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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
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U.S. Ecuadorian Altruistic Expression: Synthesizing the Ancestral With U.S. Latino/a
Immigration Experiences

A Dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Anthropology

by

Linda Jean Hall

June 2017

Dissertation Committee:

Dr. Yolanda T. Moses, Chairperson

Dr. Thomas Patterson

Dr. Christine Ward Gailey

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The Dissertation of Linda Jean Hall is approved:

Committee Chairperson

University of California, Riverside

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I owe an eternal debt of gratitude to my chair, Yolanda Moses whose witty and insightful guidance inspired me as much as it often left me speechless. She is an inspirational mentor who never allowed me to stumble. I was incredibly blessed to also have two wise, patient, and devoted committee members, Thomas Patterson and Christine Ward Gailey. I've learned from this powerful threesome that knowledge is a tool that can break the chains of oppression by turning inequality literally on its head.

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

U.S. Ecuadorian Altruistic Expression: Synthesizing the Ancestral With U.S.
Latino/a Immigration Experiences

by

Linda Jean Hall

Doctor of Philosophy, Graduate Program in Anthropology
University of California, Riverside, June 2017
Dr. Yolanda T. Moses, Chairperson

This investigation brings to the forefront what Ecuadorian immigrants claim is their identity and how in their words they practice their cultural and social relations in two spaces: Ecuador and the United States (U.S.). This ethnographic study's perspective at the intersection of race, gender, and class facilitated the exploration of how reflexively aware individuals (Giddens 1991) ---inextricably tied to varying degrees by DNA to African ancestry (Paz-y-Miño 2016) --- negotiate ideas about who they believe they are and what they want as they establish transnational identities. Ecuadorian migrants in this study give meaning and speak about the practice of their diverse racial-cultural identities by comparing their ideas of who they are to the U.S. government's 2010 census-based claim that immigrants from Ecuador may define themselves as "Hispanic" or "Latino/a", Chicano/a, and Afro-American or Afro-Latino.

Existing scholarship brought to the surface the concept of *Buen Vivir* – living good -- that frames and shapes across ethnic and racial boundaries the construction of identity, aspirations, hopes, and dreams in Ecuador (Gudynas 2011). This investigation focused on the tri-axis junction of this Andean ideal emphasizing altruistic acts and self-improvement, racialized public policies, and the rigorous demands to acquire what each subject personally defined as the American Dream in the U.S. For example, this investigation asked subjects to discuss ways in which they believe they have appropriated or ignored the ancestral component of their racially and ethnically diverse identities to acquire what they believe to be living good, or the conflation of principles and ideals seated in both *Buen Vivir* and the American Dream. The findings of this anthropological study about the lived experiences of Ecuadorian migrants in Los Angeles, New York City, and Miami increases the breadth of knowledge across disciplines about the global migration of populations struggling to come to terms with the plasticity of multifaceted ethnic and diasporic heritages.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
LIST OF FIGURES	viii
1. CHAPTER ONE: Introduction	1
2. CHAPTER TWO: Foundational Theory and Synthesis	14
3. CHAPTER THREE: Immigration’s Driving Forces and Impact	35
3. CHAPTER FOUR: Subjects, Methods, and Site Selection	51
4. CHAPTER FIVE: Los Angeles and the Environs	72
5. CHAPTER SIX: Miami Sprawl and Multi-Latin-American Dreams.....	126
6. CHAPTER SEVEN: New York City Spatial Mobility and Cultural Diversity.....	186
7. CONCLUSION:	233
8. BIBLIOGRAPHY	247
9. APPENDIX A.....	262
10. APPENDIX B	263
11. APPENDIX C	264
12. APPENDIX D.....	265

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure A1: Ecuadorian Ethnic Groups.....	24
Figure A2: Ecuadorian Socio-Economics by Ethnic Group.....	25
Figure A3: Illustration – Pancho Jaime.....	31
Figure A4: U.S. Homeland Security Immigration Statistics.....	42
Figure A5: Estimates of Ecuadorian Immigration by Country.....	43
Figure B6: Political and Social Unrest	53
Figure B7: Academic Arrests and Institutional Harassment.....	55
Figure B8: Universidad Andino Simón Bolívar - email.....	56
Figure B9: Club ANCON.....	64
Figure C10: Club ANCON dancing.....	97
Figure C11: Judy Olvera la Morena.....	98
Figure C12: All-In-One Auto Center/Dismantling.....	101
Figure C13: Award by Gio.....	116
Figure C14: Yolanda Villegas.....	123
Figure D1: Vecinos en Acción.....	132
Figure D2: La Liga Ecuatoriana.....	146
Figure D3: Susanna and Husband.....	149
Figure D4: Food – Liga Ecuatoriana.....	153
Figure D5: Jose and Paula - Miami.....	162
Figure E1: New York City Boroughs.....	187
Figure E2: Queens Borough.....	190

Figure E3: Ecuadorian Civic Committee Nueva York ECCNY.....	196
Figure E4: Oswaldo and Marta Guzmán.....	201
Figure E5: Leonor Torres Director of Events.....	213
Figure E6: ECCNY's funded program in Quito.....	217
Figure E7: Jose Juan.....	223
Figure E8: Ecuadorian Restaurant Food Company.....	227

Chapter One

Introduction

This dissertation brings to the forefront what Ecuadorian immigrants claim is their identity and how in their words they practice their cultural and social relations in two spaces: Ecuador and the United States (U.S.). This ethnographic study's perspective at the intersection of race, gender, and class facilitated the exploration of how reflexively aware individuals (Giddens 1991) ---inextricably tied to varying degrees by DNA to African ancestry (Paz-y-Miño 2016) --- negotiate ideas about who they believe they are and what they want as they establish transnational identities. Ecuadorian migrants in this study give meaning and speak about the practice of their diverse racial-cultural identities by comparing their ideas of who they are to the U.S. government's 2010 census-based claim that immigrants from Ecuador may define themselves as "Hispanic" or "Latino/a" and Afro-American or Afro-Latino.

This research grew out of an anthropological study of the Ecuadorian immigrants' claim of a type of identity that by including a tie to Afro ancestral roots becomes susceptible to the discrimination and marginalization associated with racism here in the United States. For example, prevailing stereotypes associated with the social classifications of negro, black, and Afro-American that appear on public surveys such as the U.S. Census debase and denigrate the cultural and social value of Afro descendants while exposing them to extreme emotional stress and excessive tension (Cox 1948, Fanon 1952, and Adams & Sanders 2003). The new data about Ecuadorian migrants derived from this study will serve as an incentive across disciplines for other social scientists to

seek answers directly from the immigrant populations about an insidious process – how people of African heritage from other countries become racialized within the U.S. context.

Racism is an exercise of systemic discrimination and this practice justifies the creation of hierarchies or the use of racial difference to facilitate the marginalization of populations such as the Indigenous and Afro groups in societies. In practice, racism privileges the few and it has always been a factor of everyday life in Ecuador. Since the colonial era and even in contemporary Ecuadorian society, political and social oligarchies in Ecuador have used differences in class, gender, and above all race to control and create lasting dissention between racially and ethnically diverse groups. In this way, over time the often-intersecting social hierarchies produced by these processes of division were able to reproduce the same outcome – the perpetual social isolation of people of African heritage (De la Torre 2002, Medina and Castro 2011, Rahier 2010). Based on the argument that identity is determined at the intersection of personal circumstances, the influence of various cultural traits, and socio-economic conditions, this research asks the question: How do Ecuadorian immigrants in the highly-racialized U.S. society believe they appropriate or ignore the ancestral component of their racially and ethnically diverse identities to acquire the dream of what they believe to be a good life (*Buen Vivir*)?

Ecuadorian immigrants pushed from Ecuador to the US during the late 20th and early 21st centuries in search of *Buen Vivir* -- the Indigenous concept of a good life (Walsh 2010:15) that has been coopted by the Ecuadorian state to describe the nation's desire to establish an egalitarian or multicultural space in its borders for all ethnicities-

cultures (2008 Ecuadorian Constitution – Preamble). The life stories of Ecuadorian immigrants bring to the forefront both the socio-economic factors and the personal processes of mediation and conflict at play when individual subjects form various relationships between Ecuadorian and U.S. cultural norms and values. For this reason, this research asked each subject to talk about the events and the decisions they made to try to individually achieve what for them is a good life. Over my many years of looking at the Afro-Ecuadorian experience in Ecuador, I found that Ecuadorian immigrant social clubs were one way that immigrants maintained contact with each other in their U.S. setting. Indeed, by intentionally focusing on identifying these networks here in three U.S. Cities - New York City, Los Angeles and the Environs, and Miami -- I discovered that some Ecuadorian migrants both celebrate accomplishments and mitigate the anxieties associated with acculturation in one of an unaffiliated national network of social organizations, Ecuadorian clubs.

The Ecuadorian immigrant institutions or clubs were for the most part formed during migrations by their founding members to the US during the 1960's through the 1990's. Ecuadorian immigrant social groups mitigate what is now the wide disbursement of their membership across vast metropolitan spaces including, but not limited to New York, Los Angeles, and Miami by using the Internet to recruit and distribute to the general public an invitation to join them as they celebrate their transnational identity and bicultural agendas (Kearney 1995). Johnson (2007) argues diasporic philanthropy is the hallmark of most migrant organizations and Ecuadorian immigrant clubs share this commitment to develop and sustain altruistic projects in both their land of origin and their

local communities of settlement. A comprehensive report by Harvard's Philanthropic Initiative argues there is an abundance of scholarship across disciplines that focuses on the creative ways migrant organizations distribute resources across domains or spaces; first, some scholars examine a flow back of remittances and the transfer of emergency resources as well as a constant stream of support targeted to help the poor, aged, and children. Secondly, the bulk of previous research across disciplines explores the investment of migrant organizations in projects in their US communities (ix-xv). The standpoint of this research is to view the development of these philanthropic projects in Ecuadorian clubs in both spaces as a byproduct of the Ecuadorian immigrant's creation of place, or personal experiences related to the dynamic transformation of their historical identities.

After an extensive literature search, I confirmed in the field the consensus of the archival data that many of the subjects at the research sites of New York, Los Angeles, and Miami were born after 1950. The approach of this research is historical and begins in Ecuador's colonial period because the subjects' ideas about race, class, and gender are current expressions of the ever-changing notions about differences in humanity that have traditionally been used to stratify Ecuadorian society. By establishing this standpoint for the project, the door was opened to be able to shed light on the meaning, construction, and practice of the concept of *Buen Vivir*. -- a lifestyle dream deeply engrained in Indigenous legend that claims it is possible to sustain and live a good and balanced life (Gudynas 2011). Also, as part of this research project, subjects were asked to verbally create a genealogy of how they feel U.S. notions of lifestyle ideologies such as, the

American Dream have influenced the way they see themselves and how they live their lives as dual-residents of the U.S. and Ecuador. This research embraces Stolls (2009) argument that there are different versions of the American Dream, “a commodity fetishism that originated in the marriage between capitalism and nationalism...where some cling to citizenship...the more impossible it is to provide the plenty and mobility that Americans have come to expect” (402). The discussion with interviewees about the genealogy or the transformation of ideas of *Buen Vivir* in the U.S. brought to the surface the related aspirations, hopes, and dreams associated with living a good life in Ecuador and how these are impacted by the rigorous demands to acquire what each subject personally defined as the American Dream in the U.S. In this way, conversations in the field with Ecuadorian immigrants elucidated how they experience social, economic, and political success and disappointment at the intersection of cultural expressions of place (Rodman 1992).

Another area of concern that I investigated was current scholarship that points to the possibility that Ecuadorian immigrants may feel as though their identity is being marginalized or even forgotten when they are asked to self-identify in the context of U.S. population surveys. I wanted to investigate the claim by Dávilla, et.al. (2014), that the wide diversity of languages, ethnic, and racial identities that are present in Andean populations do not directly correspond to the more restrictive racial and ethnic categories of the latest 2010 U.S. Census (146). Therefore, one task of this research was to ask Ecuadorian immigrants to express whether they feel this misidentification exists and if

so, how they believe it may impact issues of belonging in the U.S., such as citizenship and social equality.

There are two reasons I undertook this ethnographic study focusing on what is involved when some U.S. Ecuadorian immigrants construct multi-racial identities that in different ways and under various circumstances may or may not embrace Afro heritage. First, existing scholarship about people claiming Afro descent in Ecuador and the testimonies I acquired doing previous research in Ecuador both support the idea that there is the need for more interdisciplinary research projects that will explore the complexities of the Black Ecuadorian identity. Secondly, the findings and questions raised in the context of three non-anthropological studies that I reviewed convinced me that an examination of the Ecuadorian immigrant identity in motion, i.e. between nations has the potential to yield a rich body of untapped knowledge about both the composite identities i.e., Latino/a, Hispanic, Afro-Latino, etc., found in the U.S. Census and the migratory experience of Latin Americans in the U.S.

The findings of two quantitative studies by social scientists outside the field of anthropology about all Ecuadorian populations and particularly those that migrate to the U.S. influenced how I approached this research. The first report released in 2015 by the Pew research center claims at least half the Hispanic population in the U.S. considers themselves multiracial even though when asked they may not identify themselves as mixed race (Pew 2015:6). But, Pew researchers did not individually quantify the current socio-economic status of Ecuadorian migrants about the advantages and disadvantages to claiming multi-racial identity. Therefore, the PEW report revealed to me there is a need

for an in-depth anthropological study that would segregate and explore the opinions of Ecuadorian immigrants themselves. In this way, they would have the agency to express what they believe is the meaning of multi-racial identity and whether they feel claiming an ancestry of two or more races is a social and economic advantage or disadvantage while living in the U.S.

Regarding the issues of advantage and disadvantage, a second study undertaken by communications and media scholars brought to light some of the strategies and possible reasons Ecuadorians may or may not perceive of themselves as being successful as immigrants in the U.S. Neuliep and Johnson's communications research report entitled, *A cross-cultural comparison of Ecuadorian and United States face, facework, and conflict styles during interpersonal conflict: An application of face-negotiation theory* (2016), quantified the possible differences in the ways Ecuadorians manage stress or risk related to interpersonal conflicts. This study focused on university students. Although Neuliep and Johnson surveyed a very narrow population sample of only 114 U.S. university students and 132 Ecuadorian college students, their findings indicate that in many cases Ecuadorians and native born U.S. citizens manage conflict in similar ways. But, the surveys revealed Ecuadorians strongly dislike the strategy of emotional confrontation that was preferred by American born participants. Conversely, Ecuadorian subjects preferred instead to employ conflict avoidance strategies and compromise. Boholm (2001) argues that the degree to which subjects feel successful or unsuccessful at managing the risk involved in conflicts is socially embedded and shaped by culturally based notions about what they individually perceive to be the state of the world (164).

Synthesizing the findings of Neuliep and Johnson with Boholm's argument about conflict resolution and its ties to cultural expression led me to question how Ecuadorians respond to the stresses of everyday living in the U.S. I began to form questions to explore this issue by turning my attention to the action or effect of these moments of discord. Also, I realized to accomplish this type of inquiry I should begin by focusing on one artistic manifestation of culture. For this reason, I turned to Ritter's (2011) genealogy of African and non-African genres of Ecuadorian music that originated in traditionally Afro communities. Ritter defined the role of collaboration or musical fusion as a process employed by musicians of Afro heritage who utilized their indigenous music to attract desperately needed tourist dollars to Ecuador's coastal region (582-583). However, the review of Ritter's study and the other cross-discipline scholarship proved there is need to ask questions about the resilience of cultures and ideas formed in Ecuador that can be answered by exploring how these ideas change as Ecuadorian immigrants acculturate and adjust to living in the U.S.

Since 2007, the muse that inspires me to explore and write about humanity is a spirit fascinated by the Ecuadorian worldview. Above all, after years of doing research in Ecuador, I continue to be intrigued by the complex everyday-ways Ecuadorians speak to and negotiate human diversity while perpetuating the notions that blackness of skin denotes a type of danger that merits marginalization. The first few years of doing research I tried to understand the various methods Ecuadorians employ to assign social value to people of color in Ecuador through an Afro-American lens – a fractured and myopic perspective that fails even to define the reality of living in the United States. My

standpoint changed only after I embraced the concept of intersectionality (Crenshaw 1993) or, the idea that the discrimination and marginalization of any group originates at the intersection of categories of difference such as, gender, class, and race. For this reason, the foundational logic of this research builds on two key concepts. The first supposition is that discrimination and marginalization of any group originates at the intersection of categories of difference. The second premise is that it is important to examine the intersection of social difference with a host of other political-economic factors (McGlotten 2012) that work together to influence the ways U.S. Ecuadorian immigrants who are genetically of African heritage construct a view of the world between two geographical spaces.

National political and economic waves of unrest in the latter part of the 1990's resulted in Ecuadorian social, economic, and political instability that continued to impact my field site in Quito the capitol city between 2006-2014. My work began at the same time Rafael Correa and his national party *Alianza Pias* (AP) constitutionally reshaped the nation. Correa's machine set about to nullify public dissent by politically embracing both democracy and a form of ethnic-centric multiculturalism based on the racist practice of the socio-political ideology *mestizaje*. Although *mestizaje* originated in the colonial era, *even today* a modern interpretation in Ecuador utilizes complex and intersecting differences of class, gender, and race to reduce the social value and agency of blackness (Hall 2013). Shortly after Correa's election under his leadership the AP gradually infiltrated and elevated all levels of public scrutiny. For example, the populist Correean regime adopted a divisive policy encouraging citizens to expose in any situation all forms

of dissent against the totalitarian administration --- even if the offender was a member of the immediate family. In other words, during my field research term in Ecuador (2007-2014) and today evidence points to the fact that the public must practice due diligence when speaking about the social and political agenda of President Correa.

Since Correa's first election in 2007, media outlets of all sorts have been taken over or intimidated into silence. Traditional political activism by trade groups and the ethnically marginalized such as the Indigenous is now compromised by a domestic interpretation of constitutional law derived from Correa's class-relations based rhetorical model pitting the wealthy against the people (De la Torre 2010) and absorption of activist leaders into the bureaucratic mechanism of the state (232). These facts about the socio-economic climate in modern Ecuador explain why each year I found it more and more difficult to persuade willing subjects in the capital city of Quito to openly shed light on what it means to have African heritage. In order not to expose my informants to possible harm and as a way to focus more on the practice of Ecuadorian culture reflecting an African influence, after 2014 I turned my attention to exploring the ways cultural expressions born in Ecuador remain the same or are changed by the Ecuadorian immigrants who claim in some way African heritage experiences in the United States.

Many of the key questions of this research grew out of the issues raised by informants in their revealing testimonies I gathered during the early years of Correa's first administration, between 2007-2010. At that time, I focused on the issue of invisibility – or how Ecuadorian citizens who claimed African heritage in the public domain continued to be erased despite the adoption of a national democratic agenda. For

example, one of two research questions discussed in detail in Chapter 3 driving this project is based on issues brought to my attention in 2008. The subject, a young and college educated community activist and leader, self-identified as being of Afro heritage and when asked to put into words how Ecuadorians in general feel about other Ecuadorians whose ancestry is African said: “In the eyes of the general public people of African descent are rural and not urban - happy and musical, and all this is a kind of stereotype....and that the women are sensual, even the church will tell you that people of African heritage in Ecuador are happy and sensual and that they themselves believe these things that the priests were telling them” (Hall 2010). This statement exposes the complexity and intersectionality of the components of Afro identity in Ecuador as well as revealed to me a need to investigate both the role of stigma at the micro level between Ecuadorians claiming African heritage. As I turned my attention to the U.S., I realized the data acquired during these early years of research in Ecuador at the very least shed light on the norms, values, and cultural practices of U.S. Ecuadorian immigrants who may or may not claim in some way African heritage as they began the process of immigration.

As previously discussed above, this research employed the intersecting bodies of knowledge found in existing theory to shed light on the life experiences of Ecuadorian immigrant subjects. For example, the purpose of Chapter 2 is to discuss several junctions of foundational theory that support this research, such as, Ortner’s (1984) claim that the act of giving is a process of sharing and bonding that sheds light on Kearney’s (1995) claims that give meaning to the exchanges by transnational migrants between their homeland and settlement nations. Other areas of interest to this research that are

explored in the second chapter, include the meaning and impact to migrants in Ecuador and the U.S. of ideas of race, class, and gender bias in the form of masculine hegemony. Chapter 2 also relies on a corpus of scholarly data to examine from a historical perspective the push factors that drove multiple waves of Ecuadorians to migrate to the U.S. and other countries.

Chapter 3 answers questions about the purpose of the research, the population of study, and the process that resulted in the selection of Los Angeles, New York, and Miami as field site locations. Within Chapter 3, the research questions of this study are analyzed and as these relate to the genealogy of the questionnaire that was used in the field sites to conduct interviews. Chapter 4 is a compilation and analysis of life experiences of the subjects interviewed as part of this research in Los Angeles. This chapter focuses on the process of acculturation from the standpoint that in the U.S. the ideas about race, class, and gender in the memories of Ecuadorian immigrants are impacted and frame in different ways their identities and how they practice giving both in the U.S. and Ecuador. Chapter 5 examines the testimonies of migrants in Miami and this section has the same purpose and intent as Chapter 4. However, Chapter 5 also takes into consideration the strong cultural differences between the social climate of LA – a city that is highly influenced by Mexican culture --- and the social experiences of Ecuadorian migrants in Miami, a city in dominated by Cuban norms and values. Chapter 6, continues to examine the intersection of race, class, and gender as Ecuadorian immigrants practice giving and construct identities in New York City --- another space in the U.S. that is culturally multifarious and very different from Miami and Los Angeles.

