Florida International University

FIU Digital Commons

FIU Electronic Theses and Dissertations

University Graduate School

3-11-2021

# Intimate Alterities: Shifting Indigenous Masculinities and Sexualities within Amazonian Ecotourism in Napo, Ecuador

Ernesto Javier Benitez
*Florida International University*, ebeni026@fiu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.fiu.edu/etd

Part of the Social and Cultural Anthropology Commons

Recommended Citation

Benitez, Ernesto Javier, "Intimate Alterities: Shifting Indigenous Masculinities and Sexualities within Amazonian Ecotourism in Napo, Ecuador" (2021). *FIU Electronic Theses and Dissertations*. 4688.
https://digitalcommons.fiu.edu/etd/4688

This work is brought to you for free and open access by the University Graduate School at FIU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in FIU Electronic Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of FIU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact dcc@fiu.edu.

FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Miami, Florida

# INTIMATE ALTERITIES: SHIFTING INDIGENOUS MASCULINITIES AND SEXUALITIES WITHIN AMAZONIAN ECOTOURISM IN NAPO, ECUADOR

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of

the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

GLOBAL AND SOCIOCULTURAL STUDIES

by

Ernesto J. Benitez

2021

To: Dean John F. Stack, Jr.
Steven J. Green School of International and Public Affairs

This dissertation, written by Ernesto J. Benitez, and entitled Intimate Alterities: Shifting Indigenous Masculinities and Sexualities within Amazonian Ecotourism in Napo, Ecuador, having been approved in respect to style and intellectual content, is referred to you for judgment.

We have read this dissertation and recommend that it be approved.

Miranda Kitterlin, Committee Member

Andrea Queeley, Committee Member

Mark Padilla, Committee Member

Juliet Erazo, Committee Chair

Date of Defense: March 11, 2021

The dissertation of Ernesto J. Benitez is approved.

Dean John F. Stack, Jr.
Steven J. Green School of International and Public Affairs

Andrés G. Gil
Vice President for Research and Economic Development
and Dean of the University Graduate School

Florida International University, 2021

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This dissertation marks the culmination of a long and often arduous journey. As I prepare to enter the next stage of my career, I am reminded of the many individuals who made it possible for me to get to this point, and whose encouragement and friendship made all the difference when I needed them the most.

I am especially grateful to Juliet Erazo, the best academic advisor a graduate student could ever ask for. I could have never reached this point in my career without her unwavering support, her constructive critique, and her friendship. I also want to thank the rest of my committee members Andrea Queeley, Miranda Kitterlin, and Mark Padilla, who have always believed in me and in this project, and who have always pushed me to be better with their insightful critique of my work. I would also like to thank my cohort of GSS students at FIU: Jack Vertovec, Judith Williams, Renata Bozzetto, Melissa Scott, Kemar Mcintosh, and Karina Livingston, as well as all of the amazing students, faculty and staff at the GSS department. Special thanks to the Latin American and Caribbean department for their generous FLAS funding of my Kichwa language studies in Ecuador.

To my beautiful wife Sofia Alarcon: my travels to Ecuador brought me to you, and that made it all worth it. I love you more than words can express. To my family – mis padres Raul y Lupe: gracias por todo el amor y el apoyo que me han dado, y por creer en mi siempre. A mi hermana Maridalia y mi preciosa sobrina Kim: las amo siempre. A mis viejos amados, mis abuelos Cuco y Brujita: todo lo que soy se los debo a ustedes. To my dear friend Sam Morrill: I remember when I arrived in the United States in 2008, you strongly encouraged me to pursue a college degree, even when the reality of life as a

newly arrived immigrant was pushing me in a different direction. Thanks for believing in me, hermano.

I am profoundly grateful to Tod Swanson, director of the Amazon and Andes Fieldschool at Iyarina in Napo, Ecuador. Tod's vast knowledge of the Kichwa language and the history and ecology of the Ecuadorian Amazon provided invaluable tools and insight to effectively conduct my dissertation research in Napo. Special thanks to Tod's family and the amazing staff at Iyarina for making us feel welcome summer after summer. To my fellow Amazonian Kichwa students: Jose Almeida, James Beveridge, Lauren Dodaro, Georgia Ennis, Travis Fink, Chris Hebdon, Trisha Lopez, Chris Jarrett, Nick Padilla, Annie Preaux, Jarrad Reddekop, Alexander Rice, Bryan Rupert, Michael Severino, Lisa Warren Carney, John White: knowing you all and being able to call you my friends has been the highlight of my academic career. I love you, wachis.

I am also grateful to several institutions and organizations for believing in this project and for their generous funding: to the Graduate School at Florida International for their dissertation funding in the form of two Doctoral Evidence Acquisition (DEA) fellowships and one Dissertation Year Fellowship (DYF), to the American Ethnological Society (AES) for their fieldwork grant, and the Young Alumni Council at FIU for their Graduate Scholarship.

Finally, I am deeply grateful and forever indebted to dozens of individuals from the Amazonian Kichwa nation of Napo, Ecuador, for opening their homes and hearts to me during my dissertation fieldwork. They are too many to name here, but I am particularly grateful to Misael Cerda and his wife Belen Vega for their support and

friendship. To the community of Kichwa tour guides in Tena: Mosco, Jorge, Colombiano, Amarun, Wayra, Fausto, Monster, and many others, I thank them for their friendship and for welcoming me into their lives and communities. I hope I was able to accurately capture and represent some of their concerns, desires, and frustrations in this dissertation and I apologize for any shortcomings, for which I alone am responsible. Ashka pagarachu, wawkiguna!

And to all the amazing individuals who supported and encouraged me through this journey: Thank you; this dissertation is yours too.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

INTIMATE ALTERITIES: SHIFTING INDIGENOUS MASCULINITIES AND SEXUALITIES WITHIN AMAZONIAN ECOTOURISM IN NAPO, ECUADOR

by

Ernesto J. Benitez

Florida International University, 2021

Miami, Florida

Professor Juliet Erazo, Major Professor.

This dissertation offers an ethnographic account of how indigenous Kichwa tour guides in Napo, Ecuador, the vast majority of whom are young men, negotiate the demands and expectations of the ecotourism industry and how, in the process, they produce and enact new understandings of their ethnic, gendered, and sexual identities. These new understandings are reproductive of outsiders' expectations and fantasies about indigenous Amazonians, as well as personally and culturally meaningful. I engage with a variety of anthropological literatures, including the anthropology of race and gender, the anthropology of indigenous Amazonia, the anthropology of tourism and sex tourism, and the more recent work on the anthropology of "becoming." My findings revealed that while ecotourism has been widely celebrated as a sustainable source of income for indigenous populations and as an effective avenue to promote the preservation and revitalization of indigenous cultures, many Kichwa individuals working in the Amazonian ecotourism industry often feel compelled to perform sanitized aspects of their identities and to construct commodified versions of their "traditional" practices to satisfy tourists' quest for an "authentic," "pre-modern" experience. My findings also revealed a less studied phenomenon resulting from the

increasing commodification of indigenous peoples and cultures within tourism settings, namely the sexualization and erotization of indigenous men, especially those who match women tourists' imaginations of what an indigenous man should look like. I show that by entering into intimate relationships with Kichwa men, foreign (mostly white) women feel that they can experience pre-modern forms of gender roles and sexuality, which they imagine are unavailable in their home countries. They also view these relationships as opportunities to consume and be a part (however temporarily) of an overly romanticized Amazonian landscape, of which indigenous people are usually perceived as an indivisible part. On the other hand, I found that Kichwa tour guides view their work in ecotourism as an opportunity to contest their historically marginalized status within Ecuadorian society by showing the white/mestizo majority how cosmopolitan and entrepreneurial they can be. Furthermore, they view their ability to sexually attract foreign women as an opportunity to reassert their masculinity and sexual attractiveness within mainstream Ecuadorian society, in which they have long been considered feminine, subservient, and unattractive. Thus, my dissertation explores how these processes have shaped new ideas and performances of indigenous masculinities and sexualities within tourism encounters, and the impact that these ideas are having on the broader Kichwa population.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER PAGE

I. INTRODUCTION ........................................................................................... 1

Theoretical debates and contributions ................................................................... 3

The Amazonian Kichwa people ......................................................................... 15

Methods.............................................................................................................. 21

A note on positionality ........................................................................................ 25

Outline of chapters ............................................................................................. 28

II. CHAPTER 1: HISTORICAL PRODUCTION OF KICHWA ETHNIC AND GENDERED IDENTITIES. ........................................................................ 32

Introduction ........................................................................................................ 32

Kichwa masculinities in context ......................................................................... 35

The impact of colonialism, missionization and the Ecuadorian state on gender identities and relations in the Upper Napo region ................................................. 45

Napo Kichwa and the era of development ........................................................... 61

Sustainability and Post-Development: The "rediscovery" of indigenous knowledge as redemptive narrative……………………………………………………………..73

Conclusions……………………………………………………………………… 78

III. CHAPTER 2: THE ECOTOURISM BOOM AND ITS IMPACT ON KICHWA IDENTITIES AND LIVELIHOODS……………………………………………....81

Introduction ........................................................................................................ 81

Ecotourism as sustainable development ..........................…………………..…………84

The impact of ecotourism on contemporary landscapes and subjectivities in the Tena area ..........................................................................……………91

Ecotourism and the authenticity debate…………………………………………………93

The authenticity debate from the perspectives of Kichwa people……………………...110

Conclusions ....................................................................................................... 117

IV. CHAPTER 3: EDENI-SEXUAL FANTASIES WITHIN AMAZONIAN ECOTOURISM

........................................................................................................................ 119

Introduction........................................................................................................ 119

Perceived purity of the Amazonian landscape and of indigenous bodies....................... 122

Return to Eden: Edeni-sexual fantasies and encounters ................................................ 128

The quest for radical alterity: sexualization of indigenous (male) bodies in tourism encounters ....................................................................................................... 143

Conclusions........................................................................................................ 155

V. CHAPTER 4: ALL GREAT WARRIORS HAD LONG HAIR: ECOTOURISM AND THE PRODUCTION AND PERFORMANCE OF KICHWA MASCULINITIES IN THE ECUADORIAN AMAZON.

........................................................................................................................ 157

Introduction........................................................................................................ 157

Why work as a tour guide? The economics of indigeneity in the Ecuadorian Amazon 161

Urban indigeneity and the "rediscovery" of Kichwa identity through tourism 170

Pursuing foreign women and its impact on tour guides' understandings and performances of masculine identities…………………………………………………...188

Conclusions........................................................................................................ 213

VI.CHAPTER 5: FANTASIES, POWER, AND DESIRE: UNDERSTANDING INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN KICHWA TOUR GUIDES AND FOREIGN WOMEN.

........................................................................................................................ 216

Introduction........................................................................................................ 216

Understanding Kichwa tour guides' motivations for pursuing foreign women ............. 221

"Real" women looking for "real" men: Understanding foreign women's motivations.. 238

Living out "Edeni-sexual" fantasies: challenges and disilussionment ........................... 253

Conclusions........................................................................................................ 267

VII.CONCLUSION .......... 270

REFERENCES .......... 278

VITA .......... 292

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE PAGES

Figure 1. Avenida 15 de Noviembre, in the center of Tena ........................................... 19

Figure 2. The Napo river .................................................................................................. 20

Figure 3. Ingredients and tools used to make "aswa" (manioc beer) ................................ 43

Figure 4. A Kichwa tour guide explains the use of traditional medicinal plants .............. 88

Figure 5. Tour to Waorani territory in Yasuni National Park, June 2018 ........................ 96

Figure 6. Tour guide painting an American tourist's face near Tena, June 2018 ............. 98

Figure 7. Advertisement from Akangau Jungle Epeditions in Tena ............................... 133

Figure 8. Akangau Jungle Expeditions logo .................................................................. 158

Figure 9. Carlos Guevara's Campaign Ad for Mayor of Tena ....................................... 162

Figure 10. A Kichwa tour guide in Tena ........................................................................ 191

## LIST OF MAPS

MAPS PAGES

Map 1. Political map of Ecuador. .......................................................................... 16

Map 2. Map of Napo Province............................................................................. 17

# I. INTRODUCTION.

I remember well the first time I walked into Akangau Jungle Expeditions' office in the small city of Tena, the provincial capital of Napo, Ecuador. I had set up a meeting on a rainy Wednesday afternoon with Misael Cerda, a Kichwa (also spelled Quichua) man in his early 40s who owned and ran Akangau with his Argentine wife, Belen. When I showed up to the meeting at the agreed time the office was closed, Misael was nowhere to be found, and a small piece of paper posted on the door read in English "I will be back." This incident provided the first and one of the most important lessons of my fieldwork experience: the value of patience and the realization that my priorities as a researcher were not necessarily those of my informants.

It was the summer of 2017 and I had arrived in Tena a few days earlier to participate in the Amazon and Andes Fieldschool FLAS Summer Program to receive intensive Kichwa language lessons. I had learned about Akangau and, consequently, Misael, via a quick Internet search of the main tour operators in Tena. Akangau caught my attention because, unlike many other tour agencies, it was owned and operated by an indigenous Kichwa person. As I stood outside the office, I thought about how disappointed I was that my first "fieldwork meeting" did not seem to be going well at all. After I unsuccessfully attempted to contact Misael on WhatsApp (Ecuadorians' preferred texting app) I disappointedly headed over to most foreigners' favorite spot in Tena, Café Tortuga, for some iced tea. When I came back to the office nearly half an hour later, Misael was sitting behind his desk with a smile on his face. "*Mashi*" (term used to refer to some politicians and, in many cases, to foreigners), he said, "come in!" Our

conversation started with Misael making a joke that, in hindsight, fully captured the long and lasting friendship that would follow. He said: "*Mashi*, de donde eres? (Where are you from?). "From the United States," I replied. "Ah, yo soy de **Asia**…" (I am from Asia), he said, and then with a mischievous grin he added, "…de **hacia** adentro de la selva" (from inside the jungle). That has been our friendship in a nutshell: making fun of what we both represent, while at the same time acknowledging the perceived power and wealth imbalance between us.

Misael embodied what in this dissertation I have called "the tour guide brand:" long hair (quite uncommon among Amazonian Kichwa men outside the small tour guide community), a necklace with a white-lipped peccary tusks for a pendant, cargo shorts, fanny pack,  and sandals. I explained to Misael that I was interested in conducting my dissertation fieldwork in Tena, and that I thought Kichwa tour guides like himself could help me understand the impact of the booming Amazonian ecotourism industry on the identities and livelihoods of Napo Kichwa people. Since I began spending time in the Tena area in the summer of 2014, Kichwa tour guides had caught my attention due to their unusual looks, their confidence and charisma when approaching foreigners, and the frequency with which I saw many of them walking around Tena holding hands with white North American or European female tourists. I thought that Kichwa tour guides perfectly embodied one of the main contradictions that scholars have pointed out when discussing the impact of ecotourism on indigenous communities, in that they seemed to show how urban and cosmopolitan they were by accentuating aspects of their indigenous identities that Western tourists found attractive in their quest for an "authentic," "pre-modern" Amazonian experience. Surprisingly, Misael seemed really interested in my

project and he offered to assist me in any way he could in exchange for my collaboration as a translator, given that many of the tour guides that worked for him could not speak English well.

This dissertation offers an ethnographic exploration of the complex processes of adjustment and negotiation that Kichwa tour guides like Misael (the vast majority of whom are young men) go through as they move into service-based work in ecotourism, and how they make sense of the types of indigenous identities that ecotourism promotes and encourages. I pay particular attention to how they produce and perform aspects of their ethnic, gendered, and sexual identities that reflect, on one hand, some of foreign tourists' fantasies and expectations about indigenous people, and, on the other hand, tour guides' desires to transcend their marginalized and disempowered status within Ecuadorian society. I also introduce the term "Edeni-sexual" to describe fantasies and encounters involving various processes of sexualization and erotization of landscapes and bodies within Amazonian ecotourism, which frequently drive (mostly white North American and European) foreign female tourists to seek out intimate liaisons with Kichwa men, particularly long-haired tour guides.

**Theoretical debates and contributions.**

This dissertation integrates three important bodies of literature within Anthropology: 1) the literature which examines the interplay of race, gender, and sexuality in the formation of persons and their identities, with special attention to indigeneity and indigenous masculinities, 2) postcolonial literature that examines how people from the Global North position other parts of the globe in ways that perpetuate

colonial-era, global inequalities, with an emphasis on Western environmentalism and indigenous ecotourism, and their impacts on indigenous Amazonia and 3) sex tourism, specifically female sex tourism. I also briefly engage with the more recent body of literature on the "anthropology of becoming."

*Sex tourism.*

Martin Oppermann (1999) defines sex tourism as a set of complex processes involving a broad spectrum of cases and settings, in which sex becomes an integral part of the tourism experience. This view moves beyond reductionist approaches that limited sex tourism as travel (foreign or domestic) in which the main motivation is to engage in sexual relations with individuals in the host community (see, for example, Graburn 1983; Harrison 1994). Some authors have also challenged the still prevalent association of sex tourism with prostitution, in which sexual relations are strictly based on immediate monetary exchange (see, for example,  Oppermann 1999; Ryan and Kinder 1996; Simoni 2015).

While male sex tourists have been the focus of most relevant scholarship on sex tourism, an increasing number of authors in the past two decades have shifted their attention to female sex tourists, particularly within African and Caribbean destinations (see, for example, Brown 1992; Herold et al. 2001; Kempadoo 1999; Pruitt and LaFont 1995).The scholarly discussion of sex tourism put forward by these authors has begun to decenter direct monetary exchange, and has increasingly paid attention to broader issues of race, gender and power, which usually render non-white bodies as sexualized and available for tourist consumption. These studies have made several important arguments.

First, they have argued that white female travelers' desires for non-white male bodies are generally informed by colonial imaginations of non-white male (mostly black) bodies as hypersexual and exotic. Secondly, they have pointed out that (mostly white) female travelers who engage in sexual encounters with local men imagine them as opportunities to not only observe but to actively participate in romanticized, pre-modern gender roles and sexualities that they are unable to access in their home countries. However, I argue that given the prevalence in this literature of studies that have looked at relationships between female tourists and black men in Caribbean and African settings, with some notable exceptions (see, for example, Dahles and Bras 1999; Jacobs 2010; Meisch 1995), it is crucial to explore how differently racialized male bodies (e.g. indigenous men) become sexualized and eroticized in overlapping, but different ways.

Some scholars have also attempted to distinguish between what they perceive as the transactional and sex-oriented pursuit of local lovers by foreign male tourists, and the romance-oriented relationships that are established between foreign women and local men. Pruitt and LaFont (1995) coined the term "romance tourism" to describe foreign women/local men relationships, arguing that "these liaisons are constructed through a discourse of romance and long-term relationships, an emotional involvement usually not present in sex tourism" (1995, 423). This distinction is often informed by the implicit notion that gender supersedes other forms of identity, such as race, as well as socio-economic factors such as country of origin and wealth disparities. Since women have historically been subjected to patriarchal domination and, consequently, sexually and economically exploited by men, the reasoning goes, it is not possible for women to

exploit men, sexually or otherwise (see, for example, Pruitt and LaFont 1995). However, much of the more recent scholarship has been quite critical of this approach. For example, Sanchez-Taylor (2006) notes that “female tourists’ sexual–economic relationships with local men are predicated upon the same global economic and social inequalities that underpin the phenomenon of male sex tourism” (2006, 44). Jacobs (2010) too, notes the problematic aspects of the “sex” versus “romance” dichotomy, arguing that,

> these tourist encounters, when defined as ‘sex tourism’, are often presented within over-simplified binaries of gender and race (white women exploiting black men); while its alternative ‘romance tourism’ uses romance too narrowly, normally to refer solely to an essentialised idea of Western femininity (2010, xi).

Jacobs brilliantly elaborates on the problematic consequences of labeling intimate encounters between foreign women and local men as “romance tourism:”

> [It] leaves research prone to accusations of essentialism if 'romance' is only applied to the women's attitude to their relationships with men from Third World tourist destinations. Romance is crucial to these relationships but it is the romance of a nostalgic engagement with the past through the historicised objectification of native masculinities and (a highly selective part of) their living environment (2010, 93).

In my analysis of the vast literature on sex tourism, I have also encountered several theoretical and semantic problems with this concept. Theoretically, especially

following Opperman's (1999) definition, the problem with "sex tourism" is that it has become such a broad concept that it is now used to describe phenomena with seemingly very few commonalities between them. Sex tourism is used, for example, to describe the behaviors of men traveling to Southeast Asia with the specific purpose of engaging in sexual activities with underage boys and girls, but it is also used to describe a years-long relationship between, say, a Canadian woman and a Dominican man she met while on vacation in Punta Cana. While sex and power may be involved in both examples, the motivations, desires, and even the legality of them are arguably so radically different that it is hard to conceive that they could be described using the same umbrella term of "sex tourism."

Semantically, the major problem with the term sex tourism is, in my opinion, that despite the heterogeneity of settings and cases discussed by contemporary scholars, the term continues to seemingly imply that sex is the main, if not the ultimate, motivation for travel on the part of the tourist. For example, my research in the Tena area did not find that most foreign women who engaged in either short-term or long-term relationships with Kichwa men traveled to the Amazon for the specific purpose of procuring sex from local men. Rather, many of them came to see their relationships with Kichwa tour guides as part of an exotic experience in the Amazon rainforest, through which they could temporarily become a part of that landscape, as I will discuss further throughout this dissertation. I argue that another problematic aspect of the term sex tourism, both theoretically and semantically, is that it seems to convey the idea that that sex with the local population constitutes an end in and of itself. The apparent emphasis on the sexual

act itself, and not the various forms of racist colonial legacies, patriarchal definitions and performances of gendered roles and identities, and sexualized exoticization of non-white bodies that inform many of these sexual encounters, actually serves to obscure the legacies of colonial and imperialist domination that get reproduced and reinforced through them. To be sure, I am not suggesting that these processes have not been analyzed in the sex tourism literature; they have, and extensively so (see, for example, Brown 1992; Frohlick 2007; Jacobs 2010; Kempadoo 1999). What I am arguing is that it would be theoretically and analytically pertinent to produce a concept that captures these complexities in a way that clearly conveys that in most cases, the sexual act constitutes but a means to a larger end of power reassertion and engendering self-realization. Some authors have attempted to address these problems by putting forward concepts that emphasize the close relationship that exists between sexual desire and the desire for particular forms of identity such as ethnicity or race. For example, Nagel (2000) talks about “ethnosexual” encounters and frontiers, in which sexual desire for the ethnic or racial “Other” is directly related to prevalent representations and imaginations of particular ethnic and racial identities. As Nagel argues,

> Ethnic boundaries are also sexual boundaries–erotic intersections where people make intimate connections across ethnic, racial, or national borders. The borderlands that lie at the intersections of ethnic boundaries are “ethnosexual frontiers” that are surveilled and supervised, patrolled and policed, regulated and restricted, but that are constantly penetrated by individuals forging sexual links with ethnic “others” (2000, 113).

While this concept certainly moves in the right direction by decentering the sexual act, or rather, by fusing sexual desire with specific forms of (desired) identities, I think it is crucial to focus our attention not just on the particular imaginations and representations of the "desired" ethnic or racial "Other," but on the possibilities for self-realization that engaging in these liaisons provide to the "ethnosexual" traveler. As O'Connell and Sanchez-Taylor (1999) have argued, sexual desire for the racial "Other" in tourist/local encounters reflects not necessarily a "wish to engage in any specific sexual practice [but] a desire for […] control over the self and others as sexual, racialized and engendered beings" (1999, 37).

Thus, I argue that while the literature on sex tourism, and particularly female sex tourism, provides a rich theoretical framework to analyze intimate encounters between foreign female tourists and Kichwa men in the Ecuadorian Amazon, the term "sex tourism" itself can be misleading, confusing, and ultimately inaccurate as it largely fails to convey the instrumentality of the sexual act in many of these encounters. To be sure, I am not suggesting that the term "sex tourism" does not apply to any tourist/local sexual encounters. In fact, as I will show in Chapter 5, it could very well apply to at least some relationships in the Tena area. However, given that my fieldwork revealed that most of these relationships were shaped by quite specific Amazonia-related fantasies and expectations, and given that most female tourists did not seem to travel to the Tena area with the intention of procuring sex from Kichwa men, I think it is important to introduce a concept that captures these differences. To this end, in Chapter 3 I introduce the terms "Edeni-sexual" fantasies and encounters. I argue that these terms are more adequate to

describe the variety of forces that permeated tourist/local sexual liaisons in the Ecuadorian Amazon. This will address two of the major issues I have identified in the sex tourism literature. First, the substitution of the term "tourism" for the term "encounters" deemphasizes the quest for local lovers as the main motivation on the part of the tourist. Secondly, the term "Edeni-sexual" more accurately captures the fantasies and imaginations that inform foreign women's desires for Amazonian Kichwa men, since, as I will show in Chapters 3 and 5, it indexes very specific narratives about Amazonia and about Amazonian indigenous people and emphasizes the inextricable relationship between them. In that sense, while I found that many foreign women who engaged intimate liaisons with Kichwa tour guides imagined these men as more masculine than Western men, this primal masculinity was not articulated in terms of sexual prowess or penis size, as many authors have documented in Caribbean and African settings. Instead, Kichwa masculinity was appreciated for its perceived existence outside modernity, which made Kichwa men appear as "innocent" and "pure" in the eyes of many foreign women and allowed female tourists to not only experience what they perceived to be life outside modernity, but also to alleviate their feelings of guilt as white, privileged individuals through "becoming" part of a marginalized people and culture.

*Environmentalism and ecotourism in indigenous Amazonia.*

The Amazon has particular associations in the minds of North Americans and Europeans as the location of wild, pristine nature (Conklin and Graham 1995; Hutchins and Wilson 2010). With the development of the environmental movement in the second half of the twentieth century, the colonial myth of the indigenous "noble savage"

acquired a new dimension, resulting in what Redford (1990) called the "ecological noble savage." This new myth portrayed indigenous Amazonians as "natural conservationists" who lived in perfect harmony with nature and whose interests aligned with those of Western environmentalists (Conklin and Graham 1995; Ramos 1994). Throughout this dissertation, I argue that the ideas that crystalized and spread during what authors have called the "environmental turn" of the 1980s, and the related increased power and influence of NGOs and philanthropic organizations, have had a profound impact on the lives and livelihoods of indigenous people around the world. For example, I show that the rise of ecotourism in indigenous communities in the Ecuadorian Amazon in the 1990s is a direct consequence of the ideas and discourses that became prevalent during this period, as it was imagined that ecotourism was the activity that best aligned with environmentalists and indigenous people's interests regarding cultural preservation and environmental conservation (see also Davidov 2013; Hutchins 2002; Hutchins and Wilson 2010). Furthermore, I show that these ideas not only impacted the lives and livelihoods of indigenous people, especially those who moved into service-based work in ecotourism, but they also shaped the imaginations and expectations of the hundreds of thousands of tourists that flock indigenous communities every year in search for "authentic" forms of "pre-modern" life. Thus, this dissertation offers an ethnographic account of how indigenous Kichwa individuals in the Ecuadorian Amazon make sense of these processes and how they have negotiated these changes in light of the increasing outside commodification of the Amazonian rainforest and of their own indigenous identities.

While numerous scholars have analyzed in detail the impact of the increasing commodification of landscapes and cultures on indigenous identities and performances within tourism spaces (see Babb 2012; Baud and Ypeij 2009; Davidov 2013; Hodgson 1999; Hutchins 2002), I make two main contributions to this literature. First, my work advances this framework by exploring how Western environmentalist discourses have contributed to seemingly very different forms of commodification within ecotourism encounters, namely the sexualization and erotization of Amazonian landscapes and bodies and the specific desires by many foreign tourists to experience the widely promoted "Edenic" Amazon in overtly sensual and sexual ways. Secondly, I address the ongoing debate on indigenous authenticity within ecotourism, and I propose an alternative way to understand indigenous performances within ecotourism encounters. I show that these performances cannot be solely understood as the product of outside pressure to conform to sanitized and "charismatic" (Perley 2014) ideas of indigeneity that are considered attractive by foreign tourists, nor can they be seen as the manifestation of indigenous actors' full agency in deciding how to represent their own identities. Rather, I argue that ecotourism encounters are often experienced by indigenous people as sites of "becoming" (Biehl and Locke 2017). Specifically, I argue that by embodying the types of indigenous identities that of foreign tourists find attractive, indigenous individuals have an opportunity to "become" more desirable and appreciated versions of themselves, and they can (albeit in a very limited way) contest some of the most pervasive anti-indigenous stereotypes and sentiments within Ecuadorian society.

*Indigeneity and indigenous masculinities.*

I understand racial, ethnic and gendered identities as socially constructed and historically contingent (Butler 1988; Canessa 2012; Gutmann 1997; Hodgson 2001). To critically examine indigeneity and indigenous masculinities, this dissertation builds upon intersectional approaches that look at race, gender and sexuality not as different realms of experience but as complex social constructs that are produced and experienced in relation to each other (Crenshaw 1989; Hill-Collins 1998; McClintock 1995). Thus, I use historical data to show that Kichwa ethnic and gendered identities have been shaped by centuries of colonialism and contact with the Ecuadorian state, and that they continue to be constantly transformed by local, national, and global forces. However, I also show that these forces have always coexisted with Amazonian ancestral notions of personhood, consanguinity, and affinity.

For the purposes of this dissertation, I pay particular attention to the ecotourism boom that since the early 1990s has profoundly transformed the Ecuadorian Amazon and the identities and livelihoods of indigenous and non-indigenous people who call this area home. I show that the shift towards service-based work in ecotourism has presented serious challenges for the indigenous people working in this industry, as it encourages them to emphasize sanitized aspects of their identities and to at least appear to reject aspects of modernity that are otherwise crucial to their identities and livelihoods to satisfy (mostly foreign) tourists' fantasies and expectations. I also argue that ecotourism and the eco-primitivist ideas that accompany it have produced new ideas of Kichwa masculinity which emphasize Kichwa men's closeness to nature and ancestral wisdom and try to

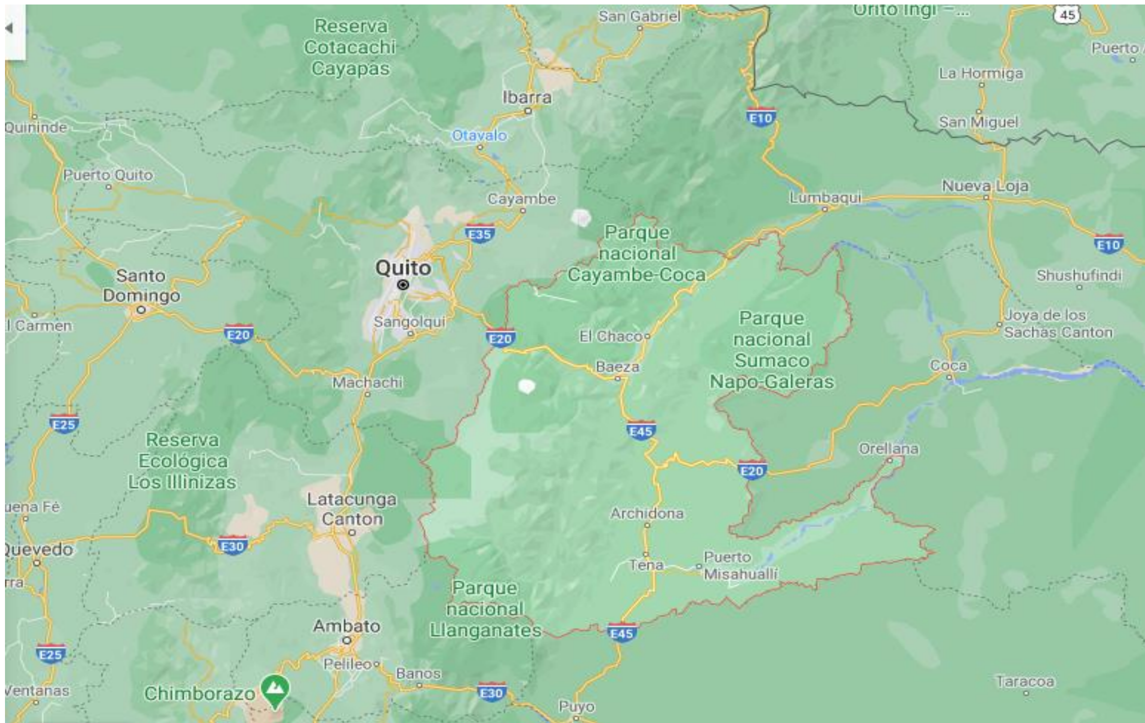
minimize several forms of predation and violence that many authors agree are central to Kichwa gender production (see, for example, Erazo and Jarrett 2018; Uzendoski 2005). These new notions of Kichwa manhood are not just prevalent among outsiders, but, as I show throughout this dissertation, are being increasingly internalized by Kichwa individuals, particularly those who are active in ecotourism and cultural revitalization efforts.

However, I also analyze ecotourism as a masculinizing space for Kichwa men who, as I show throughout this dissertation, have long been viewed as feminized, subservient, and unattractive by the white/mestizo majority within Ecuadorian society (see, for example, Colloredo-Mansfeld 1998). I engage with the concept of "hegemonic masculinity" (Connell 1995) to show that while urban Kichwa tour guides adopt some of the behaviors and attitudes of white/mestizo men in an attempt to transcend their perceived "subordinated" masculinities, they also index aspects of their indigeneity that foreign tourists, particularly female tourists, find attractive and desirable. Thus, my dissertation speaks to the work of several scholars in Latin America who have discussed several avenues for indigenous men to contest their marginalized status within their societies (see, for example, Canessa 2005; 2008; 2012; Wade 2009) but I introduce ecotourism as an alternative empowering and masculinizing space; one in which Kichwa men do not need to conceal their indigeneity and are able feel respected, appreciated and sexually attractive, which stands in stark contrast to their positionality within white/mestizo Ecuadorian society.

### The Amazonian Kichwa people.

Most of my fieldwork took place in and around the small city of Tena, Napo's provincial capital (see Map 1 and Figure 1), which is located approximately 200 km southeast of Ecuador's capital city of Quito, in a transition zone known as the Upper Amazon or Upper Napo due to its proximity to the Andes Mountain Range. During the colonial period, and well into the Republican period, this area remained a frontier region with very scarce presence of the Ecuadorian State, until its official incorporation as the Province of the Oriente in 1879 (Muratorio 1991). According to the 2010 National Census, 56.8% of Napo's population identifies as indigenous (INEC 2010), most of whom identify as Kichwa or Quichua, although I have been often reminded by many Kichwa individuals that a more correct ethnic identification is "Runa," which roughly translates as "human being" in the Kichwa language. However, given that most people use Runa and Kichwa indistinctively, and given that indigenous political and cultural organizations in this region use the name Kichwa and not Runa, in this dissertation I will refer to my indigenous informants as members of the Amazonian Kichwa nation.

Map 1. Political map of Ecuador.




Map 2. Map of Napo Province (Google 2020)

Napo Kichwa people are part of the Amazonian Kichwa nation, most of whom live in the provinces of Napo, Pastaza, Orellana, and Sucumbíos, although smaller numbers of Amazonian Kichwa can be found in all provinces of Ecuador due to internal migration. Linguistically, they are part of the Quechua family, the indigenous linguistic family with the most speakers in South America. The Napo Kichwa speak a dialect of Ecuadorian Kichwa known as Lowland Kichwa, which, although mutually intelligible, differs in important ways from the dialects spoken in the highlands (Ennis 2019). I should also mention that the majority of Amazonian Kichwa people are bilingual in Kichwa and Spanish, with only a small number of  generally older and rural monolingual Kichwa speakers. In fact, there is growing number of Kichwa youth, especially those who live in

towns and cities, who are either unable or unwilling to speak Kichwa, and prefer Spanish as their default language of communication (see, for example, Jarrett 2019; Uzendoski 2005).

There is intense and ongoing debate among scholars about the ethnogenesis of Amazonian Kichwa people in general, and Napo Kichwa in particular. As Georgia Ennis (2019) has pointed out, "[a]ll evidence suggests that pre-Colombian inhabitants of Napo were not originally Quichua speakers" (2019, 7). Thus, many people who in the present day identify as Napo Kichwa are in all likelihood the descendants of various indigenous groups in this region such as the Quijos, as well as neighboring speakers of Tukanoan, Zaparoan, Tupian and Chicham languages, who during the colonization and missionization period "were brought together at Jesuit missions and taught Kichwa as a common language by the missionaries" (Jarrett 2019, 14; see also Erazo 2013; Uzendoski 2005; Whitten 1976). This integration of neighboring but culturally distinct groups was also possible due to the steady decline of indigenous populations in this region due to disease, forced labor, and physical violence. According to Muratorio (1991), "for the entire Governorship of Quijos, the population had decreased from the original 30,000 in 1559, to 2,829 persons in 1608" (1991, 41).

Figure 1. Avenida 15 de Noviembre, in the center of Tena.  Courtesy of Misael Cerda.

Among Amazonian Kichwa themselves, there are cultural and linguistic differences based on geographical location and on historical trade and exchange routes. The two main groups are known as the Napo Kichwa, who live mostly along the Napo river and its tributaries (see Figure 2), and the Pastaza Kichwa, also known as the Canelos Kichwa or Canelos Runa, most of whom live along the Pastaza and Bobonaza rivers and their tributaries (Whitten 1976; Uzendoski 2005). While the Napo Kichwa tend to live closer to roads and towns, the Pastaza Kichwa often live in remote communities, some of which are only accessible by boat or plane (Jarrett 2019, 13).

Figure 2. The Napo river. Photo by the author.

There are also differences among Napo Kichwa people, with the most salient factor being the elevation at which they live. People who live at higher elevations, such as the towns of Tena and Archidona where I conducted my fieldwork, speak a slightly different dialect of Amazonian Kichwa than their downriver counterparts. They also tend to live in (or closer to) cities and towns, which, as I will show throughout this dissertation, has generated important points of contention between Kichwa people leading more urban lifestyles (e.g. Kichwa tour guides) and rural Kichwa, particularly those over the age of 50. Indeed, Uzendoski (2005), has argued that "many people of the older generation see urban life as problematic for Quichua ethnicity. They say, for

example, that the Runa who live as white-mestizo people do are "weakened" because they eat city food and do not bathe in the cold river early in the morning" (2005, 14).

For the purposes of this dissertation, my focus will be on the historical production of ethnic and gendered identities among the Napo Kichwa, particularly Napo Kichwa men. While I discuss the different periods since the early days of colonization and missionization in Napo, and their impacts on Kichwa identities and livelihoods, I mainly focus on the profoundly transformative period starting in the early 1990s with the rise and development of the ecotourism industry in this area. As I will show throughout this dissertation, this period brought about unprecedented challenges and opportunities for the Napo Kichwa, which mainly stemmed from their transition from subsistence-based activities to service-based work in ecotourism and its related industries.

**Methods.**

My research in the Ecuadorian Amazon has involved both short-term and long-term fieldwork periods since 2014, when I first traveled to the area as an undergraduate research assistant. Overall, I have spent a total of two years and ten months in Ecuador: one year and eight months in Napo province and one year and two months in the capital city of Quito. In the summers of 2015, 2016, and 2017, I was awarded Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) fellowships from the U.S. Department of Education to study the Amazonian Kichwa language at the Andes and Amazon Fieldschool at Iyarina in Napo province under the supervision of Dr. Tod Swanson. During those three summers, I not only acquired critical language skills in Amazonian Kichwa (I am a native speaker of Spanish), but I was also able to establish friendly relationships with numerous Kichwa

and mestizo individuals in and around Tena, many of whom worked in the ecotourism industry.

These contacts with potential informants were crucial during my fourteen-month fieldwork from June 2018 to September 2019. During that period, I lived in Napo's provincial capital, Tena, a small city of 23,305 inhabitants according to the 2010 population census (https://tena.gob.ec/index.php/tena/datos-estadisticos. Accessed October 5, 2020). My fieldwork was funded by a dissertation grant from the American Ethnological Society (AES) and by an internal fieldwork grant from Florida International University. I worked as a volunteer translator at Akangau Jungle Expeditions, a small tour agency owned and operated by Misael Cerda, a Kichwa man in his early 40s who was originally from the rural community of Uchuculin, about 7 miles from Tena. I signed an agreement with Akangau for the duration of my fieldwork and I also received institutional support from the Department of Anthropology and History at the Facultad Latinomericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO) campus in Quito. Working at Akangau allowed me to develop close friendships with most of the Kichwa tour guides operating in the Tena area, a small number of whom became the main informants for this project. Furthermore, my role as a translator allowed me to interact with most of the foreign tourists that participated in tours organized by Akangau during that year. Since tours had an average duration of two days, I was able to establish rapport with many of the tourists, some of whom were formally interviewed for this project. Furthermore, most of the participant observation for this project was conducted during the dozens of tours in which I participated, where I was able to closely observe the interactions between Kichwa tour guides and foreign tourists. These observations provided invaluable insights into foreign

tourists' imaginations, expectations and interests, and the various ways in which tour guides and other Kichwa individuals working in ecotourism adapted and conformed to those expectations.

I started out my dissertation fieldwork with three main research questions:

1. What are the imaginations of the Amazon rainforest and its indigenous inhabitants that circulate among female foreign visitors in and around Tena and how do they shape their encounters with local Kichwa men, sexual and otherwise?

2. How are notions of indigenous identity and masculinity shifting among young Kichwa men working in the tourism industry, and are intergenerational conflicts regarding proper male behavior emerging as a result of their chosen employment and relationships with female tourists? And

3. How do sexual relationships with foreign white women provide opportunities for indigenous men to reassert their sexual desirability and masculinity in Ecuador, where indigenous men have long been marginalized, feminized, and deemed unattractive by the white/mestizo majority?

To address these questions, I employed several qualitative methods, including semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and document analysis (see Bernard 2011). I primarily conducted semi-structured interviews with urban Kichwa male tour guides, and I focused on getting their life stories to try to understand how their work in ecotourism had impacted their identities and livelihoods, thus heeding Abu Lughod's (1991) recommendation to focus on "ethnographies of the particular" and individuals

rather than trying to make generalizations about particular groups. However, given the sensitive and personal character of some of my questions, some (though not all or even most) tour guides appeared somewhat uncomfortable being recorded on certain topics, particularly those regarding their relationships with foreign women. Thus, some of the most interesting stories were shared with me after they made sure my tape recorder was off. In every case, I asked whether it was acceptable for me to write about those stories, and in almost every case they responded affirmatively. Evidently, they were not concerned about their stories being written about; they just did not want to be on tape telling them. I also conducted interviews with rural Kichwa individuals who were not involved (or only tangentially so) in ecotourism to get their perspectives about the industry and their opinions on the impacts it has had on Kichwa communities. I also tried to identify points of contention and conflict between urban Kichwa tour guides and rural Kichwa to assess how tour guides are challenging particular notions of masculinity, respectability, and acceptable cultural performances. Finally, I conducted interviews with foreign female visitors, some of whom had been romantically involved with Kichwa men. In those interviews, I focused on their motivations for traveling to the Amazon rainforest and their ideas about indigenous people in general and indigenous men in particular. I also asked them to characterize and share their ideas about their relationships with Kichwa men, if applicable, as well as their motivations for engaging in these relationships. In all cases, I obtained written consent from my interviewees, and I excluded from my dissertation any information they specifically asked me to exclude. To further protect the privacy and identities of my informants, in this dissertation I have used pseudonyms for all of my interviewees, whether Kichwa tour guides or foreign visitors.

In my document analysis, I mostly focused on travel blogs and sources of Amazonian ecotourism advertisement such as the websites of Amazonian lodges and tour operators. In some cases, I analyzed travel blogs written by some of the tourists I interacted with in Tena to analyze how they portrayed their Amazonian experiences to their readers. In my analysis of all these sources, I focused on how the Amazon rainforest and its indigenous inhabitants are advertised and portrayed to potential visitors. This proved quite useful in my interviews with foreign tourists, especially as I tried to assess the sources of their ideas and expectations about the Amazon and about Amazonian Kichwa people.

**A note on positionality.**

My perceived positionality as a “non-white,” “Third-World” (and Cuban, in particular) anthropologist conducting research among indigenous people in the Ecuadorian Amazon has contributed to create a diverse range of expectations and assumptions both at “home” (by which I mean the United States) and at “the field.” I feel that within academia there is still a pervasive yet generally unspoken expectation that “Third-World” scholars like myself will study their “own” communities. I have seen this way of thinking in action in my own academic experience, where I have been the object of criticism and even mockery for not conducting my graduate research in Cuba, which apparently would be the common-sense decision for me to make since I am “from there.” Even in the academic literature about this topic, some authors seem to reproduce these notions. For example, Gupta and Ferguson have argued that,

> the hierarchy of field sites privileges those places most Other for Euro-Americans and those that stand most clearly opposed to a middle-class self. Similarly, the notion of going to "the field" from which one returns "home" becomes problematic for those minorities, post-colonials and "halfies" for whom the anthropological project is **not** [emphasis in the original] an exploration of Otherness (1997, 16).

The clear assumption here is that minority scholars will generally study their "own" communities, and thus their fieldwork experience will not be "an exploration of Otherness." It is also widely assumed by many that minority scholars will be bound by "activist" considerations in their research while reserving the more "scientific" or "theoretical" interests to those who are perceived to embody "whiteness" and "middle-class" status more properly. It is as if it were assumed that "we" are incapable of having a "global" gaze as a "natural" consequence of our "Third-World-ness," and therefore are limited in the type of research that "we" can produce, while for them there is no limit in the scope of their intellectual inquiry, since they are the true (and also probably the only) global citizens. To be sure, I have also received support and encouragement from numerous scholars, particularly those in my dissertation committee, as well as from fellow graduate students and Amazonianists. Thus, my aim in these pages is to question what I feel are still quite entrenched notions and expectations within the field of anthropology, even as I acknowledge the extraordinary people around me who do not hold those views.

Another problematic aspect of those flattening generalizations is that they ignore how the people at the field will perceive you, or the cues they will use to assess your positionality. For example, I have no evidence to suggest that the Kichwa (or even mestizo)

people with whom I have interacted in the Ecuadorian Amazon perceive me as being any less privileged or "*gringo*" than the rest of my "white American" fellow researchers, despite the fact that I was born and raised in Latin America, in a country probably poorer (in some aspects) than their own, and that I speak Spanish with native fluency. In other words, while I embody what in the United States would constitute an obvious "Hispanic" phenotype and the perceived status and challenges associated with being a "minority," in Ecuador my phenotypical characteristics are outweighed by some other factors (which can range from subtle things like dressing style or even gait, to more obvious ones like the restaurants I go to or the fact the I live in the United States), that nevertheless produce a similar result: my perceived embodiment of "First-World" status, which puts me in a complex position of power.

At the same time, I believe that the fact that I am a male researcher (compounded by the fact that I am a Latino man) interested in studying intimate relationships between white North American and European women and indigenous Kichwa men, did contribute to some of the challenges I faced during my research, specifically the ways in which some foreign women reacted to my research and, consequently, the somewhat limited access I had to obtaining foreign women's perspectives. In a few instances, white foreign women who had been intimately involved with Kichwa men not only refused to be interviewed for my project (which is understandable given the personal and sensitive nature of some of my questions), but also questioned my intentions and even the legitimacy of my inquiry, sometimes with not so veiled accusations of prejudice and misogyny. I think part of their distrust was based on the fact that, as I will show in this dissertation, most of these relationships, particularly long-term relationships, were constructed as signs of foreign

women’s “anti-racist” ideas and their appreciation of cultural difference. Therefore, they were very concerned about these relationships being portrayed as exploitative or based on racialized fantasies to any extent, no matter who the researcher was. Nevertheless, the experiences of other male researchers who have studied this issue suggest that my gender identification (and I would add my ethnicity) did have an impact on my access to women’s perspectives. For example, Klaus de Albuquerque (1998) has argued that female sex tourists in the Caribbean were not likely to be willing to be interviewed about their relationships with Caribbean men. However, as Herold et al. (2001) have pointed out, “he does not consider the possibility that they might be more disinclined to talk to a male researcher than to a female” (2001, 980). Indeed, they acknowledge that in their own study “an important factor in obtaining the cooperation of the women was that the interviewer was female. In fact, 12 of the 14 females interviewed said they preferred having a female rather than a male interviewer and only two said that gender of the interviewer did not matter” (2001, 981). These challenges notwithstanding, I should point out that I was able to conduct in-depth interviews with some of these women, a few of whom became my close friends as I will show in this dissertation.

**Outline of chapters.**

In Chapter 1, I offer a brief historical overview of Napo Kichwa’s ethnic and gender production from the early days of colonization and missionization in the 16$^{th}$ century to the beginnings of the ecotourism boom in the early 1990s. I show that Napo Kichwa identities have not been developed in a historical vacuum, but have been shaped by centuries of colonialism, missionization and engagement with the Ecuadorian state. The chapter is

divided into three main historical periods: 1) the period from the establishment of the first Jesuit missions in the area in the 16th century to the rubber boom of the late 19th century, 2) the period from the end of the rubber boom in the 1920s to the oil boom in the 1940s and 1950s, and 3) the period from the passing of Land and Agrarian Reform in the 1960s to the early days of ecotourism in the 1990s.

In Chapter 2, I analyze the global and local forces that contributed to the rise of ecotourism in the Tena area in the early 1990s, and the problematic ways in which ecotourism has been articulated as a sustainable alternative to capitalist development. I describe how Napo Kichwa people have adjusted to the demands of this industry for sanitized and folklorized performances of indigeneity, and the implications for Napo Kichwa identities and livelihoods. Finally, I engage with the academic debate on indigenous "authenticity" within ecotourism spaces, and I propose alternative ways of looking at Kichwa people's positionality within this industry.

