homogenized perceptions championed by indigenous movements, want to live in rural isolated places, tend their animals, abandon formal education as it makes one lazy, and create agricultural sustainability for themselves. They believe in native language, distinct dress, and place all as key identifying factors of their indigenous nationalities. I argue that despite the diverse socio-economic, political, and ethnic positionalities from which Ecuadorian indigenous representations emanate, each definition of indigeneity shares the commonality of an essentialized image of indigenousness in Ecuador.

I utilize chapter 2 to contrast the context of contemporary, mainstream indigeneity in Ecuador with the daily lives of Lumbiseños described in chapter 3. Here, I examine Lumbiseños identity in contradistinction to the four (mis)representations of indigeneity that coexist in the
national social imaginary and through grassroots movements. Daily routines and work sojourns often lead Lumbiseños away from their home community to urban jobs, secondary education, and interactions with white-mestizo others. In this chapter, I argue that Lumbiseños create a distinct urban indigenous identity that draws on originario ancestry, traditional social and economic practices within the community, and the day-to-day appropriation of urban capital and prestige gained in Quito and Cumbayá. Lumbiseños’ constant return to and reinvestment in their community hinges on the incorporation of externally obtained goods, services, and capital. The access to these “foreign-earned” goods and services further distinguishes Lumbiseño originarios and positions them within a ruling majority that serves to reinforce their native identity.

Chapter 4 focuses on the reinforcement of Lumbiseño identity, but shifts focus to the ritual analysis of Lumbiseños’ celebration of two national Ecuadorian holidays. I examine the Day of the Dead celebration and the performance of the Matanza del Yumbo (Killing of the Yumbo) in conjunction with the Año Viejo celebration (Passing of the Old Year/New Year’s Eve). I argue that these nationally celebrated holidays mark complex boundaries of exclusion that delineate between originario families and “others. These celebrations take on local flare and interpretations that demonstrate Lumbiseños’ urban knowledge and incorporation of symbols, while performing “tradition” that draws on ancestry, local hierarchy, and communal unity.

In chapter 5, I analyze a unique celebration manifested within Lumbisi, the celebration of San Bartolomé, their Patron Saint. Lumbiseños prepare for this four-day cargo festival through a year of organization that requires smaller rituals of asking for community support and a return of their investment through reciprocal exchange. The San Bartolomé celebration comprises myriad performances within performances, all of which draw on Lumbiseños’ past and present, the “traditional” alongside the new, and the current and former encuentros they have with outsiders.
I examine the performances of the Coronation Ceremony that elects the Queen of Lumbisí and initiates the festival and the relationship between the priostes and the costumed parade that takes place during the following two days of the festival performance. The *priostes* (festival sponsors) hold the highest social position in the community during their year-long term and stand to gain more prestige if the festivals’ production demonstrates a visible increase in display of wealth and organization. This public display of wealth elevates the festival’s priostes to a local, elite standing. Meanwhile, the rest of the population performs the Lumbiseño perception of the national socialscape. This celebration, I argue, publicly showcases the inversion of national social imaginary to elevate the local elite priostes and the Queen of Lumbisí and to subvert all “other” Ecuadorians, including the white-masked clowns, who symbolically represent the white-mestizo population through their performance.

Chapter 6 concludes this dissertation with a summation of my argument and the theoretical contributions these data provide.
Chapter 2: Race in the Time of Correa: (Mis)Representations of Indigeneity in Ecuador

Introduction

In this chapter, I describe the ideas of indigeneity that I encountered during my fieldwork in Quito, Ecuador from 2007-2009. Four dominant perspectives on indigeneity emerged from a multitude of opinions, representations, and images that flood the cityscape. First, I focus on the changing representation of indigenous peoples within the formal institution of the state. The national government’s position on plurinational recognition constitutes an unprecedented, formalized recognition of indigenous peoples and nations through the new Ecuadorian Constitution (2008) commissioned during the Correa Administration (2006-2008, 2008-). Next, I analyze data collected from a survey of young upper-middle and upper class students who self-identify as white or mestizo to demonstrate how their popular opinions shape common racialized stereotypes of indigeneity based on material culture (e.g. traditional clothing) and phenotype. These government and popular opinions represent perceptions of indigeneity that emanate from the long-privileged white and white-mestizo social and political classes prevalent in the major urban centers of Guayaquil, Quito, and Cuenca, Ecuador. For the purpose of this discussion, my data analysis focuses on popular middle, upper-middle, and upper class individuals from Quito, the largest city in the highlands that shares its metropolitan district with multiple indigenous populations.

I then turn my focus to two mainstream indigenous movements in the Andes region of Ecuador. The Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE) and Confederation of Peoples of Kichwa Nationality (ECUARUNARI) play a critical role that informs contemporary representations of indigeneity. These mainstream movements and representations of indigeneity largely exclude urban indigenous enclaves. As a result, an alternative urban indigenous movement by the Pueblo Kitu-Kara emerged in 2003. The Pueblo
Kitu-Kara movement utilizes a discourse of ethnic loss due to the close interaction and proximity of their enclaves with urban spaces. The CONAIE/ECUARUNARI and Kitu-Kara stances on indigeneity represent two grass-roots perspectives on indigenous identity that share commonalities in their definitions despite distinctions in their contemporary practices.

Combined, all four sources of dialogue relating to indigenous socio-political issues and representations of indigeneity, multiculturalism, and plurinationalism produced the most abundant displays of authority on indigeneity through a range of popular media, the internet, and public performances. I argue that despite the diverse socio-economic, political, and ethnic positionalities from which these indigenous representations emanate, each definition of indigeneity shares the commonality of an essentialized image of indigenousness in Ecuador. The definitions of indigeneity in this chapter provide the context in which to compare and contrast the indigenous identity celebrated in Lumbisí (see chapter 3).

**The State of Ecuadorian Indigeneity**

*La nacionalidad ecuatoriana es el vínculo jurídico político de las personas con el Estado, sin perjuicio de su pertenencia a alguna de las nacionalidades indígenas que coexisten en el Ecuador plurinacional.*

*Ecuadorian nationality is the legal and political bond between the people and the State, without any prejudice of belonging to any indigenous nationality that coexists within plurinational Ecuador.*

Within the last decade (2000-2010), Ecuadorians of all ethnicities and socio-economic classes have experienced dramatic social, political, and economic change. On the one hand, the long-standing oligarchy and economic stability of the elite sharply declined for the first time since the Agrarian Reforms of the 1960s and 1970s. On the other hand, lower-middle and working classes experienced increased access to social services provided by Correa’s
government and opportunities to pursue higher education, increase economic gain, and consequently achieve upward socio-economic mobility.

The white and white-mestizo populations occupy the elite, upper-middle and middle classes respectively. At the pinnacle of national social, political, and economic hierarchy, white and white-mestizo populations position themselves in contradistinction to indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian populations. Of the dominant Ecuadorian elite class, nearly 67% reside in the urban populations of the highland capital Quito, the coastal port Guayaquil, and the southern Andean city Cuenca, the three largest cities in the country (Censo 2010). I refer specifically to Quiteño white and white-mestizo populations in the remainder of this discussion, who represent a range of wealth and prestige that encompasses the vestiges of landed gentry, the upwardly mobile nouveaux riche, and the socially and politically connected high society.

Common conversations among self-identifying white and blanco-mestizos in Quito often lead to discussions of their Spanish ancestry and current and former family landholdings. White and white-mestizo Quiteños, heretofore referred to as Quiteños, mediate between their Ecuadorian-ness and their simultaneous adoration, emulation, and at times rejection and/or repulsion of Western society and culture (Rahier 2003: 299). Quiteños consider themselves very well-educated both socially and academically, well-traveled both nationally and internationally, well connected through kinship ties and social networks, wealthy both in material and liquid assets, religious, pristinely clean and hygienic, and most recently as commuter residents of the Cumbayá Valley.

White and white-mestizo Quiteños often observed and commented on the ostentatious presence of the nouveau riche, middle class, and indigenous peoples in unexpected spaces in the city, such as the supermarkets, shopping malls, restaurants, and universities formerly frequented
exclusively by the wealthy, white and white-mestizo middle-upper and upper classes. In recent years, these locations had different clientele, emanating mainly from mestizo and indigenous populations. Wealthy and middle class indigenous peoples, who once shopped solely in outdoor open markets often stereotyped as dirty and contaminated spaces (Weismantel 2001), now had the economic means to purchase items in the pristinely polished and glaringly white, sterile supermarkets of the Quiteño middle-upper, and upper class. The imaginary pyramidal structure of Ecuadorian socio-economic hierarchy that pits whites and blanco-mestizos in binary opposition to the indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian working-class appears to take the shape of an hourglass with its economic sands slowly, but steadily shifting from the top-down. The impetus for this dramatic change stems in part from the presence of a new political force focused squarely on a “Citizens’ Revolution” and an attempt at a new form of socialism for the twenty-first century.

Quito became the central stage for this socio-political shift. As the symbolic head and heart of the Ecuadorian state, Quito has always served as home to a highly diverse ethnic and socio-economic population. Despite a long history of ethnic diversity in the city, the notion of nation and national belonging largely excluded indigenous peoples for centuries. Ecuadorian nationalism, or la ecuatorianidad, throughout the twentieth century relied heavily on an ideology of ethnic and cultural blending. Since the colonial period, Spanish and indigenous blood and ancestry combined to create the mestizo population, a proverbial ethnic and cultural middle ground. Mestizos occupied a lower social and economic class than the elite oligarchy, but were more socially and economically acceptable to the white and white-mestizo populations than their indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian counterparts. Mestizos were the idealized Ecuadorian citizen that balanced the two opposing purist platforms of elite Spanish-ness, and local indigenousness.
Stutzman (1981) called mestizaje an all-inclusive ideology of exclusion, as the indigenous peoples of the 14 recognized ethnic groups within Ecuador could not participate in this nationalism due to their ethnic purity. The idealism surrounding mestizaje (being mestizo) came into criticism in the late 1970s when new socio-political movements to recognize plurinationalism based solely on indigenous ethnic descent emerged.

Rafael Correa Delgado established headquarters and managed his presidential campaign from Quito. His slogan “La Patria ya es de todos—The Homeland now belongs to everyone,” bombarded the general public via local radio, television, and printed media during his 2006 campaign and continued as his platform thereafter. The Homeland now belongs to everyone suggested a new era of Ecuadorian nationalism founded on the recognition and respect of the country’s diversity and plurinationalism. Plurinationalism explicitly included minority indigenous nations in the coastal, highlands, and Amazonian regions, as well as Afro-Ecuadorians in a new vision of Ecuadorian nationalism.

On November 26, 2006, Correa, candidate of the emerging leftist Alianza Pais Party, defeated the multimillionaire, conservative Álvaro Noboa to become president of Ecuador. Correa’s campaign won the popular vote of the middle and working class Ecuadorians, who believed his promise of a new era. Correa pledged to balance the incredibly deep chasm of economic, political, and social inequality between the elite and working class by instituting a “Twenty-First Century Socialism.” This new brand of socialism combined capitalistic tendencies for upward mobility, especially among the middle and working classes, and a socialist redistribution of wealth from the top-down. Correa demonstrated his commitment to the people, popularly recognized as el pueblo (Whitten 2003), on January 15, 2007, when he eliminated the acting congress and instituted a new, democratically elected Asemblea Nacional Constituyente,
(National Constituent Assembly). This radical move cleared congress of long-standing and corrupt politicians, and put the power in the hands of the Ecuadorian people to elect new assembly members. The Alianza País Party won an overwhelming majority of the National Assembly seats, and positioned Correa at the head of state with the majority of his party in power within the National Assembly.

Correa immediately commissioned the newly elected National Assembly to draft a new state constitution. In 2008 just two years after Correa’s initial election, the citizens of Ecuador voted to ratify the new, official Ecuadorian Constitution, formalizing the acceptance of plurinationalism and multiculturalism. For the first time, the new constitution not only made references to indigenous ideas such as sumak kawsay—good life and pacha mama—Earth Mother as they related to the rights of all citizens, but also provided an entire chapter (Chapter 4) entitled Derechos de las comunidades, pueblos y naciones—Rights of the Communities, the People, and Nations. Article 56 of chapter 4 declares, “Las comunidades, pueblos, y nacionalidades indígenas, el pueblo afroecuatoriano, el pueblo montubio y las comunas forman parte del Estado ecuatoriano, único e indivisible—Indigenous communities, peoples, and nationalities, Afro-Ecuadorian peoples, montubios (the peasant peoples of Manabí Province), and comunas form part of the sole and indivisible Ecuadorian State. The constitution called for a new presidential election the following year in which Correa triumphed again with a wide margin over his closest opponent.

In the meantime, new printed media, including billboards, posters, and other propaganda circulated within Quito that represented regional and (pluri)national cohesion. Among a slew of new Ministries and Secretaries appointed by Correa to address this new Ecuadorian citizenship, the Secretaría de Pueblos, Movimientos Sociales y Participación—The Secretary of Peoples,
Social Movements, and Citizen Participation set out to clarify the definition of plurinationalism through the media. The Secretary of the Peoples promoted “unity through diversity” as the goal for Ecuadorian citizenship. For the first time, popular media depicted highland and Amazonian indigenous peoples side by side with Afro-Ecuadorians, mestizos, and disabled Ecuadorians—albeit through the use of photo collage. Indigenous peoples in these photo depictions wore traditional clothing typical of their region that contrasted sharply with mestizos depicted in western-inspired attire. Montubios, coastal peoples from Manabí Province, had Correa himself in folklorized coastal attire with machete in hand and a typical straw hat. Several images showed Afro-Ecuadorians ranging from boys in their swimming trunks to more traditional wear and professionals in business attire. The message conveyed by this media blitz demonstrated Correa’s support for plurinationalism within the Ecuadorian state. The politics of plurinationalism allowed a shift from the recognition of the middle-ground, middle-class mestizos as the idealized Ecuadorian citizens to the purity of indigenous nations as one premise for national belonging.

On April 8, 2010, President Correa visited the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign to receive the Madhuri and Jagdish N. Sheth International Alumni Award for Exceptional Achievement. During his visit, he entertained a wide variety of questions pertaining to social inequality in Latin America and the injustices experienced by indigenous peoples in his country. When asked what he believed was his greatest accomplishment in social policy to date, the President Correa responded:

_In]Our new constitution we defined, we established in Ecuador the multicultural and multinational state because we have several indigenous nationalities. So we are considering them explicitly in our new constitution. Yes, it is true that we have to implement, to construct still this multinational, multicultural state, but we are doing so. We have about 16 different indigenous nationalities. This is already established in our constitution. We are beefing up these kinds of things._(President Rafael Correa, UIUC Roundtable, 2010.)
The opinion Correa expressed above had air of optimism and advancement in social policy, while he admitted that the conversion of the Ecuadorian state from merely recognizing plurinationalism to its acceptance still lacks cohesion. A cohesion and acceptance that even Correa had difficulty maintaining later during the same roundtable discussion. Correa appeared to politically support the idea of plurinationalism and indigenous rights, but as he further elaborated on social injustice and inequality for indigenous peoples he essentially accused indigenous peoples of being “unable to change,” and while they have been the victims of discrimination and racism they now engage in racist behavior against other non-indigenous Ecuadorians. He stated, “Indigenous people blame everybody else for their problems…I think the most important actions to solve the Indian problem in Latin America are the Indians themselves. [They] can’t expect other people to solve their problems for them.”

Survey Says: Popular Misconceptions of Indigeneity in Quito

The president’s two conflicting answers about his new social policy and the “Indian problem,” reflect a greater tension that exists in everyday interactions between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples in Ecuador. Concepts of indigeneity, whether sponsored by the government or promoted by indigenous peoples themselves, vary tremendously by geographic regions and indigenous nations within this ethnically diverse country. As the government moves to incorporate and respect indigenous peoples from all regions and ethnic nations, popular stereotypes of indigeneity still abound within Ecuadorian society that promulgate long-standing prejudices against indigenous peoples and impede their integration. In this section, I examine long-held popular stereotypes of indigeneity discussed in typical conversations with non-indigenous peoples from a range of generations and data collected in a university survey to demonstrate how the general Ecuadorian population typically identifies indigenous people.
Conversations about race and the genealogy and kinship that reinforce claims to European and Spanish society abound in non-indigenous social circles. Inevitably, conversations turn to historical and contemporary connections between military heroes, Catholic saints, and successful politicians to establish a level of prestige and privilege. To further reinforce the distinction between non-indigenous and indigenous Ecuadorians, conversations in the former’s social circles generally form a diametric opposition to indigeneity. In conversation with older generations of white and white-mestizo Ecuadorians between the ages of 30-75 about images and memories of indigeneity, two primary genres of stories emerged. One genre focused consistently on indigeneity as nostalgia framed within an idealized past when elite and upper-middle classes owned haciendas. This nostalgia and admiration of indigenous peoples emanates from personal contact and memories of employees such as hacienda workers, domestic servants or in folklore and legends of noble Inca ancestry as it relates to iconic Andean peoples such as the Otavalos, Salasacas, and Saraguros (Wibbelsman 2009, Corr 2004, Meish 2002, Belote and Belote 1977). Images of indigeneity conjure recollections of Andean indigenous women in their colorful and intricately embroidered clothing and the ponchos and cotton pants donned by highland indigenous men. Some recognized changes in indigenous clothing or some claimed that a few indigenous nationalities have “lost their tradition” of indigenous costume, especially among the younger generations. Non-indigenous peoples who reside in urban spaces also point out the absence of long trenzas (braids) or ponytails worn by both men and women as a marker of their indigeneity and the steady trend of cutting their hair to appear “more urban” in the cityscape.

These often romantic, essentialized images of indigeneity are exploited by the Ecuadorian government and commerce to promote foreign tourism. These images appear in touristic venues, travel agencies, guidebooks, and postcards available at every gift shop in a range of luxury hotels.
and upper middle-class accommodations in the city. Even one of the newest maps used by
indigenous groups to demonstrate the boundaries of their territory sells, neatly wrapped in plastic
in a large bookstore chain in Quito entitled “Tourist Guide to Ecuador’s Indigenous
Nationalities.” While these nostalgic images and ideas of indigeneity evoke conversation among
elites on race, a general misunderstanding of indigenous ethnicity and plurinationality pervades.

The other common genre of white and white-mestizo discourse on indigeneity emanates
from harsh criticism and fear of contemporary indigenous peoples. Whites and blanco-mestizos
have casual interactions with unfamiliar indigenous peoples in varied spaces throughout the city
on a regular basis. The daily work commute on any of the main avenues of Quito, for example,
promises an interaction with an indigenous man, woman, or child selling candy or other wares
during the time that transpires at a stop light. As cars approach the intersections, drivers shut
their windows and avert their attention from the abject poverty that confronts them, stop light
after stop light. These interactions feed into the non-indigenous peoples’ fear of the unknown in
this case indigenous society. Long held pejorative stereotypes of indios in Ecuadorian society
remain. The term “indio” in Spanish literally translates as Indian in English, but resonates as a
much deeper racial slur, especially when used by whites and blanco-mestizos to discuss Andean
indigenous peoples, who refer to themselves in their native Quichua as runa (fully human
beings). The indio stereotype among the whites and blanco-mestizos evokes fear and
misconceptions of poor hygiene, hypersexuality, illiteracy, as well as criminality and violence
(Weismantel 2003, Whitten 2003). Indigenous poverty often gets conflated with ideas of
intoxication, laziness, and crimes committed to obtain the material wealth held by whites and
blanco-mestizos. While many Ecuadorian indigenous peoples live in abject poverty, revenue
earned by professional indigenous people has skyrocketed in recent decades with some

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indigenous peoples amassing fortunes equivalent to some non-indigenous Ecuadorian counterparts (Colloredo-Mansfeld 1999, Meisch 2002). These misconceptions of indigeneity continually reinforce social status and privilege among whites and blanco-mestizos, and subordinate indigenous people to their power. Will these perceptions of indigeneity, poverty, and working class change now that “the homeland now belongs to everyone?”

In October 2007, I conducted a survey with 117 young men and women between the ages of 18-25 at a university in Ecuador during a seminar on globalization and multiculturalism. This survey aimed to discern any difference from the stereotypes conveyed by older generations of elite and mestizo class Ecuadorians. First, I asked the participants to omit their names to maintain anonymity and write only their gender and the ethnicity to which he/she self-identified on scrap paper, a common practice in Ecuadorian schools. The survey participants simultaneously observed six photos and were asked the question, “Are they indigenous?” If the participants had a negative response, they were asked to elaborate on their answer. Unbeknownst to the survey participants, all of the projected photographs depict originarios (native-born men and women from Lumbísí). The photos show a variety of clothing, ranging from formal and informal Western-inspired clothing to indigenous costuming all worn during their annual patron saint festival. To ensure that participants made their identifications based on their observations of the people depicted rather than the environment, I closely cropped photos and blurred any notable images with the name Lumbísí printed on them (See Figure 2.1 below).
This survey replicates a casual interaction an average person in Ecuador may experience in Quito that could provoke a racialized, snap judgment of their ethnicity. I provide additional information for the reader to contextual these images, but simply asked survey participants to answer the question “Are they indigenous?” The survey asked participants to recognize, consciously or subconsciously, the racialized representations of indigeneity reinforced through non-indigenous discourses on social status and indigenous inequality. These educated young adults never hesitated to answer these questions, nor did they challenge the validity of the racially charged act of answering questions that single out or even racially profile indigenous peoples. Their immediate accommodation indicated a certain level of comfort and conformity.
with this survey request. All students in the auditorium participated, although some chose not to answer some questions while others misinterpreted the question and only answered about their self-identification. Ultimately, this survey provides a way to engage stereotypes and perceptions of indigenous peoples outside of their community and to demonstrate how Lumbiseños are not necessarily identified as indigenous in the absence of traditional indigenous clothing without reference to a physical marker of indigeneity such as skin color, nose shape, and forehead height. Students also used other accessories to help determine the person’s identity in some of the pictures including sunglasses, cigarettes, and western-inspired clothing.

The first picture represents one of the former Presidents of Lumbisí, who is an originario. In this photo, he participates in the civic portion of the San Bartolomé festival parade through the main town square accompanied by his Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary, all dressed in formal suits, crisp white shirts with ties, and highly polished shoes. The president carries a bastón de mando (a staff of power fashioned from a sacred, Amazonian palm wood called chonta) adorned with intricately carved silver decorations. Despite his prestigious and conspicuous role within Lumbisí, the survey indicated that the participants experienced confusion when identifying him. Nearly 43% of the participants polled identified the president as a mestizo, noting his dress as the primary reason for this identification. Another 20% left this question unanswered, while only 37% described the president as indigenous. Some participants offered the explanation that the man depicted in photo 1 as having “indigenous [physical] features.”

The second photo in the series depicts a highly satirized representation of a Yumbo, an indigenous person from the Amazonian region (see discussion of the Yumbada Dance in Chapter 4). Yumbo in highland Quichua refers to a geographical location in lowlands just where the
mountains meet the lowlands on the eastern flanks of the Andes. This particular Yumbo plays the prestigious role of *mamacu*, literally meaning mother to the Yumbos, who simultaneously plays the reed flute and a bass drum. The plastic feathers, modern pink jaguar print loin cloth, and flower-print top donned by this Yumbo essentialize and exaggerate the Yumbo representation during the San Bartolomé Festival. Survey participants recognized this Yumbo as indigenous with 67% answering in the affirmative. Only 15% answer negatively and another 16% left this question unanswered. On one survey, a self-identifying indigenous person from the Amazonian region remarked that the representation of the Yumbo was the only indigenous depiction on the entire survey. While this participant’s responses varied from the trend in answers, they do demonstrate a staunch regionalism that continues between highland and lowland indigenous groups, who often claim more indigeneity than the other.

The third photo shows a young man dressed in sunglasses, a pull over shirt, and belted denim jeans, smoking a cigarette. This man was president of one of the nine sectors of Lumbisí, a prestigious socio-political position within the community. He walked with a float mounted on a pick-up truck that depicted a giant soccer ball, representative of his sector named after their athletic stadium. Not surprisingly, 50% of the participants identified this man as a mestizo, while only 38% identified him as an indigenous person, and 21% did not respond to this question. Participants pointed to dress and as the most consistent factor in determining this mestizo identification, and those who believed him to be indigenous relied on physical features.

A Lumbiseña woman dressed in clothing inspired by traditional regalia worn in Lumbisí composes the fourth picture of the survey. She works as a cook for the elderly in a community sponsored soup kitchen and as a housewife raising three small children. This day, she donned festival attire to participate in a dance choreographed by the elderly of Lumbisí. The dress this
woman wears typifies traditional indigenous clothing throughout the Andes of Ecuador including her fedora, long braided hair, ornately embroidered blouse, skirt, and alpargatas (Andean sandals). Nearly 80% of the survey participants concluded this woman is indigenous based on her clothing. The 4% that concluded she is mestiza indicated she may be a folklore dancer, dressed in indigenous clothes but not an ethnically indigenous person, and the other 13% did not answer this question.

The photo in question five of the survey shows a former Festival Commission President, a highly esteemed social role that peaks during the successful presentation of the San Bartolomé Festival, the largest festival of the year. The community nominates and elects the Festival Commission’s president annually. This man holds a job in the city, has two children, and serves his community by gathering goods and services to make festivals come to fruition. In this picture, he stands next to the image of Saint Bartholomew with his fellow Festival Commission Officers. Survey participants had mixed reactions to this photo. On the one hand, 42% believed this man is mestizo, again, indicating his clothes as the major determining factor, 38% answered he is indigenous based on physical features, and 20% left the question unanswered. The fluctuation in the percentage of unanswered questions here rises, potentially indicating uncertainty in answer choice, where as more people answered the questions in which they had more confidence.

The final image on the survey, question six, depicts a child dressed in native highland costume. She wore this outfit to dance in the general procession during the San Bartolomé festival as an Otavaleña, a young girl from the Kichwa community of Otavalo in the northern Imbabura Province. The young girl and her mother sported similar outfits, while her father wore white cotton pants, a dark blue poncho, a white hat, and a “white/pink” paper mâché mask with
green eyes. As the family danced through the streets with others in Otavaleño costume, they mocked the spiritual cleansing of high members of the Lumbiseño social hierarchy by beating them with bouquets of chamomile, rubbing live guinea pigs across their exposed flesh, and blowing sugarcane spirits upon them. The image presented to survey participants drew nearly unanimous results—79% concluded she is indigenous and only 3% disputed this claim. Many participants wrote in the description “Kichwa” or “Otavaleña” in the margin by their affirmative answers.