After examining the subject testimonies of the three research sites, Chapter 7 is a critique or conclusion of the field work and analyses of subject testimonies that turns a lens to the future of Ecuadorian immigrants that live between multiple nations. Finally, this summary chapter is a discussion of the ways the findings will contribute to the bodies of anthropological theory that ask questions about the impact of global public policies in which the ideologies of race, class, and gender biases exercise power over the diverse lived experience and the practice of various related cultures by transnational African descendants.

CHAPTER TWO

Foundational Theory and Synthesis

The migratory identity construction of Ecuadorian U.S. immigrants is the core issue of this chapter which is a discussion of the most prominent, influential, and preexisting anthropological and cross-disciplinary theory that inspired and informed this investigation. The process of migration in the following theoretical synthesis will be examined by presenting arguments from at least two sides of a core set of issues anthropologists and other social scientists consider to be ideas or concepts that both fairly and unfairly impact historically marginalized migratory populations.

This investigation owes much to scholars who build on Karl Marx's dual-class based critique of the capitalist system (Marx & Engels 1906) to argue that in modern socially stratified societies identity is formed at the intersection of issues of race, class, gender (Gailey 1987 Bonilla-Silva 1997, Marable 2002, Patterson 2000), and ethnicity – or what Baker refers to as “the surrogate of race” (Baker 2001). This ethnographic research also benefits from the viewpoints expressed by Bourdieu (1977) whose social theories began to shed light on the role of experience in the formation of identity. Even though Bourdieu's opinions are laced with misogynistic overtones and elements of Durkheimian logic seated in structuralism (Moore & Sanders 2006), this research gains insight by embracing Bourdieu's (1991) claim that identity, or the creation of self, should be understood to be a subjective and a temporally and spatially influenced experience (223). Sewell's (1992) and Smith's (2001) historical critiques of Bourdieu point to the dynamic nature of agency and this investigation fuses the theories of Bourdieu and

Sewell with Smith to justify the asking of questions about the links among agency -- emotional self-management -- and both society and culture.

The practice of Cultural Anthropology today evolved from polemics about social structure, culture and other related concepts. Anthropologists today build on the ideas that emerged from these arguments to describe the construction and dynamics of everyday life. Because of these founding debates, anthropology is thought to be a discipline that sheds light on the roles that both time and space play in the dynamic construction of identity (Speed 2006). The creation of narratives such as this ethnography about people in motion between geographical locations --- or in the process of migration --- requires an analysis of both the locus and the unique local histories spoken by empowered individuals about their places in these spaces, or lived experiences (Rodman 1992). This dissertation is deeply indebted to the groundbreaking body of logic about migration on a global or transnational scale first advanced in the late 1990's by Michael Kearney.

Kearney (1995) adds depth to the 1980's and 1990's globalization theories about migration by arguing that during this dynamic change the means to produce, consume, and the politics that frame and shape socio-cultural identity construction become separated from local places. Because of this process of separation, or deterritorialization, transnational immigrants --- individuals crossing international borders --- may refer to themselves as members of their home state even when living in another nation-state (551-552). Also, transnational migrants are non-nomadic and because they share cultural objects they also form a diaspora of the imagination (Hall 1990 & Vertovec 2009) which

Kearney (1995) argues is made evident by their investment of political-economic and emotional resources across global borders (553-555). Appadurai and Breckenridge (1989) expand on Hall's claims about a shared and common imagination among transnational migrants to add that the things they remember form paths connecting the point of departure with the destination that is enhanced through experiences to form "desires and attachments" (i).

Inda and Rosaldo shed even more light on the concept of deterritorialization by transnational immigrants. These scholars argue this phenomenon is always accompanied by reterritorialization which is the process by which the migrant's worldviews and tangible resources such as remittances acquired in the sending space (U.S.) move undisturbed to the receiving space – Ecuador (15). By synthesizing the above ideas, the standpoint of this research is that subject populations who acquired similar ideas about giving in the sending, or settlement country may be distinguished from other migrant groups based on the ways they practice philanthropy. Let's begin to explore this opinion by assuming the receiving country is Ecuador and the sending national space is the United States.

Regarding the intersection of the resilient norms and values brought by immigrants from the end-point of remissions (Ecuador) with viewpoints in the sending space (U.S.), Cohen (2011) claims the flow of remittances is a migrant activity in which old values are reinvigorated in the social context of the sending country (104). Ong (1996) adds clarity to this assertion by making two points; 1) migrants' cultural citizenship in the sending space arises from the struggle between the receiving nation's

cultural values and the hegemonic rites and practices of the sending state, and 2) the migrant's sense of belonging is framed and shaped by several factors including race, class, and culture in both spaces (737-738). In summary, it is possible migrant populations whose ideas about belonging and bi-directional giving reflect a dual-lived experience in at least two geographical spaces and may practice philanthropy in similar ways.

Performing Philanthropy

Sahlins (1972) argued that kinship relationships and economics determine the performance of altruistic acts or the desire to give or share what one has with others (211). To account for imbalances in general society due to power relationships and the influence of the cultural values of the state, Ortner (1984) claims practice theorists embraced Bourdieu's concept of habitus to claim social behaviors like philanthropy are dynamic attributes that stem from negotiations of rules and values associated with the state of belonging (146) or, in the case of migrant populations from cultural citizenship. Wilk (1993) argues that although it is true both approaches recognized the significance of space or the domain of the state as a locus for the performance of philanthropic acts, they both failed to take into consideration the importance of time as it relates to two factors; 1) the long-term desire of the giver to see his contribution outlast his lifespan, and 2) the influence of a lifetime of various non-kinship social groups on the decision-making process to practice altruism (200).

Bornstein's ethnographic study of how the traditional act of *dān* or giving in New Delhi (2009) adds weight to Wilk's holistic viewpoint that the social characteristic of

altruism for migrant populations is the constant negotiation of shared cultural beliefs as these norms and values interact with institutions such as the state and groups or social organizations (624). In fact, the idea espoused by Bornstein was also shared across disciplines. For example, prior to the publication of Bornstein's article, an interdisciplinary report – *Diaspora Philanthropy: Influences, Initiatives, and Issues* presented in 2007 to the Philanthropic Initiative, Inc. and the Global Equity Initiative at Harvard University in 2007 regarding acts of altruism by migrant populations concurred with Wilks claim. The multi-disciple panel concluded that giving --- by what they referred to as diasporic populations --- is the unique combination of four factors; receiving country political policies, sending country rules and regulations, the reasons migrant populations decided to immigrate, and the impact on motivation of the negotiation between sending and receiving country migrant traditions (Johnson 2007). Therefore, Wilks and Bornstein's theoretical arguments provide further justification for this theoretical approach to explore altruism as a social phenomenon in which migrant populations exercise agency to interpret cultural beliefs in the contexts of states and groups --- or social organizations.

Agency and Migrant Social Organizations

Current anthropological exploration of groups dynamics and structure benefits from the controversial theoretical conclusions drawn from previous cross-discipline investigations of the role of culture in social organizations. Research projects conducted between the 1920's until the 1990s were frequently terminated for one of two reasons, or in some cases a combination of both; 1) the suspected unethical misconduct of

anthropologists in regards to their treatment of sensitive data from susceptible assembly line workers, or 2) industrialists simply pulled the plug on research when the opinion of social scientists no longer fit their economic agendas. The result is that during the 20th century social scientists were hard pressed to find funding to establish projects and develop ideas specifically about social organizations. The following synopsis of the activities of the era's most distinguished research projects show that conclusions drawn by the researchers often tended to reflect what was the contemporary and dominant social theory of that time-period.

Much of the early scholarship in organizational anthropology is rooted in the bodies of theory created by two foundational scholars, Bronislaw Malinowski and Fredrick Barth. Malinowski's (1922) exploration of kinship interactions and tribal exchange – in which he states exchange continues to be the driving force of modern organizations – led him to argue that exchange is a process rooted in social and political tribal relationships (422). Barth (1998) built on previous knowledge located in kinship relationships and analysis to claim individuals perform acts that impact the social processes at play during the construction of social structures (106).

Organizational anthropology continued to be influenced throughout most of the 20th century by theories based on kinship relationships and anthropological logic that evolved from ideas that social organizations are locked or closed-ended social structures. For example, (Patterson 2001) Elton Mayo, a psychologist, led a consortium of Harvard social scientists known as the Hawthorne Bank Wiring Initiative (1927-1932). Mayo – a protégé of Rockefeller fellow W. Lloyd Warner -- employed participant observation and

instructed his team to utilize Radcliffe-Brown logic or structural-functionalism to analyze worker productivity at Western Electric's Hawthorne plant in Cicero, Illinois. Mayo's team examined relationships between the effectiveness of worker productive activity and the socio-cultural, community and personal relationships of plant personnel (73-74). Per Wright (1994), the researchers based their conclusions on an assumption that an organization is a top-down social hierarchy (Gramsci 1971) – or a controlled and closed social system in which the norms and values always remain the same (Radcliffe-Brown 1958). Even though this is a very structuralistic idea, the field notes of Mayo's team included many examples in which the workers or members of the organization formed groups to establish their agency to accomplish a shared goal. This exercise of power stood in opposition to previous theories that claimed members of an organization only functioned rationally, as one part of a unified system (8-7).

Anthropologists support of the idea that social organizations are closed systems diminished due to the conclusions drawn by an English research project known as the Manchester Shop Floor Studies (1950's and 1960s). Also, (Wright 1994) employing participant observation the group of cross-discipline social scientists lead by Manchester University's future Business School Dean Tom Lupton argued that the environment in social organizations is one of constant change, negotiations, and conflict in which gender and social classes formed in the local community highly influenced the roles individuals play in social organizations. The Hawthorne study intentionally limited the researcher's contact with the workers and gathered data mostly based on observation. But, the Manchester researchers who were directly immersed in the daily lives of the subjects

captured in their field notes and subject interviews the complex social processes that existed between groups of workers. The Manchester study confronted the prominent idea of cultural normalcy advanced by Radcliffe-Brown as well as demonstrated the value of participation as an approach to explore the complexities of group interactions (10-12).

During the 1970's, the focus of anthropological theorist interested in exploring social organizations was on the production of culture. Marshall Sahlins (1976) led the way by claiming the culture of groups is affected by changes on the inside of the organization as well as by outside forces (61). British Anthropologist Mary Douglas (1986) shed light on the role of the conscious choices individuals make to form social groups that opened the door to explore the bonding or coherence of social organizations as a cognitive process (19). This investigation focused on interpersonal actions and the practice of culture in Ecuadorian local community clubs that have memberships of less than 100. Per Douglas, the sense of community is stronger in small organizations where the individual identities and wills of the members coalesce to form institutions (21) that Garsten and Nyqvist (2013) claim are constantly arbitrated by individuals who experience life as members of a network of social organizations (6-7).

By embracing the theories laid out above, that focus on the need to understand more deeply the meaning and practices of social organizations, my research argues that much can be gained by observing the subject population in the context of community groups or clubs in which members practice some form of altruism such as philanthropy. My viewpoint is that it is also necessary to analyze existing anthropological theory about how race, ethnicity, and class shape and frame the identities of the migrants in addition to

how the act of giving is carried out by the target population of this study, migrant Ecuadorians.

Ecuadorians in the Homeland

Literature on race and ethnicity in Latin America defines racism as a fluid and adaptive ideology or confluence of ideas about racial difference (Wade 1997, Torres & Whitten 1998). This research builds on two strong theoretical arguments; 1) liberal policies and laws of democratic states reflect the influence of the ideologies of racism and sexism (Crenshaw 1991) and, 2) racial difference including ethnicity (Winant 2000, Hernández, T.K. 2013), and *mestizaje* (Bonilla-Silva 1997) influence the identity construction of its citizens (Cervone 2009, De la Torre 2002). Another point that must be considered is that for the past half century multicultural ideologies promising equal recognition for all ethnicities has dominated Ecuador's state political domain (Becker 2010). However, the Ecuadorian state has been and continues to be a space conducive instead to the formation of new racially defined hierarchies (Rahier 2008).

In the racialized space of Ecuador, institutions have traditionally been divided along lines of both culture and class (Lamphere 1992) and the hegemonic state (Gramsci 1971) acts as a dominating force exercising differential power over the bodies of individuals (Foucault 1984). In this way, the state frames and shapes the life experiences of Ecuadorians (Maggio 2014). The following section is a discussion of the meaning and function of various powerful hegemonic processes and ideologies that have for centuries framed and influenced Ecuadorian life. For example, De la Torre (2010) claims the repeated division of Ecuadorians by ethnicity or purported cultural difference is a factor

that thwarted numerous attempts during the 20th and 21st century to achieve national equality and harmony. This is especially true for the indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorians of Ecuador whose physical features and cultural practices repeatedly served as justification for their socio-marginalization (213).

The case of Afro-Ecuadorians exemplifies the ways racial-ethnic isolationism functions in Ecuador when it is based on differences in physical traits and cultural heritage. Although having a biological tie to blackness in Ecuador carries with it negative sociological connotations, from a biological standpoint geneticist Paz-y-Miño recently stunned the Ecuadorian nation by publically claiming all Ecuadorians have African ancestry (Paz-y-Miño 2016). However, when asked on the national 2010 National Census to ethnically self-identify, only little over 7% of the State's population of 14.4 million categorized themselves as a person of African or Afro-Ecuadorian heritage (Figure A1). To explain the sources of this conflict of identity it is necessary to begin by examining issues of race and ethnicity from an Andean regional perspective.

Ethnic Population According to Population Censuses				
Ethnic Population of Ecuador According to Population Censuses	How is ethnicity counted?	Indigenous (Percentage of Population)	Afro-Ecuadorians (Percentage of Population)	<i>Montubios</i> (Percentage of Population)
1950	Language	16.3		
1962	Not counted			
1974	Not counted			
1982	Not counted			
1990	Language	3.84		
2001	Self-identification	6.83	4.97	
2010	Self-identification	7.0	7.2	7.4

Figure A1: The above summary of Ecuadorian census data is an official summary of the disbursement of ethnic groups in Ecuador from 1950-2010. (Novo 2014)

The most recent and well-known regional and cross-discipline studies about Andean identity include Golash-Boza’s Afro-Peruvian investigation (2011), Wades’ Andean-wide analyses of identity politics (2011) and Colombian national and Afro-Colombian identity construction (2000). This body of scholarship adds weight to Whitten’s (1986) and Poole’s (1997) arguments that an individual ethnic group is itself a construct of many subgroups and each of these subethnic groups’ views and practices are both similar or in some cases very dissimilar. For example, black Ecuadorian scholars including Garcia (2003) and Ortiz (1982) also speak to the uniqueness of the norms, values, gender roles, and cultural practices of different groups of people of African heritage across Ecuadorian regions. Also, Antón (2011), De la Torre (2002), and Rahier (2008), note that the varied cultural specificity of Afro-Ecuadorians even differs between social classes and communities. De la Torre and Antón’s (2012) extrapolation of socio-economic indicators for the entire Ecuadorian population reveals the disproportionate

distribution of economic resources and the effect of reduced educational achievement to be factors that are closely tied to ethnic identity (Figure A2).

	<i>Ethnic group</i>	2007	2008	2009
Poverty measured by income	Indigenous	62,5%	65,9%	68,2%
	White	30,9%	25,7%	26,3%
	Mestizo	33,0%	31,4%	32,7%
	Afro-Ecuadorian	50,6%	43,4%	42,9%
	NATIONAL	36,7%	35,1%	36,0%
	Underemployment Index	Indigenous	68,5%	73,0%
White		51,2%	46,6%	49,1%
Mestizo		52,8%	52,0%	54,6%
Afro-Ecuadorian		56,4%	58,8%	61,6%
Other		75,9%	65,8%	63,8%
NATIONAL		53,5%	52,6%	54,8%
Urban Unemployment	Indigenous	3,6%	3,7%	3,5%
	White	7,0%	9,4%	8,5%
	Mestizo	5,9%	7,2%	7,8%
	Afro-Ecuadorian	8,9%	7,6%	11,7%
	Other	5,2%	11,1%	0,0%
	NATIONAL	6,1%	7,3%	7,9%
Property of Housing	Indigenous	75,6%	75,9%	79,8%
	White	65,2%	65,4%	65,0%
	Mestizo	65,3%	67,4%	64,7%
	Afro-Ecuadorian	62,9%	64,7%	65,1%
	NATIONAL	65,9%	67,7%	65,7%
	High School Education	Indigenous	3,4%	5,3%
White		16,2%	19,9%	25,4%
Mestizo		18,7%	20,3%	21,3%
Afro-Ecuadorian		6,9%	10,7%	9,8%
NATIONAL		17,0%	18,7%	20,1%
Illiteracy		Indigenous	26,6%	25,8%
	White	5,1%	5,3%	4,7%
	Mestizo	6,7%	6,3%	6,8%
	Afro-Ecuadorian	9,2%	8,3%	7,3%
	NATIONAL	7,9%	7,6%	7,8%
	College Education	Indigenous	4,2%	4,2%
White		8,5%	8,5%	8,4%
Mestizo		9,2%	9,3%	9,8%
Afro-Ecuadorian		7,0%	6,9%	7,3%
NATIONAL		7,9%	7,6%	7,8%

Figure A2: Social Indicators by Ethnicity in Ecuador. (De la Torre & Ant3n 2012).

Of course, there are always exceptions to what might be considered the norm. In this case, the anomaly is the population of approximately 50,000 Montubios farming families (Latorre 2013). Montubios whose territorial region in Ecuador is in the hinterlands of the nation's port city of Guayaquil refer to themselves as

‘indigenous/black/white’ or tri-ethnic. There is little social science research about Montubios; but, Roitman (2008) argues that what sets them apart is that their viewpoint regarding the value of Afro ancestry literally turned preconceived notions about Afro-heritage in Ecuador on its head. In 2001, Montubios exercised collective power to petition and receive recognition from the State that they are an ethnic-racial identity based on their unique mixed heritage and their shared exercise of particular cultural practices (1-3). In this way, Montubios established themselves as a *pueblo*, or distinct ethnic-political identity – a status that the State also granted in legislation to the Indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorians during the 1990’s (Jamison 2011).

The above example demonstrates both why it would be inaccurate to speak of Montubios as simply a subgroup of Afro-Ecuadorians as well as substantiates the claim that in Ecuador within ethnic groups there is a high level of diversity (Ziegler-Otero 2004). This diversity is also a well-documented fact for other Ecuadorian *pueblos* or ethnic groups such as the indigenous populations. Finally, there are two points related to the Montubios that make their unique identity important to this research. First, before migrating most Ecuadorian immigrants were aware of the legitimacy attached to the Montubios’ unique three-part identity. Secondly, the Montubios’ exercise of power during the late 20th and early 21st centuries deconstructed and pushed back against existing racially and ethnically based paradigms of social stratification that drew much of their strength from ideas seated in *mestizaje* (2).

Mestizaje and Machismo

As previously mentioned, literature on race and ethnicity in Latin America defines racism as a fluid and adaptive ideology or confluence of ideologies (Hernandez 2013). This section examines the roles of *mestizaje*, *machismo*, and *Buen Vivir* as these three factors dynamically and consistently interacted with racist-ethnic based notions, structures, and institutions in the hegemonic social order (Rosenberry 1994 & Sayer 1994) that was and is Ecuador. To show that there is chaos at the intersection of race and ethnicity in Ecuador, one must simply turn to the voluminous dialogue inside any one of the three most recent Ecuadorian constitutions. For example, the domestic contract ratified in 1978 (Corkill and Cubitt 1988) that reinstated democracy in the state followed by the constitutions adopted in 1997 and the most recent Constitution approved in 2007 (Becker 2008) all contain provisions to attempt to mediate the ongoing and volatile dissent among ethnic/racial groups. Novo (2006) argues that since even the 1970's, a decade that marked the beginning of several decades of national political-economic instability, Ecuadorian identity was framed and shaped by the dynamics at play in the nation's multifarious and hegemonic social order (7-10). In fact, Macheno's (2010) analysis of Ecuadorian migration abroad shows that national instability was one of the factors that pushed the late 20th century immigration of many Ecuadorians to the U.S. and other countries (57-59). This section sheds light on various hegemonic practices and how these subsumed race and ethnicity to be able to stand firm in the face of juridical provisions at the federal level, cries for human rights from the Catholic Church and

external activists, and the rise of Latin America's vanguard indigenous movements inside Ecuador.

Mestizaje

Many scholars argue the socially heterogeneous structure of Ecuadorian society even today is divided along lines of implicit differences in skin color, class and gender which are firmly seated in the colonial regime or rule of caste, *regimem de castas* (Jamieson 2010, Hollenstein 2009). Other scholars add that it is also important to analyze the politics of *mestizaje*. *Mestizaje* is a social stratification practice which socially prioritizes an indigenous-white ancestral identity and by doing so further marginalizes blackness and indianness in favor of a national indian-white identity (Tanaka-Saldivar 2008 and Strawn 2009). Ecuador, like many Latin American nations, embraced and politicized *mestizaje* during the 20th century. Even though *mestizaje* is an ignoble notion, the legitimization of this practice by the state exacerbated the marginalization of specific under-represented populations, especially indigenous and Afro descendants (Wade 2011, Cervone 1999). My research examines the meaning and function of *mestizaje*, *machismo*, and *Buen Vivir*, as these factors help to define Ecuadorian immigrant identity, shape their complex social relationships, and the ways they practice philanthropy in the U.S.