In Chapter 3, I describe globally circulating images and discourses about the Amazon rainforest and its indigenous inhabitants and I analyze how those discourses translated into foreign tourists' specific fantasies and expectations within ecotourism encounters in the Tena area. I analyze how the Edenic imagery associated with the Amazon has produced desires to experience the rainforest in overtly sensual and sexual ways, and the various forms of sexualization of landscapes and indigenous bodies within ecotourism encounters. I introduce the term "Edeni-sexual" to highlight the parallels between the most common fantasies and expectations associated with the Amazon and the story of the

Garden of Eden, but also to explore how these ideas often fueled foreign female tourists' sexual attraction for Kichwa men, specifically young tour guides.

In Chapter 4, I focus on how young Kichwa male tour guides in Tena produce and enact their ethnic and gendered identities within what Davidov (2013) calls the "economy of expectations" of the ecotourism industry. I therefore pay close attention to the life experiences of Kichwa tour guides, and I analyze the complex processes of adjustment and negotiation these men go through as they move into service-based employment, as well as the strategies they have adopted to accommodate tourists' needs, fantasies, and expectations. I analyze the pressure many of these men feel to assimilate into white/mestizo ways and the often contentious relationships they develop with their indigenous identities due to widespread and long-standing anti-indigenous sentiment within Ecuadorian society, and I explore how by embodying stereotypical forms of indigenous warriorhood and by pursuing intimate liaisons with foreign female tourists, Kichwa tour guides area able to contest their disempowered status and reassert their respectability and desirability. Lastly, I show that as a result of their work in ecotourism, important points of contention have emerged between urban and rural, as well as between different generations of Kichwa men and women regarding proper male behavior, Kichwa aesthetics and customs, and interactions with foreigners.

In Chapter 5, I describe and analyze short-term and long-term intimate relationships between foreign female tourists and Kichwa male tour guides. I describe the most common fantasies and expectations that inform these relationships and I analyze the main motivations of both parties for entering into them. I discuss the similarities between these

intimate encounters and those described by scholars of female sex tourism around the world, but I also analyze the particularities of the Amazon region and the ideas and images associated with it in producing unique desires and expectations among foreign female tourists. Finally, I discuss and analyze long-term relationships between foreign women and Kichwa tour guides, explore the conflicts and disappointments that accompanied some of these relationships, and reveal the often painful experiences of all the parties involved as the eco-primitivist fantasies about the Amazon and its indigenous cultures begin to fade on the part of the foreign women in these relationships.

In the Conclusions, I provide an update of the situation of my Kichwa tour guide friends in Tena during the COVID-19 pandemic, and I analyze the possible implications of the almost complete halt of the ecotourism industry resulting from it for their identities and livelihoods. I also revisit the main theoretical implications of this dissertation and I propose several new avenues of ethnographic exploration for future research.

# II. CHAPTER 1: HISTORICAL PRODUCTION OF KICHWA ETHNIC AND GENDERED IDENTITIES.

## Introduction.

One night, when Don Pedro Cerda was about 38 years old, he was called to this father's deathbed for what would be their last conversation. His father, a powerful and respected *yachak* (literally, "the one who knows," referring to individuals with shamanic powers), had been bedridden for some time, suffering from an unknown ailment. *Churi, perdoname* (son, forgive me), he said. "*I see your body now, and you see my body, but tomorrow I will disappear, but if you fast and drink ayawaska as I tell you, you will see me again soon."* That night, while Pedro held the hand of his dying father, he received one last lesson about the importance of leading a responsible, moral life. His father told him that he had chosen him since he was a little boy to be his successor, to teach him about the power of nature. Now, he said, Pedro was ready to take his place. However, he reminded Pedro that only by leading a disciplined, frugal life, would he be able to cultivate those powers and use them effectively:

> You are a father of two now. Take care of your children, take care of your wife. Work hard to provide for them. Don't abuse alcohol, don't mistreat your wife.… I chose her for you because she's good. Drink ayawaska once every four days after I am gone, and you will find me. I will teach you what you need to know.

Don Pedro's life has been a fascinating one. He, like many Kichwa men of his generation, has witnessed and participated in processes that, over the last half century, have profoundly changed the lives and livelihoods of indigenous and non-indigenous people in the Upper Napo region. Don Pedro' life story, thus, embodies the recent history of this area, although he has not been merely a passive bystander; he has actively engaged with and shaped that history, whether working for short periods of time in the oil fields, raising cattle on his family's ancestral land in order to secure a legal title to it, leading Napo's regional association of *yachaks,* or, more recently, performing *ayawaska* ceremonies for foreign tourists. At the time of my fieldwork, Don Pedro was in his late 70s, and he was extremely concerned about not being able to pass on his knowledge to at least one of his sons, like his father had done with him some 40 years earlier. The reason, Don Pedro told me, was that his two sons had moved away to Tena and had become lazy, forgetting about the land and about medicinal plants, as well as abusing alcohol and getting distracted by women:

> I tell my son Jose [who works as a tour guide in Tena,] if you have one, two, three women you will go crazy. I got married when I was 24 years old and I did not know any women before that, or after that. She has been the only one. Jose has the [shamanic] knowledge, but he's not disciplined enough. He does not know how to spend his money, and he drinks a lot. I have not had a drink in over 30 years.

Don Pedro was also deeply concerned about his son chasing after *gringas* (foreign women) and neglecting his responsibilities to his *ayllu* (roughly, extended family).

*Gringas* do not make for good wives, he said, because they are always traveling around and meeting other men, which makes them prone to leaving their husbands for anyone who *"les hable bonito"* (sweet-talks them). Furthermore, he worries that nowadays some Kichwa men, especially those who work in tourism, place too much emphasis on appearing authentic and exotic, but do not make an actual effort to learn and to mature as a responsible man. As his son Jose told me in one of our conversations:

> My father has told me that it is not necessary to have long hair or to dress in some way to possess the knowledge of a *yachak*. He says that knowledge is inside, and that I must act according to who I am, and not try to be someone different.

In this chapter, I discuss the historical production of Kichwa ethnic and gendered identities in the upper Amazon region, where Tena is located, with particular attention to the construction and articulation of Kichwa masculine identities. I argue that these identities have not been produced in a historical vacuum, but have been shaped by centuries of colonialism, missionary influence, engagement with capitalism and capitalist development, as well as by older Amazonian notions of personhood, consanguinity and affinity. I pay particular attention to Kichwa ideas about masculinity, sexuality, and morality, and how these ideas have historically been deployed by Kichwa people to differentiate themselves from neighboring indigenous groups and from whites/mestizos. I also discuss how indigenous men in Ecuador and across Latin America have historically been perceived and treated by the white/mestizo majority, and the various ways in which anti-indigenous sentiment has made many indigenous individuals develop a complex and often contentious relationship with their own indigeneity. I specifically focus on the

period prior to the tourism boom in the early 1990s, since, as I will argue throughout this dissertation, tourism has brought about profound new shifts in the ways in which numerous Kichwa individuals, particularly men working as tour guides, articulate and perform their ethnic, gendered and sexual identities. The growing impact of the tourism and eco-tourism industries on specific continuities and ruptures between different generations of Kichwa men and women will be analyzed in detail in Chapter 3.

### Kichwa masculinities in context

Studies of shifting indigenous masculinities are only recently gaining traction within anthropology. Traditionally, ethnographies of indigenous societies have focused on gendering practices mainly as descriptive and comparative tools between different "native" societies or to contrast "native" societies to the West. For example, male rituals and gender relations usually appeared in discussions about kinship systems and they were frequently used for classification purposes, e.g. patrilineal vs. matrilineal systems of kinship (see, for example, Evans- Pritchard 1974; Malinowski 1922; Murphy 1956; Radcliffe-Brown 1922). These engendering practices were presented as cross-culturally variable but internally homogenous and fixed. In other words, they were presented as timeless practices that all men (and women) within a particular society reproduced with very little variation among individuals and in isolation from external forces. Even some rather recent scholarship, however, has attempted to describe gender formation processes in indigenous societies in terms of their radical opposition to Western notions of gender, thus not paying enough attention to broader historical processes. For example, Uzendoski (2005) argues that Napo Kichwa ideas of gender formation cannot be understood through

Western individualistic, non-complementary, categories, for individualism "is linked to capital's social needs for workers to sell their labor" (2005, 45). However, this argument not only suggests that contemporary Kichwa notions of gender (and possibly Kichwa identity itself) have developed in isolation from centuries of colonial and missionary influence, but also fails to consider how Kichwa people's increasing participation in global capitalism and in the political life of the Ecuadorian state (e.g. tourism, indigenous politics or military service) are further transforming their understandings of their ethnic and gendered selves.

While diverse and often contradictory, most definitions of indigeneity include some notion of cultural distinctiveness (from Western culture) and ancestral attachment to a specific area of land (see, for example, Li 2007). It has also been associated with ideas of pre-modern forms of kinship, myths, rituals, and social organization. For much of Anthropology's history, indigenous peoples have been considered the anthropological subject "par excellance," albeit for varying and often contradictory reasons, which have ranged from an early interest to search for answers about the history and evolution of the human species (see, for example, Frazer 1998 [1890]; Levi-Strauss 1969 [1949]; Malinowski 1922, Steward 1955) to the contemporary "rediscovery" of traditional indigenous knowledge as a redemptive narrative that promised to correct the shortcomings of capitalist development towards more "sustainable" alternatives (Agrawal 1995; Escobar 1995). Perhaps the most pervasive ideas associated with indigeneity are authenticity (meaning pre-modern and pre-capitalist) and radical alterity, emphasizing their otherness vis-à-vis the West. A fundamental problem, however, in much of the

literature about indigenous societies is that indigeneity itself and self-identification as a member of a particular group are usually presented as unproblematic and uncontested, which obscures the colonial history within which ideas about indigeneity and even indigenous identities themselves have developed.

Several contemporary scholars have pointed out that indigenous identities are not fixed and are not so much determined by racial or phenotypical characteristics as they are by perceived cultural competence and socio-economic status (see, for example, Canessa 2012; de la Cadena 2000; Colloredo-Mansfeld 1998). Indigeneity is, thus, neither "natural" nor merely "adopted or imposed" but is rather "a positioning which draws upon historically sedimented practices, landscapes, and repertoires of meaning and emerged through particular patterns of engagement and struggle" (Li 2004, 309). For example, Marisol de la Cadena (2000) argues that the process of De-Indianization in Peru through politics of "mestizaje" (miscegenation) cannot be only seen as a colonizing strategy pursued by the State to assimilate indigenous people into the nation through "racial advancement," but it is also important to analyze how indigenous people themselves deploy and appropriate mestizo identities in ways that "have both reproduced and contested racism" (2000, 6).

More recently, several scholars have paid closer attention to indigenous identity production in relation to broader processes of state formation, participation in global capitalism, and indigenous politics (see, for example, Canessa, 2011; High, 2011; Postero, 2017; Tengan, 2008). Indeed, several scholars of development have analyzed the impacts of developmentalist practices in terms of gender-differentiated access to resources and

basic services, reduction of women's autonomy through land dispossession, and women's vulnerability in the labor force (see, for example, Jackson and Pearson 1998; Momsen 2004). Others have shown how particular articulations of indigeneity and cultural difference may be deployed by particular groups to attract development projects and foreign investment (Conklin, 1997; Conklin and Graham, 1995; Davidov, 2013; Hutchins, 2010), to secure legal ownership of their land (Erazo 2013) and to fight for political rights (Becker 2010; Postero 2017). For example, Orin Starn (1999), in his discussion of "rondas campesinas" (peasant councils) in the Peruvian Andes, raised the concern that the articulation of ethnic identities cannot be seen or understood without looking at the particular political and historical circumstances within which they develop. In that sense, the choice of *ronda* members to emphasize their identities as *campesinos* (peasants) over their indigenous identities, cannot be understood as a sign of assimilation or denial of their indigeneity, but has to be understood within their historically situated conditions. In other words, the deployment of particular ethnic identities is often influenced by outside expectations and stereotypes, and by the political currency that local communities feel such identities may afford them. The relationships that particular groups and individuals develop with their own indigenous identities, thus, are complex and often contentious, a point to which I will return later in this dissertation.

In Amazonian anthropology, a cohort of scholars conducting research in the 1960s and 1970s examined masculine practices and identities to address (even if not explicitly) feminist concerns about the perceived universal subordination of women. Scholars attributed power imbalances within Amazonian societies to systems of kinship

and gendered divisions of labor. For example, Napoleon Chagnon (1968) and Marvin Harris (1974) described Yanomamö men in the Venezuelan Amazon as brutally violent, whose dominant position in hunting gave them a position of superiority in relation to women. Conversely, in other societies where women played a greater role in food production and distribution, or where matrilineal kinship systems were followed, scholars found that women enjoyed significantly higher levels of power and were less subjected to male violence (see, for example, Mayberry-Lewis 1974; Siskind 1973; Vickers (2017 [1979]).

Others have looked at gender complementarity, in which masculine identities were produced mainly in opposition to female identities. Scholars within this approach have argued that gender categories are relational, and that to understand the definition and production of one gender in a given cultural context, it is necessary to look at the definition and production of the other gender (Gutmann 1997; Kimmel and Aronson 2003). Some have argued that the construction of masculinity in opposition to femininity may not be solely the product of cultural patriarchal values but may be the result of biological adaptations. For example, Tiger and Fox (1984) argue that gendered division of labor is universal because of differences in the ways that men and women naturally bond with each other. In that sense, they argued that women are naturally predisposed to be nurturing while men evolved to engage in competitive cooperation in order to, for example, be successful at hunting. These dispositions, they argue, persist and are reproduced in the ways in which governments and institutions are structured today. Similarly, Parsons and Bales (1956) put forward a theoretical framework in which they opposed an “expressive” feminine character to an “instrumental” masculine character. Structuralist scholars like Sherry Ortner (1972)

also espoused a similar view, in which female subordination was shaped by universal associations of women to nature and of men to culture. Other scholars, while rejecting the biological aspects of these theories, have embraced the oppositional character of gender identities (see Gutman 1996). In that sense, they argue that masculine identities are formed by the negation of feminine identities even when women are not present, such as in homosocial activities and male-only events, and "even if they are not reflected in men's conscious thoughts, women's presence is a significant factor in men's own subjective understanding of what it means to be men" (Gutmann 1996, 386).

In Amazonia, some scholars subscribed this notion of complementarity, but they viewed this opposition as not necessarily conducive to male dominance or violence against women. Instead, they argued that it represented different expressions of a shared substance or personhood (for a more detailed discussion of this topic, see High 2011; Uzendoski 2005; Whitten 1976).Tod Swanson (personal communication) has illustrated this theory through structures of the Kichwa language, arguing that the particle "ndi," which is added at the end of nouns when they are "natural pairs" or things that share the same substance, is used to refer to a man and his wife (*kari warmindi*), instead of using the particle "s," which often functions as the conjunction "and." Indeed, as Uzendoski (2005) has also argued,

> Masculine and feminine are contrary yet complementary forces that together make a greater whole. For example, one man explained to me that he and his wife were not separate people but rather different forms of the same person (2005, 45).

Scholars working in the Tena area have also documented what they argue are distinctively Kichwa notions of gender formation, gender roles, and personhood. For example, Uzendoski (2005) argues that gender identity is not something Kichwa babies inherently possess. Rather, it is acquired and developed as they grow up, a process that he calls "gendering of the will" (2005, 42). Through that process, which involves learning and repetition of gender differentiating practices, such as cooking and tending to the garden for girls, and hunting and wielding a machete for boys, children's genders acquire distinctively masculine or feminine qualities, finally becoming a *warmi* (woman), or a *kari* (man). Before that transformation, children's identities and vital energies "retain an androgynous or "soft," nongendered form" (2005, 42).

Traditionally, as a Kichwa male child transitions into early adulthood, his gendered identity already defined, his father or a close male relative will start looking for a suitable wife, preferably from a family that will provide a mutually beneficial alliance based on exchange and reciprocity. Young men themselves can express their attraction for a specific young woman, and, if his father considers she would make a good wife, he will go visit the woman's father with other members of his family to ask for the man's daughter's hand in marriage on behalf of his son (see, for example, Muratorio 1991; Uzendoski 2005). This ritual is called *tapuna* (Kichwa word for "to ask"), and the young man's family must provide gifts of food and drink to the prospective bride's family, effectively "play(ing) host in the girl's house" (Uzendoski 2005, 72). After the young woman's father consents to the union, the families will organize a *paktachina* (the most approximate translation would be "engagement"), which is a more formal type of *tapuna* and approximates what we would call in the United States an engagement party. During

this event, the date will be set for a *bura* (Kichwa-ized form of *boda*, Spanish for wedding). During the *bura,* the man's family must also provide abundant food and drink for all the guests. Game meat is considered the most appropriate and desired food to be served during this event, and the groom's family is responsible for hunting for the meat, or, more recently due to the scarcity of game in the Tena area, buying the meat in the illegal markets of the lower Amazon region.

The reason behind the expectation of the groom's family to provide abundant gifts from the *tapuna* all the way to the *bura* is because Kichwa marriages are patrilocal, and young women will leave their homes to move with their husbands into their in-laws' house. Thus, the woman's family has to be compensated for "losing" a daughter (Jarrett 2019; Uzendoski 2005). The bride, once she moves into her husband's house, will be called *kachun* (also spelled cachun, term by which a woman who marries into a family is referred) by her husband's family. However, some recent scholarship has found that these rituals are not currently practiced with the same frequency as they used to be, especially among more urbanized Kichwa. For example, Jarrett (2019) argues that "(t)he *tapuna* is slowly becoming less common, as many young people begin dating and become a couple on their own account, with or without explicit permission from the young woman's family" (2019, 33). Similarly, linguistic anthropologist Georgia Ennis (personal communication) argues that nowadays it is not uncommon for couples to celebrate a *paktachina* but wait years before being able to celebrate a *bura* due to the related expenses. It is worth noting that whereas traditionally all of the gifts provided to the bride's family, such as game meat and *aswa* (fermented manioc beer), were hunted or harvested from the surrounding forest and the family *chagra (garden)*, nowadays the

meat often has to be purchased and, while fermented manioc beer (see Figure 3) may still be served, most of the liquor served is store-bought.

Figure 3. Ingredients and tools used to make “aswa” (manioc beer). Photo courtesy of Sofia Alarcon.

Within the household, the distribution of work is gender specific. Men usually hunt and perform wage labor, which can keep them away from the household for lengthy periods of time, as I will discuss later in this chapter, and women usually tend to the gardens and are responsible for child-rearing. This gendered distribution of labor is reflected in Kichwa cosmology, specifically in the different types of spiritual powers that men and women are thought to be given. Boys will usually inherit their fathers’ shamanic

powers, as well as several magical objects that are supposed to make them good hunters. They are also made to bathe in the river in the early hours of the morning in order to make them stronger (see Muratorio 1991; Uzendoski 2005). Girls are often given powers to make them good *lumu mamas* and *chagra mamas* (literally, mother of manioc and mother of gardens, respectively). As Uzendoski argues,

> Women receive various *paju,* or special magical powers. Above all, women pass on to their daughters, nieces, and granddaughters "lumu paju" (manioc power), which stimulates manioc to grow abundantly in the gardens (2005, 42).

Thus, the ability to successfully perform these expected gender roles is usually seen as the measure of a good husband or a good wife. Indeed, activities and behaviors that divert attention from these duties, such as drinking in excess, being lazy, or pursuing lovers outside the marriage are deemed unacceptable because, as Swanson (2009) argues, they "distract a man or woman from attention to the task at hand" (2009, 18). As Uzendoski also notes: "People say that there is nothing worse than having a lazy cachun [woman who marries into a family]. A lazy cachun is, among other evil things, a subversive element who feminizes the husband, for he must make up for her lack of domestic prowess with his own labor" (2005, 103). Therefore, a young *kachun* will be closely supervised by her husband's mother, who will evaluate whether she is correctly and diligently fulfilling her duties to her new family.

**The impact of colonialism, missionization, and the Ecuadorian state on gender identities and relations in the Upper Napo region.**

Historical ethnographic data about the Tena area presents a more complex picture than any of these individual theoretical approaches are equipped to fully capture. For example, Blanca Muratorio (1991) shows that the heavy missionary presence in the Tena-Archidona area from early in the colonial period had a profound impact on Kichwa identity production, and, consequently, in the formation and reproduction of Kichwa masculine identities. From Muratorio's interviews with Kichwa elders, it becomes clear that Kichwa masculinity came to be self-defined, in part, by using colonial codes of morality and sexuality against neighboring indigenous groups. That way, Kichwa identities were partially constructed in opposition to "*Auca*" identities. "*Auca*" can be roughly translated as an "uncivilized," unbaptized (and thus, non-Christian) person, and the term is still used today in the Tena area to refer mostly to the neighboring Waorani. A Kichwa man, thus, was one who ate salt and covered their bodies like white men, unlike Waorani men who were known as "*llushti Aucas*," alluding to their nakedness. He would also be monogamous, unlike Shuar and Achuar men from Southeastern Ecuador, and he would be in control of his violent impulses, unlike *Auca* men who were perceived as forest savages who "killed readily" (Muratorio 1991, 48). During my fieldwork, many of my informants were quick to point out what they perceived to be the main differences between themselves and *Auca* men. For example, during a tour to Yasuni National Park which took us deep into Waorani territory (see Figure 5), my tour guide friend Sacha warned me that,

> Waorani people, especially men, are not to be trusted. They are really violent, especially when they get drunk. If they are drunk and they ask you for money, just give it to them, otherwise they might spear you. They only want money to buy more alcohol. They are "*wawa cuinta*" (like children), they don't know how to manage their money, they'll blow it all up as soon as they get it.

However, these colonial forms of self-identification have always coexisted with ancestral Amazonian notions of personhood, consanguinity and affinity. For example, the term "*Auca*" was and continues to be used today to refer not just to non-Kichwa individuals, but also to some ethnically Kichwa individuals who are not related by ties of consanguinity or affinity (see, for example, Muratorio 1991; Uzendoski 2005). During my fieldwork, for example, I witnessed several Napo Kichwa individuals refer to Kichwa-speaking people from the neighboring province of Pastaza as "Auca-like." Kichwa (or Runa) identity, thus, is a rather exclusionary one, and is usually only ascribed to members of one's "*ayllu*" (roughly, family) and to other families and individuals with whom one has ties of affinity and reciprocity, which presents serious difficulties when attempting to establish pan-ethnic alliances for political purposes (Becker 1999). However, individuals who are not ethnically Kichwa can become fully "Runa" by becoming "aylluyashka" (roughly, familiarized) through inter-ethnic marriage, ritual kinship and through living "kikin Runa kuinta" (like Runa proper).

The ethnographic record in the Tena area also suggests that, since colonial times, indigenous men were incorporated and treated by colonial authorities and missionaries in substantially different ways than indigenous women, since authorities generally relied on

male labor for numerous activities and usually conferred more authority on indigenous men, partly based on indigenous kinship structures, and, undoubtedly, partially based on colonial gender hierarchies. After Ecuador gained its independence in 1830, and the Ecuadorian state assumed a bigger administrative and political presence in the *Oriente* (literally, the East, a term by which the Ecuadorian Amazon region has historically been known), indigenous labor became more important than ever (see, for example, Hutchins 2002; Muratorio 1991; Rival 2002). Muratorio, for example, argues that in the mid-19th century white settlers and missionaries even created a proxy "Runa (Kichwa) government" with elected Kichwa male leaders from the main local "*muntuns*" ( roughly, groups of interrelated families living in close proximity to each other) in order to control and discipline the much needed native labor. In that sense, she argues that,

> Owing to his authority within the kinship group, a particular Indian official could successfully play that role. That very same authority however, allowed him also to use the labor force of his muntun to pan gold or to prepare pita for the white traders (…) The payment usually was made in cotton cloth, although in Tena-Archidona the Indians had to pay the missionaries for the masses and other religious ceremonies with four gold pesos or their equivalent in pita, or in food (1991, 81).

According to Muratorio, there was also a push to turn Kichwa men into artisans or work as cattle ranchers, which white authorities thought could be an "incentive" for them to become more sedentary and, as a result, their labor could be more easily and effectively controlled. To that end, white settlers began "installing blacksmith's or

carpentry shops (and) the missionaries introduced cattle" (1991, 81). Indeed, there was a strong effort to divert Napo Kichwa from their traditionally semi-nomadic lifestyles, which would also affect their traditional trade networks outside the Tena-Archidona area.

In 1899, liberal President Eloy Alfaro passed the "Special Law for the Oriente," which prohibited, at least on paper, some forms of forced indigenous labor in the Amazon region and established that Kichwa laborers should be paid a wage for services provided, such as carrying white settlers on their backs for approximately eight days from Tena to the capital city of Quito across the frigid Andean paramo (as well as other activities overwhelmingly performed by Kichwa men). This law, according to Muratorio (1991), "in theory (…) created the legal conditions for the Indians to freely sell their labor power" (1991, 100), which could be seen as one of the first steps to legally proletarianize indigenous labor in the Ecuadorian Amazon. In practice, however, this mostly meant proletarianizing indigenous **male** labor.

The rubber boom of the late 19$^{th}$ and early 20$^{th}$ centuries also had a profound impact on the Upper Napo region, both on Kichwa identity itself and on the degree of incorporation of Kichwa men into the Ecuadorian state apparatus and trade systems in relation to Kichwa women. First of all, the emergence of capitalist mass-production, especially within the automotive industry which demanded large quantities of rubber, made white authorities and traders redefine and reclassify indigenous populations in the area according to their perceived "usefulness" as a source of capitalist labor. As Muratorio argues,

> For the purposes of getting access to that reluctant labor force, the white traders' own consciousness and practice classified the indigenous population into

> "available" and "unusable" labor. The groups categorized as *Indios* or *indigenas* ("Indians") were those who could be put to work under the legal, if misused, system of debt-peonage. All the other indigenous groups were labelled *infieles* or *barbaros* ("infidels" or "barbarians"), and could be enslaved and sold with certain degree of impunity. (Muratorio 1991, 107).

In practice, what this meant was that those indigenous groups that were not as familiar with colonial authorities and with the debt peonage system were systematically raided, tortured, and killed, since rubber barons saw them as not only "useless," but also a hindrance to their rubber businesses, particularly Waorani men who responded to incursions into their territory with violent attacks on rubber traders and indigenous rubber tappers (Rival 2002). This reclassification of some groups of Napo Kichwa and *"Indios"* rather than *"Infieles"* (Infidels) during the rubber boom had a profound impact not just on how state authorities perceived them, but also, as I briefly discussed earlier in this chapter and will further elaborate on throughout this dissertation, on how upper Napo Kichwa see and identify themselves to this day. As Muratorio convincingly argues,

> This distinction developed early in the colonial period to differentiate the highland Indians, the Christianized and relatively docile labor force, from those of the Oriente, not yet available as a Quichua or Spanish-speaking potential labor force. As soon as the Oriente started to be incorporated into the colonial administration, the indigenous people living in the Quijos-Tena-Archidona area were the first to suffer the ideological transformation from infieles into Indios (1991, 108).

The relevance of this transformation cannot be overstated. The perception of Upper Napo Kichwa groups and individuals as a docile, Christianized source of labor, much like highland Kichwa had long been perceived, also carried a profound shift in how these groups were imagined and discursively produced in terms of morality, sexuality, and gender propriety vis-à-vis other neighboring Amazonian groups. Furthermore, I argue that the different experiences between Kichwa men and women during colonialism and the wealth disparities that resulted from men's higher levels of participation and authority within colonial society and their ability to earn wages during the various periods of capitalist expansion in the area, also had a significant impact on gender roles and gender relations within Napo Kichwa societies. In that sense, while I partially agree with Casey High's (2009) assertion that "in Amazonia gender differences appear to be secondary to broader relations between humans and nonhumans and between consanguinity and affinity" (2009, 753), I disagree with the idea that this has been conducive to "a lack of strict gendered hierarchies and of pronounced divisions between women and men" (2009, 753). There are countless examples in the ethnographic record that show that while consanguinity and affinity may sometimes take precedence over gender hierarchies, the patriarchal structures upon which many Amazonian societies are built, undoubtedly influenced by their colonial experience, do produce, in many cases, strict and hierarchical gender roles and norms that are often conducive to violence against women.

In the Tena area, Muratorio (1991) found widespread patterns of domestic violence, which were, it is worth noting, sanctioned and regulated by the state. The main character of her book, Grandfather Alonso, told her that,

> I used to hit my wife very hard only when I was drunk. Once they had complained to the authorities. The authorities advised me by opening up a book of law. They told me that a wife should only be beaten on the buttocks with a bamboo, two times, four times, until the blood comes out. This is what the authorities taught me (1991, 57).

He also laid out a woman's role in the household, and how her husband was supposed to treat her:

> If you are always sleeping with the woman, she will become lazy. If you are hugging your wife all the time, how will you live? The man must go hunting and fishing, and the woman must be made to get up; she has to be kept at home looking after the children and her in-laws.

Similarly, Uzendoski (2005) argues that a defining aspect of Kichwa masculinity is the control and exercise of violence. That violence is sometimes directed at one's wife in order to mold "the woman around her man so that she becomes publicly and personally subordinated to his will" (2005, 46). Uzendoski notes that this violence is often articulated in positive terms:

> From the perspective of Runa socioculture, a measured amount of masculine violence is viewed as legitimate when it is directed at socializing a young wife.

> This violence is described as "punishing" (*libachina*) and "teaching" (*yachachina*), the latter a euphemism that, like all portrayals of legitimate violence, emphasizes positive outcomes (2005, 46).

However, he also notes that,

> When men beat their wives in an abusive manner, it is described as *macana* (to beat up) rather than yachachina. Ideally masculine violence is socially regulated by the ayllu [family] so that spousal conflicts are made central to the concerns of the larger group (2005, 46).

An important notion that emerges from the Muratorio example is the strong association between (immature or excessive) sexual intercourse and laziness in Kichwa culture. Indeed, in the introduction to this chapter Don Pedro also complained about his son Jose's constant pursuit of women as a distraction from his duties to his family. Some scholars have analyzed this association through their articulation in Kichwa ritual songs and oral narratives (see, for example, Swanson 2009; Uzendoski and Calapucha 2012). Tod Swanson (2009), for example, argues that that in many cases Kichwa women's relations and interactions with medicinal plants are expressed in the form of songs that describe a process of ritual courtship between the female singer and the plant's male "spirit," in order to "seduce" the plant-man into sharing his medicinal properties with her. However, Swanson also argues that sexuality must be managed and expressed in a responsible, mature way, since uncontrolled, undisciplined sexuality can carry quite negative consequences. He mentions several examples in oral narratives that serve as cautionary tales against sexual looseness, in which women who "got themselves into so

many problems with men (…) became homeless (and eventually) became plants" (2009, 47). Swanson attributes this to a moral fault known as "*quilla*" (also spelled "*killa"*), which applies to both men and women:

> The word *quilla* denotes what for *Quichua* speaking people is perhaps the greatest moral fault. Although it has no direct translation its meanings approximate English 'lazy,' 'sexually loose,' and 'immature." (2009, 48)

Swanson goes on to explain this profound relationship between sexual looseness and laziness, arguing that,

> Laziness and sexual looseness are connected in Quichua for several reasons. First, work is highly gendered. Hence the products of female work such as productive gardens or elegant ceramic vessels are considered proof of a powerful and skillfully used femininity. Successful hunting is similarly proof of a skillful and disciplined use of male sexuality. Laziness, by contrast, is the result of immature sexuality. Often it is the result of being distracted from the task at hand by unsuitable partners (2009, 48).

Furthermore, Uzendoski (2005) argues that Kichwa men think that having sex makes them weak, as

> (w)omen are said to drain the vital energy out of men. Both are analogous to the productive capacities of each gender. Men are hunters in sex, while women "cook" the semen of men and transform it into a new life. Men

> complain of being tired for days after a sexual encounter, a way of speaking about energy that was drained and recirculated during sex (2005, 133).

This deeply resonates with that Grandfather Alonso told Muratorio in the late 1980s, and with what don Pedro told me in 2019. Indeed, as Swanson notes, in contemporary Kichwa vocabulary the verb "*quillachina*," which literally means "to make someone lazy," "is also the verb which means "to flirt," "to bother" or to "seduce" (2009, 48). Furthermore, sexual looseness is seen as a result or indication of immaturity, which will be a crucial point for understanding my discussion of widespread criticisms of Kichwa tour guides in Chapter 4.

During my fieldwork in Tena, many of my informants also alluded to how Kichwa boys are taught, from an early age, what a woman's role and place should be, and the necessity for them to be educated into the proper ways of playing their roles as wives and mothers. For example, my friend Urku told me that in his community, which is located about 20 miles from Tena on the banks of the Napo river, he was instructed by his father and community elders on the proper role of a wife:

> I was taught that women are supposed to serve men in everything. A man practically does not help out at home; his job is to go out hunting and provide food, external stuff, but cooking and raising the children is the job of a wife. If they don't perform their duties well, Kichwa society is like "oh, I'm going to hit you because you haven't been a good wife." Alcoholism is also a great problem. When Kichwa men go out and get

> drunk they become violent and hit their wives. And the women are taught that they must obey their husbands and stand by them even if they are being mistreated.

In one of my interviews with Don Pedro, he explained to me the criteria he used when choosing his wife:

> People ask me: how did you choose your wife? Quiet, humble, she doesn't speak much, doesn't converse, she only sometimes smiles. That's what I liked about her. I'm different, I'm always joking around, but for me it's better that she's quiet, humble, and that she takes good care of me.

What is particularly interesting about these examples is that Kichwa manhood seems to be articulated not just in opposition to "*Auca*" forms of masculinity but also to Kichwa female identities, which are often ascribed some of the same characteristics associated with *Aucas*. For example, in Urku's statement, Kichwa women are presented as immature and childish (just like *Aucas* are perceived) and it is the job of Kichwa men to "educate" them and punish them if they don't behave properly, which resonates with the ways in which many of my informants talked about educating their children. In Don Pedro's case, he emphasized that a good wife should tend to her husband diligently, and that she should not be too outspoken or too friendly with other people. Thus, while theories of gender complementarity are useful to understand Kichwa notions of gender production and personhood, it is important to recognize that "complementarity" does not imply a lack of hierarchical divisions between men and women. Some authors have pointed out that even the very concept of indigeneity is heavily gendered, and that since

colonial times there has been a strong association of "Indianness" with the intimate spaces of feminine domesticity (Canessa 2012; de la Cadena 2000; Weismantel 2001). In that sense, they argue that to be a woman is to be more "Indian," and that being a man provides opportunities for negotiating and contesting indigenous identities that are foreclosed to indigenous women. For example, Canessa (2012) points out to men's participation in military service in Bolivia as one of those opportunities, where men are able to become fluent in Spanish and to effectively become citizens of the nation, which facilitates participation in the political and economic life of the country.

I argue that this ability of indigenous men to negotiate their indigeneity in ways that indigenous women often cannot, may play a substantive role in how indigenous women even today are often perceived and treated. If women's indigeneity is indeed accentuated by their lack of competence in navigating white/mestizo society and their lower level of fluency in Spanish, they could conceivably be perceived as more "irrational" and "immature" not just by white/mestizo society, but also by their own husbands and by indigenous men in general. Indeed, during my fieldwork in the Tena area I heard numerous accounts of Kichwa men using racial slurs such as dirty Indian or dumb "longa" (pejorative term to refer to indigenous or peasant women) when arguing with their wives. To be sure, I want to avoid the often common trap of suggesting that pre-colonial indigenous societies in the Upper Napo and elsewhere in Amazonia or the Andes were egalitarian societies with no defined gender hierarchies and roles. What I do suggest is that colonial and state authorities seemed to have widened the wealth and prestige gap between indigenous men and women by both reinforcing existing kinship structures within indigenous societies, and imposing their own notions of gender and

family structures through various forms of policies and practices, as I have shown in this section.

*The imagined (a)sexuality of (some) indigenous male bodies.*

One of the areas where indigenous people, and particularly indigenous men, have been evaluated is on their perceived degrees of "assimilation," and thus the varying level of "threat" they represented to colonial authorities, the state, and white/mestizo settlers. One key aspect of this assimilation concerns their sexuality and sexual attitudes. Indeed, in her engagement with Michel Foucault's "*History of Sexuality*," Ann Stoler (1995) argues that discourses about sexuality and gender cannot be separated from discourses about race. In that sense, she argues, Foucault fails to look at "key sites in the production of that discourse" (1995, 3) by neglecting the role that the racialized colonial "Other" had as a referent of what was non-European. However, discourses about the sexuality and morality of differently racialized non-white bodies were often quite diverse and were contingent on specific colonial realities and anxieties.

Indeed, several scholars have argued that the bodies of black and indigenous men in the Americas, for example, have been historically imagined and portrayed in sometimes radically different ways from each other. According to Peter Wade (2009) this could be attributed to several reasons, from a larger presence of black people in urban centers, which created an atmosphere of fear among white residents about black sexual degeneracy and predation, to the fact that "black (African and African diaspora) sexuality became an international icon/fetish and a capitalist commodity" (Wade 2009, 185). As

Fanon (1986 [1952]) has argued, the "white man is convinced that the Negro is a beast; if it is not the length of the penis, then it is the sexual potency that impresses him. The Other will become the mainstay of his preoccupations and desires" (1986, 170). This has produced images of black men as hypersexual and animalistic, grotesquely eroticized though not beautiful (see also Gordon 1998; Schick 1999 ).

In contrast to the hypersexualized images of black men, several authors have pointed out that indigenous men in the Americas, particularly in the Andean countries, have often been portrayed as "nearly asexual" (Canessa 2008, 53). Canessa argues that while in many other parts of the Americas "whites were concerned to the point of paranoia over the corrupting hypersexuality of subalterns, Bolivian elites considered indian men to be singularly lacking in their sexuality" (2008, 52). In Ecuador, Weismantel (2001) argues that that the bodies of indigenous women have been imagined as desirable (which is quite distinct from attractive) in the different national projects of mestizaje, while indigenous men have been portrayed as dirty and unattractive. In the mestizaje ideology, the "Indian" was supposed to give way to a new race of European mestizos through sexual encounters between white men and indigenous women. Other scholars have made similar arguments, suggesting that the desirability of indigenous women was mainly based on their perceived availability, even when they were often portrayed as "ugly or smelling bad" (Canessa 2008, 43). In fact, as Canessa further argues, "(s)exual desire here appears to be constructed not out of a sensual aesthetic but out of an erotics of power" (2008, 43).

Indigenous men, seen as outside the project of mestizaje, and indeed seen as a threat to that project, came to be imagined as feminine (relative to white men's virility) and submissive. Scholars of colonialism have emphasized how, in colonial projects, "the demasculinization of colonized men and the hypermasculinity of European males represent principal assertions of white supremacy" (Stoler 1991, 56). Similar processes have been described across the globe as one of the main legacies of European colonialism (see, for example, Stoler 2002; Schick 1999 ; Martinez-Ailer ;Gordon 1998; de la Cadena 2000). Wade (2009) also describes how indigenous men were often seen as feminine and sexually degenerate in the colonial period. He argues that,

> Despite parallels between Iberian and some native American views on sodomy, the Iberians often viewed native American men as sodomites – partly due to their interpretation of widespread cross-dressing behaviour and partly due to seeing ethnic-racial others as sodomites (2009, 74).

However, while acknowledging that at some points indigenous men have also been portrayed as sexually degenerate and as a sexual menace to the integrity of white women, like in the case of Brazilian Kayapo leader Paiakan, who was accused of raping two white women in 1992, Wade argues that "these instances do not amount to the pervasive and engrained image of the hypersexual black man" and concludes that "(t)he figure of the indigenous male seems to carry a low erotic charge" (2009,185). Indeed, several jokes that circulated in Latin American countries during the first years of the HIV pandemic reflected the pervasive notion that indigenous people lacked sexual

attractiveness and sexual drive. One such joke was documented by Andrew Canessa (2008):

> In the 1990s, as AIDS spread across Latin America and neighbouring Brazil in particular, a joke went around La Paz: 'Why is there so much AIDS in Brazil and so little in Bolivia? Because the indians are so ugly they don't even have sex with each other.' Here, as on other occasions, the sensuality of the tropical lowlands is contrasted with ascetic altiplano culture (2008, 53).

It is important to point out that not all indigenous men have been imagined and portrayed in this way. As I noted earlier, the level of integration of particular groups into the state apparatus and the national economy played a significant role in their differing perceptions as gendered and sexual beings. For example, in the early period of missionization Muratorio notes that "(i)n terms of sexuality and gender relations, Catholic missionaries regarded the Napo Quichua as lacking any sense of morality and as being affected by "unnatural" sexual urges that had to be controlled within marriage" (1998, 410). The Napo Kichwa also did not go through the processes of peasantization and proletarianization to the same degree that highland Kichwa did. Davidov (2013), for example, argues that "historically indigenous identity in the Andes was subsumed into class identity—a process that did not happen in the Amazon" (2013, 32-33). As a result, as Lucero (2006) argues, "Andean peoples have often adopted the language and strategies of the Western left thus making them, in the eyes of some, seem less 'pure' and 'authentic' than their Amazonian counterparts" (2006, 35). Napo Kichwa were thus seen

as relatively “wilder” than their highland counterparts. Indeed, their higher degree of autonomy and access to forest resources did not result in the same level of deference and submission to white/mestizos that was until very recently quite prevalent in highland communities, where indigenous people, including men, would often kiss the hands of white/mestizo individuals (Meisch 1995, 448). However, the Tena-Archidona region's long history of engagement with colonial authorities and later with the Ecuadorian state, as well as their overwhelming acceptance and practice of Christianity (unlike other Amazonian groups until quite recently), have resulted in the Napo Kichwa sometimes being more closely associated with images and stereotypes about Andean indigenous people than with their fellow Amazonians. Napo Kichwa men in the Tena-Archidona area, for example, were (and continue to be) contrasted to the polygamous Achuar men or the “irrationally murderous” Waorani men. Furthermore, Michael Uzendoski (2005) argues that the notions about Napo Kichwa people being “assimilated” and *“mansos”* (roughly, tamed) unlike other “traditional” Amazonian groups, has been not only articulated and perpetuated by the Ecuadorian state and white/mestizo society, but also by several scholars working in the region. For example, he cites the work of Udo Oberem (1980), who, according to Uzendoski, mistakenly “foresaw the continual loss of indigenous culture in the Upper Napo and the final assimilation of indigenous people to mestizo society as peasants” (2005, 165).

**Napo Kichwa and the era of development**

On January 20th, 1949, newly sworn in U.S. President Harry Truman proposed a different approach to addressing world poverty. Truman proposed the incorporation of

"underdeveloped" countries into the industrialized world and called for fast-paced economic restructuring to ensure increased productivity (Truman 1949). Truman's speech is seen by many scholars as the beginning of a new era: the era of "development," in which two-thirds of the world's population were transformed into a distinct class of "the poor" and new strategies were conceived to deal with them (Escobar 2012; Sachs 1992; McMichael 2012). While the meanings of development, the effectiveness and impact of the discourses and practices associated with it, and the possible alternatives to its logic, have been the subject of intense debate among politicians, scholars and activists (see, for example, Escobar 2012; Ferguson 1994; Robinson 1983; Rostow 1960; Wallerstein 2004), the fact remains that the years after the end of World War II marked the consolidation of the United States and the Soviet Union as the world's rival superpowers, and a new vast area designated as the "Third World" became the battleground where ideological, economic and (all too often) military wars were fought. Additionally, the rise of the Soviet Union as an industrialized superpower, and the outbreak of Marxist revolutions around the world, cemented the idea within Western powers that the most effective way to fight communism was to eradicate the massive levels of poverty that fueled those revolutions in the first place (Bebbington et al. 2013; McMichael 2012).

In Ecuador, development principally meant oil. Royal Dutch Shell began seismic exploration in several areas of the Ecuadorian Amazon in the late 1940s, with varying degrees of success (see, for example, Cepek 2018), although some oil exploration had been taking place in the region since at least the early 1920s (Muratorio 1991). By the mid-1960s, several international oil companies had begun operations in the area, and

large amounts of oil reserves had been found in the Amazon, mainly in what are now known as the provinces of Pastaza, Orellana and Sucumbíos. In fact, several towns and cities were named after oil companies, like the town of Shell in Pastaza, or the city of Lago Agrio in Sucumbíos, named after the city of Sour Lake, Texas, where the headquarters of Texaco Oil was located. In the Tena area, no major oil reserves were ever found, although some companies did perform seismic exploration, sometimes with promising results. For example, the Canadian company Ivanhoe established several drilling sites around Tena and Archidona (see, for example, Erazo 2013) but they failed to extract significant amounts of crude and they ceased operations in 2014 "due to financial troubles" (Jarrett 2019, 69). While oil development did not have the impact on indigenous people in the Tena area that it did in other areas of the Amazon where large deposits of crude had been found in terms of contamination, displacement, and disease (for a detailed discussion of the impact of oil in other areas of the Amazon, and the complex and contradictory relationships between oil and Amazonian indigenous people, see Becker 2010; Cepek 2008; 2011; 2018), the oil boom impacted indigenous Kichwa in the Tena/Archidona area in different yet profoundly significant ways. Since oil companies generally paid better wages than most other types of agricultural and non-agricultural employment (see, for example, Cepek 2018; Muratorio 1991), many Kichwa men, and often entire families, resettled to "oil towns" in nearby provinces looking for employment in *"la compañia"* (literally, "the company," a general term by which oil companies are referred to). For example, Muratorio (1991) notes that,

> Estimates are that in the 1970s, approximately 4,500 Napo Runa permanently migrated to the oil region of Lago Agrio, and over 5,000 -particularly from Archidona, Rucullacta and Pano -went to settle along the Napo River, between Puerto Misahualli and the mouth of the Suno, and even as far as Coca (1991,179).

More significantly, however, for the livelihoods and the economic networks of Napo Kichwa people, the experience with oil encouraged large numbers of Napo Kichwa men to travel to other regions of Ecuador and sell their labor to numerous agricultural and non-agricultural companies, a practice that has continued to be a relatively important source of income for Napo Kichwa people, particularly men, since then (see, for example, Erazo 2013; Jarrett 2019). Indeed, as Muratorio (1991) notes,

> The work experience at Shell, though temporary, served to familiarize the Indians with a free-market economy, thus making it possible for them to sell their labor for money in several areas of the Oriente, or in the country at large. This is how some Napo Runa came to seek temporary jobs, usually for a three-month period, on the coastal banana plantations (1991, 173).

Furthermore, through Kichwa men's labor in the oil fields starting in the late 1940s and early 1950s, new definitions of wealth and poverty started to be constructed and deployed among Kichwa people. As Muratorio argues, "Indians started to be considered 'rich' or 'poor,' and that the term *pugri* (poor; Quichuanization of the Spanish word *pobre)* was used in reference to certain Runa, when compared to others who had

managed to accumulate some money by working for the [oil] company" (1991, 171), although she suggests that this did not contribute to major social differentiations among Kichwa people. Instead, Muratorio argues that the money earned by Napo Kichwa men in the oil fields was generally used to reinforce ties of reciprocity and conviviality with their *ayllu*.

During this time, there was also a proliferation of evangelical missions in the Ecuadorian Amazon. Although there had been small groups of missionaries that had attempted to create a space for themselves in the Upper Napo since the 1920s, they only succeeded in establishing a small school in one of the communities surrounding Tena in the early 1940s (Uzendoski 2003, 132). Evangelical missions established a close relationship with oil companies, who saw them as a "civilizing" force on the indigenous population that lived in the many of the areas where they operated. The synergic relationship between oil companies and evangelical missions, particularly the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL), has been extensively analyzed elsewhere (see, for example, Muratorio 1991; Rupert 2019; Whitten 1976), but for the purposes of this dissertation I am mainly interested in briefly discussing the impact of increasing evangelical influence on the gendered and ethnic self-understandings of Napo Kichwa people. Some authors argue that evangelical doctrine and evangelical missionaries captured the attention of many indigenous people in the Amazon because, despite the Catholic Church's efforts to cast them in a negative light, they appeared to disrupt the strict racial lines that had been enforced by the authorities and the Catholic missions. Indeed, Muratorio argues that evangelical missionaries

> (…) did not have the same emotional involvement or economic investment in openly espousing the ideology of racial prejudice that shaped white-Indian relations in the region. (I)n in public everyday interaction, the Evangelical missionaries addressed the Indians as "brothers," even if privately they often referred to them as "our Indian boys" (1991, 171-172).

Furthermore, some argue that evangelical missionaries opposed the system of "*wasipungo*" (debt peonage) to which many indigenous people were subjected in the Andean region, and had, in general, much more liberal ideas than the Catholic Church, which deeply resonated with Kichwa people in the Tena area. They also opened numerous schools in the area, which Kichwa people appreciated as an opportunity to better themselves. Indeed, as Uzendoski argues,

> Within Evangelical mission spheres, Runa were free to buy what they wanted and were unfettered by well-known Catholic institutions of ideological and pragmatic control. In this sense, the Evangelical missionaries helped transform communities by offering a new, more "liberal" vision of the world and the social practices to go with it (2003, 136).

