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Indigenous Ecuadorian Mobility Strategies in the Clandestine Migration Journey

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ABSTRACT

Based on testimonials of migration journeys of indigenous Cañaris from southern highland Ecuador, this paper examines strategies of mobility and social networking employed by migrants and facilitators in the human smuggling market. Following a series of economic crises in the late 1990s, Ecuadorian transnational migration increased significantly, with a 55.5 percent increase to the United States between 2000 and 2008, and staggering 12,150 percent increase to Spain between 1998 and 2005. This article focuses on the growth of a regional migration industry in the southern highland region, and pays special attention to the roles of indigenous Cañari migrants and migration merchants. The guiding questions are: how does indigeneity figure in mobility strategies; in what ways is indigenous identity strategically employed in the migration journey; and how might indigenous migration merchants contribute to the expansion of migration? As migration routes become increasingly dangerous, migrants and human smuggling actors employ more innovative and riskier strategies. I contend that while indigenous identity may be used strategically and allow migrants to forge new transnational social networks, indigenous migrants struggle for legibility in the face of ethnic and linguistic discrimination, in communities of origin, along migratory routes, and in migration destinations.

The tragic story of twelve-year-old Noemi Álvarez Quillay, which made international news in April 2014, drew long-overdue attention to the unfolding humanitarian crisis of the rapidly growing numbers of young migrants en route to the United States. Her untimely death highlighted the extreme level of fear, insecurity, and trauma that migrants experience in the migration journey. It also shed light on the dangerously inept system of national and international immigration controls throughout Central America and Mexico. Over the first half of 2014, detention centres throughout the Central American region, in Mexico, and in the southern United States were overwhelmed with the number of cases of young unaccompanied children. Despite enormous efforts by migrant shelters and other organisations

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working with migrants-en-route, the sequence of events that led to Noemi's tragic end is not unusual. Travelling alone, Noemi departed Tambo, Ecuador, and was en route to New York City, where both of her parents have lived since she was three years old. Authorities detained her in Juárez, Mexico, and sadly her journey ended in a local children's shelter.

The present article draws from testimonials and ethnographic material collected during dissertation fieldwork in Tambo, in the Cañar province of southern highland Ecuador, the community where Noemi grew up, and through contact with families there and with family members in the New York/New Jersey area. My research highlights instances in which indigenous identity figures in mobility strategies and explores how it can be strategically employed as part of the migration industry. Whereas Kyle and Goldstein showed that migration from the Azuayo region (which includes the Azuay and Cañar provinces) constituted a regional migration industry, they pay less attention to the importance of indigeneity as a form of social capital which indigenous migration merchants (as intermediaries and facilitators) have mobilised within their social networks and intermediary organisations.¹ My research shows that identity, as discussed by indigenous migrants and migration merchants, does shape opportunities and strategies both en route and in recruitment by *coyotes* (Spanish term for migrant facilitator). This research thus contributes to a deeper understanding of mobility strategies within the migration industry.²

Migration Routes

Prior to her death, Noemi was previously detained in Nicaragua during her first migration attempt, where she was held for two months. She returned to Ecuador, was reunited with her paternal grandparents, with whom she had lived since her parents' departure, and returned to school. Shortly thereafter, her parents contracted the same *coyote* to arrange another attempt. Despite her reluctance and that of her grandparents, Noemi left Tambo a second time, travelling for six weeks until she was detained in Mexico. Authorities detained the *coyote* and the child on suspicion of unauthorised migration and brought Noemi to a children's shelter, *La Casa de Esperanza* (House of Hope). According to accounts, migration officials interviewed her in a closed room with no other witness present. Afterwards a counsellor noted that she appeared to be in a state of terror and shelter staff reported that she cried night and day. Clearly none of her caretakers fully comprehended the level of trauma she felt. Two days after the interrogation, on March 7, 2014, she committed suicide in the bathroom, using the cloth shower curtain as a noose. Her parents were unable to return to Ecuador for her funeral services because of their undocumented status in the United States.

Officials launched an investigation shortly after her death to verify if it was a suicide or if it had been coerced or staged. Investigators and journalists questioned whether a twelve-year-old was psychologically capable of this kind of action. Evidence confirmed the initial cause of death and they closed the investigation shortly thereafter. While public outcry over the incident in part directed blame at the parents for subjecting their daughter to the risky journey, overwhelmingly suspicion and blame has been placed on the interrogators, who are thought to have prompted her extreme level of distress. Other than the interrogators, no one can be certain what they used to coerce her to give them information. Perhaps they threatened her family members in the United States or even those in Ecuador.³ Did she even fully comprehend her rights during the interrogation? The Secretary of the Network for the Rights of Children, José Luis Flores Cervantes, stated that Juárez city officials, by neglecting to have a witness in the room, violated international norms and protocols put in place to protect vulnerable populations, which includes children en route to the United States.⁴ The poor handling of this case by both migration officials and workers at the shelter highlight that while international standards may exist, in practice there is a dangerous absence of training and enforcement of protocols.

In July 2014, the Ecuadorian Vice Minister of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility, María Landázuri, gave a press conference in which she declared that the case had not followed the Convention of the Rights of Children, citing that the Ecuadorian government had not been notified upon Noemí's detention but only after her death.⁵ This break between protocols and enforcement at the local level plagues many of the intervening countries along the migration route. Investigations over the following eleven months led to the arrests of forty-two people involved in her transport. In February 2015, investigations concluded that she had been sexually abused prior to her death. Speculation about the intentional withholding of evidence of sexual abuse further escalated debate about the role of the organisations involved in her detainment and autopsy.⁶

Ecuadorian Migration and the 2000 Debt Crisis

In late 1999 and early 2000, Ecuador underwent a significant economic crisis. After months of fluctuating oil prices (the leading export of the country), a widespread banking crisis and the drastic devaluation of the national currency, the Ecuadorian government, following the lead of former president Jamil Mahuad, dollarised the economy, adopting the US dollar as the legal tender. Prior to the dollarisation, bank accounts were frozen and many financial institutions closed. People lost savings, investments, and businesses, and inflation continued to increase even as unemployment soared.⁷ Many Ecuadorians turned to international migration in search of better

opportunities. While Ecuadorian migration to the United States can be traced back to the late 1960s, migration increased significantly in the first few years of the new millennium. Migration to Spain, Italy, and, to a lesser extent, Germany and Russia, surpassed migration to the United States. In Spain alone, the Ecuadorian population soared from 4,000 in 1998 to 490,000 in 2005, a staggering 12,150 percent increase.⁸ In the United States, the Ecuadorian population grew from 392,045 in 2000 to 609,762 in 2008, a 55.5 percent increase.⁹