The results of this survey show that these university students identified three photographs as representations of mestizos (1, 3, and 5), while the other photographs (2, 4, and 6) depicted indigenous peoples. These results correspond to the nostalgic stereotypes of indigenous peoples as conservators of traditional dress and particular phenotypic features used by the non-indigenous elite and middle class Ecuadorians to identify elites. Government propaganda promoting “The homeland belongs to everyone” also featured images of indigenous people, dressed in traditional clothing or adorned with face paint and feathers. Non-indigenous people continue to openly utilize these images and visual markers including dress and phenotypic features (ex. nose shape, forehead height, stature, cleanliness, and skin color) to identify, racialize, and discriminate against indigenous peoples encountered within the city. These data show a disconnect between public policy and the “Indian problem,” which non-indigenous Ecuadorians erroneously claim, negatively impacts the economy and the ability to achieve a western notion of modernity (Whitten 1981, Stutzman 1981, Guss 2000, Weismantel 2001).

**Popular and Alternative Indigenous Movements in the Highlands of Ecuador**

The previous perceptions of indigeneity outlined above emanate from the formalized institution of the state and by people who primarily identify as whites, blanco-mestizos, or
mestizos. In this section, I examine two distinct perceptions of indigeneity from indigenous movements that have emerged in the Andes region of Ecuador. The two movements consist of the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador supported by ECUARUNARI—The Confederation of Peoples of Kiwcha Nationality—in the Andes region, and the Pueblo Kitu-Kara movement, an emerging force of indigenous power emanating from the city of Quito and its surrounds. Although in recent years CONAIE and the Kitu-Kara have steadily merged political positions and socio-economic goals, this section focuses on where the two organizations diverge on the issue of indigenous identity and who constitute the indigenous people in Ecuador.

**CONAIE – The Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador**

Indigenous peoples of Ecuador united to form the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE) in 1986. CONAIE remains the largest and strongest indigenous organization in Ecuador today. CONAIE recognizes 16 official indigenous nations throughout the Amazonian, coastal, and highland regions, including, Shuar, Achuar, Shiwiar, Andoa, Siona, Secoya, Cofán, Huaorani, Záparo, Chachi, Tsáchila, Awá, Epera, Manta, Wancavilca and Quichua/Kichwa. Three regional organizations including the Confederation of Kichwa Nationalities (ECUARUNARI), Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of the Ecuadorian Amazon (CONFENIAE), and Coordination of Indigenous and Black Organizations of the Ecuadorian Coast (CONAICE) comprise local extensions of CONAIE, which maintains its base in Quito. CONAIE serves as the pinnacle of indigenous authority on indigeneity in Ecuador. CONAIE’s recognition of an indigenous group or nation serves as a type of authentication or approval, much like a boarder inspection as described by Lugo (2000). In this case, indigenous authenticity, as a social domain, requires inspection based on traditional dress, native language use, maintenance of traditional ideology and celebrations, and the occupation of (and sometimes
legal rights to) rural agricultural land. The absence of these indigenous characteristics essentially annuls indigeneity in the purview of CONAIE.

In November 2006, one of the founders and former presidents of CONAIE, Luis Macas (1991-1996 and 2004-2008), arrived to the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign to deliver his lecture entitled, “Globalization from Below.” Macas explained the current goals of CONAIE for the indigenous nationalities and peoples of Ecuador, namely to obtain land and natural resource rights and plurinational recognition by the state within Ecuador. He further presented ideas of a global indigeneity that drew on similarities between the Navajo, Maya, and Inca cosmovisions to demonstrate the unity of Native North and South American peoples. During an informal conversation, I asked Dr. Macas his opinion and definition of indigeneity in Ecuador. I asked if he or CONAIE would recognize a person or group of people that claims indigenous identity, but neither wears traditional clothing, nor speaks a native language as his/her primary language, as indigenous people? He responded with a quick and absolute, “No.” He claimed that wearing traditional clothes and speaking a native language, in this case Kichwa, were integral to indigenous identity within Ecuador.

Macas’ call for unity among “traditional” indigenous groups across the Americas was later echoed in a June 2010 CONAIE sanctioned event called the “Kuntur anka pachakutik—Meeting of the Condor and Eagle for the Return of the Good Life.” This encounter united North American indigenous peoples including representatives of the Navajo, Dakota, and an Alaskan native with representatives of highland and lowland South American indigenous peoples in Quito. According to some North American participants, the purpose of this conference aimed to fulfill a (North) American Indian prophecy of indigenous unity across the continents of Abya-Yala—the native term for North and South America. However, frustrations rose between the
groups, as the indigenous peoples of Ecuador refused to concede the title of *originarios*—original families—as a form of prestige and distinction in favor of a unified term to encompass all indigenous peoples on both continents.

CONAIE’s mission in the 21st century steadily draws on discourse of pan-American indigeneity and the unity of indigenous peoples across the Americas. However, their concept of indigeneity in Ecuador fails to reflect the same forward thinking of their contemporary approach to indigenous unity. CONAIE’s propaganda and images associated with the organization’s political movement aligns indigeneity with monolithic Western ideologies and typologies of social-political organization formulated in the early days of the discipline (Service 1972).

**Pueblo Kitu-Kara**

*Qui-tu, dos palabras del idioma de los Quitu, existente muchos años anterior al quechua de los incas, su significado se relaciona con la conciencia de estar en la tierra medio, del centro. Somos un pueblo con más de cuarenta mil años de existencia (Quijia et al 2006:3).*

*Qui-tu, two words from the Quitu language, which existed many years before the Quechua of the Incas, means how one relates with the consciousness of being in the middle earth, of the center. We are a community with more than 40,000 years of existence (My translation)*

Founded as an advisory board to the Council of Nationalities and Peoples of Ecuador (CODENPE) in 2003, the Pueblo-Kitu Kara (also known as the Kitukara or Quitu-Cara) organization continues to gain strength in the heart of the Metropolitan District of Quito. Centered in Pichincha Province, the Kitu-Kara movement forms a rising socio-political indigenous organization claims Kichwa nation ancestry. Since its formal inception in 2003, the Pueblo Kitu-Kara has (re)claimed over 100,000 members who pertain to 64 “marginalized” communities in the northern highlands of Pichincha Province³. The majority of the population

³ The Pueblo Kitu-Kara claims ethnic affiliation with but not limited to Amaguaña, Alangasí, Calacalí, Calderón, Bellavista, San Juan, San Miguel Común, Landázuri, Llano Grande, Condado, Conocoto, Cotocollao, Cumbayá,
inhabits urban and semi-urban spaces in and around the city of Quito. As of 2010, the Pueblo Kitu-Kara holds legal land rights to less than 40% of these communities, which they consider ancestral lands (CODENPE 2010). The Kitu-Kara share land, water, natural resources and indigenous rights as their principal political platform with CONAIE and ECUARUNARI. Groups of Pueblo Kitu-Kara leaders travel to indigenous communities surrounding Quito offering political solidarity and political and economic assistance to those urban indigenous peoples who have either “lost” their sense of indigenous identity through contact with white and elite Ecuadorians in the city or who celebrate Kitu-Kara origin.

Early activities organized by the Kitu-Kara in the Quito Basin included Inti Raymi ceremonies at the national archaeological park of Rumipamba (FONSAL and Banco Central del Ecuador 2006) and various, small ritual ceremonies conducted by recognized shaman, Jaime Pilatuña in sacred spaces (re)claimed by the Pueblo Kitu-Kara including pre-Hispanic ruins in Cochasquí and Pomasquí. Each event steadily evolved and brought more participants from many local comunas, indigenous communities who hold land rights in common, and pueblos, small towns conformed mostly of indigenous populations from the Quito Basin, as well as urban indigenous enclaves within the city of Quito. In 2008, the Kitu-Kara sponsored the first annual “Symbolic Taking of the Plaza” in Tumbaco during the week-long celebration of Inti Raymi, the Kichwa Nation’s celebration of the Incan Sun God. The first taking of the plaza recognized multiple dance comparsas, groups of organized and choreographed dancers. These dance groups performed dances to Sanjuanitos, a traditional Andean music in Ecuador, around the central park of Tumbaco in front of the modern and colonial churches in the square. The Inti Raymi

celebration of 2009 transformed into a week-long event in several Kitu-Kara related venues, including Itchimbia Park, a former twentieth century hacienda turned urban green space at the eastern edge of colonial downtown Quito. The Inti Raymi ceremonies and the taking of the Tumbaco Plaza provide a space for the Pueblo Kitu-Kara to seek recognition, group fortification, and reclaim symbols, dances, ancestral spaces, and reinvent and reclaim their urban indigenous identity.

In 2007, the Pueblo Kitu-Kara presented a program, partially in Kichwa, on indigenous land rights and organization to the General Assembly in Lumbisí. Representatives of all the originarios of Lumbisí listened and observed intently to the presentation for nearly three hours. Most Lumbiseños were confused as to the content of the presentation, since they obtained communal rights to their land in 1981 during the agrarian reform, and continue to govern their community under locally established laws and authorities. Despite the general resistance of the Lumbiseños to this program, the Pueblo Kitu-Kara placed Lumbisí on the list of Kitu-Kara ancestry. The organization appeared to gain further support from Lumbisí when in 2007, a newly, elected president of the Kitu-Kara organization came from the same community. However, in interviews among the general population of Lumbisí in 2008 and 2009, beyond the family directly involved with the Pueblo Kitu-Kara organization, no one had heard of, participated in, or believed they were part of, the Pueblo Kitu-Kara. During the Lumbiseña president’s administration, other Lumbiseños were neither present nor participated in dance comparsas or yumbo presentations to support the Pueblo Kitu-Kara.

Although the Pueblo Kitu-Kara share similar political concerns and affiliate with CONAIE and ECUARUANRI, a disconnect occurs between these mainstream indigenous movements representations of indigeneity and the day-to-day representations of members of the
Pueblo Kitu-Kara. Few Kitu-Kara members dress in “traditional” Kitu-Kara costume, which resembles the colonial attire of indigenous streetsweepers, commonly referred to as guangudos, long-haired ones, who worked in Quito until the early 20th century (Rivera Vélez Rivera 1988). This attire for men consists of bright red ponchos with symmetric colored stripes and cropped white cotton pants. Women who proclaim their Kitu Kara identity don clothing similar to other highland Kichwa indigenous women including intricately embroidered white blouses, double-layered anacus, wrap-around skirts, secured with two belts called the mama chumbi, mother belt, and the, wawa chumbi, child belt, in Kichwa. However, the majority of the Kitu-Kara I encountered in 2007-2009 wore modern, western inspired clothing. Their lifestyles resemble the description that Frank Salomon provided for the Quito Runa (Salomon 1981). Salomon states that the Quito Runa are virtually indiscernible as indigenous people in the urban setting, but in their home communities and during festival performances, their identity shifts in line with concepts of local indigenous identity.

The Kitu-Kara are urban indigenous peoples, who in their own words “...se toma en cuenta a aquellas familias de indígenas que aún con pertenencia histórica, han sido invadidas por la urbanidad”—take into account those indigenous families that despite their historical belonging have been invaded by urbanity (Quijia et al 2006: 9).” The Kitu-Kara compare urbanity and modernity to infirmities that infest Pacha Mama, Earth Mother. They define contemporary indigeneity as:

pueblos y nacionalidades indígenas aquellos grupos humanos que tienen una forma propia de caracterización de su contexto sociocultural, representando en su forma física, en el idioma, la vestimenta, el territorio y en su forma simbólica, sus valores y costumbres culturales como la danza, la música, la medicina (Quijia 2006: 8).—indigenous communities and nationalities are those groups of humans that have their own form of carácter based on their sociocultural context, representing a physical form, in language, dress, territory and symbolic forms,
whose values and cultural customs include dance, music, and medicine (My translation).

While the Kitu-Kara definitions of indigeneity above appear to align with the “traditional” images and authentic indigenous check points offered by CONAIE and official representations of indigeneity within the state, a discourse of loss and degradation accompanies much of the literature authored by the Kitu-Kara. The Kitu-Kara justify the loss of “traditional” indigeneity due to their history of subjugation by white and blanco-mestizos, as well as their constant contact with non-indigenous peoples’ practices and proclaimed urban spaces. Urban spaces for the Kitu-Kara become a contested territory that can neither revert to rural agricultural lands nor provide the “traditional” space for the resurgence of their indigenous identity. The Kitu-Kara point to blanqueamiento, the process of cultural whitening, as the prime reason for the loss of their indigenous tradition and territory. This conversation of identity loss and crisis provides a space for ethnogenesis and identity (re)formation based on contemporary interpretations of indigenous oral history passed down through the generations combined with indigenous academic interventions as native students participate more heavily in cultural studies via local university programs. This idea of identity crisis implies a loss of identity and a nostalgia to regain an “authentic” or recognized indigenous identity despite the urban space the Kitu-Kara occupy.

Controversy and ambiguity surrounds the Pueblo Kitu-Kara Movement, not only for its questioned prehistoric existence in the Quito Basin and fight for urban territory, but also by the tactics employed by members in the procurement of new affiliates for their organization and their claims to ancestral lands in Pichincha Province. The Kitu-Kara share land, water, natural resources and indigenous rights as their principal political platform with CONAIE and ECUARUNARI. With this platform in mind, groups of Pueblo Kitu-Kara leaders travel to indigenous communities surrounding Quito offering political solidarity and sometimes financial
assistance to those urban indigenous peoples who have either “lost their indigenous identity” or who believe themselves to be of Kitu-Kara origin and wish to organize. Additional academic controversy surrounds the Kitu-Kara claim that the Kitu indigenous population inhabited their ancestral lands in and around Quito for 30,000 years and merged with the Kara people only 10,000 years ago to complete a total of 40,000 years of ancestral land occupation (Quijia 2006: 27). Many Ecuadorian anthropologists, archaeologists, and historians debate the existence of this ethnic group in the circum-Quito region prior to the arrival of the Inca (Federico González Suárez 1903, Jacinto Jijón y Caamaño 1997, and Ayala Mora et al 2008). Some suggest that the Pueblo Kitu-Kara existed only as a figment of the imagination of Father Juan de Velasco, an eighteenth century Jesuit priest, who wrote one of the most recognized histories of Quito entitled, Reino de Quito, or Kingdom of Quito written in 1767 (published in 1846).

Conclusion

Since 2006, Rafael Correa has promoted a new Ecuadorian nationalism inclusive of indigenous nations. For the very first time in Ecuadorian history, written acceptance of plurinationalism and a public, formalized rejection of inequality, racism, and discrimination in the new Ecuadorian Constitution comprise the most important advancements in social policy during the Correa administration. While these new decrees hold promise for the indigenous peoples of Ecuador, the implementation of these policies still lacks cohesion in daily interactions between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples in Quito. On the one hand these new constitutional rights form a progressive, plurinational and multicultural acceptance of diversity among indigenous nations. On the other hand, the images and definitions utilized by the government to define indigeneity remain monolithic and resistant to change or modernization. This image of indigenous belonging still pits indigenous peoples in socio-economic opposition to
all other Ecuadorians. The government continues to operate under the assumption and promotes images of indigeneity that place indigenous peoples in rural isolation and promulgate native language, dress, and local customs, while remaining unaffected by the modernity that surrounds them. The government proclaims nationalism united in diversity, but appears to reinforce long-standing stereotypes of indigeneity that distance indigenous peoples from Ecuadorian national belonging.

Dueling notions of indigeneity get reproduced by non-indigenous peoples in Quito, who belong to the middle-upper and upper classes. On the one hand popular local myths and legends produce images of the noble Inca and accepted or authentic indigeneity, and on the other hand reiterate popular stereotypes of indigenousness that promote fear, violence, criminalization, promiscuity, and poor hygiene. Conversations with upper-middle and upper classes of Quito evidenced that these non-indigenous peoples often use visual markers of indigeneity including traditional dress as indigenous dress, albeit with little knowledge of its provenience. In the absence of the clothing as a marker of indigeneity, self-identifying whites, blanco-mestizos, and mestizos revert to phenotype to evidence their presumptions of indigeneity. For example, many would make casual reference to the height of a person’s forehead or the size and shape of another’s nose to draw a distinction between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples.

These stereotypes of indigeneity based on phenotypes and costume were further evidenced in the survey conducted among non-indigenous students in a prominent, local private university. This survey, while viewed as a blatantly problematic exercise in a US university because of the implications of race and discrimination, was an uncontested task of identification for this Ecuadorian university classroom. Out of 117 students only 5 answered that all of the people featured on the slide that asked if the representations depicted indigenous people.
Somewhat alarmingly, the majority of students who answered all the questions for each individual, concluded that three photos (Photos 1, 3, 5) represented mestizos and the other three (Photos 2, 4, 6) represent indigenous peoples, two from the highland indigenous community of Otavalo (Photos 4 and 6) and one from an undefined nation of Amazonia (Photo 2). Without any questions to contextualize or elaborate on the pictures presented to them, the students created their own typology and categorization for these photos based on phenotype and visual indigenous markers such as clothing without hesitation. Even students who self-identified as indigenous appeared to have no problem with identifying any of the photos. All of the photos depicted in the slide were representations of indigenous people of Lumbisí performing various roles during their annual Patron Saint Festival. With this survey, I aimed to challenge students’ preconceived notions of indigeneity and to engage in a continued conversation about the meaning of plurinational acceptance and multicultural tolerance. However, their initial reaction to the survey reiterated the standardized images of indigeneity to which they have been exposed throughout their education and day-to-day experiences in their cities. Essentially, non-indigenous peoples distance themselves from indigenous peoples vis a vis wearing distinct clothing and in extreme cases altering their phenotypic features to look less indigenous.

The other representations of indigenous people emanate from indigenous organizations and movements within in Ecuador. Definitions and images of indigeneity offered by CONAIE, the largest and strongest indigenous organization in the highlands of Ecuador, reiterate a stereotype of indigenous peoples as timeless conservators of native language and dress, agricultural practices, and adobe brick houses. People, who claim Kichwa ancestry, as former president of CONAIE Luis Macas explained, must speak the Kichwa language, wear traditional clothes, and live a “traditional” indigenous lifestyle, otherwise, they are mestizos.
This definition of indigeneity reinforced time and again by CONAIE initially excluded urban indigenous peoples, who live a distinct Quito Runa lifestyle (see Salomon 1981). This lifestyle renders their indigenousness invisible within the cityscape but becomes more pronounced within their home community and during festivals. As a response to this exclusion, the Pueblo Kitu-Kara formed an advisory board to the new government. This organization defined urban indigeneity as an identity in crisis due to the process of ethnic and cultural whitening over the 500 years of urban contact with non-indigenous elite and middle class. While the Pueblo Kitu-Kara’s definition of indigeneity relies on the discourse of whitening and loss of tradition, the definition also implies a longing to reconstruct a traditional or authentic indigeneity based on collective memories and oral histories encountered in these communities. It is this nostalgic idea of indigeneity that coincides with the “traditional” indigeneity outlined by CONAIE, non-indigenous Ecuadorian citizens, and the state government.

These four prominent voices and positions on indigeneity converge on a stereotypical (mis)representation of indigenous peoples in Ecuador. Each representation harkens to a historical imaginary of timeless indigenous peoples, who not only remain unchanged, but promulgate tradition generation after generation. Any absence of this process or “traditional” visible indigenous markers becomes a point of disruption of this idealized image and implies a loss of indigenous identity. In the next chapter, I break with these idealized and nostalgic notions of indigeneity to describe the Comuna San Bartolomé de Lumbisí, and urban indigenous enclave in the Cumbayá Valley.
Chapter 3: Return and Reinvestment: Lumbiseño Identity and Comunero Hierarchy

Nestled between the hills of the Ilaló and Las Monjas Mountains, 10.5 miles southeast of Quito, Ecuador, the Comuna San Bartolomé de Lumbisí, a little known Kichwa and Spanish-speaking indigenous community, flourishes. On a typical business day, roosters begin to crow a little before dawn as the townspeople awake to the darkness and chill of the morning air. A quick splash of cold water from a bucket or at best a warmed water shower starts the mornings’ activities outdoors behind most Lumbiseño homes. Women begin their day as early as 4:00 a.m. by cooking giant pots of boiling hot soups over firewood to feed various generations of their extended families breakfast and then prepare for pasturing animals in distant grazing land. Younger men and women ranging in age from their late teens to late 60s prepare for their workday in the city of Quito, the neighboring Cumbayá Valley, or other distant projects in the highlands, Amazonian, and coastal regions.

As the principal mode of public transportation between the valley and the city, interparroquial buses enter the main town square in quarter-hour intervals from 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. and fill to capacity every morning. Lines of Lumbiseño businessmen in suits and ties, domestic servants in uniform, blue-collar workers, ambulant vendors with cloth covered baskets, and children in crisply pressed private school uniforms wait their turn to board. Students fill the aisles of the buses standing until the first bus exchange in Cumbayá, while others ride all the way to Quito in the cramped quarters of the interparroquial buses to attend private schools in the city. The few adults that stay behind in the community during the day include specialty store owners and workers, local doctors, members of the national police, the elderly, shepherds, school teachers, day-care workers, and housewives with infant children. The majority of Lumbiseños
commute every morning to work and return home every evening after a nearly 12-hour long workday, much like the commuters from suburban or satellite communities of any major city.

Figure 3.1 A view of the central plaza of Lumbísí in 2007. The Fondo de Salvamento de Patrimonio Cultural (Cultural Patrimony Salvage Fund) (FONSAL) redesigned and renovated this plaza during 2010-2011 with its inauguration in August 2011. [Photo courtesy of author]

The bus drivers crank the engines of the big green painted buses and through the cloud of black exhaust leave Lumbísí, making their way out of the visually marked borders of the community. The bus follows the only path into and out of the community down a short three-mile stretch of road bordered by multiple affluent, gated communities isolated within tall security walls topped with electric fencing, barbed wire, and jagged broken glass. A few short curves past the gated condominiums, houses, and apartments the buses cross over the newly reinforced portion of the road built and paved by Lumbiseños hands and equipment to provide safe passage over a ravine prone to mudslides. A few curves more and the bus proceeds past a sex scandal-ridden exclusive white social club housed in a former hacienda home and more newly built housing compounds that stand opposite wide open pasture land. A private German high school
sits behind iron gates and a long white block wall and older, established gated communities on former hacienda land also line the only paved road into and out of Lumbisí.

The buses finally arrive in Cumbayá, at a roundabout decorated with three totem-like pillars of artwork, where the bus route may proceed in one of three directions. To the east, the Pan American Highway crosses through the valley and over the highest peak of 13,000 feet above sea level en route to the Amazonian Region. To the north, an older route takes the buses across the defunct railroad tracks that once connected the Cumbayá Valley to Quito and various other colonial haciendas scattered throughout the Andes Region. Just a block away from the old railroad crossing and contemporary central bus station sits the colonial center of Cumbayá, now a gentrified space replete with posh restaurants and boutiques for upscale dining and shopping. To the west, the bus emerges in the contemporary urban center of the Cumbayá Valley, which acts as a switchboard directing traffic to the city, the village and former chiefdom of Guápulo, the nearby private university, or the previously mentioned destinations. Most Lumbiseño passengers make the hour long journey to the Río Coca station in the cosmopolitan northern sector of Quito, and from there workers disseminate on foot, by trolley, in taxis, or in other buses to arrive at their job sites and begin their work day. The return trip from the city follows the same hour long path home. Lumbisí sits at the dead end of this long and winding path, and some outsiders insist that its surmise looms as the encroachment of modernity and cosmopolitanism in the valley draws ever nearer. Lumbiseños continue to proclaim that the land, traditions, and way of life continue to be their own, albeit marked with changes.

The barrage of images that a Lumbiseño encounters on his daily sojourn to work or school in the city reflects the greater social, economic, and ethnic diversity that surrounds their community, and speaks to the complexity of their own indigenous identity within the real and
imagined boarders of their community. The stereotypical Ecuadorian notions of indigeneity explored in Chapter II depict lazy, antiquated, agro-pastoralists, who isolate themselves in rural communities and remain monolithic representatives of a distant past unable to grasp modernity and respect their own traditions at the same time. Lumbiseño identity contradicts these notions. Walking through the main town square on any given day, Lumbisí appears no different from any other working-class, Andean town. Unlike other recognized Kichwa communities, such as Otavalo in Imbabura Province to the north (Wibbelsman 2005), Salasaca in Tungurahua Province in the central Andes (Wogan 2004, Corr 2004, 2009), or Saraguro in Loja Province to the south (Macas, Belote, and Belote 2003), the people of Lumbisí wear western-inspired clothing and conduct all their daily, public interactions in Spanish. Whereas other indigenous communities establish specific spaces and days for markets, Lumbisí houses small specialty shops that vend fresh fruits and vegetables, butchered meats, breads and pastries, or common convenience store items daily. The market, in effect, comes to Lumbisí as ambulant vendors and distributors arrive in large supply trucks to leave fresh produce, crates of Pilsner beer, soft drinks, and wholesale fresh seafood, poultry, beef, and pork, as well as a variety of handicrafts, utensils, and utilitarian wares. Small, locally run restaurants on the main town square offer executive menus with rapidly prepared and consumed lunches consisting of large bowls of soups and segundos or main dishes for lunch that cost one US dollar for the bus drivers and police force and other workers who have only minutes to eat in the town between bus routes or patrols during the business day.

Lumbisí lacks tourist attractions such as artisan markets or hacienda homes converted into quaint bed and breakfasts for tourists and wealthy, non-indigenous peoples escaping the
chaos of the city similar to the ones that line the Pan American Highway in other provinces of Ecuador.

Women and men in Lumbisí dedicate themselves to professional positions ranging from blue-collar jobs to white-collar professional positions instead of working to harvest wool and weave it via back-strap looms into intricately designed tapestries or clothing to sell at a particular tourist market (Colloredo-Mansfeld 1999). Lumbiseños have no signature artisan good developed in their community, such as ceramics or balsa wood figurines, but their community boasts one of the largest unions of renowned professional carpenters in the region. While recognized for this trade, carpenters in Lumbisí do not wear any clothing that would readily identify them as part of the Kichwa nation to which they belong and self-identify, as men and women from other indigenous communities of the Kichwa nation do. Tourists rarely purposefully travel to the community, despite efforts over the last decade to increase tourism as an extra source of community income. New straw-thatched bungalows built for tourists usually sit empty on the western slope of the community. Adventure sport and biking expeditions also occasionally take place in the surrounding hillsides, but participants pack their gear and leave Lumbisí after the races or hikes conclude.