However, evangelical doctrine also promoted a strict system of individual discipline and personal responsibility. Evangelical Kichwa, for example, are not allowed to drink alcohol or dance at parties, both important elements of sociality among Kichwa people. Uzendoski argues that, in the case of Kichwa men, this resulted in a process of

"domestication of the masculine will" (Uzendoski 2003), since he argues that alcohol consumption among Kichwa men is seen as an expression of a strong masculine will and character:

> Willfulness is also expressed in alcoholic drinking bouts and fighting, and most young men regularly engage in such behavior. Men do not engage in such drinking practices for pleasure but rather to demonstrate to one another and to the world that they are willful, dangerous, and powerful (2003, 140).

For this reason, Uzendoski further argues that Catholic men in this area, who to this day still represent a majority, albeit a shrinking one, perceive evangelical men as feminized. He states that "Evangelicals have transformed the notion of a defining, masculine, and powerful will to a more passive state that they achieve through biblical reflection, prayer, and worship. To Catholic men, Evangelical men are feminized" (2003, 141).

However, it is worth noting that during my fieldwork, conducted overwhelmingly among Catholic Kichwa men, I did not get the sense that they perceived evangelical men in this way. Indeed, as I showed earlier in this chapter, many Kichwa men viewed excessive alcohol consumption as a source of problems, such as domestic violence and unnecessary fights among Kichwa men. Many of my informants, thus, viewed abstaining from alcohol, or drinking in moderation, as a virtue and indeed as a sign of a strong will, even though many of them regularly engaged in heavy drinking, and would pressure one another to do so at parties. Furthermore, although heavy drinking was definitely a part of sociality among Kichwa people, particularly men, some of my informants did not appear

to consider it an expression of a strong masculine identity, but rather a product of deep-seated frustration and poverty within indigenous communities. As a young Kichwa tour guide told me:

> Since the Western system arrived, since money arrived, there have been problems because men feel they don't have the resources to support their families, and obviously the financial burden usually falls on the man. So, in some way they do go out and drink with their friends as a way to cheer themselves up, to have a bit of fun, but afterwards, when they are drunk, they actually cause more problems for themselves.

Thus, while I partially agree with Uzendoski that drinking can be sometimes seen as an expression of masculine power (I often witnessed Kichwa men bragging about how much alcohol they could consume without becoming overly intoxicated), I also found that many Catholic Kichwa men viewed drinking in moderation or abstaining from alcohol altogether as a positive behavior, even if they were not willing to give up alcohol themselves.

*The 1960s and new ideas of (male) leadership and community.*

The 1960s and 1970s brought about major changes in other areas of Napo Kichwa lives and livelihoods, particularly in their notions of leadership and community. In 1964, the Ecuadorian government passed comprehensive land and agrarian reform, which for the first time allowed indigenous people to gain legal access to their lands, so long as they committed to national projects of productivity and development (Erazo 2013). The

Ecuadorian state, following state interventionism policies (see Harvey 2005) prescribed by development proponents and policy makers set out to remove or substantially change what they perceived as obstacles to economic growth (Esteva 1992), such as subsistence farmers and indigenous people who did not produce any surplus value, hunter-gatherers who occupied vast pieces of land without “contributing” to the national economy (Escobar 2012), and traditional networks of exchange and trade (Scott 1998). The passage of this law also encouraged indigenous people and poor peasants from the Ecuadorian highlands to resettle in the Amazon, which was much less densely populated than the Andes and provided opportunities to more easily obtain plots of land (see, for example, Erazo 2013; Becker 2008). This was also possible due to the abolition of *wasipungo* in the highlands, part of the same land reform law, which allowed for the increased mobility of highland indigenous people (Becker 2008; Erazo 2013; Meisch 1995).

However, the requirements for obtaining a legal land property title were often hard to navigate as well as prohibitively expensive for individual Kichwa families. In light of this, the Ecuadorian state encouraged indigenous people to form farming cooperatives to apply for communal land titles. This solution was adopted by some Kichwa communities, which, according to Pallares (2002), required the election of community leaders and the establishment of communal lands . However, Erazo (2013) argues that these processes generated important conflicts among cooperative members, as “(b)oth requirements were sharp departures from existing Kichwa understandings of social organization and property (2013, 27).

This period coincided with the rise of the global "Green Revolution," which promoted a concerted push to industrialize agricultural processes, including fast-paced mechanization, increased use of fertilizers and pesticides, and use of faster growing varietals (see, for example, Gupta 1998; Sachs 1992). As part of the push for collectivization in the Tena-Archidona area, Kichwa people were encouraged to make a shift away from family-based subsistence agriculture and start producing high-yield cash crops as members of farming cooperatives. The state also approved millions of dollars in funds for cattle ranching loans, which some Kichwa communities took advantage of, often without any basic knowledge of the industry. This often resulted in widespread disease among the animals and very little (if any) profits, so the push to turn Kichwa people into cattle ranchers largely failed (for an in-depth discussion of these topics, see Erazo 2013; Jarrett 2019). Indeed, Don Pedro Cerda, the *yachak* I mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, unsuccessfully tried to raise cattle on his vast property during this time, but according to his son Jose, much of the cattle died from unknown diseases, and some had to be sold to pay for Don Pedro's medical expenses after a nearly fatal accident.

For the purposes of this dissertation, however, the most impactful processes that took place among the Napo Kichwa during this period were the emergence of new notions of leadership and authority, as well as shifting ideas about community, property, and ethnic-based alliances vis-à-vis the state. Indeed, despite the state's strong push for collectivization of indigenous people in this area, and the perceived collectivist character of indigenous identities, "historically most Amazonian Kichwa have tried to avoid

subjecting themselves to political hierarchies beyond the extended family" (Erazo 2013, 63), which meant, as Erazo further argues, that "forming a bounded group of people to live within a bounded territory (…) required developing a very new sense of loyalty and identity"(2013, 58). Indigenous leaders, the vast majority of whom were men (see Muratorio 1998), had to learn how to negotiate these processes in a way that allowed them to effectively govern their territories without seeming too authoritative, which would often draw criticism and even mockery from other Kichwa people (see Erazo 2013).

This period, thus, disrupted traditional notions of authority and power within Kichwa communities, particularly with the emergence of Kichwa political leaders who saw in the state push for collectivization an opportunity to obtain economic and political benefits that would be nearly inaccessible for indigenous people as individuals or as individual family units. However, it appears that while some Kichwa leaders initially approached collectivization as a calculated strategy to ensure that "most of the land would remain in Kichwa hands" (Erazo 2013, 28), as time went by some leaders began to internalize the logic promoted by the state regarding the social organization of indigenous territories. Indeed, as Erazo further argues, Kichwa leaders "envisioned a world in which Kichwa would be organized into large groups, extending far beyond their kinship networks and centered around leaders (themselves) who would motivate all members to work together to improve their lives" (2013, 28). The indigenous (male) leader that emerged during this period came to occupy a position of authority and power that had long been occupied by *yachaks* (see Erazo 2013; Muratorio 1991), although, unlike

*yachaks*, his authority was not derived from his ability to manipulate the supernatural world. Instead, it was derived from his ability to successfully engage with state actors and NGOs to obtain economic resources for his constituents. As Patrick Wilson (2010) argues, “leaders gain prestige and maintain or enhance authority by exhibiting proper moral behavior, rooted in generosity and the ability to circulate valued, exogamous goods” (2010, 229). In fact, Kichwa leaders, as politicians everywhere, started making attempts to diminish the power and authority of *yachaks*, whom they saw as their biggest competitors for power and authority. As Erazo and Jarrett (2018) note, “one of the first strategies used by the new type of leader to reduce shamans’ power was to encourage fellow Kichwa to use state health resources rather than going to shamans” (2018, 154). The emergence of indigenous political leaders had an interesting effect on how Kichwa masculinity was evaluated. On one hand, masculine (since most leaders were men) power and prestige began to be seen not so much as the result of the wisdom they had developed over the course of their lives or for their shamanic knowledge, but for their ability to attract funds from NGOs and state agencies (Erazo 2013; Oakdale 2004; Wilson 2010). On the other hand, the shift away from hunting, fishing, and other forms of manual and agricultural labor, and towards several forms of intellectual labor, meant that indigenous male leaders were not consistently engaging in gender reaffirming practices in the eyes of other Kichwa men. Indeed, as Uzendoski (2005) argues, hunting (although not as widely practiced nowadays due to the scarcity of game in the Tena area) and fishing, are both still both “central to masculine identity and production” (2005, 127), as “(m)asculinity is defined by hunting and other forms of predation and by the capacity for violence” (2005, 46).

**Sustainability and Post-Development: The "rediscovery" of indigenous knowledge as redemptive narrative.**

The "environmental turn" that took the place in the 1980s, with its emphasis on sustainability and the conservation of natural resources, has been analyzed by some authors as a strategy of countries in the global north to maintain their control over world resources, in the face of increasing industrialization in the global south (Agrawal 2005; Gupta 1998). In terms of policy making, sustainability has been traced to the 1987 United Nations Bruntland Commission Report, which defined sustainable development as "(that which) meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (Bruntland Commission 1987). Subsequent environmental agreements were signed at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, where more than 130 countries (excluding the United States) committed to impose stronger environmental regulations on their economies, and to curtail their emissions of greenhouse gasses into the atmosphere (Redclift 2005). The new policies of sustainability emphasized the interdependence of all regions of the world and the need to protect our common resources. Scholars have also pointed out that sustainability and development are conceived and implemented using similar guiding principles. Like development, sustainability is predicated on the correction of particular "abnormalities." In that sense, sustainability reifies the divide between humans and nature, creating the latter as the "problem" upon which intervention is needed (Brosius et al. 1998; Scott 1998; West et al. 2006). The types of interventions required by the "environment" as a pathological object have often been carried out at the expense of human populations who live in "risk areas," reinforcing the idea that real nature is that which exists outside the range of human

activity (Li 2007). These notions have been clear, for example, in the politics surrounding national parks, often referred to as "parks without people" strategies (West et al., 2006), where human populations (particularly indigenous people and peasants) are displaced from their lands because they are perceived as a threat to the environment.

In the Upper Napo region, the effects of these shifts in discourse and policy, and the closely related increased power of NGOs and environmental organizations, marked a stark departure from the previous two decades, in which Kichwa people had been strongly encouraged to shift away from subsistence farming, and to cut down vast swathes of forested areas to be used for intensive agriculture and cattle ranching. Kichwa people in this area soon realized that the new emphasis on sustainability and conservation demanded different strategies and different ways of presenting themselves to be able to navigate the new reality. Some authors have made the point that the new discourses of sustainability and the previous push for industrialized development were based on similar principles. They argue that development and sustainability are both predicated upon the production of systems of knowledge that naturalize Western ideas about human beings and the environment (see, for example, Cronon 1995; Li 2007). In that sense, sustainability and conservation function as tools of governmentality (Foucault 1990; Scott 1998) employed by the state and NGOs to incorporate local individuals and groups into their logic, in order to produce "environmental subjects" (Agrawal, 2005). Indeed, as Kichwa people soon realized, those who successfully "learned" to speak the language of environmentalists and NGOs found it to be a powerful tool to support land claims and to obtain funding for their projects. For example, Erazo (2013) notes that Kichwa people in the Tena-Archidona area started using Western environmental terms such as "biosphere"

and “ecology” in their proposals in the 1990s for conservation projects, which indicated that they were already engaged with Western environmentalism by that time (2013, 141). It also appears that sustainability and conservation issues began to permeate the agendas and discourses of indigenous politicians and indigenous organizations, which, as recently as the early 1980s, were only marginally included in their platforms (2013, 142). Furthermore, it appears that some Kichwa individuals were able to successfully challenge previously issued communal land titles by arguing that the land, if adjudicated to them, would be destined for conservation purposes (2013, 148).

The environmental turn also revived an old colonial myth: the Indian as “noble savage” (see for example, Davidov 2013; Smith 1985). The new iterations of this myth are known as the “ecologically noble savage” (Redford 1990), the indigenous “natural conservationist” (Conklin and Graham 1995) or the “hyperreal Indian” (Ramos 1994), and they presume that “native peoples’ views of nature and ways of using natural resources are consistent with Western conservationist principles” (Conklin and Graham 1995, 696). So, while in the '50s and '60s development experts saw indigenous knowledge as backwards and inefficient, the environmental turn, and the shift to local development, “rediscovered” indigenous knowledge as a redemptive narrative that promised to correct the shortcomings of development towards more “sustainable” alternatives (Agrawal 1995; Escobar 2012). Several authors have pointed out that while this idea has afforded indigenous people some “symbolic capital” (Bourdieu 1984) to fight for land rights and to obtain funds from NGOs and state actors, the essentialist imaginations upon which this idea is founded can become problematic for indigenous

communities when they do not conform to all Western expectations (Cepek 2018; Conklin and Graham 1995; Hutchings 2007; Oakdale 2004).

Critics argue that environmentalists espouse simplistic and overly romantic views of the local and the indigenous. Some argue that in the real world, this dichotomy between the local and the global, between the indigenous and the Western, becomes infinitely more complicated as people and ideas flow in a multiplicity of trajectories that does not conform to the simplistic vertical model proposed by post-development theorists (see, for example, Edelman 1999; Gardner and Lewis 1996). Furthermore, some scholars argue that the essentialized notions of the local and the indigenous proposed by environmentalists offer very limited understandings about how local and indigenous communities actually relate to development, and the contested and historically situated processes by which "indigenous" knowledge is produced and articulated (see, for example, Agrawal 1995).

While the impact of the environmental turn and the post-development era (Escobar 2012) on indigenous populations and on the articulation of contemporary indigeneities has been a subject of intense debate among scholars, there is little doubt that environmental discourses have been a powerful (if problematic) tool often employed by indigenous people for their own purposes. These eco-primitivist myths promoted by the environmental and the New-Age movements also had a gendered dimension. In the Tena area, for example, both Kichwa men and women began to be portrayed as being closer to nature in an almost sacred fashion, but it was Kichwa women who came to be most associated with eco-primitivist ideas about the Mother Earth as nurturing and generous. The production of an essentialized indigenous femininity continues to be present in

contemporary indigenous politics, as well as in several interrelated areas such as ecotourism and indigenous beauty pageants (see, for example, Erazo and Benitez in press; Muratorio 1998). On the other hand, Kichwa men have come to be portrayed as wise and spiritual, and as having a special relationship to the forest and the river as successful hunters and fishermen.

However, in the eco-primitivist fantasies of the environmental and New-Age movements, indigenous masculine identities have been sanitized and stripped of important notions of predation and violence, which Uzendoski (2005) argues are crucial aspects of Kichwa masculine identity production. For example, Davidov (2013) argues that Kichwa men's shamanic powers are usually articulated in positive terms, such as having the power to heal or allowing people to find themselves through the consumption of *ayawaska,* which invisibilize the centrality of violence in shamanic practices (see also Muratorio 1991;  Whitten and Whitten 2008). Indeed, Erazo and Jarrett (2018) have argued that the inclusion in the 1998 and 2008 Ecuadorian Constitutions of  indigenous people's rights to practice their ancestral forms of medicine, provided increased visibility for *yachaks,* but "indigenous political leaders had to make sure that this form of alterity was perceived in a way that would be palatable to their international allies and tourism clients, irrespective of their own attitudes towards shamanic knowledge and practices… [and] pressures increased to present a picture of shamans to the outside world as healers with curing knowledge developed over centuries, not as killers or contributors to intra-community feuds" (2018, 156). These notions have profoundly shaped and informed outside imaginations and expectations of indigenous societies and individuals. Furthermore, the rise of ecotourism in the Upper Napo, which I will discuss in the next

chapter, is a direct consequence of the environmental politics and discourses that emerged during this period.

**Conclusions.**

In this chapter, I have traced that the historical emergence and production of Amazonian Kichwa identities, which I have argued cannot be studied in isolation from centuries of colonial, missionary, and state influence. I divided the chapter into sections which correspond to time periods that marked significant changes in the lives of indigenous people in this area, namely the missionization period between the early 1600s and the late 1800s, the rubber boom in the early 1900s, the push for development and the oil boom in the 1940s, the push for collectivization in the 1960s, and the environmental turn of the 1980s. I showed that the Tena-Archidona region's long history of engagement with colonial authorities and later with the Ecuadorian state, as well as their overwhelming acceptance and practice of Christianity, have resulted in Napo Kichwa being perceived differently in terms of their degree of “civilization” and integration into the state vis-à-vis other Amazonian groups. However, as the ethnographic data suggests, this perception was not unidirectional, and Napo Kichwa people themselves seem to have internalized these colonial tropes to some extent, and used them to produce and enact their identities in opposition to those of neighboring indigenous groups.

I also argued that since the early days of missionization in this area Kichwa men were incorporated and treated by colonial authorities and missionaries in fundamentally different ways than Kichwa women, since authorities generally relied on male labor for numerous activities and usually conferred more authority on indigenous men, partly

based on indigenous kinship structures, and, undoubtedly, partially based on colonial gender hierarchies. This tendency has endured throughout the different historical periods that have shaped lives and livelihoods in this regions, and it has allowed Kichwa men to negotiate their identities and positionalities in ways that are, for the most part, foreclosed to Kichwa women. I showed that labor is heavily gendered within Kichwa communities, and that masculine and feminine identities are produced through gender-specific forms of labor.

Finally, I analyzed how the push for collectivization of the 1960s and 1970s, and the environmental turn of the 1980s, have further transformed the lives of Kichwa people in this area. I particularly focused on the shifting notions of leadership and masculinity brought about by these processes, and I argued that masculine power and prestige began to be seen not so much as the result of the wisdom they had developed over the course of their lives or for their shamanic knowledge, but for their ability to attract funds from NGOs and state agencies. Furthermore, the environmental turn of the 1980s and the increasing presence and influence of international foundations and NGOs had a profound impact on how indigenous Amazonians have since been perceived and imagined in the Western imaginary, but also on how indigenous people themselves have incorporated and performed Western environmental ideas as a way to participate in the global economy and also to secure funding for development projects in their communities. In the next chapter, I discuss how the rise of ecotourism projects in this region in the early 1990s, which was a direct consequence of the environmental politics and discourses that emerged during this period, is further transforming the lives and identities of Kichwa

people, many of whom have gradually shifted from subsistence-based activities to service-based work in ecotourism.

# III. CHAPTER 2: THE ECOTOURISM BOOM AND ITS IMPACT ON KICHWA IDENTITIES AND LIVELIHOODS.

## Introduction.

For Federico Shiguango, that cool morning in 1989 was just like hundreds of other mornings. He woke up, gathered his gold panning equipment, and headed out to the banks of the “Jatun Yaku” (Big river), the main tributary of the Napo river. After hours of hard work under the merciless Amazonian sun, he had been able to collect enough pebbles to make his way back to his house in the Kichwa community of “La Serena,” about 20 miles from Tena, and try to sell them to nearby *colonos* (non-indigenous settlers, mostly from the Ecuadorian highlands). Federico had been panning for gold for several years, a skill he learned while briefly working for a Canadian mining company in the mid-1980s. He told me that while “gold wasn’t worth much then, at least there was a lot of it.” That particular day, he made his way to the *finca* (estate) of a Spanish man by the name of Jesus Uribe, who Federico had heard was interested in buying gold.

Little did Federico know that the fortuitous encounter with Uribe would mark the beginning of a years-long friendship and business partnership. Uribe had been mulling over the idea of starting a tourism business for a long time, and when Federico told him he owned 40 hectares of “virgin” forest next to a beautiful stream within an hour’s walk of “La Serena,” he finally saw the opportunity he had been waiting for. At the time, Tena was seen as the “last stop” before entering the “real” Amazon, and while many tourists regularly passed through Tena, very few spent more than one or two nights. Uribe and

Federico were determined to change that, and that was how, in 1989, "Amarun Kachi Tours" was born, which, according to Federico and others, was the first community tourism project in the Tena area. Uribe provided the funding for the project, and Federico enlisted his family members to build the infrastructure. They built a few small cabins, which in total could accommodate up to 22 tourists. The profits would be evenly split with Uribe, although Federico and his family would do most, if not all, of the work. The system seemed to work for a while: Uribe, who spoke some English, would try to *enganchar* (literally, hook) tourists as they got off the bus at Tena's interprovincial bus station, and Federico and his family would provide lodging, food, and guided tours of the surrounding forest.

As time went by, however, Federico told me he started feeling that the distribution of profits did not make much sense: Uribe received 50% of the profits, but did very little of the work, and Federico had to split the remaining 50% with Eduardo, his father in law, and Jorge, his brother in law, who were also partners at the company. Federico decided to cut ties with "Amarun Kachi" and he began independently bringing tourists to his property, while Eduardo and Jorge continued to work for Uribe. After a period of intense conflict between the two groups, Federico sat down with Eduardo and Jorge and asked them: "why do you have to keep working for him [Uribe]? Why can't we open our own agency?" That day, "Sacha Riksina LLC" was born, a completely Kichwa-owned and -operated tour agency. In the beginning, Federico told me, the work was really hard because Kichwa people in the communities around Tena were not accustomed to dealing with foreigners, and many acted fearful and embarrassed, especially when performing Kichwa "traditional" dances and rituals for the tourists. Starting in the early

1990s, however, the realization by many indigenous communities that tourism generated more earnings than other forms of agricultural and non-agricultural labor (Jarrett 2019), joined by the international push and support for sustainable forms of tourism, particularly in indigenous communities (see Hutchins 2002), resulted in a quick proliferation of community-based tourism projects in the Tena area.

When I began my dissertation fieldwork in 2018, almost thirty years later, the tourism landscape in Tena-Archidona looked much different from Federico's stories from the early 1990s. Dozens of tour agencies and community-based tourism projects, some of them owned and operated by indigenous individuals, had sprung up in the region to accommodate the increasing number of foreign and domestic visitors. Tena was no longer just a "rest stop" on the way to the "real" Amazon, as Federico had described it in our conversation. Tena was now, in the tourism imaginary, part of the real Amazon, although not without contradictions, as I will discuss later in this chapter. Several Kichwa communities depended on tourism revenue as their main source of income, and this shift towards service-based work proved difficult and often ripe with conflict for tourism proponents and opponents alike. It demanded new ways of thinking about their own indigenous identities and practices, and intense processes of negotiation about how to perform Kichwa culture for tourists.

While a detailed discussion of the emergence and development of ecotourism in the Tena area would fall outside the scope of this dissertation, it has been analyzed in depth by several other scholars (see Davidov 2013; Hutchins 2002). In this chapter, I only briefly discuss the local and global processes that promoted this area's shift to ecotourism as their main economic activity since the early 1990s, and the problematic ways in which

ecotourism has been articulated as a sustainable alternative to capitalist development. I argue that Kichwa individuals and communities' increasing participation in ecotourism often reflects what Davidov (2013) calls an intrinsic "paradox:" in order to participate in the modern global economy, many indigenous communities have been pushed to perform commodified versions of their identities and practices to satisfy tourists' quest for a "pre-modern" experience. However, through an engagement with the academic debate about indigenous "authenticity," I also interrogate how indigenous people themselves make sense of and adapt to the demands of the ecotourism industry and how they use ecotourism as a space of transformation and "becoming" (Biehl and Locke 2010).

**Ecotourism as sustainable development.**

Tourism has been a growing industry since the end of World War II, where the world saw an increase in the number of visitors from Europe and the United States to tourist destinations all around the world (Hawkins and Mann 2007). However, this increase may have been partly a result of technological advances in transportation and the consolidation of a large middle-class population in global north countries, rather than the crystallization of active measures to promote the development of the tourism industry at a large scale. Tourism development was not seen as a priority during this period, when the emphasis was placed on the mass-production of goods and the extraction of raw materials. Indeed, it was not until the late 1960s that the World Bank began offering large loans to Third World countries to develop their tourism industries (Hawkins and Mann 2007).

With the decline in the price of raw materials in the early 1970s, however, and the resulting massive debt accrued by poor countries through processes of state-sponsored industrialization, the architects of development promoted regimes of structural adjustment that decentered the role of the state in development projects and called for massive privatization of public assets (Harvey 2005). In this context, tourism was one of the main strategies promoted by institutions like the IMF and the World Bank, given the relatively little investment that it entailed, its potential to return large profits, and the "infinite" availability of the resources needed to sustain it (Lew et al. 2004; Tooman 1997). For example, World Bank loans to Third World countries went from 50 million dollars in 1970 to over 1 billion dollars in 1980 (Tooman 1997). The rise of tourism as a widely prescribed form of development throughout the Third World must also be looked at in close relation to the shift that occurred in the 1970s in the world's capitalist economy, when the rise of financial capital seemed to offer some relief to one of capitalism's main concerns: the expansion of capital into new markets (Ong 1999; Robinson 2014). Several authors have pointed out, however, that while the tourism industry has indeed grown exponentially since the 1970s, it has provided little in terms of benefits to countries in the Third World, since most of the tourism infrastructure is owned by First World multinational corporations, and since structural adjustment practices have "encouraged" countries in the Third World to offer tax breaks to multinational corporations operating in their territory (Mowforth and Munt 1998; Nixon 2015).

As I discussed in Chapter 1, the environmental turn of the 1980s emphasized the need for sustainable forms of development in the Third World, and indexed the disastrous impact of industrialized development on the environment. There was also a recognition

of the negative effects of mass-scale tourism to the host communities, from environmental degradation to discrimination and displacement of local communities (see, for example, Mowforth and Munt 1998). While large-scale tourism continued to grow during this period, it did not receive the same kind of support from international financial institutions. For example, World Bank loans to finance tourism projects were dramatically reduced during the 1980s, and most of the funding for tourism projects came from private organizations that were seeking to invest in individual projects (Tooman 1997). During this period, a new type of tourism emerged, alternately referred to as "sustainable tourism," "small-scale tourism," or "ecotourism," which purported to bring development to host communities without the amount of environmental degradation brought about by large-scale tourism. Sustainable tourism usually referred to small-scale tourism, with minor investments in infrastructure, instead promoting the "landscape" and local and indigenous cultures as the main attractions (Davidov 2013; Hutchins 2002; 2010; Mowforth and Munt 1998). NGOs and many state actors have touted ecotourism as a sustainable alternative to extractivism, emphasizing its potential for sustainable development as well as an opportunity for indigenous communities to enter the cash economy in ways that protected their ancestral lands and promoted their cultural "conservation" (Davidov 2013; Hutchins 2010; Whitehead 2010).

The idea behind the push for ecotourism was to provide local and indigenous communities with a source of employment, in which the main attraction for tourists is "nature" itself. Of course, nature had to be constructed and imagined in particular ways, emphasizing the value of biodiversity and presenting nature as constantly endangered and in need of protection (Cronon 1995). Some authors have also pointed out that while

sustainable tourism has been presented as an alternative to extractivism, whether of fossil fuels or minerals, the idea of sustainable tourism is deeply inscribed in neoliberal practices that "commodify" nature as a site of value (Marx 2013) that is then subjected to particular forms of intervention and management (see, for example, Davidov 2013). Davidov, for example, has argued that,

> Ecotourism in this case can be thought of as an amalgam object—on the one hand, it is a product of neoliberalization of nature and the neoliberal approach to conservation—"saving nature by selling it" and "empowering" impoverished indigenous communities to make money autonomously—on the other hand, as a platform for articulating indigenous environmental subjectivities and ecocosmologies (2013, 39).

However, it is not only nature that needs to be managed in specific ways to attract tourists, but also the identities and practices of indigenous communities who are seen as part of that natural landscape (see, for example, Conklin and Graham 1995; Ramos 1994; Hutchins and Wilson 2010). Hutchins and Wilson (2010) argue that although ecotourism has indeed benefited indigenous communities, "only sparse attention has been directed to what those projects might signify for indigenous peoples or what the political implications of the projects may be for indigenous organizations" (2010, xxvii). Some authors have moved in this direction by analyzing the commodification of the Amazon rainforest, particularly through its branding as a Garden of Eden with dedicated, indigenous caretakers (Conklin and Graham 1995; Redford 1990) and by exploring how tourists' imaginations and expectations about indigeneity have informed and shaped

processes of commodified cultural production and performance of indigenous identities within the ecotourism industry (Davidov 2013; Hodgson 1999; Hutchins 2002; 2010).

Figure 4. A Kichwa tour guide explains the use of traditional medicinal plants. Photo courtesy of Sahily Serradet

In the Ecuadorian Amazon, the rise of ecotourism was the result of several confluent and interrelated factors. First, the aforementioned shift towards conservation-based discourses and policies in the 1980s diverted funds away from other forms of development, such as intensive agriculture or cattle ranching, and towards more "sustainable" alternatives, as I argued in Chapter 1. Some authors also argue that some indigenous people saw ecotourism as a tool to fight off the encroaching oil companies in

the region. Erazo (2013), for example, notes that during her fieldwork in the 1990s, some Kichwa individuals framed their ecotourism projects as a way "to continue to defend the forest so that the petroleum companies do not damage this zone" (2013, 152). Interestingly, she further argues that,

> Although petroleum companies posed no immediate threat [to the Tena-Archidona area], this particular framing indicates that the initiators of the project felt that engaging in conservation-oriented development would help create the ties to powerful international organizations that could help prevent any future problems with extractive industries (2013, 152)

Others have argued that the rise of ecotourism in this area was also closely related to the rise of the indigenous political movement in the 1980s and 1990s, which sought "a reconfiguration of the nation-state as plurinational and pluricultural" (Hutchins 2010, 19). Indeed, Hutchins argues that some of the best known ecotourism projects in the Tena area were born thanks to the financial support of indigenous political organizations. He specifically references RICANCIE, a well-known community tourism cooperative that involved several Kichwa communities in the Tena area and which emerged in the early 1990s "with the guidance and support of the Federación de Organizaciones Indígenas del Napo" (2010, 20), a regional Kichwa political organization.

Hutchins also argues that indigenous people saw ecotourism as a way to participate in the global capitalist  economy, while, at the same time, gaining more control over their territories (see also Davidov 2013; Erazo 2013). However, the shift to ecotourism presented several difficulties, since most Kichwa people did not have much experience in service-based work, and the idea of "selling" their culture was  a novel

concept for many of them. Leaders and ecotourism proponents, thus, took on the mission of showing other Kichwa people that indigenous cultures could be commoditized and exchanged for money. For example, during a meeting of indigenous leaders to discuss the potential benefits of ecotourism for indigenous communities, one leader stated that,

> Indigenous people can't continue giving out their knowledge for free. Culture is worth something because it is different and you can convert it into money that, at the same time, can serve to maintain values and customs (quoted in Hutchins 2010, 20)

The push for ecotourism in indigenous communities also enjoyed the support of the national and local governments, which saw the economic potential of the industry, and of international NGOs and foundations, which saw in it the potential for sustainable development of indigenous communities. For example, in its "Plan Estrategico de Desarrollo" (Strategic Development Plan) for the year 2000, the Municipal Government of Tena outlined as one of its main objectives the need for curricular changes in local schools that emphasized the importance of ecotourism in reasserting indigenous cultural pride and promoting natural conservation. Furthermore, this plan identified the need to rescue local indigenous traditions and customs and to "socialize in the population the elements of cultural identification of the Amazon region in general, and the Tena Canton in particular [and] rescue the millenarian traditions and customs of indigenous peoples in the proposals for creating pedagogic materials" (Hutchins 2010, 15). The ethnographic material I will present in the next section will illuminate the impact of the realization by

authorities and indigenous leaders in Tena that indigenous culture could become a marketable product that had to be managed to accommodate tourists' interests and expectations. I pay particular attention to ideas about cultural preservation and authenticity among Kichwa tour guides and other Kichwa individuals who were involved in ecotourism when I conducted my fieldwork between 2018 and 2019.

**The impact of ecotourism on contemporary landscapes and subjectivities in the Tena area.**

As we rode the local bus that covered the route between Tena and the small tourist town of Misahualli on a rainy February afternoon, I noticed that my friend Urku could barely contain his excitement. I had come to know Urku pretty well over the previous months; he was extremely active in the tour guide community and he was the founder of a youth organization that recruited young urban Kichwa individuals to, in Urku's words, "bring them back to (their) ancestral identity." His excitement on that day, however, was related to an entirely different and much bigger project. He told me an Italian NGO had approved funding to create a new network of community tourism projects called Red TURCON, which stands for Network of Community Tourism in Napo, and that in all likelihood he would be named as its president.

Urku told me he had many ideas that he wanted to implement within the network, which, he claimed, had produced successful results in other community-based tourism projects. He stated that the first order of business for the network was going to be cultural revitalization, which for him meant that they had to get people in the communities to speak Kichwa and wear their traditional outfits all the time, and not just when tourists

visited for cultural presentations. That way, he said, tourists would feel like they are being offered a more authentic indigenous experience. Basically, he thought that people should become what they showed to tourists, so that it would not feel like a mere performance. He also said that some projects had clear rules that he would like to see implemented, which included really drastic punishments for community members who transgressed them. For example, he mentioned expelling community members for public drunkenness or for hunting commercially. When I asked him where those people would go, and where they would live, he just replied: "I don't know." He also said communities need to encourage men not to hunt, because tourists do not like to hear that animals are being killed. When I asked him how those men would procure food or money to buy food if they did not hunt and did not have any other source of income, he replied that what some communities have done is to have those men perform demonstrations of hunting techniques for tourists (making venom for blowgun darts, crafting blowguns, setting up traps, etc.) which would provide them with some income, which they could use to buy food and other supplies.

The conversation with Urku extended into the night, but I found this particular excerpt to be extremely telling of the ways in which the eco-primitivist myths about indigenous Amazonia get reproduced in the contemporary tourism industry in the Ecuadorian Amazon and elsewhere. Indeed, Urku's statements that Kichwa men should refrain from hunting and that they should not drink in front of tourists are consistent with the production of "rational" citizens that operate within the logic of the market, and who are "legible" to the state and other national and transnational actors, and whose indigenous identities have to be managed and sanitized in specific ways to attract foreign

visitors as well as funds from the state and from NGOs (see, for example, Erazo, 2013; Postero, 2017; Valdivia 2005). It is also very telling of the ways in which indigenous actors working within the industry internalize and reproduce that logic, and the new forms of indigenous identities and practices that are being forged and encouraged as more indigenous individuals move into service-based employment.

**Ecotourism and the authenticity debate.**

One of the most salient aspects of community-based tourism in the Ecuadorian Amazon is that it is based on providing visitors with an opportunity to "go back in time" to pre-modern customs and "primitive" forms of social organization, as one European tourist told me. Most tours I participated in during my fieldwork offered similarly organized packages that included, among other things, traditional Kichwa singing and dancing, shamanic demonstrations and forest hikes where visitors learned about Kichwa beliefs and about medicinal plants (see Figure 4). In some cases, tourists were also offered the opportunity to consume *ayawaska*, a hallucinogenic brew widely consumed throughout indigenous Amazonia (mostly during shamanic rituals), which is made from a mixture of the *ayawaska* vine (*Banisteriopsis caapi*) with several other types of leaves and vines. As Davidov (2013) found during her fieldwork in Tena, one of the major preoccupations of tourists witnessing and participating in these performances was the degree of "authenticity" or "contrivance" of particular indigenous cultural demonstrations, and whether the indigenous people in these performances were "real Indians" or acculturated rural people who no longer practiced their ancestral traditions. These contradictions, Davidov argues, "lie in the economy of expectations that structures

ecotourism itself… (although) for Kichwa themselves there is no paradox—ecotourism is yet another form of modernity among the many they have engaged with, and been shaped by" (2013, 21).

However, I think that there are several problems with this assertion. First, unlike most other forms of "modernity" that indigenous people have historically engaged with (i.e. cattle ranching, intensive farming, working for oil companies), participation in tourism requires that they at least appear to reject aspects of modernity that are otherwise central to their identities and their livelihoods in order to satisfy tourists' expectations. Indigenous people working in the tourism industry soon learn to speak the language of NGOs, environmental activists, and indigenous politicians, which as discussed in Chapter 1 tend to portray indigenous people as "natural conservationists" and "guardians of the forest" who reject the vices of modernity and capitalism (Conklin and Graham 1995; Ramos 1994; Redford 1990).

For example, during a tour into Yasuni National Park with a group of Dutch tourists, we visited a Waorani community on the Conanaco river. After dinner, we sat around the fire and had a very interesting chat with Ome, a Waorani man in his late 40s who regularly interacts with tour groups. The tourists were of course delighted to hear Ome talk about defending the forest and the Waorani way of life. They were especially elated when he said that the forest is like a supermarket, where you have everything you can possibly need with no need for money. He stated that Waorani people do not need money and do not want money; they just want to be left alone to continue to live in their ancestral ways. Only a few minutes earlier, however, Ome had asked me to come to Bameno with all my friends for a month to teach him English and to learn Wao-Tededo,

the language spoken by Waorani people. Basically, he was asking me to hire him as a teacher and to bring as many friends as possible, who might also be interested in learning Wao-Tededo. Later, during the performance of a community traditional dance, the Dutch tourists asked if the whole community usually participated in these dances, including children, or if they only did it when tourists visited. Ome and his brother Neme told me that every member of the community could have danced; it was just a matter of money, which he signaled by rubbing his middle finger against his thumb. Evidently, the tourists had only paid $60 for the dance, which could only pay for six dancers (at $10 per person). However, they asked me to translate to the tourists that, out of respect, they did not ask the children to dance since it included almost complete nudity, an answer that seemed to satisfy the tourists. The irony of the situation escaped the Dutch tourists: Ome's statements about wanting to be left alone and his vocal rejection of money were integral parts of his continued engagement with the cash economy.

Figure 5. Tour to Waorani territory in Yasuni National Park, June 2018. Photo courtesy of Ivan Tanguila.

Another problem with Davidov's argument is her assertion that Kichwa people do not see any contradictions in having to perform ancestral, pre-modern forms of identity for tourists as a way to participate in the cash economy. During my fieldwork, many Kichwa men and women, especially those who were starting to engage with tourism,

bemoaned the fact that they had to dance quasi-nude "like Aucas" (referring to Waorani people) for tourists. Indeed, my fieldwork from 2018 to 2019 revealed that such concerns are still present in many of the communities that depend on tourism as their main source of income, after three decades of eco-tourism development in the area. For example, an older Kichwa woman who organizes cultural activities for tourists explained to me how hard it was to convince other women in the community to perform traditional dances for tourists:

> At first, they [other women in the community] did not want to dance, they felt shame and they could not stop laughing and teasing each other. The tourists would notice. Many still do not want to participate, but others have seen that they can make some money from it, so they do it.

Many, in effect, expressed shame about such performances, referring to them as "things of the past." Some also derided tour operators, ran mostly by white/mestizos or foreigners, for forcing their views upon communities participating in tourism, and for lying to tourists about the reality of everyday life in Kichwa communities. As Camilo, one of my tour guide friends, told me in one of our conversations:

> We can't lie [to tourists], and we can't accept impositions, and that's what we are working on, or at least I am. But, as I said, [tour operators] establish certain conditions to say ok, I'll send tourists to your community, but only if you meet those requirements, those parameters, otherwise they say no, I won't send you any tourists. And our people, who really need to have some tourists visit, they go ahead and comply with what they ask.

Figure 6. Tour guide painting an American tourist's face near Tena, June 2018. Photo courtesy of Sahily Serradet.

There is an intense and long-standing debate among scholars about the power that Western imaginations and expectations may have to influence indigenous cultures. In other words: to what extent are performances and articulations of indigenous identities informed and shaped by global circulations of ideas about indigenous peoples? Nowhere is this debate more salient than in the arena of tourism, where the conversation revolves around one main concept: authenticity. I have identified three main theoretical tendencies within the authenticity debate, and I argue that all three currents have been insufficiently

equipped to fully capture the complexities of indigenous people's interactions with indigenous and non-indigenous actors, as well as their complex and often contentious relationships with their own indigeneity. To this end, I use ethnographic accounts of how Kichwa tour guides (and several other individuals who were in some fashion involved in tourism) in and around Tena performed and conceptualized Kichwa culture in (and outside) tourist settings, and I show how their engagement with tourism might be shaping particular ideals of indigenous identity and citizenship.

The first of these approaches, and probably the one that has been recently subjected to the harshest forms of criticism from scholars, is the one that establishes clear distinctions between "hosts" and "guests," sometimes referred to as the "performance turn" (McCannell 1999; Smith 1989). In this approach, the relationship between local indigenous people acting as hosts for generally wealthier and "whiter" guests is one of palpable power imbalance, where indigenous people are forced to perform in accordance to tourists' fantasies and expectations. There are several concepts that are central to this literature. Among them is the term "staged authenticity," in which McCannell (1967), drawing from Goffman's (1959) classic theory about the dramaturgical aspects of what he called "front" and "back" regions of everyday life, argues that what is presented to tourists in the "front" region is usually a commodified product that does not really reflect people's everyday lives. Thus, they assume that cultural performers in tourism settings play a role from which they can easily and consciously extricate themselves once they return to the "back" region. Naturally, if performed authenticity in the "front" region is thought of as being aimed at satisfying guests' quest for alterity, some guests will try to decipher which aspects of a given performance are authentic and which are embellished

or downright invented (Hobsbawm 1986) as attractions for tourists. This is what Bruner (2005, 95) calls the "questioning gaze," in which some tourists doubt or distrust the authenticity of a given performance.

Although this theoretical approach is rather problematic for reasons I will discuss later, it was nevertheless quite useful during my fieldwork in the Ecuadorian Amazon, given that authenticity was a central concern for many of the tourists I interacted with. Many of them would often question me about the "reality" of indigenous communities vis-à-vis their cultural performances in tourism spaces. For example, when I visited an indigenous community on the banks of the Arajuno river about 15 miles from Tena with a group of Dutch tourists, they seemed really disappointed about the cultural activities presented by community members. One of them told me he did not really care for the cultural activity, because it all seemed contrived, and he said he did not believe that these people still practiced these dances or dressed in their traditional outfits in their everyday lives. Another told me that he enjoyed it, saying that while it all seemed "totally fake," at least the community came together and had a good time. A third one said that Kichwa people resent tourism because it is changing their culture. When I asked him if he had heard this from an indigenous person, he said that he had not heard it from anybody, but that it was his general impression. When I asked him if he thought tourism is a negative thing for indigenous communities he responded affirmatively, which I found rather ironic, given that he was a tourist himself. Indeed, a large number of foreign tourists I interviewed believed that tourism is destroying indigenous cultures, but it was always other tourists (not themselves, as they saw themselves as culturally sensitive and environmentally conscious) who were contributing to this destruction.

Furthermore, some foreign tourists seemed to feel entitled to demand from indigenous people that they conformed to their unrealistic expectations. For example, during a cultural performance in a Kichwa community in which I participated as a translator for a male tourist from Austria, he became quite upset to learn that people in this community, as in most Kichwa communities, practiced Christianity. He kept saying over and over, to a point where it became irritating, how disappointed he was that these people were Catholics, saying that he thought they were "traditional Indians." He also asked me why they used metal pots, saying that traditional Indians must use clay pots. During the cultural presentation, which included a "traditional" dance, the women wore their *maki cotonas* (outfits worn during the missionization period but now presented as traditional Kichwa dress) and young girls wore the blue one-piece dresses that many unmarried Kichwa women wear at these types of activities. Once the dance was over, the girls changed back into their regular clothes (shorts and t-shirts). Seeing this, the Austrian tourist approached a young girl who was about 10 or 11 years old, and asked why she had taken off her traditional dress after the dance. The girl looked at him, not knowing what to say, and he insisted, in a scolding tone, that she should always wear her traditional Kichwa outfit rather than Western clothes.

As stated before, this literature has been subjected to extensive criticism from contemporary scholars, who argue that the distinctions between hosts and guests are not always so well defined, and that concepts such as "staged authenticity" are grossly insufficient to understand the complexities of how local peoples, and particularly indigenous people, negotiate their identities in tourism encounters (see, for example, Cepek 2008; Davidov 2013; Li 2000). For example, Lynn Meisch (1995) argues that the

traditional guest/host approach and the implied wealth imbalance implied by it was inadequate to analyze the case of indigenous people from Otavalo, Ecuador, whose success as handicrafts merchants has made them sometimes wealthier than the *gringos* who visit Otavalo. She also challenged the assumption that hosts are rarely guests themselves, stating that "for many (…) visitors to Otavalo their first encounter with Otavaleños is not in Ecuador but in Warsaw, Poland; Madrid, Spain; Cleveland, USA; or Montreal, Canada" (1995, 443). Furthermore, the "staged authenticity" approach ignores the complex ways in which tourism performances impact and shape the identities of the people participating in them. In other words: how and to what extent do local people internalize and reproduce outside expectations and imaginations? This question is particularly relevant when discussing tourism in indigenous communities versus, say, the teenage girl who performs as Cinderella at Disney World. Everyone understands the latter to be performing a role, while many imagine the former to be performing their "real" identities. This approach also does not pay enough attention to the issue of power, and the colonial legacies that often inform the contemporary economies of expectations within the tourism industry.

The questions of outside influence and of power and wealth imbalance lie at the heart of the second approach I have identified within the authenticity debate, one which several scholars have called "antiessentialism" (see, for example, Clifford 1988; Friedman 2000). According to this approach, which is still the dominant trend within anthropology, identities, including indigenous identities, are socially constructed and are never stable or static, but exist in a process of constant transformation and redefinition inextricably linked to broader processes such as international politics, economics,

legacies of colonial histories, etc. Indeed, they argue that there are no "essential" characteristics to any identity. Proponents of this approach, thus, argue that contemporary indigenous identities cannot be disentangled from the political and economic contexts in which they are produced (see, for example, Conklin and Graham 1995; Conklin 1997; Jackson 1991; Ramos 1994; Redford 1990; Rogers 1996).

For example, Conklin and Graham (1995) argue that Western environmentalist movements have recast the old colonial myth of the "noble savage" Indian into a more positive though still highly problematic new light, which presents indigenous people as natural conservationists living in harmony with nature. They argue that "the middle ground of Amazonian eco-politics was founded on the assertion that native peoples' views of nature and ways of using natural resources are consistent with Western conservationist principles" (Conklin and Graham 1995, 696). Indigenous people, in turn, have realized that their indigeneity affords them certain political currency with environmentalists and NGOs and often engage in what Gayatri Spivak called "strategic essentialism" to further their agendas. Several scholars have raised important concerns about the ways in which indigenous peoples throughout the world (but particularly in South America) negotiate their identities, practices, and aspirations amid totalizing views that reduce them to either "bare life" (Agamben 1998), that is, disposable bodies that stand in the way of progress and development, or (equally problematic) to pre-modern cultural alterity that must be studied, classified, packaged and deployed to contest the very logic of capitalism and development. Indeed, Peluso (1993) argues that the myth of the ecological Indian could actually have quite harmful results for indigenous people despite the positive responses from Westerners. She states that,

> Indigenous people now often imitate what the conservationists want to see in them: an *idealized image* of the Indian past. In this regard, the native peoples may not actually practice past customs, but may merely *appear* as if they were doing so. The focus, then, is on the *image* of their cultural past as the likeness of the ecologically noble savage (1993, 6)

Anthropology's search for radical alterity, which indigenous people are presumed to embody, and which may provide insights into alternative ways of being human and of organizing society, rests on no less colonial imaginations than those which discard indigenous views as backward and uncivilized, and its role in the production and reproduction of ideas and imaginations about indigeneity cannot be ignored (see, for example, Bessire 2014). In that sense, the artificial opposition of indigeneity to capitalism and modernity misses important possibilities for truly liberatory discourses and practices by failing to see that, as Tania Li argues, "indigeneity does not stand opposed to capitalism as a prior state on a linear, evolutionary trajectory or as a marker of ineffable otherness. Rather, it stands opposed to capitalism because it coemerged with it" (Li 2007, 410). Still, Li's argument seems to suggest that indigeneity is indeed incompatible with capitalism.

However, recent work in the Ecuadorian Amazon has disputed this notion. For example, Jarrett (2019) rejects the ideas that "capitalist 'penetration' of Amazonian societies is recent and that capitalist market engagement is inherently incompatible with indigenous peoples' life projects at the individual, household, and collective levels" (2019, 31). Instead, he argues that "it is important to understand market engagement

among the Kichwa not solely in terms of necessity, but also in relation to desires that are both culturally particular and common to much of humanity" (2019, 31). Lucas Bessire (2014) argues that in the various classic literatures on indigenous South America, "the values of culture and life were conflated" (2014, 7). In other words, the value of indigenous lives lay in their radical cultural difference vis-à-vis the West. In that sense, indigenous individuals or communities that do not conform to these expectations of radical alterity, be it because they allow oil extraction in their land, or because they convert to Christianity and decide to abandon shamanic rituals, are deemed "contaminated" or "acculturated" (Bessire 2014; Conklin and Graham 1995; Ramos 1994). Conklin and Graham also argue that that while indigenous people have been successful in attracting Western attention to their causes, "(t)he problem is that Indianness and signs of Indianness have a symbolic value that is not intrinsic but bestowed from the outside" (1995, 702).

The critical reactions to antiessentialism constitute the third trend I have identified within the authenticity debate, which some have called the "articulation" approach (see, for example, Cepek 2008; Davidov 2013; Li 2000). Proponents of this approach contend that the antiessentialist position is politically controversial because they "claim that indigenous activists either consciously or unconsciously project images of themselves that neither express nor serve their true interests" (Cepek 2008, 201). Thus, they reject terms such as "strategic essentialism" to describe the processes by which individuals come to identify themselves as indigenous and how indigeneity is deployed in local and global contexts. Rather, they use the term "articulation" (Cepek, 2008; Davidov, 2013;

Li, 2007), in which, according to Michael Cepek (2008), indigenous positionings and environmental collaborative discourses arise organically from indigenous cultures.