Machismo

Mestizaje intersects in the social domain of Ecuador with other insidious practices including *machismo*. Across disciplines in the humanities, many scholars construct theoretical frameworks about *machismo* that owe much to the work of anthropologists

Gutmann (1996) and Viveros Vigoya (2001). Gutmann and Vigoya claim Latin America is the locus of this misogynistic practice known for the victimization of women and seemingly unworthy and weaker males. Sociologist Connell built on this idea to support his claim that there are different types of masculinities; competing hegemonic masculinities that each in different ways practices domination, and alternative masculinities which Connell claims is a non-hegemonic machismo exercised by men with limited power, i.e., male members of ethnic minorities, poor classes, or homosexuals (Connell 1995).

Clinical Medicine researchers Goicolea, et. al. (2014), embrace Gutmann and Viveros Vigoya to argue that context (401) is also important in the practice of machismo. Therefore, an analysis of hegemonic masculinity must take into consideration geographical location as well as the fact that any discourse about a particular hegemonic phenomenon must look beyond the obvious uneven distribution of power (Benavides 2004). For these reasons, this investigation briefly turns to the conclusions drawn by two ethnographic studies about machismo in Ecuador.

The first study in the field of Business Administration by Stobbe (2005) reaches conclusions about the power dynamics of machismo in the Argentinian auto industry that has strong implications for Ecuadorian social groups that are subject organizations of this investigation. The second investigation is an ethnography by anthropologist Andrade (2001) of the life of Pancho Jaime (1946-1989) that sheds light on the political implications of alternative masculinities as these intersect oppressive Ecuadorian political hierarchies.

Even though Stobbe's research population was Argentinian, he concurs with a conclusion drawn by Mexican researcher Goicolea (2014); subjects who have experienced machismo understand its meaning and function from the perspective that both sexes contribute to the performance of *machismo* in Latin America (408). Regarding the stratification caused by *machismo*, Stobbe argues gender inequality in organizations is indicative of what Gailey (2014) refers to as systematic "gender hierarchy", a characteristic of states in which social power is unevenly distributed based on non-gender specific maleness and class (xi).

Per Crocker and Major (1989), individuals at the lower levels of hierarchies frequently suffer from problems of self-esteem and social stigmatization (607-608). Regarding stigma, Stobbe provides greater insight about how stereotypes that point to a positive maleness, or in this case *machismo*, relate to assumptions about one's ability to; 1) provide for their families, 2) exercise dominance over women, 3) sustain sexual prowess, great energy and strength, and 4) behave honorably with pride and respect (105-109). Andrade's biography of Pancho Jaime brings to the surface how these long-standing stereotypes about manliness or hegemonic masculinity functioned inside the context of Ecuador's most culturally diverse and emblematic city of Guayaquil.

Ecuador's economic and political conditions were very unstable in 1950 when Jaime's parents uprooted the family to migrate to Los Angeles. Andrade (2001) points to many factors such as the hippie culture of the 1970's and other social experiences that shaped the way Jaime constructed his identity in the U.S. Upon his return in 1970 to Guayaquil, Jaime adopted a unique literary persona that fused the

revolutionary hippie spirit he admired in the U.S. with the exceptionalism of machismo. The result was that Jaime gradually became the embodiment of political protest; Jaime used the tools of machismo - vulgar language and sexually explicit imagery – to stand in opposition to political corruption, the stagnation of the working-class, and exploitation of the poor by Ecuador’s socio-political establishment. The appeal of Jaime’s publications was universal throughout Ecuador and his use of often loud and provocative language and graphics did not stop the materials from becoming popular across lines of ethnicity and class. Andrade’s post-millennium interviews of subjects for his ethnography proves that *machismo* based conceptions of masculinity are understood by contemporary Ecuadorians. Uniformly, the interviewees agreed the literary devices Jaime employed reflected a form of ‘male-speak’ or popular humor that is still commonly heard between males in Guayaquil. Per Andrade, male and female interviewees from all social classes testified they appreciated Jaime’s work as a noble effort by a marginalized man to ridicule and confront political oppression. In this way, Jaime’s coarse language, humiliating characterizations of females, and his bitter and relentless political activism emerged from his personalization of the social practice of *machismo* (Figure A3).



Figure A3: “One pussy is substitute for another.” Pancho Jaime is addressing President Borja. Originally published in *Comentarios* 18:2. (Andrade 2001)

Regarding the perception of the *machismo* characteristic of nobility, Connell (1995) claimed this positive distinguishing feature of machismo was self-serving and subsumed characteristics such as over-protection (1995). Goicolea's (2005) critique of Connell calls attention to a more active form of pro-feminist masculinity that can be seen in the action of supportive males who perform various acts to oppose the practice of *machismo* (411-412). However, recent anthropological theorists who continue to draw on Gutmann argue there is a new type of compassionate masculinity that is very much aware of the need to establish resilient and supportive bonds with females (Wentzell 2015). My research's investigative standpoint is that it is necessary to shed light on ideas associated with the good and bad treatment of females linked to *machismo* that could possibly influence how Ecuadorian migrants construct identity, form relationships, and perform acts of altruism in the U.S. This theoretical synthesis will next examine the intersection of race, ethnicity, class, *mestizaje*, and *machismo* with two other identity shaping determinants that influenced immigrant lived-experiences in Ecuador. The first factor is the long-standing animosity between Ecuadorians based on whether or not an individual's family has ties to either the littoral Pacific region or the central mountainous range or High Sierra of Ecuador. The second force originates in legend and speaks to the indigenous worldview of *Buen Vivir*.

Highlands versus the Sierra and *Buen Vivir*

Andrade's biographical analysis of Pancho Jaime is also an ethnographical study of the 20th century social structure of Ecuador's coastal city of Guayaquil. In this investigation, Andrade calls our attention to more than the normalization of vulgarity as a

literary form of expression. For example, even today within the social domain of the nation there are malicious stereotypes or unfounded claims that people born on the coast are crude, effeminate, and prone to lascivious behavior. Conversely, based in part on the fact that the seat of Spanish colonial and post-revolutionary governance and culture resided and still resides in the highlands, Guayaquilians stigmatize highlanders as being formal, haughty, and arrogant (307).

Jaime's visual and textual narratives successfully normalized the Ecuadorian contentious binary relationship between regions and hegemonic masculinity. Dawson (2014) calls attention to the fact that this type of phenomenon is psychological (10-11) at the individual level (Smedley 1998) and Crocker and Major (1998) argue it is also emblematic of the ways stigma functions across various social groups within a shared geographical domain (609). Andrade actualizes Crocker and Major's claim to prove it is valid within the context of Ecuador, a social space in which stereotypes cause friction between Ecuadorians (Medina and Castro 2011). For this reason, this research explores the regional animosity between the coast and the sierra as potential influences that shape the way Ecuadorian immigrants form relationships in the U.S.

Other factors have also impacted the development of the Ecuadorian psyche and the way Ecuadorians view themselves in different geographical spaces. As an example, powerful pre-colonial indigenous myths and legends such as *Sumak Kawsay*, or *Buen Vivir* now has the politically correct meaning of 'the good life' inside the context of Ecuador's most recent Constitution (Becker 2013). *Buen Vivir's* actual meaning varies throughout the Andean region (Mamani 2010); but, the concept universally relates to the

ties indigenous peoples have with the cosmos and their commitment to live and reproduce a lifestyle based on self-improvement and the recognition of the value of the environment and the well-being of others (Gudynas 2011). This investigation embraces Acosta's claim that members of groups that embrace *Buen Vivir* – a now-recognized national practice -- reflect in their daily lives the teachings of their ancestors (Acosta 2013). For this reason, this research asks questions about the ways *Buen Vivir* is or is not reflected in the relationships and philanthropic practices of Ecuadorian immigrants in the U.S.

The above section of this synthesis of theory examined existing ideas about *Buen Vivir*, *mestizaje*, *machismo*, race, ethnicity, and class and how they may or may not contribute to the development of identity and the practice of philanthropic acts prior to Ecuadorian migration to the U.S. immigration. The final section of this theoretical synthesis explores contemporary scholarship about post migration issues in three areas, 1) the impact of the migration process, 2) the socio-cultural influence of U.S. based ideas and stratification policies, and 3) the meaning to Ecuadorian immigrants of the glossing over of diverse Ecuadorian identities inside the category of Latino/a, and Hispanic in U.S. society.

Chapter Four

Immigration's Driving Forces and Impact

Afro-Ecuadorians and the indigenous peoples are Ecuador's most ostracized and susceptible categories of human beings. For this reason, Rahier refers to the indigenous as otros (others) and Afro-Ecuadorians as the ultimo otro -the MOST Other.

(Rahier 2010).

An examination of Ecuador's history will reveal what factors stimulated Ecuadorian migration to other nations during the late 20th century. Also, this historical approach facilitates a parallel discourse about cultural stratification and how anthropologists have used biological difference, systemic cultural hegemony, intersecting classes, and composite ethnicities to define Ecuador's diverse population. In many cases, the concern of anthropologists and other social scientists cited below prompted global discussions about whether it is valid to define difference in biological and ethnical/cultural terms. Arguments that emerged from the polemics about these issues, also prompted complex debates asking questions about the social implications of employing hegemonic cultural models to define the state's population. The analysis that follows examines the ways in which ideas tied to independence and globalization intersected with rapidly changing concepts of ethnicity, race, and class to determine the content and character of a series of late 20th century global Ecuadorian migrations.

Independence to Transnationality

By the dawn of Ecuador's independence in 1830 from Spain, the images and rhetorical arguments about the *Other/Others* were firmly ingrained in Latin American consciousness. One challenge to new Latin American nations would be to define citizenship in a way that simultaneously determined the liberal identity of the outsider -- the miserable indigenous and 'invisible' Afro-slave (Wade 1997). Extant scholarship (Kuper 1999) argues the origins of social stratification can be found in the liberal ideas of John Locke (1632-1704) who on one hand advocated the agency of the individual while assigning pecuniary value to the slave. Another watershed moment in history that had a global socio-political impact on emerging nations during the 19th century was Charles Darwin's publication of *The Origin of the Species* (1859)– a pivotal work written in the Enlightenment tradition that expanded the idea that cultural diversity explains human differences (11). The concept of *blanquemento* is an example of the syncretization of Lockean liberalism with misconstrued biological ideas that were used by unscrupulous politicians and social architects in Latin America to justify the stratification of national populations based on supposed human racial differences.

Blanquemento is socio-political concept and whitening process that favors whiteness (Whitten and Torres 1998), as is *mestizaje*. Both ideas became the justification used in society to stratify populations and they functioned as dominant political ideologies for politicians to construct and reconstruct different but similar hegemonic paradigms throughout Latin America (Avendaño et. al. 2011). Per Cervone, beginning as early as the 17th century and especially in the 20th century *mestizaje* was the most

influential hegemonic and caste-like system social elites employed to organize Latin American society (Cervone 2010).

Despite Rousseau's contributions to liberal thinking about the abuses associated with conscripted labor and slavery, the scholar did not tackle the institution of citizenship – who should and who should not be considered a citizen (Callinicos 2007). Prior to the revolution and even after the first part of the 1940's, the unresolved paradox rooted in the Lockean/Rousseau liberal debate dominated Ecuadorian politics and the questionable citizenship and value to the nation of Indigenous and Afro peoples. The result today is what Mullins describes as the Latin American model of racism. This paradigm is one that “has generally privileged culture over race, in which extensive racial discrimination coexists with the absence of formal laws enforcing racism and an official ideology denying racism” (2005).

In 1925, marginalized masses in Ecuador began to resist social denegation and the tyranny of the state. The Indian voice emerged during that year to demand from the nation the creation of a new rhetoric that would effectively abandon the use of self-deprecating and stereotypical references to the pitiful or ‘miserable’ Indian. Also, that same year a contingency of the middle-class joined forces with military officers to put an end to liberal control of the nation. Thus, wide spread domestic unrest erupted that crossed lines of ethnic and class difference resulting in the election and overthrow of a total of 15 political administrations during the 1930's. To make matter worse, the political unrest was accompanied by both a rapid decline in exports of the nation's

primary crop of bananas and the global collapse of most international markets due to the Great Depression.

During the 30's and 40's, nationwide unrest within the ranks of the subaltern increased as the *campesinos* – a multi-ethnic class of poor workers -- in all Ecuadorian communities began to seek methods to acquire equal access to State resources such as education and their rights as citizens. The root causes continued to be: the oppressive dominance and greed of the land-owning elites and the unequal utilization of revenues in poor communities of production tax revenues by the state. In the late 1940's crop disease curtailed exportation of bananas from Central American and Ecuador became the global leader in the production of this crop.

Whitten (1965) explains how the economic instability during the 1940's and 50's coupled with a natural disaster combined to adversely impact the well-being of citizens. For example, in the capital city of the region mostly populated by Afro-Ecuadorians, Esmeraldas, there was “a series of alternating booms and depressions. A rubber and balsa boom during World War II was followed by a depression lasting from 1945 to 1947. The banana boom that began in 1948 ended in the late 1950's by two simultaneous disasters, the banana blight and an earthquake that razed the entire town” (Whitten 12). Both in the coastal region and the highlands, the economic welfare of Afroecuatorianos was closely tied to the natural resource of land and the ecological healthiness of the ecology.

The issue of land or agrarian reform took on greater significance after the 1950's in the socio-political struggle of the Indian and *Afroecuadoriano*. But, because of a high

level of illiteracy in the Indigenous population they were restricted from voting by law. For this reason, efforts on the part of the Indigenous increased to attract government funding to improve the educational opportunities for rural Indigenous communities. But, the economically based elite class managed to resist the demand for agrarian reform with the help of the government until the 1960s and 1970s.

Clark and Becker argue that a strong migrant movement of many of the nation's poor was brought on by political and economic uncertainty during the 60's and 70's. For example, many Esmeraldan *campesinos* were a part of what was a decade long national emigration of laborers to Ecuadorian urban areas including Quito, Guayaquil and Cuenca. Also, now-a-days many of the nation's poor who had been landowners lost possession of their ancestral properties due to the nationalization of these lands by the government. Per a 2009 Rapoport Report, "Since the communities of Afro descents, like other rural groups, frequently did not possess formal title to their traditional lands in the 1960's and 70's, it is difficult to verify an exact count of the collective and individual land Afro descents lost in the decades following the agrarian reforms" (Rapoport Center 2009). The loss of revenues from expropriated lands for the profit of others coupled with the uncertainty of emigration combined to the need for Afro-Ecuadorians to actively construct a new culturally more homogenous identity in the cities. Unlike their parents, indigenous, *mestizo* peasants, and Afro-Ecuadorians whose identity had been inexorably tied to their ownership of property began to construct new identities as part of a new trans-territorial and inner-city population.

Waves of impoverished former landowners of all ethnicities flocked to urban centers where they found few opportunities to work and restricted housing in ghettos or barrios on the outskirts of cities like Quito and Quayaquil. Per De la Torre and Conaghan (2009), by the 1960's the bottom literally fell out of the Ecuadorian political economy due to the unfair political and economic practices of a series of populist leaders (348). In summary, the entire period of 1960-2010 in Ecuador was marked by social-political changes that drastically hindered the ability of its citizens to construct a life based on the balanced objectives of *Buen Vivir* within Ecuador.

By the year 2006, Ecuador's national currency of the *sucre* failed and had to be stabilized by the process aligning the nation's currency with the U.S. dollar. To make matters worse, the currency change was accompanied by a decrease in industrial development and a rise in conflicts. The source of public discord only intensified each day as economic necessities forced dissimilar cultural groups and social classes to live closer together in a shrinking urban social space. All these factors combined with the rise of a globalized international economy and reduction of state social entitlements to set the stage for the reshaping of the personal priorities that motivate immigration (Bertoli, et.al. 2010) or the adoption of a transnational worldview (Foner 2001).

Perhaps Benavides' (2004) best summed-up Ecuador's political-economic status during and following the dawn of the new millennium: "As the Ecuadorian case indicates, a fragmented nation-state is an economic and political asset in the international-development arena" (22). This research questions the possible role of *Buen Vivir* and other tangible and intangible factors in the formation of a push of some

Ecuadorians to immigrate or move to other geographical spaces. To accomplish this goal, the subjects interviewed for this study that migrated between 1960-2010 will be specifically asked how the migration experience to the U.S. impacted their Ecuadorian-tied cultural practices of transnational giving and their perceptions of class, gender, and ethnic difference.

Defining the Migration Waves and Destinations

As shown above, the 20th century transfer of transnational artifacts, resources, and memories for Ecuadorian immigrants was driven by socio-political and economic change. This research's focus is on the population of current adults who left Ecuador, even as children, beginning in the 1960's through 2010. We now briefly turn to qualitative data to draw a few basic conclusions about the socio-economic and ethnic status of individuals that were a part in the waves of migrations from Ecuador to various international destinations. Per the U.S. Homeland Security and Office of Immigration Statistics (Figure A4), from 1960-1980 approximately 81,000 Ecuadorians received permanent residence

Figure A4

Extrapolation of data from U.S. Homeland Security (2016).

Region and country of last residence ¹	1930 to 1939	1940 to 1949	1950 to 1959	1960 to 1969	1970 to 1979	1980 to 1989	1990 to 1999	2000 to 2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Region and country of last residence ¹	1930 to 1939	1940 to 1949	1950 to 1959	1960 to 1969	1970 to 1979	1980 to 1989	1990 to 1999	2000 to 2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
South America	9,990	19,662	78,418	250,754	273,529	399,803	570,596	856,508	85,783	84,687	77,748	79,287
Argentina	1,397	3,108	16,346	49,384	30,303	23,442	30,065	47,955	4,312	4,335	4,218	4,227
Bolivia	77	893	2,759	6,205	5,635	9,798	18,111	21,921	2,211	2,113	1,920	2,005
Brazil	1,468	3,653	11,547	29,238	18,600	22,944	50,744	115,404	12,057	11,643	11,248	10,772
Chile	568	1,320	4,669	12,384	15,032	19,749	18,200	19,792	1,940	1,854	1,628	1,751
Colombia	1,278	3,454	15,567	68,371	71,265	105,494	137,985	236,570	21,861	22,130	20,272	20,611
Ecuador	320	2,207	8,574	34,107	47,464	48,015	81,358	107,977	11,463	11,068	9,284	10,553
Guyana	193	596	1,131	4,546	38,278	85,886	74,407	70,373	6,441	6,288	5,282	5,564
Paraguay	36	85	576	1,249	1,486	3,518	6,082	4,623	449	501	454	437
Peru	460	1,273	5,980	19,783	25,311	49,958	110,117	137,614	14,063	13,836	12,414	12,370
Suriname	33	130	299	612	714	1,357	2,285	2,363	202	167	216	170
Uruguay	153	754	1,026	4,089	8,416	7,235	6,062	9,827	1,286	1,521	1,348	1,314
Other South America	2,647	7	17	28	18	2	-	2	1	2	-	1
Totals	28,610	56,804	225,327	731,504	809,580	1,177,004	1,676,608	2,487,437	247,852	244,832	223,780	228,349

status (PRS), or a ‘green card’ in the U.S. The holder of a ‘green card’ was either sponsored by an employer or qualified due to familiar ties in the U.S. The advantage of a ‘green card’ status is that it fulfills for the holder a requirement necessary to apply to be through examination a naturalized citizen. Jokisch (2008) claims that the majority of the migrant flow was from southern Ecuador to the U.S., while the 1990-2000 second wave migrants preferred a combination of entry points in Spain, the U.S. and Italy. The result is that 10% to 15% of Ecuador’s national population made the decision to immigrate since 1980 (1). The official breakdown of Ecuadorian migrants by point of arrival (Figure A5) reveals almost a half million Ecuadorians migrated to both Spain and the U.S. (2).

Destination	Official figure	Estimated number
United States	436,409 (2005)	550,000-600,000
Spain	487,239 (2005)	550,000
Italy	61,953 (2005)	120,000
Venezuela	28,625 (2000)	Unknown
Chile	9,762 (2002)	Unknown
Colombia	Not Available	Unknown
Peru	Not Available	Unknown

Sources (official figures only):
United States: American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau
Spain: Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas, Municipality Survey
Italy: Istituto Nazionale di Statistica
Venezuela: 2000 Census
Chile: Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas

Figure A5: 2006 Estimates of Immigration by Transnational Destination and U.S. statistics regarding PRS status of these arrivals indicates that between 1980-1999, over 210,000 Ecuadorian migrants applied for and received ‘green cards’. Ecuadorian migration – at least legal migration – appears to have slowed to the U.S. since the 1990’s.

During all waves of migration, many Ecuadorians often were exposed to hazardous conditions and sometimes fell victim to unscrupulous litigators on both sides of the border. Again, we turn to Ong to shed light on why Ecuadorians whose lives are shaped and framed by *Buen Vivir* would decide to undergo the hardships involved in global immigration. By applying Ong’s (1996) theoretical construct and logic, it is possible to conclude that cultural citizenship in the U.S. will grow out of the conflict

between ideas Ecuadorian transnational immigrants bring from their homeland --- including *Buen Vivir* --- and concepts that define the U.S. cultural landscape such as the ideal of the American Dream. Although there are many other factors that pull migrants to the U.S., an analysis of the American Dream requires a parallel discussion of how this notion relates to ideas of difference in the U.S. including race, class, and gender. The next section examines the idea and theory about the American Dream and concludes by looking at how this concept may intersect with race, class, and gender in the U.S. to shape the cultural citizenship of other Latin American migrant groups.