A new Non-Government Organization (NGO) entered Lumbisí in 2007 that continues to invite and encourage international university students to participate in local service projects within the community. Students come to participate in three principal community projects including an organic garden, preschool, and soup kitchen for the elderly developed by Lumbiseños and staffed by mostly white international volunteers. White foreign students pay individual Lumbiseño families through the NGO for home stay experiences. Lumbiseños often compete to provide a private room and bathroom with running water and three home cooked
meals a day for the students whom they refer to as *gringuitos*, affectionately recognized white foreigners, which in turn affords these native families prestige within the native community. The Lumbiseño host mothers attend focus group sessions to voice the difficulties and oddities of hosting exchange students and to help figure out how to make them more comfortable or to better understand miscommunications through the language barrier or a student’s actions that may result in community consequences to the hosts beyond their own bruised ego. Large groups of gringuitos, who arrive from all over the United States and Europe, are a recent novelty for Lumbiseños and provide a new source of long distance networking, reciprocity, and friendships. Some Lumbiseños who have established themselves in the diaspora of Spain, Italy and the United States, met and encouraged gringuitos to visit their home community in Ecuador.

Recognition of the toponym Lumbisí has increased within the last five years within affluent white and blanco-mestizo social circles within Quito, as current and prospective residents talk about the enticing climate and all the modern conveniences of living in the Cumbayá Valley. These residents refer to their own private addresses, which bear the name Lumbisí rather than referring to the indigenous comuna. During the pre-Hispanic period, some argue Lumbiseño land stretched across what is now the Cumbayá Valley all the way to the limits of Guápulo, another Andean chiefdom near the modern northern sector of Quito (Rebolledo 1992). From purchase and barter of Lumbiseño land between Spanish elites in the colonial period to the agrarian reform of the 1980s, land tenure reduced significantly to the approximately 1514 acres on which Lumbiseños reside today. The address shared by the affluent white and blanco-mestizos populations and indigenous residents of Lumbisí results from the maintenance of the toponym, despite the reduction of land belonging to the indigenous population. Now when approached on the subject, the wealthy social circles of Quito recognize the location of Lumbisí,
but argue that indigenous peoples do not exist in the valley. Yet more and more wealthy, non-indigenous residents of the valley in some cases unknowingly share the same address as the comuneros. Instead, affluent Quiteños view Lumbisí as a developing upscale white-mestizo community in the Cumbayá Valley and rarely acknowledge that this indigenous community exists.

Historically, the people of Lumbisí assert they occupied the Cumbayá Valley since time immemorial, a claim that opens their 1981 constitution. The second article of Lumbisí’s constitution recognizes the community’s indigenous identity and the general beliefs of the community. The article states:

“The comuna of Lumbisí is a peasant indigenous organization, with marked traditional social coherence, based on the original families of the comuna, from ancestral roots, united by cultural and spiritual bonds, customs, and common interests and aspirations; written in the registry of the census and legalized by the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock.” [My translation]

This article, penned by Lumbiseños, evokes their long history of ancestry, proprietorship, tradition, and unity. Contemporary Lumbiseños continue to live by the laws, rights, benefits, and punishments assessed by the local General Assembly, composed of originarios.

Today, Lumbiseños occupy 613 hectare (approximately 1,515 acres) of the former land known as Lumbisí. Lumbiseños currently live on some of the most expensive and sought after real estate in the Cumbayá Valley, yet refuse to accept any offers to sell it. They work in the surrounding cities of the Metropolitan District of Quito, but return home each day after their work is done. Some Lumbiseños who have obtained secondary education and a resulting vocation return to practice their trade in the community. Unlike 20-30 years ago, they have electricity, running water, cell phones, and video games. In 2009, Lumbiseños even posted videos of their traditional San Bartolomé Festival celebrations on YouTube. In this chapter, I examine the complexity of the indigeneity celebrated in Lumbisí that marries concepts of
tradition with urbanity to forge a modern indigenous and cosmopolitan identity. I argue that Lumbiseños create a distinct urban indigenous identity that draws from originario ancestry, traditional social and economic practices within the community, and the day-to-day appropriation of urban capital and prestige gained in Quito and Cumbayá. The oral history and archival evidence of this community coupled with its long-standing relationship with Quito reflect an indigeneity divergent from the models and representations described in the previous chapter.

**Hacienda Life and the Hierarchy of Lumbisí**

Under Spanish rule, the fertile land of the Cumbayá Valley was divided among several Spanish elite as the spoils of victory over local indigenous chiefdoms called *cacigazgos*. Sebastian de Benálcazar, who alongside the infamous Spanish conquistador Francisco de Pizzaro, conquered Quito from the rule of local indigenous leader Rumiñahui in 1534. As a reward for his duty, Benálcazar gave his primary captain, Diego de Tapia, a tract of land recognized as the *pueblo de las guabas* (land of the guava fruit), which included Lumbisí (Rebolledo 1992). This tract of land stretched from the Machangara River to the San Pedro River and included the land of the Las Monjas and Ilaló mountains (Rebolledo 1992).

Shortly thereafter, de Tapia died and part of the land of Lumbisí transferred to the Franciscan Order of the Catholic Church, first through the hands of Friar Jodoco Rique and ultimately to the nuns of the *Limpia Concepción*, Nuns of the Immaculate Conception. These nuns and the Franciscan order amassed several tremendous haciendas in and around colonial Quito, but they lacked the workers to effectively cultivate and harvest the land (Rebolledo 1992). As part of the taxation imposed by the Spanish crown, the Nuns of the Immaculate Conception required indigenous laborers to contribute harvested crops and labor as tribute. Indigenous
peoples from Lumbísí were forced to work in rotations of up to a month at a time on distant haciendas in Riobamba, Latacunga, and Otavalo as a form of payment established by the Spanish colonials. They also labored in progressively longer rotations on the nuns’ haciendas in Lumbísí, Chillogallo, and Itchimbía throughout the early twentieth century (Rebolledo 1992).

These former haciendas remain closely connected through contemporary marriages and shared ancestry that link the people of Lumbísí with a long history of travel and service in larger metropolitan areas. Intermixing of the original population first began with the Incas in the sixteenth century, but later in the eighteenth century the population’s diversity grew more complex with the addition of yanaconas, indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian laborers, other indigenous peoples from various encomiendas, other local originarios from the Cumbaya Valley, and indígenas sueltos, free indigenous peoples from surrounding haciendas. This aggregate of distinct indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian peoples established an enduring interregional affiliation and created a highly diverse population of indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian peoples residing in Lumbísí for nearly four centuries (Rebolledo 1992). As Rebolledo (1992: 228) describes:

“Lumbísí then appears as a place of refuge and an arrival point for [indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian] migrants fleeing aboriginal communities driven from their lands [to Lumbísí] where they found a relatively safe haven, since they would have the possibility of some independence with [their own] economic activities that allowed them to reproduce and pay taxes.” [My translation]

For nearly five centuries, Lumbiseños continue to practice long distance travel to labor on other proprietors’ land, while maintaining their households and returning to their native families and community.

This historical practice influences the lifestyles that Lumbiseños continue to follow, but with the noted changes in freedom to choose their professions, duration of the time spent away from their families, and wages earned in US dollars after the 2000 dollarization of the national economy. Now, travel to labor in the surrounding cities of Quito and Cumbayá as well as other
distant towns in other provinces includes exponentially expanding varieties of blue collar and professional work. Month long rotations converted in most cases to shorter distance commutes that allow for a comunero’s daily return to his or her home, rendering contemporary Lumbisí an indigenous satellite community positioned in the hub of an affluent white and blanco-mestizo Quiteño suburban expansion.

**Originarios, Forasteros, and Yanaconas: Defining the Hierarchy of Lumbisí**

While the population of Lumbisí diversified substantially in its early documented history, the long history of internal community hierarchy continues to reflect divisions between established local families, naturalized members of the community, and strangers referred to as *forasteros* or *gente de afuera*, outsiders. According to local oral tradition, the fissures that created these hierarchies began with factions of the original native population of Lumbisí that stayed in the valley when Inca *mitimaes* arrived to establish local trade and strategic military positioning in the northern expanse of *Tawantinsuyu*—the Inca Empire. This long held belief connects Lumbiseño natives to Inca ancestry and perpetuates two prominent stories repeated in contemporary local oral tradition and outsider gossip. Some valley residents refer to Lumbiseños as “*peruanos*,” Peruvians, due to their foreign, Inca ancestry. Another local rumor connects Lumbisí to the last Inca ruler in Quito, Atahualpa, who reportedly hid his treasure in the land of Lumbisí before he was killed by Spanish Conquistador Francisco Pizzaro. The native population merged with Inca *mitimaes* sent to the Cumbayá Valley directly from Cuzco, Peru. These two populations comprised a historically privileged indigenous class collectively recognized as *originarios*, literally the original ones, meaning families with ancestral ties to the founding members of the population.
Lumbisí became an hacienda under de Tapia’s patronage. While originarios served as subservient laborers for de Tapia’s hacienda, throughout the community’s documented history originarios played an important local role as powerful native community leaders. This leadership role established a native hierarchy that positioned originarios as the ruling class within the community. As Lyons (2006: 73) argues, the institution of the hacienda was not only an economic enterprise for the Spanish colonials, but also a “…setting for a web of social relationships among indigenous laborers.” He states:

Despite their subservient position in the chain of command, indigenous people living on haciendas collectively created a complex society that spanned hacienda boundaries. Social ties among kin and friends enhanced hacienda Runa’s economic security and their room to maneuver vis-à-vis the landlord. Hacienda residents’ right to use hacienda land and other resources were a material basis for an autonomous domain in which they exchanged labor and goods as an everyday expression of social relationships. (Lyons 2006: 73)

This socio-political network forged under the constraints of hacienda and later native run encomiendas allowed originarios to gain power and control over other indigenous peoples brought to labor on the hacienda of Lumbisí as well as rise up against the established patronage of the hacienda.

According to the description of a Spanish scribe in 1681, Don Diego Quispi Santos was one of the first recorded caciques (leaders) of Lumbisí, who challenged the Order of the Immaculate Conception nuns’ demands for labor rotation between their haciendas (Rebolledo 1992). The dispute began in 1762 when more and more indigenous tributaries abandoned the nuns and moved to the land controlled by Quispi, an originario surname traced through to present now written as Quishpe. At the time Quispi controlled the land with the largest population of free indigenous peoples in the Cumbayá Valley. The dispute escalated when the nuns demanded that the indigenous people who left their lands to live and work the common lands of Lumbisí regulated by Quispe still had to contribute service to the nuns’ haciendas in Chillogallo and
Itchimbía as part of their tribute (Rebolledo 1992: 198). Quispi insisted that the nuns increase wages for those who had to serve on their distant haciendas because these labor conditions forced indigenous people, especially men, away from their own families and familial crops for more than a month at a time (Rebolledo 1992). The administrator of the nuns’ hacienda retaliated against Quispi’s demands and burned his home to the ground. Free indigenous peoples took this case to the Spanish Justice, who ruled that the administrator had to rebuild the home of the cacique (Rebolledo 1992: 224).

Lumbiseño originario families, such as the descendants of Don Diego Quispi, promulgated their foothold on authority through centuries of two forms of endogamous marriages. They used both community endogamy and a more extended ethnic endogamy within the Andean system of *ayllu*, social and kinship networking. The ayllu draws on a local system of familial and social networks that eventually expanded outside the immediate geographic community yet presumably within the ideology of endogamy. This complex system of endogamy incorporated connections to other indigenous peoples on different haciendas and others who were brought as yanaconas to live in Lumbisí. The practice of arranged and endogamous marriages continued well into the mid-twentieth century.

In a 2009 interview, a community elder explained that her cousin was the first to marry a woman from Luluncoto, an indigenous community located in the south of Quito, in the 1940s, but “*le hablaban*,” (“they [the community people] talked about her”). She described how the community gossiped and bullied the couple, explaining that the people of the community considered her cousin a “*traidor*” (traitor) for bringing an outsider into the community. She explained that the people of Lumbisí, at the time all originarios, referred to his wife as a
“venidera,” roughly translated as “newcomer.” The couple attempted to stay married for a while, but the gossip angered her cousin and eventually the conflicted couple, tortured by community’s rejection of his foreign spouse relented under the community pressure. The couple separated, and his wife left the community to return to Luluncoto.

The acceptance of exogamous marriage between originarios and other indigenous peoples remains a point of contention within Lumbisí. Despite records that show multiple generations of marriages with indigenous surnames that appear in the national archives from other communities (Jurado Noboa 2002), the rules of Lumbiseño endogamy clearly distinguish white, mestizo, and Afro-Ecuadorians as unacceptable marriage partners. Additionally, indigenous peoples outside of the accepted alliances and social networks established in Lumbisí meet resistance when attempting to marry within the comuna. By the 1990s, the practice of exogamous marriages outside acceptable networks became more common in Lumbisí, albeit still complicated by rumors and community gossip.

Most contemporary originario men and women have indigenous spouses from other communities; however, their spouses, despite registering and complying with the constitution of the community never gain full originario status. The pressures to conform to community laws and expectations prove difficult for outsiders who marry into the community. These outsiders who attempt to achieve citizenship within the comuna still receive differential treatment and less than full community rights and benefits. These challenges to exogamous marriage test the couple’s ability to maintain their relationship and residence within Lumbisí; however, in contemporary Lumbisí more couples of originario and indigenous ancestry remain together and have successful relationships.

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4 By the term venidera the elder tried to convey the novelty of her cousin’s spouse as a new comer or foreigner to the community with veni- from the Spanish verb venir, to come and –dera, a suffix that indicates a person that does the action of the verb.
Centuries of endogamous marriage resulted in the appearance of approximately ten prominent contemporary originario families. According to Quijia et al (2006:55), the native surnames of the original population that inhabited Lumbisí include multiple Kichwa names such as: Sulca, Ushiña, Picho, Tutillo, Sacancela, Guandaje, Sangucho, Quiguango, and Taco. Of these names, the following five surnames in various binomial combinations continue to exist in the contemporary Lumbiseño population including Picho, Sacancela, Sulca, Taco, and Ushiña. Jurado Noboa (2002: 151) states that the name Picho emanates from the Kichwa term pishcu (Cordero 2002) for bird and figures three times in the census of Lumbisí conducted in 1804. The Picho family remains a very large influence on the community and figures as one of the most prominent surnames. Sacancela, on the other hand does not appear in the archives examined by Jurado Noboa, but has originario status according to Quijia et al 2006 based on local informants accounts. The Sacancela family also continues to figure as a very large family name with political clout and economic strength within Lumbisí. The surname Sulca appears in national archives both in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries, but not within the context of Lumbisí, rather in Yaruqui, Santiago de Chimbo, and Alaques, which are other indigenous enclaves (Jurado Noboa 2002:181). Several nuclear families bare the Sulca surname in the contemporary community of Lumbisí. While Taco appears to be a Spanish surname in Kichwa Taco signifies “carob or locust tree,” and appears in the late seventeenth century as a surname from Amaguaña and again later in the mid-eighteenth century in Conocoto (Jurado Noboa 2002:183). While this surname still exists in the community, I have encountered it with less frequency than with other originario surnames. Ushiña, a Kichwa surname term derived from the root ushi meaning daughter with relation to her father and the suffix –ña, meaning now or already, perhaps alluding to the marriage bond and in-law status. This surname appeared within
local accounts of originario families in Lumbisí, but did not appear in the national archives. The Ushiña family continues to be one of the largest, most prominent families within Lumbisí with substantial political and economic power.

Beyond the list compiled by Quijos et al (2006), other contemporary surnames names exist within the community, all of which are considered originario families. Members of these families hold land rights, some have held official positions within the community government, and all appear on the official registry of residents read during each General Assembly meeting. Quijia et al (2006) claim that their list of originario names represents pre-Colombian surnames, and excluded the following names from that list: Caillagua, Chillán, Cusi, Guascal, and Quishpe. Lumbiseños with these surnames combined with the contemporary family names that still exist in the community from the Quijia list mark the majority of the population and land holdings within Lumbisí.

In addition to the prominent families listed above, the community recognizes other originario surnames as members of Lumbisí with comunal rights. While some of these surnames represent small families with long-standing political power, others, I suggest, represent the later additions of family names obtained when the long-held practice of endogamous marriage faded into regular exogamous marriages with people in other indigenous communities. Some of these names include Almache, Caiza, Cajas, Cando, Chicaiza, Chicharrón, Cunas, Huascal, Paillacho, Reinoso, Santos, and Simbaña.

Originarios in Lumbisí hold a distinct status in comparison to those considered outsiders. Historically, originarios laid claim to the land of Lumbisí and merged with the Inca mitimaq in order to stay on their ancestral land. Despite the later creation of a Spanish hacienda on the same land and the integration of multiple indigenous groups within the borders of the community,
originarios maintained their claim to Lumbisí. After the land reforms of the eighteenth century and the institution of Don Diego Quispi as the proprietor of encomienda land in Lumbisí, the originarios passed their land rights down to their children bilaterally to ensure the proliferation of the community and the social and familial ties that united them.

FORASTEROS

Forasteros in the historical context, as opposed to originarios, threatened the stability of the community. According to Rebolledo (1992), the originario members of Lumbisí divided when the Inca mitimaes and the Spaniards arrived. While some originarios stayed, forasteros fled from the valley to occupy the forests of the surrounding mountains. Members of this population became known as forasteros, translated as outsiders, strangers, visitors, or in some cases as traitors. During the colonial period, more indigenous peoples became forasteros to avoid the persecution and control of the Spanish. The forasteros’ abandonment of their home communities created a disjuncture with community values, where the selfish action of abandonment would cause repercussions throughout the entire community. Rebolledo (1992:260) states:

…during the colonial period [a forastero was] characterized by the abandonment of the community of origin, cultural matrix, and parental means; it translates to cutting ties to the land, living and dead relatives, the present and past, with the natural and supernatural; and represented by the land and burials within it, the people who remained relived their abandonment daily through production and festival activities that implied greater involvement to fulfill colonial obligations; and raising the possibility of individual salvation. [My translation]

This rupture with community values and the sentiment of betrayal and abandonment from within the original population kept forasteros from fully re-integrating into the community even after the land of Lumbisí changed proprietors.

YANACONAS

Yanacona, a Spanish word, glossed as servidor (servant), comprises the second most prevalent division of indigenous people in the population in Lumbisí after the Spanish conquest.
Yanaconas were indigenous peoples from other indigenous communities, who worked in privileged positions as servants to elite Spanish landowners. In the case of Lumbisí, some originarios held yanacona status, but the majority of yanaconas traveled from hacienda to hacienda laboring alongside other indigenous peoples throughout the Andean region. Hacienda owners included their yanaconas as property along with their landholdings and they relocated yanaconas as necessary to meet labor needs. When de Tapia died, he left a parcel of land for his yanaconas in the valley of Cumbayá, allowing them to settle more permanently and merge with the indigenous population of Lumbisí (Rebolledo 1992: 210-212). The mobile lifestyle and proximity to Spanish elite provided yanaconas with a deeper knowledge of colonial society in Quito. This knowledge and mobility within colonial society played a key role in the early establishment of an indigenous chapel, cemetery, and cofradia, social brotherhood, of San Bartolomé on the lands of Lumbisí (Rebolledo 1992: 213).

Creating a Comuna: The Current Lumbiseño Constitution and the Defining of Comuneros

During the National Agrarian Reform in 1981, the community of Lumbisí legally annexed 612.6 hectares of land from the municipal government of Quito. Lumbiseños formally declared and registered their community as an indigenous comuna under the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock. The community formed its own governing body consisting of a President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, and Representative. The Ecuadorian government via the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock required each comuna established in 1981 create their own rules and regulations through a formalized constitution under the guidance of the national Law of Organization and Regulations of Comunas. Lumbiseños chose to recognize the community’s ethnic identity, social class, and tradition as their uniting principals in Article II of their Constitution. The article states:
“The comuna of Lumbisí is a peasant indigenous organization, with marked traditional social coherence, based on the original families of the comuna, from ancestral roots, united by cultural and spiritual bonds, customs, and common interests and aspirations; written in the registry of the census and legalized by the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock.” [My translation]

Article II also recognizes the originario families of the community, ancestry, and spirituality as common bonds. The second chapter of Lumbisí’s constitution further defines the exact parameters of Lumbiseño citizenship. Lumbiseños define comuneros (people of the comuna) as anyone of legal age born into the community by Lumbiseño parents, currently single or married, who has permanent residence in Lumbisí. Lumbiseños consider contemporary native born citizens, who can trace their ancestry to Lumbiseño heritage either bilaterally or unilaterally, members of the originario elite. Native born Lumbiseños have rights, privileges, and obligations within the community, as opposed to those who live in the community without formal ties to originario families or recognition of their community citizenship. The rights of the Lumbiseños include to elect or be elected for the responsibilities of the internal government and commissions; participate and enjoy all of the resources including land usage, goods, and services that the community possesses; to receive help, financial and otherwise, in the time of personal or familial crisis; and to petition or complain about each individual’s rights in front of the General Assembly.

In return for these inalienable rights, Lumbiseños must abide by the laws of the comuna. The community’s constitution outlines fourteen principal laws. Comuneros of Lumbisí also must abide by the external laws described in the Law of Organization and Regime of Comunas regulated by the national Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock. All comuneros must be inscribed in community’s registry and the community’s census with their families. To maintain “good standing” within the community, comuneros, both native-born originarios and naturalized citizens, must pay an annual fee to the General Assembly. These fees provide funding for major
community projects and general community maintenance. Lumbiseños also must cooperate in community work projects, attend all monthly General Assembly meetings, and send their children to local or external schools for higher education. The constitution further obligates Lumbiseños to live in peace and harmony, demonstrate and practice good morals, respect, and maintain a spirit of solidarity.

Lumbiseños have placed formal limits on the amount of time any comunero can live away from his/her family land within the community. Lumbiseños must petition the General Assembly to leave their permanent residence for more than one year’s time. The constitution also mandates that conduct outside of the community with others reflect the essence of the community’s rules of conduct. Lumbiseños are not allowed to conduct sales, exchanges, rentals, or other negotiations with foreigners to the community who would use the land or the comuna’s goods and services without prior explicit permission from the General Assembly. Anyone found in violation of these laws is labeled as a traitor, expelled from the community, and extirpated of their community rights.

Foreign peoples or outsiders who marry a permanent resident of the community may become a comunero through a process of naturalization, testing, and acceptance. Citizens in the process of naturalization must agree to live by the Constitution of Lumbisí, sign the book of registry, and achieve a majority vote by the General Assembly, which comprises all originario families. While these naturalized citizens participate, contribute, and abide by all Lumbiseño regulations, they never gain a comparable originario status within the community. As a result, contemporary naturalized citizens become referred to as forasteros, a pejorative reference to those excommunicated members of the community who fled their land at the time of the Inca and later Spanish
conquests. The term forastero today translates to outsider or traitor, especially when under suspicion or accused of actions condemned by originario families.

In 2008, one particular naturalization case in Lumbisí involved a man from a local community who married a Lumbiseño woman. They decided to live within Lumbisí in a home on the woman’s family land and to proceed with the long and arduous process of naturalization. The man had to demonstrate financial stability, prove his current employment status, and participate in all comuna sponsored taxes, fees, and obligations for a trial period. He explained that the naturalization process took years, and even though he ultimately signed the book of registry for the community and became a legal comunero of Lumbisí, the community never provided him the same rights as the other originario families. The General Assembly denied him extra land rights to cultivate a garden near his home, and called him a forastero for what originarios interpreted as his greed, self-entitlement, and lack of understanding of community ways—echoing the community betrayal initially assigned forasteros in the colonial period. He explained that he would never achieve full acceptance within the community because their trust was difficult to earn. “I will always be a forastero to them,” he said, “even if I pay all my taxes and work in mingas every weekend. It will never change.”

Today the population of Lumbisí reflects a long history of interregional social networks, urban travel, and internal diversity. The community now comprises approximately 4,500 people (Census 2001) both Lumbiseños and the people they call gente de afuera (outsiders): indigenous peoples from regions such as Latacunga and Riobamba, and Afro-Ecuadorians said to be from

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5 Minga is a Kichwa word that refers to the Andean practice of communal work parties. In the case of Lumbisí, all comuneros are required to participate in weekly mingas to help maintain common places. Mingas in Lumbisí may include cleaning the central park, cemetery, or community irrigation canals or volunteering to help build the new church.
Esmeraldas Province. Coastal peoples from Guayas and Manabí Provinces also reside in the comuna, and are locally categorized as *mestizos*. The differential access to land, social position, kin networks, and wealth even among the native and naturalized comuneros is astonishing. This diversity among the comuneros themselves creates a distinct social hierarchy that is recognized and adhered to as a part of Lumbiseños’ daily lives. The diversity of its own population, the interactions experienced through daily work sojourns, and long distance travel interactions are often the subject of reinterpretation during what the people of Lumbísí proclaim as the “most traditional celebration of the year,” the festival of San Bartolomé.

**Lumbiseños Making the Distinction: Who are the “gente de afuera”?**

Although the constitution of Lumbísí clearly defines the rights and obligations of native or naturalized comuneros, no documentation exists to define those who Lumbiseños consider *gente de afuera*. In terms of daily interactions, Lumbiseños define gente de afuera in contradistinction to the practices, values, and ancestry described in the constitution of Lumbísí. Within the community, Lumbiseños have power and control over every aspect of communal life. Outsider participation in General Assemblies, decision making, voting, communal work parties, and festivals are either explicitly prohibited or strictly limited based on the relationship forged between the outsider and Lumbiseños. Lumbiseños have explicit control of land rights and the means to collectively grant access for gardening, cultivation, pasturing animals, and land for burial of the deceased. Outsiders neither benefit from any service provided by the community with the exception of water and electricity, nor do they have any rights to land or land usage. These constitutional stipulations clearly limit the roles that outsiders perform and marginalize them as “others” within the boundaries of Lumbísí.
Outsiders rent apartment or living space approved by the General Assembly and have multiple places of provenience. Lumbisí served as a crossroad in pre-Hispanic and colonial periods, facilitating the interregional movement of indigenous peoples to the Andes region and the capital city, Quito. Lumbisi’s central location in a low pass through the Andes Mountains, accessible from both the littoral and Amazonian regions, allowed for early and prolonged migration of free indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian peoples to the urban periphery of Quito.

