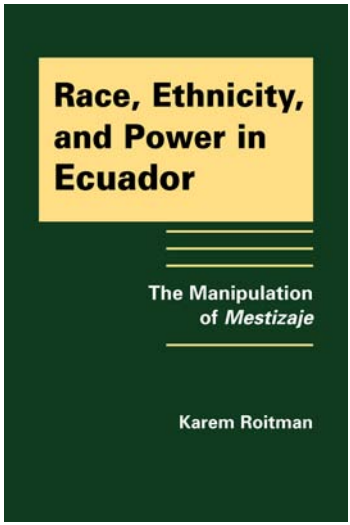
EXCERPTED FROM

Race, Ethnicity, and Power in Ecuador: The Manipulation of *Mestizaje*

Karem Roitman



Copyright © 2009
ISBN: 978-1-935049-07-4 hc

FIRSTFORUMPRESS

A DIVISION OF LYNNE RIENNER PUBLISHERS, INC.

1800 30th Street, Ste. 314
Boulder, CO 80301
USA
telephone 303.444.6684
fax 303.444.0824

This excerpt was downloaded from the
FirstForumPress website
www.firstforumpress.com

Contents

List of Tables and Figures *ix*
Preface *xi*
Glossary of Key Concepts and Ethnic/Racial Terminology *xv*
Note on Capitalization *xvii*

1 Introduction 1

2 Foxes and Lions: Studying the Upper Classes 15

3 Constructing Identities: The 2001 National Census 41

4 Economy, Etiquette, and Ethnicity: Defining Ecuadorian Elites 75

5 The Mestizo and the 'Other': Ethnic Narratives in Ecuador 95

6 The Port and *Mestizaje*: Ethnic Narratives in Guayaquil 129

7 Learning *Mestizaje*: Ethnic Narratives in Quito 153

8 Ethnic Narratives and Socioeconomic Development 183

9 Responsibility and Change 205

10 Conclusion 227

Appendixes
1. Brief Chronology of Ecuadorian History *233*
2. Methodological Overview *237*
3. Statistical Data *259*
Bibliography *265*
Index *315*

1
Introduction

Mysterious Pigs

In December of 2004, a series of red, white, and black pigs appeared graffiti-painted on the walls of several of Guayaquil's[1] wealthier neighborhoods. Rumors quickly spread that the 'Latin Kings,' a dangerous gang active in several countries, was seeking revenge for the murder of two gang leaders by an 'upper-class Guayaquilenian.' Two hundred people would be killed for each gang leader murdered. The pigs were the Latin Kings' code: a black pig meant death; a red pig, rape; a white pig, fear. Panic erupted among the upper class of Guayaquil: mothers kept their children home from school, schools suspended classes, more private guards were hired, and each house became a fortress (Burbano de Lara 2004).

Fear dissolved, however, once a local artist (Daniel Adum) acknowledged authorship of the mysterious pigs. Yet, while schools resumed and the pigs were quickly smothered under fresh coats of paint, the recent events could not be easily forgotten. The 'mysterious pigs' had somehow stirred up the underlying terrors of a deeply divided city. For a moment, the deep societal crevices where ideas of 'race,' class, and power easily mingle had been uncovered. The chasm between social classes had become evident and the upper classes knew themselves hated. The episode of the mysterious pigs brought up a series of questions: who were the 'upper classes' that believed themselves targeted by the Latin Kings? Why did they think themselves hated? What role, if any, did race, ethnicity, class, and power play in these dynamics?

This book seeks to explore these and a series of other questions about ethnicity,[2] racism, and power by investigating how the upper classes of Ecuador's two main cities, Guayaquil and Quito, understand and represent their ethnic identity and that of the 'others.' More broadly, this book analyses the implications of the ethnic and racial narratives used by Ecuadorian upper classes for the state's social and economic

development. Through this analysis I hope to uncover processes that hamper the construction of civil society, examine the socioeconomic costs of discrimination, and describe the dynamics through which discrimination has remained alive under state discourses of 'multiculturalism' and '*mestizaje*,' or mixture. Finally, I wish to raise questions about the construction of social responsibility and 'development' within certain racial and ethnic paradigms.