From my reading of this literature, the main preoccupation of these authors seems to be the political implications of casting doubt on the genuineness of indigenous identities and indigenous political activism. For example, in a well-known debate between Jonathan Friedman and Mark Rogers (Friedman 1996; Rogers 1996), Friedman denounced antiessentialists as “debunkers” who have engaged in a “concerted effort to falsify the genuineness” of indigenous identities (Friedman 1996, 201-202). Interestingly, many of these authors seem to suggest that there are indeed essential qualities to indigenous identities, even when they would contradictorily agree with the basic anthropological tenant that identities are socially constructed. In my opinion, proponents of “articulation” are often guilty of the same fault of which they accuse antiessentialists, namely of denying indigenous individuals of full agency, which necessarily has to include the agency to engage in strategic essentialism or even outright deceit. The portrayal of indigenous cultures as well-defined, organically constituted units, whose individual members are incapable of acting in self-interest, ironically reproduces the very colonial imaginations that antiessentialist authors critique. However, I partially agree with some of the criticisms of the antiessentialist approach regarding their overestimation of the power that these global discourses actually have on locally situated productions of indigenous identities and their generalizations about the ways in which indigenous people deploy their indigeneity in locally situated contexts (see, for example, Li 2007). In other words, the myth of the ecologically noble savage, while undoubtedly powerful in the global imaginary, does not carry the same meaning and weight in every local context.

Also, the ascription of externally oriented interests to the production of contemporary indigenous identities runs the risk of presenting indigenous people as agency-lacking cogs in the Western environmentalist machine or merely opportunists who consciously deceive well-meaning actors for financial gain.

The position of the "articulation" proponents is understandable, though, and they have good reasons to resist any portrayal of indigenous people that could be cast in a negative light. After all, the political risk of even appearing to suggest that indigenous activists might be engaging in some sort of deception is one that could result in horrible consequences for indigenous people. For example, as Cepek (2008) suggests, if the Cofán people of Eastern Ecuador do not have any essential connection to their territory, then why should the government respect its integrity and its rightful ownership by the Cofán nation? This question was particularly relevant in the context in which Cepek was writing his piece, given that the new Ecuadorian Constitution was being debated at the time, and an important section of it was devoted to state policies concerning indigenous peoples and indigenous territories. However, while politically justifiable, the position of these authors is, in my opinion, theoretically contradictory and omits a large body of ethnographic evidence that directly contradicts their arguments.

In sum, I think that much of the academic debate about indigenous authenticity is ultimately misguided, as it revolves around the quest for, or negation of, essential qualities to indigenous identities, but does not do enough to interrogate indigeneity itself as a product of ever-changing historical forces. I propose an alternative way of thinking about the production and performance of indigenous identities, one that recognizes the

power of global and local forces acting upon indigenous individuals but also accounts for the complex and innovative ways in which indigenous individuals make sense of their own indigeneity to find their place in the ever-changing global context. I argue that ecotourism has been and continues to be a profoundly transformative space for indigenous people, as they are constantly confronted with their own indigeneity and are evaluated on the "correctness" of their ethnic performances by usually more powerful outsiders. However, if we think about indigenous identities and performances merely as being dictated from the outside, or, conversely, as being the product of ancestral and essential indigenous identities finding new expressions in the modern world, we run the risk of missing the bigger picture. Graham and Penny (2014), for example, building on Judith Butler's concept of "performativity" (1990) have argued that individuals "achieve, accomplish, and even improvise Indigeneity through performance and performative acts" (2014, 4). While "performativity" is indeed a useful concept to understand how indigenous identities are produced and enacted, it still does not fully address the forces and desires that drive those performances and the ways in which individuals relate to them.

The more recent body of literature on the "anthropology of becoming" (Biehl and Locke 2010; 2017) may offer an alternative way to think about ecotourism and the performance and transformation of indigenous identities within it. In an upcoming co-written piece (Erazo and Benitez in press.), for example, we have argued that indigenous beauty pageants in the Ecuadorian Amazon may be better understood as spaces of "becoming," rather than merely analyzing them as spaces where pageant organizers

inscribe their agendas onto the contestants, or, conversely, as spaces strategically used by contestants to achieve well-defined objectives (like launching a political career, for example). Similarly, I argue that ecotourism cannot be reduced to a space where indigenous people merely reproduce outsiders' expectations, nor can it be only viewed as a space where indigenous agents reaffirm and celebrate their identities. Instead, as Biehl and Locke (2017) have argued, it is important to look at "the human subject as always under construction," and to acknowledge "how power and knowledge form bodies, identities, and meanings, and how inequalities disfigure living, while refusing to reduce people to the workings of such forces" (2017, 5). Thus, while ecotourism certainly promotes the sanitation of folklorization of indigenous identities, it also provides unique opportunities for indigenous people to contest pervasive anti-indigenous stereotypes. In other words, by performing and embodying aspects of their indigeneity that are celebrated and almost revered by (mostly white and thus perceived as more powerful) outsiders, many indigenous people working in ecotourism feel that, for the first time, their indigeneity is not a disadvantage but an asset, even if one that is mostly circumscribed to ecotourism spaces and to the arena of indigenous politics. After centuries of marginalization and of being perceived as uncivilized and irrational, they feel proud that their culture (however folklorized and sanitized) is being valued and appreciated. It feels good to be treated like human beings whose lives matter for a change. They feel that they have "become" something other than the poor, backwards indigenous peasants that most of Ecuadorian society perceives them to be. As one of my tour guide friends told me,

> (…) before, during fiestas de Tena [celebrations for Tena's foundation anniversary], there were always really nasty fights between Kichwas and mestizos because they [mestizos] did not want us to participate in the fiestas. They would yell racial slurs at us, and they would beat up Kichwas, so we would always walk in large groups and we would defend ourselves if mestizos provoked us. That was like 20 years ago; now is different. Now we are important, and tourists come to see us, not them, so they know they have to respect us because their businesses depend on us.

As it becomes clear in this example, something that is often missed in academic discussions about "authenticity" is how indigenous people deploy the still very limited social and political currency that their indigeneity affords them to challenge anti-indigenous dynamics at the local level, and how, in the process, they strive to "become" more desired and appreciated versions of themselves. These notions will become clearer in my discussion of urban Kichwa tour guides in Chapter 4.

**The authenticity debate from the perspectives of Kichwa people.**

The authenticity debate is not something that only happens among scholars and academics.  It also happens locally. However, the local debate has been deeply influenced by outside articulations of authenticity and by the increasing marketability of indigenous "traditional" knowledge and practices. In fact, I argue that the very existence of and the need for current debates about indigenous authenticity among Kichwa people themselves are the product of long and complex processes of Kichwa engagement and struggle with

global capitalism, the Ecuadorian State, and indigenous local and national politics. In other words, the authenticity debate among Kichwa people (and indigenous people in general) is inextricably linked to the increasing political currency afforded to indigeneity in the global arena and the economic and cultural opportunities that result from it. Ecotourism is, of course, one such opportunity, but, as discussed earlier in this chapter, it is one in which indigenous identities and practices are identified, packaged, and commodified in particular ways to meet the demands of the market for "radical alterity." While several scholars have discussed how repackaged and commodified notions of indigeneity are produced in government ministries, travel agencies, mass-media, and NGO projects (see Davidov 2013; Hutchins 2002; 2010), in this chapter I have explored how indigenous people themselves make sense of these processes, as well as their active role in producing, reproducing and contesting those identities.

During my fieldwork in Tena I noticed the often externally oriented processes of Kichwa identity production within the tourism industry, where the main driver for culture revitalization projects was the idea that certain aspects (however folklorized and sanitized) of Kichwa culture could be performed for outsiders as an economic opportunity. For example, Urku, whom I mentioned earlier in this chapter, was heavily involved in cultural revitalization projects and created an organization of young Kichwa people whose slogan was "de regreso a nuestra identidad" (back to our identity). He tried to recruit urban Kichwa youth who did not want anything to do with Kichwa culture and customs and who refused to speak Kichwa. He told me that these young people were only interested in Western goods and culture, and so he tried to make them reconnect with Kichwa music, dance, food and other aspects of their culture, which he said they should

not lose. When I asked him what is the incentive for them (and for himself) in "rescuing" those traditions, he told me that he tries to make them see that if they learn Kichwa songs and dances, and that if they embrace their Kichwa identity, they can get a job in tourism, or they can get hired as a group to perform Kichwa dances and music abroad. Similarly, when I asked Roberto, a 42-year-old tour guide about the importance of cultural revitalization in the communities, he replied that rescuing Kichwa traditions was extremely important because many communities depend on tourism as their main source of income, and if they lose their customs and traditions, what will be left for tourists to see?

Indeed, for many individuals working in tourism in and around Tena, the measures of authenticity and cultural preservation were usually directly related to the revitalization and performance of traditions and practices that were considered attractive by tourists. The strong association of cultural authenticity with the most "folklorized" (Rogers 1998) aspects of Kichwa identity resulted in continuous complaints of cultural loss in Kichwa communities by tour guides and others working in tourism. In most of my interviews, I noticed that tour guides often saw themselves as agents of change and of cultural preservation, whose mission was to rescue  quickly vanishing Kichwa traditions and practices in rural Kichwa communities. As one veteran Kichwa tour guide told me,

> When foreigners come here, they want to see a community that is "*antigua mismo*" (roughly, authentically ancient), with traditional dress, language, food, etc. Nowadays, young people don't want to live in the forest, the complain about the mosquitos, they are too used to having electricity, things like that. I always tell them to value their culture.  Some communities are losing their culture; although

> there's maybe 5 or 10% of people in the community who work in tourism and they might preserve it (Kichwa culture) a little.

As evidenced in this conversation, there were also some concerns on the part of many urban Kichwa working in tourism about the importance of preserving a visual and aesthetic differentiation between Kichwa people and non-indigenous urban and rural dwellers. Otherwise, many told me, they feared that tourists might lose interest in the communities around Tena and decide to venture deeper into the Amazon to see more "authentic Indians" like the neighboring Waorani. To be sure, this is something that is already happening (and has been for some time), as tour operators and travel agencies often advertise their tours to Waorani territory as opportunities to come into contact with the "real Indians," contrasting them to the more "acculturated" Kichwa (see, for example, Davidov 2013).

For many of my informants, the measures of indigenous authenticity were also directly linked to attracting funds from international NGOs, and many complained that most of the surrounding towns and communities had failed to successfully create the brand of cultural authenticity and indigenous resistance that most NGOs sought to fund. As Rumi, a former tour guide who had been involved in regional indigenous politics, told me,

> Imagine that an NGO wants to fund a "*proyecto*" (project) in a Kichwa community. Do you think they're going to select the town of Archidona, even though most people in Archidona are Kichwa? No, of course not. They're going to look for communities like Sarayaku, because Sarayaku not only defends and

> preserves Kichwa culture but they also have a political agenda to fight against oil. They defend nature, biodiversity, [which are] things that NGOs are looking for.

I should point out that some NGOs do fund projects in towns like Archidona or Tena, but Rumi's statement illuminated the anxieties of many of my informants, particularly those involved in tourism: the more authentic and distinct a community appeared to be, the easier it would be for NGOs to justify investing in them. Interestingly, some tour guides pointed to tourism, and not to ancestral Kichwa knowledge, as the main source for their ideas about environmental conservation. As Urku told me,

> For me, I have learned about this [environmentalism] through my work in ecotourism. The idea behind ecotourism is that you have to protect your environment so that communities can access a source of income. At the beginning, (indigenous) people were not really "*socializados*" (literally, socialized, meaning they did not have the knowledge) about how they had to work, but little by little they started learning. Now we know that if we want visitors to come and provide a source of income, we need to "*no hacer la caceria*" (not hunt), and not cut down trees for agriculture… Instead, we need to protect, we need conservation.

However, not all tour guides saw ecotourism as the best avenue to promote and protect Kichwa culture. Or, at least, they saw the existing system as being terribly flawed, only favoring the interests of tour operators, most of which were run by non-indigenous people. When I asked Atarina, a Kichwa woman who runs a small ecotourism lodge on

her property near Tena, about the effects of tourism in Kichwa communities, she replied that,

> At first sight, you would think that Kichwa culture is being celebrated and preserved, but for many of these people it's just a show. I don't blame them; that's how tour operators sell the Amazon: an indigenous woman in a seed dress, a parrot, a monkey… so tourists come wanting to see that. We need to resist tour operators and their demands. We can't lie about who we are. I mean, if people want to perform a demonstration and say look, this is how our ancestors used to live, that's fine, but we can't say this is how we live now.

By the same token, many acknowledged the advantages that communities involved in tourism held over those that were not. As my friend Camilo put it,

> Communities involved in tourism are too dependent on tour operators and NGOs, but they also have more resources to defend themselves than those communities who are living outside tourism. They have more freedom to be themselves, but they lack the resources that tourism brings. They are in their own world, *"naturalmente"* (in their natural state).

Indeed, for many rural Kichwa who were not involved (or only tangentially involved) in tourism, tour guides' statements that they were losing their culture and their identity did not make much sense. Most of the rural Kichwa individuals I interviewed found it rather amusing that urban tour guides, who in their opinion lived and acted more like mestizos, saw themselves in a position to lecture their rural counterparts on the "proper" ways of being Kichwa. To be sure, I am not suggesting that the authenticity

debate was meaningless to rural Kichwa. As the ecotourism industry developed in this area, indigenous people, urban and rural alike, soon became familiarized with the types of indigenous identities and practices that ecotourism promoted. Furthermore, with the rise of indigenous politics, identity-based rights and increasing government programs and policies specifically targeting indigenous communities, most indigenous individuals in the Amazon and throughout Ecuador have frequently been in the position to confront their own indigeneity and to consider the political, social and personal implications of being identified and self-identifying as indigenous. What I am suggesting is that for rural Kichwa outside the tourism industry, the authenticity debate looked slightly different and carried different implications than it did for my tour guide friends and others working in tourism.

For example, the preoccupation expressed by many tour guides about the need for promoting the use of Kichwa "traditional" outfits in the communities did not appear to be a major concern among rural Kichwa. Most of the rural individuals I spoke with thought of those outfits as "things of the past;" some Kichwa elders still remembered their parents wearing them during the times of missionization. Furthermore, many of my rural informants associated outfits like the popular seed and fiber dresses that many indigenous women wear in tourism settings and indigenous beauty pageants with modernity rather than with Kichwa tradition, as they understood them to be invented traditions popularized as the result of tourism development in the region (see, for example, Erazo and Benitez in press). Similarly, most of my rural informants did not seem the least bit worried about the increasing influx of Western goods and amenities into the communities; they thought of it as progress that would improve their lives and

the lives of their children. The statement referenced earlier in this section, for example, in which a veteran tour guide lamented that rural people in the communities were too used to having electricity, left many of my interviewees rather confused and also a bit amused. As one rural interviewee told me, "these guys [urban tour guides] don't really know how to live in the forest anymore. You take away their TVs and their cellphones and they'll go crazy." The important topics of discussion in the authenticity and cultural survival debate for many of my rural informants, thus, were related to things that were important for their livelihoods and for their moral understandings of propriety and reciprocity, such as having access to land and game, ensuring that the younger generations maintain and honor their obligations to their *ayllu*, and keeping their young away from what they view as moral flaws in mainstream Ecuadorian society (promiscuity and infidelity being two prominent ones), rather than to the more superficial expressions and markers of Kichwa identity that seemed to concern many urban tour guides, as I will further show in Chapter 4.

**Conclusions.**

In this chapter, I briefly discussed the global and local forces that promoted and realized the ecotourism boom of the 1990s in Ecuador's Upper Amazon region. I discussed how the emergence and rise of ecotourism impacted the livelihoods and identities of indigenous Kichwa people in this area, many of whom have moved into service-based work and increasingly depend on ecotourism as their main source of income. I also addressed the long-standing academic debate surrounding indigenous authenticity, and I showed that while all sides of the debate contribute important ideas for understanding the global and local forces acting upon indigenous people and how

indigenous people negotiate and adapt to those forces, they ultimately miss the bigger picture by focusing on the quest for, or negation of, essential qualities to indigenous identities. They therefore do not go far enough in interrogating indigeneity itself as a product of ever-changing historical forces. Thus, I used the recent body of literature on the "anthropology of becoming" to propose an alternative way to look at ecotourism spaces and the indigenous identities that are produced and performed within them. I argued that while ecotourism promotes the sanitation of folklorization of indigenous identities, it also provides unique opportunities for indigenous people to contest pervasive anti-indigenous stereotypes. In that sense, it allows indigenous people to perform and effectively "become" more appreciated and respected versions of themselves, ones that are perceived (even if mostly by white outsiders) as powerful, wise, and special, rather than as the poor, backwards indigenous peasants most of Ecuadorian society perceives them to be.

# IV. CHAPTER 3: EDENI-SEXUAL FANTASIES WITHIN AMAZONIAN ECOTOURISM

## Introduction

When I met Laura back in the fall of 2018, she and her friend Susanne, both French, had just arrived in Tena from the nearby tourist town of Baños. They were ecstatic about finally being able to see the Amazon, since they told me that unfortunately the rainforest was on its way to being completely destroyed by human beings. Laura told me that visiting the Amazon rainforest had been one of her dreams for a very long time, and that it was a privilege to finally be able to make that dream a reality. She referred to the Amazon as a magical place in which you could find the world's greatest remedies and the most incredible animals and plants, including "the most beautiful butterflies." They booked a two-day tour at the tour agency where I volunteered as a translator and, as they did not speak Spanish, I was asked to accompany them on the tour, which was led by my friend Jimmy.

During the course of two days, we visited several tourist attractions near Tena, witnessed demonstrations of Kichwa traditional dances, and slept in a rustic cabin in a nearby Kichwa community, which was owned by an older Kichwa man who regularly hosted foreign volunteers. During the course of those two days, Laura and Susanne did not have many interactions with Kichwa individuals with the exception of Jimmy and, to a much lesser extent, the older man who owned the cabin where we spent the night. However, Laura told me she was fascinated by how different Kichwa men were from men back in France. In her own words,

> When I met the Kichwa men, I had a really good impression. They are respectful and kind. In my point of view, I think the Kichwa men are different that the men in my country, France. Compared to the men of my country, the Kichwa have a strong connection with the environment around them; the pillars of Kichwa culture are the relationship to the land and solidarity. For them each tree, flower, has a utility and so they will deepen [*sic*] it. While the culture of men in my country is more focused on individualism, everyone thinks about their [own] well-being. They also do not pay attention to what surrounds them, their environment is different.

It was quite evident to me that Laura could not have based these ideas on her two-day experience in the Tena area alone, especially since she did not really interact with any Kichwa men other than Jimmy. Instead, Laura's statements were in all likelihood informed by some preconceived ideas about indigenous cultures and indigenous individuals that permeate the "mediascape" (Appadurai 1996) of Amazonia-related narratives. She came to the Amazon looking for radical alterity, and her limited and superficial experiences with indigenous individuals during her tourism experience were not going to stand in the way of her claiming that she had found it. Furthermore, Laura's depiction of the Amazon rainforest reflected some of the most common ideas that permeate Western discourses and representations of Amazonia, from its biodiverse rainforests, piranha-filled rivers, to its exotic indigenous inhabitants.

In the previous chapters, I discussed how the environmental turn and the rediscovery of indigenous knowledge as an alternative to capitalist development impacted

the lives of indigenous people throughout indigenous Amazonia, particularly as they moved towards service-based work in the ecotourism industry. In this chapter, I discuss how those globally circulating discourses about the Amazon rainforest and its indigenous inhabitants translated into specific ideas and expectations during the tourism experiences of foreign visitors in and around Tena, and the ways in which the Amazonian landscape was often described in often overtly sensual and sexual terms. Furthermore, I argue that these romantic representations of the Amazon often resulted in a much less explored phenomenon within the Amazonian literature: the sexualization and eroticization of indigenous (particularly male) bodies, which were often portrayed and perceived as an integral , and thus natural, part of that landscape. I therefore introduce the term "Edeni-sexual" tourism encounters to describe the various ways in which Amazonian tourism experiences and ideas often mirrored biblical representations of the Garden of Eden, and how these ideas often fueled foreign female tourists' sexual attraction for Kichwa men, specifically young tour guides. However, I also argue that while these romantic representations of the Amazon and of indigenous people are certainly part of the allure that drives thousands of foreign (and, to a lesser extent, domestic) tourists to the area every year, these myths often hold quite disparate meanings for individual visitors, and produce a diverse and sometimes contradictory array of interests and expectations. In my discussion, I use data collected during some of my interviews with foreign tourists in Tena, as well as fieldnotes taken while participating in numerous tours during my year-long fieldwork.

**Perceived purity of the Amazonian landscape and of indigenous bodies.**

*Nature as (a welcome) absence of civilization*

One of the most common expectations among foreign visitors in Tena was that the Amazon rainforest, as a site of "wild" nature, was where (presumably Western) civilization was not. In other words, an "authentic" Amazonian experience was one in which the traveler found themselves far away from urban centers, and, thus, away from any sign of modern infrastructure. As one American female tourist told me via email a few weeks after she returned to the United States:

> I expected to find myself deep in nature isolated from civilization, and that expectation was met when I left the center of Tena and took a guided tour of the jungle. Once in the jungle, I expected to encounter wild and dangerous animals, including snakes, everywhere.

As a participant in the specific tour referenced by this tourist, I found her comments to be quite interesting for several reasons. First, the "jungle" mentioned by this traveler was a patch of secondary growth forest within a Kichwa community, a mere five miles from Tena. Even more interesting, however, was the fact that the presence of houses and of the indigenous people who lived in them within this "jungle," did not seem to affect this tourist's perception that she was "isolated from civilization." Evidently, her separation of nature and civilization was one in which indigenous people were perceived as part of the former, and apart from the latter. Some scholars have argued that even the very idea of a "pristine" forest is not borne out by the overwhelming evidence that points

to a historical human manipulation and intentional production of what in the popular imaginary is thought of as an untouched (by humans) Amazonian rainforest (for a detailed discussion see Balée 2013). However, the apparent contradiction between an untouched and pristine forest and the idea of an "anthropogenic forest" put forward by Balée and others, was not one with much relevance in the eco-primitive imaginations of most Amazonian visitors. In other words, many viewed indigenous interactions with the forest as environmentally conscious and sustainable, which resulted in a symbiotic and almost sacred balance. Thus, indigenous manipulations of and interactions with the rainforest did not affect, but often rather reinforced, its perception as "pristine" and "untouched." Indeed, many of the foreign tourists I interviewed and interacted within Tena portrayed the rainforest as being in continuous danger from destruction by humans, but this category of (destructive) humans rarely included indigenous people. As a French female tourist told me while discussing her long held interest in visiting the Amazon,

> I wanted to see this huge rainforest, discover the different species of plants, trees, flowers, animals, but I also may have the opportunity to **meet people living in this forest before the human being destroys everything, sadly** (my emphasis)**.**

According to several foreign tourists I interviewed in the Tena area, mass media played an important role in shaping their expectations prior to arriving in the Ecuadorian Amazon, and they acted rather surprised (and occasionally upset) when those expectations were not met. Sometimes, I wondered if any of them realized the irony of the situation, like in the case of one foreign female tourist , who, while enjoying a glass

of iced tea in a foreign-owned coffee shop in the center of town, which offered a high-speed internet Wi-Fi connection, told me,

> With the Amazon, I just thought of green, so much green, so much greenery, trees, vines. I associated it with the things I saw on Nat Geo, so more than anything like plants and animals but not people, you know I didn't really think about a city here, I didn't think about people who lived there and cultures that are there. I mean, I kind of thought of like tribes because it's stuff you see on Nat Geo as well, but I didn't… it was mainly green, plants, animals and a sense of disconnected, not being connected to society really, including the tribes not connected to society.

A seemingly contradictory perception of the Amazon among some foreign visitors, however, was that, despite the articulation of the rainforest as a site of "wild" nature and lack of civilization, it was also perceived as an uncontaminated, pure landscape, free from the diseases that are so prevalent in urban centers. This was especially true in the case of visitors whose view of and interest in the Amazon were mainly informed by New Age and eco-primitivist ideas, in which the "natural" remedies found in the forest were portrayed as effective alternative sources of treatment for most health ailments. As Davidov (2013) points out in her research about ecotourism in Tena,

> a certain subset of tourists was generally willing to rub on or ingest herbal mixtures that were offered by guides and/or shamans in cases of an acquired scratch, insect bite, rash, and even gastrointestinal distress, even though the same

> tourists were, as a rule, hyperconscious of possible illness and bacteria in the urban areas like Quito and Guayaquil (2013, 167).

Indeed, during a tour with a couple from the United States, I was able to witness such behavior as we were getting ready to enter a waterfall. An older Kichwa man from the community we were visiting told the tourists he had to perform a ritual cleansing to prevent any of the bad energies of the river from entering their bodies and making them sick. He pulled out a bottle which contained "*veinticinco,"* a type of moonshine liquor very popular among Kichwa people due to its very low cost. The bottle also contained two dead scorpions, which the Kichwa man claimed had medicinal properties. He proceeded to take small sips from the bottle and subsequently spat out the liquor all over the tourists' faces. They looked startled and uncomfortable, but neither refused the ritual. Later, the female tourist, who was a close acquaintance of mine from Miami, came up to me and confessed that she could not believe she was able to get through that experience with a straight face:

> I don't know if you knew this about me, but I am an extreme germophobe and also a little bit of a hypochondriac (laughter). It was definitely a new experience for me, but I guess this is the Amazon, right? In any other context, I would have definitely refused being spat on my face (laughter).

For this same subset of tourists, the purity and the healing powers of the Amazon rainforest often extended to indigenous people, as they were perceived to harmonically coexist with the natural landscape and to wisely and sustainably use its resources. Several tourists mentioned indigenous people's use of medicinal plants and natural remedies,

their “organic” diet and their closeness to nature as the main reasons why indigenous people were, as a general rule, healthier than Westerners. While these overly romantic views of indigenous people’s lifestyles did not necessarily correspond to the realities of every-day life in indigenous communities (indigenous people’s increasing reliance on processed foods and Western pharmaceuticals, for example), these statements nevertheless reflect a prevalent association between indigenous practices and the “purity” of indigenous bodies.

This association also clearly manifested itself during intimate encounters between foreign women and Kichwa men. For example, many of my tour guide informants told me that some of their foreign lovers never demanded that they used a condom during intercourse (they also stated their own preference for not using condoms, which they perceived as diminishing sexual pleasure). This may be attributed to the perception by many foreigners that indigenous people are free of disease, in part due to their perceived isolation from the “modern” world. In fact, as Domingo, a veteran tour guide who claimed to have “hooked up” with dozens of foreign women, told me when I asked him his opinion about the motivations of foreign women who established intimate relationships with Kichwa men,

> They say that (they are attracted to indigenous men because) we are still belong to a pure race, that we are not mixed like mestizos are, that we are almost free of any diseases, and that we don’t consume drugs.

Lynn Meisch (1995) found similar ideas and behaviors during her research about foreign women/indigenous men in the Andean market town of Otavalo in northern

Ecuador. She argued that many foreign women did not think it was necessary to demand condom use from their Kichwa partners:

> Many gringas, who should know better, seem to be ignoring the risk. One reason might have to do with the myth of timelessness that pervades so much thinking about Otavalo. If the inhabitants of the indigenous "villages" are living in a pre-industrial utopia, then by this reasoning they are also living in the pre-AIDS past (1995, 460).

To be sure, the fantasy about purity and freedom from disease often went both ways, although for seemingly different reasons. Many Kichwa tour guides told me they did not deem it necessary to use a condom when having intercourse with some foreign women because they were able to tell whether a woman carried any type of sexually transmitted disease (STD) based on their looks. So, while foreign women may have perceived Kichwa men as disease-free based on fantasies about the purity of indigenous people, Kichwa men perceived the whiteness and relative wealth of foreign women as a marker of a "clean" life, thus shielding them from disease. This phenomenon has been documented in other tourism settings such as the Caribbean, where Herold at al. (2001), for example, have argued that,

> Indeed, because they (Caribbean men who engage in sexual encounters with foreign women) feel so confident that they can judge whether a woman has an AIDS or STD infection by her appearance alone, many believe it is not necessary for them to use a condom (2001, 989).

As I will argue in the following pages, however, these pervasive notions about the purity of indigenous bodies often extended beyond the corporeal to include a host of moral and spiritual qualities.

**Return to Eden: Edeni-sexual fantasies and encounters.**

Tourism destinations are usually imagined and experienced as liminal spaces in which travelers feel free from the usual constraints of daily life in their home countries or cities (in the case of domestic tourists) and from regular social norms (see, for example, Ryan and Hall 2001; Smith 1989; Weichselbaumer 2012). It has also been documented that this liminality is often experienced in the form of perceived sexual freedom, which prompts some travelers to engage in sexual behaviors that deviate from their usual behaviors in their home countries (see, for example, Herold et al. 2001; Frohlick 2007; Kempadoo 1999). However, this perceived sexual freedom is inextricably linked to the imagination of particular landscapes as more or less sexualized and erotized. For example, the Caribbean is often considered one of the most erotized landscapes in the world, with tour operators selling paradisiac images of "pristine" white sand beaches with hyper-sexualized black bodies at the traveler's disposal (see, for example, Nixon 2015). As Mimi Sheller (2004) has argued,

> The 'naturalization' of the social and economic inequalities of the contemporary tourist economy occurs through three steps: the objectification of Caribbean people as part of the natural landscape; the equation of that landscape (and hence those who people it) with sexuality and corruption; and finally, the marketing of

> the Caribbean via imagined geographies of tropical enticement and sexual availability (2004, 17).

Not all tourism spaces are imagined and sexualized in the same way, however. While Caribbean locations, for example, are sold as hyper-sexual spaces with endless opportunities for sexual "rule breaking" (Sheller 2004, 18), other locations are sexualized through their portrayal as "sacred" spaces, where religious spirituality and deep connections to nature allow the traveler to enact pre-modern forms of sexualized gender roles. As Jacobs (2010) argues about the production of Egypt as a particular tourism landscape within Western discourse,

> The marketing of holidays to countries like Egypt in contemporary Western society not only draws upon these romantic and nostalgic images, it reinscribes and reinforces them, encouraging tourists to turn them into tourist practice. The emphasis on intrepid Orientalist archaeological travellers (both male and female), costume and overt sensuality (the veil, the harem *and* the robes of Bedouin/Arab masculinity) and the (potential) freedom of the desert, are not just used to sell the destination, they also produce it (2010, 64).

The Amazon mostly falls under the latter category of tourist destinations. The portrayal of the Amazon and of Amazonian people as pure, uncontaminated and innocent, has prompted several scholars to point out the parallels between prevalent discursive imagery about Amazonia and biblical narratives about the garden of Eden (see, for example, Hutchins and Wilson 2010; Salazar 2010; Slater 1996; 1999; 2002). These Edenic narratives, as I will show in the pages to follow, were some of the more powerful

forces that drove tourists' imaginations and expectations of indigenous individuals and communities during my fieldwork in the Tena area, and had important implications in the production of sexualized landscapes and bodies within tourism experiences. Candace Slater (1996), for example, has argued that many of the Western representations of the Amazon,

> (…) may imply hopes for the rediscovery of paradise (the recovery, for instance, of an original state of innocence and plenty through a return to nature). They also may focus on the construction of a new Eden through the alliance of nature with technology or the radical replacement of the first by the second (1996, 116).

The narrative of an Edenic Amazon with dedicated indigenous caretakers was certainly often reproduced by many foreign visitors in and around Tena. Indigenous people were usually imagined as living simple (yet pure) lives, living off the bountiful forest around them, and rejecting the vices of the modern world, including money and Western clothes. The parallels between these portrayals of Amazonian lifestyles and the story of Eden are not hard to see. Adam and Eve also lived pure, innocent lives. They did not wear clothes and they lived off the generous bounty that God provided for them through the garden of Eden. Furthermore, they lived free of sin, which was embodied by the fruit from the Tree of Knowledge. In the Amazonian narrative, sin is mainly embodied by what Westerners perceive as the vices of capitalism and modernity in general. As one American female tourist told me of her expectations before arriving in the Amazon,

> I definitely expected less Western clothing and modernization. I still imagined people to be living in the forest with no electricity and living off the land. I also thought the way people lived would be more uniform.

The Edenic narrative is also present in the advertisement strategies of many Amazonian tour operators (see Figure 7). In that sense, visiting the Amazon is not just advertised as an opportunity to experience the rainforest and the "traditional" indigenous cultures that thrive in it, but also as an opportunity to achieve spiritual transcendence by shedding the burdens of modern life and connecting with the purest forms of life, embodied by the rainforest and indigenous peoples. For example, the website of Yachana Lodge, a tourist lodge on the banks of the Napo river founded by Douglas McMeekin, an American, in 1995, featured (until quite recently) a blog section where tourists were encouraged to visit the lodge for spiritual growth. As one of the blog entries read,

> One way in which nature can restore spirituality is by leaving us feeling connected to something greater. It is almost impossible to comprehend the power of a mountainous volcano or enormous river such as the Napo. (…) The power of Mother Earth, not to mention the universe, is incredibly humbling. Yet through contemplative practices, it is possible to harness this energy (https://yachana.com/ Accessed September 1, 2019)

Similarly, indigenous people were advertised as the last remnants of a pre-modern era, living in the Edenic environment of the Amazon. For example, the website of Napo Wildlife Center (also a foreign-owned Amazonian lodge), in a blog entry titled "The harmonic [*sic*] images of the Amazon." describes a featured tour to the Kichwa

community of Añangu as an opportunity to travel back in time to find “the purest of human beings”:

> On this trip you will get to know the Kichwa Añangu community, who for more than 500 years have stayed in this sector of the jungle and know it better than their own hands. In your clothes, your gestures, your way of relating, you can find images that evoke the purest of human beings in contact with their nature. Be amazed also with the way they have to live in harmony with the environment, the structures and materials with which they build their homes, the closeness of each member in the community and the areas they have opened to interact, offering every day a living painting that it’s [sic] worth living (https://www.napowildlifecenter.com/the-harmonic-images-of-the-amazon/. Accessed May 13, 2020).

Figure 7. Advertisement from Akangau Jungle Epeditions in Tena. The text reads: "The jungle is waiting for you. Connect again with your essence." Photo courtesy of Misael Cerda.

The notions of indigenous people being part of nature, and, thus, being pure and innocent were indeed very powerful among some foreign visitors in Tena, especially among those with strong interests in issues related to social justice, sustainability and the cultural survival of indigenous peoples and cultures. The unintended consequence of

holding these views was that indigenous people were sometimes thought of as incapable of wrongdoing, which undoubtedly resulted from the eco-primitivist narratives promoted by tour operators, environmentalists, adherents of the New-Age movement, and an important segment of the global media. As Lynn Meisch (1995) has convincingly argued in her research about Otavalo in northern Ecuador,

> The image of the timeless, noble savage is fostered by most guidebooks and by the tourism literature produced abroad and locally, as well as by the New Age fascination with shamanism and the ecology movement's apotheosis of indigenous people as “natural ecologists” (1995, 33).

Interestingly, this fantasy of indigenous people’s moral purity was often not based in the idea that indigenous people possessed an inherent moral superiority, but rather on the idea that their isolation from the modern world had kept them in a state of blissful ignorance. Indeed, many of these same tourists often complained about the differences between urban and rural indigenous people, arguing that urbanites had lost their innocence and were starting to behave more like mainstream Ecuadorians. Once again, as in Eden, knowledge was presented as the original sin. However, for a small subset of Amazonian visitors, the very fact of being an indigenous person did imply an inherent moral purity and superiority vis-à-vis Westerners. A story related to me by an American scholar who regularly hosts student groups in a fieldschool near Tena, offered a clear example of this way of thinking:

> One year I had a student from Arizona who was really committed to pan-indigenous rights and identity. He even tried to organize a pan-indigenous

> movement in Tena! Even though it was his first time in this area, he said he already knew Kichwa people because all indigenous people are a big family. Anyway, he met a Kichwa woman from Pastaza [a nearby province] who was known to me, and who had a bad reputation in her community for regularly chasing after *gringos* (foreign men). On a group trip to Baños, this guy snuck her into his hotel room and spent the night with her. The next morning, he came to see me quite upset because his wallet was missing. I then just asked him: who did you spend the night with? But he just looked at me and said: **she would never do that; she is an Indian!** (my emphasis). Later, I called her on the phone and threatened to tell her father, so she eventually returned the wallet.

Thus, whether portrayed as free from disease, living in harmony with nature and indeed being part of nature, or being free of moral flaws like lying or stealing, these stereotypes are highly consequential. As these examples show, the very pervasive imaginations that portray indigenous people as pure and uncontaminated profoundly shaped how many foreign visitors perceived and interacted with them. They have also contributed, as I will show in the next chapter, to shape how some Kichwa individuals, particularly young male tour guides, have come to imagine and perform their own indigenous identities.

Several of the foreign tourists with whom I interacted in the Tena area also reproduced notions that fused indigenous people with the Amazonian landscape, sometimes in ways that, while aimed at emphasizing Kichwa people's deep connection to nature, effectively perpetuated colonial imaginations of indigenous people as less than

(fully) human. A good example is the case of Emily, a British woman who participated in a tour led by my friend Sacha (in which I also participated as a translator). After Emily left Tena two days later, she posted an entry on her online travel blog in which she complemented Sacha's performance as a tour guide in the following way:

> Our tour guide… (Sacha) was also clearly half human, half animal, as he was able to make lots of different monkey/bird/anything sound to communicate with them. Needless to say, my version was not the same. (https://emilyseyesexplore.com/2019/03/27/how-i-survived-the-amazon-for-3-days/. Accessed July 20, 2020)

Similarly, while, as discussed earlier, several scholars have explored the production of Amazonia through Edenic narratives, less attention has been paid to the resulting sexualization and eroticization of the Amazon rainforest and of Amazonian indigenous bodies. Indeed, it is not infrequent to hear the rainforest being referred to as "virgin" and "untouched," always in danger of being "ravaged" by greedy outsiders. However, the sexual undertones of these metaphors have escaped many scholars of Amazonia, even as they discuss the problematic aspects of these terms (see, for example, Davidov 2013; Hutchins 2002). A notable exception is the work of Candace Slater (1999), who has argued that,

> No longer a hostile, harpy-like forest from which wealth is to be systematically extracted, Amazonia becomes a vulnerable, virgin (and thus, passive, if still female) territory to be jealously preserved from those who might have other visions and other uses (1999, 78).

Indeed, many tourism experiences in the Tena area were often related to me in a way that reflected a desire, on the part of the tourist, to have an intensely sensual and even sexual experience with the Amazonian landscape. I call these fantasies and encounters "Edeni-sexual," as they combine the desire to consume and engage with the Amazonian landscape (and indigenous bodies who are perceived as part of that landscape) in overtly sensual and sexual ways, and the desire to, through that experience, return to pre-modern ways of life, imagined to be free from the vices of modern life. As one European female tourist said to me after a long hike to Pimpilala Waterfalls, around 20 miles from Tena,

> It was totally worth it. I was quite tired but when we got to the waterfalls and I sat there with that cold water rolling down my body, and the Amazon rainforest all around me, it all went away.

An interesting phenomenon that suggested the perception of the Amazon as a sexualized landscape was the desire and willingness of many foreign visitors, particularly women, to take off all their clothes during tours, especially when swimming in rivers. While, as discussed above, it has been documented that holiday locations far away from home are usually imagined as places where usual social norms do not apply, and thus perceived as places of sexual freedom, it was nevertheless quite interesting that so many European and North American women would remove their clothes with such an ease in front of Kichwa male tour guides whom they barely knew. Indeed, most tour guides I spoke with in Tena mentioned several instances where foreign women had suddenly removed all of their clothes and jumped in the river. While I also heard accounts of male

tourists engaging in the same behavior, the overwhelming majority of the stories related to me by Kichwa tour guides were about foreign women. As one of them said to me when I asked why he thought that *gringas* were willing to be naked in front of him,

> In my experience during all this time, *gringas* say that it (being nude) is a way to be in direct contact with nature, and here (in the Amazon) much more so, because it's *mas profundo* (roughly, deeper or more profound, referring to the connection with nature) and much purer.

An older tour guide told me similar stories, saying that *gringas* used to get naked and bathe in the river, telling him that they wanted to experience pure nature and be in deep contact with the rainforest and the river. They would also ask him to undress and bathe with them, which he found a bit embarrassing, but he would nevertheless usually comply to satisfy the tourists. He also told me that the irony of the situation did not escape him, stating that,

> It's funny that Kichwa people are shyer to take their clothes off, while *gringas* have no problem (laughter). They think that indigenous people walk around naked and all that, but it's me, a Kichwa man, who usually has to stop them because they want to get naked right away, and I tell them no, there is a time and a place. Kichwa people sometimes get offended by this.

It is worth mentioning that, in the dozens of tours I participated during my fieldwork in the Tena area with groups of foreign women, I did not once witness such behavior, which was interesting given the frequency with which I heard that such stories

happened, even during the very period of my fieldwork. This could conceivably be attributed to the fact that my presence, as a foreign male researcher, disrupted the sense of isolation from modernity and social norms that, in the tourists' eyes, made those behaviors acceptable or desirable. In other words, my presence arguably brought the modern world and the social norms associated with it back into their Amazonian experience in a way that the presence of Kichwa men evidently did not.

I should also mention that I came across instances in which tour guides seemed to take advantage of these very common Amazonian fantasies to get foreign women to remove their clothes while on tours, thus reinforcing those fantasies. For example, during a two-day camping tour with four foreign women, Gilberto, an older Kichwa man in his early 70s, who would sometimes lead tours within his property near Tena, told me about his strategies for getting *gringas* to undress in front of him as we sat by the fire enjoying dinner:

> I have a very effective technique (laughter). I tell them that the river is a *lugar sagrado* (sacred place) in my culture and that it is forbidden to bring anything from modern civilization [including clothes)] into the river. I tell them that it is the only way to receive good energies from the river and the waterfalls.

Without downplaying the questionable actions of some Kichwa men, like Gilberto, in these instances (who, interestingly, related this story to me without the slightest indication that he recognized his actions to be wrong), I think it is important to point out the particular fantasies and imaginations that make it possible for Gilberto to succeed in getting foreign women to suspend their judgment and acquiesce to his

demands. It is hard to imagine, and I have yet to find anything similar in the academic literature on tourism, another context in which so many North American or European women would comply with an elderly, unknown man's request to remove their clothes. After many years of working with tourists, Gilberto understands the Western associations of the Amazon and Amazonian indigeneity with the sacred, the ancestral, the spiritual, and the very pervasive notion that when visiting an indigenous community you should do things you would not normally do to avoid offending indigenous people, that allow Kichwa men like Gilberto to even have the ability to use those strategies.

The sexualization and erotization of the Amazonian landscape also manifested itself within intimate encounters between female tourists and Kichwa tour guides. Several of the foreign women I interviewed in Tena described their sexual encounters with Kichwa men, in part, as an esoteric sexual experience with the surrounding Amazonian landscape. As Frohlick (2007) has argued in her research about foreign women's sexual relations with local men in Costa Rica, "erotic intimacy within a touristic setting can involve proximate relationships to people whose corporeality is fused with the landscape" (2007, 152). Jessica Jacobs (2010), too, has explored how sexual desire for racial and ethnic "Others" is often linked to specific desires for the landscapes of which they are imagined to be a part. This resonates with some of my findings in the Tena area. For example, Tiffany, an American NGO worker, when telling me about her first sexual encounter with her current boyfriend Rumi, a Kichwa man, described the *Pachamama* (Kichwa term for Mother Earth, but usually used in an esoteric way) as an active participant in the sexual act:

> We just like started intimately touching each other and I rested my hand on his chest and then that was the night we kissed. It was really intense and awesome, and it was like we were rolling all over the *Pachamama* underneath his house.

In fact, Tiffany explicitly told me that the setting of the Amazon rainforest contributed greatly to her attraction for Rumi. To illustrate her point, she mentioned that she had spent some time in the capital city of Quito and she had not felt attracted to any of the guys there, including some Kichwa male students who were part of her exchange program. In her words,

> I had been with other guys in Quito, not like being with them romantically, but I had been surrounded by them, and I had obviously gotten to know the other Kichwa exchange student as well. So, I don't know, maybe it was a romance in the Amazon with Rumi, I guess. I was surrounded by other Kichwa guys (in Quito) and I didn't do anything when I was in Quito with anyone. But being in the Amazon was pretty cool, like imagine no cell service, in the jungle, there's no one to talk to about it, or take photos and post places, and think about being in like, I'll get graphic with it (laughter), being in someone else's wooden home, pouring rainstorm, thunder crashing, making love in a forbidden way (giggles), that was just something amazing and passionate and genuine about it and he was just so genuine about it.

Similarly, my friend Sacha told me about a short relationship he had with a young woman from California who, in his words, was very interested in indigenous cultures and in the "hippie" lifestyle. Sacha said that he met her on a three-day tour he led in a

community near Tena. One night, while he was laying in his hammock after a long day of hiking, she came up to him and asked him if he could give her a massage, arguing that her muscles were sore from the hike. The massage quickly turned into intimate touching, and they ended up having sex in his hammock. Sacha's account of what the female tourist told him after their sexual encounter also reflected a desire on the part of the American female to incorporate the landscape into that intimate moment:

> She told me that having sex with me in the middle of the forest was like nothing she had ever experienced before because she felt a special connection to me and to nature. She said that having sex with an indigenous man was very different than having sex with guys in her country.

In chapter 1, I showed how indigenous men in Latin America have long been imagined as lacking sexual attractiveness and, quite often, lacking sexual drive altogether. However, this seems to have changed in the past three decades with the rise and increasing influence of the contemporary environmental and New Age movements. A few scholars have documented, and my fieldwork in Tena confirmed, increasingly common occurrences and patterns of sexual liaisons between foreigners and indigenous individuals in Latin America, especially between foreign women and indigenous men (see, for example, Canessa 2008; Meisch 1995; Vich 2007). As I stated earlier in this chapter, however, most scholars researching indigenous communities in the Amazon have failed to pay attention to the various processes of sexualization and eroticization of indigenous bodies that the contemporary environmentalist and New Age movements and ideas have, if not promoted, at least set the bases for, particularly within tourism

encounters. As Aldred (2000) has convincingly argued about New Age ideas and practices,

> In the so-called postmodern culture of late consumer capitalism, a significant number of white affluent suburban and urban middle-aged complain of feeling uprooted from cultural traditions, community and spiritual meaning. The New Age movement is one such response to these feelings. New Agers romanticize an "authentic" and "traditional" Native American culture whose spirituality can save them from their own sense of malaise (2000, 329).

While not all, or even the majority of tourists in the Tena area, would self-identify as "New Agers," as the movement itself is "only a movement in the loosest sense of the term" (Aldred 2000, 330), the pervasive influence of New Age ideas about indigenous cultures and identities, often echoed by mainstream media, tour operators and even by some academics, as I discussed earlier in this chapter, seemed to have reached and shaped the imaginations and expectations of many Amazonian visitors. This, of course, included many of the foreign women who established intimate liaisons with Kichwa men.

**The quest for radical alterity: sexualization of indigenous (male) bodies in tourism encounters**

The quest for cultural difference and romanticized notions about the cultural "Other" are not specific to the Amazon. Most scholars who have looked at sexual liaisons between foreign women and local men have shown this to be an important part of the allure of non-white male bodies in tourism settings (see, for example, Brown 1992;

Herold et al. 2001; Kempadoo 1999; Pruitt & LaFont 1995). However, what is unique is the Western imaginary about the Amazon and, to a lesser extent, the Andes as well as other "tribal" communities around the world (see, for example, Hodgson 1999; Jacobs 2010) is that, unlike, say, black "beach boys" in the Caribbean, indigenous Amazonians are often thought to exist not just on the fringes of modernity, but completely outside of it. Perhaps even more importantly, in the eco-primitivist fantasies of many Amazonian visitors, indigenous people were not only pre-modern but also anti-modern, purposely shunning the material comforts of the modern world in favor of a simpler but more natural, more environmentally friendly, life. The possibility to not just observe, but to actively participate in that perceived absence of modernity through intimate encounters with Kichwa men shaped and drove many female visitors' desires in Tena. As Tiffany said to me when discussing her views about the Kichwa community that her boyfriend Rumi was from:

> (They have) this sense of identity and community. Identity with the community, I should say, identity that sets apart instead of homogenizing them into this mestizo bubble or this Westernizing bubble, which is really cool, and pop culture and this is what society is doing, but there's a sense of being unique within that and I think that sense of uniqueness and identity is where a lot of pride comes in being Kichwa.

In this regard, my findings are similar to what Jessica Jacobs (2010) found in her research about intimate encounters between foreign women and Bedouin (as well as non-Bedouin) men in Egypt's Sinai Peninsula. She notes that,

> (…) to date I have concentrated on Western women tourists and argued that they travel to the Sinai in order to escape from Western modernity and that their ethnosexual encounters with local Egyptian and Bedouin men are based upon seeing the landscape and men of the Sinai as representative of some alternative to, or absence of, modernity (2010, 94).

In her study of foreign female/Kichwa men sexual relationships in the Ecuadorian Andean town of Otavalo, Lynn Meisch (1995) argues, that prior to the 1980s, foreign women's public relationships with Kichwa men were extremely rare. However, she notes that "by 1985, it was fairly common to see a gringa and an Otavaleño walking hand-in-hand down the street (Meisch 1995, 448)." Meisch attributes this rapid change to the abolition of "*wasipungo*" (debt peonage of indigenous peasants) in the second half of the twentieth century and the upward economic mobility of indigenous people in Otavalo, which produced a generation of "healthier, taller, better educated, wealthier (Kichwa men)" who met "Euro-American standards of sexual attractiveness"(1995, 448). In other words, Meisch thought that foreign females' sexual attraction for Kichwa men in Otavalo increased as Otavaleños became more similar to Western men.