This pattern of movement and mobility now expanded and facilitated by public transportation creates a switchboard joining two major highways that pass nearby the community of Lumbisí. The projected opening of the new international airport in Tumbaco will increase travel and access to Lumbisí by national and international travelers. Lumbiseños have capitalized on all the contemporary movement in the valley by establishing a new clandestine taxi cooperative, but despite all this movement, Lumbiseños always return home.

Due to Lumbisí’s access to the city and relatively low rent housing it provides, transient outsiders arrive in community only briefly to earn money and find means to establish themselves in the city. They may be individuals or families who travel from multiple regions in Ecuador to secure work in Quito or international migrants fleeing border conflicts and the War on Drugs.

These transient outsiders, while they provide extra income by paying Lumbiseños rent, remain the farthest removed from community relations. Most transient outsiders keep to themselves and limit their daily interactions with the people of Lumbisí. They have the least access to rights or benefits within the community and spend most of their time outside of the community working. Their lack of obligation to the land and the community social relations more broadly allows transient outsiders more mobility and the space to contribute only through payment to their landlords. During the last decade of economic crisis and subsequent
dollarization of the Ecuadorian economy, Lumbisí has offered a midway resting point for those seeking work and migrating to the city.

While some transient families and individuals live in the community only until they obtain stable work and can afford to move to another location, others like living in the community and establish a semi-permanent residence there. Semi-permanent residents take on different roles within Lumbisí compared to the more transient families and individuals. Semi-permanent residents contribute to the community sometimes monetarily and to a lesser extent in reciprocal labor exchange. While most outsiders are strictly prohibited from participation in these communal events, semi-permanent residents with longstanding relationships within the community can be informally “adopted” and allowed to contribute in distinct ways to the community, comparable to Weismantel’s (1986) description of outsider’s interactions in Zumbagua. Informal adoption occurs most frequently when the outsider is alone, without family, or other caretakers, and is reserved for a very small minority of the outsider population. When outsiders become contributing members of the community, they also become incorporated into fictive kinship systems such as compadrazgo. Lumbiseños still maintain a privileged position within the community as evidences by the lack of outsider’s land rights and usage and participation in particular events, though they have more interaction with Lumbiseños than do the transient outsiders who only rent space.

Outsiders who live outside of Lumbísí’s borders vary in ethnicity and social class categories according to the Lumbiseños. Lumbiseños are very aware of and often interact with people in other indigenous communities. Interactions include visits on market days, preparation of festival goods, observing each other’s festival activities, and intermarriage. The indigenous communities most commonly affiliated with Lumbisí include Sangolquí, Tumbaco, Pifo, Nayón,
Zámbiza, Latacunga, and Riobamba. Many indigenous peoples in these communities are members of Lumbiseños’ extended families (e.g. in-laws, aunts, uncles, and cousins) and often travel as invited guests to observe festivals and other social events within the community. While they do not take center stage in festival performance, indigenous outsiders often help behind the scenes in festival preparations such as cooking, harvesting, and slaughtering animals for feasts. Lumbiseños also distinguish themselves from the nationally idealized white and mestizo populations with whom they interact outside of the borders of Lumbísí. Those blanco-mestizos that have interaction with Lumbiseños generally subordinate them. Many Lumbiseños work for whites and mestizos in domestic and other specialized jobs in Quito and Cumbayá. Lumbiseños travel and interact with these outsiders in spheres other their home community, except in the rare cases of compadrazgo (god parenthood), a business invitation, or political campaigning and community engagement. Within the confines of the community, Lumbiseños refer to mestizos by the pejorative Kichwa term mistis, implying Lumbiseños’ sharp rejection of mestizo people and society. Lumbiseños and white and mestizo populations mutually limit contact beyond formal work relations, especially wealthy white and blanco-mestizos living in close proximity to Lumbísí.

The new affluent housing developments that surround the entrance to Lumbísí exemplify the visual reminders of the social, class, and ethnic divides in Ecuador and epitomize the white and blanco-mestizo avoidance of all people and materials that project indigeneity. These populations often use the pejorative and discriminating term indio to reference that which is “indian” rather than using the widely accepted term indígena for indigenous. Wealthy whites and blanco-mestizos occupy the new modern, two-story stucco houses that have risen out of former pasture land on the immediate borders of Lumbísí. The first phase of construction for
these homes consists of building brick and electric fences nearly three meters high to keep out
the people they refer to as “indios” at the end of the street. Many million dollar mansions just a
stone’s throw away from Lumbisi’s entrance main entrance remain empty, yet guarded by heavy
iron gates and armed guards, who stay vigilant twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

These affluent non-indigenous populations fear their indigenous neighbors and doubt
their “safety” outside of their own garden gates. The white and blanco-mestizo inhabitants of this
area talked openly about their fear of “indios,” and tried to convince me of the danger and harm
they could inflict on me. Multiple white-mestizo families approached me as I walked the road
leaving Lumbisi. On one Sunday excursion, I set out to walk to Quito with a minimal backpack
and water. I knew the walk would take several hours to complete through the long, steep winding
roads of Guápulo, but I decided to try to arrive to the city without any buses, private cars, and
taxi to understand how people from Lumbisi used to travel to the city. Barely out of Lumbisi’s
main entrance, a family of blanco-mestizo strangers approached me in their car. They waved
their hands out of the window to grab my attention and stopped me at the edge of the road. The
family insisted I enter their vehicle so they may drive me to safety, as they believed “imminent
danger” lurked at the end of the road in the community of “indios.” The family believed I had
lost my way to the city and arrived dangerously close to a violent, unsafe, and untrustworthy
community of indigenous people in Lumbisi. They pleaded with me to get in their car and allow
them to take me to safety. When I refused to get in their vehicle, they followed behind me in
their car until I reached the entrance of the private, German high school, just two miles from the
center of “civilization” in city of Cumbayá. Clearly, the family genuinely feared for my safety as
a white, foreigner in the area near Lumbisi and felt compelled to rescue me from the “imminent
danger” they perceived existed there. The discourse of these residents reiterates the national
Ecuadorian stereotype of indigeneity and reflects a clear absence of social interaction, education, and tolerance between these two populations.

In conversation with whites and blanco-mestizos in Quito, most were astonished to learn of my study of “indigenous” people in the valley. Cumbayá has become an icon of middle-upper and upper class flight from Quito and one of the markers of white and blanco-mestizos’ social prestige. The images conjured with the name of the town were of mansions, new malls and multiplex theatres, the exploding real estate market, the university, and the local upscale hang outs in the newly gentrified central plaza—not of indigenous people. Indígenas have no place in the white and blanco-mestizo imagery of Cumbayá.

Lumbiseños view blanco-mestizos who live in close proximity to their community as well as the elites of Quito as equally, if not more so, depreciatory. No active protest against these new neighbors has occurred, but resentment looms large as the new, affluent gated communities usurp the public water supply and receive other State benefits not offered Lumbiseños who live only yards away. Beyond the limits of this stretch of unnamed road, other blanco-mestizos very rarely receive invitations to any social or festival interactions in Lumbisí, unless they have demonstrated a concern for the community or for one of its members.

**Reinvestment and Return: Daily Practices that Define Lumbiseño Identity**

The creation and maintenance of Lumbiseño identity relies on the constant negotiation of many complex interactions of social networking and relationships between seemingly conflicting dichotomies of history and modernity, permanence and mobility, rurality and urbanism, and tradition and change. Their identity relies on the incredible balance and negotiation of all of these characteristics at once, challenging the idea of a continuum between extremes and rather focusing on the diversity of the paths and constant circulation that at once keeps Lumbiseño
identity in flux and firmly grounded. The geographic community of Lumbisé offers a space of collective identity as Lumbiseños, despite the diversity in social, economic, and political power one holds within the community. To help maintain this collective social space and identity, Lumbiseños place great value in return and reinvestment in their day-to-day routines.

In 2004, an impetus to reinvest in the elderly of the community began before the General Assembly in the community’s Social House. Elderly in Lumbisé prior to this proposal often spent time alone in their homes, largely forgotten as their children and grandchildren left the community daily to work in the surrounding cities. While they may spend time pasturing family animals or helping cook large meals, the elderly received very little in return for their efforts.

Sra. Blanca, a middle-aged originario, demonstrated her interest in organizing activities for the elderly of the community and asked for a portion of community funds, accumulated through annual communal tribute, to help with costs. Driven in part by her own aging mother and her mother’s friends and contemporaries, Sra. Blanca and her sisters decided to reincorporate the elderly into active and meaningful roles within the community. The elderly care commission joined the ranks of nearly 40 other commissions within Lumbisé dedicated to particular community tasks, organization, and accomplishment of work projects to benefit the community as a whole. This project, as with all of the other 40 commissions, emerged in response to a need for better nutrition and healthcare for the elderly in the community.

By 2007, the elderly service project began to gain momentum as they prepared to demonstrate to the public. Sra. Blanca, her younger sister Sra. Lucia, daughter Srta. Blanca, and a few close friends helped organize a dance presentation for the annual celebration of San Bartolomé, the community’s Patron Saint performed by the elderly. Nearly 20 elderly women, affectionately referred to in the community as abuelitas (grandmothers), came forth, excited to
participate. The abuelitas and the organizers produced costumes made of new materials, but based on descriptions the abuelitas provided of the traditional dress they once wore to special events. They gathered materials for performance props that included back-strap baskets, symbols of traditional crops, old ceramic vessels used to transport chicha, sea shells, and various other effects that referenced a “traditional,” Lumbiseño past. The abuelitas gathered and practiced their choreography weekly and helped with the sewing and production of costumes.

![Figure 3.2 Abuelitas entering to dance during the San Bartolomé Festival in 2007.](image)

To accompany their performance, Srta. Blanca also organized an information station that showcased traditional aspects of the comuna and the San Bartolomé Festival in the main town square. A woven straw mat served as a showcase for examples of traditional crops such as beans, corn, ají peppers (capsicum), and limes, as well as processed goods such as chicha, ceramics, gourds, and elaborate wax candles purchased from the historical center of Quito and used in this cargo festival celebration. All these items sat at the privileged vantage point at the feet of a small effigy of the community’s Patron Saint, San Bartolomé. The kiosk served to remind Lumbiseños
and those who arrived from outside to observe local festival activities of the community’s agricultural origins and the reason behind the celebration of San Bartolomé.

On the Vespers of the San Bartolomé Festival August 2007, the abuelitas marched into the main town square with the rest of the civil parade that represented the community government and school children in uniform from the community schools. The abuelitas wore their traditionally inspired costumes complete with fedoras, shawls draped over their shoulders, shiny, brightly colored square-formed blouses with lace detail, long full skirts with colorful stripes near the hem. They wore alpargatas (sandals typically worn by most indigenous men and women in the Andes of Ecuador). Baskets filled with trinkets, corn, potatoes, and other grains wrapped around their shoulders and rested on their backs. Some carried hollowed out wooden serving dishes and others had ceramic vessels filled with chicha, a traditional corn beer. The abuelitas rounded the corner in a double-file line near the Social House, and arrived just short of the church steps before the lines divided, creating a passage for the rest of the parade participants to walk through. After the rest of the participants filed past, the abuelitas proceeded with their dance performance. Dancing to a sanjuanito, an affectionate diminutive of the Catholic Saint John and a lively genre of Andean music believed to originate from Incaic influences in the northern Andean Imbabura Province of Ecuador (Meisch 2002:131), the abuelitas formed various geometrical patterns and danced in time to the music. As the song entitled Quiriquingue continued, shouts of “Ajaya!” a Kichwa exclamation that conveys jubilation and excitement filled the square, as all participants and observers stopped and watched the elders perform with great enthusiasm, vigor, and happiness. They danced for nearly seven minutes without pause and only stopped when the music ended to pluck the community
authorities from their vantage point on the church steps to join them in the streets of the town square to dance to another song.

Srta. Blanca, a young originario woman in her early twenties who worked diligently as a community advocate and later as the president of the Pueblo Kitu-Kara organization, approached a group of the eldest abuelitas after the performance. Srta. Blanca wore her pink pants suit, high heeled clear acrylic shoes, and her long, dark hair freshly washed, loosely flowed on her back. She held the microphone as she and Doña Nicolasa walked together to the center of the performance group to provide some words about their performance. Doña Nicolasa, an originario revered for her ability to speak Kichwa, spoke into the microphone as Srta. Blanca held it for her. Doña Nicolasa, approximately 90 years old at the time, began a public monologue in Spanish and ended it in Kichwa, the native language she was forbidden to speak for much of her lifetime. The previously clamorous crowd grew completely silent as she said:


Thank you ladies and gentlemen. All ladies and gentlemen are welcome. [In Kichwa] Welcome. All of you here now are the Community of Lumbisí. Every year, every day we celebrate our Patron San Bartolomé, he provides us food. We celebrate the home he provides us. [Translated in consultation with Norman E. Whitten, Dorothea Scott Whitten, and Rodolfo Cerrón Palomino]

This symbolic monologue and performance by the abuelitos capture a public example of return and reinvestment in Lumbisí. For the first time in at least decade, Doña Nicolasa gave a public monologue in the community’s native language, Kichwa. This discourse evoked into the present a formerly defining feature of their Lumbiseno identity, their language, and also a key historical figure, Saint Bartholomew, the Patron Saint of the community. Doña Nicolasa referenced the saint as their protector and provider, as she simultaneously connected the present celebration with Lumbiseno’s past struggle to
maintain their ancestral land, the formation of their cofradia in the name of San Bartolomé to protect it, and the use of her ancestral language or as some contemporary Lumbiseños put it “how the ancient ones speak.” The outbreak of applause and cheers at the end of Dona Nicolasa’s monologue exploded as she called out “¡Que vivan los priostes! ¡Que viva San Bartolomé!” (“Long live the festival sponsors! Long live Saint Bartholomew!”) The reaction of the crowd clearly signaled a collective public recognition of both the meaning of her words and her action of returning to speak like the ancient ones did.

Participation in the San Bartolomé Festival initiated an even bigger push to help care for the elders of Lumbísí. By late 2008, Lumbiseños working with a professional architect built a new soup kitchen to host the elderly men and women, the abuelitos, for lunch and activities three times per week. The community constructed the facility, aptly named El Comedor (Dining Hall), with their own materials and labor. Sra. Santos, likely a descendant of Don Diego Santos Quispi one of the first documented caciques to govern Lumbísí in the seventeenth century (Rebolledo 1992), donated her land rights and provided the construction site for the facility.

In the shadow of this brand new concrete block construction sits her traditional adobe mud brick and ceramic tile roof home. While some Lumbiseños surmise that Sra. Santos donated her land for the greater good of the community, others gossip about her desire to keep anyone else in the comuna from receiving rights to her homestead land after her demise. In return for her grand gesture of generosity, she receives preferential treatment during meal service and given extra portions of proteins and starches such as beef bones and rice or potatoes to eat between meals served at the facility. She refuses to enter the dining hall or to participate in any of the
games or activities organized by volunteers, unless an extraordinarily special occasion called for her presence. She usually sits on the threshold of her home, tearing used pieces of cardboard for kindling her fire. She stands with bare, calloused feet in a dusty wool skirt and sweater with her weathered fedora fit tightly over her forehead, just revealing her steel gray eyes. She observes with hard, unforgiving stares all the activities in the dining hall from outside the windows when the abuelitos arrive. Volunteers serve her food on a special plastic tray with distinct utensils, plates, and cups. They deliver it to a stool that sits cleared as a makeshift table just inside her heavy wooden door. If her standards and needs remain unmet, an occasional chase ensues with Sra. Santos wielding her long gnarled walking stick threatening and at times dealing blows to volunteers and locals who try to escape her.

The soup kitchen marks both a coveted return of the presence and admiration of the elderly in contemporary Lumbisí and a reinvestment that will remain a community benefit for the future generations of abuelitos to come. While most elders rarely received regular exercise, healthcare, or meals, the development of the El Comedor soup kitchen now provides nearly 80 elderly daily meals, regular healthcare, and group activities five times a week. The reinvestment that Sra. Blanca, her sisters, and other community members initiated continues to grow and flourish with the help of international volunteers, a Non-Government Organization, and the newly formed Ecuadorian Ministerio de Inclusión Económico y Social, the Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion.

**Conclusion**

The indigenous identity celebrated in Lumbisí combines a long history of indigenous and urban contact with white and blanco-mestizo populations in Quito. Initially, the Inca conquest divided the community and foreshadowed later divisions that accompanied Spanish colonization.
Spanish colonials introduced labor rotation and in most cases forced their indigenous laborers to travel with them among their many colonial landholdings.

Indigenous diversity defined the community of Lumbisí and led to a strict socio-economic and political hierarchy among the indigenous population. For nearly 500 years, originario families from Lumbisí adhered to the practice of arranged, endogamous marriages within the intertwined kin and social networks of other indigenous peoples who worked on hacienda and encomienda land. Although the land of Lumbisí shifted ownership various times throughout the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries between the proclaimed heroes of the conquest and clergy of the Catholic Church, Lumbisí ultimately provided a home to originario families, yanaconas transported from hacienda to hacienda to labor for Spanish landowners, and other displaced indigenous migrants.

The twenty-first century population of Lumbisí reflects the long held historical contact and influence of cosmopolitan Quito. Historically, Lumbiseños worked in rotation on haciendas run by Spanish colonials, including the Nuns of the Immaculate Conception. This circulation posed a hardship on the population due to the extended absence of men in the community who could not work their own agricultural land and pasture animals within the community. Today, men represent the largest portion of the population who continue to travel between the community and surrounding cities including Quito. Lumbiseños never established a market or developed artisan trade during the colonial period, unlike the Otavalo weavers to the north. Their constant travel between haciendas, encomiendas, and their homes in Lumbisí made such artisan production difficult to maintain. Instead, service and labor defined the Lumbiseños relationship to the city and the occupations Lumbiseños obtained as hacienda laborers and domestic servants to white-mestizo elites. Today, the monthly labor rotations between haciendas have been
replaced by the cyclical daily trips from their homes in the valley to the surrounding urban parishes for blue and white collar professions to their return home.

Lumbiseño originarios occupy the pinnacle of this socio-political hierarchy, as a democratically ruling majority within their community. While the white and blanco-mestizo populations of the Ecuadorian state position Lumbiseños in a subordinate socio-economic class outside of the borders of their ancestral land, Lumbiseños dictate their rules, regulations, rights, and consequences within comunero society. Semi-permanent residents, who hold no blood relations to the people or land of Lumbisí but have settled in as long-term renters within the community, occupy the social middle class of the Lumbiseño hierarchy. Afro-Ecuadorians and transient outsiders who live within the borders of Lumbisí as renters occupy the lowest level of Lumbiseño hierarchy due to their limited interaction and reinvestment in the community. This population of transients has neither rights to land use nor any other community established benefits.

Originarios live by the rules of their internally generated constitution, which ultimately value remembrance, collective contribution, hard work, and return. The concepts of return to and daily reinvestment in the community shape Lumbiseños’ the everyday activities. Women wake at 4:00a.m. to cook for their family members headed to the city to earn a salary to support the family, and they stay behind to pasture and care for their family’s animals. In return for their help, men stay strong and healthy to earn salaries away from home. As men and some women complete their work and receive payment from their urban jobs, they return to their community to reinvest their salaries into their nuclear and extended families in the form of purchased foodstuffs, school uniforms and tuition, and transportation back and forth from the community to the city. The students, who board the interrparroquial bus at 6:00a.m. to attend private secondary
schools in Quito to achieve their academic goals, supported by their families, move on to higher education. They continue their studies to learn a trade or profession, and eventually return to the community to practice vocations that include law, medicine, dentistry, education, carpentry, and mechanics. The families who decided that the community’s elders needed care and established activities, meals, and companionship for the aging, also exemplifies types of reinvestment in the community for the future care of generations of abuelitos to come.

The importance of this community history lies in the collective identity born from this long-term urban and non-indigenous population contact merged together with internal indigenous kin, social, economic, and political relations forged in their daily lives and (inter)actions. These networks and interactions forge Lumbiseños’ ever shifting identity, but grounded in fundamental community tradition and cosmopolitan indigeneity. While history in the Western sense of the term projects a linear passage from past to present, history in Lumbísí circulates within its borders, stories, conversations, actions, and reinvestments. The community’s and therefore the comuneros’ history remains remembered, told, and retold, as it constantly circulates through the present. The path of their history takes the shape of an imperfect cycle, passing through myriad bifurcations and different routes every day. However, Lumbiseños’ daily return to the community always follows the path that leads home to a place they recognize as theirs.
Chapter 4: Ritual Return and Reinvestment: Public Performances of Power, Prestige, and Personhood

Boundaries of Exclusion: The Role of Originarios in Festival Production

The acts of reinvesting and returning to Lumbisí set the originario population apart from the outsiders and transients who take advantage of low rent and excellent inter-valley transportation to leave and access other urban spaces within the metropolitan district. I understand the concept of return within Lumbisí in various manifestations. Originarios return home daily from their work sojourns to the city or from pasturing their animals in the nearby open pasture land and hillsides. They return their salaries to the community to support their families and their extended networks of exchange through goods and services that the urban earned salaries afford them. Lumbiseños also return to the community to practice various trades and professional jobs they have learned through secondary education in Quito, including carpentry, salon stylists, dentistry, obstetrics, law, and pharmaceutical sales. Returning can also take the form of long-distance participation in the community via payments of taxation to remain in good community standing and large sums of donated goods and money from those Lumbiseño originario families who live in the diaspora in Spain and the United States to ensure their “presence” and “participation” in festivals throughout the year. Ultimately, return takes the form of reinvestment of urban earned capital, consumer goods, labor, time, and skills in the community to ensure the future return of the next generations of originarios and to fortify the town’s infrastructure for its successful future. Day-to-day routines and activities may lead Lumbiseños to other urban centers and away from their homes, community, and “traditional” identity; however, these same activities provide for greater monetary and symbolic reinvestments in the community.
Ritual celebrations in Lumbisí provide the largest public recognition, interpretation, and reinvestment originarios can make in their community on an annual basis. Lumbisí’s ritual celebrations help define originario identity, as well as potentially enhance their social and economic prestige within the community’s domain. The General Assembly, composed of all originario families, names a group of five originarios annually, who plan, organize, and collect tribute from other comuneros throughout the festival cycle to provide the means necessary for successful ritual celebrations. Community elected and Catholic Church sanctioned, these privileged originarios assume the central role of priostes, festival sponsors. The General Assembly also names the members of the Festival Commission, which is also composed of originario men and women bound by social ties and/or kin relations to assist the priostes. The Festival Commission works behind the scenes with the production and execution of each festival.

The successful execution of these festival events includes excellent organization during and between events, providing food and drink in excess for the participants, and the public appearance of calm, collectedness during the events. If the ritual celebration meets these high standards and the ritual succeeds, the priostes and the Festival Commission receive high social status and social capital, community prestige, and power. The failed execution of these ritual fundamentals would result in shame brought on the prioste family and the Festival Commission. This shame could affect that family’s future social relations in the community and the family’s ability to participate in other community activities. Comuneros frown heavily upon stinginess, unwillingness to share, complete disregard for community established rules of organization, ritual execution, and an unwillingness to work. The annual performances of public ritual celebrations have played an increasingly important role in reinforcing Lumbiseño originario identity and defining, as the mayoral said precisely in the preceding vignette, what is “Lumbisí”
and what is “ours.” Lumbiseños continue to celebrate and reinforce their ritual practices by the use of urban salaries earned in nearby cities. By limiting outsider participation and imposing such high stakes as community power and prestige on these festival events, originarios further delineate the boundaries of and publicly draw attention to their identity.

In this chapter, I describe and analyze two national holidays as they are celebrated within Lumbisí. These major, public ritual events mark distinct moments of community reinvestment and identity fortification. While other religiously oriented celebrations take place during the calendar year, I focus here on the rituals Lumbiseños utilize to further carve a space for their community’s identity and distinct ritual interpretations. These celebrations include two national holidays, Año Viejo (Old Year) and Día de los Difuntos (Day of the Dead). I argue that the Old Year celebration combined with the Killing of the Yumbo in January and the Day of the Dead in November each contribute to the delicate balance of celebrating Lumbiseño identity by employing urban earned salaries and usurping urban symbols of prestige to do so. I demonstrate how these ritual celebrations showcase originario personhood, power, and prestige through the reinvestment of their urban earned salaries, materials, symbols, and experiences to enhance “traditional” community ritual events.

The Death of the Old Year and Killing the Yumbo: Passing on the Prioste Privilege and the Potential for Prestige

Old Year: The National Holiday

Ecuadorians across the three mainland coastal, highland, and Amazonian regions celebrate the national holiday of Año Viejo or the Old Year on December 31 every year. During this celebration, Ecuadorians interpret through various performances in the coastal and highland regions the literal “passing” or death of an embodied male figure that represents the Old Year. In the highlands, residents of Quito, Cumbayá, Lumbisí, and their surrounds celebrate by making
effigies of mostly male public figures, who achieved widespread disapproval or gained substantial positive or negative media attention either nationally or internationally throughout the year. Examples of effigies in 2008 included public officials, politicians, artists, celebrities, and some popular images of cartoon or other well know characters. Effigies range in size from that of a small child to a full grown adult. In 2010, for example, many Ecuadorians chose to make an effigy of President Correa wearing a gas mask twisted over his face. The gas mask referenced the police uprising against the president on September 30, 2010 that resulted in the president being trapped in the Millitary Hospital for several hours before the secret service and military completed a successful rescue mission. Irony, satire, mischief, and superstition rule this holiday, and Ecuadorians who participate often use their effigies to point out the shortcomings and critiques that plagued the country’s social, political, and economic state throughout the year.