In brief, in this work I shall explore and analyze the identity of the 'white mestizos' who have historically been in power and who have historically controlled the official creation and labeling of Ecuadorian ethnic identities. This white-mestizo population, I find, has maintained its cultural, social, and generally economic power by defining acculturation as the road to progress, and themselves as the models whom others should emulate. These 'elites,' however, have quietly fallen out of the ethnic ladder themselves. Since 'mestizo' became colloquially understood as a label for those who were 'no longer Indians,' the Criollo 'elites,' while theoretically mestizos, were not placed in the ethnic structure since they were not directly linked to an Indigenous past. Their identity, therefore, was shrouded in silence, permitting them to remain in a position of ethnic power while their own ethnic identity has not been questioned or problematized. Policies that advanced their interests could, therefore, be presented as advancing the interests of the 'the mestizo nation' even if they only benefit the narrow interests of the country's socio-political elite.

It is important to highlight that while my analysis is based on research conducted in Ecuador, the questions and themes this book broaches are applicable more broadly. The effects of socioeconomic inequalities and identity politics are urgent topics in all societies, but especially in Latin America, the most unequal region in the world. Integrating populations with 'new' 'mixed' identities is also a challenge that a plethora of societies confront at present. Thus, considering the multiple and complex equations in which elites and ethnic identities interact, and exploring new, progressive ways in which we might shape these interactions, is crucial if we seek to promote just and sustainable development worldwide.

Ecuador as a Case Study

Given that elites, inequalities, racism, and power influence the dynamics of numberless countries, why choose Ecuador as the subject of this book? Ecuador was chosen because its many similarities with other post-colonial states, along with its fascinating idiosyncrasies, make it an

especially rich case study. Ecuador, much like other post-colonial states, was created on a bed of ethnic diversity characterized by tremendous power disparities between different ethnic groups. Ecuador's history is fraught with struggles to sometimes conceal, sometimes address, the deep political, economic, educational, and social inequalities that resulted from the colonial encounter. These inequalities developed singularities in each of the country's four regions: the Highlands and the Pacific Coast or Littoral, on which this work concentrates, the Amazonian Lowlands, and the offshore islands. As a result of their different conquest experiences and geo-economic roles, each region developed its own socio-political history and ethnic narratives.

Since its independence in 1830, the Ecuadorian state has sought to build an overarching national identity despite the ethnic divisions within it. The ethnic, racial and cultural hybridity that existed within the country was often seen as a resource for the creation of this national identity. Thus, the largest hybrid group, the mestizos, made up by descendants of Spanish and Indigenous mixture, was often presented as the foundation of the Ecuadorian republic. To build a national identity, construct a sense of unity, and mollify the ethnic, the Ecuadorian state has historically invoked *mestizaje* as a strategic thread to bind all citizens. This invocation, however, ignored the heterogeneity existent among mestizos and excluded Ecuador's Indigenous and afroecuadorian heritage, advocating acculturation as a means of integration. This 'exclusionary *mestizaje*' has prompted the political mobilization of marginalized ethnic groups who, under banners of 'multiculturalism' and 'pluri-nationality,' demand greater recognition and access to state resources. These mobilizations have prompted much research into the discrimination of Ecuadorian Indigenous people (Rivera Velez 2000), (Muratorio 2000), (De la Torre 2002) and, to a lesser extent, of afroecuadorians (Rahier 1999b), (Rahier 1998), (De la Torre 2002). The dynamics within the mestizo community and the inherent tensions between *mestizaje* and 'multiculturalism' as state discourses, however, have remained largely unexplored.