The Socio-economics of Ecuadorian Immigrant Giving

There are few previous ethnographic studies of Ecuadorian immigrants in the U.S. to turn to to draw conclusions about how their goals and aspirations directly relate to the acquisition of the American Dream. For this reason, this investigation examines qualitative studies by political scientists and geographers and other social scientists to begin to understand the impact of the American Dream on Latin American immigrants. For this reason, the first objective of this section is to expand on the body of demographics about Ecuadorian immigrants to better understand who they were in Ecuador and who they became in the U.S. Mancheno (2010) claims that in 2006 58% of the total number of migrants to various global locations originated in one of three provinces of Guayas (Guayaquil) on the coast and Pichincha (Quito) and Azuay (Cuenca). The statistics from 2006 reveal that the migrant population that year of highlanders was ~3% higher than that of immigrants from the coastal zone. Migration from predominately Afro and Indigenous populations was less than 5%.

Mancheno also explores various social characteristics of migrant Ecuadorians and his findings reveal that many migrants to the U.S. were male and for the most part the survey indicates they were prepared to assume productive activities (62). The issue of preparedness translates in the U.S. to mean what a PEW report on Ecuadorians in the U.S. refers to as able to rise above the level of poverty and gain a certain level of income (3). Lopez and Rohal of the Pew Research Center (2013) claim Ecuadorian immigrants earn less than other Hispanic groups while their percentage level of poverty is higher most other residents of the U.S. and lower than other Hispanic groups (2). Comparing Mancheno to Lopez and Rohal, one of the specific questions this investigation explored was: are there culturally-based reasons Ecuadorian migrants who have achieved a high level of preparedness in Ecuador perform at a low level in the U.S? Also, these metrics both reveal a need to ask subjects why they feel a disproportionate number of people in Ecuador of Afro and indigenous origins tend to be involved in migration abroad.

Regarding the flow of resources in the form of remittances Jokisch (2014) indicates that in 2010 7% of Ecuadorian homeland households were receiving remittances and the investment per household was remitted by highlander migrants. U.S. Ecuadorian immigrants contributed over 50% of the total remittances and remittances from all sources abroad in 2010 totaled 3% of the Ecuador's national revenue. A domestic breakdown of expenditures reveals that Ecuadorian U.S. immigrants had made many investments both in the Ecuadorian economy and to individuals that has not been traditionally counted as an actual cash exchange. These types of contributions may be in forms of charitable support or the payment of debts (12). The expense of sending

remittances could pose a hardship since the medium income per household of U.S. Ecuadorian immigrants in 2010 was only between \$22,000 to \$30,000 per year (Brown and Patten 2012). Therefore, the constant flow of Ecuadorian immigrant contributions rooted in *Buen Vivir* must overcome the racial, ethnic, and class based hegemonic stresses associated with the ideal of what it means to succeed in the U.S. --- the American Dream.

Race, Class, Gender and the American Dream

One of the primary conclusions reached by Abad and García-Moreno (2016) in their anthropological study of female Cuban and Ecuadorian immigrants in Spain is that there is a need to examine the complex emotions that permeate the process of Latin Americans migration. This turn in focus represents a new perspective in Anthropology that goes beyond neoclassic or equalization approaches of the 1960's and 1970's and the economic inequality viewpoints of the 1980's (128-130). Although Abad and García-Moreno did not specifically mention the conflict between the highly charged and personally interpreted worldviews of *Buen Vivir* and the American Dream, this investigation will focus on relationships between these ideals. In a critique of Cultural Anthropology, Rosaldo (2014) also argued for this same change in perspective. This investigation also embraces Rosaldo's opinion that there is also a need to widen the temporal and spatial boundaries of anthropological research to be able to effectively explore the ways race, class, and gender impact migration (148).

In his ethnography exploring the political activism of Ecuadorian immigrant musicians in Charlotte, North Carolina, Byrd (2014) claims political policies and

constantly changing racial and class-based ideas determine the economic and social practices of immigrants (246). Expanding on Byrd, Rosaldo (2014) adds that there are controls in place that go so far as to dictate the criminalization of immigrants and marginalization of females and sexually different individuals in globalized hegemonic societies (148).

Regarding criminalization, Joseph (2015) argues in her ethnography about Brazilian immigrants in the U.S. that Latin Americans who often come from societies in which racial boundaries tend to be porous and malleable tend to accept the ethnic/racial labels given to them in the U.S. Also, there is a long and confusing history in the Latin American immigrant community about whether people from Latin America should identify themselves as Hispanic or Latino (Beltrán 2010 & Byrd 2014). Making this decision about how to self-identify is very important since the descriptors commonly appear on applications for employment and most importantly they are freely used to describe racial and ethnic difference within the context of the latest 2010 U.S. Census (U.S. Census 2010). The outcome for Latin American immigrants is that they are caught in the middle of struggles between often conflicting social models of U.S. society that define how they are viewed by others and how they view themselves.

Joseph (2015) claims an example of the clashes in ethnic and racial identity can be seen in the ways Latin Americans and the public interpret the label “Latino”. For some, Latino implies ethnicity. But, in practice the meaning of “Latino” has a racial meaning. Also, the descriptor “Hispanic” is a highly controversial term to which some Latin Americans are adamantly opposed (33-34). But, prestigious research organizations

such as the PEW Research Center repeatedly use the label “Hispanic” to describe not only Ecuadorians but all Latin Americans (López 2015). This research will look specifically at the practice of the Ecuadorian immigrant identity in the domain in which ethnic and racial clashes result in the creation of stereotypes. This is alluding to a general lack of social and economic preparedness on the part of all Latin American immigrants. However, Foner (2001) in her ethnography about immigrants in New York observed that in that competitive and ethnically diverse U.S. social domain many immigrants arrive in the U.S. well-educated, well-funded, and educationally prepared to compete in U.S. society (45). But, is preparedness enough in a very complex, racially stratified, and volatile U.S. economy? This research questions the binary relationship between what is the perceived and what may be the economic, social, and educational preparedness of U.S. Ecuadorian immigrants in terms of their ability to achieve the most influential ideal in the U.S., the American Dream.

The American Dream

The final section of this theoretical analysis is an examination of the meaning and function of the standard of perfection known as the American Dream. First, the core credo of the American Dream appeals to the emotions on a very basic level. The American Dream is the promise of an equitable and fair return for invested efforts within a capitalistic system that is designed to unfairly distribute wealth (Marshall 1950). The subjective nature of the American Dream adds to its mystique and often obfuscates the role of entitlement produced by this illusion in a capitalist-class-based society.

A post-Marxist viewpoint is that capitalist societies are experiencing a rapid growth of a middle-class, or the non-proletariat and non-owner class (Ortner 1998). Per Jefferson (2015), in a capitalist society the most prized benefit of citizenship is the right to consume. Although citizenship implies socio-economic equality, the financially challenged in capitalist societies are citizens who often fail to appropriate the most valued right of citizenship, consumption. For the middle-class who are neither too poor or too rich, their position in a capitalist society affords them the opportunity to experience all the benefits of citizenship by purchasing a family home, the most emblematic act of consumerism. This ability to buy often produces a conflict between citizenship and capitalism as the desire to achieve normalizes the practice of consumption as a socio-economic indicator of individual success or failure (311). This research embraces Jefferson's central argument; the American Dream creates a sense of entitlement to consume that prevails to some extent even during economic downturns to shape and frame the practice of citizenship (322).

Immigrants are at a disadvantage since the road to citizenship in the U.S. can be a long, expensive, and extremely painful 10-year process. As a "green card" holder, an immigrant's sponsoring employer has the right to pay below scale wages and without cash reserves the entitlements of the U.S. middle-class can only be imagined. To make matters worse, the American Dream draws its logic from neo-liberal ideas that demand high worker output and self-sufficiency (Morgen and Gonzales 2008). This means that if one fails to acquire citizenship or a family home, they must personalize this shortfall as a failure/weakness on their part to live up to the social and ideological expectations of the

American Dream. But, the reality for Ecuadorian immigrants in the U.S. is that per the 2010 U.S. Census only 39% were homeowners; a rate that is almost half the national average of 65% for the population (Brown and Patten 2013). Two questions related to this issue that were explored in my research were: As holders of memories from two transnational spaces, how do Ecuadorian migrants negotiate between the two ideals of the American Dream and *Buen Vivir*? The second question relates to context and asks will Ecuadorian immigrants experience the American Dream the same in different geographical locations in the U.S.?

A great deal of the above analysis of existing theory demonstrates that the focus of many social scientists for the past five decades has remained fixed on Ecuadorians as only a population bound geographically to the South American continent. A major objective of this research is to temporally and spatially expand the scope of anthropological research about Ecuadorians to include a more in-depth understanding of who they are and what they are doing in multiple global spaces. The next chapter of this dissertation will examine the methodology and sites chosen to conduct the field research for this project that examines identity construction and the significance of the practice of transnational giving by Ecuadorian immigrants in the U.S.

Chapter Four

Subject, Methods, and Site Selection

Socio-political forces and circumstances originating in Ecuador impacted both the decision about which population to study and the methods that this project should use to effectively collect meaningful data about the subjects chosen for the investigation. This chapter that builds on my previously done research about Afro heritage in Ecuador (2007-2014) begins by providing a brief synopsis of events that prompted me to investigate the meaning of this same Afro ancestral heritage across international borders. After an introduction to the population of study, this chapter undertakes a theoretical analysis of approaches that were considered and those that were eventually employed to gather and extrapolate field data. The purpose of this strategy is to define the investigatory framework of this research that enabled me to undertake field site activities in New York, Miami, and Los Angeles. For example, a vital part of the narrative about the methods used in this chapter will be a discussion of the design and effectiveness of the questionnaire employed while doing interviews in these locations. The chapter's conclusion is a critique of the project's strategies and how these approaches may have affected the reliability of this research that was done to shed light on U.S. Ecuadorian immigrant identity and the performance of philanthropic acts of exchange by this migrant population.

From Afro-Ecuadorians to People of African Heritage

Almost uniformly, interviewees that participated in this research project asked me one question; "Why us, why would you decide to do this research on Ecuadorians?" My

response is not by any means a short story and involves an almost religious experience on my part that happened to me in Ecuador – a country I truly love. However, to love Ecuador is often equivalent to falling for that bad boy your mother warned you about – he’s extremely handsome and equally as dangerous. I will explain the analogy here.

As I prepared at the end of my first year at the University of California Riverside to undertake what I thought would be a continuation of my research project in Ecuador investigating Afro-Ecuadorian identity and culture, Ecuador’s always volatile social and economic environment imploded. Social unrest cut across class and ethnic boundaries and activists from all sectors of society hit the streets across the nation to demand immediate changes to Ecuador’s unfair public policies (Figure B6). This public expression of dissent and President Rafael Correa’s methodical increase of his administration’s stronghold over the media and many private institutions in the state were two of the reasons I began to modify my plans to return to Ecuador.

► Ecuador: The “Citizens’ Revolution” vs Social Movements

Written by By Raúl Zibechi, Translation by Danica Jorden
Wednesday, 21 January 2015 22:52



Source: Americas Program

The intent of Rafael Correa’s government to evict the principal indigenous organization from its building shows the contradictions of the “citizen’s revolution.” What’s in play is the country’s plan, a neo-developmentalism anchored in mining, oil and major hydroelectric projects cloaked in the Good Living mantra.

La Conaie se resiste



Dirigentes de la Conaie dieron una rueda de prensa este martes. Foto: ÚN

AUDIO

PARO NACIONAL

A+ A -A

FOTO

La **Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador** (Conaie) no le teme a lo que se venga con las movilizaciones y el anunciado **paro nacional**. La **Constitución** los ampara y garantiza el derecho a la resistencia.

VIDEO

Esa es su bandera para seguir con las acciones en **oposición al Gobierno**. Según **Pepe Aacho**, dirigente de la organización y asambleísta por Zamora, aunque el paro se ha anunciado para este año, no es la única vía para protestar, sino también las movilizaciones de todos los sectores del país.

PEDIRÁN INCONSTITUCIONALIDAD DE LA NUEVA LEY

Las centrales sindicales y la Conaie marcharon en Quito



Figure B6: (clockwise) The Indigenous group CONAIE eviction from their headquarters (1/21/2015) led to CONAIE’s formal resistance and the formation of coalition with unions and current street protests 03/2016).

For the most part, I became aware of the gravity of the situation in Ecuador via social media – a space beyond the control of nation’s authoritarian and populist regime. On Facebook and in various blogs, images of police violence accompanied the approved

Ecuadorian media's scant and controlled release of news about the administration's eventual imposition of martial law. Accompanying the civil unrest, global prices for oil plummeted and Ecuador's deep dependency on this one export product resulted in the liquidation of the nation's gold reserves on the international market to raise desperately needed liquid assets (Gill and Xie 2014). Much of my work for almost eight years in Ecuador always depended heavily on my ability to interview both activists who opposed Correa and elites embedded within his administration. The situation was so serious that my informants on both sides expressed concern for both my safety and theirs if they were to be seen in public doing interviews with a scholar from the U.S. Before mid 2015 when the state officially declared martial law, the final blows to my hopes of continuing research in Ecuador were dealt by both Ecuador's national administration and Mother Nature.

I was finally forced to rethink my plans to continue to do field work in Ecuador after the arrest and short term disappearance, imprisonment, and eventual expulsion from the country, also in February, 2015 of Manuela Picq, an international scholar observing activist protests in Quito (Figure B7) and the attempt in early 2016 to manipulate the policies of my host university, Universidad Andino Simón Bolívar (Figure B8). President Correa extended a national state of emergency originally put into place to control civil unrest after the violent volcanic eruptions of Tungurahua in early 2016 near Quito. This act on the part of an already oppressive government augmented the level of national insecurity and instability, especially in and around the area in Quito in which I planned to conduct research.



[Academicos Solidarios con Manuela Picq](#)

9,057

Supporters

We the undersigned demand that Manuela Lavinas Picq's order for deportation from Ecuador be rescinded immediately. Manuela Lavinas Picq was beaten and arrested in Quito on Thursday, August 13. Manuela was participating in a legal, peaceful protest as a journalist. At the time of her arrest, she was in the company of other journalists and photographers and was unarmed. Manuela's legal visa was subsequently cancelled arbitrarily and without due process.

In addition to a journalist, Manuela Picq is a widely-recognized scholar of International Relations, social movements, feminism, indigenous studies, and sexuality studies. She is a faculty member of the Universidad de San Francisco Quito, and has held academic appointments at Amherst College, in Amherst Massachusetts, and Princeton University in Princeton, NJ. Dr. Picq was exercising her rights to freedom and expression, protected under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Articles 18-20) of which Ecuador is a signatory. We ask that the Ecuadorian government reconsider the legality and justice of their actions and allow Dr. Picq to remain in the country.

Nosotros los signatarios demandamos la revocacion de la orden de deportaci3n de Manuela Lavinas Picq. Manuela Lavinas Picq fue golpeada y detenida en Quito este Jueves 13 de Agosto. Manuela estaba participando en una protesta legal y pacifica como periodista. En momento de su detenci3n estaba en compa1a de otros periodistas y fot3grafos, y no estaba armada. La visa legal de Manuela fue despues arbitrariamente cancelada y sin debido proceso. Manuela es una reconocida academica de derechos internacionales, movimientos sociales, feminismo, estudios indigenas, y sexuales. Es miembro de la facultad de la Universidad de San Francisco Quito, y ha sido profesora universitaria en Amherst College, la Universidad de Massachusetts Amherst, y Princeton University. La doctora Picq estaba ejerciendo sus derechos de expresi3n libre, protegidos bajo la Declaraci3n Universal de Derechos Humanos (Articulos 18-20) de la cual Ecuador e signatoria. Pedimos que el gobierno Ecuatoriano reconsidere la legalidad y justicia de sus acciones y deje a la doctora Picq permancer en el pais.

This petition will be delivered to:

- Rafael Correa
- GOVERNMENT OF ECUADOR
- Minister of External Relations Ecuador

Figure B7: Early 2016 email distributed globally to form a coalition of social scientists in support of Manuela Lavinas Picq.

Figure B8

Sent: Saturday, February 06, 2016 3:40 PM

Subject: Re: Urgent: Your solidarity with the Universidad Andina Simón Bolívar, Ecuador, is needed

Dear Comrades,

I am writing to encourage everyone to undertake a deeper assessment of the current crisis in Ecuador so you can see that there are far larger and more complicated issues, with highly nuanced details about class and regional conflicts, than the ones represented in the posting below. It is important to note that the current president of Ecuador Alfonso Correa, was elected as part of a wave of anti-imperialist social movements in Latin America, particularly Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, and Venezuela, but also Nicaragua and El Salvador. Some of the social movements alluded to below are middle and upper class and pro-capitalist and pro-U.S., and do not have the interests of the working classes and the poor in mind. They were behind a coup that, like the one in Venezuela against Hugo Chavez, and also in Honduras, were supported by the U.S.

I should add that as a writer, freedom of speech and freedom of the press are important, but I have yet to find any place in the world where they exist. As a scholar, I know that all discourse is ideological and involved in a complex interplay with Ideology. The current representations in U.S. media and this list serve about Ecuador is part of a very long and ongoing process that should be thoroughly investigated and debated with the goal of ensuring autonomy for the region and freedom from U.S. imperialism and predatory capitalists.

In solidarity with the working classes of Ecuador,

Figure B8: 2016 email to global academics to unite in opposition to the government's manipulation of the policies of UASB. My local advisor chairs Humanities at UASB.

Amid this turmoil in Ecuador, I approached my dissertation committee with the above facts and was given permission to consider alternatives to both the proposed population of study and the field site locations. Because I had already invested almost eight years focusing on people of African heritage in Ecuador, I decided to continue along the same investigatory path by following this population to another geographical

location. For this reason, I turned my attention at first to exploring Afro-Ecuadorians as immigrants. Due to the small numbers of Afro-Ecuadorian immigrants in the U.S., this idea evolved and expanded to become this research project that looks at Ecuadorians of all ethnicities – who are what Paz-y-Miño (2016) argues are all people of African heritage --- who have migrated to the U.S. The following discussion of methodologies includes a more detailed discourse to explain how an initial archival search shaped the direction and scope of this project.

Methodologies

Many of today's ethnographic researchers across the Humanities share one objective: to compile and draw conclusions about humankind based on both positivist and empirically sound evidence. For example, this tradition is a scientific practice that is reflected in the groundbreaking fieldwork of research teams that were led by Robert Parks in Sociology (Singleton, et. al. 1998), Theda Skocpol in Political Science (King, et.al. 1994), and Franz Boas in Anthropology (Layton 1997). This investigation also goes beyond the traditional qualitative and quantitative binary to argue that empirically derived conclusions reached about populations of study by researchers that take into consideration subject perspectives, the contextually of time and place, while employing careful observation -- add value to positivist conclusions deductively drawn about human subjects.

Regarding the project's participants, this research benefits from Gailey's (2014) claim that although there is an agreement for the most part about approaches to derive anthropological theory, the cultural practices and experiences of subjects should be

viewed through a lens capable of bringing into focus the dynamic relationships that exist between power differences in society and gender (152). By providing the clear definition above of the methodological standpoint of this research project, this investigation allows for researcher reflexivity while taking precautions to avoid the data corrupting pitfalls associated with denying the influence of undeclared biases (153). The theoretical discourse described above justifies the importance of this chapter by analyzing how the approaches taken to complete this investigation relate to the project's specific research questions.

Project Research Question Analysis

This research is intended to increase the scant body of existing scholarship about cultural expression as an act of giving and bring to the forefront for the first time the experiences of a severely under-studied population, Ecuadorian immigrants in the U.S. To derive knowledge related to this project, all inquiries for information used to gather evidence for this dissertation were designed to support an exploration of the subjects identities as they were before leaving Ecuador as well as who they think they have become in the United States. Therefore, to give meaning to an identity initially constructed based on the principles of *Buen Vivir* as it is reconstructed in terms of ideals associated with the American Dream, the following are this investigation's core research questions:

Question 1: How will the social-cultural life experiences and expressions of U.S. Ecuadorian immigrants who may or may not claim in some way African heritage be reflected in their performance and interpretation of everyday activities in an immigration

space? First, this investigation does examine Ecuadorian immigrant identity as one that transverses and is socially constructed by forces from at least two geographical spaces. Also, because there may be as many differences as similarities between the ideals of *Buen Vivir* and the American Dream, this research acknowledges the importance of examining lived experiences to shed light on the relationships between the two conceptualizations of what constitutes a good life. This investigation asked questions about the recognized but seldom explored act of giving because it is not possible in one study to discuss every cultural factor involved in the practice of forming an ideal lifestyle.

Question 2: Are there observable cultural practices present in the way these Ecuadorian immigrants form and maintain relationships in their families and communities that relates to the way they feel about access to employment, housing, educational advancement, and their social relationships with other people of African heritage in the U.S.? This question opened the door for subjects to discuss the impact of identity framing and shaping forces such as race, class, and gender and how these impact everyday perceptions of opportunity and inter-group social interactions.

Question 3: Do U.S. Ecuadorian immigrants who claim or don't claim in some way African heritage consider their distinct ancestral norms and values (based in Ecuador on history and geography) to be compatible with the racially biased U.S. census definition of them as part of a homogenous Latino/a population or Hispanic (Rosaldo 2014)? As referenced above, other groups of immigrants from Latin America express confusion regarding the use of the ethnic descriptors Latino/a and Hispanic in U.S. public

documents. The testimonial evidence I acquired in Ecuador doing research revealed Ecuadorians of various ethnicities often openly claim to have some blood ties to African heritage (Hall 2014). Therefore, this research builds on data from my previous investigation in Ecuador to elucidate the characteristics of this phenomenon specifically in Ecuadorian U.S. immigrants. The immigrants were asked to discuss what they believe is the meaning and purpose of many of the conflicting and often negative stereotypes about African ancestry they are exposed to daily in Ecuador and how these coincide or disagree with stigma about people of African heritage they've encountered in the U.S. In this way, this research asked questions not only about the meaning of Latino/a and Hispanic but how individuals perform being a U.S. Latin American immigrant.