However, I remain largely unconvinced by this argument. After all, if this were true, Meisch would have conceivably seen a high incidence of relationships between foreign female tourists and white/mestizo men in Otavalo, since their phenotypical characteristics are very similar to those of Kichwa men and they generally were, with some notable exceptions, better educated and wealthier than Otavaleños. Still, Meisch is clear about the prevalence of relationships between foreign women and, almost

exclusively, indigenous Kichwa men. In fact, it has been documented that some white/mestizo men in Otavalo, Cusco, and other parts of Latin America, actually pretend to be indigenous or emphasize their indigenous heritage to attract foreign female tourists. As Canessa (2012) has argued about Peruvian men who seek out relationships with foreign women, also known as "*bricheros,"* particularly in the city of Cusco, "what is interesting about the bricheros is that even as they index Indianness to attract foreign women, they do not, in other contexts, identify themselves as indigenous at all" (2012, 111). Similarly, in his research about race and sexuality in Ecuador, Carlos de la Torre (1996) has argued that,

> Otavalo is a very interesting case to study the inversion of racist-sexual codes. Many European and North American female tourists prefer to go out with Indians instead of mestizos. This must be the only place in Ecuador in which some mestizos pretend to be Indians in order to get a *gringa* (1996, 90, my translation).

Indeed, my fieldwork in the Tena area revealed that foreign women's' attraction for indigenous men was not based on their conformity to Euro-American standards of attractiveness or their cosmopolitanism. On the contrary, their attraction was mainly informed by indigenous men's perceived embodiment of radical alterity vis-à-vis the West. In fact, some foreign females told me that they felt attracted to Kichwa man **despite** their lack of conformity to some of the most common Western beauty standards, and they emphasized Kichwa men's perceived differences with men in their home countries as one of the main drivers of their attraction for them. As Tiffany told me about

her first impressions of Kichwa men when she arrived at her current boyfriend's community:

> The guys in the community, I was just attracted to them. I loved the Kichwa that they spoke and I loved seeing the comradery among the guys in like a not jocky, not "showoffish," "standoffish," kind of like in a corny, "showoffy" way but not in like an aggressive, like macho way to show off. [However,] I guess I didn't like that much that they were all my height. And Rumi, I find it really attractive like his knowledge of like the jungle and building his own houses and farming. I find that, like a primal masculinity, of just doing for survival. I feel like in the U.S. there's a lot of masculinity tied to jobs and making money, and his masculinity is like a totally different level, cause he makes like no money, but he has so many of these useful life skills that I find really attractive, and they are a way to not only care for himself but for someone else. Like, I trust him, when I'm walking with him in the rainforest at night, and when I'm walking with him at night anywhere, cause he's so like capable, he's so capable of everything, he can make something out of nothing.

In all fairness to Meisch, she does acknowledge later in her essay that one of the main drivers of foreigners' fascination with indigenous cultures was that "many Europeans and Americans are imbued with a profound nostalgia for a world believed lost, but found in Otavalo: prosperous settlements in a pristine setting where traditional customs, community, and family appear to be intact" (1995, 452), which makes her earlier argument all the more strange.

This deliberate quest for radical alterity often meant that only those men who were perceived to most properly embody it succeeded in attracting foreign lovers, as I will further discuss in Chapter 4. Thus, when foreign women in Tena engaged in intimate relationships with Kichwa men, it was almost exclusively with long-haired Kichwa tour guides. This could be partly attributed to the fact that tour guides were, by virtue of their occupation, the local men with whom foreigners had the most interactions. Also, tour guides felt much more comfortable and confident when approaching foreign women, given that they usually were able to speak some English and were much more aware about outside expectations of indigeneity and about how to meet those expectations. In that sense, I would partially agree with Meisch's (1995) previously discussed argument that contemporary Kichwa men's higher degrees of cosmopolitanism played a role in their increased attractiveness in the eyes of foreign female tourists. However, I argue that this is true in Tena only to the extent that Kichwa men's (mostly tour guides) cosmopolitanism was perceived and interpreted **as its exact opposite**. Indeed, tour guides' conformity to outside expectations, expressed in the form of having long hair, using facial and bodily adornments, speaking the Kichwa language, and emphasizing the sacredness of nature and their special connection to it, was not usually interpreted by foreign female tourists as the result of Kichwa tour guides' long-term interactions with foreigners and their cross-cultural competency. Instead, it was generally perceived as the embodiment of true indigenous authenticity, which many tourists thought was being lost, even in Kichwa rural communities. As Sarah, a young American woman who was part of a six-week exchange program in Tena, told me after

participating in a tour led by my friend Jimmy, after which one of her friends "hooked up" with him,

> I know that they viewed him as a sort of adventure. Do you understand what I'm saying? I think that they were attracted to him, of course, because of his exotic looks and long hair. Also, because he was so openly flirty.

The importance of the Western associations of a particular look with the most authentic expressions of a given place cannot be overstated (see Figure 10), as it played a crucial role in shaping the desires of foreign women for (some) Kichwa men. As a result, most Kichwa men in Tena outside the small tour guide community, who very rarely embodied the radical alterity look that tourists expected and desired, very seldom became the object of sexual attraction of foreign female tourists. This was probably due to the fact that, in all likelihood, these men looked much more like the poor Latino immigrants these women were used to seeing in their home countries, rather than the "real Indians" they associated with the Amazon region. This phenomenon has been documented by other scholars working within different contexts in Latin America. For example, Susan Frohlick (2007) found in her research about intimate relationships between foreign females and local men in Costa Rica that foreign female tourists overwhelmingly preferred Afro-Latino men, noting that "(w)hite *Tico* men also hook up with foreign tourist women in Puerto Viejo but are positioned outside the Caribbean aesthetic and thus seemingly not as desirable" (2007, 140).

An interesting example that illustrates this phenomenon is the case of Sergio, a tour guide who was Afro-descendent and was originally from the Ecuadorian coastal

region. Sergio's family moved to Tena when he was still a toddler, and he grew up in San Jorge, a majority Kichwa neighborhood in the outskirts of Tena. Since most of his friends were Kichwa, Sergio became fluent in the Kichwa language and was quite knowledgeable about Kichwa customs and traditions. In fact, many Kichwa tour guides told me they saw Sergio as "*kikin Runa*" or Runa (Kichwa) proper, which is further evidence of the fluidity of indigenous identities that I discussed in Chapter 1, by showing how outsiders can "become" indigenous. When Sergio started working as a tour guide right after graduating from high school, he also began growing out his curly hair (which obviously looked quite different from Kichwa men's extremely straight hair), and he started wearing peccary tusk necklaces and otherwise copied the adornments of other tour guides. However, Sergio's Afro-descendent phenotype, which could have arguably favored him in other tourism hotspots on the Ecuadorian coast, given the strong association of Ecuador's coastal region with blackness (see, for example, Rahier 1998), actually hindered his ability to procure foreign lovers in the Amazon. While Sergio did have some occasional foreign girlfriends and even had a child with an Eastern European woman, he often complained that most *gringas* were not interested in him. Indeed, one night, as I was making my way to a popular bar in Tena to meet some friends, I saw Sergio standing on the sidewalk with a very attractive foreign female tourist. They were chatting and laughing, so I just passed by them, winked at Sergio, and kept walking. Later, at the bar, I ran into Sergio who was now sitting at one of the tables by himself, drinking a beer. When I asked him about what happened with the *gringa* I had just seen him with, he just shook his head and said,

> *Mashi, mashi*, that *gringa* is a *loca* (literally, crazy, but probably referring here to her perceived sexual looseness). She would never go out with me; she is only interested in hooking up with "*hombres nativos*" (native men). She is a good friend, but nothing else. She comes to Tena every year, hooks up with a few "*guias*" (Kichwa tour guides), and then travels to Shuar territory (a different indigenous nation in the Ecuadorian Amazon) and hooks up with a few Shuar guys there.

Another product of indigenous men's perceived embodiment of radical alterity and cultural purity is the (less common) phenomenon where a small subset of foreign women express the specific desire to be impregnated by an indigenous man. This phenomenon, however, is not unique to the Amazon, or even to indigenous Latin America, as several scholars have shown. For example, Jacqueline Sanchez-Taylor (2006) argues about relationships between white women and black men in the Caribbean that "some female sex tourists want black boyfriends in order to live out certain fantasies, whether they be 'educating and helping the noble savage,' being the focus of 'cool' black men's adoring gaze or wanting to have 'sunshine babies'" (2006, 52). Similarly, Dahles and Bras (1999) noted that some "beach boys" in Indonesia "expressed their conviction that Western women come to Bali to conceive a child from a local man as they dispose of better seed  than Western males" (1999, 281). While no foreign female tourist explicitly expressed to me that they wanted to have a child with a Kichwa man during my fieldwork in Tena, I did come across several instances in which such desires had been communicated to Kichwa tour guides and to other Kichwa individuals. For example,

during an interview with my friend Camilo, he stated that several *gringas* have told him that they wanted their children to have the strength and knowledge of Kichwa people. In Camilo's words:

> **Camilo:** They say they want descendants of pure blood, children of pure blood.
>
> **EB:** They have told you that?
>
> **Camilo:** Yes, exactly. They say they don't want white skin; they want skin like ours, and they want their children to be strong and to have the knowledge and the power of nature. That's why I want a Kichwa man, they say. Some *gringos* (foreign men) have told me the same thing.
>
> **EB:** So, they think that by simply having a child with a Kichwa person, that the child will automatically…
>
> **Camilo:** Yes, they think they are going to be stronger, that they are going to have more energy, more power, more control over the human world.

My friend Tina also told me similar stories, in which some of her foreign female friends had expressed their desire to have children with a Kichwa man because of their pure blood and profound knowledge of nature, which they imagined would be transferred to the child. Interestingly, both Tina and Camilo, while amused by these notions, expressed to me that they thought these foreign women were misguided and that they did not think that these children would inherit these characteristics just because they had Kichwa fathers. To illustrate their argument, they pointed to the increasing language loss

among Kichwa youth, and their complete lack of knowledge of the forest due to their desire to live more like mestizos. In other words, Kichwa culture and knowledge had to be learned and practiced every day, according to these Kichwa individuals, which resonates with Judith Butler's (1988) argument about the performative and iterative nature of any identity. The exception, Camilo told me, was shamanic powers. According to Camilo, the children of powerful *yachaks* do inherit their fathers' powers, but, even then, they have to cultivate those powers by training rigorously for many years before being able to use them effectively.

It is important to point out, however, that while fantasies about radical alterity seemed to inform and shape these sexualized fantasies among foreign female visitors in Tena, I did encounter a small number of instances in which female tourists who engaged in short-term intimacy with tour guides did not even recognize them as Kichwa (or indigenous, in general) individuals. This could conceivably be attributed to overly primitivist notions and expectations about indigenous people that tour guides, with their fashionable clothes, their command of the English language, and their overtly flirtatious behavior, did not seem to meet in some cases. For example, one American female tourist, who had spent the previous night with my friend Jimmy, was very surprised the next day when, during our conversation, it came up that Jimmy was Kichwa. As our conversation revealed, her attraction for Jimmy was not informed by eco-primitivist fantasies about indigenous people, but by the perceived hyper-masculinity of Latino men "I can't believe he is Kichwa! I thought he was just another Latino man from Tena. He asked me out and took me dancing; he was such a gentleman! I had a great time with him."

In another case, I found that while attraction for Kichwa tour guides may have been shaped by indigenous people's imagination as exotic and closer to nature, they were still strongly associated with pervasive stereotypes about Latino men and, thus, subjected to suspicion and distrust by female tourists. I discussed this case earlier in this chapter, in which Emily, an American exchange student, had told me that her friend found Jimmy attractive due to his long hair and exotic looks. However, Emily also told me that they had been suspicious of Jimmy and other Kichwa tour guides all along. As she told me via email a few weeks after she returned to the United States:

> I think that all of us had a certain amount of skepticism about Latino men, especially since we found out multiple secrets [that] they withheld from us on social media (for example, secret sons, or a wife or girlfriend).

As I mentioned earlier in this chapter, it was not only Kichwa tour guides who were sometimes not recognized as "real" indigenous people by foreign tourists, but also, and even more frequently, most other Kichwa individuals in and around Tena. This could be attributed to the fact that, outside "traditional" performances in tourism settings, Amazonian Kichwa people did not generally wear a distinctive Kichwa outfit (as they usually do in the Ecuadorian highlands) and were often indistinguishable from mestizo individuals in the eyes of foreigners (although local people in Tena were readily able to tell Kichwa people apart from non-indigenous individuals). For example, one morning, as I was riding a bus that covered the route between Tena and Ahuano, a small port village on the banks of the Napo river that served as the starting point for many river tours, a Dutch couple, who were traveling with me on our way to a tour,  asked me whether I

thought we were going to see indigenous people on the tour. I should point out that most of the route covered by the Tena-Ahuano bus is made up of Kichwa communities, so most people riding the bus that morning were, in fact, Kichwa individuals on their way to work or school. When I told the Dutch couple that most of the people traveling on the bus with us were indigenous Kichwa, they looked surprised and confused, saying that they did not expect to see indigenous people riding a bus.

**Conclusions.**

In this chapter, I have discussed the most common fantasies and expectations that foreign tourists bring into their Amazonian experiences, which are mostly informed by globally circulating images and discourses that portray the Amazon and indigenous Amazonians as existing in a pre-modern state, free from the vices of capitalism and modernity. I also showed that the perceived purity of the landscape extended to the indigenous people living in it, since Kichwa people in the communities surrounding Tena were usually imagined to harmonically coexist with the natural landscape and to wisely and sustainably use its resources. Thus, many foreign tourists viewed Kichwa people as healthier and stronger than Westerners. However, as discussed in this chapter, these pervasive notions about the purity of indigenous bodies often extended beyond the corporeal to include a host of moral and spiritual qualities. In that sense, some foreign tourists imagined indigenous people as free from moral flaws such as lying, stealing, or acting in self-interest.

I also explored an understudied phenomenon within Amazonian ecotourism encounters resulting from these ideas, namely the sexualization and erotization of the

Amazonian landscape and of the indigenous people who live in it. I introduced the term "Edeni-sexual" to underscore the similarities between prevalent outside imaginations of the Amazon and the story of the Garden of Eden, but also to capture the inextricable relationship between Amazonian landscapes and bodies in the sexualized fantasies of foreign visitors, particularly female visitors. Thus, I argued that foreign female visitors' attraction for Kichwa men (mostly long-haired tour guides) was fueled by the latter's perceived embodiment of primordial forms of masculinity and by their perception as natural parts of the Amazonian landscape. In the next chapter, I will discuss how Kichwa male tour guides have reacted to these outside ideas and expectations, and the impact they have had on the articulation of these men's understandings and performances of their ethnic, gendered, and sexual identities.

# V. CHAPTER 4: "ALL GREAT WARRIORS HAD LONG HAIR:" ECOTOURISM AND THE PRODUCTION AND PERFORMANCE OF KICHWA MASCULINITIES IN THE ECUADORIAN AMAZON.

## Introduction.

As tourists walk by Akangau Jungle Expeditions' office in Tena, one of the first things they may notice is the big sign above the door featuring Akangau's logo (see Figure 8). It depicts a long-haired indigenous man sitting peacefully on a tree trunk, wearing nothing but a grass skirt, and surrounded by plants, flowers and feathers. In their website, visitors will find a brief explanation about the meaning behind the logo, which reads:

> the symbol in our logo is an Omagua man. This man symbolizes the ancient Kichwa culture when a man having long hair was a symbol of his strength. They believe that hair is a physical manifestation of our thoughts and an extension of ourselves. The same happens with thoughts of Mother Nature. We can see her "hair" (the grass) constantly growing (https://akangau.com/our-origins/ Accessed July 30$^{th}$ , 2020.)

Figure 8. Akangau Jungle Expeditions logo.

The logo and its description capture many of the contradictions that are present in the growing tourism industry in and around Tena, and the complex ways in which indigenous people working in it negotiate and reconfigure their own identities in ways that are both appealing to visitors as well as culturally and personally meaningful. The long hair, which is rarely seen among Kichwa men in the Amazon region, is a very distinctive trait of Amazonian Kichwa tour guides. The grass skirt, while still sometimes used by *yachaks* (shamans) during healing ceremonies performed for tourists, has given way to blue jeans and Nike t-shirts in the present day, but nevertheless represents what many of the tourists who flock to the region are looking for: radical alterity. Similarly, the image of the indigenous man surrounded by flowers and feathers, and the analogy between hair and grass, capture one of the main Western tropes about indigenous people:

that they are closer to nature and to their environment than Westerners and that they have not been corrupted by modern capitalist society, which, as discussed in the previous chapters, has been called the "ecologically noble savage" myth (Redford 1990). This disconnect between outsiders' expectations about indigenous peoples and the reality of the indigenous people's daily lives has found fertile ground in the growing Amazonian ecotourism industry, where it often becomes magnified.

Kichwa tour guides, the vast majority of whom are young men, are central figures in these scenarios, as they serve as culture brokers between tourists and indigenous communities, and, as I will show in this chapter, occupy an ambiguous and contested space between the two. This chapter focuses on the life experiences of Kichwa men who work in ecotourism in this area, and analyze the complex processes of adjustment and negotiation these men go through as they move into service-based employment and the strategies they have adopted to accommodate tourists' needs, fantasies, and expectations. Through an engagement with relevant theoretical debates about masculine identities, and indigenous masculinities in particular, this chapter analyzes the impact that the growing ecotourism industry in the Ecuadorian Amazon, specifically in and around Tena, is having on how young, male Kichwa tour guides produce and negotiate their gendered and ethnic identities. I discuss the motivations of mostly young Kichwa men for seeking employment in the tourism industry and I argue that Kichwa tour guides often feel compelled to emphasize what makes them different from non-indigenous Ecuadorians and to construct commodified versions of their "traditional" practices to satisfy tourists' quest for an "authentic," "pre-modern" experience.

However, I also argue that ecotourism has provided important opportunities to contest the long-standing marginalization and feminization of indigenous men within Ecuadorian society. Several scholars have discussed some avenues for indigenous men in Latin America to contest and partially transcend their disempowered positions, such as enrolling in military service, working as miners, or "whitening" themselves by moving to urban centers and distancing themselves from stereotypical markers of indigeneity such as speaking an indigenous language or dressing in distinctively indigenous outfits (see, for example, Canessa 2005; 2008; 2012). The problem is that in most cases, as Canessa (2005) convincingly argues, "they are never quite accepted because people have great difficulty in hiding their rural, indian roots even when they try: they will never speak Spanish well enough; they will never be white enough" (2005, 136). I argue that ecotourism offers an alternative masculinizing space for Amazonian Kichwa tour guides, one that does not require them to attempt to conceal their indigenous identity but actually encourages them to bring it to the forefront (albeit in sanitized ways as I will discuss later in this chapter). Furthermore, I argue that tour guides find a source of empowerment in the opportunities that ecotourism offers to engage in intimate relationships with foreign women, and, more importantly, in the increasing realization that they are considered sexually attractive by these women.

In sum, ecotourism offers Kichwa tour guides a space in which they feel respected and desired, a space that profoundly contrasts the one they typically occupy within white/mestizo Ecuadorian society. As I argued in Chapter 2, ecotourism can be better understood as a space where indigenous people are able to "become" (Biehl and Locke

2010) different and more appreciated versions of themselves, even if those versions often reflect outsiders' eco-primitivist fantasies and expectations. Thus, I discuss the opportunities and constraints for these men to forge new and liberatory forms of indigenous masculinities in ways that both reproduce and contest racist and essentialized views of indigeneity. However, I also found that while ecotourism may provide tour guides with opportunities to reassert their respectability, masculinity, and sexual desirability, there were important points of contention between urban and rural, as well as between different generations of Kichwa men and women regarding proper male behavior, Kichwa aesthetics and customs, and interactions with foreigners.

**Why work as a tour guide? The economics of indigeneity in the Ecuadorian Amazon.**

When Jimmy was growing up, he used to dream of one day becoming a policeman or a military officer in the Ecuadorian Army, like several of his uncles. Jimmy came from a Kichwa family, but his parents moved to Tena before he was born, looking for work. They always encouraged Jimmy to pursue an education, and they seemed happy that he wanted to become a policeman, one of the most desired occupations among Kichwa people in and around Tena. When he started high school, however, he opted for a Bachillerato Tecnico (roughly equivalent to Vocational School) in Tourism. A Bachillerato Tecnico degree allows those students who are not interested or are otherwise unable to pursue a college degree to graduate high school with some professional skills to

enter the labor market. Not surprisingly, most tour guides I interviewed during the course of my fieldwork chose this option when they entered high school.

This could be attributed to two main factors, in my opinion. First, the fact that, as discussed in Chapter 2, the tourism industry had been growing in and around Tena since the early 1990s, prompted government officials to develop and promote curricula for the study of tourism as a professional activity, as they saw in tourism a promising development strategy for the region. That support has not waned over the years. In fact, the 2019 mayoral election in Tena was won by Carlos Guevara, a mestizo businessman whose campaign slogan was "Tourism, Security, Employment," (see Figure 9) highlighting the importance of the tourism industry for Tena's economy, and the support of his future administration for this industry.

Figure 9. Carlos Guevara's Campaign Ad for Mayor of Tena

The second factor that drove many of my informants to pursue a Bachillerato Técnico in Tourism was the fact that, for many young indigenous people, the cost of

attending college was prohibitively expensive. Even after the passing of the new Ecuadorian Constitution in 2008, which made public universities tuition-free, the enrollment rates of indigenous students at public universities remain disproportionally low (add source). Some of my tour guide friends also indicated that they did not have many options to choose from as they entered high school. As Vladimir, one of my main informants, told me:

> [When my parents] brought me to Tena to attend high school, I chose the tourism program. There were only two programs at that high school: *maestro* [generally elementary school teacher] and tourism.

Just as in Jimmy's case, working in tourism was not initially the first choice for many of my informants. Pedro, a Kichwa man in his early 30s, was an elementary school teacher by training but had been unable to find work for several years. He worked in a remote community in Orellana province for about a year on a temporary contract, which was not renewed once it expired. During my fieldwork he worked as a part-time tour guide for his uncle, who ran a tour agency in Tena. Similarly, Jose, who was in his early 40s, had started working in tourism quite recently, after losing his job as an elementary school teacher in an indigenous community near the Colombian border. He now works with his father, a well-known "*yachak*," performing *ayawaska* ceremonies for tourists. Others were driven to tourism by chance, or bad luck, as was the case for Camilo, a tour guide in his late 30s. His plan as a young man was to work for an oil company, as he told me in one of our conversations:

> I had an uncle who worked for the [oil] company, for Texaco, and he had a really high position in the company; he was a supervisor or something. So, I had the choice to go work for the company with my uncle. Ever since I was a child my parents used to tell me: you have to be like your uncle! So, I got really excited because he worked with big generators, and that interested me, I liked it… [but] when I was in my third year of technical school, about to move on to the fourth year, in which I would have become specialized [in oil], my uncle had an accident at work and died. My future was practically lost right there, and so I said ok, what do I do now?

Like Pedro and Jose, Camilo did not have many choices as an indigenous man without a college education. Economic opportunities in the region for indigenous men are few and far between, and tourism offers a source of income that requires very little investment (although even that initial investment can often be prohibitively expensive for many), as the main attraction is the surrounding rainforest and Kichwa identity itself. For Kichwa men who do not or would not work in tourism (even for those with college degrees) there are few opportunities for steady employment in non-agricultural jobs (for a detailed discussion of this topic, see Jarrett 2019). According to the last population census, only 34.8% of Napo's population had steady jobs in either the public or private sectors, even though the unemployment rate was reported at merely 4.9%. The same graph shows that 31.6% of men worked in agriculture, which, as Jarrett (2019) shows, provides very little income. Thus, one of the most lucrative non-agricultural activities for Kichwa men without a college degree, and the one that requires the smallest investment,

is working as a tour guide for a travel agency or building a few cabins in one's property to rent out to tourists. Tourism also provides a greater source of income than other non-agricultural activities. For example, during a visit to the Kichwa community of Shiripuno on the banks of the Napo river, we attended a gold panning demonstration along the river bank. The people in Shiripuno and elsewhere around Tena have figured out that it is just easier and more profitable to perform gold panning demonstrations for tourists than to actually pan for gold. While they can work tirelessly for ten hours a day trying to gather one ounce of gold, which could yield around $30, they can charge $5 per person for a demonstration and make the same $30 amount in under twenty minutes.

I should point out that there were other economic opportunities that were in many ways more lucrative and desirable than tourism among men (both indigenous and non-indigenous) in Tena, but in many cases these opportunities required initial investments that were simply out of reach for most of them, particularly Kichwa men. For example, owning and driving a cab was mentioned to me as some of the occupations that can be quite lucrative, but considering that a car in Ecuador typically costs twice what it would cost in the United States, it was not an option available to many young Kichwa. For example, Jarrett (2019) found in a survey conducted among Kichwa families in the Tena-Archidona area that the "average annual income of survey respondents was $2,219. This figure is significantly below the national minimum wage of $5,404 per year" (2019, 35), so even managing to save enough money to provide as down payment for a car proved unfeasible for many young Kichwa. Many other young Kichwa men, like Jimmy, aspired to become police officers, a highly respected and well remunerated occupation. Kichwa

individuals will often speak proudly about a son, a brother, or a sister who is police officer and is able to provide financial assistance to the family. Many of my tour guide friends would also complain that Kichwa women only want to date mestizo men and Kichwa men who are police officers. In fact, there are countless memes circulating on social media that reflect my friends' anxieties. One of them depicts an indigenous-looking police officer with a caption that reads: "If you didn't want me before, don't seek me out now that I make 700 [dollars]." But, as Jaime, a Kichwa tour guide in his early 40s told me, becoming a police officer is not cheap:

> My nephew just graduated from the police academy. He was lucky. He didn't have to spend too much money because he entered a program for Amazonian recruits, which was much cheaper, but he still spent between $2000 and $3000.

This is quite expensive, considering that the minimum monthly wage for full-time employees in Ecuador is around $400 and, as I showed earlier, Kichwa people's average income is usually well below the national average. Furthermore, one of the eligibility requirements to qualify as a prospective police cadet is a minimum height of 158 cm (5'1") for women and 168 cm (5'5") for men (Ministerio de Gobierno 2019). This effectively disqualified many indigenous men, who tend to be significantly shorter than their white/mestizo counterparts.

Becoming a tour guide, on the other hand, requires little to no investment. Some of the tour guides I befriended during my fieldwork had no formal licenses from the Ministry of Tourism, which meant that they could not be legally hired by third parties (although all of them regularly were), but could lead tours in their own communities. Not

going through the certification process also meant that they did not have to spend any money in formal training. The ones who decided to become certified had to enroll in programs that could last anywhere from four months up to a year, at a cost of approximately $80. This would provide them with a certification as a "local" or "native" tour guide, which in practice meant that they were only supposed to lead tours in the Amazon region.

When I conducted my fieldwork, however, many "informal" tour guides would complain that even the frequency and availability of these programs were grossly insufficient, which meant that new tour guides could be working without a license for years before one of these programs became available. Other authors have discussed longer certification programs for tour guides, where tour guides are trained in the "traditional" aspects of their own cultures. For example, Davidov (2013) notes that "[i]n order to obtain their tourist guide certifications, they attend a four or five-year university program for tourism where they study a wide variety of subjects, including business management, sustainable development, ecology, botany, history, and anthropology (2013, 84). These longer programs, however, were not available (at least in the Tena area) during my fieldwork. IKIAM University, a recently established public university in Tena, did offer a tour guide certification program, but it only required a few months of coursework. It did, however, allow several of the tour guides I worked with to finally receive a formal license.

One of the biggest appeals of working in tourism for Kichwa young men, however, is the opportunity to interact and possibly establish intimate liaisons with

foreign female visitors. All of the tour guides I have spoken and interacted with in and around Tena have had several foreign girlfriends, without exceptions. Some of them have even been married to and have had children with North American and European women. For Kichwa men in these relationships, one of the major appeals is to have a partner who could potentially open the door for foreign travel and work opportunities. Many of them also believe that a foreign partner could help them build some cabins to rent to tourists and could contribute some financial resources for themselves and their families. More importantly, however, these relationships provide opportunities to contest long-standing imaginations of indigenous men's lack of physical attractiveness and submissiveness. This topic will be addressed in depth in the next section.

I should also mention that some women (indigenous and otherwise) do work as tour guides, but their numbers are disproportionally small in relationship to the number of men. Most of the women I met during my fieldwork who worked in tourism were generally assigned to the kitchen, to the front desk, or to housekeeping activities. While the full spectrum of complex and diverse cultural reasons for the virtual absence of women as tour guides fall outside the scope of this dissertation, it is important to point out that although "gender relations have changed significantly due to women being increasingly involved in the public sphere through education, work, market activities, and political leadership… gender complementarity and the centrality of the patriarch head of household continue to be important to Kichwa social order" (Jarrett 2019). Indeed, when I asked Vilma, a Kichwa woman in her late 30s who graduated from the IKIAM-

sponsored program I mentioned earlier why there are so few female tour guides, she explained that,

> It's hard for a Kichwa woman to work as a tour guide, especially if she has children because she's expected to take care of the house and the children and cannot leave for several days to lead a tour. Your husband will simply not let you; they say it is not an appropriate job for a woman. They think that you might cheat on them with a *gringo* or something.

Here, too, we can see continuities with historical gender roles among Kichwa people since pre-colonial times. As I showed in the previous chapter, it was Kichwa men who often went out hunting in the forest or embarked on long trips to trade goods with other groups, while women usually tended to the *chakra*. Similarly, in the post-colonization period, it was overwhelmingly Kichwa men who performed wage labor, and who left the household, sometimes for extended periods of time, to sell their labor. The ecotourism boom, thus, did not appear to disrupt that dynamic. There are some exceptions, however. For example, an ecotourism project developed in the Kichwa community of Shiripuno is advertised as a women's project, ran and managed entirely by women. Indeed, when I participated in a tour within that community, the women emphasized how that ecotourism project contributed to their fight against *machismo*, allowing them to become financially independent from men. However, some tour guides expressed the opinion that while the feminist discourses espoused by these women were an effective advertisement strategy, it was the men in the community, particularly one Kichwa man who had been married to a French woman and owned a tour agency in the

nearby tourist town of Misahualli, who ran things behind the scenes. Whether accurate or not, these opinions nevertheless reflect how many men reacted to Kichwa women in positions of power, an issue I have discussed elsewhere (see Erazo and Benitez in press.)

**Urban indigeneity and the "rediscovery" of Kichwa identity through tourism.**

*Racism and the pressure to assimilate.*

My friend Jimmy was born in the city of Tena, and while his parents came from rural Kichwa communities, he grew up in an environment in which the white/mestizo majority did not look kindly at indigenous people, to put it mildly. As a different Kichwa tour guide in his early 30s told me,

> Discrimination was very evident, this was before being Kichwa became popular, although it still continues today in many ways. When a Kichwa student walked into a class of mestizos they would say: Look! Here comes an "indio." When you were waiting outside for the bus they would say: Look at that "indio," and they would spit at you. I always had to force people to show respect by fighting anyone who offended me. I would fight a lot; I even fought one of my teachers once for disrespecting me.

Roberto, who was 42 years old at the time of my fieldwork, told me similar stories about his time at a majority mestizo high school in Tena:

> I felt a lot of racism. Look at that "*indio nativo*"(native indian), they would say. They said that because we didn't have good shoes. Since we had to walk all the way from our community through the forest in order to get to school, we carried

> our shoes in our hands and we walked through the mud barefooted. They always mocked us like that, and they would say that we "*indios*" were dumb and dirty.

Jimmy and many other Kichwa youth, thus, sought to distance themselves from any identifiers of indigenous identity as a way to shield themselves from these sorts of racist incidents. For example, Jimmy never learned how to speak Kichwa fluently, in part because his parents deliberately avoided teaching him. Many of my informants told me that most Kichwa families who move into urban settings like Tena avoid teaching Kichwa to their children because they feel that in order to have better chances of succeeding, their children must assimilate into mestizo culture and not be identified as "natives." Others use different strategies to hide their indigenous heritage. For example, a young woman known to me, who has a Kichwa father and a *mestiza* mother from the Ecuadorian coast, would only use her maternal last name on her Facebook page, deliberately avoiding using her father's Kichwa sounding last name. The result of this complex and often hostile environment is that most urban Kichwa youth in Tena today are either unable or in some cases simply refuse to speak Kichwa, especially if there are *mestizos* present. This phenomenon has been well documented by other scholars working in the region (see, for example, Ennis 2019; Uzendoski 2005) and there is ample evidence that similar processes are taking place elsewhere in Latin America (de la Cadena 2000; Postero 2017).

During my fieldwork in Tena, however, there were strong indications that the lack of Kichwa fluency among young Kichwa individuals was not merely an urban phenomenon, but that it was increasingly extending to the surrounding rural

communities, where the vast majority of the population self-identifies as Kichwa. Sacha, a tour guide in his 40s, illustrated this by describing how young rural Kichwa react when he tries to speak to them in Kichwa:

> When you ask them [young rural Kichwa individuals] do you speak Kichwa? They just look at you for a few seconds, just thinking about whether to say yes or no. Among Kichwa people they sometimes do speak [Kichwa] but not 100%. They put up a barrier saying I cannot speak Kichwa, even among other "*nativos.*" In the communities, maybe 50% or even as low as 30% are fluent in Kichwa; the language is being lost.

Indeed, I found some indications that some Kichwa youth in and around Tena not only refused to learn or speak Kichwa themselves, but actually mocked other Kichwa for doing so. As Sacha further explained,

> Very few Kichwa youth want to preserve our language. They only want to speak Spanish. Sometimes I'd be speaking Kichwa with other *guias* (tour guides,) and there would be a few young Kichwa who would say: "Look at these guys. They don't change; they are always speaking Kichwa. It sounds so ugly!" Sometimes they make faces at you, and tell their friends, "look, this is a *nativo* (a native)"

As Kichwa children enter the school system, they are quickly exposed to the conflicting representations of indigenous people that are so pervasive in Ecuador and throughout Latin America. On the one hand, they learn about the glorious past of indigenous civilizations before European colonization, and about how bravely indigenous

warriors fought against colonial oppressors. They also learn about the importance of rescuing ancestral Kichwa traditions and about the richness of indigenous cultures in Ecuador (see, for example, Hutchins 2002). On the other hand, they face mockery and bullying from their peers (and even their teachers) for exhibiting behaviors or dispositions associated with indigenous people, thus shaming Kichwa youth into "assimilating" into mestizo ways. Uzendoski (2003), for example, argues that this pressure on Kichwa children to assimilate and to value white-mestizo ways and identities over their own have been embedded in the educational system in this region since the times of missionization. He notes that,

> Runa people expressed to me that in the "early days" of education they were afraid to send their children to schools or to let them pursue a trade career in town for fear of abuse and/or exploitation by the authorities. At that time, the Runa believed that their own forms of social praxis were only expressible and livable in the safe confines of interpersonal and family relations (2003, 137).

Many scholars of Latin America have discussed these contradictory processes, in which states exalt and celebrate indigenous heritage and culture while, at the same time, enforce policies that discriminate against actual indigenous people and attempt to discipline and sanitize indigenous cultural practices (see, for example, de la Cadena 2000; Erazo and Jarrett 2018; Martinez Novo 2014; Postero 2017; Radcliffe 2012 ). Ecuador, as most settler colonial states, has a long history of discrimination against its indigenous population. For most of the country's history, indigenous people were considered Ecuadorian nationals but not Ecuadorian citizens, which was an important and deliberate

distinction, as wealth and literacy requirements effectively excluded the indigenous population from legally participating in the political life of the country (Becker 2008). It was not until the 1979 Constitution that the literacy requirement was eliminated, granting citizenship to any Ecuadorian national over 18 years of age (Constitución de la República del Ecuador 1979).

Given the pressure to assimilate and the shame associated with being identified as a "*nativo*," Jimmy developed a contentious relationship with his indigenous heritage, and he sought to distance himself from activities or customs that were associated with indigenous people, such as working the land, drinking manioc beer on a regular basis, and, more importantly, speaking Kichwa. In fact, as he became an adult, he told me that he was never interested in working as a tour guide or in getting involved in indigenous politics and cultural revitalization projects:

> When I was a kid, I wanted to be a cop. At some point I was also interested in joining the military. When I got out of high school, I was not able to go to college because it was really expensive. Now it is different. So, fresh out of high school I worked in construction, and I did apprenticeships in glassblowing and welding. I am a (certified) welder! I also worked for about 6 or 7 months with the Health Department.

As these examples show, the ways in which individuals, regardless of perceived membership to a particular group, enact and relate to their indigenous identities, are contingent on numerous factors such as occupation, place of residence, upbringing, and cultural competence in breaching ethnic and racial boundaries. My tour guide friends,

thus, had good reasons to feel rebellious against a society that has historically disenfranchised and feminized them. Still, the question remains: what are the possibilities and limitations for contesting negative stereotypes and structural discrimination within what Davidov (2013) calls the "economy of expectations" of the Amazonian ecotourism industry?

*Rediscovering and redefining Kichwa identity through ecotourism.*

As the ecotourism industry boomed in and around Tena in the early 90s, one of Jimmy's older brothers started working as a tour guide at one of the many eco-lodges that sprung up in the area. Soon, Jimmy realized that his brother was making good money in ecotourism, and that he was able to establish friendships and even intimate relationships with foreign female tourists. According to Jimmy, the possibility of meeting foreigners (particularly foreign women) was one of the first things that drew him to ecotourism, joined by the persistent encouragement from his older brother. Later, he found his true passion as a whitewater rafting instructor, an activity he said he enjoyed more than walking in the forest or explaining Kichwa customs and traditions to tourists.

When I met Jimmy in the summer of 2018, he had been working as a tour guide for nearly twelve years, and his attitude towards his indigenous heritage had shifted considerably from the stories he had shared with me from his childhood and early adulthood. He had grown out his hair (a distinctive feature of tour guides) and had adopted the nickname "Machakuy" (Kichwa word for venomous snakes). During one of our interviews, he expressed how proud he felt of being Kichwa, and he underscored how important he thought it was to rescue and revitalize Kichwa culture:

> It is up to us, tour guides, to rescue our culture, because being a tour guide isn't just about showing the Amazon to tourists; it is about being proud of who you are, saying this is who I am and this is my culture, and if something is being lost we have work from the bottom up to rescue it, whether it's our language or other Kichwa traditions.

Not all tour guides experienced these processes of "rediscovery" and adjustment in similar ways, though. Many of them grew up in rural and often remote communities where Kichwa was the only language spoken in the household, and where hunting, fishing and tending to *chakras* were part of everyday life. They also did not face the same levels of rejection and shaming that urban youth like Jimmy faced from his mestizo peers in urban settings like Tena. My friend Sacha, for example, admitted that he only learned Spanish when he started elementary school in a nearby rural community. Some others have continued to juggle their work in tourism with farming their family's lands to supplement their income. Still, I argue that regardless of their background, most tour guides have had to face and adjust to new ways of understanding and performing their ethnic and gendered identities. The story of my friend Pedro, a rural Kichwa man in his early 30s, may help illuminate my argument.

When I met Pedro back in the summer of 2018, he was a recently laid-off elementary school teacher, living with his wife and two children in one of the many indigenous communities that surround Tena. He had no formal training as a tour guide, but his uncle, who owns a tour agency in Tena, would sometimes hire him to lead tours (mostly in his own community) when other, more experienced tour guides were not

available. Since he did not speak any English, his uncle would send me on some of the tours with Pedro to serve as a translator and to help out in the kitchen. When Pedro started leading tours, he seemed visibly uncomfortable, as if he did not really know what tourists were expecting from him. He was extremely shy, and sometimes we would walk through the forest in total silence until one of the tourists stopped to ask about a certain plant or a certain aspect of Kichwa culture. While Pedro was very knowledgeable about medicinal plants and about the varying quality of the wood from different trees, he did not seem very familiar with some of the topics that foreign visitors were usually interested in, such as conservation, Kichwa spirituality or Kichwa people's special connection to nature. For example, he would talk about the practical uses of a particular tree, such as providing shelter for hunters, or providing cotton to be put in blowgun darts. Unlike more experienced tour guides, however, he would not emphasize the importance of that tree for shamanic rituals and would not ask visitors to touch it and meditate in its vicinity to receive its powerful energy.

However, when I participated in another tour with Pedro several months later, his demeanor had significantly changed. He seemed more confident and talkative, and, in his explanations to tourists, he would emphasize the importance of Kichwa spirituality and the sacredness of nature. For example, before entering a waterfall, he asked tourists to walk in slowly, take a sip of water and then blow it out as a way to ask permission from the waterfall, and to prevent the negative energies of the river from making them sick. Evidently, Pedro had participated in several tours with more experienced tour guides and had learned from them the "proper" language of a Kichwa tour guide, which emphasized

indigenous people's closeness to nature and often had the unintended effect of reinforcing tourists' already overly romantic views of indigenous people. Thus, while tourism may seem like an excellent opportunity for valuing Kichwa culture, the story of Pedro shows that tour guides are often encouraged to emphasize sanitized or even invented? aspects of their identities to satisfy tourists' expectations.

There are also many aspects of Kichwa culture and of life in Kichwa communities that tourism advocates actually wished to minimize, as they moved into service-based work. For example, in a conversation with Urku, a young Kichwa tour guide who was about the become the newly elected president of a regional ecotourism network, he mentioned his interest in implementing several ideas, which he claimed to have produced successful results in other community-based tourism projects. He stated that the first order of business for the network was going to be cultural revitalization, which for him meant that they had to get people in the communities to speak Kichwa and wear their traditional outfits all the time, and not just when tourists visited for cultural presentations. That way, he said, tourists would feel like they are being offered a more authentic indigenous experience. Basically, he thought that people should become what they showed to tourists, so that it would not feel like a mere performance.

He also said that some projects had clear rules that he would like to see implemented, which included really drastic punishments for community members who transgressed them. For example, he mentioned expelling community members for public drunkenness or for hunting commercially he insisted that he strongly advocated enforcing strict rules in those communities where tourism was the main economic activity. For

example, he said that indigenous communities needed to encourage men to refrain from hunting, because tourists did not like to hear that animals are being killed. When I asked him how those men would procure food or money to buy food if they don't hunt and don't have any source of income, he replied that what some communities have done is to have those men perform demonstrations of hunting techniques for tourists, which would provide them with some income that they could use to buy food and other supplies. He said that some hunting is necessary, like killing *guatusas* (agoutis) which destroy manioc gardens. So, in that sense, he said, some forms of hunting can function as pest control. However, he said that when a group of tourists came across a man who had just killed a *guatusa*, they got very upset and inquired why their tour guide (Urku's cousin) had told them that people in the community did not hunt anymore. The tour guide, Urku said, should have explained to them that killing some animals like *guatusas* is very important for their food security, since *guatusas* pose a threat to manioc crops, a basic staple of Kichwa diet. Instead, the tour guide became too scared of receiving negative feedback from the tourists and assured them that the man who had transgressed the no-hunting rule would be sanctioned severely.

I found this conversation to be very telling of the types of indigenous identities and practices that are often encouraged and reproduced within ecotourism projects, despite, ironically, being presented as an opportunity to preserve indigenous traditions. Indeed, some authors have pointed out that while sustainable tourism has been presented as an alternative to extractivism, whether of fossil fuels or minerals, the idea of sustainable tourism is deeply inscribed in capitalistic practices that commodify nature and

local cultures as loci of “value” (Marx 2013) that are then subjected to particular forms of intervention and management (see, for example, Cronon 1995; Davidov 2013).

Indeed, Urku’s statements that Kichwa men should refrain from hunting and that they should not drink in front of tourists are consistent with the production of “rational” citizens that operate within the logic of the market, and who are “legible” to the state and other national and transnational actors, and whose indigenous identities have to managed and sanitized in specific ways to attract foreign visitors as well as funds from the state and from NGOs (see, for example, Erazo 2013; Hutchins 2010; Postero 2017; Valdivia 2005).

It is also very telling of the ways in which indigenous actors working within the industry internalize and reproduce that logic, and the new forms of indigenous identities and practices that are being forged and encouraged as more indigenous individuals move into service-based employment. As evidenced in my conversation with Urku, tourism often encourages the “sanitation” of indigenous practices in order to rid them of what Povinelli (2002) calls culturally “repugnant practices.” The power and wealth imbalance between local indigenous populations and outside actors (whether tourists, NGOs, or state actors) usually results in the latter having the upper hand in being able to label particular practices as “repugnant” or undesirable. I found that hunting was one of the activities considered most “repugnant” by tourists, undoubtedly due to marketing campaigns that emphasize the “endangered” status of many Amazonian species, and depict indigenous people as “guardians of the forest.” These forces acting upon indigenous communities who enter the ecotourism industry (or indigenous politics) often result in what Mark Rogers (1998) has called the “folklorization” of indigenous

identities, "a process in which a social group fixes a part of itself in a timeless manner as an anchor for its own distinctiveness" (Rogers 1998, 58). Indeed, Urku's insistence that people in the communities should wear their "traditional" outfits all the time responded to the drive to preserve such distinctiveness, in this case, for the consumption of tourists in search of an "authentic," pre-modern experience, and a "Garden of Eden" full of animals. As another tour guide explained to me,

> People in the [Kichwa] communities are losing their culture. Not many people want to eat our traditional food, for example. Now everybody wants "*llakta mikuna"* (town food) like the "*mishus"* (mestizos). I always tell people that we have to rescue those traditions. When *gringos* come here, they want to see a Kichwa, a native, and if they are always speaking Spanish and living like mestizos, "*donde va a encontrar"?* (Where are they going to find [a native person]?).

Furthermore, the argument made by Urku that Kichwa men should refrain from hunting, at least when tourists were present, illuminates what Perley (2014) calls "charismatic indigeneity," whereby indigenous people as ascribed dispositions and behaviors that reflect Western expectations and concerns, such as being closer to nature and environmentally conscious. This concept is closely related to other Western myths about indigenous identities I have mentioned earlier in this dissertation, namely to what Redford (1990) has labeled "the ecologically noble savage" or what Alcida Ramos (1991) has termed "the hyperreal Indian."

Ironically, Urku's suggestion that men should perform hunting "demonstrations" for tourists implicitly acknowledges that hunting is an important part of Kichwa livelihoods, and that the "environmentally friendly" decision to refrain from hunting is not the product of ancestral indigenous environmental concerns that align with Western environmentalist ideas. Rather, it is the product of indigenous people's continuous engagement with global capitalism and with Western articulations of indigeneity, which they often reproduce in culturally meaningful ways and for their own specific purposes. Still, despite these ideas espoused by younger tourism advocates like Urku, many other Kichwa men in the area (including many working in tourism) continued to hunt regularly and did not seem to share Urku's concerns about conforming to tourists' expectations. As Don Pedro, an older *yachak* who regularly performs *ayawaska* rituals for tourists told me,

> Hunting is part of my life; no one can tell me I can't hunt. I will continue to walk in the forest (euphemistic way sometimes used to refer to hunting in the Kichwa language). Look, yesterday I was walking in the forest and I shot a *"taruga"* (deer). That's what you're having for lunch today; and if a group of tourists shows up, that's what I'll feed them too!

Indeed, when I pressed Urku on the importance of hunting in Kichwa culture, asking him whether he thought that the long tradition of hunting would be lost if the rules he proposed were implemented, he seemed to reconsider his answer, saying that it would be acceptable for Kichwa men to hunt to feed their families, but not for commercial purposes. However, he insisted that it would be better if it was done away from the eyes of tourists.

Becoming a tour guide in the urban setting of Tena, thus, involves complex and often contradictory processes of negotiation and adjustment. However, I argue that through their work in tourism they are able to at least try to redefine what it means to be indigenous within a society that has long perceived them as “dirty, lazy, irrational and backward” (Colloredo-Mansfeld 1998, 186). Through their work in tourism, they have an opportunity to show white/mestizo residents how cosmopolitan, technologically savvy, and entrepreneurial they can be. They also have an opportunity to distance themselves from pervasive stereotypes associated with rural Kichwa people. Research in Ecuador and elsewhere in Latin America has shown that urban indigenous individuals, as they gain economic and cultural capital, often internalize and reproduce long-standing racist views associated with rural, poorer “Indians” (Colloredo-Mansfeld, 1998; de la Cadena, 2000; Postero, 2017). In the indigenous market town of Otavalo in northern Ecuador, for example, Colloredo-Mansfeld (1998) found that urbanized indigenous people were as likely to call rural folks ‘dirty Indians’ as some mestizos. Because the ragged signs of peasant hardship have long been associated with racial inferiority, some of the wealthy reject poor *indígenas* with caustic remarks about their appearance, imagined drunkenness, and presumed laziness. In so doing, they reproduce racism’s logic” (1998, 196).

During my fieldwork in Tena I noticed that urban tour guides often referred to rural Kichwa individuals, particularly men, using pejorative terms that conveyed their feelings of superiority and their internalization of some of the most insidious stereotypes about indigenous people. For example, when I asked Jaime, a tour guide who has lived in Tena for over twenty years, if he saw any differences between urban and rural Kichwa men, he replied:

> You see, *mashi*, men out in the communities are still too shy, they don't know how to act around tourists. You see that '*runawa'* standing there, not knowing what to do. They don't have a lot of knowledge about the forest. Some of them are also really *machistas* and all they think about is *chupar* (consume alcohol).