Recent scholarship has argued that *mestizaje* does indeed provide a sense of belonging and unity for diverse populations, serving as an inclusive paradigm in Latin America (Wade 2006). Some might point to Ecuador's 2001 census as an illustration of the high extent to which *mestizaje* has worked these wonders, noting that over 75 percent of the Ecuadorian population now declare themselves mestizos (INEC). Yet, the growing political mobilizations of non-mestizo ethnic groups in Ecuador contravenes these claims, raising doubts as to the extent and manner in which *mestizaje* has been adopted by different socioeconomic

strata within the Ecuadorian population. In fact, the idea of *mestizaje* in Ecuador is highly problematic, as it ignores the growing salience of other ethnic identities within the state, as well as the heterogeneity and power dynamics existent among mestizos.

Mestizaje, like other hybrid identities, is an extensive construct that permits much variety within it. In other words, great socioeconomic, political, cultural, gender, and physical disparities can exist among those who claim this hybrid identity. Individuals and groups can use these disparities to affect their ethnic identity and vice versa. For instance, if different ethnicities are associated with different socioeconomic classes, or if being considered a member of a certain ethnic group is beneficial for socioeconomic advancement, then sectors of a hybrid group may embrace or deny components of their ethnic identity for socioeconomic motives. This presupposes that there can be ethnic differences within a single hybrid ethnic group and that certain ethnic identity change is possible. If this is true, then policies that affect socioeconomic structures may, in effect, precipitate ethnic changes and vice-versa.

Previous literature surveying ethnic identity change in Ecuador has largely concentrated on the 'whitening process' of Indigenous people: their acculturation as they 'change' from 'Indigenous' to 'mestizos' (Espinosa Apolo 2000), (Ibarra 1998), (Ibarra Davila 2002), (Smith Belote and Belote 1984). Change within the mestizo group has been either ignored or presented as a change in socioeconomic status, not as an ethnic identity change. This is due at least in part to a simplistic conceptualization of hybrid groups as homogeneous. Ethnic terminology specific to processes of ethnic change within *mestizaje*, such as 'longo' and 'cholo,' has, therefore, escaped study. Yet, insofar as the mestizo group is understood as homogenous, tensions and inequalities within it can be hidden and, thus, not properly addressed by policymakers.

Comprehending how hybrid ethnic identities can both affect and be affected by socioeconomic variables, and how these identities can, consequently, change through individual-agency as well as through structural modifications, requires further research. While some such research has been undertaken on Ecuador, an academic vacuum exists around middle-upper and upper-class mestizos (Cuvi 2003a). Scholarship on Ecuador tends to identify this sector as 'white-mestizos' (Whitten 2003a), hinting at a racial or color basis for this group's identity, but almost nothing has been written about this group in terms of its ethnic identity or its ethnic narratives. The sparsity of research in this area has several reasons. First, there is the sheer difficulty of accessing the socioeconomically dominant sectors of a society (Marcus 1983), as well as the exoticization of the research subject, whereby academics,

mostly of the upper socioeconomic classes themselves, research the exotic 'other' which is defined as anything but their own class (Smith 1999b). It may also be the case that this dearth reflects a scholarly bias to concentrate on elites' economic and political networks rather than on the more amorphous space of narratives and identities (Marcus 1983). Most importantly, however, the fact that the middle-upper and upper classes have not been more fully researched within the paradigm of hybrid ethnicities says much about how these hybrid ethnicities have been conceptualized. It appears that the discourse of hybrid ethnic identity has been largely imposed on the lower socioeconomic classes by a dominant sector whose own ethnic identity has never been questioned. Labels used to identify the hybrid ethnic sector have been fabricated and defined by the dominant sector.

Ethnic labels are of great importance in the socioeconomic development process. Such labels facilitate racist behavior. By racism I mean acts that are based on the assumption that a person's character, intellectual capacity, and other non-material qualities, are determined by his/her physical attributes, especially skin color. In Ecuador, however, racism has usually been understood solely as physical violence suffered by distinct ethnic 'others' at the hands of white and white-mixed people. Yet, a subtler racism amongst and within the hybrid sector is possible through the creation and utilization of ethnic labels. Due to the assumption of homogeneity within hybrid sectors, however, this racism, which expresses itself in social exclusion mechanisms, has not been studied in depth or addressed by development policies.