Figure 4.1 Three Old Year effigies sitting in the patio of a Quiteno home on December 31, 2010. The center effigy represents President Rafael Correa during the September 30 police uprising, where police officers fired tear gas on the president and his military and special aids rushed to put a gas mask over his face. [Photo courtesy of author]
Participants in the Old Year celebration stuff old clothing with a combination of sawdust, newspaper, and firecrackers. They affix paper mâché masks to the bodies of the effigies to identify them, and each effigy sits or stands at the entrances of homes as the personified “Old Year.” Most households write long wills and testaments of the Old Year effigies to confess actions that they repent, complaints they have for the unfair attention they received, or wishes they would like their families and friends to receive throughout the New Year.

Throughout the day, the viudas or “widows” of the male Old Year figure block main thoroughfares and frequented side roads in communities by standing on either side of the road and pulling taut a rope stretched between them to stop oncoming vehicles. The widows, who are men dressed in drag as white or mestizo women, flirt with the drivers, dance in front of cars, and make bold and brazen propositions to the driver before she asks for money. The money, as most widows claim, goes to help her transition into the New Year without her husband, the Old Year. A few spare coins donated to the widows usually persuade them to drop the rope and allow the cars safe passage.

Figure 4.2 Quito, Ecuador. The burning of an Old Year effigy at midnight on January 1, 2011. [Photo courtesy of author]
The Lumbiseño Old Year Celebration: The Eve of the New Order

The passing of the “Old Year” in Lumbisí not only incorporates aspects of the national holiday such as the “Old Year” effigies and their respective widows, but also comprises rituals of renewal, unity, and power. The Old Year celebration in Lumbisí precedes the most anticipated Lumbiseño ritual events of the New Year, the naming of the new government officials and the priostes or festival sponsors on January 1. While the Old Year celebrations exist throughout Ecuador, the Lumbiseño celebration gives rise to the next generation of socially elite originarios within the community, who take over as potentially the most prestigious community role as festival sponsors. In Lumbisí, Old Year festivities emulate the highland ritual activities, but use mostly effigies of local government officials and family member’s to mark both the culmination of the year’s festival cycle and community renewal. Both the local new order of governance and festival sponsors succeed those formerly holding these positions. The passing of the Old Year ushers the community and church’s blessing of both new community government officials and the priostes. On the one hand, the Old Year celebration represents the Lumbiseño tradition of change of power, and on the other hand the national holiday becomes incorporated as part of the Old Year celebration.
Another Lumbiseño tradition incorporated into the Old Year/New Year’s Eve celebration includes a parade organized by the out-going festival sponsors. Together with the Festival Commission, the out-going priostes lead a parade with the town’s brass band, the community’s Yumbo dancers, a traditional pingullero or flute and drum player, the Lumbiseño Festival Commission, and their families. This parade incorporates a 24th of August brass band with women and men dressed in costume emulating the biblical journey of the Three Kings to visit the Christ Child, Mary, and Joseph. Many of the prioste’s wives carry effigies of the baby Jesus in their arms and sing somber hymns as they walk in procession. This parade winds its way over the dark foot paths of the community to each incoming government official and prioste’s homes. Lumbiseños use sky rockets to communicate across the large distances between prioste homes.
The rockets explode in the pitch black night sky with a crackling sparkle of color to draw attention, and the following rocket produces a loud, thunderous boom to inform the next prioste of the parade’s impending arrival. The former priostes and members of the Festival Commission meet inside for a toast of rum or whiskey and to recognize and bless the incoming sponsors.

Meanwhile, outside the houses of the incoming priostes and government officials in the darkness of night, the Yumbos perform. As the brass band rests during the visit, the yumbos dance to the beat of the bass drum and three-hole flute, played by an elder originario. At the command of the lead Yumbo, the Yumbo dancers take out small glass bottles from their pockets or pick them up from their necklaces and begin to blow an intermittent call and response whistle between the men and women. After a few minutes inside the new prioste’s home, the loud beat of the base drum from the brass band and another sky rocket fashioned from bamboo mark the procession’s movement to the next home, until all of the new prioste’s and government officials have received the parade.

Yumbos represent lowland indigenous peoples, chthonic spirits, and powers of shamanism from the Amazonian region of Ecuador (Salomon 1981, Williams and Fine-Dare 2008). Lumbiseños claim to have danced the yumbada continually, since time immemorial, though they recognize Lumbiseños were never actually yumbos themselves. The dance, according to an originario and self-proclaimed expert of traditions, reflects what Lumbiseños observed when indigenous Amazonian merchants came to the region to investigate the area to later establish trade. He states:

…los yumbos eran prácticamente los comerciantes, pero ¿cómo venían los comerciantes? Precididos por los señores (indicando los yumbos en actuación) que están. Porque después vienen los que…vienen con sus productos y se le entregaban o sea el intercambio.

The Yumbos were practically the merchants, but…and How did merchants come? Preceded by the men and women (indicating the yumbos performance)
that are there. Why do they come after those that…come with their products and turned them in, in other words an exchange. [My translation]

Salomon (1981:163 and 166) describes the Yumbo performance as associated with the Catholic celebration of Corpus Christi in other indigenous or Quito Runa communities bordering the city to the north and northeast. Fine-Dare (1986, 2006, 2008) corroborates this claim with her study of the Yumbada in Cotocollao, an urban indigenous enclave in the northern sector of Quito that also performs the Killing of the Yumbo in association with Corpus Christi. However, in Lumbisí, the Killing of the Yumbo performance coincides with the rise of new power in the community and the renewal of community unification among originarios despite any internal conflicts or differences. Simultaneously with the morning mass of January 1 each year, yumbos begin their dance and celebration of the newly named priostes outside of the church. Not only
does the Lumbiseño Yumbada performance occur separately from their Patron Saint festival, which resembles Salomon’s (1981: 172-191) description of the Yumbo Ceremonial Cycle, but the performance also takes place during the wet season month of January.

In the hours preceding the stroke of midnight on December 31, another distinct public performance ensues in the main town square, where the general population of originarios and residents gathers to observe a beauty contest of sorts. Selected heads of household from each of the nine sectors of the community dress in drag as the widows of the personified Old Year effigies. These “widows,” instead of blocking streets and asking for money, participate in a contest that measures their loss and suffering, beauty, talent in a dance competition, and finally they deliver a public roast of their beloved “husbands,” often represented by local community figures who received negative attention during the year. In 2008, for example, a widow dawning a long, blonde disheveled wig, a short, tight red mini-dress, and high heel shoes, talked about her beloved husband, the outgoing president of the community, whom she caringly identified as “mi Salvadorito,” my little Salvador. The outgoing beauty queen of Lumbisi and her court judge the contest and select a winner just moments before the stroke of midnight, and crown the widow of the year.

Promptly following the widows’ contest, at midnight, Lumbiseños burn the effigies of the Old Year. In 2008, Lumbiseños burned a pile of effigies in the main town square, including a giant Old Year in the shape of a Transformer, Optimus Prime an animated cartoon leader that transforms from a tractor-trailer into a robot. They burned this Old Year in representation of the entire community, along with smaller effigies brought forth by individual families. Individual households also burn their effigies at this time, as the entire Quito Basin fills with thick black
Lumbiseños’s celebration in the predawn hours ushers out the old year and foreshadows the grand anticipation and celebration of a new year with a new government, and new priostes. As the smoke clears in the early dawn hours of January 1, the first and one of the most important events of the Lumbiseño festival cycle takes place, the public announcement and blessing of the new priostes. Priostes preside over all festival events in the community for the following year. This role spotlights the qualities most valued in an originario. Successful priostes must: have extensive community and extra community social and kin networks, work hard and selflessly give contributions to other priostes or the community at large, show humility in public despite the tremendous resources and labor required to host all the annual festivals. Priostes occupy the single most important social position in Lumbiséí community throughout the year, as festival sponsors and organizers. They become the agents of organization and the recipients of reciprocity they earned completing tasks and favors for their extended family and friends.

Priostes, once named, start the long task of formally reaching out to their social and kin connections to help support them in the production of festival events. Priostes sponsor large dinners, parties, and sometimes more private events for their familial and social connections to secure their labor, attendance, and/or resources. The community mandates the successful production, organization, and execution of the largest festival of the year, the Patron Saint Festival, mentioned previously and expanded upon below, and this responsibility falls on the shoulders of five men and their wives, originarios chosen from within the community. The priostes become named and officially recognized in the morning mass by the parish priest alongside the community’s newly elected government officials. The successful production of the

6 In 2010, the Correa administration along with the Ministry of the Environment put forth regulations on the Old Year traditions across the country. Effigies could no longer be stuffed with sawdust or fireworks, as they were considered hazardous to the health of Ecuadorian citizens and the environment due to the thick black smoke it produced when burned. From 2010 forward, citizens who celebrated the Old Year were required to stuff the effigies only with newspaper.
festivals in the cycle yields the sponsoring priostes’ reputation and personhood a wealth of social
prestige within the community. A successful prioste surpasses the expectations of the community
at large, shows great abundance and resources, demonstrates a willingness to share and be
humble, works diligently beforehand to produce the best possible celebrations, and remains stoic
and stationary during the festival performances. The support of a good Festival Commission
ensures that the priostes are able to accomplish all these feats.

As the parish priest holds a special mass to bless the incumbent community government
as they receive their bastones de mando or the staffs of authority on their first official day of
office, outside the church a yumbo dance performance takes place. The community band, 24 de
Agosto, and a flute and drum player called a pingullero or mamacu play intermittently as men
and women dressed in full Yumbo costume skip in geometric configurations called by the lead
Yumbo right outside the church steps. The loud blaring of the band often interrupts and angers
the parish priest, who recognizes the “folklore” Lumbiseños celebrate, but would rather the mass
proceed seamlessly to doctrine with little attention paid to the pagan celebration of yumbos just
outside the church doors. The flute and drum player fills the instances of band silence
immediately with the deep booms of his taut leather head bass drum played with his right hand
and the melodic playing of his three-hole vertical bone flute with his left hand, simultaneously.
The Yumbos may perform at other times and events during the year, but their primary dance, the *matanza* or Killing of the Yumbo, is reserved for the day of the changing of the priostes. The Yumbo performance in Lumbisí in 2008 consisted of seven men and seven women. The men wore blue and white long sleeved Umbro soccer shirts and matching Umbro soccer shorts, white knee socks, and white tennis shoes. Their faces were covered by white, flesh colored mesh masks painted usually with blue and sometime brown eyes and mustaches. The men also wear long haired blonde or brunette wigs, generally curly and disheveled. Women wear more traditional female Andean attire for the performance. During this matanza of 2008, they wore turquoise blue satin-like shirts resembling the shirts worn by the abuelitas in the previous year’s San Bartolomé festival with matching knee-length skirts. Women also wore flat
_alpargatas_ or traditional Andean sandals generally worn by both native men and women. Both men and women carry back-strap baskets adorned with sea shells, beads, feathers, and stuffed animals, some fine taxidermic specimens, others plush toys. Each yumbo also wears a distinguishing crown made from authentic tropical bird feathers from the Amazonian region, such as scarlet and blue macaw and toucan. The Yumbo dancers during the matanza performance carry spears made of chonta palm wood, a dark Amazonian hardwood rumored to carry special Amazonian power, like the chonta palm staffs passed to the incumbent governing body. Yumbo spears measure approximately 6 feet in length and bare colorful ribbons wrapped from the base to the tip with loose ends that flow in the air during the intricate patterns and configurations that the dance requires.

The double-file line, indicating two clans of yumbos, dances joyfully through many configurations including cris-crossing patterns as they dance in rhythm to the band’s music. Once the tempo of the band’s music slows, the Yumbos dance becomes controlled by the beat of the leather bound drum and bone flute. When the new priostes and governing officials emerge from the church’s threshold, the yumbos erupt in lively, animated dancing, as they surround the prioste’s and government officials. As the group parades through the streets of Lumbisi, family members of the newly named priostes shower them with rose petals the entire walk. The priostes, their families, and the government officials all make their way to a previously selected prioste’s home to celebrate and observe the performance of the matanza.

The main street leading into the community becomes the center stage for the matanza performance. In 2008, two pick-up trucks owned by originarios blocked off the main passage of the road for nearly two hours, allowing no one to pass through the makeshift barrier and threaten the yumbo performance. The matanza begins just as the morning dancing started with a lead
Yumbo calling out directions and patterns in a muffled, mockery of an unknown Amazonian language. The Yumbo would call “Pasharishosh” seemingly meaning simply “pass” or “change,” as the double-line configuration would pass to the other side or yumbo performers would exchange places in the double-line configuration. After dancing to several songs and filing past each other, maintaining the two clan lines intermixed with men and women, a Yumbo performer from the opposite clan flirts with the lead Yumbo’s “warmi,” Kichwa for “woman,” and the lead Yumbo observes this tremendous slight against him.

Figure 4.6 Lumbisí, Ecuador. January 1, 2008. (Left) Three male yumbos dancing in the matanza performance. (Right) Female yumbo surrounded by male yumbos while dancing the matanza performance. [Photo courtesy of author]

A chase ensues. The lead Yumbo frantically runs after the traitor, hunts him down, and symbolically kills him with his spear. The fallen yumbo’s clan members bring the “body” to the center of the performance, adorn it with flower petals, and cover it with a white sheet with a cross drawn on it from head to toe. At a moment when the observers watch as the lead Yumbo’s
clansmen chase him down and talk to him about what he has done, the “body” gets replaced by a wooden log and a cone structure to symbolize his erect penis.

As the fallen yumbo’s clan members mourn their loss, the Yumbo leader’s clan tries to convince him to use his Amazonian magic and power to resurrect the fallen yumbo. The clan members coax and persuade the lead Yumbo to perform his magic, and carry him back to the center of the performance in the middle of the road on their shoulders. He attempts to resurrect the yumbo three times as he calls to the corpse and tells him “Suwa, suwa,” again using his “Amazonian” tongue to encourage the yumbo to “Get up, get up.” He pokes and prods the fallen yumbo again and again, recognizing his failure to resurrect the fallen yumbo by saying “manushahi, manushashi” and shaking his head no. He decides that the final attempt would require more magic. His clan provides him with a bottle of cane alcohol, and he takes in a big mouthful and proceeds to spray the body repeatedly, while repeating “Suwa, suwa” and poking the body with his chonta palm spear. The lead Yumbo finally dismounts from the shoulders of his clansmen, and gets close to the body. He instructs all of the yumbos to surround the body and to put their spears underneath it. By this point, the yumbo performer had been sneaked back under the white cloth. He calls out his command to the fallen yumbo’s body several more times, until the body responds. Underneath the white cloth, the fallen yumbo starts to fane masturbation. All the yumbos then use their spears to support the resurrected yumbo in his ascent back into his yumbo community and the land of the living.
As the performance concluded, all the yumbos invited the new priostes to join them in dancing. Some yumbos even offered the priostes their masks and crowns, and the priostes accepted, wearing the crowns and masks as they danced in the streets. Family members of the yumbos presented the new priostes with offerings including wine, champagne, and a basket of tropical fruits, and ultimately the priostes invited the yumbos inside to eat a meal with them in appreciation for their performance.

The Yumbo parade and the Matanza of the Yumbo in Lumbisi clearly demonstrate the kaleidoscope of local “traditional” and “modern” symbols coupled with the events of the national Ecuadorian holiday of the Old Year that unite to form a cohesive celebration of Lumbiseño prestige, power, and identity. While other well-known Yumbo performances take place during Corpus Christi and are associated with the battle between religious authority and
indigenous authority as the case of Cotocollao Yumbo (Fine-Dare 2006), the yumbos’ performance in Lumbisí clearly marks a confluence of local power pertinent to the community on the eve of new order. This eve of new order occurs on December 31 each year, the same day commemorated throughout Ecuador as the national celebration of the Old Year. This national holiday gets reworked and reconfigured to instill local meaning and empower Lumbiseño identity through the exclusion of outsider participation. Meanwhile, aspects of the national celebration have been adapted to the Lumbiseño celebration, albeit with Lumbiseño characters, beauty contests for the “widows,” and the burning of the Old Year effigies at midnight. Lumbiseños have translated this national holiday into the celebration of local authority and the rise of their most socially prestigious positions, as festival sponsors, in Lumbisí.

The yumbos in parade to the priostes’ homes foreshadow and the killing of the yumbo completes the performance for the new order of Lumbiseño leaders rise to power. Both the newly elected local government and priostes further demarcate the boundaries between originarios and outsiders with whom they share space within the community and those external to the geographic boundaries of the community. Only Lumbiseño originarios may occupy the roles of local governance, festival sponsorship, and as yumbo performers. By excluding other residents of Lumbisí from these roles, originarios empower their socio-political position within the community year after year to define what as they say, “es nuestro” or “is ours.” Lumbiseño government, priostes, and yumbos embody socio-political positions that parallel the social, economic, and political roles of wealthy white and white-mestizos in other communities and at the national level. The impact of their governance remains local, but the systematic hierarchy produced and reinforced by urban contact translates into local associations, organizations, and governance.
The yumbos, themselves an embodiment of foreigners to the highlands, represent a confluence of seemingly ironic complementarity. As the men wear expensive modern Umbro brand soccer uniforms obtained in the city, their masks painted pink to represent whiteness with green and/or blue eyes, long curly blonde and brunette wigs, knee-high white socks, and their Nike tennis shoes, they also wear authentic Amazonian feather crowns made from colorful macaw and toucan feathers. These male Yumbo costumes draw on urban capital to purchase the brand-name soccer uniforms and reflect Quiteño experiences of observing physical and symbolic “whiteness.” Their female counterparts evoke a stronger connection to highland indigenous tradition by wearing typical Otavaleña costumes. Otavaleños share the same highland Kichwa indigenous nationality as Lumbiseños. The women yumbos’ costumes comprise high-quality embroidered blouses, double-belted, double-layered skirts, and typical highland sandals or alpargatas to achieve highland regional recognition. Unlike their male yumbos who hide their faces by wearing pink-flesh painted wire masks, the women leave their dark skin bare, marking the recognition of another symbol of highland indigeneity, as indigenous women viewed as “traditional” do not wear make-up or any other artificial facial cover. The women yumbos do wear the same Amazonian feather crowns as their male counterparts signaling the interconnection between the male and female yumbos, while also indicating inter-regional unity.

The celebration of the Yumbo marks the convergence of the national and local, highland and the lowlands, past and present, and rurality and cosmopolitanism all within Lumbiseño tradition. These elements of Lumbiseño celebration, considered by some to be insurmountable dichotomies, are in fact deeply complementary expressions of the complex daily lived experiences and the relived remembrances of times past. In the next section, I discuss the
Day of the Dead: Revisiting Ancestors, Reinvesting in Relations, and Reifying Identity

The National Holiday

Brought as a Spanish Catholic tradition during the sixteenth century to Ecuador, El día de los difuntos or Day of the Dead emanates from a Roman Catholic custom first recognized in the thirteenth century as two distinct feast days (Dues 1992: 135). On November 1, the church celebrated the feast of All Saints, also known as the Communion of the Saints, to commemorate those loyal followers of the faith who enter into heaven after their passing. The following day, November 2, the Catholic Church celebrated the feast of All Soul’s Day, to recognize, remember, and pray for all the souls condemned to purgatory (Dues 1992:135). As Spanish missions arrived to the Americas to convert indigenous masses to Catholicism, they viewed everyone who escaped the Catholic doctrine as pagans and therefore condemned souls.

The Day of the Dead tradition continues in contemporary Ecuador. On November 1 and 2 of each year, the government offers the population of Ecuador an average of two days of vacation to celebrate the Day of the Dead. While many contemporary white-mestizo middle and upper class families take this time to travel outside the city limits of Quito to the beaches in coastal towns such as Salinas or Esmeraldas, others remain in the city to celebrate the lingering traditions that require visits to local cemeteries and the consumption of ritual foods.

These Ecuadorians still follow the local traditions of drinking a warm, purple-fruit porridge called colada morada, available for purchase in most restaurants and fast food establishments in the city and eating a bread doll fashioned to look like a swaddled baby called guaguas de pan—literally “baby” from the Kichwa guagua and “of bread” from the Spanish “de
pan.” The local bread stores that dot every neighborhood in Quito stock these bread baby confections made of sweet dough, stuffed with guava paste, hazel nut spread, chocolate, dulce de leche or pastry cream. The bakers decorate the bread babies with brightly colored glazes that delineate the guagua’s eyes and a smile, as well as geometric designs on the body. Quiteño families generally purchase one guagua de pan for each living family member to consume on or before that day, and they eat these confections at home, while sipping on their purple fruit porridge.

![Figure 4.8 Guaguas de pan and colada morada purchased in a neighborhood bakery in Quito, Ecuador on November 2, 2008. [Photo courtesy of author]](image)

Based on observations of two main cemeteries in modern and historical Quito, hundreds of people still make their way to the cemeteries to commemorate this day and remember their deceased. For example, the El Batán Cemetery in the modern sector of Quito fills with families eager to visit the tombs of their deceased. After cleaning tombs, exchanging silk or plastic flowers for new ones, and standing to remember and pray for their loved one, Quiteños generally leave the cemetery to have lunch with living family members in the city. This cemetery exhibits
several sections bound by cement walls and tall, manicured bushes that serve to mark the boundaries between distinct burial sites. These divisions establish separate German, Jewish, and Ecuadorian sections of the cemetery grounds in El Batán. The Day of the Dead is only celebrated in the Ecuadorian section, while Jewish and German cemeteries remain closed.

Families come to El Batán Cemetery to lay fresh or silk flowers on the tombs of their loved ones. They stay a relatively short time staring at the grave, at times praying, other moments just talking, while others spend time weeding around the boundaries of the tomb, dusting off the tombstone, or polishing the marble façade of the niche. During observations made in 2008, none of the families delivered meals or guaguas de pan and colada morada to these tombs.

Figure 4.9 El Batán Cemetery, Quito, Ecuador. (Left) Luxury indoor niches and indoor burial plots with private garden. (Right) Examples of in-ground plots looking towards common, outdoor niches that surround the cemetery. [Photos Courtesy of Author]
Many families walked together, arms linked, as they made their way through the labyrinth of graves of El Batán. The cemetery is so large that street signs mark and direct the families of the deceased to their burial zone and street. El Batán offers in-ground burial plots as well as modern buildings several stories high full of niches for both cremated and physical remains. Additionally, El Batán has special mausoleums dedicated to the Ecuadorian Army, Air Force, and Navy. Other divisions include recently constructed indoor marble niches “de lujo” (luxury niches) and several sections dedicated to common, outdoor niches, exposed to the environment. Some in-ground tombs that line the main street of the cemetery have overturned grass and dirt, tombstones with faded names or deliberately sandblasted to remove names, and their contents removed to a general ossuary. These tombs are unearthed and relocated if the deceased’s family fails to pay the rent to occupy the burial space. This process also occurs in outdoor niche space, where remains will be removed and relocated to a general ossuary in order to accommodate paying customers. Burials and niche placements then, are only semi-permanent and require economic and familial support to be maintained. The open tombs and advertisements of niches for sale or rent scattered throughout this cemetery indicate that mortuary expenses, especially during times of economic crisis, fall to the wayside or become forgotten, leaving funeral associations to remove and relocate remains.

Another grand cemetery that occupies approximately 64 acres in the historical center of Quito boasts a wide array of burials ranging in class from pauper to former Ecuadorian presidents (Zaldumbide 2010). The San Diego Cemetery in downtown Quito was established in 1872 with the purpose of providing a space for the burials of dominant elite Spanish descendents (criollos) and affluent white and white-mestizo Ecuadorians. Later the cemetery opened to public burials in 1900 after the affluent white and white-mestizo populations started to abandon their
mausoleums (Zaldumbide 2010). Many of the early burials represent state figures, ex-presidents, famous Ecuadorians, and upper class families of Quito. This cemetery exhibits luxury burials in elaborate, private mausoleums, where multiple family members’ remains may be interred or placed on internal shelving in caskets or urns within the same structure.

Figure 4.10 San Diego Cemetery, Quito, Ecuador. View of affluent, private family mausoleums. [Photo Courtesy of Author]

At the main entrance of the cemetery, vendors line the street with Day of the Dead fair. Ambulant vendors establish temporary stalls to sell *fritada* and *llapingachos*, a popular national fried pork and potato pancake dish, and the more traditional ritual food and beverages including *guaguas de pan* and *colada morada*. Other vendors sell flower crowns fashioned from shiny, multicolored paper, and small cards printed in color with religious motifs that include prayers and bible passages written on them. Visitors to the San Diego Cemetery leave these offerings on the tombs in dedication to their deceased.

Cement block paved paths cover the majority of land separating burials in the white and white-mestizo zone at the front of the cemetery. Private mausoleums clearly represent the most
expensive burials due to their elaborate decoration, high quality of construction materials including marble, and the physical space they occupy within the cemetery. Many of these niches look like chapels, houses, and substantial monuments. Both the San Diego and El Batán Cemeteries offer the sale of permanent mausoleums, burial plots, and expensive, luxury niches to upper class white-mestizos who are often the only ones who can afford the prices for eternal interment. Permanent burial mausoleums, plots, and niches range from $1,000 to $25,000 US dollars (Hoy 2006). In 2008, one private mausoleum near the entrance of the San Diego Cemetery bore a bright yellow sign that indicated, “For Sale by Owner, $25,000 USD,” despite the fact that coffins and urns occupied all six visible interior shelves (see picture below).

The San Diego Cemetery also houses other niches located beyond the necropolis of luxury burials and mausoleums. The cement block paths lead through the monstrous constructions of mausoleums to rows upon rows of high-rise outdoor niches and individual in-ground burial plots. The tall white washed niches and tombstones exhibit an array prices and burial styles to serve an equally wide range of clients from various social classes and ethnic ancestry. Some niches that contain both cremated and physical remains line the boundary marking wall of the cemetery, up to ten niches high. For those who cannot afford expensive marble plaques, cement is used to seal the niche, painted white, and then black paint retraces the names of the deceased year after year.
Figures 4.11 San Diego Cemetery, Quito, Ecuador. (Left) Families decorating the tombs of their loved ones in outdoor niches. (Right) Day of the Dead celebrants walking through the main stone street that marks the boundary between mausoleum burials and outdoor niche burials. [Photos Courtesy of Author]

Figure 4.12 San Diego Cemetery, Quito, Ecuador. A close-up view of a free-standing pavilion with a variety of niche decorations and niche façades. [Photo courtesy of author]
Free-standing burial pavilions occupy multiple stories of space and offer a honeycomb of more affordable niches. Each free-standing pavilion structure holds hundreds of niches, some sealed, others open, and still others sealed with advertisements to sell the spot. While the walls of these free-standing constructions are white-washed, most individuals decorate the niche’s seal as economic means allow. Some of these niches have marble slabs engraved with the names of the deceased, others have glass coverings that seal the marble behind a lock and allow family members to make a small shrine with pictures, flowers, and written prayers. Others are open concrete slabs that have small sconces suspended on the side of the closure to support fresh or silk flowers. These niches, designed for individual burial, range in price and the duration of occupation. Like El Batán Cemetery in the northern modern sector of Quito, the San Diego Cemetery not only sells burial space, but also rents it. At the end of the rental contract, spanning a minimum of four years, the funeral association of the respective cemetery either renews the contract with the deceased’s family or removes the remains from the rented niche and reinter them in a general ossuary, unless the family makes other arrangements. Rented burial spaces provide families with little means to inter their loved ones at a going rate of $180-550 US dollars for the term of the contract.