Archival Search and Network Construction

This is the first ethnographic study of U.S. Ecuadorian immigrants in anthropology that includes a focus on their local social organizations or clubs. Much of the extent literature about this small population is quantitative and non-empirical. These types of approaches result in the formation of conclusions based heavily on various economic metrics and not the personal opinions of the population of study. Also, these surveys derive their findings from U.S. Census data and often the researchers attempt to legitimate a study's conclusions by including a disclaimer in small print acknowledging the likelihood that many individuals from this population may prefer to not be counted (Brown and Patten 2013 & López 2015). In this way, the approach of these investigators deprives Ecuadorian immigrants of agency or the right to speak to their experiences, practices, norms, and values. This multi-sited research expands on both Pribilsky's

(2012) ethnographic study that examines what he refers to as *Iony*, or the aspiration to acquire things that in part shapes undocumented Ecuadorian male consumption in New York City (325) and Miles (2004) reflexive anthropological description of her experiences as a researcher and the migration life stories of Ecuadorians only from the highland city of Cuenca to New York City.

I began to look for Ecuadorian immigrants by first making phone calls to my network of Afro-Ecuadorian former subjects still living in Cuenca and Quito, Ecuador and to my academic advisers in both the U.S. and Ecuador. To my surprise, my Ecuadorian contacts and counselors said they knew few Ecuadorians now living in the U.S. and those that they did know absolutely preferred to protect their privacy. Despite this cautionary advice, I consistently expanded my list of potential contacts by using various chat services to establish digital “friendships” in the case of the social medium Facebook. On Facebook, I found and began to chat with two Ecuadorian immigrants who were performing artists in New York, and I also acquired vital and invaluable administrative data about the Ecuadorian clubs in LA, Miami, and New York from their organization’s website, blogs, and Facebook home pages (Weller 2015).

Sociologist Susie Weller’s extensive critique of Facebook as an enhancement to qualitative research calls attention to the pitfall of impersonality between researcher and subject that may be encountered while establishing and maintaining contact with subjects (22). This discomfort factor is a part of what Snodgrass (2014) refers to as the ideology of social media that must be taken into consideration when using this technologically dependent strategy to do ethnographic research (470). Despite these issues, Facebook

played a vital role throughout the field site phase of this research project. In fact, even now during the current writing stage Facebook continues to serve as a medium I use to maintain contact with subjects who have participated in this research. I found that the participants of this research felt comfortable when I used this social network as both a way to communicate and as a window into the Ecuadorian immigrant world.

Literary Search Findings

The initial plan of this investigation was to look for, compile and review the limited existing scholarship about U.S. Ecuadorian immigrants over the full term of this ethnographic project. An initial Google search on the Internet resulted in locating a very informative list of Ecuadorian clubs throughout the U.S. This document was dated 2007; but, by comparing the addresses on the list with Lopez's Pew Research Center report on the status of Ecuadorians in the U.S. (2015) and the broad analyses of Ecuadorian transnational migration across several global borders by Jokisch and Kyle (2008) and Bertoli et.al. (2010), I became familiar with the motivational myriad of push factors that exerted pressure to cause and frame waves of transnational Ecuadorian immigrations to various destinations. My preliminary research in the Los Angeles environs for Ecuadorian immigrants slowly began to produce interview opportunities. Concurrently, the success of my network strategies intensified and these activities together further confirmed that there is a need in Anthropology and for anthropologists to research what Ecuadorians would have to say about their immigration experiences in the U.S.

One fact quickly emerged as I interviewed my first two informants; no matter where I finally decided to conduct research I would probably not find many -- if any --

currently existing neighborhoods exclusively populated by Ecuadorians in any part of the U.S. According to the informants, immigrants from Ecuador had either been driven out of their communities in Los Angeles, New York, and Miami by gentrification or some scattered and settled all over the U.S. in multi-ethnic urban and rural neighborhoods to find employment or a better lifestyle. Because of this distance factor between Ecuadorians, even living in the same city, the complexities involved in coordinating convenient times and locations made it impossible to use focus groups as a helpful introductory tool for the initial phase of research (Schensul 1999).

My subjects in Los Angeles agreed that moving forward to conduct interviews with Ecuadorian migrants meant coming to terms with a privacy issue; or, what I was told by my informants was a strong resistance and distrust of overly-inquisitive non-Ecuadorians. After having great success in LA with several one-on-one interviews, I moved forward with the project in the following four ways; First, I continued to slowly increase the number of face-to-face interviews of key informants in LA. and intensified my efforts to somehow become a special guest – or someone accepted by at least one member of the apprehensive community. My objective was to reach out to potential participants in LA, New York, and Miami via personal contact, telephone, and digital or virtual medium to establish relationships that would help me eventually to gain access to the Ecuadorian immigrant clubs.

Early in 2016, my initial contacts in LA invited me to attend an event at their local community Club ANCON in the Gardena city area near Los Angeles (Figure B9). I was formally introduced to the organizations founders and while enjoying the live

entertainment and Ecuadorian food I solicited potential subjects to participate in the investigation. Because of these literal and virtual approaches, my active search in the nearby Los Angeles (LA) community became one comprised of developing extended connections. These included key efforts to contact community activists like Elba Berruz who was described as a person who knows everyone Ecuadorian throughout the U.S., a few local celebrity Ecuadorian immigrants, and the owner of one of LA's most prestigious restaurants, El Caserio in the exclusive LA suburb of Silverlake. The life stories of these important community figures are a key part of chapter four's narrative about Ecuadorian immigrants in LA.

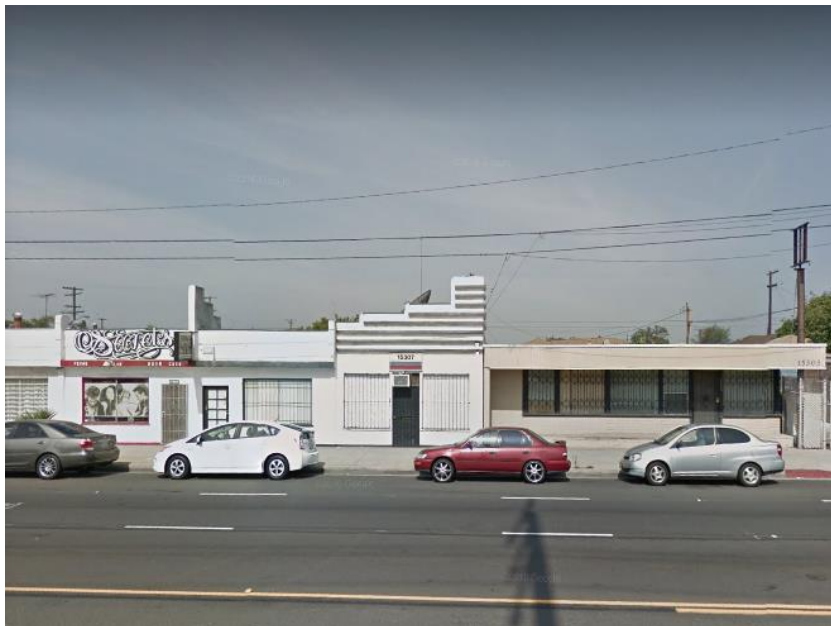


Figure B9: Club ANCON - Gardena, California

My second approach grew out of the experience of conducting the subject interviews. During the first two interviews, conducted as one-on-one sessions with subjects, I began to adjust the order of questions and noticed that to assure that the flow

of the conversation would remain on track it would be better to periodically rethink and revise the field questionnaire. As a result, the original survey improved over time to become a series of questions that facilitated the creation of comfortable conversations. In this way, the questionnaire could augment the level of subject collaboration (Moses 2004) and enhanced the academic value of data the subjects shared in their testimonies (Lassiter 2005).

The third step I took was to select two other potential clubs in other cities: Ecuadorian International, Inc. in Flushing, New York, and Vecinos en Acción in Miami. The reason I decided to extend the field sites into three U.S. regions was that this approach would afford me the opportunity to observe and document the impact of regionally-specific attitudes about race, class, and gender in the U.S. on the development of both diverse Ecuadorian immigrant identities and cultural practices (Stone-Caden 2013). To accomplish this objective, this investigation focused on the differences and similarities in the ways migrants from Ecuador in the U.S. give meaning to the conflation of *Buen Vivir* and the American Dream.

Finally, I adopted a dual approach for the field research after having decided my research sites --- the Ecuadorian social clubs --would be the spaces where Ecuadorian immigrants gathered to practice the cultural act of transnational giving. My first approach I decided to use was to conduct open-ended interviews in which all dialogues between the informants and me were unstructured and flexible enough to favor and facilitate elaboration on their part (Bernard 2006). Secondly, I decided to employ participant observation, an approach that is now accepted across disciplines in the

Humanities as an effective field technique to capture and record human activity (Bernard and Gravlee 2014).

Participant Observation

To perform participant observation, I lived in central locations in areas in which Ecuadorian immigrant clubs were located. I also made it a point to visit the Ecuadorian Consulate offices in all three cities. I purposefully did not go to the Consulates to solicit their support to accomplish the project. Instead, my visits were always clearly defined to these Ecuadorian government representatives as a way to show my respect for their highly regarded position as liaisons in the immigrant community of study (Stone-Caden 2013). For example, I found accommodations in Astoria, close to both Corona and Jackson Heights in Queens. In Florida, I stayed in Little Havana, the traditional residence for newly arrived migrants who live together in homogenous and multi-ethnic and culturally diverse Latin American immigrant communities. When I was invited, I accompanied informants to their community events or meetings of their social organizations. Many times, I was fortunate enough to be invited to share a meal at local restaurants and in their homes. My participation at different types of gatherings presented the unique opportunity for me to observe how Ecuadorian immigrants negotiate differences among themselves and form or don't create positive relationships across differences in gender, language, culture, class, and ancestry in three culturally multifarious U.S. cities (Musante 2014).

Field Questionnaire

As previously stated, this investigation conducted unstructured interviews in which the informants' comments influenced many of the changes that were made in the field survey questionnaire I used as a script to facilitate conversations. Per Weller (2014), the approach of conducting lightly structured interviews, like the employment of participant observation, is a shared practice in the Social Sciences and one that is best suited to establish initial contacts to conduct field research (343). The questionnaire or script was an appropriate interview tool because by using this instrument to guide the dialogue, I could easily introduce various supportive documentation, i.e. census documents without breaking the flow of what was below the surface an organized face-to-face interview (Bernard 2006). There were two Field Study Questionnaires (Appendix A & Appendix B) and I used a survey from the 2010 U.S. Census in both English and Spanish (Appendix C) and a second survey in Spanish that is part of the 2010 Ecuadorian Census (Appendix D).

The session lengths varied from 1.5 hours to close to 3 hours. Interview times were long because in all cases the interviewees tended to be so relaxed that they seemed to lose track of time as they shared information about their experiences before and after coming to the U.S. The questionnaire is divided into two parts; Phase I and Phase II. Questions in Phase I deal with the subjects' lives in Ecuador and the questions in Phase II pertain to their lived experiences since coming to the U.S. The flow of the inquiry always focused on key issues of concern to the research questions and therefore the subjects were asked about their attitudes in both geographical locations regarding the act

of giving, race, ethnicity, gender, class, and above all the role of both *Buen Vivir* and the American Dream in their lives. All subjects – in all three geographical sites -- were asked the same series of questions in relatively the same order. If the interviewee served as an officer of a U.S. Ecuadorian social organization, after completing the survey I initiated a conversation with them about the history and status of the club.

As previously mentioned, the subjects were scattered in all three cities throughout various multi-ethnic urban and rural communities. I recommended and employed SKYPE when the interviews were extensive to afford the subjects the opportunity to divide the session into two parts. SKYPE as social medium provides a platform that geologists Bertrand and Bourdeau (2010:1) and psychologist Paul Hanna (2012:24) describe to enhance traditional face-to-face interviews while providing conversational security and a visual interface that permits the interviewer and interviewee to interpret body language or human interactions. However, SKYPE comes with certain limitations. For example, the flow of conversation can easily and unexpectedly be disrupted by technological glitches. Some experts including Snodgrass (2014) argue that SKYPE also fails to convey the depth of feelings and emotions that may be present in a conversation (477). This issue and other problems did arise related to the various methods employed to conduct research in the field sites. The next section is a critique and summary of both the positive and negative outcomes of using unstructured interviews, participant observation, and the social mediums of Facebook and SKYPE.

Review of the Methodologies

This research was conducted over a six-month period and benefited greatly from the data and experiences I acquired doing research in Quito, Ecuador from 2007-2014. For example, I understood and expected Ecuadorians in the U.S. to be suspicious of outsiders and protective of their family units. Also, the tensions between ethnic, regional customs and beliefs and the hidden role of race in Ecuador are all issues I've explored in conversations with Ecuadorians in the past. Investigating Ecuadorians in the U.S. as an immigrant population was a long overdue project that I knew would benefit from a more personal and flexible methodological framework. Above all, this framework had to be designed so that it encouraged interviewees to discuss very personal confrontations in their lives with sometimes dangerous and often debilitating practices such as *machismo*.

Since the project's term was only six months, I also tasked myself to conduct productive interviews that would demonstrate to the subjects that I have a long-term interest in documenting and telling their stories. For this reason, I put as much effort into cultivating a solid, durable, and open line of communication as I did into the production of valuable data that would facilitate the writing of this dissertation. There were failures along the way – people promised to meet with me and never did, a few of the interviews took almost a year to arrange. Although I received support from many Ecuadorian immigrants, a few promised meetings and information that never materialized. These problems were expected and I'm sure they are issues that commonly arise when the subjects are human beings.

The open-ended interview format did prove to be very effective. Perhaps one way to improve this approach would be to find a more efficient way to get as much information using a shorter questionnaire. The interviewees didn't mention being exhausted; but, interviewer fatigue prevented me from conducting more than two of these sessions a day. Because of this factor, at all three sites I was unable to find time to interview everyone who expressed an interest in participating. Regarding participation, many the interviews had to take place in the Ecuadorian clubs – very noisy places in which the events going on in the background often interfered with the one-on-one exchange of information. I compensated by arranging some of the interviews at other, quieter locations. But, many of the subjects had already traveled long distances to attend the events at the clubs in heavy traffic and some simply did not have the funds to meet me again at a local coffee shop or restaurant. This is a complex problem and one that must be resolved to save time and resources for the subjects and the researcher in the future.

Doing ethnographic studies in cities on a small and highly scattered population that is stratified by intersecting ideas of class, ethnic, gender and racial difference becomes extremely complicated when the subjects further divide in response to the pressures of living in the U.S. For this reason, the research took unexpected twists and turns. These bumps in the road required the use of a mixed methods approach including SKYPE and Facebook to compensate for the ever-expanding factor of distance between subjects and the time and expense involved in finding a convenient space and time for subjects to meet with the researcher. This problem of distance also impacted the field

research in an unexpected way. Because Ecuadorian immigrants for the most part no longer share a common community, they are rapidly losing track of one another. This breakdown of subjects' inter-personal relationships erodes the solidarity of Ecuadorian immigrants and it will be discussed later in the dissertation as a factor that impedes the progress of anthropological fieldwork focusing on this population.

Although there is always room for improvement, the relative consistency of the interviews resulted in the production of a pool of data that gives meaning to both the individual life stories of each subject and the overall characteristics of Ecuadorian immigrant identity construction and their cultural practice of altruism. The next three chapters are a collection by city of their stories in which they provide answers to the basic questions of who they saw themselves as being in Ecuador and who they believe they are today in the U.S.

Chapter Five

Los Angeles and the Environs

If you really want to make a friend, go to someone's house and eat with him...The people who give you their food give you their heart.

Cesar Chavez (1927-1993)

Los Angeles, California is known throughout the world as a city that is the crown jewel of the Golden State of opportunity; LA is the City of Angels where each day's breathtaking sunrise validates the quest to find and live the American Dream. But, in the home of the American ideal did Ecuadorian migrants encounter a welcoming space? Did immigrants from Ecuador who arrived between the late 1960's and early years of the new millennium feel they were treated as friends or were they at least even shown some hospitality in LA as new arrivals? Perhaps the illustrator and avant-garde artist Andy Warhol (1928-1987) best described the reality of becoming a part of the city that is often sarcastically referred to as La La Land; "I love Los Angeles, and I love Hollywood. They're beautiful. Everybody's plastic, but I love plastic. I want to be plastic". Many subjects interviewed for this investigation addressed this issue as part of their testimonies about their lived experiences in what Warhol describes as the home of the plastic or pliable.

The broad question for this investigation speaks directly to this defining characteristic of life in LA that Warhol refers to as malleability; How would LA frame and influence Ecuadorian immigrants to construct their lives and practice cultural acts such as giving? The objective of this chapter is to summarize the personal life experiences of the subjects of this research as they see living in L.A. to be a

reconstruction process of their traditional worldviews and preconceived notions about racial, class, and gender differences.

Ecuadorian Conflation and Fragmentation in LA

Ethnic Studies scholar Gaye Theresa Johnson's analysis (2013) of spatial entitlement is an examination of how the cultural plasticity of the LA region enabled Latin Americans and Afro-American --- individually and in coalitions --- to repurpose spaces of racial and ethnic oppression. By reconstituting public facilities such as parks and city streets for *fiestas* and parades, and becoming part of the union labor movement, LA's marginalized ethnic groups created social citizenship – or, membership in a community that served as an alternative to the racialized and political definition of citizenship in the U.S. Johnson argues that relationships between Latin Americans and Afro-Americans during the mid and late-20th century remained amenable because many prominent Afro-Americans romanticized what they believed to be the Mexican state's resistance to overt racism in the U.S. Latin American and Afro-Americans constructed zones of spatial entitlement on the job and in their neighborhoods by working side by side in unions to oppose unfair hiring practices and with civil rights activists to expose human rights violations. Various industrial expansion projects during the 20th century included the creation of a massive highway construction program to accommodate residential expansion, and the scattering of ethnic and racial groups that followed the development of the city into sprawling suburban centers. In order to sustain a sense of belonging, shared public spaces in LA became centers of cultural celebration and Latin

Americans continued to join with Afro-Americans to create aesthetic and pragmatic expressions of their unity in the struggle for social, political, and economic equality (ix - xiv).

The 1970's and 1980's recessions were accompanied by a rise in the arrival of Latin American immigrants into the LA area, a sharp increase in unemployment, and an expansion in the discriminatory abyss between the rich and the poor. According to Gilmore (2007), one of the contradictions that resulted in the creation of two social classes in California was, "Anglos' fear of their demotion to minority status, coupled with capital's differential exploitation of labor market segments defined by race, gender, locality, sector, and citizenship" (57). The racist social climate that grew out of this paranoia and a rise in the national and local political demands for law and order produced an economic engine in the state that tasked itself to manage surpluses of financial capital, land, and labor (64-78). As a result, the State of California began to reconstitute surpluses to construct and populate what is now its largest cottage industry; a network of prisons to house in disproportionate numbers Afro-Americans and Latin-Americans – or, the predominantly non-citizen/poor class (Gilmore 2007). This investigation builds on the studies of Johnson and Gilmore to ask questions about the relationships Ecuadorian immigrants formed with other Latin Americans and how their attitudes about intra-ethnic associations shaped their construction of identity and practice of altruism.

Ecuadorian immigrants that arrived in the U.S. after 1960 also had to follow work into the hinterland of small enclaves that constitute the Greater City of Los Angeles. As a result, and as previously discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, the attempts to locate

Ecuadorian immigrants in LA was a tedious process. The first step to accomplish this task was to find a relatively small group of subjects who value above all their privacy¹ within a metropolitan population of 3.88 million people scattered over a huge land area of over 500 square miles. Further exacerbating the possibility of locating clusters of Ecuadorians in central locations was the fact that various socio-economic push factors from political and private development organizations during the late 20th century had caused a disruption of the process of migrant acculturation (Logan 2002). Sanjek (2000) describes post-millennial inner-city neighborhoods in the U.S as spaces that have undergone drastic social reconstruction. These communities that were once comprised of immigrants who shared a nation of origin have become domains in which disparate national groups wage a constant battle to acquire the power to redefine the stratification of classes (12). For this reason, the search to find subjects to interview for this investigation began in a place in which different classes of immigrants from Ecuador could possibly come into contact; the Ecuadorian owned restaurant El Caserio.

I made arrangements by cold-calling (making an unsolicited phone call) to the reservation line of the restaurant and after briefly introducing myself to the owner William Velasco, I was given an appointment. Above the doorway of the entrance to El Caserio's the inscription on the archway describes the restaurant as also a bar, and gallery. The facility that includes a private parking lot and building surrounded by tropical fixtures and exotic plants sits on a prominent corner in LA's gentrified and

¹ In all but one case, only the first name of individuals was used to protect their privacy in this ethnography with the exception that when the interviewee's identity and life story are well known to the public because of their personal celebrity.

exclusive Silver Lake suburb. The cuisine is advertised on the elaborate and sophisticated website of the business as Italian and South American; but, many items on the menu are dishes that are commonly served in Ecuadorian households. When I arrived at the facility on the prearranged day to do the interview with Mr. Velasco, I asked the maître d' if there were many Ecuadorians working at the restaurant. The reply was -- except for the owner and a few members of his family -- "no". However, the waiter added that most of the staff of *El Caserio* has roots in different Latin American nations.