Regional differences within Ecuadorian 'white-mestizos' have also been largely ignored. Yet, the fact that *mestizaje* has been largely promoted by thinkers from the Highlands rather than the coast hints at the need to explore the extent to, and the manner in which, the coast has adopted this narrative. Moreover, studies that look at racial narratives from a national rather than a local perspective have often proven limited, as they are unable to discern clear, stable variables affecting ethnic/racial identities (Wong 2005). These problems point to the need to consider local narratives, given the *relational* nature of identities.

Taking these thoughts into consideration, this book seeks to advance our understanding of how ethnicity, race, power, elites, and to a lesser extent, gender, interact in two specific locations, Guayaquil and Quito. This work takes a novel perspective by concentrating on elites, the population that has been least studied in terms of ethnicity in Ecuador, and by looking at the racial and ethnic discrimination taking place *between* mestizos rather than against those defined as afroecuadorians and Indigenous people. It explores the narratives that support this

discrimination, and looks at the effects of this discrimination on the labor market, returns to education, and the creation of development policies. I argue that lower-class mestizos in Ecuador habitually suffer from covert and overt racial discrimination and yet are disempowered in their struggle against such discrimination, as it is not recognized or researched, since it is not understood as a racial issue. Their plight, in other words, is not legitimated by the state's anti-racism policies.[3] By examining how the ethnic narratives of the upper classes support *mestizaje* as a guard against the political and social mobilization of non-mestizo ethnic groups *and of other mestizos* I shed light on this process of discrimination. I also explore why and how the responsibility for overcoming social inequalities is transferred by the upper classes to the very populations that have been historically marginalized by Ecuador's ethnic and racial structures. More broadly, I argue that ethnicity needs to be reconsidered as a political tool: its use is easily conflated with ideas of race and can disadvantage individuals unable or unwilling to claim politicized identities. Supporting this investigation is the view that it is necessary to politicize discussions of ethnicity/race, including the identities of the upper classes, to bring these to the public sphere for democratic dialogue, rather than permitting myths to remain as the basis for popular understanding.

The topic of this book is particularly relevant at present as Ecuador and other Andean countries confront the tense contradiction between national narratives of 'ethnic mixture' and local support for different forms of multiculturalism. The struggle between these two paradigms has been represented as a battle against the 'white-mestizo' oligarchy, as illustrated by the political rhetoric of Lucio Gutiérrez, Evo Morales, Hugo Chavez, and Rafael Correa, among others. Understanding why this struggle has been represented in this way, and the implications of this representation, requires us to study the demonized upper classes. The fact that we have not previously undertaken research in this area might actually have contributed to the present upheavals by permitting unspoken systems of inequality to simmer undisclosed.

Ecuador is not unique among post-colonial states in struggling with ethnic/racial constructs or in having an enduring oligarchic structure. Integrating populations historically separated by skin color through narratives of mixture without falling into pregnant silences that portray all racism as extinct is a challenged faced by Latin American countries, the United States, South Africa, and Brazil, among others (Bonilla-Silva 2006, Picca and Feagin 2007, Hamilton et al 2001). Ecuadorian society, therefore, promises to be a valuable case study that may generate insights of wider social relevance. The characteristics Ecuador shares

with other Andean countries, for example, such as the recent eruption of individuals from traditionally oppressed ethnic groups into national leadership,[4] and the regional basis of its elites, provide a basis for comparison, while Ecuador's particular ethnic narratives, its use of 'mixture' as the core national identity, and its specific attempts to address ethnic inequalities within its borders are pertinent for neighboring countries insofar as these specifics provide a model to be either emulated or critiqued.