The use of the word "*runawa*," which roughly translates as "little Indian," was a term that many urban tour guides used when discussing (mostly young) rural Kichwa men. The use of the term would usually be accompanied by references to how backward and child-like some of these men were, thus reproducing colonial discourses that have long sought to infantilize indigenous people as a justification for their disenfranchisement. It also signified tour guides' self-perceived differences in relation to their rural counterparts. By virtue of their urban lifestyles, their fashionable clothes and their relationships with foreigners, they were able to distance themselves from the most pervasive stereotypes that circulated among white/mestizo Ecuadorians about indigenous people. They were, as Andrew Canessa (2011) argued about urban Aymara in Bolivia, "becoming" less indigenous, while at the same time accentuating "folklorized" (Rogers 1998) aspects of their identities that foreigners found attractive.

However, the process of "becoming" (Biehl and Locke 2010) more desirable versions of themselves was somewhat ephemeral in the sense that it only effectively crystalized within the confines of tourism settings and encounters. In other words, Kichwa tour guides could "become" the wise, spiritual, indigenous warrior within ecotourism encounters because there was value placed on those identities by tourists. Outside the space of ecotourism, however, they were still mostly viewed as merely

"Indians" by the white/mestizo majority, and as immature womanizers by many of their fellow Kichwa. As a Kichwa woman from a nearby community told me:

> Tour guides act with a sense of superiority because of their relationships with foreigners, and they use a lot of English words. Tour guides act differently when they are around foreigners, telling them about nature, the energy of the *Pachamama*, those things, but they **drop that act** (my emphasis) when they are "*Runa pura"* (among other Kichwa).

However, I do not think that the phrase "drop the act" captures the complexity of the tour guide experience, as is seems to imply a level of deception in tour guides' interactions with foreigners. I do not think that tour guides embody certain types of identities within tourism encounters to deceive or mislead tourists, but because they find it extremely personally gratifying to be recognized and treated as something different than what they usually are within Ecuadorian society. This statement by a young Kichwa woman nevertheless illuminates some of the seemingly contradictory ways in which young Kichwa tour guides negotiate their identities as they move into service-based employment in the ecotourism industry. On one hand, as discussed above, they attempt to contest their marginalized status by distancing themselves from the stereotypical image of the ignorant, child-like and backward "Indian." On the other hand, as the case of Pedro illustrated, they actively seek to accentuate some other aspects of their indigeneity that are considered attractive and exotic by (mostly foreign) tourists.

Some scholars around the world have found similar phenomena among young indigenous men. Tengan (2008,) for example, argues that indigenous men in Hawaii, who have long felt emasculated by a continuous "loss of land, tradition, authenticity, culture and power stem[ming] form the historical experience of colonialism and modernity" (2008, 8) are increasingly drawing on "ancestral" forms of masculinity to contest their subordinated and disempowered positionality within contemporary society. Similarly, Casey High (2010) argued that young Waorani men in the Ecuadorian Amazon draw on fantasies about "violent warriors," embodied by older generations of Waorani men, to construct and perform forms of masculinity that are "increasingly elusive in the communities where they grow up" (2010, 765). These authors, however, seem to solely focus on indigenous men's desires to contest racist stereotypes and to reassert their masculinity vis-à-vis a society that has long deemed them submissive and unattractive, and do not pay enough attention to other external forces that encourage and reward indigenous people who emphasize certain aspects of their indigeneity.

Ecotourism is one such force, and in Chapter 2 I discussed how externally oriented many of indigenous cultural revitalization projects were, especially in the area of ecotourism. Some scholars have discussed these processes at length, in which failure to conform to tourists' expectations can result in a lack of access to the resources available in tourism settings. For example, Dorothy Hodgson (1999), argues that in Tanzania, as tourism became an increasingly important form of development, state officials have "revitalized" Maasai culture to show it to tourists. But, since tourists came to Tanzania looking for an "authentic" indigenous culture, Hodgson argues that Maasai individuals, particularly Maasai men who seemed to embrace any aspect of "modernity," were

ostracized. As a veteran tour guide from the mission town of Archidona told me in one of our interviews, **"**sometimes there are '*agentes externos'* (external actors) that come here and want to impose their views upon us. They want to impose how they think a Kichwa community should be. They impose certain conditions in order to give us funding for projects."

A relevant concept here is "hegemonic masculinity" (Connell 1987; 1995) which developed along with the emergence of early queer scholarship (see, for example, Carrigan, Connell and Lee 1985; Mieli 1980). Connell (1995) argued that hegemonic masculinity is deployed not just against women, thus perpetuating male dominance, but also against what he calls "subordinated" masculinities (namely, those of gay men, men of color, etc.). In that sense, states, institutions and societal norms are formulated through heteropatriarchal structures that perpetuate white heterosexual masculinity as the unmarked, natural identity, while casting alternative identities as deviant. This concept has nevertheless been subject to extensive criticism from many scholars, who have pointed out that the reification of masculine identities as well-defined and coherent ignores the complex and contradictory ways in which men relate to and enact their gendered identities (for detailed critiques of this concept, see Collier 1998; Hearn 2004; Holter 1997; Seidler 2006; Whitehead 2002). In his ethnographic study of gay sex tourism in the Dominican Republic, for example, Mark Padilla (2007) argues that Western articulations of gay identities can be problematic in analyzing Dominican male sex workers, who may not see any conflict between engaging in same-sex relations with foreign tourists to make a living and asserting their heterosexuality and their "*hombría"*

(masculinity that is opposed to what they saw as effeminate men, rather than to femininity).

Still, the concept of hegemonic masculinity does provide useful tools to analyze how Kichwa tour guides and many young Kichwa men in and around Tena increasingly incorporate many of the affinities and behaviors of white/mestizo men in order to distance themselves from what white/mestizo society perceives as the "subordinated masculinities" of indigenous men. This is evidenced, for example, in their more cosmopolitan register of Spanish, filled with slang and foreign words in ways that were not very common among Kichwa men in more rural communities. However, I agree with the critics of the hegemonic masculinity framework in that it fails to capture the complexity of how some members of subaltern groups conform to hegemonic forms of masculinity, as well as the limits to that conformity. For example, in the case of Kichwa tour guides in Tena, they do not only incorporate white/mestizo behaviors and dispositions, but also accentuate aspects of their indigeneity that are desired and rewarded in tourist settings, as I will argue in the pages below.

**Pursuing foreign women and its impact on tour guides' understandings and performances of masculine identities.**

As mentioned earlier, the possibility to establish intimate relationships with foreign women played a central role in many young tour guides' aspirations and motivations for working in tourism. As a Kichwa tour guide, it was all but guaranteed that one would be able to date or "hook up" with dozens of "*gringas,*" something that most tour guides actively and often aggressively sought out. In this chapter, I do not

discuss actual foreign women/ Kichwa tour guide relationships, which will be the topic of the next chapter Rather, I focus on answering one pressing question: how and to what extent are the Edeni-sexual fantasies I discussed in Chapter 3, and the increasing realization by Kichwa tour guides that they are viewed as sexually attractive in the eyes of foreign female visitors, shaping tour guides' understandings and performances of their ethnic and gendered identities?

*Long hair, jaguar fang necklaces, and the politics of authenticity.*

Kichwa tour guides in Tena are often easily identifiable (see Figure 10): they usually have long hair (which as mentioned earlier is uncommon among Amazonian Kichwa men), they wear necklaces with jaguar (*Panthera onca*) fangs or white-lipped peccary (*Tayassu pecari*) tusks as pendants, and they have a distinctive way of dressing that is in many ways similar to how foreign visitors to the area usually dress (i.e. cargo pants, sandals, fanny packs). Clearly not all tour guides follow these patterns, but many (particularly urban tour guides) told me that they needed to find ways to be identified and identifiable as tour guides, and that they wanted their long hair and their way of dressing to serve as a political statement about their pride of being Kichwa and their refusal to conform to societal expectations about indigenous men. For the purpose of this dissertation, I will call tour guides' peculiar way of dressing and their choice of bodily adornments "the tour guide brand," since they combine a stereotypically indigenous "warrior look" with fashionable Western clothes and accessories. Indeed, when I asked my friend Jimmy about his long hair, he, who once dreamed of joining the military as I

discussed in the previous section, now referred to the army as a tool of state domination over indigenous people:

> I do it [have long hair] because it is a source of energy, power and virility. Look at the greatest warriors of history! Look at Achilles, Samson, Hercules. They all had long hair! When the Spanish came, they forced indigenous men to cut their hair. The military also forces indigenous men to cut their hair, saying that this is how a man should look. They are supposed to make you into a man, but it's the opposite, they take away your virility.

In fact, it would not be an exaggeration to state that most if not all long-haired Kichwa men in Tena either worked as tour guides or were involved in an activity related to the ecotourism industry. At first sight, it would appear that tour guides are merely trying to portray a more "authentic" look in the eyes of (mostly foreign) tourists, who have surely been inundated by the imagery of National Geographic and the Discovery Channel, where "real Indians" usually appeared naked and where Indian men usually had long hair and other "exotic" body and facial adornments. However, I found that the politics and motivations behind the decision to grow one's hair long or not were complex and socially consequential. I also argue that the tour guide brand was not seen as a mere aesthetic choice, but was perceived as the embodiment of a particular lifestyle, as I will show in the pages below.

Figure 10. A Kichwa tour guide in Tena. Photo courtesy of Misael Cerda.

Many of the long-haired tour guides I interviewed during the course of my fieldwork stated that it was their responsibility and their desire to rescue ancestral Kichwa masculinity, which has been lost due to Western influence. As I mentioned earlier, one of my main informants referred to long hair as the embodiment of masculine warriorhood and virility, and considered that the legacy of colonialism, alive and well in today's Ecuadorian society, attempted to emasculate indigenous men as a way to

perpetuate their inferior position in society. My friend Sacha told me something similar when I asked him about his decision to grow his hair:

> Everything in our culture is being lost. Not everyone values what they have, they start losing their culture. For example, I have long hair because many years ago all men had long hair, and women too. All the young people that live in the cities now, they only want to imitate “la gente moderna” (modern people). Even out in the communities, young people don’t want to value their culture, “solo quieren perder” (they want to lose it), they only want to speak Spanish, they want to become mestizos.

As for the necklaces, many of my interviewees told me that in the old times, the best hunters would wear the fangs of their kills, signaling their strength and their abilities as successful hunters. When I pointed out the fact that they rarely (if at all) went out hunting themselves, and that people in the communities who did still hunt regularly did not wear those kinds of necklaces, most of them told me that they were attempting to show and represent their origins and their heritage to the tourists and to the world. In other words, they were trying to embody ancestral forms of male warriorhood, at least aesthetically, even if they did not actually practice those identities in their daily lives. As one of my main informants told me: “We come from a history of warriors and hunters, and that’s what we are trying to show to the tourists, that our culture is still alive.”

However, people in Tena (indigenous and non-indigenous) seemed to think that tour guides had long hair and dressed the way they did because they wanted to project a more “authentic” indigenous image to attract foreign women. Interestingly, most of the

tour guides I have spoken to often agreed that this was the case for other tour guides but not for themselves. As one tour guide in his early 40s told me:

> I know some younger tour guides want to imitate the older ones. They say, look, this guy has a lot of *gringas* (foreign women), maybe it's because of the hair? And so, they grow out their hair really long, just for that. I do it because I want to preserve my culture; ancient people had long hair. I remember I used to have long hair as a child, and then they forced me to cut it really short when I started school. Now I have it again.

As I mentioned earlier, however, the decision to wear one's hair long, while offering opportunities to attract foreign women, was often met with disapproval, criticism and even downright mockery from other Kichwa men and women outside the tourism industry. Many older Kichwa men, particularly those who lived in the rural communities around Tena, saw long hair not just as an aesthetic preference, but as a symbol of a lifestyle they did not approve of. For them, tour guides seemed immature and irresponsible; they drank too much and they were always chasing after *gringas* instead of settling down and having a family, like a proper man should. They referred to long-haired tour guides using the term "*akcha sapa*" (literally, a person with an affinity for long hair), which carried a subtly disapproving undertone. For example, Jose's father Don Pedro, a 78-year-old *yachak*, had strong words for tour guides, saying that they grow their hair long only "because *gringas* like it." He claimed to hate long hair himself and called *akcha sapas* "*warmi kuinta*" (literally, like women). He said that sleeping with all those foreign women made tour guides weak and immature and it made them forget about their

obligations to their *ayllu* (family), a statement that deeply resonates with my discussion of Kichwa associations of undisciplined sexuality with laziness from Chapter 1. He said that Kichwa men should find women who are dependable and who are relatively "unknown" to other men, meaning that they do not leave their *ayllu* to travel like foreigners do. He also denied the very common assertion among tour guides that hair is a source of energy and virility. On the contrary, he argued that, "long hair makes you *piñarishka* (angry) because it gets tangled in vines and tree branches while walking in the forest. Long hair is bad for walking in the forest."

When I visited a Kichwa community on the banks of the Arajuno river, I heard similar accounts of how long-haired tour guides were perceived not just by older generations of Kichwa individuals, but also from young rural Kichwa. When I asked people's opinions of tour guides, they all invariably referred to a community member who had moved to Tena to work at a tour agency. He had grown out his hair really long, and every time he came back to the community to visit his relatives, he was met with mockery and teasing from friends and family members alike. "Look guys, here comes '*el maricon'* (pejorative word for a gay man)," they would say, causing everyone to laugh. People in the community told me they did not actually think he was gay, and that he was a good kid, but they just really enjoyed teasing him and having a good laugh at his expense. However, what might appear as innocent banter among friends could actually have much deeper implications.

In all the time I have spent in the Ecuadorian Amazon among Kichwa people, one of the things I have noticed is that Kichwa people tend to avoid direct confrontation, and

usually use teasing and humor to express disapproval of people's actions (for a detailed discussion of the use of humor and teasing in Kichwa culture, see Uzendoski 2005). For example, when I was studying the Kichwa language at a summer field school on the banks of the Napo River, I would sometimes try to help out the Kichwa ladies who worked in the kitchen, as a way to practice my Kichwa. On one such occasion, I was acting clumsier than normal and I was bumping into people as I moved through the kitchen. One of the ladies, visibly irritated with me, said that I was "*tonsa shina*," which literally means "like a *tonsa*," a small fresh-water fish known for its poor eyesight. Everyone (including myself) laughed, but their annoyance with me was very real.

Long hair in men was also widely disliked by Kichwa women. Most women I spoke to told me that they preferred men with their hair neatly cut, and that they did not find tour guides' style attractive. As one Kichwa woman in her mid-20s told me, "long hair is just a 'moda' (a fad) that they [tour guides] use to hook up with *gringas*. I don't like it; it doesn't look good on a man. Tour guides are a bunch of drunks, and they are too immature. They sleep with a different *gringa* every week." The association of long hair with a certain lifestyle is also quite clear in this example, and many Kichwa women I spoke to said that they were not attracted to tour guides because they were womanizers who were always chasing after *gringas.* Thus, it is not surprising that due to their reputation as "*gringa* hunters," many of my tour guide friends remained single during my fieldwork, which is unusual among adult Kichwa men. They were often unable to find a local woman because they were not perceived as reliable and responsible partners. They also faced criticism from family members, who often berated them for not having a wife

and a family, even after reaching an age in which acting as (what they perceived as) an immature "*wambra*" (very young person) was no longer acceptable. As my friend Edison told me,

> My mother told me that if I reach 30 years old and I'm still unmarried I'm going to turn into a *maricon* (pejorative word for a gay man). My friends tell me that as well. In my culture, people start having children at 15 years old; my own brother already has two kids. I do want to have kids, but since I started working in tourism, I have learned a lot from *extranjeros* (foreigners). Many of them were older than me and didn't have kids yet. They would always tell me that they had too much stress at work, that there's no time to have kids, so that mentality also entered my mind.

Indeed, some authors working in Ecuador and elsewhere have explored the politics and perceptions of authenticity behind the hairstyles of non-white men, particularly in tourist spaces. For example, Lynn Meisch found that in the Ecuadorian Andean town of Otavalo, many foreign female tourists expressed their admiration for how Otavaleño men looked, with specific references to their long hair. As one of them told her: "These guys are so sexy! Long hair, high cheekbones, white teeth, well-built, nicely dressed, friendly. Sometimes I just like to sit and look at them. They're Madison Avenue Andean Indians. (Meisch 1995, 449)." Similarly, Babb (2012) has found that long hair is one of the main strategies that *bricheros* (men who pursue foreign women) in the Peruvian city of Cusco adopt to attract the attention of foreign female tourists. As she notes, "these "Andean lovers" perfect the art of seduction of *gringas*, often by

exaggerating qualities of indigenous difference, wearing their hair long, playing traditional flutes, and adopting a dress style evocative of "Inca culture" (2012, 39). Scholars working in the Caribbean have also pointed out that "beach boys" who seek out intimate relationships with foreign female tourists often have long "dreadlocks" to embody the "*rasta*" look that many foreigners are attracted to (see, for example, Herold et al 2001; Kempadoo 1999; Philips 2008; Sanchez-Taylor 2006).

Interestingly, some authors have discussed how failing to have the "appropriate" hairstyle, or otherwise failing to meet the aesthetic and visual expectations of outsiders, can often result in not being able to successfully attract foreign lovers. For example, Dahles and Bras (1999) argue that Indonesian "beach boys" who failed to embody the "*gondrong*" look, which often consists of "tight black jeans, loose shirts that are unbuttoned to the belly, long black hair, and dark sunglasses" (1999, 281) complained to them that they were not as successful in attracting foreign women. As one such "beach boy" told them: "Maybe I look too decent and too serious. I wear my shirt in my trousers, my hair is neatly cut, and I am clean. Maybe women think I am not interested in having a relationship, that I am too serious, with my religion for instance (1999, 283)."

Indeed, during one of my interviews with Edison, one of the best-known Kichwa tour guides in Tena who only a few months before our conversation had really long hair down to his buttocks, he expressed his deep frustration about not having long hair anymore, as it seemed to have impacted his ability to attract foreign women. One night, after going out to a bar with other tour guides, he got very drunk and passed out at one his friends' house. When he woke up the next morning, he realized that his friends had cut

his long ponytail off while he was unconscious. At first glance, it might appear as an innocent practical joke among friends, but Edison was not the tiniest bit amused. He explained why:

> You remember, *mashi*, how cool my long hair looked. These "*hijos de puta*" (sons of bitches) cut it off. *Gringas* used to love my hair; they would always want to touch it. I used to have many *gringa* "*amigas*" (literally "friends," but used as a euphemism for "lovers" here,) you know that. But since these jerks cut off my hair, I haven't been able to get as many *gringas* as before.

Edison had good reason to be concerned. Some other tour guides mentioned their short hair as the main cause of their inability to attract foreign women. A few days after my conversation with Edison, I went out for a beer with my friend Jose, who, as I mentioned earlier in this chapter, had started working as a tour guide fairly recently after losing his job as a schoolteacher in a community near the Colombian border, in Sucumbíos Province. Jose, while deeply knowledgeable of the forest and of Kichwa customs (his father is a well-known *yachak*,) did not share most tour guides' aesthetic preferences for long hair or for their particular style of dressing. Instead, he had neatly groomed short hair and he usually dressed in jeans and polo shirts. Not long after we finished our second beer that night, Jose confided to me that he had met a French woman during an *ayawaska* ceremony his father had performed. The woman was around his age (early 40s) and had evidently taken a liking to him. A few days after the ceremony, she had come up to him and told him that she really liked him, and that she was interested in having a relationship with him because she loved his people and his culture. The only

thing she would change about him, she said, was his short hair. She said that she was traveling to Peru for a month or two to visit another *ayawaska* shaman, and that she would love to come back to Ecuador and spend some more time with Jose after that. She had one small request, though: Jose should grow out his hair because she really liked indigenous men with long hair. When I asked him whether he was thinking about doing what she asked, he told me: "Maybe I will, I don't know. I don't like long hair, but this *gringa* really likes me, and she said she wants to take me to France. "*Tocará dejarse"* (roughly, I'll just have to let it [grow])." I should point out that he never did, at least during the period of my fieldwork, and the French woman never made it back to Tena.

Despite tour guides' claims to rescuing ancestral masculinity, some did acknowledge to project that "warrior look" with the specific intent of attracting foreign women, although they claimed to have some other powerful reasons. As my friend Rumi told me,

> I used to have long hair too, and obviously I wore my *guangana* [white-lipped peccary] necklace too (laughter). I did it because I knew *gringas* liked it, and I liked feeling exotic. That's the reason I did it; that's the reason we all did it. There's no other reason. As a tour guide, you take tourists out to the communities for cultural presentations, but what do we show? What do we offer? So, we had to come up with stuff that caught the attention of *gringas*. There was no other way.

However, while it was quite clear from my conversations with tour guides and many other Kichwa and non-Kichwa individuals in and around Tena that one the main drivers of tour guides' long hair, dressing style and personal demeanor was to project a

particular image that foreign female visitors found attractive, it would be an oversimplification to state that this was the only reason. During many of my interviews in the Tena area with Kichwa individuals outside the tourism industry, I noticed that, for all their criticisms of tour guides as immature and arrogant, there was also an undeniable admiration and even jealousy towards tour guides for their ability to easily navigate the mestizo and the *gringo* worlds. For example, a 27-year-old Kichwa woman, who was dating an American man at the time, told me that,

> Yeah, people in the communities look at tour guides with *recelo* (the closest translation here would be "disapprovingly"), but some of it is pure envy. Kichwa people don't like it when other people *progesa* (progress), especially if they themselves get no benefits from it. They see tour guides hanging out with foreigners and *progresando* (progressing) and they hate it that they're stuck in poverty and unhappy with their lives.

While this was just the opinion of a young, upwardly mobile Kichwa woman who was dating a foreigner herself, it nevertheless captured the anxieties of many of my informants outside the small tour guide community: Kichwa tour guides were representing their culture and showing it to foreigners, but they did not always do it in a way that they either approved of or even identified with. And that brings me to another powerful reason why many of the tour guides I interacted with adopted the "warrior look:" They did not just do it to attract foreign female tourists, but also to redefine and contest the long-standing colonial views of indigenous men as poor, subservient, feminine, dumb, and child-like, and their desire, as I discussed earlier, to "become" more

appreciated and desirable versions of themselves. By growing out their hair and wearing jaguar fang necklaces while, at the same time, wearing fashionable Western clothes and pursuing foreign lovers, Kichwa tour guides seemed to be sending rebellious messages in all directions. On the one hand, they were telling white/mestizo society that they rejected the image of indigenous men as subservient, shy, feminine and unattractive. At the same time, they were sending a message to their fellow Kichwa that they rejected what they perceived as a long-standing internalization by Kichwa men of those very stereotypes, keeping them in a position of subservience, which they attributed to the legacy of colonialism. Judging by most tour guides' willingness to endure the social consequences of some of their choices, which sometimes strained their relationships even with their own families, it was hard to see their challenges to all those norms as being born out of anything but sincere discontent and frustration. As my friend Rumi explained,

> I didn't want to be like those men in the communities, getting married young and having bunch of kids. That's not the life I want. Working in tourism I feel important, I feel exotic. Yeah, when I had long hair I mostly did it because gringas liked it, but it also provided me with other ways to learn, other ways to see society. So, it was like, yeah, I'm Kichwa and I have my culture, but also know about other things, so I became wiser.

Another interesting feature of tour guides was their choice of nicknames. Nicknames in Tena (and throughout Ecuador,) particularly among men, are extremely common. They are generally used as an expression of camaraderie and humorous banter among friends. The assignment or adoption of a particular nickname is often related to

the physical characteristics of a person, their place of origin, or peculiar characteristics of their personality. For example, some men might be given the nickname “chino” due to the particular shape of their eyes, some might be called “manaba” (from Manabi province) or “negro” (black) due to their origins from the coastal areas of Ecuador, and some might be called “Tabaquero” due to his addiction to tobacco or “Despiste,” alluding to his forgetfulness, just to name a few.

Tour guides were no exception. Almost all of them had a nickname at the time of my fieldwork, and people usually called them by their nicknames rather than by their actual names. What was different in the nickname choices of many of my tour guide informants was 1) that nicknames were often self-adopted rather than imposed by other people and 2) that they did not usually refer to physical characteristics, geographical origin or personality traits but instead they were often Kichwa words that referenced prominent elements of the landscape . In that sense, I encountered several tour guides who called themselves “*Sacha*” (forest), “*Yaku*” (water or river), “*Wayra*” (wind) and, many people’s favorite choice, “*Amarun*” (Kichwa word for anaconda and other large constrictors). This last one had very explicit sexual undertones that tour guides would often happily hint at, especially to female tourists. As Uzendoski (2005) has argued, however, this association was not created by tour guides but has long been part of Kichwa cosmovision. He notes that “the anaconda is thought to be the originator of life itself and signifies the power of procreation. This relationship is sometimes evoked by likening the anaconda to the human penis” (2005, 30).

These Kichwa sounding nicknames were more frequently adopted by younger tour guides, while older tour guides generally adopted nicknames that followed the patterns of mainstream Ecuadorian society. I should note, however, that these types of nicknames were not the exclusive domain of Kichwa tour guides, but were also often adopted by Kichwa artists as stage names, and by some other Kichwa involved in indigenous politics and cultural revitalization efforts, as well as those who were active in promoting bilingual education. It is also worth pointing out that some long-term foreign residents and foreign scholars who have had children with local Kichwa individuals have sometimes given them Kichwa sounding names, something quite uncommon among Kichwa people themselves except for a few individuals involved in cultural activism and indigenous politics.

While the relevance of this discussion of nicknames may not be immediately clear, I argue that choosing Kichwa sounding nicknames that reference prominent elements of the landscape cannot be analyzed in isolation from all the forces discussed earlier in this chapter, from external expectations of indigenous authenticity to tour guides' desires to contest their subaltern positionality. It is all part of the tour guide brand. While it was not quite clear to me why many older tour guides did not often adopt these types of nicknames, my impression was that younger tour guides grew up amid, and have thus been more exposed to, global circulations of "New Age" and Western environmentalist ideas and imaginations of indigeneity, which portray indigenous people as closer to nature and often sacralize (real or imagined) indigenous identities and practices (Aldred 2000; Conklin and Graham 1995; Ramos 1991; Redford 1990). As

Rumi, a former tour guide who was at the time in a long-term relationship with a North American woman, told me,

> I feel free like the wind. I'm part of nature, I'm closer to nature. I always wanted to change my name, I did not feel that Clemente was my real name, so when I had enough money I went to the "Registro Civil" (Ecuadorian ID and passport office) and I changed it to Rumi (rock or stone in Kichwa). I do identify with my name now, the only thing is that I've had so many bureaucratic problems because I had to change my name in all my documents, including my high school diploma. That hasn't been easy.

Not all tour guides who adopt these types of nicknames end up officially changing their names, however. In fact, other than Rumi, I do not know of any other tour guide who has gone that far. Rumi's willingness to go through all that bureaucratic red tape just to change his name, though, indicates a much deeper discontent and frustration than our conversation would suggest, and it points to similar anxieties shared by other tour guides even if they do not go as far as Rumi did. Just as with long hair, nicknames are not just a way to attract foreign women and to appear more "authentically" Kichwa; they also provide an opportunity to contest their marginalized status by showing the uniqueness and importance of their identities.

However, all these performances of "charismatic" (Perley 2014) Kichwa masculinities seemed to find their limits when some Kichwa men  adopted looks or practices that were not viewed as culturally appropriate even by Kichwa tour guides, which often resulted in mockery and accusations of being outright deceitful. Two main

examples come to mind. The first concerns a tour guide who was known as "*el pintado"* (the painted one) among other tour guides. This particular tour guide walked around Tena with his face painted as ancient hunters and warriors did, something that most tour guides often did when performing demonstrations for tourists (see Figure 6) but never did as regular everyday practice. Tour guides often mocked "*el pintado*" for this practice, and many told me that he only did it to attract *gringas.* Indeed, the very fact that he was known as "*el pintado*" reflects how uncommon it was for Kichwa men to do this, and implied a subtle sense of disapproval.

The second example concerns Carlos, a Kichwa man who was not a tour guide but habitually stood outside a coffee shop in Tena which is very popular among foreign visitors, selling pottery to tourists. Carlos not only embodied what I have called the tour guide brand, but often adopted practices that were deemed inauthentic and deceitful by other Kichwa tour guides and even by his neighbors and some of his family members. For example, I often saw Carlos performing sun salutation rituals outside the coffee shop, especially if there were foreign female tourists present. I also occasionally saw him playing a flute and chewing on *guayusa* (*Ilex guayusa*) leaves, which are widely consumed by Kichwa people as an infusion (see Jarrett 2019), but are not usually chewed or eaten. Many Kichwa tour guides told me that these practices were common in the Andes, where indigenous people have traditionally chewed on coca leaves , but they were not part of Amazonian Kichwa culture.

Indeed, when I first asked Carlos about his practice of leaf chewing, he told me that he had learned it from his grandparents, who he said used to chew on *guayusa* and

*ishpingo* (*Ocotea quixos,* a spice taxonomically related to cinnamon) leaves. After he said this, he stayed silent for a few seconds, and then admitted: "Actually, I didn't learn it from my grandparents; they didn't do that, but I do!" Carlos's is an interesting case. He was widely disliked by many tour guides for crossing what they saw as a fine line between emphasizing aspects of their identities that were attractive to *gringas,* but which were also culturally and personally meaningful, and being, in their words, attempting to deceive tourists by deliberately misrepresenting Kichwa culture. For example, tour guides would emphasize the healing aspects of shamanism while downplaying its intrinsically violent character, or they would speak about the spiritual powers of a specific tree and not focus too much on its practical uses (as many rural Kichwa generally did), but they did not view those actions as deceitful. Instead, they felt that they were merely highlighting (real) aspects of Kichwa culture that tourists were interested in. However, they reacted negatively to performances of "Kichwa culture" that they did not recognize as even remotely related to any Kichwa tradition, such as Carlos's guayusa chewing or his performance of sun salutation rituals.

The increasing realization by Kichwa tour guides that they are considered attractive and desirable as sexual partners by many foreign women has undoubtedly boosted many of my tour guide friends' confidence and self-esteem, as I will further explore in Chapter 5. For the purposes of this chapter, however, I want to focus on the effects of this realization on the seemingly different behaviors and attitudes that urban tour guides exhibited vis-à-vis other Kichwa men.  During my fieldwork in Tena, I noticed very marked differences between urban Kichwa tour guides and rural Kichwa

men in terms of their general demeanor and especially in their ways of comporting themselves around foreign visitors. Nowhere were these differences more evident, though, than in how urban tour guides and rural Kichwa men behaved around foreign female tourists. While many rural men, including some who worked in activities related to tourism, would often adopt a rather shy and quiet demeanor, most urban tour guides, who had dated or "hooked up" with several *gringas,* generally behaved in a very flirtatious (often aggressively so) manner. To illustrate my argument, I will use the examples of Pablo, a rural Kichwa man who works as a "*canoero*" (motorized canoe operator) in the rural parish of Ahuano, and Jimmy, one of my urban tour guide friends from Tena.

At the time of my fieldwork, Pablo was a 25-year-old Kichwa man from Ahuano, a rural parish about 20 miles from Tena, on the banks of the Napo river. At merely 25, he had been married for seven years and he had two small daughters. He owned and operated a motorized canoe, and would often be hired by my agency to transport tourists on river tours. Although I led tours with Pablo on at least a dozen occasions, he told me he did not consider himself a tour guide, which was very interesting for me in the sense that Pablo considered being a tour guide a lifestyle as much as an occupation. On most of the tour I had the opportunity to participate with Pablo, it struck me how quiet and reserved he was around tourists, especially women, despite being incredibly knowledgeable about the local flora and fauna and about Kichwa customs and traditions. After we got to know each other well during the course of several tours, Pablo would even ask me to provide explanations and answer tourists' questions myself, arguing that

"you already know this stuff, *mashi*, and you speak their language so it's just easier if I operate the canoe and you do the talking part."

I also noticed that Pablo would rarely take the initiative to engage in conversation with tourists, particularly female tourists, although he would be extremely polite and friendly if one of them initiated a conversation with him. In all the time I spent with Pablo, I never witnessed an attempt to flirt with a female tourist, even when in several of our conversations he suggested he was not opposed to the idea of hooking up with a *gringa*. Pablo thought that his shy demeanor and his "normal" looks (he had short hair and wore rubber boots and long-sleeve shirts) did not make him attractive in the eyes of *gringas*. In his own words,

> I have never been with a *gringa*. Many of the tour guides in Tena have had many "extranjeras" (foreign women,) but I guess us "*canoeros*" don't have that kind of luck. But, you know, I'm married (to a Kichwa woman,) and I don't have time to do all those "*pendejadas*" (roughly, stupid and almost childish behaviors) like having long hair and all that.

By contrast, Jimmy, a veteran tour guide from Tena, displayed a very different, much more confident attitude around foreign female visitors. As discussed earlier in this chapter, Jimmy embodied what I have called "the tour guide brand," a combination of the stereotypical indigenous warrior look (long hair, jaguar fang necklaces and other bodily adornments) and Western fashionable clothes such as cargo shorts and sandals. Jimmy was one of the most successful tour guides in Tena in terms of attracting and seducing

foreign women. He was also one of the most aggressive ones in his explicit sexual overtures to *gringas*, which earned him a reputation as a womanizer and a "*gringuero*" (a man who regularly pursues foreign women), even among other tour guides. Jimmy's nickname was "Machakuy," which is the Kichwa word for different types of venomous snakes, and it was the subject of several sexual jokes related to its origin, implying parallels between snakes and his genitalia.

I had the opportunity to participate in several tours with Jimmy during my fieldwork, in which I was able to witness his overly confident and flirtatious behavior around foreign female visitors. In one of those tours, we traveled with two French female tourists to "Laguna Azul" (Blue Lagoon,) a beautiful grouping of natural, crystal-clear pools in the "Waysa Yaku" river, about 20 miles from Tena. After we bathed in the river for nearly an hour, the tourists laid down on some nearby rocks to dry up and catch a tan. Jimmy walked up to them and started dancing and singing in a very sensual manner, rolling his hands down his naked torso and emulating sexual moves with the movement of his hips. The French tourists could not stop giggling. One of them asked him about his several tattoos on his arms and torso. Jimmy began explaining the meanings behind the tattoos, adding that he had one tattoo that was not immediately visible but was nevertheless his favorite one. He pointed at his groin area and with a mischievous grin told them that he had a tattoo of an elephant there (which he later said was a joke,) clearly implying that he had a large penis, like an elephant's trunk. The French tourists laughed nervously but they did not seem offended by his joke. Later, on the trip back to Tena, we were riding in the back of a truck and the driver hit the brakes abruptly to avoid a

pothole. Jimmy leaped out of his seat and almost fell over one of the French tourists, putting his groin area really close to her face. She smiled in a flirtatious way: "Wow, that was too close!" He replied, "I'm sorry, it's just that sometimes I'm like a *puma* (jaguar), jumping on people like that."

Another way in which urban Kichwa men, specially tour guides, showed their confidence and their conformity to mainstream heterosexual behavior, was through catcalling. According to many of my interviews with Kichwa, mestiza and foreign women around Tena, mestizo and urban Kichwa men were more likely to catcall them on the street than rural Kichwa men. As one young Kichwa woman in Tena told me,

> Older Kichwa men tend to be more respectful of women, at least when it comes to catcalling. Older Kichwa men generally do not catcall me when I walk by, but younger men do, especially urban Kichwa and mestizo men. Those who already know me usually leave me alone, there is some respect. The worst in that sense are tour guides. Since they hook up with lots of *gringas*, *"se creen superiores"* (they feel superior) and they catcall everything that moves.

This resonates with what many foreign women told me, stating that it was mostly urban Kichwa tour guides who engaged in catcalling and aggressively flirtatious behavior, both in person and through social media. An American female anthropologist who conducted research in the Tena and Archidona area in the 90s confirmed the change in Amazonian men, both Kichwa and mestizo, in terms of aggressive catcalling and overtly sexual attitudes towards foreign female tourists. According to this anthropologist

(personal communication,) she very rarely experienced catcalling when conducting research in the Tena area, as most men were rather shy and reserved. Conversely, she stated that she frequently experienced catcalling and sexual inuendo by mestizo men in the capital city of Quito. As tourism developed in the early 90s, and the upper Amazon region became more integrated to the national economy, men in the region seem to have become more cosmopolitan and thus more confident in their interactions with foreign women, which was also undoubtedly boosted by the considerable amount foreign female visitors who seemed to have an interest in engaging in intimate relationships with indigenous men.

During my fieldwork in Tena, however, I noticed that at least some of the catcalling being done by my tour guide friends was not aimed at actually getting the women being catcalled to respond. In fact, I argue that in some instances catcalling represented an opportunity to show and reaffirm one's masculinity and heterosexuality in front of one's male peers, rather than an opportunity to get the attention of the woman being catcalled. For example, on one occasion I was coming back from a tour with several Kichwa tour guides and a mestizo cab driver who had been sent to pick us up from the tour site, about ten kilometers from Tena. As we approached Tena, we drove by an attractive young Kichwa woman who was walking along the side of the road. As we approached her at about forty miles per hour, the tour guides and the cab driver simultaneously shouted sexually charged comments at her, and then began to laugh as we drove away. As it becomes clear in this example, the intention was not really to engage

this woman, but to perform normative forms of heterosexuality and reassert their masculinity in front of their male peers.

Finally, another interesting difference between rural and urban Kichwa men was in homosocial behavior. For example, it was quite common for my tour guide friends to engage in different forms of homoerotic banter with one another, something I never witnessed among rural Kichwa men. The most common form of this behavior was to tell each other that they were going to take advantage of one another while they slept, or that they were going to perform anal sex on the other while leading tours in the forest. The most common phrase used was "*te voy a dar trelo*" (literally, I am going to give you *trelo*) which apparently comes from inverting the phrase "*los tres*" (the three). This references a popular euphemism within mainstream Ecuadorian society, *"los tres platos"* (three-meal course), which implies a sexual act that includes oral, vaginal and anal sex.

Of course, this form of teasing was not considered by tour guides to have any implications of homosexuality. Instead, it was aimed at jokingly feminize one another, suggesting that the other would be placed in a submissive position. This idea resonates with what other scholars of Latin America have found among white/mestizo men, where men sometimes reaffirm their masculinity and dominance by having sex (mostly in the active role) with effeminate men (see, for example, Almaguer 2011), although, in the case of Kichwa tour guides, I never got any indication that these ideas went beyond a form of humorous banter among close friends, but was nevertheless a type of behavior that starkly contrasted those of rural Kichwa men.

**Conclusions.**

In this chapter, I have discussed several points that I consider crucial if we are to understand the experiences of young male Kichwa tour guides in the Ecuadorian Amazon. First, I explored the motivations of many of these young men for seeking work in the ecotourism industry. I showed that economic opportunities for young Kichwa individuals in the Ecuadorian Amazon are few and far between, especially considering that very few of them have college degrees. Thus, becoming a tour guide was often the most viable option for Kichwa youth in Tena, especially young men who comprised the vast majority of the tour guide community. As I indicated, ecotourism was not often the first choice of employment for many of the tour guides I interviewed, as there are other activities that were considered more profitable and desirable, but often required investments that were simply out of reach for indigenous individuals. Thus, many individuals were driven to tourism by lack of other options, the appeal of interacting with foreigners (particularly foreign women), or simply bad luck.

I also analyzed the complex and often contradictory processes of negotiation that young Kichwa men go through as they enter service-based employment in the ecotourism industry. Perhaps the most interesting of the processes is the contentious relationship that tour guides develop with their own indigeneity, in which they often distance themselves from the most common stereotypes circulating within Ecuador associated with rural indigenous people. Thus, by dressing like the foreign tourists they interact with, speaking foreign languages, and adopting urban lifestyles they attempt to show how modern, technologically savvy and entrepreneurial they can be. However, even as they appear to

reject these stereotypes, they also seek to accentuate certain aspects of their indigeneity that make them appear more authentic in the eyes of tourists, especially of foreign women, such as having long hair, indexing indigenous people's special connection to nature, and reproducing Western environmentalist ideas regarding conservation and the rainforest.

However, I argued that these seemingly contradictory processes cannot be reduced to explanations that only look at Kichwa tour guides as powerlessly conforming to the fantasies and expectations or more powerful outsiders, nor can they be reduced to explanations that only focus on tour guides' agency in strategically deploying aspects of their ethnic and gendered identities that will allow them to make a living through their work in ecotourism. Instead, I proposed looking at ecotourism encounters as spaces where Kichwa tour guides can "become" (Biehl and Locke 2010) more appreciated, respected, and desired versions of themselves, although I acknowledge that their desire to "become" was shaped by outsiders' expectations and eco-primitivist fantasies.

I showed that while scholars have explored several avenues through which indigenous men in Latin America can partially transcend their disempowered and marginalized status, such as joining the military or the police forces, working as miners, or moving into urban centers and trying to conceal their indigeneity, ecotourism offers an alternative masculinizing and empowering space for Amazonian Kichwa tour guides which does not require them to attempt to conceal their indigenous identity but actually encourages them to bring it to the forefront. Within ecotourism spaces, thus, indigeneity was not experienced as a liability but an asset. For these men, who grew up in a society

that deemed them as unattractive, feminized, and backward due to their indigenous origin, ecotourism became a space in which all those perceptions became inverted. Within ecotourism spaces, Kichwa culture (however sanitized) was celebrated and almost revered by Western tourists, and Kichwa tour guides were perceived as wise, strong, and primordially masculine. Furthermore, foreign female tourists frequently exhibited a sexual interest in these men, who were considered to be at the bottom of the dating and marriage pool within their own society. In the next chapter, I offer an in-depth discussion of intimate relationships between Kichwa tour guides and foreign female tourists, and I explore the motivations and fantasies that shape most of these relationships.

# VI. CHAPTER 5: FANTASIES, POWER, AND DESIRE: UNDERSTANDING INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN KICHWA TOUR GUIDES AND FOREIGN WOMEN.

## Introduction.

At the time of my fieldwork, Tiffany was a 23-year-old woman from the United States who had lived in Tena for about five months. She worked for a local NGO that provided short-term service-learning internships for foreign students. She had participated in a study abroad program in the Ecuadorian Amazon a few years prior, when she was still an undergraduate student, and had fallen in love with the place and with its people. It was during that first trip that she met Rumi, who, as I discussed in previous chapters, was a Kichwa man who had worked as a tour guide for a long time and was very active in regional indigenous politics. From the moment she arrived in the Kichwa community where Rumi lived, she said she felt really attracted to the Kichwa men in the community because of their culture and their sense of solidarity and community. Shortly after she moved into the community as part of her study abroad program, she started dating Rumi. The beginnings of the relationship were a bit tumultuous, as the study abroad program directors frowned upon students engaging in sexual relationships with members of the host community. However, Tiffany was determined not to let that stop her from experiencing something she really desired. As she told me in one of our conversations, "I wanted to believe that this is just something exciting and new, and a romance in the Amazon, like, wow, think about it, a romance in

the Amazon! I think it's something I wanted and I didn't want to think about how long it could be or where it could go, I just wanted it."

Sexual liaisons between foreigners and locals in Tena were a fairly common occurrence during the period of my fieldwork. While some foreign men did engage in intimate relationships with Kichwa and mestiza women, and less frequently (or at least less visibly), with Kichwa and mestizo men, arguably the vast majority of foreign/local sexual liaisons occurred between foreign women and Kichwa men, particularly tour guides. This could be partially attributed to the fact that many of these relationships were established in tourism settings, where the vast majority of tour guides are young Kichwa men. Another important factor was the still prevalent association of indigenous femininity with conservative morality and sexuality, although these notions were often challenged by young, urban Kichwa women, who seemed increasingly willing to engage in short-term intimacy with foreign and local men alike. Not surprisingly, due to the strong patriarchal order that still governs gender and sex relations in the Tena area (as well as in much of the world), the reputation of Kichwa women who engaged in short-term sexual relationships with foreigners suffered considerably more than the reputation of Kichwa men who engaged in similar behaviors, which may have also contributed to the seemingly fewer occurrences of foreign men/local women sexual liaisons. As Lynn Meisch (1995) noted in her research in the Andean market town of Otavalo in northern Ecuador,

> The foreign-local romances in Otavalo are almost all *gringa*-Otavaleño, rather than foreign males and Otavaleña (or white-mestiza) females (…) Young

> Ecuadorian females of all ethnicities are more sheltered and protected than young males for all the usual reasons, including their parents' fears of harm, pregnancy, and damage to their reputation (1995, 453).

In fact, the most visible relationships between foreign men and Kichwa women in the Tena area during my fieldwork were usually formal, long-term relationships between Kichwa women and long-term foreign male residents, particularly researchers and NGO workers, rather than short-term tourists, although that is not to say that short-term liaisons or casual "hook-ups" did not occur.

Despite the frequency and visibility of these relationships, particularly between foreign female tourists and Kichwa tour guides, the academic literature about ecotourism in the Tena area has systematically ignored them (see, for example, Davidov 2013; Hutchins 1992; Hutchins and Wilson 2010), even when my interviews and conversations with people in and around Tena suggested that these relationships were even more prevalent in the decade prior to my fieldwork, when many of these scholarly works were produced. Still, there is absolutely no mention of these relationships in any ethnographic account of this area. To be sure, my intention here is not to speculate about the reasons and motivations that have driven these scholars to ignore this phenomenon or, as it may be the case, to consider it irrelevant or overly controversial. Instead, in Chapter 3 I built upon their work to show a seemingly different product of what they describe as the increasing commodification of the Amazonian rainforest and its indigenous cultures, namely the production of and desire for sexualized and eroticized indigenous bodies.

In this chapter, I analyze the impacts of power, sexualized fantasies about the racial "Other," and the desires to perform essential forms of gendered identities, on actual relationships between foreign women and Kichwa men, particularly long-haired tour guides. I discuss the similarities between these encounters and those described by scholars of sex tourism in other Third-World countries, but I also analyze the particularities of the Amazon region and the ideas and images associated with it in producing unique desires and expectations, and I put forward an alternative way of describing and thinking about these relationships using the term "Edeni-sexual" encounters, which I introduced in Chapter 3. In the introduction to this dissertation, I described some of the problematic aspects of the literature on sex tourism, and of the term "sex tourism" itself, when analyzing many of the intimate liaisons that are established in tourism settings between tourists and locals. In this chapter, I use ethnographic data collected in the Tena area to show that the motivations and interests of both foreign tourists and locals who enter into these relationships have sometimes been presented in rather simplistic ways, and that racialized and colonial fantasies informed not only foreign women's desires for Kichwa men, but also Kichwa men's desires for foreign white women.

I also discuss and analyze the main motivations of Kichwa men who entered into these relationships, which ranged from purely economic incentives to the desire to contest anti-indigenous stereotypes by showing their ability to attract white women. Most literature on sex tourism treats local non-white men who pursue foreign women as "romantic entrepreneurs" who play into the racialized fantasies of foreign (mostly white)

women by performing (and internalizing) commodified versions of their ethnic and sexual identities to make a living. In contrast, I show, through dozens of ethnographic examples, that there exists a broad spectrum of anxieties, desires, and imaginations that played important roles in my tour guide friends' desires to pursue foreign female visitors that went far beyond the merely economic.

Finally, I discuss and analyze long-term relationships between foreign women and Kichwa tour guides, explore the conflicts and disappointments that accompanied some of these relationships, and reveal the often painful experiences of all the parties involved. I argue that there are three major forces and fantasies that inform many of the relationships. First, intimate encounters with indigenous men allowed foreign visitors to consume and be part of an overtly sensual and sexualized Amazonian landscape, as the bodies of indigenous individuals were often imagined to be a natural part of that landscape. Secondly, the perceived absence of "coevalness," or coexistence of indigenous and non-indigenous peoples (see, for example, Davidov 2013), allowed foreign women to "travel back in time" and experience pre-modern forms of gender roles and sexuality. Finally, engaging in intimate relationships with indigenous men provided opportunities for some of these women to simultaneously subvert the balance of gender power existing in their home countries, and reaffirm their feminine and sexual identities without the burden of what they perceived to be increasingly ambiguous and fluid gender roles and identities in North America or Europe. To support my arguments, I use information provided to me during interviews with foreign visitors in Tena, as well as fieldnotes taken while participating in tours as a volunteer translator.

However, I argue that “Edeni-sexual” encounters between foreign women and Kichwa men in the Ecuadorian Amazon differ not just from those documented in other tourism settings, but also deviate in one crucial way from the main theme of the Eden story. Indeed, in the Eden story, Eve corrupted Adam (in the eyes of God) by tempting him to eat from the Tree of Knowledge. In Tena, however, foreign women did not intend for Kichwa men to come out of their perceived state of Edenic innocence. Instead, these women often wanted to purify themselves from their baggage of guilt and privilege through their relationships with these “pure” men. In other words, these North American and European Eves did not intend to corrupt their Kichwa Adams; **they wanted to be redeemed by them**. These notions will become clearer in my discussion of long-term relationships between foreign women and Kichwa men in the final section of this chapter.