Williams came to the table and after we welcomed each other with a traditional kiss on the cheek we immediately started what would turn out to be an almost three-hour interview. As previously stated, the initial subjects of the study of this investigation were Afro-Ecuadorian immigrants. For this reason, the objective of this first field work interview in LA was to enlist Williams' help to find a population of people of Afro heritage from Ecuador of unknown size in the metropolitan area. When asked to racially and ethnically self-identify, Williams and several of his family members spoke of ancestral roots in both the coastal and sierra regions of Ecuador and they claimed a mixed Spanish and indigenous heritage based only on the legends of their paternal grandmother. Williams describes himself as a person who is frequently seen by others as Mexican because after many years living in the Mexican dominant society of LA his Spanish accent is now more Mexican than Ecuadorian. However, his responses to the questions on the Ecuadorian and U.S. censuses were that he self-identifies in Ecuador as Spanish and indigenous (*blanco-mestizo*) and as white in the U.S.

As planned, there was a free flow of conversation which made it possible for Williams to periodically invite guests to our table. As a result, the interaction of a variety of subjects became a rich and informative narrative. This dialogue directly influenced the reconstruction of the fieldwork questionnaire because during these initial conversations Williams and the friends and family members revealed what they felt were the most important factors that influenced the lives of Latin American migrants in the U.S. For example, an impromptu discussion about relationships between Afro-Americans and people of Latin American African heritage developed after Williams invited Charlie de Cali, an Afro-Colombian Hollywood club owner to our table. This conversation began after I asked Charlie and Williams if they believe Afro-Latinos have much in common with Afro-Americans. Although the following testimony was spoken by Charlie – a non-Ecuadorian, Williams was in complete agreement with the following response from Charlie:

Not so much, I believe because Afro-Americans had to live a harsher life – and they still have to here --- in general, not in every case, [here] one needs to be a great artist to think they have a life on another level – an Afro-American as an artist lives on another level. But, we, our personalities, our smiles are different. Both Afro-Americans and Afro-Latinos suffered from racism...problems with racism, but we through off the chains, but Afro-Americans suffered more under slavery, they were victimized. If we suffered, we danced! And our type of slavery was much freer. Our space was much easier...we have our music...la cumbia!

Charlie de Cali, 2015 (LA)

Charlie's opinion was that racial and class issues shape life in the U.S. in such a way that these discrepancies become forces that cause Afro-Americans to see the world and act differently than Afro-Latinos. Williams embraced Charlie's claim and added that

there is a less-burdensome and positive outlook that he believes is shared by people in general of Ecuadorian heritage.

Williams left Ecuador at age nine and he warmly recounted his numerous classroom achievements in language studies and math that he feels prepared him well to migrate outside his homeland. But, Williams also spoke of experiences in the Ecuadorian space as a time in his life that was adversely impacted by the reality of parental abuse. Williams parents, his aunts and uncles, and even his older cousins didn't hesitate to treat their children in a callous manner. Per Williams, this often led to unfair psychological maltreatment and unprovoked physical beatings. For example, the children were unwilling witnesses to the practice of masculine hegemony as the endless meandering and sexual liaisons by their uncles, grandfather, and male cousins led to the birth of countless unclaimed children. Williams sarcastically described his father as an immodest and fruitful man who ultimately produced over 24 children by several different women. Because of these comments by Williams about what he felt was a common issue in Ecuador early on in my research, it led me to consider in a more systematic way how the gender-biased system of male-dominance known as *machismo* influenced the immigrant experience of males and females differently.

Williams described his coming to America as an opportunity that changed his life forever. Regarding the outcomes of his migration to the U.S. from Ecuador, he expressed a great deal of pride that El Caserio has been up and running for 32 years as a showplace of the multi-cultural diversity that the restaurant expresses in Latin American art and cuisine. For example, El Caserio's Italian-Ecuadorian menu grew out of Williams'

collaboration with his former employer, the head chef of one of LA's West Side Italian restaurants. For Williams, this provides tangible evidence that transnational relocation to the U.S. shaped the way he lives his life today.

Like most restaurant owners, all the experiences we have through our times, through our lives, this is the expression of my experiences, what I like, don't like...what I dream, my life, this is my restaurant, this is what I like. Yes, I am Ecuadorian (leaning back in the chair and proudly looking around at a massive Ecuadorian flag proudly displayed on the ceiling and other fixtures).

Williams Velasco. 2015 (LA)

Williams did not mention the acquisition of money or fame as an objective. He spoke instead of his ideals and the satisfaction he feels to be able to display his own artwork throughout a domain he owns -- a restaurant he described as a space in which everyone feels at home. El Caserio's celebrity clients are actors, producers, academic scholars, and politicians including LA's Mayor Eric Garcetti -- who from 2001-2006 represented the Silver Lake district as a LA Councilmember. The current mayor is a frequent customer who can be found at least once a week sitting at the bar waiting for his order "to-go". Per Williams, El Caserio's reputation throughout LA is that for the past 30 years it has been a cultural oasis of Latin American cuisine that appeals to local personalities who want to relax in a politically neutral space. For example, the seating arrangements are indiscriminate which creates an open environment in which celebrities often find themselves seated beside their constituents and fans. At this point in the conversation, Williams turned in his chair to exchange a wave of the hand greeting with a family at a nearby table as he described them as three-generational customers.

Williams was not made aware of the Chavez quote at the beginning of this chapter about food and how it relates to friendship. But, his testimony revealed that he has acted in the spirit of *Buen Vivir* to create an environment in which he offers friendship at the intersection of his worldview from Ecuador with the equal opportunities that are part of what he understands to be the American Dream. The joy from doing hard work was repeatedly emphasized as Williams talked about his goals, aspirations, and honors that included when he was selected by both U.S. and Ecuadorian officials to travel the world as an ambassador of Ecuadorian culture and Latin American hospitality. When the conversation turned to how other Ecuadorian immigrants in LA feel about community service, Williams strongly recommended an interview with local activist and Ecuadorian immigrant Elba Berruz. Per Williams, Elba Berruz's vast experience working to acquire equal rights for Ecuadorians as transnational migrants would shed light on the desire of Ecuadorian immigrants to support their culture, their homeland of Ecuador, and the goals and values that shape their community and personal lives in the U.S.

Williams shared Facebook and the personal phone number of Sra. Berruz and in the following months all attempts to reach her failed. Unfortunately, Sra. Berruz passed away February 10, 2016 after a long struggle to control the relentless systemic damages of diabetes. The following account of her life is a compilation of information that comes from members of the LA's Ecuadorian community including personal insights about Sra. Berruz in the words of her close personal friend, the world renowned *Señora de la Cancion Ecuatoriana e Internacional* (The Lady of Ecuadorian and International Singing), Yolanda Villegas.

**Elba Berruz (1945-2016):
Campeona de los derechos humanos (Champion of Human Rights)**

Elba Berruz was born in Ecuador's coastal city of Guayaquil and her life included a series of major accomplishments. The achievements of Sra. (señora) Berruz can be measured by counting the vast number of immigrants from Latin America she personally lifted-up, fed, and rescued from undeserved legal exploitation and castigation. According to her close friend Yolanda Villegas, "She (Elba Berruz) was tireless --- calling me any hour of the day to go with her to help somebody – so many times these people were caught-up by the immigration police or in need of food or a place to stay" (2006). Also, Elba Berruz frequently negotiated with politicians at all levels of the government as she crisscrossed the U.S. and worked diligently in Ecuador to pass laws in both countries that would affect the rights of citizenship of Ecuadorian immigrants across international borders. Sra. Berruz was small in stature; but, her dedicated acts of caring about the norms and values of her birth nation endeared her to Ecuadorian migrants throughout the U.S. Gio Galarza later described Elba Berruz as a person who "saw nobody as a race, for her people were people – she loved her country (Ecuador), but, the things she did helped all Latin Americans" (2016).

Sra. Berruz became an accomplished public accountant in Ecuador and after arriving in LA in 1966, she used the inherent talents of this rigorous profession to envision and create a path to citizenship and equal rights for Ecuadorians living in all parts of the world. As an activist leader with a deep commitment and unfaltering dedication to Ecuadorian people throughout the U.S., Sra. Berruz's forty-year long struggle to establish the best environment for her people and four children inspired her to

found at least six Ecuadorian organizations and clubs. As a social and political activist, Sra. Berruz led the way as coordinator of the successful campaign in 1994 to establish double citizenship for Ecuadorians in the U.S. – a unique status that now allows Ecuadorians to concurrently hold and declare themselves to be citizens of two nations. The special transnational dual citizenship is granted individually by homeland countries such as Ecuador. The classification does ease the restrictions imposed on immigrants to work, i.e. to obtain work and their status makes it easier for them to travel between their homelands and the U.S. (Leblang 2017). But, U.S. jurisdiction prevails regarding naturalization - or the legal process to gain full citizenship rights – including the right to vote in the U.S. and obligation to swear allegiance to only defend the U.S., hold a public office in the U.S., extend citizenship to children, and the right to help specific family members in the homeland to acquire entry as naturalized citizens to the U.S. (U.S. Homeland Security 2017). Ecuadorian migrant who complete all the steps defined by U.S. immigration authorities to become naturalized U.S. citizens do not have to relinquish their preexisting citizenship in Ecuador. Sra. Berruz diligently worked to bring about the passing in 2002 of Ecuador’s Law of Suffrage in the Exterior (Echeverría 2015) granting Ecuadorian transnational immigrants the right to cast votes in Ecuador’s national elections while living abroad or holding dual citizenship in other nations.

The tireless efforts of Sra. Berruz included her support of what she often referred to as the continued celebration of the diversity of her home nation (Galarza 2016). The funeral of Sra. Berruz was a multifarious commemoration of a life lived by an individual who appreciated and relished her role as a servant of humanity. The chapel internment

ceremony for Sra. Berruz at LA's Forest Lawn cemetery was an event in which the divisions of race, gender, and class vanished in the pews filled to capacity by her friends of all colors and nationalities. This dissertation does not contain a personal testimony by Sra. Berruz; but, as a project this ethnography owes much to her giving spirit that many Ecuadorians claim is reflected in the objectives and aspirations of their diverse network of clubs and civic organizations.

Monica and The Road to Club Ancon, LA

After meeting with Williams at El Caserio, many unsuccessful cold-calls via telephone to suspicious potential subjects, and a constant search on Facebook, I finally locked down my second interview in the city of Corona – 47 miles outside LA -- with Monica, a special-education teacher. This project was brought to Monica's attention when she attended a school board meeting and a fellow Ecuadorian teacher told her that she'd had a conversation with another teacher who told her that someone at the University of California was doing a project about Ecuadorians in LA. She later confided that since the referral seemed to be coming from a reliable source she felt comfortable enough to ask that the session be held in her home. The interview with Monica revealed much about the multi-ethnic cultural climate and acculturation process Ecuadorian immigrant children experienced in LA during the 1970's and 1980's. During this era, or wave of immigration to LA by Ecuadorian immigrants, various members of Monica's immediate family traversed U.S. and Ecuadorian borders several times in search of better social and economic opportunities.

Monica was born in 1965 in LA and when she was age four her native Ecuadorian parents sent Monica and two of her four siblings to Guayaquil to become familiar with Ecuadorian culture. In Ecuador, family life took priority over community and after her return to the U.S. at age eight, Monica's parents restricted their children's contact with other kids in the historically and mostly Afro-American neighborhood (Sonenshein 2013) to visits in their home "My Mom opened the door to the black kids to play with us, eat with us at times -- but, she moved out of that neighborhood saying she wanted to 'get away from them because of their different ways'" (Monica 2015). Home for Monica at that time was a domain in which the care of the household was the responsibility of her mother and Aunt. Ecuadorian cuisine prevailed inside the walls of the home where the matriarchs of the family exclusively prepared and served dishes from their homeland.

Monica describes the family as middle-classed because her Mom worked in a box factory and her father's diligence paid him a good salary as a manager in LA's garment district. Although Monica was permitted to invite black children from her neighborhood to her house, conflicts between ethnic groups increased to the point that the family relocated after only a few years from the Pico Union community to South Gate. Per Monica, the move was justified by the parents as their only way to escape both Afro-Americans and a wave of culturally different immigrants into a neighborhood. Between 1960 to 1980, the percentage of whites in Pico Union declined over 60%, blacks only increased their numbers by 1%, and the Latin American migrant population comprised by mostly Mexicans, Salvadorans, and Guatemalans increased by over 24% (Zhou 2009). By the late 1970's when Monica's family moved, Pico Union was an overcrowded slum

in which the units were repeatedly being subdivided by greedy landlords (Hutchinson 1999) to accommodate an influx of what Monica's mother labeled *cholos*, or lower classed people.

In South Gate Monica and her siblings were enrolled in a private Catholic school where language became less of an issue than in Pico Union. But, her brush with prejudice at Pico Union and the acceptance of her Latin American heritage in South Gate are pieces of a puzzle that explain why Monica – whose ancestral lines she says supports her self-identification in Ecuador and the U.S. as white (*blanco*) - ethnically identifies in the U.S. as Ecuadorian. During the 1970's when Monica struggled to learn English in Pico Union², she and her mostly Mexican Spanish speaking classmates were repeatedly ridiculed and even harassed by condescending teachers who imposed an illegal mandate that only English should be spoken in school. Monica's progress was painfully slow and often served as justification for the teachers to sit Monica with the other native Spanish speakers in the back of the classroom. As Monica's proficiency in English improved, so did her self-esteem and insistence that her parent's home also adopt the class-based English speaking only standard. A confrontation with her mother about forcing the

² Monica's attended Pico Union school during an era in which a California district argued before the Supreme Court (*Lau v Nichols*, 1974) to be able to deny special services that would help non-English speaking students to improve their English language skills. The decision of the court was that the school district had practiced discrimination or "effectively foreclosed from any meaningful education" and thereby violated Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Bilingual Education Act of 1968 (with special provisions that called attention to the special needs of non-English speakers) requiring all public schools in the U.S. that receive federal funding to provide equal education for all students. Although the legal precedence was established, local public schools in Los Angeles were slow to implement changes leaving the students at the mercy of non-compliant teachers and administrators (Malakoff and Hakuta 1990 & MacDonald 2013).

family to speak English only in the home had an unexpected outcome. Monica spoke of this incident with her mother as one that still serves as the primary reason she insists her son of mixed Chilean and Ecuadorian heritage maintain pride in his dual cultural ancestry.

I understood well that if you speak Spanish in school you are low. But my mother said ‘don’t lose your culture, you come from Ecuador, you come from us. So when I was home I spoke Spanish and my whole attitude changed about learning Spanish and I thought – I can learn what I want to learn, do what I want to do.

Monica (2016, LA)

Monica claims this life lesson from her mother about her Ecuadorian heritage and the pride she developed over the years living in Los Angeles as a Latina shapes and frames the way she performs her duties as a special education teacher. Monica also expressed a strong belief that any type of abuse committed against people who are already marginalized for any reason is intolerable and credits her experiences as a witness to the systemic maltreatment of Afro-Americans in Pico Union as one reason she began to develop this idea about social justice. Monica is a teacher of special education because she sees any act of discrimination of other human beings as equivalent to an attempt in her mind to isolate different genres of music. “I love music! And, even though R&B is associated with Afro-Americans – we all love to dance with it – so, you just can’t divide music by race, so why divide people (Monica 2016)?”

Another benefit of Monica’s change of schools was that her parents and the Moms and Dads of her fellow-students began to form a network of Ecuadorian friendships across LA that led to the formation of an Ecuadorian social club in the late

1970's. Although most LA suburban communities like Pico Union and South Gate had few Ecuadorian families, Monica called my attention to the fact that organizations like the one formed by the parents at her Catholic school now exist in many large U.S. metropolitan areas. Monica and I spoke more about these clubs in a later chat session on Facebook that eventually resulted in an introduction to her Aunt via phone and an invitation by this Aunt to visit with her family at Club Ancon in Gardena.

One of the most interesting comments by Monica was in response to a question that asked her opinion about the labels commonly used in the U.S. to describe people from Latin America: Latino/a and Hispanic. "Hispanic sounds weird, too close ...too attached to Spain – it's like we're a spinoff from Spain. Latino is someone from South America and speaks from that Latin [language] base, which includes all of us" (Monica 2016). Regarding ethnicity, Monica also expressed confusion about the ethnic categories she finds on all types of questionnaires in the U.S. She laughed and said she always fills out the "Other" category because she's aware Ecuadorians are known to be of various combinations of mixed ancestry, and it is highly likely she too has Afro blood in her family.

Monica sees herself as a woman who plays multiple roles within the domain of her family as a wife, mother, cousin, daughter, and niece. For her, the family and professional spaces both consist of many multi-national and multi-racial inter-connections and relationships. All these intersections traverse the lines of differences between human beings drawn in the sand by her parents and her experiences of assimilation in the U.S. For example, Monica takes tremendous pride in the extremely

curly hair and dark skins of her nieces and nephews who are the children of her sisters' marriages to men of Afro-American and Afro-Latino heritage.

Over the years, Monica admits to struggling with the incongruities and conflicts between U.S. and Ecuadorian ideas about race that she feels drives some mixed-race Ecuadorian immigrants and their descendants to abandon or dilute anything to do with their African heritage. By dilute, Monica explained that she meant these individuals of mixed blood often take on the cultural traits of others and totally cut off ties with their Afro families --- or, in some cases they even go so far as deny African ancestry. She told me about a mixed couple from Ecuador – an Afro-Ecuadorian male and his *blanco-mestizo* wife. This couple immigrated to the U.S. in the 1970's to avoid racial tensions and the condemnation of their families in Ecuador. After the sudden death of the father, their children chose to marry or have relationships with ethnically different partners, including Afro-Americans, Afro-Latinos, and whites. Per Monica, interracial marriages are very common in Ecuadorian families all over the U.S.; but, the reaction in many cases shatters the traditional custom to foster family unity when the new couple limits their contact with their Ecuadorian family unit. I tried but failed to arrange an interview with the surviving mother of this family and one of her daughter. Monica expressed concern that their lack of interest in my project may be too painful for the mother; or, that the children may feel uncomfortable discussing one of the central themes of this research – the meaning of racial-ethnic differences.

Multiple positive and negative transnational experiences that involved the ways individuals deal with difference, such as the exercise of prejudice and racial difference,

framed and continue to shape how Monica gives of herself to her family and to the special students in her classroom. Her home during the holidays is decorated to reflect her Ecuadorian ancestry. The friends and family that gather to celebrate transnational holidays in the pictures that fill her many scrapbooks form a cornucopia of ethnicities. She spoke with pride of her master's degree – not as an academic achievement, but, as a tool that she fought hard to acquire to help her students. Monica's lived experiences originate at the global intersections of racial and class difference; and, her insights about these junctions shed light on the comments of her close friend and the next subject interviewed for this investigation, Carolina.

Carolina and U.S. Montubios Mixture

The field study questionnaire for this investigation underwent revisions after Monica's interview because the current syntax failed to motivate the interviewees to discuss how issues of gender bias may have influenced the construction of her identity. In other words, the questionnaire needed to be improved to bridge this topic and produce gender-specific data as part of future interviews beginning with Carolina's session at El Caserio. With survey changes in hand, the session with Carolina began by talking about her life in the Guayas Province of Ecuador and her mother's decision to leave the country to join their father in LA in 1974 when she was seven years old. The first topic of part of the interview focused on significant differences between Monica and Carolina, friends who met in in the early 1970's after Carolina's father helped Monica's Dad to migrate to the U.S.

Although Monica and Carolina are now very close friends and the arrival in LA of their families was during the same decade, the two women from Guayas Province do not share a racial-ethnic heritage. After a short conversation about the various ethnic categories on the 2010 Ecuadorian census, Carolina preferred to self-identify as *Montubios* because she has ancestral ties to the predominately Afro-Ecuadorian province of Esmeraldas, her white heritage extends back to Lebanese settlers in this coastal province, and she has a third familiar connection to the indigenous of the region. Carolina, discussed the often negative reactions she receives from other Ecuadorian immigrants in the U.S. when she boldly claims her Ecuadorian identity as *Montubios*. Although Carolina understood that claiming *Montubios* identity meant that she acknowledges by doing so that she has Afro ancestry which led to her admission that she struggles to understand what it meant in Ecuador to be dark-skinned with curly hair.

As a child, I saw them (Afro-Ecuadorians) –but, you just didn't mix. I remember seeing them in the ports -- not that much in Guayaquil...saw them as laborers on the docks.... just remember when I saw Afro people as a little girl thinking, oh they're darker, they looked darker... I don't remember how this first became a part of my consciousness, this idea that dark skin is not as coveted, and white skin is 'it'. (She imitates voices she's heard in her head and begins to talk about what these voices said when she used to go outside in the bright sunshine) 'cover yourself up, put something on, you don't want to get that dark...' I have no idea where these voices come from. Other immigrants here [Ecuadorian in U.S.] make fun of me, saying Esmeraldans are ugly, they say Esmeraldans should be looked down on...I confront this all the time and all I want to say is there's so much in me.

Carolina 2016, LA.

The intersection of race and class creates a barrier for Carolina that prevents her from attaching or feeling she belongs in any one national space: "I don't feel like the US

or Ecuador are my home...I identify as a person, neither here nor there...living a life in between” (Carolina 2016). Also, there was a great deal of outrage in Carolina’s voice when she talked about what she referred to as a rate of male infidelity that she considers to be a huge problem in Ecuador.

Carolina is very sensitive to the issue of masculine bias towards females and cites it as one of the reasons she believes some Ecuadorians are rumored to be too serious, jealous, and bitter. Carolina believes her darker appearance and what she refers to as her lack of Ecuadorian social graces prevent her from fitting into Ecuadorian societies in both the U.S. and Ecuador. She feels she should’ve learned to fit in from her mother. However, Carolina does not blame her mother because as an Esmeraldan laborer in Guayaquil her mother was marginalized and for this reason she never acquired the life skills or customs she and her daughter both needed to function successfully in Ecuadorian society.