Important Questions to Ask About Elites, Race, Development, and 'Mixture'

Four questions drive this book:

1. What are the effects of ethnic/racial identities for socioeconomic development and how do these effects develop?
2. How has the discourse of *mestizaje* or 'mixture' been appropriated or dismissed by the upper socioeconomic strata?
3. How do the ethnic narratives of 'white-mestizos' affect socioeconomic development processes?
4. Can *mestizaje* be a sustainable national narrative for Ecuador and other countries facing a growing emphasis on multiculturalism?

The development community is increasingly acknowledging the harmful impact of racial and ethnic inequalities as well as of racist discriminatory and exclusionary processes. Discriminatory actions and social exclusion can have dire effects for socioeconomic development. Much has been written on social and economic networks and their role in allowing individuals and communities to benefit from such resources as education (Burt 2000, Cleaver 2002). Discrimination, however, can disrupt the creation of such networks, effectively debilitating development processes. Development policies in post-colonial states such as Ecuador, which are burdened with complex inequalities assembled through ethnic identities, must seek to understand this reality and to consider it throughout all the steps of policy creation. Only then will policies be able to reap the benefits of social and economic networks.

Several scholars are seeking ways to measure the impact of these processes on economic growth (Florez 2001). There is also a growing body of work on the links between ethnic-based inequalities and

conflict.[5] At the level of multi-national organizations, in 2001 the United Nations led the 'World Conference on Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance,' in Durban, South Africa.

Three significant insights emerged from this conference:

1. Race and poverty are interconnected in the manner that the impact of racism is ultimately the deprivation of the comprehensive right to human and social development.
2. The spatial dynamics of social division within societies governed by hierarchical inclusion regimes, and the persistence of disparities in capabilities, particularly in agency and voice, among stratified social groups, creates social tensions that undermine the stability of human and social development.
3. The development of uniform measures of social inclusion is a priority to establishing a monitoring mechanism capable of guiding and aiding the coordination of international human and social development strategies (Durban plus one 2001:35).

Ethnic identity should be considered within the field of development studies not simply for its economic implications, however. Ethnic identities should be considered in order to support a more holistic understanding of what development is. If we hold that development is antithetical to injustice, then it clearly follows that an end to ethnic discriminations must be sought as part of development. If development is understood as containing a socio-psychological component, moreover, given that ethnic and/or racial discrimination is harmful to the promotion of individual and collective well-being, understanding processes of ethnic and racial identity creation and possible oppressive structures is necessary for the fostering of the population's healthy development.

A number of practitioners and organizations have campaigned for the inclusion of ethnicity as part of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), in a similar way to how gender has been included (Telles 2007), (Gender 2005). Yet, in contrast to gender, there is still a deafening silence surrounding ethnicity and race in development (White 2006), (Kothari 2006b). This is an important, but just emerging, area of development studies. Further research on ethnicity/race could, therefore, learn from the work already done to theorize and acknowledge gender in development: we must strive to denaturalize and politicize ethnicity and race, much as we have sought to do with gender (Weldon 2006:236), (Power 2006:28). We must also constantly consider the interplay

between gender, ethnicity/race, and other social variables, reminding ourselves of the multifaceted and articulated nature of social reality.

If ethnicity is going to be adequately considered in the MDGs and if we are to effectively combat racial and ethnic discrimination, a sophisticated and nuanced understanding of the local, specific nature of ethnic and racial identities and relations is needed. We need to understand the official construction of these identities and relations, as well as their local idiosyncrasies, divergences, and their 'lived experience' (Wade 2005).

Gaining such a thorough understanding of racial and ethnic discrimination requires us to look closely at the specific ethnic narratives of different socioeconomic classes. However, national discourses can hamper this process by obfuscating differences under a common label, as has been the case with the use of *mestizaje* in Ecuador. This is dangerous as policies created without a thorough understanding of the specific dynamics of differentiation and the routes through which these differences are translated into socioeconomic inequalities in a society may prove completely ineffectual or even counter-productive. For example, Saavedra notes that in Peru, a country with important similarities to Ecuador in its ethnic structure, the 1998 "Peruvian Congress passed the Law No 26772, prohibiting discriminating practices in labor hiring and in educational admission processes. *However, a lack of understanding of the channels through which effective discrimination prevails [made] this kind of rule ... little more than lip service*" (Saavedra et. al. 2002:1, my emphasis).