Most of the activity taking place in the San Diego Cemetery in 2008 occurred around the niches and in-ground burials marked by white tombstones. Both family members and hired help wearing uniforms washed the tombs, white-washed niche walls and panels, repainted the names and dates in black, and cleaned the areas surrounding the tombs. Some families paid to have roaming musicians stop and play typical Ecuadorian music genres of lament at the foot of grave in front of the niches. Niches were also painted in the same fashion as in-ground tombs and were decorated with flower crowns, silk or fresh flowers, and the small prayer cards purchased at the
entrance and filled out with the family members’ names and the deceased to be blessed. Families who contributed to the decoration of the niches affixed all commemorative items vertically to the individual niche’s façade, whereas the placement of the same items varied from tomb to tomb.

El Batán and San Diego Cemeteries serve as the location for the urban celebration of the Day of the Dead in Quito. Both cemeteries occupy land surrounded by urban housing. Despite the relative proximity to and ease of these cemeteries to Quiteños’ homes, fewer and fewer white-mestizo families celebrate the Day of the Dead in the cemeteries where their deceased are buried. Instead, many tombs become forgotten, uncelebrated, and in extreme cases unearthed to make room for the funeral associations’ profit.

These cemeteries provide understanding of the contemporary mortuary practices of mainly urban, white-mestizos, although burials representative of most ethnic groups and socio-economic classes are also present within the same space. Both cemeteries clearly delineate types of burials by ethnicity and socio-economic class. For example, the Jewish and German sections of the El Batán cemeteries remain closed, while the remaining Ecuadorian side stays open for Day of the Dead celebrations. Within the Ecuadorian cemetery, the prices of private or familial mausoleums, in-ground plots, and niches set apart socio-economic and even political divisions. While boundaries of class and ethnicity become clearly marked and associated with different styles of burials and decorations of the tombs, the cemetery land does not belong to any one ethnic, social, political, military, or class group. Instead, the diverse population of Quito theoretically has access and rights to be buried within the same cemeteries. However, pragmatically most Ecuadorians with the exception of wealthy whites and white-mestizos can afford access to permanent burial sites.
The hierarchy of burials remains consistent with access to funds to purchase permanent plots rather than rented spaces. The more elaborate the burial monuments and mausoleums that accommodate whole families or multiple remains, the higher the deceased’s social class. The middle-class burials become associated with individual and family in-ground plots for the burial of physical remains. These tombs are more elaborate than the easily reproduced high-rise, cement burial niches, but less expensive than private individual or family mausoleums.

Conversely, anyone who can afford the mass produced burial niches that line the cemeteries has access to their purchase and/or rental. These niches are designed for the burial of an individual’s remains without any necessary connection to other family members’ niches, unlike the private mausoleums and familial burial plots described above. A niche burial from 1975 can be located right next to a niche burial from 2005 of remains unassociated with the deceased’s family, based on the inconsistency of displayed surnames. The variance in dates also demonstrates the recycling of niches, where an earlier burial may have been removed to accommodate a new, paying costumer. These niche spaces indicate either a temporary resting place or a lower socio-economic level because of their semi-permanence. While some use rented niches to prolong the time they need to look for the ideal permanent place for their loved one’s remains, others simply cannot afford to invest such a great burial expenses.

The cremation of remains also becomes a viable solution to limited city burial space and monetary constraints. The interment of cremated remains in niches costs a fraction of the burial of physical remains in coffins. Rented burial space becomes one of the only options for poverty-level families, who cannot afford expensive burials, but wish to inter their loved ones with a ceremony. Rented burial space allows a family to pay in four year increments, according to their
contracts, with the option to renew contracts indefinitely, as long as the funeral association receives payment for the rented space.

Día de los difuntos in Lumbisí

![Figure 4.13](image)

Figure 4.13 Entrance to Lumbisí’s cemetery. To the left, a tent selling fried pork, potato pancakes, guaguas de pan and colada morada at the entrance. Celebrants ate lunch both under this tent and took their meals inside the cemetery to eat graveside [Photo courtesy of author].

The Día de los difuntos in Lumbisí shares some qualities of the national holiday celebrated in Quito, but like the Old Year celebration, Lumbiseños celebrate this holiday in a local fashion that reinforces their indigenous identity and belonging to their ancestral land, while limiting others from participating in their cemetery. Here, I describe how Lumbiseños share certain elements of the national holiday and how they construct a locally meaningful celebration through the incorporation of these elements.
The weekend prior to the Day of the Dead celebration, the funeral commission in Lumbisí calls for a *minga* or communal work party to do general maintenance, cut the raised western flank of the cemetery’s grass, and clean the dirt paths between tombs. A large white-board hangs at the entrance of the community, near the location of the new church under construction. The sign announces the minga and lists originario surnames in alphabetical order, indicating that these families must send representatives to participate in the minga on their behalf. The minga, as described by Mayer (1977:63) is an Andean institution of elicited work exchange based on principles of reciprocity. Participation in communal work, obligated by the Lumbiseño constitution, becomes a form of community investment and reciprocal exchange as their work in mingas ensures continued communal rights, protection, and good community standing.

The marked brick boundaries of the contemporary cemetery in Lumbisí represent a space where communal rights are exclusively extended to originarios and their families. Written in their constitution, only Lumbiseño originarios have the rights and privileges of obtaining burial space within the community cemetery. The layout of the cemetery follows the nature slope of the mountain, gradually giving way to the community and its other eight sectors below. Cemetery organization follows a tri-partite division, where the highest geographical portion of the cemetery to the west marks the western most extreme. A wide dirt path cuts between the western burials and the lower eastern expanse of the cemetery where no graves markers exist. The dirt path houses a small, outdoor pulpit constructed of brick and cement, where the parish priest holds his sermon on the Day of the Dead.
The eastern portion of the cemetery lacks grave stones, wooden crosses, or any other typical marker used to indicate a tomb or burial. This disheveled area of the cemetery remains overgrown and untouched. Some community rumors speculate that burials of children who were miscarried, abortions, people who were not baptized before their death, or those who committed suicide lay beneath the tall unkempt grass and weeds, left as marginalized, lost souls condemned to an afterlife in purgatory. The southeastern portion of the cemetery also houses a free-standing pavilion with 100 niches, standing five niches high and 20 niches wide. The construction of these niches lasted from 1988 until 2001, when the people of Lumbísí held its official inauguration. The niches were open and available for sale starting in December 2001. From December 2001 to present 2011, only three niches house physical remains. Lumbiseños constructed these niches for non-originario residents of the community, who have forged a special relationship with the comuneros, but have no familial ties to the land. Niches offer special residents an alternative to
in-ground burials that are limited to originario burials. Niche burials are reserved for socially and economically poor outsiders, rather than for originarios.

Originario burials occupy the western slope of the cemetery, the highest vantage point from within the brick wall borders. During a 2001 General Assembly meeting in Lumbísí, comuneros proposed to expand the cemetery. They proposed to expand the western portion of the cemetery, as tombs became overcrowded in the existing cemetery space. Rather than opting for an easterly expansion across the path that divides the cemetery, the community decided to expand the western slope by filling in a massive ravine. Dump trucks filled with dirt and other solid waste materials lined up to dump their loads in the cemetery ravine. Once filled, Lumbiseños extended the central path and began burying their deceased across the ravine and to the west of the dirt road. According to Carranza Romero (2001:19):

The location of the tomb and the posture of the cadaver are very important for the peace of the soul and the prosperity of their family that stays behind in this life. It is recommended that the tomb be in the highest part of the cemetery where the deceased could see the village. The head of the dead should be pointed to the north or to the east because these are positive cardinal points (2001: 21) [My translation]

The burials on the western slopes of the Lumbísí cemetery not only represent a privileged vantage point in the cemetery congruent with Andean ideology and folk Catholicism, but also a social and kinship network that point to the local system of value and social and religious prestige.

Lumbiseños reserve the earth within the borders of this cemetery for originario burials, unlike the cemeteries in Quito, where whites-mestizos, as well as other ethnic Ecuadorians may all be buried within the same cemetery, albeit with socio-economic differences marked by the prestige of the space. On the one hand, Quiteño funeral associations provide a range of prices for mortuary practices from rented niches to cremation, and from private permanent in-ground plots to family mausoleums ranging from lowest to highest cost respectively. On the other hand,
Lumbiseños have an internally constructed and originario manned Comision de camposanto or literally translated as Sacred land Comission also known as the Cemetery Comission. This commission takes care of the sale of burial plots, provides the funeral paraphernalia and arrangements for the funeral service, and maintains the cemetery grounds. A permanent, in-ground burial plot in Lumbisí costs approximately $400 US dollars, a price established as fair among originarios in the General Assembly. All in-ground plots cost exactly the same price, while tomb styles vary throughout the cemetery.

Unlike the semi-permanent burial spaces in the cemeteries of Quito, Lumbiseño burials provide an eternal resting place. Comuneros never disinter or move the physical remains of their deceased. The plots they own become their resting place and no one may be buried on top of an existing grave. The permanence of originario burials puts a premium on cemetery space.

In 2001, originarios sought to expand the cemetery to the south and in so doing proposed to surpass a ravine nearly two-stories high to achieve cemetery expansion horizontally on the western slope. This proposal of expansion reflects Lumbiseño beliefs and mortuary practices. The expansion also marks a prestigious and divine division between the western slope burials destined for heaven and the eastern decline unmarked burials condemned to purgatory. They accomplished this expansion through the combination of minga and by contracting dump trucks from the Metropolitan District of Quito and buying fill dirt to bridge the gap to the other side.

Originarios also expanded space they deemed “unusable” according to their beliefs in the eastern decline of the cemetery to vertically house burials for those poverty-stricken residents who could not afford to be buried elsewhere. The act of placing outsiders or “others” in the vertical niches, reinforces the strict separation of outsiders and originarios, and keeps Lumbiseño
land reserved for their ancestors, while the space above the land can be occupied by “other” paying customers.

Figure 4.15 Lumbísí, Ecuador November 2, 2007. A view of the niches located in the eastern section of the cemetery. As of 2011, only three burials (left) have been placed in the niches since its inauguration in 2001. [Photo courtesy of author]

Depending on which weekday or weekend Day of the Dead falls, many Lumbiseños who have the time prepare the tombs of their ancestors on November 1. The preparation of the tomb consists of removing weeds, delineating the boundary of the tomb with shovels and garden hoes, removing last year’s adornments including flower crown offerings, and repainting the tombs. Family members white-wash grave markers and repaint the names of their deceased and the date of their demise in black paint. White washing tombs often occurs the day before the official Day of the Dead celebration to allow the paint time to dry. Some families, due to time constraints of commuter travel and work, leave all the cleaning and repainting until November 2. Lumbiseños share the tradition of cleaning their ancestors’ tombs with those who celebrate the national holiday in other settings, such as the urban cemeteries of San Diego and El Batán. Unlike in
Quiteño cemeteries where hired employees clean and repaint the tombs, Lumbiseño families take it upon themselves to do the cleaning and repainting. This preparation alleviates the work load of November 2 when ritual food production and familial gatherings in the cemetery take place.

The official Day of the Dead celebration begins in the cemetery at 7:00 a.m. on November 2 each year. Rain or shine, the community of originarios gathers in the cemetery to listen to the local parish priest’s sermon. Gathering around the tombs of their loved ones in this open, outdoor chapel, the priest prays for the deceased. According to one abuelita:

“everyone, everyone approaches the Priest with a note so he can read it, paying for the little soul that they have, if they have one, you see. To the father, mother, or the children or the brother and sisters, like that. So, there was a little note for the priest with the alms…those that don’t have that little alms leave the bread [My translation]

The priest may make special stops at specific tombs, if paid by a family to do so. Otherwise, as soon as the sermon ends, roughly an hour later at 8 a.m., the priest leaves, and the people of Lumbísí stay behind to celebrate the day with their loved ones.

Figure 4.16 Día de los difuntos mass in the Lumbísí cemetery 2007. A family sits on the tomb of their loved one to hear the parish priest’s mass. [Photo courtesy of author]
In contrast to the cemeteries of El Batán and San Diego, the people of Lumbisí spend several hours in the cemetery visiting with the deceased by congregating with their living relatives around the tomb. Large extended families gather to remember the departed and to ensure that his/her influence on the living will be a positive throughout the coming year. To entice positive manifestations on the living throughout the year, the living must appease the dead by leaving their favorite food items including guaguas de pan and colada morada, conversing with them, spending quality time, and interacting with them on this day by leaving their tomb decorated, clean, and remembered.

Figure 4.17 Lumbisí, Ecuador 2007. (Left) Families cleaning the tombs of their deceased on the Día de los difuntos in Lumbisí, 2007. (Right) Example of a cleaned and decorated tomb in the Lumbisí cemetery.

Some originario families buy their guaguas de pan from one of the several bakeries located within the boundaries of Lumbisí. Others, like the originario Chillán family, use one of the last existing brick ovens in the community owned by an extended family member, to celebrate the day with family after having participated in the cemetery. In 2007, the Chillán family including the elderly parents, their children and their children’s spouses, as well as their
grandchildren, gathered to make, consume, and distribute pan de muertos including guaguas de pan and colada morada.

After harvesting and processing enough wheat to render 50 lbs of flour, the family slaughtered their own pigs to provide the lard necessary to make nearly 75lbs of salty dough to make the special bread for this day. The coarse wheat flour and lard are combined with butter, sugar, salt, yeast, oil, and boiled water. Each family in Lumbisí has its own recipe passed down through generations. Lumbiseños only consume this dense and incredibly fatty bread recipe during the celebration of the dead, and they make it into multiple forms including guaguas de pan, rings, birds, and soldiers. One of the grandchildren made a rendition of SpongeBob Squarepants, a popular international cartoon character, as her contribution.

Although the forms of homemade pan de muertos vary, everyone within the family must consume a bread doll fashioned to look like or represent the person who eats it, including the deceased. They use pot black or the burned black spots that form on the outside of the brick oven to color dough and decorate their bread dolls. These dolls exhibit details, facial features, and even clothing representative of the person who will consume it. Lumbiseños believe that even the deceased members of the family need to consume pan de muertos and colada morada. Some of the guaguas de pan made in the Chillán family had the initials of the family member to whom it belonged.
Figures 4.18 Lumbisí, Ecuador Día de los difuntos 2007. (Left) The author’s attempt at making guaguas de pan and roscas during the Day of the Dead with the Chillán family. (Right) The brick oven used by the Chillán Family to bake pan de muertos. In the foreground, a tray of roscas or rings that symbolically represent eternity bakes, and in the background a tray of guinea pigs bakes for later consumption. Lumbiseños only consume guinea pigs during important festival events and ritual celebrations.

Just as Lumbiseños consume pan de muertos on this day, they also make and consume their own colada morada, also known as mazamorra or mazamorra morada. Many recipes within Lumbisí differ slightly, but in general this deep purple porridge consists of black corn flour, blackberries, blueberries, chopped strawberries, babaco, and/or pineapple. Women diligently cook this porridge in Lumbisí and enhance its flavors with a variety of herbs such as lemon verbena, orange leaf, cloves, cinnamon, lemon grass, and naranjilla (Solanum quitoense) or a small orange. Lumbiseñas serve this viscous, warm porridge alongside pan de muerto. As the porridge cools, a thick skin forms, conserving the warmth below.

The ritual food items consumed by the living and left for the deceased on the Day of the Dead in Lumbisí contrast drastically with the store-bought and highly processed guaguas de pan and colada morada available for purchase in Quito. Families in Lumbisí both buy and produce their own pan de muertos, but whereas in Quito the purchase of these goods may signal wealth, in Lumbisí purchased pan de muertos and colada morada carries less prestige. The community places value on producing their own goods, harvesting their own lands, and investing the time to do so. This work, as in the case of the Chillán Family, yields a wealth of homemade product that
they share with others. However, Lumbiseños place value in the process of making these ritual food items as it unites families, demonstrates their wealth in harvested goods, and shows their generosity when they share the final product.

Lumbiseños place high value on how production of ritual foods. Lumbiseños also compete among each other to gain more prestige through the decorations of tombs. The more decorated the tombs of their ancestors remain after the celebration ends, the more prestige the living gain, both as a reflection of the well-being bestowed upon them by the deceased as well as visual cues to material wealth afforded to the dead by their living family. Here, Lumbiseños purchase decorations, prayers, alms, and persuade the parish priest to bless the tomb of their loved ones with urban earned salaries. Both actions, the making of pan de muertos and its consumption along with decorating an ancestor’s tomb, merge to comprise the common urban elements with ancestor commemoration and originario exclusivity in Lumbísí.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have described two national holidays celebrated in Ecuador, the Old Year and the Day of the Dead, to demonstrate how Lumbiseños practice national holidays on their own terms within their local community. Lumbiseños have effectively adapted these two holidays to fit their own ideology and socio-economic means and needs by drawing on symbols and performances from Quito. At the same time, both celebrations within Lumbísí take on unique attributes deeply rooted in Lumbiseño identity and tradition.

Lumbiseños merge elements of the national celebration of the Old Year with their own celebration that commemorates the rise of comuna power on January 1 each year. The most visible merger takes place as the government and rising priostes simultaneously celebrate their new community roles, while participating in the burning of Old Year effigies and observing the “widows” perform in their beauty contest. Clearly, this Lumbiseño celebration comprises two
forms of local power in the local political arena and in the social sphere. The reinvestment in the community unfolds in the renewal of community government, as the exiting of the former community officials gives rise to the new political power. The Old Year marks the last night in which the exiting officials hold political power and provides a time for the community to provide a gesture of welcome and exchange of power with the newly elected government. This community celebration combines the typical national celebration of the Old Year, but incorporates the unique element of Lumbiseño changing of power. The date of this exchange of power neither coincides with any other local authorities in surrounding communities nor within the nation’s capital or elections of national officials. Celebrating the New Year with a new government consequently defines a new beginning for Lumbisí, renewed annually during this celebration.

This celebration also merges with the parade of the yumbos on December 31 and the subsequent matanza performance on January 1. The Old/New Year celebration continues into the early hours of January 1 with the blessing of the new governing body and the exchange of bastones de mando (staffs of authority). As the new government emerges from the town’s Catholic Church, a shift in focus occurs that highlights the incoming priostes. This shift aligns with community ideas of unity through diversity and “tradition” that has been celebrated within Lumbisí for hundreds of years. The yumbos take center stage during this second demonstration of community power and reinvestment as they welcome the incumbent festival sponsors. No other community position of authority holds more potential for social success and the attributed social prestige of successful priostes within Lumbisí. Priostes, elected by Lumbiseño originarios, receives the yumbo performers as their first act as priostes. While Quiteños’ celebration of the
Old Year ends in the early morning hours, the priostes of Lumbisí observe the performance of the yumbos as a continuation of the previous night’s celebration.

On the one hand, the matanza of the yumbos represents a form of continuity, a celebration that the community claims as a centuries old custom, and a representation of community solidarity. On the other hand, the costumes and performance of the matanza have many attributes and symbols that merge regions (Andean and Amazon) with modern, urban elements such as Umbro brand soccer uniforms. Yumbos represent Amazonian merchants and their advances into highland territory to arrange long-distance trade networks, rather than highland indigeneity. All dancers wear colorful Amazonian plumage in their crowns and women wear vestments that identify them as highland indigenous women but not as Lumbiseñas. This mixture of elements creates a unique Yumbada that shares elements with other Quito Runa celebrations in the Quito Basin including Cotocollao and La Magdelena (Williams and Fine-Dare 2008), but varies the types of costuming worn, props used, and actions completed within the performance. Despite the various points of origin of this symbolic dance of initial defiance and later reconciliation, all these symbols combine to reinforce the concept of the matanza in Lumbisí.

The Old Year celebration then begins at the common origin of December 31 throughout the Ecuadorian nation and worldwide. However, the celebration diverges greatly from those celebrations observed in Quito during the Old Year. Lumbiseños have carved out their own interpretation and have repurposed the celebration of Old Year to fit within their community needs. They use this occasion to celebrate the rise of community social and political power, while still participating in elements of the national celebration.
The Day of the Dead celebration in Ecuador marks another national holiday celebrated in Lumbisí. This celebration also differs from the mainstream traditions of the white-mestizo urban dwellers of Quito. The Day of the Dead for wealthy white and white-mestizo populations becomes more and more associated with out-of-town travel, store bought guaguas de pan and colada morada, and for some a brief visit to leave flowers at their loved ones’ tombs. The celebration in Lumbisí combines urban elements with traditional references to ancestry and identity to fashion their own celebration. The prayer cards and plastic or paper flower crowns adorn tombs in the cemeteries of San Diego, El Batán, and Lumbisí. These items are purchased outside of the cemeteries and placed on the tombs of their loved ones. Some Lumbiseños also purchase guaguas de pan from local bread stores, but there many families that still raise their own livestock and harvest wheat to produce these ritual foods. The Chillán family continues to make their own colada morada and pan de muertos in quantities so large that synthetic sacks get filled with dozens and dozens of roscas, birds, and bread dolls to redistribute among family members and their vecinos (neighbors). The matriarch of the Chillán family explained:

And thanks to God, He gave to us and I had enough to share with all my children, with the whole family, and with all the neighbors, you see. Even if it is just a little, we make it enough. Yes, yes, that is how it is. [My translation]

The quantities of bread distributed, according the matriarch, would last each of her children’s families until the next Day of the Dead, as the pan de muertos keeps for long periods of time without risk of rotting. Consequently, family members, including the deceased, consume guaguas de pan on the Day of the Dead, while some store their gifted roscas to eat throughout the following year.

The Day of the Dead celebration in Lumbisí, just at the Old Year, provides a mixture of symbols usurped from popular urban symbols, such as the alms or pray cards and plastic flower rings. The national and the Lumbiseño celebration also share the action of cleaning tombs and
leaving offerings of flowers at the grave. However, the celebration in Lumbisí merges other local elements with these shared elements to celebrate. For instance, the cemetery land in Lumbisí marks one staunch contrast with the cemeteries in Quito. While in Quito anyone who can afford a burial space can be buried within the city’s cemeteries, Lumbiseños limit access to the celebration of the Day of the Dead by excluding outsiders to the community. Only Lumbiseño originarios and their families may be buried within earth sheltered by red brick boundaries and a locked iron gate. This exclusion allows originarios to celebrate the Day of the Dead with their ancestors for whom they claimed this land and registered it legally as a comuna in 1981. The presence of recognized ancestors in the cemetery prevents the national government from reclaiming this land. Remembering these ancestors with the celebration in the Lumbiseño cemetery ensures the well-being of the living, and as such the cycle of renewal and reinvestment in the community reoccurs year after year. This distinction and the prohibition of others to be buried within the Lumbiseño cemetery walls makes this celebration confined to local ancestor commemoration and the recognition of indigenous ancestry.

In the next chapter, I focus on the analysis of the San Bartolomé Patron Saint Festival in Lumbisí. While the two Lumbiseño ritual celebrations discussed in this chapter interpret national holidays enacted locally, the San Bartolomé festival demonstrates a locally manifested festival that interprets a highly stereotyped national socialscape and an inversion of the imagined colonial/present national social hierarchy.
Chapter 5: Celebrating San Bartolomé: The Power of Local Performance at Play with the Popular National Social Imaginary

At precisely 3:00 p.m. on a hot, sunny Saturday afternoon in August 2007, the first sky rocket took flight from the worn, callused hands of a middle-aged originario, one of Lumbisi’s pyrotechnic experts. He held the short bamboo shaft of the rocket in his hand as he lit its fuse from his cigarette. The rocket flew high into the sky and exploded above the town square with a thunderous boom felt and heard throughout the community. The boom signaled to the comuneros the costumed dancers’ arrival in the center of town. The community’s brass band, Banda de Música 24 de Agosto, named for the Patron Saint’s Day August 24th, played a rousing round of an Andean music genre called Sanjuanito at the Vespers of the San Bartolomé Festival.

Hundreds of costumed participants rounded the corner of the main town square to dance in front of the festival sponsors observing from the old church steps. The mayoral (foreman or controller) of the festival, another originario, acted as chief organizer of the costume parade. He danced through the center of the double-file line of costumed dancers dancing and blowing his whistle to signal changes in parade configurations. Dressed in a leather vest, cowboy hat, chaps, a long-sleeved shirt, and dark sunglasses, the mayoral mocked cracking his whip to get all costumed dancers to perform to his and the sponsors’ approval. The mayoral in the midst of the parade, drenched in sweat, turned as I filmed the dance performance. With his arms outstretched signaling the parade behind him, he said, “¡Esto es Lumbisi! ¡Esto es nuestro!”—“This is Lumbisi! This is ours!”

The mayoral’s words, the frequently shared and repeated phrases, “This is Lumbisi! This is ours!,” signal Lumbiseños’ pride in and recognition of this four-day cargo festival as a unique part of Lumbiseño identity. While chapter 4 dealt with the local interpretations of national holidays, this chapter addresses the local celebration of San Bartolomé. The San
Bartolomé Festival showcases a highly stereotyped and satirical presentation of the national Ecuadorian socialscape as imagined by Lumbiseños, while still elevating and celebrating Lumbiseños’ identity. The incorporation of urban prestige goods, technology, sponsors, and performances enhance the enactment of these stereotyped and exaggerated social roles. I argue that the San Bartolomé performance creates an inversion of the national social imaginary, positioning festival sponsors and the newly elected Queen of Lumbisí and her court as local elites, the Festival Commission as middle-class skilled workers and organizers, and finally the costumed performers as the lowest social position as the primary workforce or “laborers” that performer in the festival. The San Bartolomé Festival represents a strictly local Lumbiseño festival that incorporates Lumbiseños’ visions and interpretations of their past and present. Travel, work, interactions with outsiders, and other experiences in the Metropolitan District of Quito coupled with national and international media get incorporated into the nostalgia, memory, and imagined and remembered traditions that surround the San Bartolomé Festival in Lumbisí.