In response to the exodus, the Ecuadorian government established a Ministry of Migration that later evolved into the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility. Consular offices were established in destinations with high concentrations of migrants, including more states throughout the United States, in Spain, Italy, and Germany. The Ecuadorian government established three consular offices in Mexico, in response to the increasing numbers of Ecuadorians detained en route. The government has further elaborated a Law on Human Mobility, which would serve as an umbrella for all legislation regarding immigration, including regional migration to Ecuador, predominantly from Colombia and Peru. The emergence of institutions and legislation, which directly responded to the migration crisis, supports the argument Nyberg Sørensen and Gammeltoft-Hansen make which contends that the migration industry is not only about the facilitators and intermediaries but the rise in legislation and state offices to contend with the mobility and international detention of their citizens.¹⁰

Between 2000 and 2010, most Ecuadorian migrants travelling to the United States followed a route which began with a seven- to eight-day journey by sea and later – for two to three months – over land by car, truck, train, motorcycles, and foot. Since 2010, many migrants are able to fly to Central America, primarily to Honduras, and begin the journey over land. It is a route marked with danger, precariousness, and fear. Terrible stories abound, as friends and neighbours return from unsuccessful attempts and share their experiences. Routes and borders are increasingly policed by national migration control agencies, as well as drug cartels, and people undertake greater risks in search of alternative passage. Upon arriving in Honduras, Guatemala or Mexico, travelling is interspersed with prolonged periods of waiting, as smugglers await updates on opportunities for passage or the arrival of payments. Once the migrants finally cross over into the United States, they continue on to their final destinations of New York, Minneapolis, Oregon, or California, depending on where they may have contacts. The journey is an immense undertaking, but it is only the beginning of a life-changing experience for the migrant, and for the family and acquaintances left behind.

For young Noemi, her profound level of desperation is difficult to comprehend but the context out of which she was migrating typified the limited

opportunities available to many young indigenous girls. Her journey brought her through a myriad of contacts with migrant facilitators, detention officials, not-for-profit centres, the series of intermediary institutions that constitute the meso-structure of the migration industry, yet they all failed to safeguard her from the harsh isolation and fear induced by the migration industry.¹¹ Her parents made the decision based on their perception of these limited opportunities and in the hopes of reunifying their family where they had established a new home. Indigeneity may not have figured into her migration experience in any strategic way but it certainly shaped the context out of which she migrated. As a young indigenous girl from a rural area, Noemi's level of vulnerability along the route would have been extreme. Her story stands as inspiration for this analysis of the experiences of other indigenous migrants in the clandestine migration journey.

Migration Industry and Regimes of Mobility

There are two emerging literatures on contemporary international migration that move beyond previous approaches to understand human mobility in a globalised world. While not mutually exclusive, both migration industry scholars and mobility studies scholars highlight dimensions of migration that have been underanalysed in previous scholarship.¹² Scholars who use migration industry as a conceptual frame analyse the vast social and economic networks of migration facilitators and mobility management, and the institutions involved in migration control, such as legalisation, detention, and deportation. Scholars who engage with mobility studies emphasise mobility as part of a broader set of practices within and prior to widespread international migration. These scholars examine all forms of migration: tourism, business, education, and labour, as well as immobility, in order to capture the intersection of mobility practices, dispossession, and power disparities. Both approaches concede that components of a migration industry have existed in earlier historical periods but contend that contemporary migration has reached a scale unforeseen. While it is beyond the scope of this article to work through an in-depth comparison of the two analytic approaches, the case of indigenous migration would certainly benefit from a hybrid approach of the two. As we understand the formal and informal institutions and actors in migration facilitation and detention, the international attention to high-risk routes, it is important to understand mobility as a practice that predates current institutions and borders.

Indigenous Migrations

In order to better understand how indigenous migrants strategise and adapt in order to cope with increasingly difficult conditions in the migration

journey, I examine cases in which indigeneity provided an opportunity for passage and social mobility in order to tease out the instrumentality of migrant strategies. I contend that transnational social networking based on shared indigenous identity may materialise as more indigenous migrants from Latin America pass through the largely indigenous regions of Central America. In the case of migration merchants, a term used by David Kyle to describe a particular transnational mobility strategy, social connections and opportunities arise out of their participation in the migration industry through front-staging their identity to facilitate collaborations and encourage investments.¹³ At the same time, ethnicity may render groups more vulnerable to exploitation due to linguistic barriers and ethnic discrimination as in cases where *coyotes* use them as a ‘sacrificial’ group in order to divert attention from other groups and allow them to pass.¹⁴ Further, while indigenous entrepreneurs may emerge from migrant communities, the for-profit nature of the business often results in a social distancing, much like that described by Hernández León in his work with *camioneros* in Mexico, a situation which arose during fieldwork, as described herein, and in later conversations about migrant experiences with *coyotes* from the community.¹⁵

Kyle’s ethnographic work in Ecuador throughout the 1990s culminated in the publication of *Transnational Peasants* in 2003.¹⁶ Kyle conducted a comparative ethnographic study in highland Ecuador and formulated two categories of migrants that drew attention to the “radically different economic strategies of transnational mobility.”¹⁷ These two groups of migrants, migration merchants and merchant migrants, typified, respectively, strategies among rural, indigenous migrants from the province of Azuay, just south of Cañar, and in the northern Andean region of Pichincha, working mostly with Otavaleño migration merchants. Migration merchants facilitated aspects of the migration journey, whether they were *enganchadores* (recruiters), *chulqueros* (money-lenders), or *coyotes*. Merchant migrants mostly referred to Otavaleño migrants who travelled internationally to sell artisan goods and music. Working in the same southern region, I examine what has taken place over the last ten years, among the groups he classified as migration merchants. My work engages with his stated goal to “explore the ‘multiple conjunctural’ causes of migration operating simultaneously at several levels of analysis. For example, the same ‘variable’ of ethnic identity may be socially constructed differently at local, national, and international levels but can nevertheless be seen to shape migration at each of those levels.”¹⁸ At the time of the publication of his book, Kyle noted that more indigenous migrants from the southern region were participating following the dramatic upsurge in international Ecuadorian migration in 2000.