Overview of the Book

This book is informally divided into three parts. The first part, made up of Chapters 2 and 3, consists of a general theoretical and historical overview of work pertinent to the study of ethnic identities and elites in the Ecuadorian context. The second part, Chapters 4, 5, 6, and 7, will present a detailed overview of Ecuadorian ethnic narratives, analyzing particularly the ethnic narratives used by the upper classes of Guayaquil and Quito. The final part, Chapters 8 and 9, will study the implications of these narratives for the socioeconomic development of Ecuador. I shall conclude with a brief discussion of the implications of this research for development policies. I want draw the attention of the reader to the research methodology appendix that follows my conclusion. In it I present the methodology of my research, discussing why and how I chose the population and investigation site and the challenges of undertaking research as an 'indigenous researcher.' While I present a

summary of my methodology in this introduction, I think the reader might be well advised to read this appendix first, in order to fully understand my research findings, arguments, and ideological approach.

Overview of the Chapters

For the benefit of readers unfamiliar with Ecuador, I begin Chapter 2 with a historical overview of Ecuador through which I highlight how ethnicity and race have been used to construct the state's socio-political structure, and note the different factions within Ecuadorian upper classes. To better understand how this work might contribute to debates on elites, ethnicity and race, I conduct a brief review of existing literature on elites and conclude that previous research has influenced our conceptualization of the upper classes and, hence, limited our investigations to their politico-economic structures. Previous research has sought to map out the upper classes' political and economic power through local and national institutions, rather than to understand how social and cultural narratives might sustain these structures of power.

Chapter 3 looks at how we might understand ethnic and racial narratives in Ecuador. It begins by examining the official representation of ethnic identities in Ecuador, as given by the 2001 V National Population and VI Housing Census. By calling upon theoretical advances in our conceptualization of ethnicity and race, I argue that quantitative techniques are limited in their ability to help us study social dynamics in mixed societies like Ecuador, and in-depth qualitative studies of local ethnic narratives are crucial. In fact, several problems with the census' representation of ethnic identities in Ecuador can be identified, including the imposition of nation-wide ethnic categories that ignore local variations, the conflation of ethnicity and race, and methodological inconsistencies. The greatest problem of the census, however, is that its categories can hardly encapsulate the complex history of *mestizaje* in Ecuador. Thus, the Ecuadorian government's claim that three-quarters of Ecuadorians identify as mestizos, which implies that ethnic problems are limited to a minority of the population, is shown to be highly questionable. Questioning this claim opens up a space for us to investigate the complex dynamics within *mestizaje*.

Chapter 4 explores in detail the identities of modern Ecuadorian elites, concentrating especially on the use of ethnic/racial narratives in the construction of these identities. I explore ideas of social and cultural capital in the creation of Ecuadorian socioeconomic strata. I conclude this chapter by examining the struggles confronted by the Gutiérrez

regime (2003-2005) as a case study of the implicit role race and ethnicity play in the construction of Ecuador's upper classes.

Chapter 5 analyses how local ethnic identities have been historically constructed. Through this chapter, I highlight the growing ethnic polarization of Ecuador and the challenges it poses for the idea of a 'mestizo state.' Three causes can be found for this polarization: the marginalization of 'ethnic others' through the use of *mestizaje*, the historical role of ethnicity as a tool for the acquisition of economic, political, cultural, and educational capital, and the hierarchical nature of Ecuadorian *mestizaje*. In this chapter, I look at how *mestizaje* has been historically constructed in Ecuador, noting that it has tacitly excluded Indigenous people and explicitly barred afroecuadorians. The hierarchical nature of *mestizaje* has further prompted groups who are in fact 'mixed,' such as montubios, to strategically emphasize and essentialize their local ethnic identities in order to access political and economic resources. In the last part of this chapter I look at the ethnic terminology that has emerged to create a hierarchy within *mestizaje*, sabotaging the attempts of those who seek social mobility through acculturation and who cannot claim membership in Indigenous or afroecuadorian identities.