¡Que Viva San Bartolomé! A Brief History of the Local Patron Saint Celebration

Lumbiseños claim they continually celebrated the San Bartolomé Festival since the beginning of community’s recorded existence in 1535. In 2011, Lumbiseños marked the commemoration of 476 years of communal existence. They claim the San Bartolomé Festival as the “most traditional celebration of the year.” A former community president and his wife explained the importance of this festival in a 2004 interview. Together, this couple has witnessed and participated in over 75 festivals throughout their lifetime. They stated:

“We do what we can to celebrate our patron saint of Lumbisí. Before, each sector used to present a decorated car and a costumed dance. This year we had a drawing to decide which sector presented a decorated car and which sector presented a dance. The cost of living has effected what we can do, but we always manage to celebrate somehow. That is how it is.” [My translation]
The couple further indicated that no matter the economic condition of the community, Lumbiseños always celebrate the festival of San Bartolomé, albeit with some festivals more extravagant than others. The ability to achieve extravagance and outdo the previous year’s festival, especially in the face of economic scarcity enhances the festival sponsors’ social prestige by demonstrating the reach of their social and kinship relations.

The historical and contemporary celebrations of San Bartolomé commemorate the confluence of several significant events, symbols, and figures deeply rooted in Lumbiseños’ past. First, the festival connects Lumbiseños’ agricultural and pastoral past to the present through the timing of this late summer celebration. The San Bartolomé Festival events take place annually at the end of the dry season (from April to August in the Quito basin) and the beginning of the new agricultural cycle and planting season. The rainy season begins between late August and September, positioning the San Bartolomé celebration on the verge of its arrival. The beginning of this celebration usually falls on the second or third week of August to accommodate the long weekend of festivities as close to the Saint’s day, August 24th, as possible. As descendants of the Inca mitimaes and local indigenous populations as described in chapter 3, the importance of the local Andean agricultural cycle and Inca feasts play a role in the organization of Lumbiseño celebrations. Like the Incas, Lumbiseños historically celebrated feasts each month during the calendar year. This practice continued well into the twentieth century for Lumbiseños. Some contemporary elders claim that the increase in higher education accompanied a decline in local celebrations. As one community elder described, “Ahora es una sola. Más antes era ashta7 fiesta tuvimos. Ya llegó los hijos. Los hijos se fueron al colegio. Adios fiesta.” (Now there is only one. Before there were more celebrations we had. Our children came. Our children went to school. Good-bye celebration[s]. [My translation])

7 This elder’s statement references the Kichwa term “ashta” meaning “bastante” in Spanish or “lots” in English.
Historical accounts of indigenous chronicler Guaman Poma de Ayala (1615) and later Jesuit missionary Bernabe Cobo (1990) in Peru, align the month of August in the Inca calendar with the crucial first planting of the season. De Ayala depicted in one of his infamous drawings of Inca daily life the Inca King initiating planting with a foot plow, followed by his consumption of maize beer called *chicha* in Spanish or *aswa* in Kicwha. This celebration started around the first week of August each year. Zuidema (1981) notes that early to mid-August had great significance to the Inca, and it shared similar importance throughout the Andes region, including parts of Ecuador. While these dates may not correspond directly to the San Bartolomé Festival, the dates do coincide with the critically important new beginning of the Andean agricultural cycle in the central Andes of Ecuador. A successful festival, one in which the community has demonstrated its wealth and surplus during the driest and most difficult time of the year, brings the return of the rain, renewed fertility, reproduction, and success to Lumbisí.

*Figure 5.1* Guaman Poma de Ayala’s (1615) drawing depicts the first planting of the season during the Inca agricultural calendar. August marked the feast of the planting, which followed the King’s participation in breaking fresh soil to plant. Note: The female figure to the right of the image offers ritual corn beer to the laboring Incas (Photo source: http://www.kb.dk/permalink/2006/poma/info/en/frontpage.htm)
Lumbiseños evoke renewal through the process of ritual cleansing and commemoration with various offerings related to fire. On the night of the celebration’s Vespers, Lumbiseños provide *chamiza* (medicinal plants) cut and dried to burn in a large bonfire. They send small hot air balloons sailing into the night sky fueled by slow burning wood. Priostes and extended families sponsor towering pyrotechnic displays called *castillos* (castles) that explode tier after tier in colored sparks and flames as participants dance beneath their fiery rain. Selected participants, usually members of the Festival Commission and honored local dignitaries, run with *vaca locas* (crazy cows), wooden structures mounted with constructed bull’s horns, covered with cow’s skin or plastic, and fitted with delayed ignition fireworks. Other participants light the fireworks on the crazy cows on fire, and sparks fly while the “cow” runs wildly through the congregated community. The priostes also hold and burn ornately decorated wax candles throughout the celebration as symbols of prestige and a gesture of divine connection. This fiery theme marks a clear symbolic gesture to pre-Hispanic understandings of purification and renewal that ensure the return of the rain, bountiful crops, and the continuation of community’s well-being for the coming year.

![Figure 5.2 Lumbisí, Ecuador. August 2005. Costumed participants in the San Bartolomé festival dance under the exploding fireworks of the castillo (castle).](image)
Finally, the figure of San Bartolomé (Saint Bartholomew) plays a significant role in the secular and sacred construction of the patron saint celebration. From here forward, I refer to the Catholic Saint as Saint Bartholomew and I use the Spanish gloss for the saint celebrated in Lumbisí as they recognize him, San Bartolomé. According to historical documents found in the national archives in Quito dating to the sixteenth century, Lumbiseños chose San Bartolomé as the guardian of their cofradía established in 1590 to protect the ancestral lands of Lumbisí against claims of proprietorship made by Catholic religious figures including the nuns of the Immaculate Conception and land hungry Spanish colonizers (ANQ-Caja 1-XX). The choice of the Catholic Saint Bartholomew complicates the connection between the saint’s protective nature and the indigenous struggle to maintain their land against the same Spanish church and authorities who attempted to take their land away. Documents from the eighteenth century suggest that indigenous men and women protected their land in the name of their Patron Saint even resorting to violence. For example, one document indicates, *Y el día lunes dela semana pasada que hacen ocho días midieron y prepararon las tierras de suyopamba q e en parte estaban azad--- los Caciques Dº. Diego Quispi y Dº. Manual Quispi diciendo ser las tierras del Snton Patron del pueblo.* (And last week Monday, that makes eight days, they measured and prepared the lands in suyopamba⁸ (that in part were [worked] by the Indigenous leaders Sir Diego Quispi and Sir Manual Quispi saying the land belongs to the Patron Saint of the town [My translation]).

Based on a recent caption of a photo taken by Kitu Kara photographer Mauricio Ushiña (2009) that described the Lumbiseño celebration as “San Bartolomé de las Casas,” I propose that the figure of San Bartolomé conflates the image of the Catholic Saint with the ideology of Fray Bartolomé de las Casas. Bartolomé de las Casas, a Spanish Dominican friar and later Bishop,

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⁸ Suyopamba is a compound word consisting of two Kichwa roots, suyo/suyu for division and pamba for land, resulting in their land or their land division.
gained a reputation as the “Protector of the Indians” in Central and South America (de las Casas 2009 [1562]). Some contemporary Lumbiseños claim that Saint Bartholomew visited the community in the 16th century and through his protection, they maintained their ancestral land. This led to the formation of the aforementioned brotherhood named in his honor. However, the Catholic Saint Bartholomew never visited the Americas, but rather conducted his mission and met his fate in Armenia during the first century A.D., nearly fifteen centuries before the documented organization of the San Bartolomé brotherhood and rumored visit to Lumbisí.

Figure 5.3. Lumbisí, Ecuador. August 2005. During the Santa Misa procession, the Festival Commission carries an effigy of Saint Bartholomew dressed in special robes provided by the same commission and currency attached to his sash to receive prayers. [Picture courtesy of author]

According to Bible scholars, Saint Bartholomew only gains mention as one of the twelve apostles of Jesus Christ in the gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, as well as in the book of Acts (“Catholic Encyclopedia”). Bartholomew disappears in the New Testament never to be mentioned elsewhere by that name, although some argue that Bartholomew could have become
known as Nathaniel (“Catholic Encyclopedia”). Saint Bartholomew’s mission led him to spread the gospel of Matthew through India, Mesopotamia, Persia, Egypt, Lycaonia, Phrygia, and Armenia. In Armenia, Bartholomew successfully converted the King of Armenia to Christianity, which provoked the King’s brother to flay Bartholomew alive and crucify him upside down during the first century A.D. (“Catholic Encyclopedia”). Most depictions and effigies of Saint Bartholomew have him either holding his own skin in one hand or having it draped over his body and holding a large knife in the other hand. He has become recognized as the Patron Saint of Tanners and Leather workers among other professions (“Catholic Encyclopedia”).

By contrast, Bartolomé de las Casas, born in the late fifteenth century, lived and conducted his missionary work in Hispaniola, Mexico, Guatemala, Venezuela, and eventually Peru during the early to mid-sixteenth century. De las Casas advocated for human rights for indigenous peoples and proposed peaceful colonization that abolished their abuse through among

Figure 5.4 Lumbisi, Ecuador. August 2005. (Left) The image of Saint Bartholomew typically displays a knife in one hand and a red cloak draped over his body. This cloak represents the saint’s own skin, flayed from his body after the brother of the King of Armenia discovered Bartholomew converted the King to Christianity. (Right) The smaller, portable effigy of Saint Bartholomew carried by the Festival Commission at the end of the Santa Misa presentations.
other things coerced missionization. Bartolomé de las Casas called for the elimination of the encomienda system, which forced indigenous works to labor without wages for landowners who in turn only provided minimal housing, small garden plots for familial subsistence, and access to grazing land (Moline-Fioravanti 1986, Saignes 1999, Thurner 1993). Contemporary Lumbiseños continue to use various images of Saint Bartholomew during their San Bartolomé celebration, but the symbolism of protection and indigenous land rights reinforce the 16th century ideology Fray Bartolomé de las Casas spread throughout the Americas.

San Bartolomé: The Contemporary Festival

During the weeks prior to the San Bartolomé Festival, Lumbisí undergoes a dramatic transformation. The streets that are usually empty during the typical work week begin to swell with activity. The church gets a new coat of fresh white paint with sky blue trim and decorated with a banner of the Ecuadorian flag draped above its open doors. People returning from work in the evenings bustle home for a quick dinner before dance practices, costume alterations, and construction on carro alegórico (makeshift floats) begin. The church bells ring at 7:00p.m. to call parishioners to mass for each night of the novena, a nine day prayer session. Groups of festival participants representing each of the nine sectors of Lumbisí practice their dance routines in the hidden spaces between houses or on less used roads around sunset. The galleros, a team of hand selected men designated to dance and surrender their live roosters in a public presentation to the priostes of the festival, practice their dance in geometric configurations over and over again to the sound of a pre-recorded Sanjuanito. Lights in individual homes stay lit well beyond the typical 8:00p.m. bedtime hour, as preparations continue well into the night.

The residents that live in the Centro Poblado Sector of Lumbisí spend time cleaning the streets of the plaza and mingas (a communal work party) work to straighten up the grounds of
the central park. In anticipation of this huge event, storeowners work diligently to restock their supplies of beer and *puntas* or *trago*, inexpensive, high proof alcohol derived from sugar cane. *Pilsener* beer, one of the most popular Ecuadorian bottled beers, sends representatives to set up tents, kiosks, promotional items, and stages for particular festival events as part of their sponsorship of the San Bartolomé festival, arranged by the Festival Commission. Pilsener also brings hundreds of *jabas* (specialized plastic crates made for the convenient transport of twelve liter bottles of beer at a time) to stock their kiosks and to sell to festival goers and the Festival Commission alike. Vendors, including Otavaleños, bring typical artisan goods made of wool, and carnival ride owners line the streets as early as a week before the first festival event. The bright lights of the giant Ferris Wheel and other carnival rides illuminate the typically dark streets of the *Sector El Estadio*, Stadium Sector, to the west of the central plaza. Elder women spend their days traveling to Sangolquí to process and purchase the extra corn necessary to make massive quantities of ritual corn beer, which priostes provide and festival participants consume during the extent of the festival. Relatives, guests, and tourists—usually national tourists from other towns and cities rather than international tourists—start to arrive from distant indigenous populations in the Imbabura, Cotopaxi, and Chimborazo Provinces to observe the festival events.

Lumbiseños start celebrating San Bartolomé with the Catholic novena, just five days prior to the culmination of the festival. The local parish priest holds evening mass each night during the novena at which time the effigy of Saint Bartholomew switches hands and circulates through the nine sectors of Lumbisi. The circulation of the effigy allows the saint’s image to spend one night in each sector. During the novena, Lumbiseños come to designated houses to pray to the effigy asking for good health, good crops, the well-being of the community, and everything in between. They place a bill of US currency ranging from one to ten US dollars
under the saint’s sash or pin it to his bright red tunic to have their prayers heard (see Figure X). This exchange of currency marks the only direct exchange of payment from the petitioner to the saint. This practice harkens to the colonial period when indigenous parishioners of haciendas in Ecuador paid priests to have their prayers heard (Crespi 1981). All other exchanges between Lumbiseños and the priostes or Festival Commission take the form of reciprocal payments between social and kin networks. These exchanges entail goods such as grains or chickens for festival meals, services such as securing urban sponsors like Pilsener or renting disc jockey equipment, and labor such as cooking or dancing. Lumbiseños could conceivably give currency, but they choose to exchange the aforementioned goods and services as opposed to exchanging money.

After the initial five days of the novena, the San Bartolomé festival celebration begins. The contemporary San Bartolomé festival consists of a four-day weekend beginning on the Friday before the 24th of August and culminating on the following Monday. August 24th of each year remains the official saint’s day of the community. To accommodate the travel of extended family and special invited guests, Lumbiseños schedule the bulk of the celebration during a long weekend. Divided into four principal days, the San Bartolomé celebration comprises el pregón de la fiesta (the proclamation of the festival) with the coronation of the Queen of Lumbisí and her Court of Honor on Friday. On Saturday, Lumbiseños celebrate Las Vísperas (Vespers), which includes a costume parade during the day followed by the lighting of the chamiza bonfire, hot air balloons, fireworks, and crazy cows at night. After these activities, Lumbiseños return to the town square to participate in a modern, popular music dance sponsored by the priostes and contributing local families. Santa Misa (Sacred Mass) takes place in the community church on Sunday morning, promptly at 8:00a.m. Later the same day, the nine sectors of the community
present decorated cars, a folkloric dance, or a comedic skit to represent their sector in the festivities. Following the presentations, various games for the general population ensue. Members of the Festival Commission launch handfuls of candy and citrus fruit, namely oranges, into the crowd. The galleros also sponsor a game loosely translated as “catch the rooster.” They jostle a bean bag⁹ tied to a rope as participants run under the rope and try to jump and grab it. The successful participant leaves the game with a live rooster or chicken as their prize.

On Monday, the final day of the festival, the priostes and the Festival Commission provide a feast of rooster soup and maize beer for the entire community, special invited guests, and members of neighboring communities who know of the locally famous Day of Gallomote (Rooster and Hominy Soup). The newly elected Queen of Lumbisí and her court of honor also participate in the final day’s events by providing ollas encantadas (small ceramic pots filled and decorated like piñatas). The Queen provides enough pots so that each child in the community has a chance to break one. The children line up in parallel lines and two by two to break the pots. Like the breaking of a piñata, the Queen and her court blindfold the children and spin them around before handing them a broomstick to hit the pots. Once the pot cracks or breaks, the child receives his or her prize. These pots contain a combination of traditional candies such as colaciones and caramelos (usually hard candies) small toys, t-shirts, and confetti. Each day’s events comprise multiple performances, all in homage of their patron saint, San Bartolomé. Lumbiseños locally produce the entire performance of the San Bartolomé festival through an arduous nearly year-long process of gathering resources not only from each of Lumbisí’s nine sectors, but also from the municipality of Quito (Ushiña Sacancela 2004). Once the priostes and Festival Commission rise to their new positions on January 1 each year, they begin amassing

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⁹ Historically, Lumbiseños used live roosters for this game. They tied the roosters upside down and jostled the rope as participants ran and jumped underneath the bird. Lumbiseños later prohibited the use of live roosters in this game, as the roosters suffered and often times died as a result, leaving the participants without a prize.
goods, services, and favors owed them through a complex system of reciprocal exchanges between kin and within social networks. Alegría, an originario woman, explained how the Festival Commission asked her to contribute a large amount of chickens for the meals leading up to the main feast on the final day of the San Bartolomé festival. She said, “Me pidieron más de cincuenta gallinas este año, solo yo. A mi hijo unos treinta más y el otro unos veinte más.” (They asked me for more than 50 chickens this year, just me. My son, some thirty more and my other son twenty more.) (personal communication 2011). When asked if she considered that amount to be in excess of the usual donation, she replied, “Sí. Somos jubilados, donde creen que vamos a sacar tantas gallinas?” (Yes. We are retired. Where do they think we are going to take out so many chickens?) She explained that in years past, retirees donated less as they were unable to produce as much during the year. This indicates that donations depend on the proportion of production and one’s capability to donate, a sensitive subject matter that successful priostes must manage so as to not offend a potential donor. The 2011 request received by Alegría for excessive amount of chickens bordered on an imposition or a burden greater than usual. The Festival Commission and the priostes must constantly negotiate the fine line between asking for enough goods to increase the visible wealth of the celebration without breaching the limit of their favors and what the participants returning the gesture may generate. The Festival Commission collects these offerings during the week of the festival, giving Lumbiseños time to amass the goods they promise to donate to the Festival Commission. The community in turn holds these priostes responsible for a successful festival that demonstrates the increased wealth and great organization of the community.
Lumbiseño salaries earned in Quito and Cumbayá are used to purchase festival goods and services and add to the donations requested by the priorites from families within the community. A quick estimate of the cost of the San Bartolomé festival in 2007 reached approximately $25,000 US dollars, based on public consumption of food and beverages, technical equipment such as speakers and stages, fair rides, fireworks, candles, payment to the parish priest and Saint Bartholomew effigy for prayers, the band, and other incidentals. Each year the priorites strive to outdo the organization and grandeur of the previous year’s festival. In 2007, the cost of the San Bartolomé Festival exceeded by nearly five times the estimated average family income. The burden to meet these costs, gather resources, and produce a successful festival event is the
responsibility of the sponsors who, with their wives, comprise the core of directors of the festival, while the members of the Festival Commission work behind the scenes of the festival to ensure its seamless execution.

Crowned Queens, the Viennese Waltz… and a Comparsa?

At 8:00p.m. on Friday, August 18, 2005, the first bottle rocket left the hands of the cohetero (the rocket releaser) to signal the first event of the San Bartolomé celebration, the crowning of the Queen of Lumbisí. Each of the nine sectors of Lumbisí provides a young lady between the ages of 12-17 as a community representative. Originarios including the priostes and Festival Commission elect the Queen and her court of honor based on their proposal for community service projects for Lumbisí throughout the year. In the open air of the elementary school courtyard, several local dignitaries, festival sponsors, the community’s government officials, the former Queen of Lumbisí 2004, and the final court of honor gathered in front of the Pilsener Beer sponsored stage. Dressed in formal ball gowns and high-heeled shoes with sparkling blue and gold sashes, each of the crowned members of the court of honor received a handmade bedroom suit donated by the Commission of Lumbiseño Carpenters and a delicate necklace donated by a jewelry company from Quito as gifts for their devotion to the community. After the coronation process and the receipt of her gifts, the Queen of Lumbisí delivered her pledge to serve the community and made a call for “world peace,” and to “make love, not war.” The Queen and her court of honor stepped down from the stage and met with their corresponding festival sponsor to dance the “traditional waltz.” The record player queued and the grand Viennese waltz, The Blue Danube, composed by Johann Strauss, blared as the couples of honor attempted to dance a local rendition of the waltz.
Figure 5.6 Lumbísí, Ecuador. August 2006. Coronation Ceremony at the beginning of the San Bartolomé Festival. Here the reigning Queen of Lumbísí sits with her court of honor and other local dignitaries including the festival sponsors and community government members [Photo courtesy of author].

Following the waltz, the Queen and her court joined the seated dignitaries in the privileged section of the stage to watch a stylized dance performance of a nationally recognized comparsa, folkloric dance troupe. After the comparsa completed two dances to cleanse the festival ground and ask pachamama for her abundance, an all-female local salsa band took the stage and played well into the midnight hour. This performance closed the coronation ceremony and opened the San Bartolomé Festival. All participants left the school courtyard to dance in the baile general (general dance) sponsored by an originario family in the main town square. The sounds of popular highland music blared from giant speakers until nearly 4:00 a.m.

The coronation of the Queen of Lumbísí is the annual pregón de la fiesta, the formal opening of the festival of San Bartolomé. Multiple transnational and national symbols ordinarily recognized as elements of urban festivals transcend the boundaries of Lumbísí for the San Bartolomé Festival. These symbols feed the tension between the national perceptions of
mestizaje (see chapter 2 for a detailed description) and the local usurpation of cosmopolitan knowledge and symbols employed to enrich Lumbiseño indigenous identity.

The election of the Queen of Lumbisí represents a departure from the traditionally imagined indigenous celebration. Unlike other recorded descriptions of similar saint’s day festivals, Corpus Christi celebrations, and other smaller festival events in the Metropolitan District of Quito (Beals 1955, Salomon 1981, Fine-Dare 1986 and 2006), the people of Lumbisí elect a Queen to preside over the traditional festival events of San Bartolomé and community service projects throughout the year. Rogers (1998) describes the segregated white and indigenous beauty pageants that take place in Otavalo, a northern Ecuadorian market town. The “white” or white-mestizo pageant representatives hail from the town center and perform idealized notions of indigeneity through folkloric dance used in the talent portion of the competition. These beauty pageants separate indigeneity to a romanticized performance of folklore, an interpretation of indigenous “others,” while Rogers claims that indigenous pageants incorporate indigenous dance as a representation of the self. These strict dichotomies of urban/rural, white-mestizo/indigenous, performance/reality, and other/self outlined in Otavaleño pageants ignore the possibility of the indigenous performance of both urbanity and whiteness that forms a part of a local indigenous elite social class.

Lumbiseños incorporate selected symbols and gestures toward urbanity and whiteness as a symbolic, constitutive and characterizing element of their indigenous pageant performance. The Lumbiseño pageant marginalizes the performance of folklorized and objectified indigenousness for the visual consumption of the urban, indigenous elite of Lumbisí. I use the term pageant broadly to mean the election of a female representative of the community based on community values, but not in a canonical sense of beauty pageant such as the globally televised
Miss America or Miss Universe pageants. The young women in the Lumbisí pageant participate in orations, not bathing suit competitions. They wear ball gowns, but forego any talent competition to determine their well-rounded candidacy. Instead, Lumbiseños choose the candidate elected Queen in Lumbisí based on her commitment to service and the community.

The incorporation of the coronation ceremony and the election of the Queen during the San Bartolomé Festival as traditions remains unclear. One elderly couple in their late 70s reported that they witnessed the crowning of the Queen every year for as long as they could remember, while several former Queens who attended the ceremony attested that this tradition began at least 40 years ago.

The figure of the Queen clearly represents an elite, regal figure with sophisticated urban knowledge, and at the same time she acts as an originario representative and resident of Lumbisí. The Queen addresses the crowd in Spanish, not Kichwa. She and her court of honor wear expensive formal gowns and high-heeled shoes sown or purchased by her respective family. The purchase of these luxurious costumes and the ability to perform in the coronation ceremony exemplifies the representatives’ families’ privileged status within the community. Not every family can afford to supply their daughters with these essential costumes for the coronation ceremony, and without them, the contestants may not participate.

Throughout the remaining days of the San Bartolomé festival the Queen embodies a social position of privilege. She, along with her court of honor, stands next to the priostes in various privileged vantage points, but shares no direct affiliation to a prioste. She remains inactive throughout the remainder of festival performances until the last day of the festival when she and her court of honor give their time to the under privileged children of the community during a massive distribution of donated clay-pot piñatas.
The composition of the coronation ceremony performance, the contrasting symbols of dance presentations ranging from the European high culture, Viennese Waltz, to the indigenous interpretation of traditional folk dance, juxtaposes the urban/elite with the rural/indigenous within the same space of the local Lumbiseño elementary school courtyard. The waltz played over large box speakers from an LP record. While the music played, the crowned indigenous young ladies of Lumbisí struggled in their high-heels to match the steps of their partners, the festival sponsors. When the music ended, the ladies curtsied while the men bowed before returning to their seats in front of the crowd. Neither of the pair danced the distinct formal ¾ beat step-close pattern of the Waltz with precision, but the representation of their cosmopolitan knowledge of the Waltz carried more significance than the performance itself. The performance of the waltz demonstrated the local folklorization of “high culture,” and the competence of the actors who danced it. While Rogers (1998) points to the white performance of folkloric dance in Otavalo as the acknowledgment of a “generalized municipal identity,” he indicates that indigenous pageants reference indigeneity throughout with the purpose of “seiz[ing] control of and separating out of the larger society… to create an ideology of ‘ethnic worth’ (1998: 57).” Indeed the performance of the Waltz in the Lumbisí coronation ceremony serves to separate the local Lumbiseño elite from the general population, but in this case the separation marks the boundary between folklorized “whiteness” and the embodiment of local indigenous elite Lumbiseños including the festival priostes, the Queen and her court, and the representatives of the comuna government.