**Understanding Kichwa tour guides’ motivations for pursuing foreign women.**

*Economic incentives.*

In much of the literature about non-white local men pursuing intimate encounters with foreign female visitors, which often overlaps with the literature on sex tourism, economic gain and the possibility of foreign travel are mentioned as the primary motivations of these men (see, for example, de Albuquerque 1998; Brown 1992; Dahles and Bras 1999; Phillips 2008). They are usually described as “romantic entrepreneurs” who play into the racialized fantasies of foreign (mostly white) women by performing (and internalizing) commodified versions of their ethnic and sexual identities to make a living. Depending on location, these men are known as “beach boys” or “rent-a-

dreads"(Jamaica), "bricheros" (Peru), "jineteros"(Cuba), "gringueros"(Costa Rica), "bomsas" (the Gambia) and "sanki pankies" (Dominican Republic), just to name a few. In most cases, with a few exceptions (see, for example, Jacobs 2010) the socioeconomic status of the men involved is similar: they are generally young, poor, and uneducated, and they usually work in tourism settings where they have easy access to foreign visitors. For example, in her research about "bomsas" in the Gambia, Brown (1992) found that,

> In return for the services which they provide to tourists, "bomsas" expect, in the short term, various forms of payment (money and material goods) and, in the long term, they aim to extend the friendship into one which endures after the tourist has left the Gambia. Ideally the youths hope to obtain from their tourist friend the gift of an airline ticket to Europe (1992, 364).

Several scholars working in the Caribbean region have reached similar conclusions about Caribbean men who engage in relationships with foreign women. Herold at al. (2001), in their study of "sanki pankis" in the Dominican Republic found that,

> The males play up their financial situation in different ways, such as indicating that they are poor, or they may suggest that they have family responsibilities for a sick relative or that they hope to continue their education or that they would like to start a small business but need money to do these things. Another strategy is to look sad and not to talk. This throws the woman off guard because until that point

> the beach boy has been very friendly, smiling all the time, and very talkative (2001, 991).

From my interviews and informal conversations with my tour guide friends in and around Tena, I was able to confirm that economic opportunities in the form of financial assistance and foreign travel were indeed part of what drove many of my informants to pursue relationships with foreign women. As my friend Edison told me about a German woman with whom he had just spent the previous weekend in the nearby town of Baños,

> This girl had a lot of money; we had a great weekend in Baños. She paid for everything we did: tours, meals, everything. I told her I am sorry, but you know I am poor and cannot afford a weekend in Baños. She understood, she was cool. One time I felt bad and I told her I was going to pay for breakfast, but she said no. Every time we went out, she was really quick to reach for her purse to pay for stuff.

Many others told me that having a foreign girlfriend also represented a good opportunity to obtain some financial assistance to build tourism infrastructure on their properties. Many of my tour guide friends owned land in the neighboring communities, which often had beautiful swimming holes and other potential attractions for tourists, but they usually lacked the funds to finance even the most basic types of construction. Indeed, some tour guides in Tena who were able to open their own agencies and/or build forest cabins to rent out to tourists, did so with the assistance of foreign girlfriends or

wives. In a few cases, according to accounts from my informants, this type of financial support seemed to be the main motivation on the part of the Kichwa men. For example, Tina, a Kichwa woman who was in the process of obtaining her tour guide license, told me that she knew a tour guide from a community on the banks of the Napo river who had gotten married to a woman from Switzerland. They were living together, and they even had a baby together, but Tina said that everyone knew he was only with her for the money, and that after she bought him a house and a motorized canoe he broke up with her and asked her to leave the house with their child and to go back to Europe. Others told me stories about tour guides seducing female tourists to steal their cash and jewelry while they slept. Whether accurate or not, the stories that Tina and others related to me nevertheless illuminated how many people, including many Kichwa people, felt about these relationships.

Foreign travel was also one of the most sought out opportunities by my tour guide friends, as many imagined that being able to work in Europe or the United States for a few months or years could help them make enough money to come back to Ecuador and open their own tourism business. Interestingly, while most if not all of my informants expressed their desire to establish a relationship with a foreign woman that would facilitate opportunities for them to travel to North America or Europe, very few had intentions to reside abroad permanently. In fact, most stories about tour guides that had managed to travel abroad via a foreign partner were filled with instances of frustration, anguish and regret. While most of the relevant literature mentions foreign travel as one of the main (and often the ultimate) aspirations for these men (see, for example, Brown

1992; Herold at al. 2001; Frohlick 2007; Kempadoo 1999; Meisch 1995), I think more ethnographic work is needed to illuminate the experiences of these men once they achieve their goal. Some authors, like Dahles and Bras (1999), have described some of these experiences in their work with "beach boys" in Indonesia:

> Five years ago, Sugyo went to Austria to live with a young woman he had met in Yogyakarta. They got a child, a little boy, Sugyo is very proud of. But life in Austria was not easy for the Indonesian man; he could not find a job and felt isolated. While Sugyo was supposed to care for their child, he got drunk and neglected his duties. Their relationship deteriorated. He stole money from his girlfriend, left Austria, and traveled through Europe. Finally, he returned home to Yogyakarta (1999, 285).

My friend Jaime is also a good example of the hardships that many of these men go through as unskilled immigrants in Western societies. Back in 2008, Jaime met a volunteer from the United States in Tena, and they started dating. After a few months, his girlfriend asked him if he wanted to get married and move to New York with her. Jaime was elated, he told me, because life in the Amazon was hard and even working in tourism did not provide him with a steady source of income. Besides, he said, "it was New York! Who doesn't want to live in New York?" Jaime received a fiancée visa to travel to the U.S with her in 2009. His plan was to stay in the U.S and get married to her, but he soon grew disillusioned of life in New York. His girlfriend would leave early for work and would not get back until really late at night, leaving Jaime home by himself, with little to do other than watching TV. After nearly a month, she encouraged him to sign up for

English classes to improve his chances of getting a job. She also had him help out her father in the family business (they owned a car wash business), which, according to Jaime, was really hard work. After about 3 months, he decided that the best option for him was to return to Ecuador, where he ran his own tour agency, something he thought would be nearly impossible to achieve in the U.S. He informed his girlfriend about his decision and he told her that the best thing for both of them would be to end the relationship. Shortly thereafter, she found out she was pregnant with Jaime's child. At the time of my fieldwork, the boy was 11 years old and Jaime got to see him once every two or three years, whenever the boy’s mom has been able to bring him to Ecuador to spend time with his father.

Jaime’s story was hardly the only account I encountered where moving abroad with a foreign girlfriend ended disastrously. My tour guide friends often mentioned the case of a well-known tour guide in Tena who moved to France with his French girlfriend. After a few months, they told me, his girlfriend grew tired of his drinking and of his inability to learn the language or get a job, and kicked him out of the house. According to the accounts from my friends, she had already started dating a French man and her excitement about dating an indigenous man had waned as he could not adjust to life in Europe. This story was always told to me as a cautionary tale, and many tour guides used this story to explain to me why they refused to leave Ecuador permanently. For example, my friend Sacha, who had been married to a European woman and had two children with her, explained to me why he refused to move to Europe when she asked him to:

> She once told me "let's sell the house and move to Europe! There are more opportunities in Europe to find work." But I told her "if you take me to Europe you are just going to dump me after a while." It has happened to many of my friends. *Gringas* get tired of them and kick them out. I don't want that to happen to me. My cousin moved to Europe with a *gringa* and after a while she got back together with her ex-boyfriend and kicked him out of the house.

I also came across several stories of Kichwa tour guides, who after agreeing to travel abroad with their foreign girlfriends, had decided to stay in Ecuador. The best-known case, and the one most tour guides would often allude to with a mix of admiration and disgust, was the case of Edison. Edison had been dating a German volunteer for some time, and things seemed to be going well. Eventually, however, she had to go back to Germany to complete her college degree, but she left with the promise that she would save up money to pay for Edison's visa paperwork, so that he could move to Germany with her and get married. Some months later, she wired Edison around $4000 to pay for his passport and all the visa paperwork. When Edison went to the visa interview at the German Consulate in Quito, his visa was denied, and he was asked to provide further evidence of solvency in order to reapply for the visa. Edison left the consulate extremely disappointed, but instead of coming clean with his girlfriend and trying to reapply for the visa, Edison had a different idea. In his own words:

> I decided to go to Baños [a tourism hotspot in the central highlands] and I ended up spending all of the money she had sent me. I called up all of my friends in Tena, as well as some women, and I told them to meet me in Baños. We spent

> several days in Baños, just partying and drinking until all of the money was gone. I still owe her that money, and she says she won't come to Ecuador until I pay her back.

When I asked him why he did that, he replied: "I regret what I did, but I guess seeing all of that money, an amount I had never seen in my life, it just drove me crazy."

A similar story was related to me by my friend Camilo, who had found himself in Edison's situation not once but twice. He said that two Swiss women had given him money on separate occasions to travel to Europe, but, instead, he spent the money on things that his community needed. He also acknowledged that he spent some of the money on alcohol and women with his friends. He admitted that he never had any real intention to use the money to travel to Europe: "I know I stole from them, but I did it for a good cause, to help out my community. I guess selling my body like that was worth it." He also told me that if they had been really in love with him, they would have stayed in the Amazon, and he said that he knew many tour guides who have left for Europe or the U.S with foreign partners and had been mistreated or abandoned after a few months, and that he did not want to have to go through that in a foreign country.

*Merely romantic entrepreneurs? Beyond the economics of dating foreign women in Tena*

While economic incentives were undeniably important factors in tour guides' motivations for pursuing these relationships, it would be grossly inaccurate to say that they were the only or the ultimate motivation, as a few scholars working elsewhere in Latin America, the Caribbean or Africa seem to suggest (see, for example, de

Albuquerque 1998; Brown 1992; Meisch 1995). My fieldwork in and around Tena uncovered a broad spectrum of anxieties, desires, and imaginations that played important roles in my friends' desires to pursue foreign women. These ranged from popular ideas about white women's sexualities to the desire to contest pervasive stereotypes about indigenous men's attractiveness and desirability.

To be sure, some scholars have discussed aspects of these relationships between white female tourists and non-white local men that resonate with many of my findings in the Tena area. For example, Phillips (2008) discusses how beach boys in Barbados contrasted foreign women's sexual looseness with Barbadian women's conservative views on sex. Philips argues that "here, black women's sexuality is viewed in local culture as conservative while white women are considered to be more open" (2008, 205)**.** Many of my tour guide informants in Tena shared similar views about white women's sexualities. For example, Edison, when telling me a story about his weekend away with a German tourist, raved about how good the sex was with her. He said that *gringa*s are better in bed than local women because local women only want you to turn them on with a few kisses and penetrate them right away without much foreplay, whereas *gringas* "te hacen toda la huevada" (they do everything). He said this while rolling his hand down his body which indicated to me that he was referring to oral sex as well as other forms of foreplay. My friend Roberto shared similar views about foreign women. He told me that,

> *gringas* are wild in bed. They say that without oral sex it feels like they did not have sex at all. You have to kiss their "chucha" (vagina). Kichwa women are not

> like that at all, although now with modernization some of them are now behaving more like *gringas* [regarding sexual preferences].

Many tour guides also expressed their affinity for foreign women because, in their opinion, they are generally more attractive than local women, particularly Kichwa women. As Felix, a veteran tour guide in his early 50s, told me: “for me, going out with a *gringa* with that beautiful white skin, blond hair, blue eyes, a total novelty for us. Wow, that woman! That is really attractive to us.” Others emphasized the lack of attractiveness of Kichwa women as justification for their preference for foreign women. As Sergio, a tour guide in his late 20s, explained,

> I’m a *gringuero* (a man with an affinity for foreign women). I really hate going out with Kichwa women; I don’t think they are very pretty. They are usually “turras” and “chimbas” (pejorative terms used to describe lack of physical attractiveness and lack of sophistication). I actually prefer women from Eastern Europe, because they have bigger butts.

The desire for whiteness and the sexualization of white women have been documented by many scholars in Latin America and around the world. For example, Canessa (2008) argues that in Bolivia the bodies of white women are presented as the ideal of feminine beauty, as evidenced by their ubiquitous presence in advertisement posters, TV commercials, and virtually any space where female beauty is represented. As Canessa notes, “[e]rotic female bodies are white female bodies” (2008, 48). In Ecuador, Meisch (1995) has similarly argued that,

> *Gringas*, particularly blondes, are considered exotic in Ecuador. The afternoon Ecuadorian tabloids, and calendars given out each year by commercial establishments, invariably contain photos of at least one bare-breasted woman, usually blonde. Advertisements, television, beauty contests, and books all contain far more blondes than their presence in the population would warrant (1995, 451).

Being able to seduce an increasing number of white women, thus, afforded prestige and validation to my tour guide friends, as it demonstrated conformity to normative heterosexuality and to the desire for and valuing of whiteness, which are colonial legacies inherited by many Latin American and Caribbean societies, as shown in the previous examples (see also de la Cadena 2000; Fernandez 2010; Kempadoo 1999; Queeley 2017). As Dahles and Bras (1999) have argued about "beach boys" in Indonesia, "they achieve status among their male friends through sleeping with as many female tourists as possible. In the short term their aim is to pick up an endless stream of white girlfriends" (1999, 281).

Indigenous men across Ecuador, and specifically in the Upper Amazon region where I conducted my research, were considered to be at the bottom of the dating and marriage pool, even by many indigenous women. In my conversations with several Kichwa women, particularly those who were urban and upwardly mobile, they expressed their disdain for Kichwa men and their refusal to even consider dating or marrying one of them. As Estefania, one of the Kichwa contestants in the popular "Guayusa Ñusta" beauty pageant in Tena told me,

> I have never dated a Kichwa man. To me, all Kichwa men are like "*ayllu"* (family), I couldn't date them. Kichwa men are very "*machistas*." They drink too much, and they don't do anything to better themselves. I want to see other things, have a different life, and it pains me that even members of my own family don't seem to be doing anything to have a different future.

Another young Kichwa woman, who was dating an American man at the time, referred specifically to Kichwa men's lack of physical attractiveness as one of the main reasons why she had never felt inclined to consider them as possible sexual and romantic partners: "I really don't like men with dark skin, they don't attract me. Kichwa men have really dark skin and ugly facial features. That's why I have never been attracted to a Kichwa man in my entire life."

For white/mestiza women in Ecuador, many of whom have indigenous ancestry themselves, dating or marrying an indigenous man was seen as a "step backwards." As several scholars of race in Latin America have argued, the preoccupation with "advancing the race" towards whiteness is more prevalent and intense in post-colonial societies where certain groups have historically been marginalized as part of the colonial enterprise, especially among those groups or individuals whose whiteness is more based on socioeconomic status than on physical appearance (see, for example, de la Cadena 2000; Canessa 2008; Fernandez 2010; Watanabe 2016). In my conversations with several mestiza women, they invariably pointed to the most widely circulated stereotypes about indigenous men as the reasons why they did not feel attracted to them. They said that indigenous men were known to be habitual drunks, that they were poor, and that they

were physically unattractive. As one upper-class mestiza woman from the capital city of Quito told me: "I'm sure there must be some indigenous men who are "*guapos*" (attractive), but honestly, I have yet to see one." Interestingly, as I showed in the previous example, several upwardly mobile indigenous women shared almost identical views about indigenous men.

Mestizo-Kichwa relationships in the Ecuadorian Amazon, thus, are usually fraught with conflict and shame, particularly if the indigenous person in the relationship is the man. This could be attributed to patriarchal structures in which the man is expected to be the provider, and indigenous men, due to their often lack of formal education and their inability to get high-paying jobs, were generally not perceived to be as good marriage prospects as mestizo or foreign men were. As my friend Rumi related to me,

> I had a mestiza girlfriend for three years, but she always wanted to go out with her friends alone, and not take me with her. One time, there was this party, and I knew where it was, and I knew most of her friends, but she didn't want me to come because of the fact that I was Kichwa and she was ashamed of me. I broke up with her that night, and I told her enough! I changed my number; I didn't even leave a note. I didn't want to continue to be a reason for her to be ashamed in her "*sociedad*" (social circle). It has happened to me many times before.

Most of the Kichwa men I interviewed in and around Tena, thus, had either never been in a relationship with a mestiza woman, or their stories were strikingly similar to Rumi's. The general perception among these men was that mestiza women were too

"high-maintenance," and that they only cared about financial security when choosing a partner. They also acknowledged the role that anti-indigenous prejudice played in their lack of attractiveness in the eyes of most mestiza women. As one of them explained to me,

> Mestizas are extremely racist; they will never look at a Kichwa man [as a potential sexual and romantic partner]. Their "*raza*" (race) is like that. From a very early age their parents teach them not to get mixed up with us. How are you going to get involved with that Kichwa? You are contaminating the race, they say.

I should point out that similar findings have been documented by other authors working in societies that are often imagined as more racially "homogenous" than Ecuador. For example, in her work with "beach boys" in Barbados, Joan Phillips (2008), described how one of her informants "confessed to feelings of racial inferiority within Barbadian society, where "light-skinned" or "brown-skinned" individuals are accorded a higher status than their darker-skinned counterparts, […] a sure indication of how colonial mentality remains firmly entrenched within the local culture" (2008, 205).

This hostile environment drove many of my tour guide friends to avoid dating local women altogether. Instead, many became frequent patrons of local "*chongos*" (brothels), which are legal in Ecuador,  and bars, many of which have an almost exclusive male clientele and female servers are expected to drink with customers (as long as they keep buying alcohol), sit on their laps and engage in overly flirtatious behavior. Several

tour guides stated that it made more sense financially for them to go to a "*chongo*" than to go out with a local woman. As my friend Sergio put it,

> I don't usually go out with "*Runa warmis*" (Kichwa women) or "*mishu warmis*" (mestiza women). You take them out and you have to pay for everything: dinner, drinks, the entrance fees to the club, more drinks (laughter) and then maybe a motel room. That adds up; you could spend 50 or 60 dollars in one night. When I go to the *"chongo"* I only have to spend 10 dollars for a half hour of passion (laughter) and maybe 5 dollars on beer.

Many of my tour guide friends, thus, felt discriminated against and dismissed as sexual partners not just by mestiza women but also by many urban, upwardly mobile Kichwa women. Interestingly, many of my Kichwa tour guide informants seemed to have themselves internalized some of the anti-indigenous stereotypes espoused by the white-mestizo majority. For example, many of them told me that the first emotion they experienced when they realized they were attractive in the eyes of foreign women was not so much excitement as surprise. As Sacha, a veteran tour guide in his 40s, told me,

> You know, I've always wondered why *gringas* prefer Kichwa men over mestizos. I have asked myself, why do they like me if there are "*colonos"* (mestizo settlers) that are much more "*guapos"* (attractive)? They are taller, they have cars and good jobs. Some *gringas* have told me that it's because we're exotic, and we're more *"naturales"* (literally, natural, but here meaning closer to nature), and because we are native to the Amazon.

He also told me that he once had an argument with a mestizo man, who could not wrap his head around why foreign women wanted to date indigenous men, who, in his words, were "uglier" than mestizo men and had no money to take these women out to dinner or to a nice club. Sacha said he replied: "Yes, it may be true that we are ugly and short, but we have something you don't have. We have our culture and our forest, and that is what they [foreign women] like about us. We are a pure race." As Lynn Meisch (1995) found in her research on foreign women's relationships with Kichwa men from the Andean market town of Otavalo, "part of their initial attraction is that they [Kichwa men] are unaware of how attractive they are, although that changes quickly with all the attention from Euro-American women" (1995, 450). Indeed, as Sacha further told me, he has encountered many new tour guides who have told him that they did not know how to react to foreign women's sexual advances, arguing that they did not understand what *gringas* saw in them. In Sacha's words:

> Many young Kichwa [who are beginning to interact with foreign tourists] are really shy with [foreign] women. When they come and say "hey, look, let me buy you a drink," it's like they get scared because they feel like "why is this pretty *gringa* going to want me being so ugly?" That's what they think: that we are ugly. They don't understand why *gringas* prefer us over mestizos. Why do they want someone from "*adentro"* [literally inside, a word used to refer to remote rural communities]? They get scared.

Many tour guides in Tena expressed their amazement at this sort of attention from foreign women, and, in our conversations, they described to me how easy it was for them to hook up with several *gringas* in a single weekend. As my friend Roberto explained,

> Before, when large groups of *gringas* would come down to Tena, it was extremely easy. You could go home with a different *gringa* every night, guaranteed. You didn't need to do anything; they would throw themselves at you. Now it is a bit different, many *gringas* now come with their boyfriends, but many still come alone or with other *gringas*.

Indeed, many other tour guides told me that it was often foreign women who initiated intimate encounters, sometimes quite aggressively. As my friend Jimmy related to me after a jungle tour with two American female tourists,

> These *gringas* are crazy. Yesterday, when we went swimming in the river, they got totally naked. Then, when we went to sleep, one of them came up to my hammock like three times during the night, asking me if I wanted to have sex with her. I told her I was working, but that we could go out the next day if she wanted.

The desire to reassert their status as attractive, desirable heterosexual men often superseded economic motivations when approaching foreign women. For example, as discussed earlier, many authors have argued that the possibility of foreign travel is one of the main (and often the ultimate) goals of local men who engage in sexual relationships with foreign female tourists. Many tour guides in Tena indeed stated that this was one of the main allures of having a foreign girlfriend. However, during my fieldwork I also

encountered several instances where the foreign travel incentive could be completely ruled out. For example, one of my tour guide friends from Tena was married to a European woman and lived in Europe most of the year. During one of his trips to Ecuador, I had the opportunity to participate in several tours with him, where he ended up "hooking up" with some of the female tourists. These sexual encounters did not seem to be the product of calculated economic motivations as he already lived in Europe and had a foreign wife, but rather came about as opportunities to reassert his role as a normatively heterosexual man and his desirability as a sexual partner in the eyes of foreign (white) women.

**"Real" women looking for "real" men: Understanding foreign women's motivations.**

As I have argued throughout this dissertation, the "sex tourism" label can be problematic when analyzing the interests and motivations of foreign women who entered into sexual relationships with Kichwa men. First, I have no evidence to suggest that most foreign women who ended up establishing intimate relationships with Kichwa men traveled to the Amazon with that intention. And, secondly, I have little evidence to suggest that sexual gratification from the sexual act itself was of particular interest to these women when deciding to enter into these relationships. Some scholars have discussed these issues in other locations, and they have found that in most instances the sexual act itself occupied a secondary place as many of the women did not find sex with their local partners particularly gratifying. As de Albuquerque (1998) argues,

> The most curious thing about Caribbean sex tourism, however, is the little-discussed banality of sex. In accordance with local tradition, beach boys and rent-a-dreads prefer straight sex. They tolerate few deviations from the missionary position, and they perform no cunnilingus—the West Indian male's aversion to "eating poom poom" is well known. The island hustler approaches sex with a female tourist as if he is doing her a favor (1998, 56).

Susan Frohlick (2016) also noted that many foreign women who engaged in sexual encounters with local men in Costa Rica claimed not to find the sex with their local partners particularly gratifying. As one American female tourist told her, “come to think of it, I haven’t had an orgasm with any of these guys. Well, maybe one in one year, maybe.” (2016, 257). Similarly, my fieldwork in Tena did not reveal any interests in specific sexual practices on the part of the foreign women who engaged in intimate encounters with Kichwa men. Instead, as will be further discussed later in this chapter, these encounters often presented an opportunity to consume the perceived radical alterity embodied by Kichwa men and to effectively immerse themselves in the widely promoted Edenic fantasy of the Amazonian landscape. As Andrew Canessa (2012) has convincingly argued, “what appear to be large and remote power relations are reproduced and re-created in something as simple and innocent or as damning as a kiss…. [and] it is precisely in intimate spaces where social identities, citizenship, and nationhood are produced” (2012, 25-26).

However, it is also important to mention that I did come across a few instances in which foreign female visitors did appear to travel to the Amazon with the specific

(though arguably not the only) intention of entering into intimate relationships with indigenous men, although it is worth pointing out that they represented a very small minority. During a conversation with Tina,  a Kichwa woman whom I had befriended through some of my tour guide friends, she said that some of her female friends from Switzerland who traveled regularly to Tena had told her about their intentions to settle permanently in Tena and about their desire to marry a local Kichwa man. In Tina's words:

> They often tell me: "I want to live here, I love the Amazon, and I want a Kichwa husband." They say that Kichwa men have such beautiful brown skin, and long hair. They also say they love Kichwa culture and that's why the want to live here.

Given that most Kichwa men in Tena did not usually have long hair, the statements by this foreign woman clearly referred to a stereotypically indigenous look, a stereotype that did not pertain to the vast majority of Kichwa men in the Amazon. In this sense, my findings both resonate and differ from Lynn Meisch's (1995) findings in the highland market town of Otavalo, where she met several foreign women who had come to Ecuador "to find a husband, a generic Indian" (1995, 458). In both cases, foreign women seemed to be interested in finding a man who embodied a stereotypically indigenous look. However, the context of Otavalo is quite different from the Amazon. In Otavalo, aesthetic and visual differences between indigenous and mestizo individuals are much more marked than in Tena (see, for example, Colloredo-Mansfeld 1998; Meisch 1995; Weismantel 2012), so a "generic" Kichwa man in Otavalo would most likely have long hair and wear "traditional" indigenous outfits, while in Tena, with the exception of

tour guides and a few other Kichwa individuals, indigenous and mestizo men are frequently indistinguishable from each other to the untrained eye of foreign visitors. However, it would be fair to say that some foreign women in Tena did appear to actively seek out, if not precisely a "generic Indian," arguably a "generic," interchangeable, long-haired Kichwa tour guide, as Tina's story shows. A story related to me by my friend Sacha also illustrates this point:

> One night we were staying in a lodge after a tour and I was really tired from hiking all day, so after dinner I just went to my room and tried to fall asleep. After, I don't know, an hour or two, I heard the door open. It was this Canadian girl, who had been flirting with me all day. She asked me if I wanted to have sex with her, but I told her no, I'm married [I should add that he was married to a British woman]. Besides, the owners of the lodge were really strict about this, and I didn't want to lose my job. So, I asked her if I could call my friend Sami [another Kichwa tour guide], who was single, and was also staying at the lodge with us. So, I called Sami and she left with him. They slept together. They are now married and they live in Canada.

My friend Camilo told me, in a recorded interview, an even more unusual story which also reflected a specific desire on the part of a foreign female traveler to have a sexual experience with an indigenous man. I reproduce here a long excerpt of our conversation because it captures not just the expressed sexual fantasies about racial "Others" on the part of the tourist, but also Camilo's astonishment and disbelief in the moment:

> One of the craziest things that has ever happened to me was during a tour in Yasuni [National Park]. In the group, there was a couple, they were married, the woman was very beautiful and the man was super tall, like a monster. I was tired and so I went down to the river to get some sleep on the canoe. Then, I see the wife getting on the canoe, saying: "can I keep you company?" I said yes, come on in. She said: "can I lie next to you?" I said, *chucha* (expletive), what? So, I kind of imagined what was going on, and it happened, and I was thinking I'm a dead man because I knew her husband was there too. But what was really crazy was that when I later got back to the group the husband comes up to me and says hey, everything ok? I tell him yes, everything's ok. And then he says: "did you enjoy the sex with my wife?" It turns out that she had told him she wanted to have sex with me because she wanted to experience sex with a native man. They must be those kinds of people who do "*locura y media*" (roughly, overly crazy things) because afterwards, when we traveled to Esmeraldas [a province in Ecuador's coastal region with a large Afro-descendant population] she did the same thing with a black guy, a friend of mine.

In Chapter 3 I analyzed the most common fantasies and stereotypes that drove foreign women's attraction for Kichwa tour guides, which I have called "Edeni-sexual fantasies." However, when analyzing these relationships, it is crucial to look at sexual attraction and sexual encounters as avenues for Western travelers to achieve desired forms of power reassertion and gendered self-realization. Intimate encounters with Kichwa men, thus, provided opportunities for foreign women to not only consume and be

a part of the perceived radical alterity and pre-modern social organization of Kichwa people and culture, but also to get a temporary respite from the sexual and gendered politics of their home countries in Europe or North America. They were able to, simultaneously, subvert the balance of gender power existing in their home countries, and reaffirm their feminine and sexual identities without the burden of what they perceived to be increasingly ambiguous and fluid Western gender roles and identities. This seems to be a common finding in most scholarly works about foreign women/ local men relationships: a contrast between Western (presumably white, although not necessarily) men and "real" local men, with whom Western women could feel as "real" women. For example, Jessica Jacobs (2010) argues that,

> […] in the Sinai, local men are considered desirable, not just because they are attractive and available, but because of certain assumptions about their imagined masculinity. Although these masculinities can vary when described - they are more close [*sic*] to nature, more 'manly', or 'real gentlemen' - they are […] put in a comparative position to a nominal notion of Western masculinity (which is presented as undesirable) (2010, 65).

Similarly, Sanchez-Taylor (2006), argues that notions of animalistic, irrational, and hypersexual Caribbean black men drive foreign white women to seek out intimate encounters with what they perceive to be "real" men:

> Female sex tourists are looking for 'real men', rather than a 'New Man', and black men are perceived as being hyper-masculine. […] Through the lens of

> racism, then, Caribbean men epitomize the romantic ideal – they are more like women, even as their 'animalistic' attributes make them more like men than white men (2006, 49).

Pruitt and LaFont (1995) also noted that many foreign women seeking sexual intimacy with black men in Jamaica complained about receiving little attention from their male partners (and from men, in general) back home, in contrast to the great deal of attention they received in Jamaica. In that sense, the argue that "these women often express a frustration with the men from their own cultures as inattentive, preoccupied with career, unemotional or confused about their role" (1995, 427).

During my fieldwork in Tena, I also encountered several instances where these notions seemed to be at play, driving foreign women's desires for intimate relationships with Kichwa men. One interesting example was the case of Roxy, a 30-year-old graduate student from the United States who had traveled to Tena to participate in a Kichwa language summer program. After a night out in Tena, we decided to go dancing at Tena's popular Club Gallera. Within a half hour of arriving at the club, I saw Roxy dancing with my friend Luis, a long-haired Kichwa tour guide. Soon thereafter, I saw them kissing and touching somewhat intimately. Later, as we were leaving the club, Roxy turned to me and said:

> I know what you are researching, and I don't care what you think. I'll be honest with you: I like aggressive men; I respond well to aggressiveness. Men back home

are a bunch of pansies; they are too afraid to upset you and they don't take the initiative. I like the aggressiveness of Kichwa men.

When I asked Roxy, out of curiosity, how she thought she would have reacted if I, instead of Luis, had started grabbing her butt within a few minutes of knowing each other (like Luis did). She paused for a few seconds, and then, with an expression on her face that signaled her surprise at her own contradictory realization, she admitted: "Yeah, I would have thought you were a creep." Despite Roxy's complaints about American men's lack of aggressiveness, thus, her answer to my question seemed to indicate that her desire was not for men back home to act differently or more aggressively. Instead, she seemed to value encountering aggressiveness that was, in her eyes, not the product of Western toxic masculinity, but the product of a timeless, essential masculinity, embodied in this case by indigenous Kichwa men.

Furthermore, her valuing of male aggressiveness seemed to show a desire to perform "traditional" or essential forms of femininity, in which the female is pursued and dominated by an aggressive, powerful male. As Jacobs (2010) notes when discussing the case of Marianne, a European woman who regularly engaged in sexual liaisons with Bedouin men in Egypt, "her idea of local Bedouin/Arab masculinity is one that is more distinct from femininity than found between men and women in Europe, [so] Marianne felt free to perform a version of femininity she felt unable to perform in Europe" (2010, 67). Similarly, Jacqueline Sanchez-Taylor (2006) found that by engaging in intimate relationships with black men in Caribbean resorts, foreign women effectively reproduced normative notions of heterosexuality and femininity. As she argues:

> In many Third-World tourist resorts, female sex tourists find themselves presented with opportunities to 'attract' these 'real men', and so to personify the ideals of femininity and heterosexuality that they are taught to aspire to. Equally, if not more importantly, they can find a 'real man' to sex them (thereby publicly affirming their 'femininity') without losing control and becoming a real woman in the sense of being a social and political subordinate or risking being rejected and humiliated (2006, 49).

In Tena, my friend Tiffany also referred to the liberating feeling of being able to have a “real” man and to be a “real” woman, which her relationship with Rumi provided. In one of our conversations, I asked her if she felt that gender dynamics were different between her and Rumi than they had been in other relationships with men back home. She replied, in a tone that revealed a certain guilt for feeling that way:

> Yes, to some extent, and I think this is just part of a personal growth. I’m really looking for guys who are more masculine…in the sense, more, hmm, hard to explain, more being ok with saying “that’s my woman,” like him taking charge of things, taking charge in like a sexual way, like taking charge of me, and like me feeling totally fine with that, I like that. I want to be taken care of, and he does that, even without having a lot of money he does that. Guys in the U.S., [they] were very respectful, like, if it’s meant to be it’s meant to be, you know, you do your thing; it’s fine and I’ll respect your decisions. I’ll respect your wishes; if you don’t want me that’s fine. I was like, just say that I’m yours and that’s it, *punto!*

> (period). Maybe that's not healthy as a mentality, but for me, I like it, there's something like "instinctful" [*sic*] about it.

She also complained about how ambiguous and fluid gender roles and performances had become in the United States, and she felt somewhat relieved about not having to navigate those types of gender and sexual politics, and about the simplicity of her relationship with Rumi in that regard, where she could just be a woman in a relationship with a man:

> I like the way Rumi talks about me, like, this is my woman, like, I like being talked about like that. I think that's something that's a little lost (in the United States), especially with the whole "my partner," nouns like my partner, which is great, I think it's very inclusive but I think for me… I don't know. I have been with guys that have been very passive about that, like no, like it's up to you, like it's fine, when realistically all I want them to be is like, I want them to defend me, like with respect to our relationship, like if someone else is trying to infringe on that, like take charge of it. Mostly white guys, they were more like, it's fine, just ignore it. Like no, I want you to fight for me, and Rumi will always fight for me, quite literally which I really hate. That's never happened, thankfully, but he will literally do that.

Interestingly, some scholars have argued that foreign women's desires for the "primal" masculinity that non-white men are perceived to embody are often articulated as feminist quests, even when some of them bemoan the effects of feminism on Western

masculinity, as I showed in Roxy and Tiffany's examples. For example, Weichselbaumer (2011) notes that some of her informants "lament that feminism has eroded manliness in the West" and that "the involvement with a 'real' Caribbean man allows a woman to become a woman again. A primordial woman!" (2011, 1227).

*Money, power, and the inversion of gender roles.*

In a seemingly contradictory manner, however, while some foreign women like Roxy or Tiffany expressed their desire to perform essential forms of femininity, their whiteness and relative wealth in relation to their Kichwa partners also allowed them to subvert the gendered power imbalances they often experienced in their home countries. This phenomenon has been extensively analyzed in the academic literature on female sex tourism. For example, Romero-Daza and Freidus (2008) argue that "women who travel in search of relations with locals use their ability to do so to assert a new identity and expand their gender repertoires in realms previously reserved for men" (2008, 170). Similarly, Jacobs (2010) argues that the relative wealth of European and North American female travelers in Third World settings allows them to become an "honorary man [whose] new freedoms are masculine freedoms that originate from the possession of a greater economic and social wealth than those that are being visited" (2010, 47). However, some authors have argued that foreign women/ local men relationships do little to disrupt gendered power since, despite the wealth imbalance, local men often appear to be in control of the relationship. For example, Herold et al. (2001) have argued that while it is true that foreign women are generally wealthier than their Caribbean male partners,

they are very careful not to threaten their masculinity by making their wealth imbalance too evident. As an example, they note that,

> the man may reach for his wallet and then suddenly indicate that he does not have much money. In these kinds of situations, the woman will often give the man money under the table, so that it appears as if he in fact were paying for the expenses (2001, 991).

Similarly, Kempadoo (1999) has argued that part of the fantasy of white women who engaged in intimate relationships with Caribbean men was that, despite the wealth gap between themselves and their Caribbean lovers, “the black man is required to be the sexually aggressive and competent partner, allowing the tourist woman to combine economic power and authority with traditional Western configurations of femininity as sexually submissive and subordinate” (1999, 139). De Albuquerque (1998), on the other hand, found that the ability of “beach boys” in the Caribbean to exert control over their foreign lovers was contingent on several factors, such as the level of experience the foreign female visitor had in establishing relationships with local men. He argues that,

> Like many West Indian males, beach boys and rent-a-dreads like to exercise a husband's authority over their temporary girlfriends. The men determine when and how to have sex, what restaurants and bars and nightclubs to patronize, what sights are worth taking in. First- time visitors generally acquiesce. But for sexually sophisticated women already familiar with the Caribbean, the perquisites of masculine control wear thin after a day or two (1998, 55).

My findings in Tena, however, revealed that, at least in the foreign/Kichwa couples I interacted with, the foreign women visibly enjoyed assuming the role of the provider in the relationship and the "masculine freedoms" (Jacobs 2010, 47) that came with it, although it did sometimes create conflicts, as I will discuss later. For example, one night I received a call from Tiffany, asking me if I wanted to go out to dinner with her and her boyfriend Rumi. We met at a very popular coffee shop by the *malecon* (riverwalk) in Tena, but decided that we would go get some pizza at a different location. After we entered the restaurant and sat down, I found it quite interesting to see the dynamic between Tiffany and Rumi, because she visibly acted as the person with the absolute economic power in the relationship. First, she asked Rumi if he wanted a beer, and he said yes. Then, she told him that he should eat something, and asked him to look at the menu and pick anything he wanted. She then wrapped her hands around him and gave him a kiss on the cheek. When he finished the first beer, she asked him if he wanted another one, and he nodded affirmatively. Watching Tiffany behave that way, taking on the "masculine" role, made me think about my own relationships and how I sometimes have acted in the same way; a way that aimed to please but also made it clear that I was the one buying, the one providing. By virtue of her economic power, Tiffany also felt she enjoyed more power and control over other areas of their relationship. For example, she told me she felt quite comfortable telling Rumi if she did not want to have sex when he requested it, and that she did not feel the same pressure to perform (sexually) that she usually felt in the U.S. This has been documented by several other scholars, who have argued that foreign women who engage in sexual liaisons with local men in tourist locations often feel that they have more control over their sexuality. For example, Herold

et al. (2001) have argued that "an important aspect of the woman's paying for the expenses is that a power role reversal occurs in that she does not feel obligated to him but rather is more likely to feel that she is in control of the situation. Consequently, the woman feels less pressure to become sexually involved" (2001, 991). Indeed, as Tiffany said to me about her sex life with Rumi:

> Hmm, he might be disappointed, if I'm like no, I'm not feeling it [to have sex] and we'll find another way to be together. Sometimes I'll say: "actually this is not a good moment" and he's ok with it. Also, in the U.S, I often felt the pressure of like, maybe not being adequate, you know, in bed, feeling the pressure of how I should perform as a woman. With Rumi, I focus less on who I should be and I focus more on who I want to be.

However, despite Tiffany's display of economic power, in many of our long conversations she made it a point to emphasize that their wealth imbalance did not have much of an impact in her relationship with Rumi, and that she was convinced that Rumi's feelings for her were genuine. While my impression after spending considerable time with them was that they indeed cared for each other very much, Tiffany's statements seemed to suggest that any economic interest on the part of Rumi would somehow "taint" their relationship. As she said to me in response to my question about whether she ever felt that Rumi saw the economic benefits of his relationship with her:

> Honestly no, honestly no. I've never felt that and at times I initiated offering things like [to] help out with money for whatever or even teaching him English.

> He never presses me about anything, and he hates taking money from me, hates it! And I never felt like he wanted to utilize me as a resource.

Several scholars have similarly pointed out that foreign female travelers often appeared uncomfortable with discussing financial assistance of their local partners, as they usually imagined (or tried to imagine) that their perceived wealth did not have an impact on their attractiveness in the eyes of local men. For example, O'Connell and Sanchez-Taylor (2005) argue that:

> In the mirror of the Other, they find themselves reflected back at half their age or weight, or twice as beautiful. This feat is achieved by either ignoring the massive imbalance of economic, social, and political power between themselves and their local or migrant sexual partners, or by interpreting it in ways that do not suggest that their partner is acting on a purely instrumental basis (2005, 94).

Similarly, Susan Frohlick (2007) has noted that,

> Monetary exchange does take place even though its role is muted by the women who wrestle with or chose to ignore the wider political economy of their fantasies and erotic desires [and] all of the women I interviewed conveyed anxiety, confusion, or even anger when the mention of money by their local partner tainted what the women viewed as a developing romance or intimate connection (2007, 142-143).

As argued earlier, economic opportunities did play an important role in driving Kichwa tour guides to seek out intimate relationships with foreign women, although that is not to say that many of them did not love of care about their foreign female partners, particularly those in long-term relationships like Rumi. Still, Tiffany's anxiety about Rumi's relationship with her being thought of as instrumental or motivated by economic factors to any extent, even as she admitted that she regularly provided financial assistance to Rumi who was unemployed for a long period during my fieldwork, suggested to me that this was in fact something that deeply concerned her.

**Living out "Edeni-sexual" fantasies: challenges and disillusionment.**

Unlike short-term visitors, foreign women who engaged in long-term relationships with Kichwa men were not just usually motivated by the ability to consume and be a part (albeit temporarily) of the Amazonian landscape and of the perceived radical alterity of indigenous people. Instead, as Jacobs (2010) has argued about women who established intimate liaisons with Bedouin men in Egypt, they were often committed to becoming part of the community and "going native." In that sense, as I argued earlier in this chapter, these relationships would allow these women to alleviate their burden as white, privileged foreigners and to show their commitment to social justice and racial equality. Indeed, in Tena, most of the foreign women in long-term relationships with Kichwa men were NGO workers, volunteers, or exchange students, many of whom worked directly with indigenous communities in development and sustainability projects and showed a deep appreciation for indigenous cultures and peoples. In fact, despite their unconscious reproduction of racialized and overly romanticized tropes about indigenous

people, most of these long-term relationships were, as Sanchez-Taylor (2006) similarly noted in the Caribbean, "constructed […] as a sign of anti-racism" (2006, 53) and appreciation of cultural difference.

However, in this section I discuss how the fantasies about the simplicity of life in the Amazon and the perceived strong sense of community of solidarity of indigenous people and cultures, often end in disillusionment and conflict after foreign women find a lack of correspondence between their fantasies and the realities of everyday life in indigenous communities. Conversely, I argue that when Kichwa men have moved abroad with their foreign partners, the relationships often fail because the type of primordial masculinity that drove the foreign women's attraction for Kichwa men in the first place can arguably only be successfully performed in the context of the Amazon. To be sure, not all foreign women/ Kichwa men relationships fail, but I argue that many of them often do, especially after the initial enchantment with indigenous cultures and people starts to fade. While I heard about many cases during my fieldwork in Tena, I go into particular depth with two of them: the story of my friend Sacha and Brittany (from Sacha's perspective since Brittany had already left Tena at the time of my fieldwork ), which ended in divorce and a bitter fight over the custody of their two children, and the story of Tiffany and Rumi, whose relationship was still ongoing when I left Tena.

*Sacha and Brittany: The fading of the eco-primitivist fantasy.*

Sacha and Brittany met in 2007 at a popular bar in Tena. Sacha had met some of Brittany's friends during a tour, so when he arrived at the bar that night, they introduced

Sacha to Brittany, a newly arrived European volunteer who would be teaching English to Kichwa children. They quickly hit it off and she asked him if he would like to go out to lunch with her the following day. According to Sacha, from their first encounter he got the sense that she really "*queria encontrar un nativo"* (she really wanted to find a native), given how forward she had been in asking him out right away. When they went out for lunch the next day, Sacha told me he was a bit nervous because he had no money:

> I was afraid because I was still a student and had no money, but she told me she was paying for everything. Then, I was a little surprised to see her ordering only salad. At that time, I did not know why they [foreigners] ate that, so I asked her, and that's when I learned she was a vegetarian.

After just a few dates, Brittany asked Sacha to take her to meet his family, which took Sacha by surprise since he did not really have any intentions to have a formal relationship with her yet. She told him, however, that she wanted to be her "*novia"* (girlfriend) and that she wanted to see how his family lived. Sacha told her that he lived with his mother, his brothers and his nephews, and that they were really poor. Sacha also told her that if she wanted to go to his house and have dinner with his family, she had to be willing to eat whatever his mother had cooked that day. She agreed, and that was the first time she ate meat since becoming a vegetarian. After the meal, Sacha's mom took her aside and told her that if she wanted to be with her son, she had to assimilate into Kichwa culture and accept Sacha for who he was: poor and uneducated. If she was willing to do that, Sacha's mother said, she would be welcome into the family. If not, the door was open. The next day, Brittany moved in with Sacha and his family.

In the beginning, Sacha told me that she appeared very excited about the experience of living with his extended family:

> We only had a small room in my mother's house, and we would wake up and share a meal with my whole family. She was *super emocionada* (super excited) and she would tell her friends in Europe "look, I'm with an exotic man" and she would send pictures of me every day to her friends. I wondered why she used that word, "exotic," but I just listened to what she said and I never told her anything about it [I should point out that Sacha speaks English with some fluency, which is why he was able to understand Brittany's conversations].

Brittany also provided regular financial assistance to Sacha and his family, and even when Sacha told her she was doing more than enough, she would tell him *"no pasa nada, yo quiero ayudarlos"* (it's no problem; I want to help them out). His family loved her, and she loved being part of the family. Then, she got pregnant with twins, and that, according to Sacha, started to change everything. Brittany told Sacha that they had to move out of his mother's house when the babies came, so she purchased a small plot of land and built a house on it. After the babies were born, Sacha's mother offered to move in with them to help take care of the babies, but, after a short while, Sacha noticed that Brittany seemed annoyed by his mother's presence:

> She sometimes would tell me that my mom would speak to her in Kichwa and that she did not understand her. Also, she told me that my mom used to tell her

> that the children were not well taken care of, and that she needed to bathe them. She wanted privacy, and told me to ask my mother to leave. So, she left.

Brittany also started complaining about the fact that Sacha did not make much money. Also, since her scholarship money was running low, they did not have enough money to take care of the children, so she often resorted to requesting money from her parents in Europe. Furthermore, she complained that Sacha would often spend what little money he made on alcohol and parties with his friends, to which Sacha replied that *"yo te dije desde el principio como era mi vida y tu aceptaste"* (I told you from the beginning how my life was, and you accepted). She also began acting jealous of other female tourists, accusing Sacha of sleeping around with them, and even asking Sacha for his Facebook password so that she could read his private conversations. The relationship started falling apart, and Brittany told Sacha she was thinking about going back to Europe:

> She would tell me: "I want to go back to Europe." She would start comparing Ecuador to Europe, saying that there were blackouts here, that sometimes we did not have running water… She started suffering, and she "*comenzo a desilusionarse de la vida"* (started growing disillusioned of her life), saying that we didn't make any money, and that it was very hard for her to get a job here. So, she told me "let's sell the house and move to Europe," but I told her that I did not want to go, because many of my friends who had moved to Europe with *gringas* had ended up in the streets after the *gringas* had gotten tired of them.

Evidently, the fantasies about the simplicity of life in the Amazon with an indigenous man and the somewhat romantic views on material poverty that Brittany seemed to appreciate in the beginning of their relationship, had started to fade as she faced the realities and the struggles of everyday life in Kichwa communities. Jessica Jacobs (2010) similarly found in her research that foreign women who decided to reside permanently in "local" Bedouin communities in Egypt nevertheless held on to their Western privileges. For example, in the case of Nora, a Swiss woman who lived in a Bedouin community with her Bedouin husband, she argues that,

> While Nora might envy the technologies of the spirit that she believes can be found in a pure form of Bedouin life (in the mountains away from the tourist coast) Nora has not completely renounced her origins and accompanying privileges. She travels once a year to visit her family in Switzerland and holds onto her and her sons' Swiss passports. Escaping modernity however is not that easy and its desirability is ambiguous (2010, 72).

Similarly, Brittany evidently understood that if her relationship with Sacha were to fail, or that if her livelihood and her children's welfare were in jeopardy, she had the privilege of being able to leave; she had the ability of escaping **towards** the "modernity" she was initially attempting to escape **from,** a privilege that was foreclosed to Sacha as a poor indigenous Kichwa man. In that sense, the desire to become part of a Kichwa community and to immerse herself in the perceived pre-modernity of life in the Amazon did not mean an abdication of her privileges as a white foreigner.

After Sacha refused to move to Europe, Brittany insisted that he gave her authorization to take their children with her to Europe on vacation to visit her parents. Sacha, fearing that she would not return to Ecuador, proposed that she could take one of the children while the other one would stay with him. Brittany finally convinced him that she would come back to Ecuador, so Sacha signed the authorization papers for both children. While they were in Europe, Sacha said he noticed something was not right. Every time he would ask her to have a videocall with the children, she would tell him that the computer was broken. Later, she confessed to him that her parents had forbidden her to let him speak to his children. Brittany did return to Ecuador, but her mother joined her a few days later. They filed a police report against Sacha, arguing that he wanted to rub capsicum peppers on the children's eyes and that he hit them with nettles, both widely used methods for disciplining children in Kichwa culture (see, for example, Uzendoski 2005). They showed up at the house with the police, both crying, and forced Sacha out of the house. Sacha threatened them, saying that he would never sign the travel documents for the children. They could sell the house and leave, he said, but the children would stay in Ecuador. Brittany and her mother moved to the capital city of Quito with the children, and started consulting with lawyers about legal ways to strip Sacha of his custody rights. They finally came up with a solution. Brittany sued Sacha for missed child support payments. Sacha, who had no money at the time, was arrested for failure to pay. Brittany told him she would drop the charges if he signed the authorization documents so that she could take the children to Europe with her. At the time of my fieldwork, Sacha's children were almost eight years old and they had scheduled bi-weekly phone calls with their

father. Sacha was still hopeful that Brittany would someday bring the children to Ecuador to spend some time with him.