In Chapter 6 I narrow my focus to Guayaquil and explore how Guayaquil's upper classes understand their city and their identity through the lens of ethnicity. I analyze this group's narratives about Indigenous people, afroecuadorians, and montubios, and examine how these different narratives are related to the idea of *mestizaje*. I argue that in Guayaquil the mestizo narrative hides the maintenance of an ethnic/racial hierarchy, which negates the city's afroecuadorian population and displaces Indigenous identities to the Highlands. I also argue that *mestizaje* has not been adopted as a personal identity by the upper classes of Guayaquil, a fact that speaks of this narrative's limited reach.

In Chapter 7 I explore the ethnic narratives used by the upper classes in Quito, and compare and contrast these narratives with those I found in Guayaquil. I argue that interviewees in Quito represent *mestizaje* as a 'learned' identity while they romanticize distant non-mestizo ethnic identities. The relation of interviewees in Guayaquil and Quito to *mestizaje*, I argue, creates a hierarchy among mestizos that allows discrimination even while promoting the state's mestizo discourse. I conclude the chapter by contrasting media representations of ethnic identities in Quito and Guayaquil and by highlighting a troubling similarity between the elites of these cities: that they both largely ignore afroecuadorians in their communities.

Chapter 8 explores the problems of creating a mestizo identity given the upper classes' representations of *mestizaje*. I note the failings of the idea of *mestizaje* as a national identity narrative for Ecuador and further explore the processes of differentiation among mestizos undertaken by the upper classes of Guayaquil and Quito. I argue that the ethnic narratives of Guayaquil's and Quito's upper-class 'white mestizos' undermine the very market forces interviewees presented as pathways to socioeconomic equality and as tools to combat discrimination. These narratives hamper the creation of socioeconomic networks among mestizos, which, in turn, affect individuals' returns from educational investments and limit their opportunities in the labor market. Ethnic inequalities are consequently maintained across generations.

Chapter 9 looks at interviewees' proposals to address ethnic inequalities within Ecuador, analyzing the implicit assumptions of these proposals in terms of agency, and their implications for the future of the Ecuadorian state. I highlight the great emphasis placed on education as a panacea for ethnic troubles, a liberal view that promotes education as a tool for individual acculturation and advancement, suggesting that ethnicity can be molded to fit the dominant culture. I argue that interviewee's emphasis on the agency of the 'ethnic other' downplays the consequences of ethnic and racial structures on individuals' actions, permitting individuals' lack of success to be blamed on 'psychological complexes' rather than on any structural limitation. I further emphasize the problems with current suggestions to address ethnic inequalities in Ecuador, which concentrate on Ecuador's Indigenous population, largely ignoring afroecuadorians and never addressing the ethnic or racial narratives that affect mestizos. To conclude Chapter 9, I compare what appears to be the present understanding of ethnicity and development in Ecuador, as represented by white-mestizos of the upper classes, to previous paradigms on gender and development.

Methodology

Gaining a thorough understanding of the ethnic narratives employed by 'elites,' and of the implications of these narratives for socioeconomic development, required the use of a variety of research methods. I have undertaken an analysis of current scholarship and a content analysis of two of Ecuador's main newspapers, one based in the Highlands (Diario HOY) and one in the Littoral (El Universo) between January 2000 and December 2004. Participant observation constituted a third component of my research. For this purpose I spent five and half months in Ecuador between 2003 and 2005, dividing my time between Guayaquil and

Quito. During that time I participated in many social events and informal activities with my informants. This was an integral part of my research, as it is often in these relaxed and private settings, where individuals are released from the confines of public etiquette, that views on ethnicity and race are most forcefully and sincerely expressed. This was also an especially enlightening process because my status as a native Ecuadorian placed me within the local ethnic narratives, allowing me to examine these from within, or as Tanya Luhrmann has put it, allowing me 'to learn from the inside' (Luhrmann 2000). In other words, while observing others I also observed how others positioned and defined me, definitions from which I suffered or benefited, depending on the context in which I maneuvered.