Ecuadorian scholars have carefully studied transnational migration within rural and urban communities but they have only recently begun to analyse

indigenous migration in particular.¹⁹ US-based researchers, Pribilsky and Jokisch,²⁰ conducted research in the same southern region where Kyle had worked. Their work, respectively, looks at the forms of social stratification caused by increased migration on transformations within family organisations and agrarian practices. Weismantel contributed to this debate in her analysis on the impact of transnational migration in urban Cuenca, the third largest city in Ecuador, on the ways in which access to remittances destabilised social hierarchies and challenged racialised ideologies among privileged elites.²¹ The narratives herein show that indigenous identity can also facilitate mobility throughout the journey and within the communities of origin.

For many indigenous groups, migration is not a new phenomenon, but rather part of a long history of mobility which includes movement along trade routes, circular migration or simply a result of national borders being delineated across their territories. This has been the case in the Amazonian border regions between Ecuador, Peru and Brazil and certainly in other nations and regions with large indigenous populations and throughout the globe as national boundaries were delineated across regional territories. The long history of indigenous migration in Southern Ecuador includes various forms: predating the arrival of Spanish colonisers, Incan rulers strategically relocated indigenous groups throughout the empire in order to dissuade uprisings (known as *mitimae*) and conducted trade across wide expanses throughout the highlands and Amazonian regions in what John V. Murra termed “vertical archipelagos.”²² Indigenous people have laboured as cargo bearers for intraregional trade for centuries and been instrumental in the construction of railways and roadways throughout Ecuador. Within the twentieth century, it has included seasonal migration from the highlands to the coast; rural to urban migration; settlement programmes in the Amazon; as well as international migration primarily to the United States, Spain, Italy and Germany.

International migration and access to remittances have blurred the social and geographic markers of class, ethnicity, and privilege in these rural highland communities.²³ Arjun Appadurai recognised mobility within the context of globalisation as creating a “new order of instability in the production of modern subjects.”²⁴ Indigenous Cañaris, often wearing the wide-brimmed white hats associated with agrarian life, are now commonly seen in the driver’s seats of new pick-up trucks transporting goods and people through town. By the mid-2000s, indigenous *coyotes* and *prestamistas* now have a significant role in the lucrative informal economy of the migration industry, which *mestizo* elites have long dominated. These changes suggest an important shift in the socio-economic and ethnic stratification between *mestizo* elites and indigenous and rural workers. Within the indigenous communities, social stratification has increased between households with migrant members abroad and those without.²⁵ The inflation in costs of goods and for

services due to the influx of remittances, among other factors, has also generated greater divisions. However, even migrant households are not guaranteed an improved financial status given the unstable flow of remittances, high level of debt, and heightened tensions among family members left behind.²⁶

While I did not work with Noemi's family, many spoke of a family in a very similar situation in Tambo, an increasing occurrence in the region. As migration becomes more common, frequently both young parents will migrate, leaving the grandparents, aunts, uncles, and other extended kin, as the caretakers of children left behind. In general, despite the symbolic marker of success in the form of a modern style home, people criticised the family's arrangement and used them as an example for how migration caused the disintegration of the family values and parenting within the largely indigenous community. This negative perception of the family stands in contrast to a perceived solidarity based on ethnic identity and in fact, the situation was used as a counterpoint in the imaginary of an ideal indigenous family model that merited membership and actively participated in the indigenous community. Even those households that contributed to the fees incurred by their lack of participation in community-level projects (*mingas*), largely due to the absence of multiple family members, were cast in a less favourable light as people reflected on their absence over shared meals during said projects. These community acts grew in significance for those that participated even as they made the absence of members more apparent.

Noemi and her cousins resided together in a partially constructed *casa fría* (cold house) on the family property close to the grandparents' adobe house. Cold houses, a local moniker for the cement block and rebar construction style, dot the landscape in the region as families invest remittances in modern style homes. The multiple-story buildings with large windows stand in sharp contrast to the single-level, thick wall construction style of previous decades whose design retained precious heat during the brisk highland evenings unlike the 'cold' modern ones. My research findings supported Boccagni's assessment that the housing became both symbolic markers of migrant success and of their absence.²⁷ The adopted name also suggests the antithesis of a home, devoid of warmth, settlement, and family. For many, these houses symbolise success and prestige, a marker of visible social mobility previously unattainable due to institutional and social barriers. These houses often remain partially constructed due to intermittent remittances, and as such, stand as stark reminders of the absent migrant members. More often than not the remaining family members occupy the first floor until construction is complete. In Noemi's case, the children slept in the new house but still ate most meals with the grandparents in their home. These accounts suggest that instead of forging a sense of solidarity through shared dilemmas presented by absent migrants, the dominant disparaging discourse around migrant

abandonment contributed to the isolation of the family even among those that remained and continued to participate in the community.

Migration Testimonials

The following section draws on the stories of indigenous Cañari migrants from the canton of El Tambo, the region where I conducted my fieldwork. For each of them, indigenous ethnic identity figures in their experience in different ways. While regional and national identity helped create bonds with others while en route, instances of solidarity based on indigenous identity surfaced at different times within their accounts. Indigeneity became a performative identity that allowed indigenous migrants from Latin America to ‘pass’ as members of local indigenous groups, by adopting clothing style and linguistic terms, in order to trick migration officials who are most often mono-lingual Spanish speakers. This form of ‘passing’ allows migrants to move through policed areas with more ease as ethnic discrimination renders indigenous peoples less visible to immigration officials. This strategy is supported by *coyotes* that stock clothing at safe houses and recruit local indigenous travellers to help the migrants blend in with local groups.²⁸

From *Migrante* to *Enganchador* (From Migrant to Recruiter)

When José, a young indigenous man from highland Cañar, first attempted to migrate to the United States in May 2001, he arranged his travel with a *coyote* in Cuenca, the third largest city in Ecuador, a two-hour bus ride south from his hometown. He began his journey at night and travelled the six hours by bus to the Pacific coastal town of Manta. Before sunrise in the morning, nearly one hundred hopeful immigrants waited on the beach for the small dinghy to bring them out to a larger fishing vessel. Once they commenced the journey on the tightly packed fishing boat, the hopeful migrants were forced to wait in the fishing cargo holds during the daytime but were able to spend the nights on deck. These water routes are increasingly patrolled by United States coast guard as well as coast guards from Central American countries. The cargo holds of fishing vessels serve as hiding spaces if another ship is sighted at sea and often passengers will be held there throughout the journey as a way to control the groups.