In Carolina’s family, for the past three generations every female member has suffered some sort of abuse by their male partners. In fact, it is Carolina’s opinion that every male in her family habitually practices some sort of gender-based abuse against women. Carolina spoke at great lengths about her father’s dedication to his lifelong mistress and how this relationship always took precedence over his investment of time and money in the home of his wife and daughter --- even after Carolina and her mother followed her father to the U.S.

Carolina appeared to be visibly irritated, disturbed, and outraged by an incident at least 25 years ago at her alma mater, UCLA. During her undergraduate studies, one of

Carolina's professors told her about a research project commissioned by the Ecuadorian government to investigate the high incidence of birth of what Carolina referred to as bastard children in Ecuador. According to Carolina, at the time of this late 1970's study³, 95% of the children born in Ecuador held the status of bastard – a class of child whose illegitimate birth locked them out of Ecuador's health care system. For Carolina, long-standing social problems that adversely impact women and children like these that have their roots in hegemonic masculinity in Ecuador are at least part of the reason she prefers to disassociate herself from her nation of birth. On the other hand, Carolina is also very concerned about her state of belonging in the U.S. for two interconnected reasons: 1) she's been ostracized at work and in her personal life because in her opinion there is a conflation of ideas and prejudices based on class in the U.S. with those that adversely influenced her life in Ecuador, and 2) Carolina's inability to clearly find a place for or define herself in terms of ethnicity or race according to the U.S. census, may explain why it is possible for her to self-identify according to her closest relationship. Or, ---as Monica pointed out earlier --- in terms of those around her: "I've never identified myself as Caucasian, but I'm married to a white guy" (Carolina 2016).

Carolina's interview once again brought to the forefront Williams lived experiences in which he too was a victim of masculine-based ill-treatment and brutalization. After a review of the investigation questionnaire, changes were made to encourage the subjects to specifically discuss hegemonic masculinity from the standpoint that this gender-based bias is commonly related to the practice of *machismo* in Latin

³ The existence of this study was not confirmed by this investigation because whether or not it really exists is not as important as the fact that this memory is real for Carolina.

America. Also, the research so far revealed that Monica, Carolina, and Williams were professionals and the ways that they have gone about accomplishing their goals to achieve success has something to do with both their abilities to pursue the American Dream and the ideals they brought with them from Ecuador around their respective concepts of *Buen Vivir*. For this reason, the research survey was fine-tuned so that the questions would evoke a conversation about how a shared intolerance or acceptance of racial, ethnic, and class injustice may be related to the dreams of success associated with who they were in Ecuador and who they have become in the U.S.

During the first three interviews, the subjects appeared to be comfortable sharing their opinions about issues of race, ethnicity, and class that are sensitive topics to talk about in the U.S. and Ecuador. For this reason, I made the decision that the investigation would move forward without directly asking the participants if they believe their testimonies may be impacted by the fact that the researcher is Afro-American⁴. There was also concern that Carolina's session did not include any discussion of her attitudes about giving. For this reason, it would be necessary in future sessions to explore in the subjects' own words what it means to them to support the societies of their birth and their current residence. Beginning with the next scheduled interview, the questionnaire's redesign was changed so that it would facilitate an open discussion of the following two

⁴ Sociologists Sarah Mayorga-Gallo and Elizabeth Hordge-Freeman (2016) describe the apprehension felt by ethnographic researchers of color who actively concern themselves with issues of credibility – or, presenting oneself as being worthwhile to be doing the research “because of being black”, as well as being concerned about the passive perception of the interviewees -- the way we will be perceived as we work in the field by the respondents (18). Early in the research I decided to forget about this troublesome dichotomy and I moved forward as a well-informed researcher with good intentions and a willingness to listen, share my life experiences, and learn.

issues while continuing to explore race, class, and gender; 1) the feeling of social membership or welcome that Carolina felt was absent in her life, and 2) the ways this sentiment may or may not relate to the desire to practice the promotion of Ecuadorian culture and transnational philanthropy. After the session with Carolina, the next week's work in the field included a visit to Club Ancon as a special guest of Monica's Aunt. I secured this invitation via telephone in a brief conversation with the Aunt that was arranged by Monica

Club Ancon: Valentine's Day Event

Club Ancon⁵ occupies the middle suite of a one-story office building in the El Camino Village neighborhood of Gardena⁶ that is approximately eight miles from downtown LA. The location is between two major highways and most of the current members still live within a 20-minute drive from the location. The club is named after an Ecuadorian city and in 1972, when the club was founded by three coastal migrant Ecuadorians, the first site was on Imperial Highway close to downtown LA. Club Ancon's mission is to provide a nurturing space for both Ecuadorians and their culture that will enable them to easily unite to work in support of projects in the U.S. and in Ecuador. Funds raised from celebratory events at the Gardena location are utilized to subsidize local projects of need and cultural advancement as well as the club's

⁵ Much of Club Ancon's historical information was obtained via a phone interviews with former club president, Loly Vera and Gio Galarza, Event Manager of the 2016 Fiestas Patrias Ecuatorianas.

⁶ Gardena is known as a "well-educated city of under 62,00" (City of Gardena Demographics 2017) and per the Census' American Community 2010-2014 Survey the ethnically mixed foreign born population is 19,675 – and over half of this number are naturalized citizens. 9,247, or almost 50% of the foreign-born residents of Gardena originated in different parts of Latin America (U.S. Census Bureau 2017)

participation in citywide Ecuadorian events. For example, each year the club members select by vote a young lady of Ecuadorian heritage who they sponsor to compete to be the reigning queen of the *Fiestas Patrias Ecuatorianas* (Celebration of the Ecuadorian Homeland), a week-long parade and extravagant food festival held in downtown LA. The parade serves as an act of solidarity for Ecuadorian migrants who participate or attend to observe what is now a transnational celebration of Ecuador's Independence from Spain.

After several attempts to arrange a time to meet with Monica's aunt before the Valentine's Day Celebration at Club Ancon that evening had failed because of her busy schedule, I met her and her husband for the first time shortly after entering the building. Monica's aunt was busy preparing an assortment of Ecuadorian dishes with a group of other women in a small area with a counter. This counter also served as a bar. As we chatted, several of the husbands of the ladies in the kitchen introduced themselves and joined the conversation. On the wall in this small room where the kitchen is located there are pictures on the wall of former Club Ancon officers. To the right of the kitchen is another oblong room in which there were tables decorated in observance of Valentine's Day surrounded by chairs in a way that freed up a section of the floor in the middle for dancing.

For the first hour, the crowd was light. The second hour the beer and mixed drinks began to flow and the DJ's selection of music gradually changed until he settled into a presentation that fused U.S. and Latin American music. By then, the crowd had almost tripled and the small archway in front of the kitchen became the event's epicenter. The

remainder of the evening this small cozy area became the spot where people hugged each other as they balanced plates of *seco de chivo* (goat), sweet cheese-filled *empanadas*, and beverages. A friend who had agreed to accompany me that evening and I sat at a table near the front entrance of the club. During the evening --- when men weren't asking us to dance -- the officers of the club and various members dropped by to inquire about goals of this project. Everyone wanted to know why I was so interested in Ecuadorians.

One of the major highlights of the evening happened right before the arrival of the nights prearranged entertainment. An older couple took to the floor and as they danced everyone else in the room suddenly grew silent. The ladies sitting beside us whispered that they have been married over 50 years. A wave of warm applause only increased as the incredibly graceful woman enveloped in her husband's arms waved to the crowd to join them on the floor (Figure C10). As cups were held high to toast the couple at the end of their dance, an executive of the club took the microphone at the front of the room to extend a welcome to visitors and provide information to the attendees about the upcoming internment of Elba Berruz. Once these necessary formalities were concluded, the DJ prompted the crowd to return to the floor to merengue and samba.



Figure C10: Senior couple given the floor in celebration of their 50-year marriage. In the background is the kitchen area with the pictures on the wall of former Ancon Club president.

The room was absolutely packed after the arrival that evening of Judy Olvera la Morena (Figure C11), the entertainer of the evening. Judy's performance began at the door as she personally greeted everyone and slowly made her way to the stage and later to the food and drink bar in the other room. Judy mixed-genres and her powerful voice filled the room with classic, traditional, and current Latin American music. Some of the songs were chants of what the ladies said were a bit edgy Ecuadorian folk songs and others brought repeated roars from the crowd, "E -cua - dorrrrrrrrri"!



Figure C11: Judy Olvera la Morena, Valentine's at Club Alcon

Later that evening, I chatted briefly with Judy between sets and she self-identified as an Afro-Ecuadorian born in Guayaquil who now lives as a Latin American or Latina in Manhattan, New York. Although Judy agreed to an interview and I continued to try to interest her in participating via Facebook and on the phone in LA and while I was doing field work in New York via Facebook and telephone chat, Judy's life experiences are not a part of this investigation.

Various members of the Club Ancon continued to bring people to our table and as a result one piece of valuable information emerged as a part of these conversations. Several members spoke of a large group of artists from Ecuador --- like Judy -- that are a

part of a national circuit of musical performers who specialize in entertaining in Ecuadorian clubs and at Latin American events all over the U.S. Four other people at Club Ancon's Valentine's celebration did agree at that time to participate in sessions to collect their life stories in the upcoming weeks. Unfortunately, three of these eagerly anticipated interviews never materialized and the only subject's testimony that is a part of this project's collection of data is the life history and analysis of Club Ancon's current president, Patricio Vasconez.

I attended the funeral of Elba Berruz and made plans to move the project to Miami before trying to collect more interviews in LA. Also, the volcanic April, 2016 eruption of Cotopaxi in Ecuador set the wheels in motion for Club Ancon and other U.S. Ecuadorian organizations and individuals to develop quick solutions to deliver aid to their homeland. In fact, the next interviews for this research project grew out of casual meetings in Pasadena with two subjects at a massive Ecuadorian earthquake fundraiser, *Unidos por Ecuador* (United in Support of Ecuador).

The first subject I met at the fundraiser was the priest Joselo Aguirre. Joselo, *El Pastor*, performed the benediction for the event and later he allowed me to work by his side to hang a black ribbon of mourning on a huge Ecuadorian flag that was used as an onstage backdrop for the event at Pasadena's Senior Center. *El Pastor* recommended I include his brother Robert's life experiences in this investigation. I followed *El Pastor's* advice and his brother's testimony appears next in this chapter.

The second subject walked with me as I searched ten blocks without much luck to find the safety pins *El Pastor* needed to attach the black wreath to the flag. His name is

Gio Galarza and that day at the benefit to support his homeland he served as Master of Ceremonies. As Gio and I rapidly walked down North Raymond Avenue, our chat about this investigation resulted in his pledge to help as much as possible when I moved the project to New York. Later in this chapter, the life experiences that Gio shared in an interview reveal why he believes who he is today has a great deal to do with both the ideas of his childhood in Ecuador and his desire to succeed in the U.S.

Robert Aguirre: Dreams, Success, and Altruism

The interview with *El Pastor's* brother Robert Aguirre took place in his office at the front of a fenced-in lot in the arid Fontana foothills about 50 miles from downtown LA. The facility is surrounded by an assortment of late model cars with twisted and mangled panels, crushed bumpers, broken window glass, and in most of the wrecks the airbags were deployed. On the left side of the front of the building there was a very large industrial shipping container – the kind that is stacked on the deck of freighters. This interview occurred after April 16th, 2016 when a destructive 7.8 earthquake caused a tremendous amount of property damage, injury to over 28,000 people, over 650 deaths near the Province of Esmeraldas, Ecuador. Robert's office was full of articles that would eventually be placed in the shipping container outside his office. He periodically took phone calls during the interview about the logistics and his plans to travel to Ecuador to personally bring spiritual and tangible support to the region during the month of August.

Behind the building where the session took place there was an oblong lot with several cars in various stages of repair and a series of salvage, painting, and general repair stalls. During Robert's interview, he spoke of the importance of having a strong

work ethic and how owning All One Auto Center and Dismantling (Figure C12) represents his success and the freedom to live the American Dream, “to me it means preparation, get a house ...everyone wants a house, boys want a first car, then a house, then you meet someone special...marry and form a good family, have property for kids to live in, working and having some money...” (Robert Aguirre, 2016 LA). Although Robert’s answer seemed to echo the testimony of Williams, this interview explores particular events in Robert’s life as a way to examine similarities and differences in these very unique men who both perform altruistic acts in the U.S. and Ecuador.



Figure C12: Aid earmarked for Ecuador outside the entrance to Robert Aguirre’s Office.

Robert, who was born in Chimborazo in the high sierra near Cuenca, has dual citizenship and he identifies as *mestizo* (Spanish and indigenous) in Ecuador. Because he says he feels there is no such category to describe him on the U.S. census, he self-identifies on this survey as ethnically Ecuadorian and racially “Other”. A self-described pragmatic, Robert expressed disappointment that being an “Other” means in many ways in the U.S. that he does not exist.

Invisibility is not an uncommon problem for Robert. He recalls being the victim of discrimination in Ecuador because of his dark features, small frame, and even during his college career the other students taunted him because of his poor background and the way he spoke Spanish. Robert’s home-life tended to be unstable due to his father’s severe drinking. But, Robert’s Dad was not a philanderer and in many ways his charity and genuine caring for the culture and well-being of the indigenous in the region surrounding Quito. Although Robert’s father would disappear for long periods just to be found drunk in the streets of Quito by his wife and children, when he worked as a construction foreman he was highly respected.

Robert’s memories of his father reveal that to live *Buen Vivir*, a good life, requires a strong work ethic, a dedication to preparedness, and the willingness to train the next generation to care about the suffering of others. Despite being an alcoholic, his father was not the stereotypical adulterer, father of multiple unclaimed children, or the physical abuser of his wife and children. But, because he only sporadically worked, Robert often had to assume the role of breadwinner for the family. Robert used the pride in working and the tolerance for difference in race, class, and ethnicity taught to him by his father to

be successful at working side by side in the fields and factories with people of different races and classes.

At age 20, Robert graduated from high school and later he announced to his family, “I’m going to the U.S., the land of opportunity—land of Martin Luther King, where everything is possible... you’ll have an opportunity if you work and respect the laws. In the U.S. it doesn’t matter if they discriminate against me, my mind is prepared to go over there – where I can save money. Money to me meant security” (Robert Aguirre 2016). Robert’s announcement is an acknowledgement that he was aware of the fact that his differences in Ecuador could create problems again for him in the U.S. However, this reality was tapered by his belief that his experiences in Ecuador as a hardworker and victim of discrimination because of his low economic status and his dark and slight appearance had prepared him to migrate.

Robert arrived in LA with a high school diploma and one year of college in 1988. He purposefully doubled his clothes each day to cover his skinny frame and at only 117 pounds he took a job in downtown LA in a warehouse. On and off this job, the racial tolerance he learned at the side of his father was reinforced by strangers from different ethnic groups in the U.S. As Robert struggled one day at his factory job to lift boxes that weighed almost as much as him, several Afro-American workers used hand signs to communicate to Robert that they wanted to help him. Their kind gesture saved Robert’s job and reaffirmed the lessons of his father that if he were trying to improve himself his

efforts would led to a good life. These fellow-workers and many Mexican, Asian, and Central Americans Robert met over the next 15 years became his reliable network of supporters and advisers.

Robert married a Guatemalan immigrant in 1998 and in the early years of the new millennium he enrolled in Freeman Occupational Center (FOC) in LA to train to be a computer technician. Now, without proper immigration paperwork and only armed with the technical English that was part of the FOC curriculum, Robert cleaned buildings until in 2006 he found a new job at a Korean body shop in mid-town LA at the corner of Crenshaw and Olympia. Avenues. On his new job, Robert acted on his father's advice to always work hard. His manager --- an Afro-American man Robert described as *mulato* ---noticed his dedication and along with the Korean owners of the shop they supported Robert's efforts to learn English and the skillsets to repair cars and care for customers. As Robert's children grew old enough to start their own lives outside the home, his wife also turned her attention to building a career. Robert encouraged her to go to college and she completed a two-year degree that prepared her to work at a large savings and loan corporation.

During these early years of the new millennium, Robert and his wife saved money. Per Robert, because he was a conscientious and industrious worker, he was eventually able to benefit from the support of his always growing multi-ethnic network of friends, associates, and in some cases, financial backers. Robert bought his mother a home, supported his younger siblings – including *El Pastor*--- to acquire college degrees and enter the U.S. Several years ago, Robert managed to even bring his nephew who will

soon receive his college degree to the U.S. Robert also began to purchase real estate property as he invested money in his family in the U.S. and Ecuador. He explained his decision to buy the first four units in Van Nuys, California as a wise monetary decision; “we saved because I wanted my own house –I saw renting just cost too much – not as a status symbol” (Robert Aguirre 2016). At the core, Robert’s family home served as confirmation that he had acquired a space for his family to enjoy a balanced life by appropriating the ideal of the American Dream.

Unfortunately, Robert’s marriage and the U.S. economy collapsed shortly after 2008 when he decided to launch his own business. Circumstances went from bad to worse in the latter part of the same year; and, as Robert fought in the courts to evict a disgruntled previous tenant, struggled with little success to attract customers during a recession to his business, he resigned himself to divorce and leave the Van Nuys property of his dreams. For the next few years, Robert slept on the floor in what was then only a shell of the commercial building that now serves as the offices of All One Auto Center.

Robert has a long history of battling and winning against the formidable forces of various local and national U.S. legal institutions. Although he purchased All One Auto Center in 2003, the local country authorities dragged their feet to grant approval to use the property until 2007. These legal and complex conflicts over property and the social disappointments he faced as a divorced father were both challenges that threatened the dreams that Robert constructed in Ecuador and that he believed would come true in the

U.S. As Robert continued to talk about these very challenging times in his life, the story was contextualized to reveal the ways he continued to reflect on the lessons of *Buen Vivir* taught to him in Ecuador by his father:

I started helping other people.... there's a girl....in 2007 I did a big case, one lady... an Indigenous lady, came here and she needed flight ticket to get to her husband in New York City...I helped her. A yr. later I received a call about a girl from Ecuador that was caught [by immigration] in Phoenix...they asked me to adopt her...I found out who to talk to get help and they agreed to help her. I was investigated to adopt her. But, in 2007 they released her and they sent her back to Ecuador. I tried to get help in Ecuador with a non-profit to bring her back to US. But, American institutions and the U.S. government finally helped me. I brought her back here. She now stays with me...a month ago she became a US citizen.

Robert Aguirre, 2016 (LA)

Robert refers to himself as a self-made millionaire who bucked the legal systems in the U.S. to be able to share his wealth with others. Robert is a devout Catholic; but, his religious zeal was not a factor discussed as part of his interview that asked why he gives to help causes in the U.S. and Ecuador.

Robert can practice transnational philanthropy outside the cluster of Ecuadorian clubs in LA because of two factors that are explored by this research, 1) his strong multi-ethnic-racial-cultural network of associates and friends support his efforts, and 2) the reasons to give for Robert are firmly rooted in the worldviews of his father, *Buen Vivir*. The next interview of Patricio Vasconez, the current President of Club Ancon, focuses on the practice of altruism and efforts to sustain and promote Ecuadorian culture that is the mission of many Ecuadorian community organizations.

Patricio Vasconez: Ecuadorian Investments and Leadership

The interviews so far revealed that there was no real tangible Ecuadorian settlement in LA from the 1960's to the 1990's. This meant for the preceding four interviewees above that for many years they needed to rely heavily on familiar ties or the friendship of strangers who may not even speak Spanish. Also, all four previous subjects testified that they repeatedly moved throughout the city. This means that for long periods of time, they were without the social and economic benefits that come from being a part of a neighborhood in which the majority of the residents share cultural values and even some of the same life experiences. Patricio Vasconez, a lawyer, and CEO of his own tax firm with offices in Lawndale, claimed he felt prepared to come to LA to support his sister who wrote her family and spoke of the loneliness she was experiencing as an Ecuadorian immigrant in LA. According to Patricio, "the U.S. reputation was one of danger, you must avoid contact in U.S. society to stay safe. Also, Ecuadorians do not trust other Ecuadorians and this stems from ideas in Ecuador that still prevail, like geography still matters. Where in Ecuador you were born" (Patricio 2016).

One similarity between Patricio and Robert is that they were both born in the high sierra of Ecuador. Although Patricio is dark complexioned, he does not appear to be indigenous because his hair is wavy and not straight and he has mostly white features. In Patricio's case, his life experiences began in Cotopaxi south of Quito and based on his Spanish ancestry on both sides he describes himself as Blanco (white) in both Ecuador and the U.S., "despite my dark complexion, which makes me different than my whole family, I'm Blanco.....Hispano here in the U.S. My Mom is white looking with green

eyes and so is my Dad. I'm the only dark one in the family. But, everyone loved me, I was treated special" (Patricio 2016). Patricio, who feels he's never experienced discrimination in the U.S. based on an accusation that he is racially different, believes that problems in the U.S. based on class and gender differences cause as much stratification in society as misconceived ideas about race. When asked to comment on what he thought was the outcome of so much class conflict in the U.S., Patricio offered the following opinion.

In the U.S. you are valued for what you have, people then think they are important. In Ecuador we socialize more, we live more, we share with people. In the U.S. you do everything for yourself. Not many people in the U.S. work with the community.

Patricio Vasconez. 2016 (LA)

Above, Patricio is speaking about the absence in the U.S. of the communal ideal of *Buen Vivir* which Patricio feels inspired his mother to do charity work with the poor in the community. Patricio's mother was an employee of Ecuadorian Social Security who encouraged her children to go outside their middle-class comfort zones to serve in some way the less fortunate.