Certainly, Sacha, by his own admission, made numerous mistakes in their relationship. He told me he regretted regularly leaving her home alone and coming home drunk after a night out partying with his friends. He also admitted to sleeping with other women while he was married to Brittany. What I found interesting, however, about Sacha and Brittany's story, was that the things that seemed to most attract Brittany in the initial period of their relationship, such as living with his extended family, speaking an indigenous language, and the materially poor life of Kichwa communities, were the very things that she found unsustainable or bothersome as time went by and her initial enchantment waned.

*Tiffany and Rumi: the attractiveness of Kichwa masculinity fused with the Amazonian landscape.*

I opened this chapter with Tiffany and Rumi's story. During my year-long fieldwork in Tena, I got to know them pretty well, especially Tiffany, who told me she found her conversations with me (even those in which my recorder was conspicuously sitting on the table) "therapeutic" and calming, since she did not have any close friends in Tena who she could trust with her most intimate problems and anxieties. When I left Tena in September of 2019, Tiffany and Rumi were still together and the relationship was going well. Judging by several communications we have had since then, it appears that, fortunately, that has not changed as I write these pages. In the pages to follow, however, I

discuss Tiffany's uncertainties about her future with Rumi, and her doubts about being able to make the relationship work outside the Amazon.

For women like Tiffany, their relationships with indigenous men opened the door to a world and a culture that were, in their eyes, not just outside modernity but also pure and imbued with Western notions of sacredness. In the case of Tiffany, she perceived her relationship with Rumi as a privileged opportunity to participate and be a part of the world. It also seems that Rumi, who even according to Tiffany had a reputation as a "*gringa* hunter" in his community, was well aware of these very common Western fantasies, and he was willing to play the part. For example, the strategy he used to seduce Tiffany clearly shows his willingness to perform the sort of spiritual, almost mystical indigeneity that seemed to fuel foreign women's attraction for Kichwa men. As Tiffany related to me:

> Rumi confessed to me, like "this is going to sound crazy," and I was like "oh boy tell me," and he said "when I met you that day in the van, I had dreamed about you the night before. It was you, and I knew I was going to meet you, or I didn't know I was going meet you but I saw you, and you got into the van to go to Tiputini. I couldn't believe it was you!" At first, I thought there's no way, but I believe him now. He doesn't have a reason to lie, he really doesn't have a reason to lie.

Interestingly, while Tiffany felt extremely attracted to Rumi's world, she also often questioned her right to be a part of that world, and she confessed to me that she

knew that, as a Western person, she could never really belong in it. Evidently, she felt that as a Westerner she was not only a corrupting force to indigenous cultures, but her very own corrupted foreignness prevented her from being a part of what she perceived as a pure, pristine, culture. This exchange I had with her during one of our long conversations was quite illuminating of these notions:

> **Tiffany**: I will never be from the community (…) it doesn't feel right for me ever to think of me living in that community. It just doesn't feel right.
>
> **EB**: Why not?
>
> **Tiffany**: Again, this idea, like I'm not from there, and I think even if I were to marry Rumi, even if I learned Kichwa, maybe I'd have to do it first, but it just doesn't feel right.
>
> **EB**: So, is it maybe that you feel that you don't have the right to live there?
>
> **Tiffany**: Yeah, but it's something like that, or maybe it's like a personal identity thing…
>
> **EB**: So, you think you would be a disruptive force in the community…
>
> **Tiffany**: Potentially.
>
> **EB**: You also told me that you often feel that you don't have the right to learn Kichwa. Do you think that the Kichwa language is somehow sacred?

> **Tiffany**: Yeah, it's just me pondering these things, like reading so much about the way that white messiahs and the way development has failed the world and the way that our larger systems, mostly Western systems, have been a plague to like tradition, like traditional indigenous groups, and that's always in the back of my mind.

As it becomes clear from this example, Tiffany often struggled with the idea of becoming a disruptive force to Kichwa culture and identity in Rumi's community, but she also felt privileged for being "invited" into the community and thus being able to, however temporarily, escape the modern world and "purify" herself from her heavy baggage of guilt as a white North American, a desire I have highlighted throughout this chapter. Similar findings have been documented by other scholars who have looked at relationships between foreign women and "tribal" men in other parts of the world. For example, Jacobs (2010), when discussing the case of a particular European woman who often entered into intimate relationships with Bedouin men in Egypt, argued that,

> Being accepted by her host family, accepted in a way Nora feels most tourists and foreigners are not, is of major importance […] While Nora was living as a modern European, she was implicated in the modernity. Now she has discovered the effect of the ethnomasquerade and become a Bedouin she can be 'inside', she is 'out' of Europe and has entered 'in' to another place (2010, 71).

The importance of distancing themselves from the typical, unaware tourist, is a desire that some other scholars have also noted when analyzing tourist/local relationships.

For example, Meisch (1995) argues that *gringas* in Otavalo often paraded their Kichwa boyfriends in front of the market crowd to signal their "belonging" to Otavalo, unlike most other tourists. In that sense, Meisch argues that, "when a *gringa* and Otavaleño walk hand-in-hand through the market; the man may look sheepish; but for the *gringa*, this public display says, "Look. I'm not just any old tourist. I have an indígena [indigenous] boyfriend" (1995, 458).

Despite caring for Rumi very much, Tiffany confessed that she felt that they were not at the same stage in their lives. Tiffany was 23 years old, and still exploring the world and what it had to offer, and was definitely not considering marriage or children. Rumi, on the other hand, was 30 years old, an age at which most Kichwa men are already married. This deeply concerned Tiffany, as she told me in one of our conversations:

> He might be getting ready to settle down, and I'm terrified of commitment, like [even] saying that I'm committed to him now, this is my boyfriend, that is a huge deal. The fear of missing out is a real thing; there is always something better and I keep looking for that best. What terrifies me though is… he…I really love him, don't get me wrong. I don't want to say he loves me more, but he might love me in a way that he's ready to settle down and I'm so not ready for that. We have talked about it though, openly, like yeah, listen, marriage, no, maybe when I'm 30, and I really don't want kids.

Furthermore, as I discussed earlier in this chapter, one of the things that Tiffany found most attractive about Rumi was his ability to provide for her, even with his very limited resources. As she explained to me,

> if it's something I need, like I told him I wanted a hammock, I had a hammock three days later, out of like twine, and he knows how to set traps, and he knows how to farm, and he knows how to harvest, and he knows if I'm walking he'll know how to look out for me and I find that really attractive… I feel like in the U.S. a lot of times like masculinity is tied to a man's ability to provide but by buying things, which I don't think it's as challenging, I can buy my own stuff, I know how to do that, I can do it better (laughter).

However, she struggled with the thought of whether their relationship would work outside the Amazon, in a place like the United States, for example, where Rumi would not be able to exhibit the sort of primal masculinity that Tiffany found so attractive and where he would not be able to provide for her in the ways that she appreciated. In Tiffany's words:

> Could I really live in Ecuador my whole life? I'm thinking about these questions now. Right now, my answer is "no, I don't think so, because I'm missing things about home." And, you know, could Rumi live in the U.S.? That's a secondary question. And what would that look like? And how would I feel about him? And I think my attraction would be strained, for him, if we were in the U.S, maybe for his inability to provide. Personally, I wouldn't see him as less of a man, but I

> think if we were in the U.S. I would want him to also provide for me, and I think it would be hard for him to do that, and therefore I think it would strain… us… more, because here he's more capable, he knows, he can pick up on things, he can pick up like side jobs or whatever, and be able to provide, not that he even needs to provide for me, it's not even a need but, if we're sharing this together and I'm carrying the weight of paying for everything, that would just be a lot in the U.S.

As illustrated by the story of Jaime, which I discussed earlier in this chapter, Tiffany's concerns were not unfounded. In many instances, these relationships ended due to the indigenous men's inability to get good paying jobs, their struggles with adjusting to life in Europe or North America, and the overall lifting of the veil of fantasy and exoticism that had shrouded their relationships with their foreign lovers in their "local" indigenous communities. Rumi appeared to be aware of these dynamics, and he once told me that the idea of moving to the United States with Tiffany was not particularly appealing to him, although he said he would love the opportunity to visit Europe or North America. He seemed resigned to the idea that one day, after Tiffany found a better work opportunity back home, she would just pack her things and leave him behind, as so many *gringas* have done in the past. He often shared these concerns with Tiffany, as she related to me with a profound sadness in her voice:

> He says, "you're just going to leave me." Sometimes he'll say it, like not necessarily dramatically, but… and he doesn't say it usually, but he's like "I really don't want it to happen, but I think you're just going to leave me." That makes me really sad…

When I asked her if Rumi's concerns made her sad because she thought that, at some level, Rumi might be right, she just looked down and, lowering her voice, replied:

> Yes… because of this whole other life that I have that he has no access to right now… And I share with him all the time, I share so many stories, but like, it's not the same, and I do have a fear that I care about him so much and I don't know what's going to happen. And I'm trying not to overthink it, cause I'm always overthinking and I don't enjoy the present moment, I'm just really trying to be present, I'm just trying so hard to be present, but it's really scary, it's really scary…

Thus, Tiffany seemed to acknowledge that while the desire to escape modernity through her relationship with Rumi was one of the main factors that drove her to seek out that relationship in the first place, her commitment to abandoning her privileges as a white foreigner was not as strong. As I have shown throughout this chapter, the desire to ease one's burden of guilt as a white, privileged foreigner is often only desirable until living out that fantasy becomes a burden in and of itself.

**Conclusions.**

In this chapter, I discussed an important yet understudied aspect of what several scholars have described as the increasing commodification of the Amazonian rainforest and of its indigenous cultures within the booming ecotourism industry in the region, namely the production of sexualized and eroticized indigenous bodies. Through an engagement with the vast literature on sex tourism, and particularly female sex tourism, I

showed that while there are some commonalities between the relationships of foreign women with Kichwa men in the Ecuadorian Amazon and other tourist/local relationships around the world, there are also important differences between how indigenous Amazonians are imagined by outsiders, versus other non-white populations from other parts of the world. In that sense, I showed that Kichwa men are perceived as sexually attractive not so much because of colonial notions of (mostly black) non-white men as hypersexual and animalistic, but mainly because they are imagined to be "pure," "innocent," and "closer to nature," due to their existence in an Edenic, pre-modern world, free from the vices of capitalism and modernity. I argued that foreign women who entered into intimate relationships with Kichwa men, which I have called "Edeni-sexual" encounters, often articulated those relationships as opportunities to experience primordial forms of gendered and sexual identities, which they imagined to be inaccessible in the West. Furthermore, I argued that that foreign women often felt that they could alleviate their guilt as privileged white foreigners by becoming part of indigenous Kichwa families and communities, although I also showed that this desire to escape modernity was often fraught with conflict and ultimately disillusionment.

In the case of Kichwa tour guides who participated in these relationships, I argued that while economic incentives such as financial assistance or foreign travel were an important part of what drove them to pursue foreign women, the ubiquitous portrayal of local men who seek out foreign women in tourist settings as "romantic entrepreneurs" in the anthropological literature is insufficient to capture the broad spectrum of desires, anxieties, and frustrations that were related to me by Kichwa men in the Tena area. I

showed that Kichwa men's attraction for white women is embedded in colonial legacies that portray whiteness as beautiful and desirable, as well as in more recent ideas about the perceived sexual looseness of white women versus local women. Thus, I argued that Kichwa tour guides often experienced these relationships as opportunities to reassert their masculinity and desirability within Ecuadorian society, which has long viewed them as subservient and unattractive, even if to achieve this goal they felt compelled to perform aspects of their ethnic and gendered identities that conformed to foreign women's eco-primitivist fantasies and expectations.

## VII. CONCLUSION.

On March 16, 2020, the Ecuadorian government issued a nation-wide state of emergency due to the rise of COVID-19 cases in the country. All airports were closed for both domestic and international flights, a mandatory stay-at-home order was issued except for first-necessity activities such as buying food or going to the hospital, and the whole country came to a halt, filled with fear and uncertainty. Napo Province was able to stave off the virus longer than any other province in Ecuador, but in early April the first two positive cases were reported. According to official reports around 1400 people have been infected in Napo and 73 of them have died as I write these pages in early October, although most people I have spoken to in Tena think that the real numbers are much higher.

While many people have lost their jobs and businesses, my friends in the ecotourism industry have suffered one of the harshest blows, as their entire source of income disappeared overnight. With no international tourists, and no domestic tourists due to the ban on interprovincial travel, they found themselves in a grave situation since for most of them ecotourism was their only source of income. Some of my tour guide friends have since left Tena and have moved into their parents' homes in the surrounding rural communities, partly because they felt safer away from urban centers, and partly because with no money to buy food they were at a very real risk of starving to death. Interestingly, in the midst of an unprecedented tragedy some of them have found an opportunity to reconnect with and find a new appreciation for the types of rural lifestyles they had left behind when they moved to Tena and started working in ecotourism. In

other words, they have begun to live those aspects of their indigeneity that they previously only performed for tourists, such as farming, fishing, and hunting. Still, the real magnitude of the impact of COVID-19 on the ecotourism industry and on the identities and livelihoods of Kichwa people working in it is yet to be seen, and my dissertation would not be complete without acknowledging that many of the dynamics I have described in it have been completely disrupted by this pandemic. Thus, there is a real possibility that some parts of this dissertation are outdated or even irrelevant in the present moment.

While new research is required to assess the impact of COVID-19 on this region, and specifically on the ecotourism industry, this dissertation offers an analysis of the ecotourism industry in Tena as it stood in the year prior to the pandemic. I have shown that the shift towards service-based work in ecotourism has had a profound impact on the identities and livelihoods of Napo Kichwa people since the early 1990s. I have argued that the biggest impact lies in the nature of the ecotourism industry itself, and in the ideas and discourses that have shaped it. Specifically, since the main attractions in ecotourism in Tena are the surrounding forest and Kichwa culture itself, Kichwa people have had to reimagine their indigenous identities in radically different ways than in previous historical periods to satisfy tourists' expectations and fantasies and their quest for an "authentic," "pre-modern" experience. To be sure, transformation and adjustment are not new to Napo Kichwa people, as I have argued throughout this dissertation, since Kichwa identity itself is the product of centuries of contact, trade, and conflict with neighboring groups, colonial authorities, missionaries, the Ecuadorian state, and more recently international development agencies and NGOs. What is new and often challenging for

Kichwa people is that while they had been trying to show the Ecuadorian state since the early 1960s that they could be modern and productive citizens (see Erazo 2013), the eco-primitivist fantasies that lie at the heart of what Davidov (2013) calls the "economy of expectations" of the ecotourism industry requires that they perform aspects of their indigeneity that many Kichwa themselves consider "things of the past" and that they at least appear to reject aspects of modernity that have been crucial to their identities and livelihoods for decades to embody the type of "charismatic indigeneity" (Perley 2014) that the ecotourism industry promotes.

I have described in detail the experiences of urban Kichwa tour guides, the vast majority of whom are young men. Throughout this dissertation, I have shown that tour guides serve as culture brokers between (mostly foreign) tourists and rural Kichwa communities, and occupy an ambiguous and contested space between the two. While many of them come from the very rural communities they usually show to tourists, their urban lifestyles, and their sometimes dismissive attitudes towards rural Kichwa people have made them be viewed as "less Kichwa" in the eyes of many rural individuals. At the same time, their aesthetic embodiment of a stereotypically indigenous look such as long hair and jaguar fang necklaces (which I have called the "tour guide brand" in this dissertation), coupled with their emphasis on indigenous people's spirituality and special connection to nature, contributes to them being seen, by tourists, as more authentically indigenous than their rural counterparts. This dissertation has also analyzed foreign tourists who travel to the Amazon looking for radical alterity, and the impact of that quest for Kichwa identities.

Even as they have worked to show how well they can meet tourists' expectations of ecological noble savages, tour guides have simultaneously attempted to redefine their indigenous identities in the eyes of their white/mestizo compatriots. For the latter, tour guides' focus has been on demonstrating how modern, entrepreneurial, and cosmopolitan they can be, thus contesting long-standing anti-indigenous stereotypes that have portrayed indigenous people as lazy, irrational and backwards (see, for example, Colloredo-Mansfeld 1998). Curiously, some of them reproduce some of those very stereotypes when referring to rural Kichwa, using them as examples of what they are not. In the process, I have shown that they have adopted some of the attitudes and inclinations of white/mestizo men, thus trying to transcend their "subordinated" masculinities by emulating the "hegemonic" masculinities (Connell 1995) of white-mestizo men. However, I have also shown that there are important limits to that conformity, specifically tour guides' indexation of aspects of their indigenous identities that are considered attractive by foreign tourists.

Furthermore, the increasing opportunities that ecotourism has provided to establish intimate relationships with (mostly white) foreign women and the very realization that they are considered sexually attractive by these women who in the Ecuadorian imaginary are considered the ideal of feminine beauty (see, for example, Meisch 1995), have allowed Kichwa tour guides to reassert their masculinity and sexual desirability within a society that has long viewed them as unattractive and undesirable, effectively relegating them to the bottom of the marriage and dating pool. Thus, while white/mestiza women, and even many indigenous women, are generally disinclined to date or marry an indigenous man, many white foreign women from Europe and North

America seem to value and desire the very characteristics that are disparaged by Ecuadorian women, such as having an indigenous phenotype, speaking an indigenous language, and embodying Western fantasies of radical alterity.

In this dissertation, I have also explored and analyzed some of the most common Western fantasies about the Amazon rainforest and about indigenous Amazonians, and I have shown how those ideas have translated into specific experiences and expectations within ecotourism encounters in the Tena area. I have discussed the parallels between Amazonian fantasies and the story of the Garden of Eden, as indigenous people are imagined to inhabit a bountiful forest that provides everything they need, and to exist in a state of blissful ignorance, away and safe from the vices of modernity and capitalism. However, I have also called attention to an understudied yet directly related phenomenon to those Edenic fantasies about indigenous Amazonia, namely the production of and desire for sexualized and erotized landscapes and indigenous bodies within ecotourism encounters. I introduced the term "Edeni-sexual" to capture the inextricable connection between (mostly female) foreign tourists' sexual attraction for indigenous men, particularly long-haired Kichwa tour guides, and their perceived positionality as "natural" parts of the rainforest, as part of a heavily fantasied and idealized landscape that Westerners desire to consume and immerse themselves in to get a respite (however temporary) from the vices and problems of the West.

Finally, I have analyzed the motivations and desires that inform intimate relationships between foreign female tourists and Kichwa men, particularly tour guides, through an engagement with the academic literature on sex tourism, and more

specifically female sex tourism. I have shown that while this literature offers important insights about the colonial and racialized legacies that are reproduced in many of these tourist/local encounters, sometimes both parties are portrayed in rather simplistic ways that do not fully capture the complexity of desires, fantasies, and anxieties that inform many of these relationships. Also, the prevalence in this literature of studies that have looked at relationships between female tourists and black men in Caribbean and African settings made it theoretically pertinent to explore how differently racialized men (i.e. indigenous men in Latin America) are sexualized and erotized in tourism settings. In this dissertation, I have in fact shown that Amazonian Kichwa men are usually the object of desire of foreign women not because of the hypersexuality associated with black men (with some exceptions), but because they are perceived to embody the purity, spirituality, and timelessness associated with the Amazon rainforest, and because of their perceived existence outside modernity. I have also shown that these relationships are often experienced by foreign white women as opportunities to perform traditional gender roles that they claim have been eroded in the West, even as they reassert their wealth and power in relation to their indigenous partners. Furthermore, I have argued that some of these relationships, particularly long(er)-term relationships, are experienced by these women as opportunities to alleviate their guilt as white, privileged individuals from Europe and North America, and they seek to "become" part of a marginalized people to distance themselves from the long history of white colonialism and the centuries of genocide and oppression against non-white people, particularly indigenous people. However, as it becomes clear in the last chapter of this dissertation, the desire to belong in a different place and to become part of a marginalized community is often ambiguous

and it almost never entails the long-term abandonment of their privileges as white Westerners. In fact, for many of these women the desire to alleviate their burden of white guilt usually becomes a burden itself after the initial veil of eco-primitivist fantasies about indigenous people and cultures fades.

I would like to conclude this dissertation with some thoughts on what I think is the most important argument I have made. The debate on indigenous authenticity within the ecotourism industry, which revolves around the commodification of indigenous identities for tourist consumption and the power or lack thereof that indigenous people have in deciding what aspects of their identities to show and how to show them, and which in fact extends to whether or not Kichwa tour guides adopt particular looks or emphasize certain aspects of their indigenous identities only to attract foreign women, generally misses one crucial element that I have tried to underscore in this dissertation. That element is the long-standing and persistent anti-indigenous sentiment within Ecuadorian society, and Latin American societies in general. For centuries, indigenous people in Ecuador have been looked down upon by the white/mestizo majority, their cultures have been ridiculed and mocked (even as with the rise of multiculturalism in the last decades of past century indigenous histories and cultures have been officially celebrated and used as political currency), and they have been historically considered backwards, irrational, dirty, and ugly. I have used the concept of "becoming" as articulated by Biehl and Locke (2017) to show that ecotourism, despite the pressure to conform to sanitized and folklorized forms of indigenous identities and practices, has allowed indigenous people, and more specifically Napo Kichwa people as they are the main focus of this project, to "become" more appreciated and respected versions of

themselves. For the first time, their cultures and ways of living are not mocked or ridiculed, but are appreciated and even revered by more powerful white outsiders. For the first time, Kichwa men are not told that they are unattractive and undesirable. Instead, an increasing number of white North American and European women are telling them that they are special, beautiful, and worthy of their attention and sexual desire. Indeed, through the eyes and fantasies of foreign tourists and outsiders in general who see in indigenous peoples an alternative to Western consumerism and environmental degradation (however misguided and even problematic those perceptions may be), Kichwa people working in ecotourism have been able to "become" something other than the poor, backwards indigenous peasants that most of Ecuadorian society perceives them to be, and they have been able to look at their indigeneity as an asset rather than a disadvantage. As one my Kichwa tour guide friends put it when discussing anti-indigenous sentiment within white/mestizo society, "foreigners come to see us, not them; we are now very important people."

REFERENCES

Abu-Lughod, Lila. 1991. “Writing Against Culture.” In *Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present,* edited by Richard G. Fox. Santa Fe, New Mexico: School of American Research Press

Agamben, Giorgio. 1998. *Homo sacer: Sovereign power and bare life*. Redwood City: Stanford University Press.

Agrawal, Arun. 1995. "Dismantling the divide between indigenous and scientific knowledge."*Development and change* 26 (3): 413-439.

Agrawal, Arun. 2005. “Environmentality: Community, Intimate Government, and the Making of Environmental Subjects in Kumaon, India.” *Current Anthropology* 46 (2):161–90.

Aldred, Lisa. 2000. “Plastic Shamans and Astroturf Sun Dances: New Age Commercialization of Native American Spirituality.” *American Indian Quarterly* 24(3): 329-352.

Appadurai, Arjun. 1996. *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Aronson, Amy, Michael Kimmel, and David Alan Sapp, eds. 2004. *Men & masculinities: A social, cultural, and historical encyclopedia*. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO.

Babb, Florence E. 2012. “Theorizing Gender, Race, and Cultural Tourism in Latin America: A View from Peru and Mexico.” *Latin American Perspectives* 39 (6): 36-50.

Balée, William. 2013. *Cultural Forests of the Amazon: A Historical Ecology of People and their Landscapes.* Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press.

Baud, Michiel and Annelou Ypeij, eds. 2009. *Cultural Tourism in Latin America: The Politics of Space and Imagery*. BRILL editions.

Becker, Marc. 2008. *Indians and leftists in the making of Ecuador’s modern indigenous movements*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Becker, Marc. 2010. *Pachakutik: Indigenous Movements and Electoral Politics in Ecuador*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Bernard, Harvey R. 2011. *Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Rowman Altamira.

Bessire, Lucas. 2014.*Behold the black caiman: A chronicle of Ayoreo life*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Biehl, João and Peter Locke. 2010. Deleuze and The Anthropology of Becoming. *Current Anthropology* 51(3): 317–51.

Biehl, João and Peter Locke. 2017. “The Anthropology of Becoming.” In *Unfinished: The Anthropology of Becoming*, edited by João Biehl and Peter Locke, 41–89. Durham: Duke University Press.

Bloom, Peter Jason, Stephen Miescher, and Takyiwaa Manuh, eds. 2014. *Modernization as Spectacle in Africa*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Brosius, J. Peter, Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, and Charles Zerner. 1998. “Representing Communities: Histories and Politics of Community-based Natural Resource Management.” *Society & Natural Resources* 11 (2):157–68.

Brown, Naomi. 1992. “Beachboys as culture brokers in Bakau Town, The Gambia.” *Community Development Journal* 27(4): 361-370.

Bruner, Edward M. 2005. *Culture on Tour*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Butler, Judith. 1988. “Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory.” *Theatre Journal* 40 (4):519.

Cabezas, Amalia L. 2009. *Economies of Desire : Sex and Tourism in Cuba and the Dominican Republic*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Canessa, Andrew, ed. 2005. *Natives Making Nation: Gender, Indigeneity, and the State in the Andes*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.

Canessa, Andrew. 2008. “Sex And The Citizen: Barbies And Beauty Queens In The Age Of Evo Morales.” *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies* 17 (1): 41-64.

Canessa, Andrew. 2012. "Gender, Indigeneity, and the Performance of Authenticity in Latin American Tourism." *Latin American Perspectives* 39 (6): 109-15.

Canessa, Andrew. 2012. *Intimate Indigeneities : Race, Sex, and History in the Small Spaces of Andean Life*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Carrigan, Tim, Bob Connell, and John Lee. 1985."Toward a new sociology of masculinity." *Theory and society* 14 (5) 551-604.

Cepek, Michael L. 2008. “Essential Commitments: Identity and the Politics of Cofan Conservation.” *Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Anthropology* 13(1): 196-222.

Cepek, Michael L. 2011. "Foucault in the forest: Questioning environmentality in Amazonia."
*American Ethnologist* 38(3): 501-515.

Cepek, Michael L. 2018. *Life in Oil: Cofan Survival in the Petroleum Fields of Amazonia.* Austin: University of Texas Press.

Chagnon, Napoleon Alphonseau. 1968. "*The fierce people."* New York Press.

Clarke, Jackie. 1997. “A Framework of Approaches to Sustainable Tourism.” *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 5 (3):224–33.

Collier, Richard. 1998. *Masculinities, crime and criminology*. Sage

Collins, Patricia Hill. 1998. “It’s All In the Family: Intersections of Gender, Race, and Nation.” *Hypatia* 13 (3):62–82.

Colloredo-Mansfeld, Rudi. 1998. "'Dirty Indians', Radical Indígenas, and the Political Economy of Social Difference in Modern Ecuador." *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 17 (2): 185-205.

Conklin, Beth A. 1997. “Body Paint, Feathers, and VCRs: Aesthetics and Authenticity in Amazonian Activism.” *American Ethnologist* 24 (4): 711–37.

Conklin, Beth A., and Laura R. Graham. 1995. “The Shifting Middle Ground: Amazonian Indians and Eco-Politics.” *American Anthropologist* 97 (4):695–710.

Connell, Robert William. 1983. *Which way is up?: Essays on sex, class, and culture*. Allen & Unwin Academic.

Connell, Robert William, and Raewyn Connell. 2000. *The men and the boys*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Connell, Robert William. 2005. *Masculinities*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Connell, Robert W., and James W. Messerschmidt. 2005."Hegemonic masculinity: Rethinking the concept." *Gender & society* 19 (6): 829-859.

*Constitucion de la Republica del Ecuador.* 1979. Cancilleria.gov.ec. Accessed September 10, 2020.
https://www.cancilleria.gob.ec/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/constitucion_1978.pdf

Cronon, William, ed. 1996. *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature*. W. W.
Norton & Company.

Dahles, Heidi, and Karin Bras. 1999. "Entrepreneurs in Romance Tourism in Indonesia." *Annals of Tourism Research* 26 (2):267–293.

Davidov, Veronica. 2013. *Ecotourism and Cultural Production: An Anthropology of Indigenous Spaces in Ecuador*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

De Albuquerque, Klaus. 1998. "In Search of the Big Bamboo." *Transition* 77: 48-57.

De la Cadena, Marisol. 2000. *Indigenous Mestizos : the politics of race and culture in Cuzco, Peru, 1919-1991*. Durham: Duke University Press.

De la Cadena, Marisol. 2010. "Indigenous Cosmopolitics in The Andes: Conceptual Reflections
Beyond "Politics". *Cultural Anthropology.* 25: 334–370.

De la Torre, Carlos. 1996. *El Racismo en Ecuador: Experiencias de los Indios de Clase Media.* Quito, Ecuador: Ediciones Centro Andino de Acción Popular.

Descola, Philippe. 1996.*The spears of twilight: life and death in the Amazon jungle*. HarperCollins.

Edelman, Marc. 1999. *Peasants against globalization: rural social movements in Costa Rica*. Redwood City: Stanford University Press.

Ennis, Georgia. "Remediating Endangerment: Radio and the Animation of Memory in the Western Amazon." PhD diss., University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 2019.

Erazo, Juliet S. 2010. "Constructing indigenous subjectivities: economic collectivism and identity in the Ecuadorian Amazon." *Development and Change* 41, (6): 1017-1039.

Erazo, Juliet S. 2013. *Governing Indigenous Territories: Enacting Sovereignty in the Ecuadorian Amazon*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Erazo, Juliet S. and Christopher Jarrett. 2018. "Managing Alterity from Within: The Ontological Turn in Anthropology and Indigenous Efforts to Shape Shamanism." *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 24: 145–63.

Erazo, Juliet, and Ernesto Benitez. (in press). "Becoming Politicians: Indigenous Pageants as Training Sites for Public Life." *American Anthropologist*.

Escobar, Arturo. 2010. "Latin America at a Crossroads." *Cultural Studies* 24 (1):1–65

Escobar, Arturo. 2012. *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Evans-Pritchard, Edward Evan. 1974.*Man and Woman among the Azande*. Free Press.

Fernández, Blanca S., Liliana Pardo, Katherine Salamanca y Alberto Acosta. 2014. "El *buen vivir* en Ecuador: ¿*marketing* político o proyecto en disputa? Un diálogo con Alberto Acosta." *Íconos*: *Revista de Ciencias Sociales* 48:101–117.

Ferguson, James. 1990. *The Anti-Politics Machine: "Development," Depoliticization, and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Fernandez, Nadine T. 2010. *Revolutionizing romance: Interracial couples in contemporary Cuba*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

Foucault, Michel. 1990."*The history of sexuality: An introduction, volume I.*" *Trans. Robert Hurley.* New York*:* Vintage Books.

Foucault, Michel. 1991. Governmentality. In *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*. C.G. Graham Burchell, and Peter Miller, eds. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Frazer, Simon.1998. *The Golden Bough.* Oxford: Oxford University Press. First published in 1890.

Friedman, Jonathan. 1996. "The politics of de-authentification: escaping from identity, a response to 'beyond authenticity' by Mark Rogers." *Identities* 3(1–2): 127–136.

Frohlick, Susan. 2007. "Fluid Exchanges: The Negotiation of Intimacy between Tourist Women and Local Men in a Transnational Town in Caribbean Costa Rica." *City & Society* 19(1): 139–168.

Goffman, Erving. 1959. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. Garden City, N.Y: Doubleday.

Gordon, Robert. 1998. "The rise of the Bushman penis: Germans, genitalia and genocide." *African Studies* 57: 27-54.

Gupta, Akhil. 1998. *Postcolonial Developments: Agriculture in the Making of Modern India*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Gordon, Robert. 1998. "The rise of the Bushman penis: Germans, genitalia and genocide." *African Studies* 57 (1): 27-54.

Graburn, Nelson H.H. 1983. “Tourism and Prostitution.” *Annals of Tourism Research* 10 (3):437–443.

Graham, Laura R., and H. Glenn Penny, eds. 2014. *Performing Indigeneity: Global Histories and Contemporary Experiences*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Greene, Shane. 2009. *Customizing indigeneity: Paths to a visionary politics in Peru*. Redwood City: Stanford University Press.

Gupta, Akhil and James Ferguson, eds. 1997. *Anthropological Locations: Boundaries and Grounds of a Field Science*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Gutmann, Matthew C. 1997. "Trafficking in men: The anthropology of masculinity." *Annual review of anthropology* 26 (1): 385-409.

Gutmann, Matthew C. 2003 *Changing men and masculinities in Latin America*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Gutmann, Matthew C. 2006. *The meanings of macho: Being a man in Mexico City*. Vol. 3. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Hale, Charles. 2004. "Rethinking indigenous politics in the era of the “indio permitido”." *NACLA Report on the Americas* 38 (2) 16-21.

Haraway, Donna. 1998. "Situated knowledges: The science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective." *Feminist studies* 14 (3): 575-599.

Harris, Marvin. 1993. "The evolution of human gender hierarchies: A trial formulation." *Sex and gender hierarchies*: 57-79.

Harrison, David. 1994. “Tourism and Prostitution: Sleeping with the Enemy?” *Tourism Management* 15 (6):435–443.

Harvey, David. 2005. *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hawkins, Donald E., and Shaun Mann. 2007. "The World Bank’s role in tourism development." *Annals of Tourism Research* 34 (2): 348-363.

Hearn, Jeff. 2004. "From hegemonic masculinity to the hegemony of men." *Feminist theory* 5 (1): 49-72.

Herold, Edward, Rafael Garcia, and Tony DeMoya. 2001. “Female Tourists and Beach Boys: Romance or Sex Tourism?” *Annals of Tourism Research* 28 (4):978–997.

Herzfeld, Michael. 1985. "Gender pragmatics: Agency, speech, and bride-theft in a Cretan mountain village." *Anthropology* 9(1-2): 25-44.

High, Casey. 2010. “Warriors, Hunters, and Bruce Lee: Gendered Agency and the Transformation of Amazonian Masculinity.” *American Ethnologist* 37 (4):753–70.

Hobsbawm, Eric and Terrence Ranger, eds. *The Invention of Tradition.* Cambridge: Cambridgge University Press.

Hutchins, Frank. “Ecotourism and Cultural Change Among the Quechua in Ecuador’s Amazon.” PhD diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2002.

Hutchins, Frank, and Patrick C. Wilson, eds. 2010. *Editing Eden: A Reconsideration of Identiy Politics, and Place in Amazonia*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Hodgson, Dorothy Louise. 2001. *Once Intrepid Warriors : Gender, Ethnicity, and the Cultural Politics of Maasai Development*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Holter, Øystein Gullvåg. 1997.*Gender, patriarchy and capitalism: A social forms analysis*. Work Research Institute

Instituto Nacional de Estadistica y Censos (INEC). 2010. Censo de Población y Vivienda. https://www.ecuadorencifras.gob.ec/censo-de-poblacion-y-vivienda/

Jackson, Jean. 1991. “Being and Becoming an Indian in the Vaupés.” In *Nation-States an Indians in Latin America*, edited by Greg Urban and Joel Sherzer, 131–55. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Jacobs, Jessica. 2010. *Sex, Tourism and the Postcolonial Encounter (Landscapes of Longing in Egypt)*. Routledge.

Jarrett, Christopher. “The Social Life of Guayusa from Amazonian Ecuador: An Examination of Livelihoods, Landscapes, and Politics.” PhD diss., University of Texas, San Antonio, 2019.

Kempadoo, Kamala., ed. 1999. *Sun, Sex, and Gold : Tourism and Sex Work in the Caribbean*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Kimmel, Michael S., Amy Aronson, and David Alan Sapp. 2003. *Men & masculinities: A social, cultural, and historical encyclopedia*. Sapp, D.

Kuper, Adam. “The return of the native.” *Current Anthropology* 44 (3):389-402.

Levi-Strauss Claude. [1949] 1969. *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*. Translated by John Richard Von Sturmer, James Harle Bell, Rodney Needham. Beacon Press.

Lew, Allan, C. Michael Hall and Allan Williams, eds. 2004. *A Companion to Tourism.*Wiley.

Li, Tania Muray. 2004. "Environment, indigeneity and transnationalism." In *Liberation ecologies: Environment, Development and Social Movements,* edited by Michael Watts and Richard Preet, 339-70. London: Routledge.

Li, Tania Murray. 2007. *The Will to Improve: Governmentality, Development, and the Practice of Politics*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Lucero, José A.. 2006 "Representing "Real Indians": The Challenges of Indigenous Authenticity and Strategic Constructivism in Ecuador and Bolivia." *Latin American Research Review* 41.(2): 31-56.

MacCannell, Dean. 1999. *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Malinowsky, Bronislaw. 1984. *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*. Reprint, Long Grove, IL:Waveland Press. First published 1922.

Martinez-Alier, Verena. 1974.*Marriage, class and colour in nineteenth-century Cuba: a study of racial attitudes and sexual values in a slave society*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Martinez-Novo, Carmen. 2014. “Managing Diversity in Post-neoliberal Ecuador.” *Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Anthropology* 19(1): 399-422.

Marx, Karl. 2013 [1887*]* *Capital: Volumes 1 & 2*. London: Wordsworth Editions.

McClintock, Anne. 1995. *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*. Routledge.

McMichael, Philip. 2012. *Development and Social Change: A Global Perspective*. Pine Forge Press.

Meisch, Lynn A. 1995. "Gringas and Otavalenos: Changing tourist relations." *Annals of Tourism Research* 22 (2): 441-462.

Mieli, Mario. 1980. *Homosexuality and liberation: Elements of a gay critique*. Gay Men's Press.

Ministerio de Gobierno. 2019. Nuevo llamamiento a aspirantes a Policías de Línea y Oficiales. Quito, Ecuador.

Mohanty, Chandra Talpade. 1984. "Under Western eyes: Feminist scholarship and colonial
discourses." *Boundary 2* (1)333-358.

Momsen, Janet Henshall. 2003.*Gender and development: critical concepts in development studies*. London: Routledge.

Mowforth, Martin, and Ian Munt. 1998. *Tourism and Sustainability: New Tourism in the Third World*. London: Routledge.

Muratorio, Blanca. 1991.*The life and times of Grandfather Alonso, culture and history in the upper Amazon*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

Muratorio, Blanca. 1998. Indigenous Women's Identities and the Politics of Cultural Reproduction in the Ecuadorian Amazon. *American Anthropologist* 100 (2): 409–20.

Murphy, Robert F. 1956. "Matrilocality and patrilineality in Mundurucú society." *American Anthropologist* 58 (3): 414-434.

Nagel, Joane. 2000. "Ethnicity and Sexuality." *Annual Review of Sociology* 26:107-33

Nixon, Angelique V. 2015.*Resisting Paradise: Tourism, Diaspora, and Sexuality in Caribbean Culture*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi.

Oakdale, Suzanne. 2004. "The Culture-Conscious Brazilian Indian: Representing and Reworking Indianness in Kayabi Political Discourse." *American Ethnologist* 31 (1):60–75.

Oberem, Udo. 1980. *Los Quijos: historia de la transculturación de un grupo indígena en el oriente ecuatoriano.* Otavalo, Ecuador: Instituto Otavaleño de Antropología.

Ong, Aihwa. 1999. *Flexible citizenship: The cultural logics of transnationality*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Ortner, Sherry B. 1972. "Is female to male as nature is to culture?" *Feminist studies* 1(2): 5-31.

Padilla, Mark. 2008. *Caribbean pleasure industry: Tourism, sexuality, and AIDS in the Dominican Republic*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Parsons, Talcott, and Robert F. Bales. 1956. *Family Socialization and Interaction Process*. Vol. 7. Psychology Press.

Patil, Vrushali. 2018. "The Heterosexual Matrix as Imperial Effect." *Sociological Theory* 36 (1): 1-26.

Pearson, Ruth, and Cecile Jackson. 1998**.** *Feminist visions of development: gender, analysis and policy*. London: Routledge.

Peluso, Daniela. 1993. "Conservation and Indigenismo." *Hemisphere* 5(2): 6-9.

Perley, Bernard. 2014. "Living Traditions: A Manifesto for Critical Indigeneity." In *Performing Indigeneity: Global Histories and Contemporary Experiences*, edited by Laura R. Graham and H. Glenn Penny, 32–54. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Philips, Joan. 2008. "Female sex tourism in Barbados: A Post-Colonial Perspective." *Brown Journal of World Affairs* 14(2): 201-212.

Postero, Nancy. 2017. *The Indigenous State: Race, Politics, and Performance in Plurinational Bolivia*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Povenelli, Elizabeth. 2002. *The Cunning of Recognition: Indigenous Alterities and the Making of Australian Multiculturalism*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Pruitt, Deborah, and Suzanne LaFont. 1995. "For Love and Money." *Annals of Tourism Research* 22 (2):422–440.

Queeley, Andrea J. 2017. *Rescuing Our Roots: The African Anglo-Caribbean Diaspora in Contemporary Cuba*. Gainesville: University of Florida Press.

Radcliffe, Sarah A. 2012. "Development for a Postneoliberal Era? Sumak Kawsay, Living Well and the Limits to Decolonisation in Ecuador." *Geoforum* 43 (2):240–49.

Radcliffe-Brown, Alfred R. 1922. *The Andaman Islanders*. Free Press.

Rahier, Jean Muteba. 1998. "Blackness, the Racial/Spatial Order, Migrations, and Miss Ecuador 1995-1996." *American Anthropologist* 100(2): 421-430

Ramos, Alcida Rita. 1994. "The Hyperreal Indian." *Critique of Anthropology* 14 (2):153–71.

Redford, Kent. 1990. "The Ecologically Noble Savage." *Orion Nature Quarterly* 9 (3):25–29.

Rival, Laura M. 2012. *Trekking through history: the Huaorani of Amazonian Ecuador*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Robinson, William I. 2014. *Global Capitalism and the Crisis of Humanity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rogers, Mark. 1996. “Beyond authenticity: conservation, tourism, and the politics of representation in the Ecuadorian Amazon.” *Identities Global Studies in Culture and Power* 3(1–2): 73–125.

Rostow, Walter W. 1960. *The stages of economic growth: a non-Communist manifesto*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rupert, Bryan S. *Negotiating the Good Life: Navigating Cultural and Environmental Change in the Lower Amazon Basin*. PhD diss., Indiana University, 2019.

Ryan, Chris, and Rachel Kinder. 1996. “Sex, Tourism and Sex Tourism: Fulfilling Similar Needs?” *Tourism Management* 17 (7):507–518.

Sachs, Wolfgang, ed. 1992. *The Development Dictionary: A Guide to Knowledge as Power*. 2nd ed. Zed Books.

Sahlins, Marshall. 2000. *Culture in Practice*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Salazar, Noel. 2010. *Envisioning Eden: Mobilizing Imaginaries in Tourism and Beyond.* Berghahn Books.

Sanchez Taylor, Jacqueline. 2006. “Female Sex Tourism: A Contradiction in Terms?” *Feminist Review* 83 (1):42–59.

Schick, Irvin Cemil. 1999. *The erotic margin: sexuality and spatiality in alteritist discourse*. London: Verso.

Scott, James C. 1999. *Seeing like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Seidler, Vic. 2006. *Transforming masculinities: Men, cultures, bodies, power, sex and love*. London: Routledge.

Sheller, Mimi and John Urry, eds. 2004. *Tourism Mobilities: Places to play, places in play.* London: Routledge.

Simoni, Valerio. 2015. “Breadwinners, sex machines and romantic lovers: entangling masculinities, moralities, and pragmatic concerns in touristic Cuba.” *Etnografica* 19(2): 389-411.

Siskind, Janet. 1973. “Tropical Forest Hunters and the Economy of Sex.” In *Peoples and Cultures of Native South America,* edited by Daniel Gross, 226-240. New York: Natural History.

Slater, Candace. 1996. “Amazonia as Edenic Narrative.” In *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature,* edited by William Cronon. W. W. Norton & Company.

Slater, Candace. 1999. “Justice for Whom? Contemporary Images of Amazonia.” In *People, Plants, and Justice: The Politics of Nature Conservation,* edited by Charles Zerner, 67-82. New York: Columbia University Press.

Slater, Candace. 2002. *Entangled Edens : Visions of the Amazon*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Smith, Valene L. 2012. *Hosts and Guests: The Anthropology of Tourism*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Starn, Orin. 1999. *Nightwatch: The Politics of Protest in the Andes.* Durham: Duke University Press.

Steward, Julian Haynes. 1955. *Theory of Culture Change. The Methodology of Multilinear Evolution.(Second Printing)*. Champaign: University of Illinois Press.

Stoler, Ann Laura. 1995. *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault’s History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Stoler, Ann Laura. 2002. *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Stronza, Amanda. 2001. "Anthropology of tourism: Forging new ground for ecotourism and other alternatives." *Annual review of anthropology* 30(1): 261-283.

Swanson, Tod. 2009. “Singing to Estranged Lovers: Runa Relations to Plants in the Ecuadorian Amazon.” *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature, and Culture.* 3: 36–65.

Tena Municipal Government. 2000. Plan Estrategico de Desarrollo. Tena, Ecuador.

Tengan, Ty P. Kāwika. 2008. *Native men remade: Gender and nation in contemporary Hawai‘i*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Tiger, Lionel, and Robin Fox. 1984. *The Imperial Animal.* New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Tooman, L. Alex.1997."Tourism and development." *Journal of Travel Research* 35(3):33-40.

Uzendoski, Michael. 2003. "Purgatory, Protestantism, and Peonage: Naporuna Evangelicals and the Domestication of the Masculine Will." In *Millennial Ecuador: Critical Essays on Cultural Transformations and Social Dynamics*, edited by Norman E. Whitten, 129-153. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press.

Uzendoski, Michael. 2005. *The Napo Runa of Amazonian Ecuador*. Champaign: University of Illinois Press.

Valdivia, Gabriela. 2005. "On indigeneity, change, and representation in the northeastern Ecuadorian Amazon." *Environment and Planning* 37(2): 285–303.

Vickers, William T. 2017. "Sex Roles and Social Change in Amazonian Ecuador." *Tipití: Journal of the Society for the Anthropology of Lowland South America* 15 (1): 26-45.

Vilaça, Aparecida. 2005. "Chronically unstable bodies: reflections on Amazonian corporalities." *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 11(3): 445-464

Viveiros de Castro, Eduardo.2004. "Perspectival anthropology and the method of controlled equivocation." *Tipití: Journal of the Society for the Anthropology of Lowland South America* 2 (1): 1.

Wade, Peter. 2009. *Race and Sex in Latin America.* New York: Pluto Press.

Wallerstein, Immanuel. 2004. *World Systems Analysis: An Introduction.* Durham: Duke University Press.

Watanabe, John M. 2016. "Racing to the top: descent ideologies and why Ladinos never meant to be mestizos in colonial Guatemala*." Latin American and Caribbean Ethnic Studies* 11(3): 305-322.

Weichselbaumer, Doris. 2012. "Sex, romance and the carnivalesque between female tourists and Caribbean men." *Tourism Management* 33 (5): 1220-1229.

Weismantel, Mary. 2001.*Cholas and pishtacos: stories of race and sex in the Andes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

West, Paige, James Igoe and Dan Brockington. 2006. "Parks and Peoples: The Social Impact of Protected Areas." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 35:251-277.

Whitehead, Neil. 2010. "Cannibal tourists and savvy savages: Understanding Amazonian modernities." In *Editing Eden: A Reconsideration of Identiy Politics, and Place in Amazonia* , edited by Frank Hutchins and Patrick Wilson, 106-123. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Whitehead, Stephen M. 2002. *Men and masculinities: Key themes and new directions*. Polity.

Whitten, Norman E., Marcelo F. Naranjo, Marcelo Santi Simbana, and Dorothea S. Whitten. 1976. *Sacha Runa: ethnicity and adaptation of Ecuadorian jungle Quichua*. Champaign: University of Illinois Press.

Whitten, Norman E., and Dorothea S. Whitten. 2008. *Puyo Runa: Imagery and Power in Western Amazonia.* Champaign: University of Illinois Press.

Yarrow, Thomas. 2011. *Development beyond Politics: Aid, Activism, and NGOs in Ghana*. New York:  Palgrave-Macmillan.

VITA

ERNESTO JAVIER BENITEZ

Born: Pinar del Rio, Cuba.

EDUCATION

| | |
|---|---|
| 2015 – 2021 | Ph.D. Candidate, Global and Sociocultural Studies<br>Florida International University<br>Miami, Florida |
| 2013-2015 | B.A, Anthropology (Summa Cum Laude)<br>Florida International University<br>Miami, Florida. |
| 2009-2012 | A.A., Sociology<br>Miami-Dade College<br>Miami, Florida. |

PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

Erazo, Juliet, and Ernesto Benitez. (in press). “Becoming Politicians: Indigenous Pageants as Training Sites for Public Life.” *American Anthropologist*.

“All great warriors had long hair: the impact of Amazonian tourism on Kichwa masculinity and sexuality in Napo, Ecuador”. AAA/CASCA Annual Meeting. Vancouver, B.C, Canada, Nov 20- Nov 24, 2019

“All great warriors had long hair: the impact of Amazonian tourism on Kichwa masculinity and sexuality in Napo, Ecuador”. XII Sesquiannual Conference of the Society for the Anthropology of Lowland South America (SALSA). Vienna, Austria. June 27-June30, 2019.

“Ecoturismo y su impacto en la producción de la masculinidad Kichwa en el Alto Napo”. Guest Lecture. ESPOL University. Guayaquil, Ecuador. August 8th, 2018.

“Ecotourism and changing indigenous masculinities in the Ecuadorian Amazon”. Guest Lecture. Andes and Amazon Field School. Iyarina, Napo, Ecuador.

“Intimate Alterities: Sex and Masculinity in Amazonian Tourism”. Sociology, Geography and Anthropology Graduate Student Association’s 7th Annual Meeting. Florida International University. Miami, Florida. March 30th, 2018