While there was no room to walk around, no violence or abuse occurred. Food and water were scant. After seven arduous days at sea, the boat arrived to the Guatemalan coast where the travellers were packed onto a truck. José travelled through Guatemala and into Mexico over the next few weeks, staying overnight or a few days at houses “like hostages” and then being packed alternately into buses and pickup trucks, at one point walking for over twelve hours across desert-like plains, followed by swimming/wading

across rivers. The *coyotes* continually split people into smaller groups and paired them with others as they slowly approached the United States border. At certain points, in an area he referred to as “Tierra Blanca”, the group was split into much smaller groups and given 3,500\$ pesos (Mexican currency) so they could pay the officials 200\$ and later 500\$ to each of the *coyotes* along the way. The network through which the journey was financed alternated. They were told to meet up at a hotel but two men, an uncle and nephew, never arrived, which José attributed to their inability to read. The *coyote* simply informed the group that they were ‘lost’. In the hotel there were migrants from Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador. Under cover of night, the *coyotes* brought the group by bus to Aguas Calientes near the border and reunited them with other Ecuadorians, twenty in total.

In this first attempt, José arrived in Texas after two and half months but was immediately detained by US border officials. In the beginning, officials asked them, “Who is Pancho Villa?” to determine if they were Mexican. After they could not answer, they convinced the guards that he and others from highland Ecuador were indigenous Guatemalans. While *mestizo* migrants have engaged in the same strategic move through memorising maps of villages, street names and popular figures, the ability of indigenous migrants to use language to mask their national identity, especially when most migration officials are mono-lingual Spanish speakers, make their ruse more convincing. I point to this “passing” strategy, made possible by the denigration of indigenous personhood across Central and Latin American regions, as a form of mobilised invisibility. Ultimately José and his colleagues decided to admit their national origin in order to be able to return to their homes after such a long and arduous journey. He was kept in detention for three months, unable to communicate with his family and passed the time with detainees from Colombia and other parts of Ecuador. He was in this detention centre when the twin towers fell. Ultimately he returned to Ecuador on 15 October.

Having already invested US\$2,000 in the journey, José attempted to migrate once more in 2003. He followed the same initial route in Ecuador but this time the ship travelled all the way to the Mexican coast. Juan recounted the horrific experience during his eight-day trip at sea. Not only was there a shortage of food and water, but female travellers suffered from incidences of violence and abuse, something that had not happened during his first journey. The passengers were also kept below decks for the entire trip. On the seventh day, a thirty-year-old man from Paute, a small town just outside of Cuenca, committed suicide. He had been showing signs of distress and the crew had him tied up but somehow he was able to escape. José witnessed the incident and said that the man tore off his clothes and threw himself off the ship. Since the man had never learned how to swim – being from the highlands – he knew he would drown as soon as he jumped into the water. The next day, the Mexican coast guard detained the ship and all the

passengers were sent back to Ecuador. “He missed them by just one day... one day,” José repeated in disbelief as we sat in a borrowed living room just off the main road through Sisid, a small town outside of Cañar. José attempted the journey one last time in 2005 but Ecuadorian officials detained the group on the coast before they were even able to board the fishing vessel on suspicion of attempting to migrate. After a brief interrogation, they were then left to find their own bus fare to return to their hometowns.

José’s story shares similarities with the migration experiences of many households in the highland regions of Ecuador. While José’s first attempt to enter the United States ended in his detention and deportation, his subsequent attempts demonstrate the increasing vigilance on the part of the Ecuadorian government and other countries throughout the region. José’s story depicts the brutality of the migration journey but also the difficulties faced and the sacrifices made by hopeful migrants in their quest for a better quality of life. Unable to complete the journey, he now works as an *enganchador*, or recruiter, for the *coyote* in order to reduce his debt. *Enganchadores* have been a part of the informal economy in the highlands for over fifty years; previously labour recruiters from the coastal plantations would seek seasonal workers in the same highland regions, touting better wages and opportunities. Kyle (2003) describes similar incidences in his research and frames this as a centuries-old institution of usurious middlemen in different economic periods. Put another way, the economic collapse stimulated a resurgence of subsistence strategies that rural and indigenous communities have relied upon over decades. When indigenous migration merchants entered the migration industry, they were initially viewed in a relatively positive light. Even so, José expressed remorse and disdain for his position but felt he had little choice since his debt was so high. What is interesting about his story is the way in which he became ensnared in the migration industry, working with a local *coyote* who recruited him to help increase his clientele. There may not have been an immediate or apparent fashion in which indigeneity created a moment of solidarity in his experience, but the indigenous leadership in Cañar was working with José to get him more involved in local community activities. By providing an alternative source of income, the communities work with the non-governmental organisations opened a possibility through networks based on his indigenous identity.

Migration ‘*Sin Querer*’ (‘Without Intent’)

In 2003, Segundo made his first attempt to migrate to the United States. He worked in construction but had not been able to find work for a long time and his family was struggling. He began his account with the statement that he migrated without intent, *sin querer*. He explained that he started on the journey before having decided to leave. He said that the money had been arranged and he felt

compelled to go. Segundo's description relegated his own sense of agency in the decision-making process to those that arranged the journey. His account aligns with both Kyle and Hernandez's portrayal of migration merchants having an incentivising impact on the migration flow. At the onset of his journey, he worked with an *enganchador* from the small town of Sisid who travelled with him to the coast where close to 200 people were brought out to another fishing vessel that travelled eight days to the coast of Guatemala. The group was split apart once they reached the coast and his group travelled by truck up to the mountains where a family housed them for six days. The migrants were told to bathe and given indigenous Guatemalan clothing. There were three separate groups with different *coyotes*. They weren't allowed to leave the premises and were hidden from sight. Later the group was separated and they travelled on trikes, a common vehicle for taxis, and were grouped with Guatemalans to further hide them from suspicion. They arrived at another family home and were among forty–fifty others from Ecuador, Peru and Colombia. From there they walked for hours and finally sought shelter at an abandoned house. Ultimately officials detained them in Tapachula, Mexico, where he was held for three weeks until they had enough Ecuadorian migrants to fill the plane for their return.