The pageant performance of the local Lumbiseño elite extends to include the consumption of the folklorized indigenous performance of the comparsa dance. Organized by the Festival Commission, the hired dance comparsa consisted of outsiders to the community, who
performed while Lumbiseños observed. The barefoot comparsa performers, dressed in typical northern highland costumes complete with bordered blouses and the long wool *anacus* (skirts) cinched at the waist by two superimposed *chumbi* (belts), regaled the crowd with two dance interpretations. During each interpretation, performers danced to the *Sanjuanito*, the same lively traditional Andean song genre played during the rest of the San Bartolomé Festival, but with addition of *charango* guitars and panpipes. The Kichwa lyrics emanated from giant box speakers as the performers took the stage in a whirlwind of brilliant colors, swirling scarves, and calculated dance configurations. The Festival Commission hired this nationally recognized comparsa based on their known skill and performance to dance for the opening of the festival and again at its close on the day of the Santa Misa. The comparsa’s folklorized choreography, costumes, and music represent a nationally recognized competence in the performance of stereotyped “indigeneity” by mestizo actors (Hagerdorn 2001). By securing this renowned performance for the San Bartolomé Festival, the Festival Commission gains social prestige for investing substantial funds, obtaining difficult to attain entertainment, and showcasing indigenous folklore in the context of the locally folklorized venue of high culture. The performance of this skilled comparsa intimately connects to the success of the festival and to the public face of grandeur the priostes imbue.

Finally, the comparsa performance simultaneously interfaces folklorized indigeneity and high culture while it separates the festival priostes and coronation ceremony participants from the idealized imagery of indigeneity with which the festival elites do not associate. As the Queen, her court, the festival sponsors and the community government members sat in specially reserved plastic chairs on the school courtyard, they gazed upon and visually consumed the performance of the folkloric dance, but did not participate physically in its execution. The
comparsa performance in this context was to honor and entertain the elite, not as a folklorized or symbolic constitution of their indigeneity.

The last live performance in the 2004 coronation ceremony was comprised of an all-female salsa band. Dressed in micro-mini skirts and sequins from head to toe, the salsa band began to play, as all of the participants danced on the courtyard and observers danced on the benches of the amphitheatre seating. The women on stage sang popular, modern salsa songs heard frequently on radio stations emitted from Quito. Again, this performance reiterates a Lumbiseño preference to cosmopolitanism and modernity. The salsa band can neither be categorized as an explicitly “whitened” element of European high-culture nor as a symbol of folklorized indigeneity. Instead, the salsa bands’ performance offers a symbolic middle ground, one that still carries an undertone of indigenous elite knowledge of the cosmopolitan and the transnational. Salsa is a resilient music genre that emanates from Cuba and Puerto Rico, highly influenced by African music, as well as North American Jazz (Alén Rodríguez 2000). As Salsa spread throughout Latin America, the music underwent localized transformations through the incorporation of transnational and transcultural interpretations (Seeger 2000). Although these three performances emanate from what would seem to be worlds apart, all were performed in the direct gaze of the effigy of San Bartolomé on the same stage, as part of the traditional festival opening.

**Roles in Reversal: Powerful Priostes and Quiteño Clowns**

The bulk of the San Bartolomé celebration takes place in the main town square, known to Lumbiseños as the *parque central* (central park or plaza). This plaza houses the main church constructed in 1939, the community Social House, Metropolitan of Quito’s police outpost, Fray Jodoco Rique elementary school, originario housing, and variety shops. The Latin American
plaza developed out of reduction town construction, where Spaniards in the colonial era encouraged organization around the main town square (Guevara-Gil and Salomon 1994). The creation of a central town square facilitated the collection of taxation and tribute both locally and for the Spanish crown, while it alienated indigenous peoples from other activities that took place there (Saignes 1999). This space became analogous with Spanish authorities, Catholic religion, and governance (Low 2000). Despite disdain for the Spanish colonizers, indigenous communities in the Metropolitan District of Quito’s urban and rural parishes still maintain their plazas as a central point for community organization, religion, and social and ritual gatherings.

During the four-day celebration, the priostes, their families, the Queen of Lumbisí, and her court primarily occupy the raised steps of the town’s church. The doors of the church remain open during the entire festival to allow the multiple effigies of their patron saint to “watch” the festival activities with this local elite crew of festival producers. The church steps, among other privileged vantage points, allow the local Lumbiseño elites to watch the festival performances.

Figure 5.7. Lumbisí, Ecuador. August 2006. This photo demonstrates the raised, privileged vantage point of the church steps from which the effigies of Saint Bartholomew, priostes, and the Queen of Lumbisí and
her court observe the festival performances. Note: The payasos (clowns) occupy physically lower space as well as a lower social class during this enactment. [Photo courtesy of author]

The costumed parade during the Vespers particularly draws the attention of the priostes and their local elite guests. The costume parade represents the organized chaos of the stereotyped daily interactions of all Ecuadorian ethnic groups in the whitened space of their “city plaza” (Low 2000). The majority of costumed performers represent capariches (colonial street sweepers of Quito), costeños (coastal Afro-Ecuadorians), otavaleño mystics (indigenous peoples of the market town Otavalo who perform limpiezas or spiritual cleansings), and payasos (clowns), while smaller groups of lobos (wolves), mischievous monos (monkeys), and diablo umas (four-faced devils) also participate in the enactment. Each costumed performer has prescribed ritual behavior that mocks or stereotypes the groups they represent. These ritual behaviors range from the type of dance performed by each group to the verbal communication one can use and the food they consume.
Figure 5.8 Lumbisi, Ecuador. 2006 and 2011. (Clockwise from top left) An “Otavaleño” holds a guinea pig in preparation of the spiritual cleansing offered to a prioste. A Capariche dancing during the San Bartolomé Vespers. (Bottom left) Lumbiseños’ interpretation of rowdy coastal, Afro-Ecuadorians rough riders who share similarities in costume with “Montubios,” peasants from the coastal region. A Payaso character holding his “salchicha” and dancing during the San Bartolomé Festival. These four photos represent the major of the costumed performers during the San Bartolomé Festival. [Photos courtesy of author]

Elite Lumbiseños during this performance play the role of stoic, non-participants, who merely observe while the rest of the symbolic nation gathers together in the plaza to “work.” In this case, “work” is synonymous with dance performances under the control of the mayoral, a
symbolic reference to the historical hacienda foreman figure, who dances with a whip and calls out dance configurations to control the quality of the costumed performers “work.” This work performance seeks to accomplish one of the festival’s secondary goals to successfully entertain the royal-like audience of the priostes as a form of tribute or fulfillment of the costumed performers’ obligations to them.

The priostes embody indigenous elite, not only by expressing their superiority through their gaze and spatial positioning above the crowd in the plaza, but also through their forms of consumption and communication. During the four-days of the festival, priostes lead the procession of costumed characters and the saint’s effigy to the homes of the Festival Commission members. Women in the procession, generally the wives of the priostes and of the Festival Commission, throw handfuls of rose petals over the saint and the priostes. Rose petals lie scattered over the entire path traced by these local elite, as they ritually embody royalty graced with this showering of flowers traditionally associated with white and white-mestizo purchase and consumption. Priostes also consume ritually prescribed “white” foods or foods associated with wealthy white and white-mestizo populations. These foods symbolically serve to separate the local Lumbiseño elites from the other festival participants. Priostes receive food in the form of secos, literally dry food, typically served as a second course. Secos include rice, protein, and grains that can be consumed by using forks and knives. In the Andes, forks and knives oppose spoons used to eat soups, as markers of wealthy and peasant class respectively. Stereotypes of indigenous peoples suggest they only eat inexpensive broths, soups, or stews that require a spoon. During the festival, the Festival Commission provides soups for all other festival participants to eat with spoons, consequently subordinating the masses of costumed performers and other festival participants to food typically consumed by the peasant class.
In addition to food, priostes also drink distinct beverages from the rest of the people who portray other roles within the festival. Priostes primarily consume whiskey or rum, and use these libations to toast each other. Whiskey and rum represent the types of alcohol typically consumed by wealthy whites and white-mestizos in urban spaces on special occasions such as a birthday party, a charity fundraiser, or for a congratulatory toast. Priostes propose toasts with individual glass or plastic cups for each member of the toasting circle. Whiskey and rum oppose the indigenous produced ritual corn beer called *chicha* in Spanish and *aswa* in their native Kichwa. Traditional chicha consumption and production, through the community process of female mastication, expectoration, and its subsequent fermentation, are inherently communal. Chicha production requires group effort and the spoils are shared, often from a single *pilche* (hollowed gourd) passed from person to person. Chicha in this performance becomes a symbol of subordination associated with other indigenous groups and the payasos or clown figures, in other words the peasant working class. Although some upscale restaurants offer a modern approximation of chicha made without the mastication of the corn or yucca, whites and white-mestizos in Ecuador rarely consume or produce chicha, defaulting to their preferred whiskey, rum, wine, or champagne. The priostes’ elite role prohibits them from chicha consumption throughout the entire festival performance, distancing themselves further from the peasant “workers.”
Figure 5.9 Lumbisí, Ecuador. August 2006. (Left) This basket shows the secos (dry foods), bottles of whiskey and rum, and the rose petals offered to the priostes from the members of the Festival Commission. (Right) The Festival Commission provides this meal to all costumed participants and includes chicken soup and a cup of chicha (ritual corn beer) [Photos courtesy of author]

Ritually prescribed forms of communication also serve to separate the priostes from the crowd of costumed participants. The priostes’ remain silent during the entire festival, except for a few moments of interpersonal communication with other priostes, a toast among the priostes, or the reception of a message from the Festival Commission to prepare them for the next act. By contrast, all the costume participants play the sardonic roles of ethnic subordinates with their own prescribed communication. For example, the representations of the costeños (coastal peoples) comprise an amalgam of stereotypes that symbolize the conflation of rowdy coastal Afro-Ecuadorians and the cowboy-like representations of Montubios, coastal peasants of Manabí. Dressed in cowboy hats, white shirts, black pants, and colorful scarves tied around their necks, the costeños wield machetes that they clash like swords, fire cap guns in the air, and carry bottles of sugar cane based alcohol they drink and offer to others throughout the festival. Costeños have a distinct communication that mocks the speech of coastal inhabitants. They use
the word “carajo” that signifies a common exclamation in the highlands that has an English equivalent of “Damn it” (Wibbelsman 2005b), while on the coast and in other Spanish speaking regions of Latin America it conveys a harsh vulgarity, usually translated as “fuck.” This word’s frequent use combined with their performance with machetes and guns lends to the Lumbiseños’ overall portrayal of the costeños’ vulgarity, violence, hypersexuality, and rebellious nature.

The portrayal of payasos has an equally creative and stereotypic representation of whites and white-mestizos interpreted through the lens of Lumbiseño experience. Clowns in the San Bartolomé Festival wear colorful jumpsuits, white paper mâché masks, and long conical hats with streamers. The masks have stark white backgrounds, exaggerated red cheeks, noses, and lips, and large blue or green eyes. The clowns’ provide merriment, laughter, and energy as they dance around and act as court jesters. They also carry oblong bean bags called salchichas (sausages) that they use to randomly beat members of the audience and other performers. Payasos communicate though laughter, mumbles, incomprehensible utterances that seem like words but have no discernible translation or meaning. Only during breaks in the band’s music do payasos shout out clearly “Que vivan!” (May they live long!) in response to a series of calls that recognize each group of festival participants including the saint, priostes, and costumed dancers. Lumbiseños render payasos and their white and white-mestizo counterparts powerless, remove their ability to abuse by replacing their weapons with a pillow, and mute their unconscionable actions through their unintelligible mutters and foolish appearance.

These actions coupled with the clowns’ hard “work” in continuous dance performance and merrymaking frame an inversion of power. While these characters embody the inverse of the experience and interactions Lumbiseños have with white and white-mestizos over the hundreds of years of their interactions, clowns become the subordinate laborers during the San Bartolomé
Festival in opposition to the local elite priostes. In daily interactions that occur between Lumbiseños and whites and white-mestizos, the relationships of whites and white-mestizos to indigenous laborers clearly present an opposite reality. Lumbiseños’ stereotyped interpretation of whites and white-mestizos aligns with these populations’ stereotypes of indigenous peoples. Lumbiseños envision the stereotype of white and white-mestizo people as incomprehensible, hypersexual, mischievous, and untrustworthy based on their experience with whites and white-mestizos with whom they regularly interact.

Figure 5.10 Lumbisí, Ecuador, August 20, 2011. The newly remodeled plaza in Lumbisí hosted the 2011 San Bartolomé celebration after local authorities from the Metropolitan District of Quito, including the mayor of Cumbayá, inaugurated it. [Photo courtesy of author]
Conclusion

Scholars such as García Canclini 2005, Hurtado 2007, Beck and Mijesky 2000 along with the popular discourse of indigenous organizations in the highlands of Ecuador including the Kitu-Kara (Quijia et al 2006) and ECUARUNARI (2010) suggest that prolonged contact with urban spaces and white-mestizos leads to a process of cultural and ethnic whitening. From its conception, blanqueamiento ideology and nationalism based on mestizaje has implied the complete abandonment of indigenous traditions in favor of the (en)lightening of indigenous people through acculturation to urbanity and modernity. Blanqueamiento then renders indigeneity a commodity of anti-modernity or counter culture (Stutzman 1981), restricting the participation of indigenous peoples and rejecting them from modern, national representation. Beck and Mijesky (2000, 2010) further argue that prolonged urban contact between indigenous peoples and white and white-mestizo populations, the more adamant indigenous peoples’ rejection of white and white-mestizo culture. The current implementation of multicultural and plurinational social policy under the Correa administration (see Chapter II for more detailed discussion of social policy during Correa’s administration) diverts attention from the preceding ideology of mestizaje, but in turn narrowly focuses on the romanticized, essentialized, and paternalistic notions of indigenous nationalities in need of state protection due to their threatened existence.

Lumbiseños contest these grand assumptions of mutual exclusivity between indigeneity and urbanity. They are both self-identifying indigenous and fully cosmopolitan people, much like other Quito Runa groups described by Salomon (1981) and the Otavalo merchants described by Colloredo-Mansfeld (2003) and Wibblesman (2008). While Lumbiseños clearly demonstrate a selective appreciation for various aspects of white and white-mestizo urban culture, including
technology, transportation, salaries, and education, they also value their ancestral land and the
kinship and social relations that maintain it. The originarios of Lumbisí, who have more access
to these urban goods and services as well as communal rights rather than private title to ancestral
land to farm, transform elements of upper and middle class white and white-mestizo culture into
their own local system of value. Salaries, technology, education, and extra-communal
experiences do not merely become inserted, superimposed, or hybridized into local ritual
interpretations, but rather incorporated into Lumbiseños’ locally valued, traditional ritual
celebrations as their own.

The example of the San Bartolomé Festival provided above demonstrates a grass-roots
view of Ecuadorian society, as they envision, satirize, and perform it. Lumbiseños have
maintained contact with Quito since its inception as an indigenous community during the
colonial period. Their performances in the town square not only symbolically connect
contemporary Lumbiseños with their colonial past, but also bring recognition to the strength of
Lumbiseño identity, the power they hold within their community, and their ability to unite to
produce this locally constructed, organized, and celebrated year after year without cessation or
temporary interruption for over the last 476 years.

The Lumbiseño vision of the San Bartolomé festival conflates myriad symbols, both
historical and present time, urban and rural spaces, and solemn and satirical performances within
a locally valued network of family, friends, and community. The San Bartolomé Festival also
considers and incorporates interpretations of national and international representations. The
costumed performers in the San Bartolomé Festival clearly represent the Ecuadorian nation with
various indigenous communities, Afro-Ecuadorians, and clowns that symbolize their interactions
with white and white-mestizo Ecuadorians. The “entire population of Ecuador” performs in the
streets of the main town square of Lumbísí, beneath the gaze of the festival’s priostes. These individuals represent the pinnacle of community power and during the time-space of the festival reign over the costumed representation of the Ecuadorian population.

In addition to the prioste’s powerful position, the selection of the Queen of Lumbísí and her court incorporate both the national, international, and even global phenomenon of beauty competitions. The competition within Lumbísí clearly draws on certain criteria expected of their queen, but they define these expectations locally with their own interpretation of beauty and value. The Lumbiseño concepts of beauty and value within this contest draw not on aesthetics or phenotypic features, but rather the commitment of this señorita (lady) to give to her community in the form of service projects. While some projects may remain the same year after year, the successful candidate usually proposes additional projects unique to her reign that continue the betterment of her community for at least one year. The initiative to create new projects that serve the community and reflect value on community development from within, drawing on a combination of traditional value, urban symbols, and the desire to take an active role in their own development while always keeping the past as daily reminder of their identity.
Chapter 6: Conclusion

In conclusion, my dissertation examines the ethnic self-identification and racial representations of urban indigenous peoples of the Quito Basin in Ecuador. Specifically, I focus on Lumbisí, an indigenous community engulfed by the wealthy white and white-mestizo urban expansion of Quito into the Cumbayá Valley. According to highly racialized stereotypes emanating from non-indigenous Quiteños, Lumbiseños appear to be either fully assimilated mestizo members of Ecuadorian society or not recognized at all as an indigenous community. By contrast, Lumbiseños adamantly deny claims of their assimilation, abandonment of indigenous practices, and a mestizo socio-economic position. Instead, Lumbiseños themselves profess a distinctly urban indigenous identity showcased and reaffirmed in their community through social relations, communal property rights, reciprocal exchange, reinvestment in local business and festival sponsorship, and the production of a yearly cycle of public festivals highlighting their community’s strength and power.

The hegemonic State and regional grassroots indigenous movements that often provide official discourse on indigeneity compete against each other and mutually negate the urban indigeneity articulated in Lumbisí. The State operates within a discourse of multicultural acceptance of indigeneity contingent on idealized notions of indigenousness that emerged in colonial times. The government portrays indigenous peoples as the rurally isolated conservators of native languages, distinct dress, and locally manifested traditions. In chapter 2, I provided ethnographic evidence collected among white and white-mestizo populations of Quito as well as from President Rafael Correa to demonstrate the essentialized notions of indigeneity perpetuated through popular and national government discourse. These essentialized stereotypes portray indigenous peoples as stuck in the marginalized rural parishes of Ecuador, incapable of
superseding their poverty, ignorance, native language, traditional dress, poor hygiene, and anti-modernity.

Mainstream indigenous movements such as CONAIE and the alternate movement by the Kitu Kara both align with popular and government essentialisms of indigeneity, albeit from different perspectives. The qualities these organizations use to judge and categorize degrees of indigeneity and its presumed loss in urban spaces comprise native language use, traditional dress, local identity, and traditional practices. According to a personal conversation with Luis Macas (former president of CONAIE from 1991-96 and 2004-2008) during his visit to University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign campus in 2006, he explained that people who claim indigeneity but who do not speak a native language or wear traditional dress daily are not indigenous peoples. Lumbiseños’ dynamic urban indigeneity simultaneously challenges grassroots indigenous movements for self-representation and essentialized State definitions of indigenous citizenship. Indeed, Lumbiseños choose to willfully avoid these movements, and carve a space to articulate their urbanity and indigenousness in locally meaningful ways.

By contrast, the Kitu-Kara Organization, a rising urban indigenous movement, seeks to reclaim ancestral land rights and indigeneity based in urban spaces by rejecting *blanqueamiento*—the process of ethnic and cultural whitening (Whitten 1981, Whitten 2003, Hurtado 2007). The Kitu-Kara Organization equates colonization, modernity, and assimilation to infirmities that infected Pachamama (Earth Mother) and destroyed indigenous populations that reside in cities (Quijia et al 2006). Due to this destruction, a discourse of nostalgia emerges that aligns with the essentialized governmental and mainstream indigenous movements. This discourse of nostalgia reinforces the Kitu-Kara’s desire for rural land rights, bilingual education aimed to recuperate their native Kichwa, and a return to wearing traditional vestment. My
research demonstrates that Lumbiseños offer a new approach to indigeneity in Ecuador that stems from local ancestry and land rights and relies on urban cultural capital to maintain it. This urban indigeneity neither constitutes hybridity nor acculturation, but rather a modern indigeneity that has selectively incorporated urban amenities such as prestige goods, technology, and services into their own daily routines and systems of value.

Lumbiseños formally self-identify as indigenous, working-class comuneros, people with land rights held in common. They established a highly organized autochthonous local government, laws, and rights by which only native-born and naturalized citizens of the community benefit and abide. Native-born Lumbiseños, also known as “originarios,” occupy the pinnacle of their social hierarchy and represent the majority of residents who work and/or study in Quito. These contemporary native local elites hold positions in the community’s government, organize local service projects to benefit the community, elect festival sponsors, and act as cultural gatekeepers within Lumbísí. This local cultural foundation contributes to Lumbiseños’ self-identification as ethnically indigenous.

As Lumbiseños gain increased access to the higher education, professions, and mobility that the city provides, their festivals become productive sites in which to examine the local negotiation and interpretation of national and globalized experiences that frame daily life and contribute to urban indigenous identity formation. While some elders insist that when their children obtained formal education the number of festivals declined from once a month to just seven large-scale celebrations annually, it is clear that the scale and symbolic referents within each festival have augmented due to urban-earned salaries. I draw on Wibbelsman’s (2005: 155) approach to festival analysis as a multivocal, complex, creative, and versatile site of expression and interpretation that articulates infinite perspectives, symbols, and actions to create and
reinforce a collective, local cultural identity.

The local celebration of the national Ecuadorian holidays of the Day of the Dead in November and the Old Year in December mark distinct boundaries of exclusion within Lumbisí and promote the community’s local power. The Day of the Dead celebration in Lumbisí reinforces the boundary between originarios and forasteros (strangers/outsiders), as originarios have exclusive rights to in-ground burial plots within their private, community cemetery. Lumbiseños prohibit the burial of non-originarios within the cemetery’s soil, although some outsiders who have achieved special status through forged relationships within the community may be buried in the recently constructed mausoleum at the far reaches of the southeast portion of the cemetery. Without relatives buried within the Lumbiseño cemetery to visit and remember, outsiders cannot participate in the Day of the Dead celebration. This cemetery exclusion differs from national cemeteries in Quito where no limitations exist for burials regarding ancestry or ethnicity. Instead, Quiteño cemeteries limit access to national cemetery space by socio-economic class. Class distinctions in these cemeteries, visible through burial placement, forms of interment, and tomb decoration, limit burials by the price a client may afford. In these national cemeteries, burials not only range in prices, but also in the permanence or semi-permanence of the burial, whereas in Lumbiseño burial ideology, once buried, one becomes a permanent part of the community never to be disinterred.

The Lumbiseño celebration of the Año Viejo (Old Year) distinguishes the local festival from the national holiday celebrated on the coast, in the highlands, and in the Amazonian regions. Lumbiseños bring aspects of the national celebration, including burning effigies of the Old Year and the performances of his mourning widows, but they also infuse this celebration with local flare, culminating in the ascension of the new local order of government and festival
sponsors. The Old Year celebration in Lumbisí marks a transition, a shifting of power between the outgoing authorities and their incumbent counterparts. The Old Year celebration then merges with the formal recognition of the priostes and local government by the community’s Catholic Church and the Lumbiseño performance of the Killing of the Yumbo (Salomon 1981). The Killing of the Yumbo differs substantially from the Yumbada performances of other urban indigenous enclaves including Cotocollao, La Magdalena, and among the Quito Runa described by Salomon. The purpose of the Lumbiseño Yumbada serves to remind both the political and social rising powers that community unity is powerful, despite internal diversity, hierarchy, and conflict. The Yumbada demonstrates that if threatened, the community will rally behind their leaders and support them no matter what differences may separate them on the day to day basis.

By contrast the San Bartolomé Festival, a local celebration, showcases Lumbiseño worldview inverts the national socio-economic imaginary. Lumbiseño originarios divide into multiple roles within the festival including: the elite faction of festival sponsors, the behind-the-scenes “middle-class” comprised of the Festival Commission, and multiple factions of “outsiders.” Originarios relegate the role of Quiteño white and white-mestizos to white-masked clowns, who ceaselessly perform to the satisfaction of the priostes. This performance positions the socially prestigious priostes at the pinnacle of the community’s hierarchy as celebrated elite; it subjugates the rest of the “outsiders” to highly stereotyped, white and ethnic roles. The priostes parody their Quiteño elite counterparts, who ritually consume “white” foods and beverages and the performances of “others,” while participating in the festival through silence and solemn observation. The Festival of San Bartolomé contributes to empowering Lumbiseño identity by uniting socio-economic resources that reinforce their internal social hierarchy (Guss 2000, Corr 2004, Orta 2005).
Lumbiseños enact an indigeneity that willfully incorporates and rarely critiques elements of white-mestizo society. While Lumbiseños assert their identity through ancestral land and the familial bloodlines that sustain it, the reproduction of this community grows more dependent on the salaries and education received in Quito. Economic and education capital returns to Lumbísí through reinvestments by younger generations of native-born Lumbiseños who claim rights to inherited land, establish businesses within the community, and engage in festival production as local government leaders and festival sponsors.

This modern, urban indigeneity (re)formation draws on the symbiotic relationship between urbanity and indigeneity and contributes to anthropology as follows. I dispute studies of urban indigenous communities as on a path towards assimilation, fully assimilated, or bands of resistance at the margins of national society (Beals 1966, Gill 2000, Rebolledo 1992, Redfield 1941 and Weismantel 1988). Few studies consider prolonged indigenous interaction with urban spaces prior to the 20th century (Gill 2000, Guss 2000, de la Cadena 2000, Mendoza 2002) and fewer concede cooption of urbanity without the implication of assimilation. My project demonstrates long-term indigenous occupation of urban spaces, which contests stereotypes of mestizo and indigenous identity. I also challenge Beck and Mijeski (2000, 2011), who argue the more contact indigenous peoples have with mestizo-white dominant culture, the more adamant their rejection of it. I show how urban, mestizo-white culture becomes appropriated as indigenous in Lumbísí.

In addition, I provide insight to local symbolic, ideological, and performative aspects of festival production informed by local, urban, and global experiences in Lumbísí. I participated in and observed public performances that allowed the examination of locally informed, urban indigeneity outside formal institutions of the State. My analysis complements contemporary

I am extremely indebted to the people of Comuna San Bartolomé de Lumbisí for their years of patience and support. After slowly earning my way into their community and conversations through years of work, sweat, volunteerism, and sharing, their commitment and support of this project and me has never wavered. I take full responsibility for the work within this project and accept any mistakes or misinterpretations as my own. Lumbiseños want recognition of their community, their identity, and their way of life, not in opposition to any indigeneity in Ecuador, but rather as respected modern indigenous members of the emerging multicultural, plurinational, and pluriethnic Ecuadorian society that share the basic rights of their fellow citizens.
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