It is semi-structured interviews, however, that make up the main component of my research. I interviewed 30 university-aged, middle-upper class youths in Quito and eight university-aged, upper class youths in Guayaquil, as well as 40 (25 men, 15 women) working-age individuals of upper socioeconomic standing in Quito; and 37 working-age individuals of the upper socioeconomic class in Guayaquil (18 men, 19 women). My interviewees included four previous Presidents of Ecuador, several government ministers and previous ambassadors, presidents of the Central Bank, as well as many key figures from prestigious social and civil service organization (Junta de Beneficencia de Guayaquil, Kiwanis Club, Club de la Union, Club de Rotarios, Yatch Club, Club El Condado), and members of traditional 'elite' families—all of whom are correctly considered as members of Ecuador's 'elite.'

Accessing the upper classes was a hurdle to be overcome for this research (Shore and Nugent 2002). I relied on personal connections and used a 'snowballing' technique to contact more informants after each interview. As a means to safeguard my informants and those who allowed me access to them, throughout this thesis I have used pseudonyms and avoided anything more than vague references to individuals' occupations and family histories. Aware of the ethical demands of research I have not only sought my informants' complete anonymity but have also striven for thorough transparency in the presentation of my data to avoid misinterpretations or injurious attributions to individuals, attempting to avoid harm to my informants and honoring trust.[6] All informants were fully informed of my research purposes, granting informed consent for investigations.

It is important to highlight that my position as an Ecuadorian conducting research in Ecuador created a significant methodological challenge. This position opened venues inaccessible to foreign researchers and granted me cultural insights, but also made me liable to

blindness toward my own cultural preconditioning. Constant reflexivity was therefore imperative. Seeking such reflexivity I called upon Bourdieu's idea of 'participant objectivation,' the "objectivation of the subject of objectivation," to uncover my cultural, class, gender, and educational pre-conceptions (Bourdieu 2003:282).[7] I have also taken on board considerations on the effect of subjectivity and autobiographical variables advanced in literature on the research process (Smith 1999b), (Hertz and Imber 1995). Through extensive self-questioning reflection, I sought to understand my own subjectivity and to avoid imposing upon my research population pre-conceived theoretical categories.

Notes

[1] Ecuador's largest and most populous city.

[2] For an explanation of my use of the terms 'ethnicity,' 'race,' 'ethnicity/race,' 'upper classes,' and 'elites,' please refer to the glossary.

[3] By 'anti-racism policies' I refer to legislations and discourses opposing different types of discrimination. I do not mean to imply that Ecuador has a cohesive state anti-racism programme.

[4] Notably Peru's former President the 'Cholo' Toledo, Bolivia's current President the Aymara Indian Evo Morales, Ecuador's former President Colonel Lucio Gutiérrez, and Gutiérrez's first Minister of Foreign Policy, Nina Pacari, an Indigenous woman.

[5] CRISE, the Centre for Research on Inequality, Human Security, and Ethnicity, is spearheading this research. Much of their work is available online < http://www.crise.ox.ac.uk/> (July 12, 2007).

[6] My actions were informed by adherence to the Association of Social Anthropologists Ethical Guidelines, available at http://www.theasa.org/ethics /ethics_guidelines.htm (August 18, 2007).

[7] In his article Bourdieu argues against participant observation as a "necessarily fictitious immersion in a foreign milieu." However, given my status as an 'indigenous researcher,' I consider that his argument must be nuanced, as my immersion in my home country for the purposes of research is inherently not 'necessarily foreign' (Bourdieu 2003:282).