Like José's experience, Segundo mentioned that a few of his fellow travellers were able to convince officials that they were Guatemalan but he chose to return home. Segundo began his second attempt just one month after arriving home. He travelled a similar route to Mexico, even staying at the same safe houses until he was detained in the same region as before. He decided to forego another attempt but later heard that those that did try one last time ultimately did make it. Fortunately for Segundo, the *coyote* only charged him \$700 instead of the full \$2000 initial payment of the usual \$12,000 fee. In 2008, three of his six children were in the United States and he was considering another attempt. He had become more involved in local politics and was a representative for the community for artisans and craft-workers. In this account, indigenous identity again served as a mode of passing, a strategic performance, aimed at confusing migration officials both during their travels through Guatemala and Mexico, and even upon detainment. By convincing an official of their indigenous status, Ecuadorians would not have to begin the migration route as far back but was predicated on their ability to reconnect with the original *coyote* to which they had paid initial fees and, for many, who also held titles to their family lands (often used as collateral for initial loan). It was unclear from his testimonial how that may have been arranged but Segundo maintained ties with the *coyote* as he considered his next attempt.

Solidarity En Route

Santiago, an indigenous Cañari man in his late thirties, shared his migration experience and how he successfully entered the United States after three

attempts. Like the others, he worked with the same *coyote* that arranged all three attempts. Generally the local *coyotes* would charge in installments and only solicit the full fee once the migrant crossed into the United States regardless if they were detained and deported afterwards. Santiago was reluctant to share why he had returned to Ecuador but he had become very active in the activities of the indigenous community; that is how we initially met. We discussed his experience, which was similar to the others in terms of the sea-to-land crossing. When asked whether he felt his indigenous identity played a role in his migration experience, he shared the following encounter. During his second attempt, he was staying at a safe house in Mexico and reported that he had been approached by an indigenous Mexican *coyote* who asked if he wanted to get into the business with him and not “let the mestizos make all the money.” This level of *compadrazgo* (comradeship), or ethnic solidarity, was touched upon in other migration stories shared by return migrants in Ecuador and in informal conversations with migrants in the New York City area. These migrants described learning indigenous Guatemalan and Mayan terminology and wearing indigenous clothing. By adopting the clothing, and in some cases, vocabulary, of an indigenous group, Segundo and others he travelled with used indigeneity strategically as a performative identity.²⁹ By tapping into the mutual experience of invisibility or at the very least ‘otherness’ of the indigenous groups by the dominant society, migrants were able to avoid detection. In the last instance, the Mexican *coyote* used indigenous identity as a basis for a potential partnership against the *mestizo* migrant workers.

Indigenous Migration Merchants

*A range of migration merchants profit by facilitating some aspect of the migration process, such as money-lending, activities available to nearly all return migrants. This brokering has reproduced the pyramidal structure of the straw hat export economy, although this structure is more open to entrepreneurial migrants who are not part of the local financial elite.*³⁰

Not just anyone could become a *coyote*. In the early days of migration, only a few *mestizo* families occupied lucrative positions as informal money-lenders and *coyotes*, mostly due to connections in the United States through a migrant family member. As the epigraph describes, middle-class merchant families, who had profited during the straw-hat economy prior to the decline in the market in the mid-1960s, comprised the first wave of migrants to the United States. As such they established and profited from the initial connections within the migration network. When indigenous migrants forged their own social networks and connections and became *coyotes* in the early 2000s, a critical shift occurred. Overall, indigenous community members welcomed this shift. When people talked about the relationship to the indigenous

coyotes and moneylender, there was an implicit expectation that they would be more fair, less likely to exploit or threaten the remaining family members for repayments, and also more likely to communicate in Kichwa, the regional indigenous language.³¹ People contended that the community itself would have greater leverage over the actions of this person because they lived in the community.

Luis, a former president of a local indigenous organisation, provided further insight on the history of migration and the impact on social inequalities in the region. As we rode up to Laguna Culebrillas one afternoon for a cultural tourism event, he commented that the recent appearance of indigenous moneylenders and *coyotes* had finally broken the legacy of former landholding elites and merchant families exercising control over indigenous Cañaris and peasant *mestizos*. Up to the early 1980s, most families subsisted on the small plots of land granted through the agrarian reforms of the late 1960s and early 1970s and on supplemental work. As the economic and political conditions worsened in the 1980s, migration to the United States surged as families struggled to keep up with the exorbitant prices of basic costs of living. He contended that the main cause for the economic hardship was corruption among the 'forty' families who consistently held power since the late 1800s. Corruption and inside connections were the driving force of politics (of state) in this area and the rural families were the ones who suffered the most.³² He also pointed out that most *coyotes* in the region had deep roots in migration and were related to each other, going back to the pioneer migrants. These migration predecessors had an easy journey, which cost around 6,000 sucres (approximately 250 USD in late 1970s).³³ Family members continued their involvement until it became a family business, one that depended on well-established personal connections.

Once indigenous *coyotes* started to take the stage, the older families no longer had exclusive connections and the social dynamics began to change. When men from the rural areas began migrating to the United States in the mid-1980s, they would get dressed up before they visited the *coyote* in Cuenca, which in many testimonials was a *mestiza* woman.³⁴ I heard stories like this numerous times from migrants who had made the trip or had family members who had left, following the initial pioneers. Luis contended that the *coyotes* had all the controls, playing an exclusive and privileged financial and social role in the community. He further recounted that later elite urban *mestizos* in Cañar and Zhud, a town just north of Cañar, began working in the migration industry. However, the dynamics changed once people from the rural areas became more connected in the migratory network.

When Raul, an older Cañari man, commented that there was a Cañari *coyote* in the community, I asked how he might differ from *mestizo coyotes*; he responded that primarily the difference was the language barrier for monolingual Kichwa speakers who wanted to migrate. Most could not

communicate with a *mestizo* and wouldn't understand what was entailed in the contract or what to expect in the journey. He pointed out astutely that indigenous *coyotes* were more accountable to the community, as the ties were still considered to be strong if the *coyote* continued to reside there. The extended family and kin-networks (still identified through regionally identifiable indigenous surnames) were thought to temper the possibility of exploitation and abuse/threats by debt-holding moneylenders or *coyotes*. This presents an interesting paradox, in which entrepreneurs in the migration industry, *coyotes* and moneylenders were tolerated in the communities as they are seen to be part of the social fabric, while the migrant families were seen as contributing to the demise of social controls and community cohesiveness.³⁵ One compelling reason for this tolerance, as I was told, was that *coyotes* serve an important role and people may eventually need their services. Informal interviews conducted seven years later actually showed a shift of perceptions of indigenous *coyotes*, who were now seen as disconnected from the community and engaged in exploitative relationships with migrant families. In his research with Mexican migrants, Hernández-León (2008) pointed to this social distancing as *camioneros* engaged in the for-profit business.

I first met Juan in Quito, where he had helped recruit indigenous migrant investors in a four-star hotel project in Cuenca; he was recently working on his own housing complex in Cañar, Urbanización Cañar. Juan had played a large role in the formation of the Pachakutik indigenous political party,³⁶ but had fallen out with the other organisers. Over the course of my first few weeks in Cañar, Juan shared his background as a former teacher and taxi driver, a dual career path that many teachers shared, as the teaching salary could not sustain a household.³⁷ He shared his story about the Pachakutik party much later, when he told me that he had run to be a representative for the region, but had lost due to negative campaigning by another candidate. Apparently there were many disagreements and he no longer worked with any of the organisations. He never elaborated more on the experience but at the time Pachakutik was formed in 1995, Cañar was recently recovering from a violent encounter between *mestizo* business owners and indigenous Cañaris at the newly established cultural centre in the town centre.³⁸ Tensions would have been high. Juan was also working on a start-up magazine and had a second housing development project closer to the coast. A few months later, I learned he was also a well-known indigenous *coyote*.

One afternoon I met Juan and his wife Josefina at the housing development they were spearheading. Juan spent the day giving the investors (all indigenous families) a tour of the construction site, which included a total of thirty homes in three construction styles. Afterwards the families gathered for a snack of soda and crackers and to review their payment history. His wife, who kept the logbooks, reviewed each family's monthly progress in

their three-year payment plan. Many of the family members (mostly women) had lapsed only a few months, but one woman in particular, who was trailed by three children in tattered clothes, was told that she was almost eight months behind in payments and was going to lose her share in the housing development. She was very apologetic, but argued that her husband had stopped sending money. Joséfina admonished her and said there was nothing she could do. They argued back and forth until finally the woman left. Having been witness to an uncommonly loud and bitter dispute, I realised that not only did Juan and Joséfina have significant power over numerous families through the development project, but that migrant households that no longer received remittances could find themselves in an even more precarious situation than before, especially when investments such as these were disrupted and they had no other alternative. Obviously this woman had diverted funds away from her household to pay for the investment and her evident poverty made the loss of these funds even more difficult.

Juan's history of employment and entrepreneurialism, as a teacher, taxi driver, manager of a bus company (which I learned transported hopeful migrants to the coast during midnight runs), active indigenous political member, a potential entrepreneur in the Cuenca hotel project, to a *coyote*, and housing development business owner, is impressive. It also shows the diverse economic strategies that people employ in formal and informal markets. In an interesting turn, the housing development, while evoking nostalgic images of Incan and Cañari heritage through the name and promotional materials, was equally sold as a modern neighbourhood touting all the amenities and comforts of affluent lifestyles.

Conclusion

This article sought to outline ways in which indigenous identity figures in the migration experience and also engage with the broader debate on undocumented migration and on the role of ethnicity in shaping its development. I've included accounts of indigenous migration from the communities of origin and throughout the migration journey. The tragic story of Noemi Alvarez Quillay is instructive as child migration continues to increase in different regions of the world. What are the roles of intermediary institutions in safeguarding the basic human rights of these vulnerable populations? How do we understand the factors that shape the increase in migration despite the risks of the clandestine migration routes? This article focuses on a particular lens through which one can understand why and how indigenous migrants employ different mobility strategies within the context of intersecting forms of inequality. In all three testimonials, the men recounted a moment in which they strategically passed as a member of another indigenous group in order to avoid detention. Actors along the smuggling route would store clothing at

safe houses along the route in order to facilitate this and recruited people of these indigenous groups as transporters. The performance of indigenous identity clearly becomes a mobility strategy which relies on the virtual invisibility/legibility of indigenous people to trick oftentimes mono-lingual *mestizo* migration officials.

Through employing the concept framing of a regional migration industry, we can better outline the role of intermediary institutions and actors and the impact they have on migration. But it is also important to understand mobility strategies as part of a larger set of practices that have a historical precedence. In southern highland Ecuador, regional migration, for labour and as part of expansive trade routes, has been part of regional subsistence strategies for many generations. At the community level, indigenous migrant entrepreneurs, or migration merchants, have transformed economic and social relationships between regional *mestizos* and indigenous peoples. Kyle's work highlighted that the rise of migration merchants could be seen as a resurgence of 'usurious' middlemen that had played similar intermediary roles in former economic periods.³⁹ While participation in the regional migration industry may open up possibilities for social mobility, indigenous migration merchants still contend with discrimination from regional middle-class merchants who disparage indigenous migration and visible markers of economic success. In relation to how they contribute to migration, it is difficult to quantify. However, in terms of migrant experiences, the presence of local, community-based, *coyotes* has created a more direct migration route from rural communities. The upsurge in child migration results from various factors, however many of the parents participated in the rapid increase in migration starting in the early 2000s. Over ten years later, the parents have begun to send for the children they left behind, who are now young teenagers. The *coyotes*, located in these communities, are able to start the process very quickly, and oftentimes these young adults will leave directly from the grandparents' (or primary caretakers') home without having spent any time in the cities or outside of their communities. This was very likely the case for young Noemi.

While it is difficult to ascertain how often indigeneity helps forge broad-reaching alliances in the migration route, there is definitely a growing number of indigenous migration merchants in Cañar with the necessary connections to facilitate migration. When the indigenous migrant merchant in Mexico propositioned Santiago to work as ethnic colleagues in the smuggling market, it presented an interesting case but was unique at the time of the interviews. There are far more accounts of indigenous groups being used as decoys, sent intentionally by human smugglers to be intercepted intentionally by migration officials, in order to move other groups of people over a different route. In this way, the possibility for ethnic solidarity en route is overshadowed by the relatively disadvantaged

position of mono-lingual or semi-bi-lingual indigenous people in the migration route. Despite gains in social and economic mobility, the precarious nature of clandestine migration and the vulnerability of undocumented labourers in the global economy tethers indigenous households to much larger fluctuations.

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Notes

1. David Kyle and Rachel Goldstein, 'Improving EU and US Immigration Systems' Capacity for Responding to Global Challenges: Learning from Experiences', in *Migration Industries: A Comparison of the Ecuador-US and Ecuador-Spain Cases* (San Domenico di Fiesole, Italy: European University Institute, Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, Migration Policy Institute 2011) pp. 1–16.
2. My usage of identity as social capital draws from Bourdieu. There is a growing body of literature on indigenous identity that aims to deconstruct reified and monolithic conceptualisations of indigenous identity, as used by state legislation and other discursive and legitimating institutions. Robert Andolina, Nina Laurie, and Sarah A. Radcliffe, 'Development, Transnational Networks, and Indigenous Politics', in *Indigenous Development in the Andes: Culture, Power, and Transnationalism* (Durham: Duke University Press 2009) pp. 23–52; Alicia Torres and Jesús Carrasco (eds.), *Al Filo de la identidad: La migración indígena en América Latina*, 1st ed. (Quito, Ecuador; Ciudad de Panamá; Madrid, España: FLACSO-Ecuador; UNICEF; AECID, 2008); Marisol de la Cadena and Orin Starn, *Indigeneidades contemporáneas: Cultura, política y globalización* (Lima, Perú: Instituto Francés de Estudios Andinos: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, 2010); Robin Maria Delugan, 'Indigeneity Across Borders: Hemispheric Migrations and Cosmopolitan Encounters', *American Ethnologist* 37 (2010) pp. 83–97; Rudi Colloredo-Mansfield, 'The Power of Ecuador's Indigenous Communities in an Era of Cultural Pluralism', *Social Analysis* 51 (2007) pp. 86–106; Andrés Pedreño, 'Proletarizados y etnificados: La inmigración Ecuatoriana en la agricultura intensiva de la región de Murcia', in Victor Bretón, Francisco García, Antoni Jové, and María José Villalta (eds.), *Ciudadanía y exclusión: Ecuador y España frente al espejo* (Madrid: Catarata 2007) pp. 225–250; Carlos Yescas Angels Trujano, *Indigenous Routes: A Framework for Understanding Indigenous Migration* (Geneva, Switzerland: International Organization for Migration [IOM] 2008). Rather than embark on the important discussion of identity as a conceptual category, I point to the moments in which identity is mobilised in different contexts. Historical and regional social networks, economic practices and informal networks within the region are also extremely important in the growth of international migration from the region, as Kyle and Goldstein argue. For further reading, see Kyle and Goldstein (note 1) pp. 1–16.

3. The long arm of the *migra* (shorthand for migration control) has a tangible presence in these communities of origin, as people clearly understand the precarious position of their undocumented migrant family members in the United States. People expressed fear in sharing information about undocumented migrant family members beyond close family and friends, which suggested either a fear of local surveillance or that of a sophisticated network of migration control.
4. Araly Castañón and Luz Sosa, 'Indigna ciudadanos muerte de niña en albergue; Fiscalía cierra el caso', *El Diario* (Juarez, Mexico), 6 May 2014.
5. María Landázuri, 'Gobierno ecuatoriano aboga porque muerte de niña en México sea esclarecida', *Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores y Movilidad Humana*, 2014, available at <<http://www.cancilleria.gob.ec/es/gobierno-ecuatoriano-aboga-porque-muerte-de-nina-en-mexico-sea-esclarecida/>>.
6. Monica Ortiz Uribe, 'Authorities Say Migrant Girl Was Sexually Abused Prior To Suicide', *Fronteras: The Changing Americas Desk*, 2015, available at <<http://fronterasdesk.org/content/9959/authorities-say-migrant-girl-was-sexually-abused-prior-suicide>>.
7. Luis I. Jácome, *The Late 1990s Financial Crisis in Ecuador: Institutional Weaknesses, Fiscal Rigidities, and Financial Dollarization at Work* (Washington, DC: International Monetary Fund, Jan. 2004).
8. FLACSO-Ecuador; UNFPA-Ecuador, *Ecuador: Las Cifras De La Migración Internacional* (Quito, Ecuador: FLACSO Ecuador; UNFPA, 2006).
9. Source: Center for Latin American, Caribbean, and Latino Studies of the Graduate Center, City University of New York. Unless otherwise noted all data were derived from the US Census Bureau, Public Use Microdata Samples for the national censuses of 1900 through 2000 and the American Community Survey 2008 as organised and made available by Steven Ruggles, J. Trent Alexander, Katie Genadek, Ronald Goeken, Matthew B. Schroeder, and Matthew Sobek, *Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 5.0* [Machine-readable database] (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota 2010), available at <<http://usa.ipums.org/usa/>>. All data was analysed using SPSS, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences.
10. Ninna Nyberg Sørensen and Thomas Gammeltoft-Hansen (eds.), *The Migration Industry and the Commercialization of International Migration*, Global Institutions (London and New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group 2013).
11. Stephen Castles and Mark Miller, *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World*, 4th ed. (New York and London: The Guilford Press 2009).
12. Nyberg Sørensen and Gammeltoft-Hansen (note 10); Rúben Hernández-León, 'Conceptualizing the Migration Industry', in Ninna Nyberg Sørensen and Thomas Gammeltoft-Hansen (eds.), *The Migration Industry and the Commercialization of International Migration*, Global Institutions (London and New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group 2013) pp. 24–44; Nina Glick Schiller and Noel Salazar, 'Regimes of Mobility Across the Globe', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Regimes of Mobility: Imaginaries and Relationalities of Power, 39/2 (2013) pp. 183–200; Ulla Berg, 'Migration Brokers and Document Fixers: The Making of Migrant Subject in Urban Peru', in Ninna Nyberg Sørensen and Thomas Gammeltoft-Hansen (eds.), *The Migration Industry and the Commercialization of International Migration*, Global Institutions (London and New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group 2013); Noel Salazar, 'Towards an Anthropology of Cultural Mobilities', *Crossings: Journal of Migration and Culture* 1/1 (2010) pp. 53–68; Kyle and Goldstein (note 1).

13. David Kyle, *Transnational Peasants: Migrations, Networks, and Ethnicity in Andean Ecuador* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press 2003).
14. It is important to note the escalating violence encountered by migrants as more narco-traffickers insert themselves in the human smuggling market to both coerce migrants to become drug runners or threaten them with violence in order to extract payment from them or from their families.
15. Rubén Hernández-León, *Metropolitan Migrants: The Migration of Urban Mexicans to the United States* (Berkeley: University of California Press 2008).
16. Kyle (note 13).
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid., p. 16.
19. Gioconda Herrera, Maria Cristina Carrillo, and Alicia Torres, *La migración ecuatoriana: Transnacionalismo, redes e identidades*, ed. by Plan Migración, Comunicación y Desarrollo (Quito: FLACSO Ecuador 2006); Torres and Carrasco (note 2); Luciano Martínez, *La emigración internacional en Quito, Guayaquil y Cuenca* (Quito: Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales [FLACSO] y Banco Central del Ecuador, Jan. 2004) p. 12; Francisco Hidalgo Flor (ed.), *Migraciones: Un Juego Con Cartas Marcadas*, 1st ed. (Quito: Pontificia Universidad Católica del Ecuador; Abya Yala; Friedrich Ebert Stiftung ILDIS Proyecto Regional Amazonia Sostenible; CINDES; Plan Migración Comunicación y Desarrollo, 2004).
20. Jason Pribilsky, *La Chulla Vida: Gender, Migration, and the Family in Andean Ecuador and New York City*, 1st ed. (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press 2007) pp. 75–102.
21. Mary Weismantel, ‘Mothers of the Patria: La Chola Cuencana and the Mama Negra’, in Norman E. Whitten, Jr. (ed.), *Millennial Ecuador, Critical Essays on Cultural Transformations and Social Dynamics* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press 2003); Mary Weismantel, *Cholas and Pishtacos: Stories of Race and Sex in the Andes* (University of Chicago Press 2001).
22. John V. Murra, *The Economic Organization of the Inka State* (Greenwich, CT: JAI Press 1980).
23. While indigenous identity has a broad range of definitions across nations and in international circuits, the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE) has had an important role in its conceptualisation in Ecuador. As a result of collective mobilisations of indigenous peoples throughout the country, indigenous nations and groups have become defined as entities. The political agenda of CONAIE is to guarantee that the nation-state recognises that the country is plurinational made up of nine nationalities and three groups. The Cañaris are part of the Quichua national group which is part of both the ECUARANI regional- and the CONAIE national-level pan-indigenous organisations.
24. Torres and Carrasco (note 2) p. 13.
25. Brad Jokisch and Jason Pribilsky, ‘The Panic to Leave: Economic Crisis and the “New Emigration” from Ecuador’, *International Migration* 40 (2002) pp. 75–102; Pedreño (note 2) pp. 225–250; Weismantel, ‘Mothers of the Patria’ (note 21); Kyle (note 13).
26. Pribilsky (note 20); Jokisch and Pribilsky (note 25).
27. Paolo Boccagni, ‘What’s in a (Migrant) House? Changing Domestic Spaces, the Negotiation of Belonging and Home-making in Ecuadorian Migration’, *Housing, Theory, and Society* 31 (2014) pp. 277–293.
28. As part of my dissertation research, I conducted fieldwork in the province of Cañar, in southern highland Ecuador. In addition to formal and informal interviews with family members and local indigenous leaders about the impact of international migration on cultural practices and community life, I engaged in local festivities, mingas (work

projects) and family events. I began my fieldwork in September 2007. By mid-2008, return migration had increased and I began collecting migration testimonials from both those who had returned and those who had attempted to migrate but were unsuccessful. I include these three testimonials because they represent similar aspects of other testimonials but are the most explicit about the use of indigenous identity as part of the migration strategy.

29. Stuart Hall, 'Cultural Identity and Diaspora', in *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference* (London: Lawrence and Wishart 1990) pp. 222–237; Andolina, Laurie, and Radcliffe (note 2) pp. 23–52; Cadena and Starn (note 2).
30. Kyle (note 13) p. 203.
31. Kichwa is the most recent spelling for Quichua, the most predominately spoken indigenous language in Ecuador. It is closely related to Quechua that is spoken in both Peru and Bolivia.
32. Enrique Ayala Mora (ed.), *Nueva historia del Ecuador: Epoca republicana V: el Ecuador en el último periodo* (Quito: Corporación Editora Nacional 1983) p. xi.
33. The exchange rate in 1979 was 25 sucres to 1 USD; G. G. Johnson and International Monetary Fund, *Formulation of Exchange Rate Policies in Adjustment Programs* (Washington, DC: International Monetary Fund 1985).
34. Because *coyotes* relied on social networks and sharing of information to maintain their business, many accounts in specific rural locations, described a similar encounter with a particular *coyote*. In this case, many of those who migrated from the region shared the contact information for a female *coyote*. It may be the case that female *coyotes* were more prevalent at a particular time given the absence of male counterparts in the same entrepreneurial family as migration from the region was predominantly male led.
35. While policymakers at the national level tend to focus on the developmental potential of remittances, people at the local level comment that they primarily result in social disorder. Residents and local officials in Cañar remark on the irresistible appeal of remittances that lures hapless migrants abroad, which in turn brings about family disintegration, loss of traditional values, and of community ideals. Local indigenous leaders also express concern but they worry more how remittances affect social cohesion, community practices and intergenerational cultural values.
36. "In 1995, Indigenous activists in Ecuador launched the Movimiento Unidad Plurinacional Pachakutik (MUPP, Pachakutik Movement for Plurinational Unity) as a vehicle to compete for political office. The MUPP, commonly called Pachakutic, emerged after years of debate on whether and how Indigenous peoples should engage in electoral politics." Marc Becker, *Pachakutik Indigenous Movements and Electoral Politics in Ecuador* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers 2011) p. xi.
37. Taxi licences were very expensive in Cuenca (@ US\$25,000–30,000). It was apparent that many return migrants invested in licences as a source of income. Many of the teachers worked for companies, however, and made a very small salary in comparison to the independent drivers.
38. Jan Lundius, *Mishqui-yacu, Sweet Water: The Story of a Development Project Carried Out with the Indigenous Peoples of Ecuador* (Rome: International Fund for Agricultural Development 2001).
39. Kyle (note 13).