Like Robert, Patricio takes pride in the work ethic of his father who was for most of his life was a successful farmer who consistently provided for the needs of his family. Like race, because his father did not tolerate the mistreatment of his family or his employees for any reason, Patricio feels hegemonic masculinity in Ecuador did not have much impact on his life. According to Patricio, his father was an always present and positive example to his family and even after a bad investment caused him to lose his farm, the family was always his father's primary concern.

Patricio left Quito for the U.S. out of concern for his sister in 1979. He felt his strong work ethic and educational training had prepared him to succeed. This first trip was on a Visitor Visa because he thought he could earn enough money to be able to finish a law degree in Quito in just one year abroad in the U.S. But, by 1982 Patricio had a thriving business selling goods by going from swap meet to swap meet in LA that netted him a good income. His marriage in the late 1980's to a Mexicana only increased his economic and familial ties to the new life he was building in the U.S.

Because of the Reagan Amnesty Program in 1982, Patricio capped off this year by becoming a U.S. citizen. But, even after the birth of his two children he always wanted to go back home to Ecuador where his dreams included being an attorney – a professional --- and serving the young people of the community. For this reason, Patricio and his sister invested a substantial amount of money in the late 1980's to build four units in their homeland that were lost due to Ecuador's financial instability. According to Patricio, he went into bankruptcy and to save money sent his wife and kids to Ecuador where the children stayed and attended school for three years while he began a 10 year process to repay debtors. In 2004, and after the bills were settled, Patricio and his sister received invitations to attend an event at Club Ancon.

During his first trip to Club Ancon, Patricio enjoyed the music and food and after two years of attending club events the members invited him to be president. Patricio's was aware that his presidency Club Ancon which was traditionally controlled by members from the coastal zone was not going to be a smooth transition for all the members because he was from the high sierra. Despite the rumblings, Patricio has

always performed his duties in a way he feels ignores the Ecuadorian stereotypes tied to geographical spaces by providing a family-safe environment for all Ecuadorian immigrants.

It costs over \$10,000 for some to cross the border...it's dangerous, some have to pay coyotes So, when they arrive, they look for a safe place. Some Ecuadorian immigrants don't succeed here. Why? First of all because they love Ecuador, nobody comes with the idea to stay here. They say, 'I go to the U.S. to make money and then return', they go back whenever possible...but here, Ecuadorians work two or three jobs, they work hard and it takes a lot of money to get here. You must have an education to get a Visa in Ecuador and have some type of work in the U.S. before coming. Even though it would be possible for other Ecuadorians to sometimes help them, generally nobody does this Ecuadorians don't trust other Ecuadorians; the old ideas prevail that's why there are many clubs in LA because geography [sierra vs. coast] still matters.

Patricio Vasconez. 2016 (LA)

When Patricio gave the testimony above, he called attention to the traditional problems faced by Club Ancon; but, he ended this statement about the current state of the organization by adding that there were new issues like the distance factor that separates Club Ancon from many members who now live more than 30 miles outside downtown LA in the Environs (outskirts). As the conversation concluded, Patricio sat back in his chair and after thinking for a moment he spoke this time of a new dream based on his current commitment to overcome the distance factor and to serve a younger and more Americanized generation at the club.

Patricio's success as an entrepreneur in the public is an indication that he has achieved the American Dream. This also means that Patricio is now living the ideal good life of his past in Ecuador when he dreamt of devoting his life to young people. The final two life histories of this chapter of Gio Galarza and Yolanda Villegas are life histories

that explore the issue of success. As Yolanda and Gio stories below evolve, their testimonies begin to speak directly to what they believe it means to construct a new identity that reflects the values of *Buen Vivir* in a domain dominated by ideal of the American Dream.

Gio Galarza: Celebrity and Service

Gio's self-identifies in Ecuador as *mestizo* (mixed), and for him this means he is "100% Ecuadorian". In Gio's case, *mestizo* steps outside the typical identity box defined by a combination of indigenous-white ancestry. Gio's father's familial roots are in the Philippines and on his mother's side his heritage is Chinese. Even before Gio's birth in Guayaquil in 1969, the ideas associated with *machismo*, such as male superiority and gender privilege, led to Gio's grandfather's rejection of Gio's father and Gio's exploitation after his mother's move to the U.S. without Gio and the abandonment of Gio by his father.

Yes, *machismo*, in those days it was common for men to have double triple lives...to have more than one family. My Dad's Mom had died at birth so my grandma raised my Dad. When Dad was 5 years old, my Dad's Mom remarried to a man from the sierra – from Quito, who didn't want to have my Dad as part of the family... didn't want to have anything to do with my Dad because he was a child of her former relationship ... she was really never married to my Grandfather... so, my Dad was raised by my Dad's Mom's mother, my grandmother. My Dad's next wife migrated to the U.S. with kids and before they were divorced, her green card application included my Dad's name who was then able to migrate to the U.S., leaving me in the care of his current wife (his stepmom), a very mean woman who did not send me to school --- at age 9 or 10 I was often beaten... so, I ran away and lived in the park for a year without any contact with Mom and Dad in US.

Gio Galarza, 2016 (LA)

The complex above story is more than a tale of transnational border crossings and the abuses of an unwanted child. Another outcome of the secrecy that surrounded Gio's struggles in Quito was that his mother in the U.S. didn't know anything about the emaciation and suffering of her despondent son. As his stepmother squandered the remittances sent to her each month by Gio's father to care for his son, Gio learned to survive in the streets because he worked hard cleaning shoes and delivering papers to make money just like the day and street laborers he met while living in one of Quito's central parks. Being around the poor who needed so much reinforced the ideas of *Buen Vivir* that Gio had seen in the behavior of his father, "What I saw? Well, I remember my father—a photographer who taught me the ropes of how to work --- who had a big house two story house, he would always help people...my Mom's folks came from the country...he would be like a servant to them, I saw him and I think this is where I got it from" Gio Galarza 2016. When Gio reunited with his father in the U.S. at age 16, the animosity he once felt towards his Dad had been replaced by a feeling of compassion.

The legacy of Gio's lived experiences with gender bias is his determination to never allow his children to feel abandoned. Gio sees how his brother's now living in the U.S. ignore their children. Perhaps for this reason, Gio advanced the idea that there must be other reasons beyond *machismo* that explains why his male siblings behave so much like his father. But, Gio defines himself as different, "I'm the other way around, I'm not married, I live with my partner and I encouraged her to get her CPA. We just take turns, when she is in school I take care of the children. I want her to be independent...for us to be the same...just in case something happens to me I want her to be OK". Gio

understands as a father he must abide by the ideals of *Buen Vivir*. He claims that the acts of his father and brothers speak to a past that reflects the impact of *machismo*.

Regarding racial difference, Gio claims he understands race as the source of conflict between people in Ecuador. But, the ethnic status he claims of Ecuadorian in the U.S. eliminates the need for him to categorize himself as any race in his adopted homeland.

I know race difference is a huge problem in Ecuador, but here (U.S.) it's never happened to me because I'm Ecuadorian. Maybe Ecuadorians feel a little alien here because they may not have papers or the language for them could be a barrier. For me, discrimination because of race reflects ignorance... people acting out of ignorance and insecurity.

Gio Galarza. 2016 (LA)

Above, Gio is not simply conflating race and ethnicity. Instead, it appears he is expressing the desire or hope that a discourse about race no longer has a place in the public domain. Gio's lifestyle as a celebrity and political activist require him to be blind to the differences in people for reasons of race, ethnicity, class, and gender.

Gio's opposition to the hegemonic practice of stratifying people for any reason in Ecuador and the U.S., are the primary reasons he embraced two interconnected goals; 1) Gio wants there to be more projects like this vanguard investigation that focuses and brings to the forefront the history of Ecuadorian immigrants, and 2) Gio feels he is no longer attached to Ecuador and that his dreams today reflect who he has become in the U.S.

Gio came to the U.S. at age 11 – first to Hoboken, New Jersey and later with his mom at age 15 to LA. Gio self-identifies as Latino and not Hispanic because he is

Ecuadorian, or tied to Latin America and not in any way connected by blood to the Iberian Peninsula. The old ideas that are based in Ecuador on geographical ancestry that Gio describes as nationalistic notions are just part of the reason he no longer desires to move back to Ecuador, “I feel I can be a real asset here (U.S.), I have more resources here than there, I lived here all my life there (Ecuador), I feel like a stranger, I don’t know the system, the people anymore--- I haven’t seen my family there in years” Gio Galarza 2016. Gio is referring to his educational achievements which include a college degree in Political Science and serving his adopted country in a war zone as a former U.S. Marine.

There is little doubt that Gio has mastered the *Buen Vivir* challenge to always practice self-improvement. Currently, Gio wears several hats in two very different arenas; 1) he performs and he manages other Latin American talent in LA, and 2) at the same time, he’s part of a coalition of Ecuadorians in the U.S. who are pushing the current U.S. Congress and administration to acquire Temporary Protective Status (TPS) for Ecuadorians. TPS would not create a shortcut to U.S. citizenship; but, by some Ecuadorian migrants could apply for this special protection and remain in the U.S. if their personal safety would be at risk in Ecuador.

At Gio’s invitation, I was in attendance at one of the planning sessions for the August 10th 2016 Fiestas Patrias Ecuatorianas parade and festival that will be in downtown LA. At this meeting, representatives from some of LA’s Ecuadorian clubs organized and discussed the logistics or best procedures they should use to assure the safety and smooth operation of the festival events. Club Ancon’s president, Patricio Vasconez facilitated the meeting. A few weeks later, my son and I worked by Gio’s side

along the parade route and we were amazed at the level of stamina Gio displayed acting as both the marshal of the parade and MC of a post-parade ceremony. Perhaps Gio's training as a dancer may have something to do with the fact that he always seems to have limitless enthusiasm for all his many personal and business projects. In fact, his dedication to this investigation has only increased since that day we first walked together down the street in Pasadena looking for safety pins.

Gio follows my posts on Facebook, takes my calls no matter what the hour, and his insights about the Ecuadorian experience in the U.S. from the perspective of living on both coasts added clarity to the field work in New York and Miami. My son and I received undeserved but very special recognitions (presented by Gio) from the California Senate for our work during the parade at a ceremony in the Bradley Penthouse of LA's City Hall, August 10, 2016.



Figure C13: Gio Galarza's presentation to me of California Senate Award. LA City Hall.

In giving my introduction to receive the award, Gio -- as Master of Ceremonies encouraged the Ecuadorians in the audience to participate and support my research that for the first time in their words tells their story as a part of the Latin American migration to the U.S.

Gio's life experiences are a testimony to the importance to him of the core principles of *Buen Vivir*. As pointed out earlier, he diligently practices self-improvement while he recognizes and defends everyone's right to a good life. Although in the above testimony Gio appears to imply talking about race is counterproductive, during the interview he acknowledged that the appeal for TPS here in the U.S. is a struggle for equal opportunity that flies in the face of ideas about the race, ethnicity, class, and gender of

Latin Americans. Gio's declaration that he is ethnically Ecuadorian gives meaning to how he feels he must acquire the good life, or *Buen Vivir*. For Gio, his celebrity -- or what he has achieved in the U.S. --- is closely tied to both who he was in Ecuador and the promise of success that defines the American Dream.

The last interviewee of this chapter's analysis of the sessions and events that happened while doing field work in LA is Yolanda Villegas. Like Gio, Yolanda is an accomplished celebrity. Yolanda's life story speaks to the positive and negative outcomes of gender bias, the desire to promote culture, and the cost of achieving the American Dream.

Yolanda Villegas: Cultural Expression and the American Dream

Machismo and class shaped the life of Yolanda Villegas even before her birth in 1946 near the Colombian border in the Ecuadorian province of Imbabura. I met Yolanda near her home in Downey at Mimi's, a popular French cuisine restaurant. After Yolanda and I placed our orders, she began the interview by talking about her mother. Yolanda's mom was an independent woman of mixed indigenous and Spanish ancestry who provided for her children by selling shoes in the city of Ibarra. Yolanda and her siblings did not share the same father; and, Yolanda and three of her siblings were born out of wedlock. In Yolanda's case, her father even denied her under oath in court in response to the pressures of his family to protect their 100% Spanish ancestral heritage and social standing in the community as members of a higher class. As an unwanted child without the recognition of her father, Yolanda's bastard class status prevented her from attending school and exposed her to ridicule from the other children in her village.

Above all, selfishness was not tolerated by Yolanda's mother. Yolanda's mom worked without compensation to support the candidacy of José María Velasco Ibarra by overseeing voter registration campaigns in favor of Ibarra's multiple elections from the 1930's to the 1970's. Also, Yolanda's mother constantly searched for and accepted almost any kind of work, she encouraged her daughters to always be of service to the community. After her 14th birthday, Yolanda was sent to live with her sister in Quito at her mother's insistence to have better access to an education after many years of watching her mother work as a feminist in support of the rights of local indigenous women and a national political activist. Above all, Yolanda feels her mother valued the lives of others "No, no, no, there should not be any selfishness, you couldn't live like that, only worried about yourself" (Yolanda Villegas 2016).

The above childhood experiences provide an explanation as to why Yolanda believes she received the necessary training from her mother to prepare her to live a balanced lifestyle or a good life, *Buen Vivir*. Several incidents would occur after Yolanda's vacation trip to a beach in Guayaquil at age 16 that would cause her to wonder if she could ever escape following too closely in the footsteps of her mother. Yolanda self-identifies in Ecuador as *mestiza* based on her mixed Spanish and Indigenous heritage and she credits her mother's side of the family as being the source of her talent to sing. At age 10, she began singing in public by entertaining the crowds at her mother's many voter registration rallies. When being interviewed, Yolanda declared that singing professionally had always been her dream. As we talked about the times standing and performing for the crowds beside her activist mother, she began to sing in her powerful

mid-soprano voice “*Un Canto de Amistad*” (A Song of Friendship). Yolanda’s voice is so stunning that the other patrons in the restaurant that glanced our way appeared to be pleasantly surprised and in no way irritated to hear her. Yolanda excelled in grade school, began performing on the radio, and in Quito before her trip to the beach in Guayaquil at age 15, Yolanda was already a highly-recognized celebrity who would soon graduate early from high school.

The beach trip changed Yolanda’s life in ways that would impact even how she would construct her identity and her dream to be a singer after arriving in the U.S. While at the beach, she met and quickly married the son of a very rich family. He verbally belittled her and the psychological abuse was so severe that Yolanda left and divorced him after only four months. Yolanda returned to her mother’s house and continued to do radio shows while she used a guitar and oversized clothing to protect herself from being labeled an unmarried pregnant woman. But, Yolanda always believed she’d only be able to live her dreams to become a successful singer on a grander scale outside Ecuador. For this reason, she resigned herself to migrate to the U.S.

In preparation for the demands of migration, Yolanda completed a course to become a paralegal and secretary. This vocational training included a class in Professional Business English. In a strange twist that involved many clandestine episodes in which Yolanda desperately tried to maintain custody of her daughter; her ex-husband’s social position eventually convinced even Yolanda’s mother that the child

should remain in his custody. At this point, Yolanda left Ecuador in 1970 after promising her daughter that they would be together in the U.S. just as soon as she could earn enough money to send for her.

Yolanda finally entered the U.S. with a Green Card by way of Tijuana after being declined a Visa by U.S. Embassies in Colombia, Panama, and Costa Rica. With each stop, Yolanda continued to sing for two years to earn money while keeping what she was sure was her greatest asset – her training as a paralegal “tucked under my arm, protected – this I saved for the U.S.” (Yolanda Villegas 2016). For Yolanda, this marked a change in priorities as she began a slow move away from the dream of professionally singing that she formed under the influence of her mother. The singing was becoming a tool to get her to a space in which she could promote the clerical talents that she now believed were the means that would lead to her success, or acquisition of the American Dream.

Yolanda used her familiar network and after her arrival at her sister’s house in LA, she immediately found work. Ironically, the first job proved to be too strenuous and her fellow workers who were bedazzled by Yolanda’s talented renditions of Latin American songs from their homeland agreed to take on her responsibilities. Because they did Yolanda’s job so well, she was promoted and then quickly resigned when she found out she’d have to inform on these fellow Latin Americans as part of her new responsibilities as their manager. Yolanda got another break almost immediately and because of the encouragement of an Afro-American fellow employee she went to evening classes to improve her skills in everyday English. Again, her familial connections led to a very good job at Union Bank with the opportunity to advance as she increased her

proficiency in English at Union Bank. All the while she struggled to shine a light on her clerical talents to advance forward living the American Dream, she pushed herself further and further away from singing.

Yolanda married a Bolivian fellow classmate who suddenly died shortly after the birth of Yolanda's second child. Because of the birth of the child, Yolanda gained U.S. citizenship in 1977. Yolanda's deceased husband was a well-paid jewelry maker and designer and he patiently taught Yolanda to make her own pieces. She began a small retail business by making a modest profit from selling her handmade jewelry and inexpensive sundries she acquired in Tijuana to her fellow-employees. Yolanda used her entire salary at the bank to send remittances back to a friend in Ecuador to give to her eldest daughter. This flow of cash created an opportunity and the distance between them was reduced when mother and daughter managed to chat on the phone the few times the ex-husband was not present. Finally, at age 15 the daughter arrived in the U.S. to complete her education.

Since Yolanda only mentioned getting support to advance her career from her family members and the people of various ethnic groups on the job, she was asked to describe her relationships with other Ecuadorians in the LA community during the 1970's through the first decade of the new millennium.

No, I didn't find any Ecuadorians. I finally found one lady, a friend of my sister in Glendale. But, I didn't find any others. My sister lived in Hollywood, she didn't have any Ecuadorian friends there either. I did start seeing more Ecuadorians around 1974...in 1977, I met more Ecuadorian citizens when I became a U.S. Citizen, got to know them at their restaurants. I got a real estate license, in 1978 I started in real estate,

but most of my customers were other Latin Americans and Black people. I first found out about the clubs in 2006 or 2007 for Ecuadorian people that's when I came back to the music, that's when I met Elba Berruz. When I came back to the music.

Yolanda Villegas. 2016 (LA)

The above testimony by Yolanda confirms that for over 30 years she had become separated from her dream, to professionally play music. During those three decades, Yolanda married and divorced another husband after the birth of a second daughter, then a few years later she again wed a much younger man who she divorced after 18 years in order to allow him to fulfill his dream of having a family. During this time, Yolanda achieved monetary success as the owner of a real estate brokerage firm; but, as she grew older she suffered a financial setback in 2006 that would cause her to reassess who she had become while living the American Dream.

In an effort to find a way to get some enjoyment out of a real estate career that she now found taxing and unfulfilling, Yolanda decided fate would decide her next step. She took a set of business cards that were stacked up in front of her on her desk and arbitrarily picked one from the set and dialed the number. Totally by chance, the card she selected belonged to a woman she didn't even remember meeting, Elba Berruz. Without any hesitation, Yolanda said to Elba, "Hi, I'm Yolanda Villegas from Quito. I was wondering if you can help me" (Yolanda Villegas 2016).

Elba was shocked that one of Ecuador's greatest singers had been living in LA without her knowledge and she couldn't believe that Yolanda Villegas had given up singing. After a brief chat on the phone, Yolanda drove to Elba's office where the ever-

enthusiastic Elba began to recruit Yolanda's talents to perform at the local Ecuadorian clubs and at special citywide events. According to Yolanda, Elba's schedule was brutal and it was not uncommon to receive a phone call at any hour of the day from Elba requesting that Yolanda accompany her on a special mission. Once again, Yolanda willingly accepted her role as accompaniment to another great female activist (Figure C14). Tears filled Yolanda's eyes as she spoke with pride of how she was there when one of Elba's dreams came to fruition, the *Fiestas Patrias Ecuatorianas*.



Figure C14: Yolanda Villegas, *Fiestas Patrias Ecuatorianas* Parade

The experience of working with Elba also restored Yolanda's faith that her dreams to be a singer in Ecuador were still a part of her future. Yolanda's *Buen Vivir* ideals survived even as she watched Afro-Americans being denied housing and the ostracization of her own people from Latin America for claiming --- as she does --- their

Latino heritage. One of Yolanda's most recent accomplishments reflects the way she thinks about differences in race and ethnicity. Yolanda founded *Cantares del Alma* (Singing from the Soul) as a non-profit organization devoted to the promotion of Latin American culture. Yolanda spoke warmly of this organization whose multi-cultural goals reflect the intermarriage of so many people of different Latin American countries. At the end of the interview Yolanda declared

I'm now happier than I've ever been, I have a home and enough money in the bank – nowhere near what I had before – these extra things, they are not important. I still have so many dreams...to travel the world and take my beautiful *pasillos* to everybody...I want to help my people, the poor people who come here from Guatemala and El Salvador – they want so much to come here to the United States, not to fight any more like they did at home ... but they are coming here for a new life. Maybe in the future there won't be space for anybody here...with papers or no papers.

Yolanda Villegas 2016. (LA)

Above, Yolanda – who claims to have no interest in applying for dual-citizenship -- speaks of the compromises she has made and the insecurity she feels about her U.S. identity. Later in this dissertation, I will analyze what is becoming a new immigration wave of Ecuadorians and explore how anxieties about the possibility of belonging serve to drive and shape their emigration experiences. In Yolanda's case, she redefined and promoted herself to create a path to achieve success in both the transnational domain of the U.S. and in Ecuador. At the very least, Yolanda now lives in harmony with the ideals of *Buen Vivir* that require her to be committed to provide a lifestyle for others that will lead to their self-improvement.

The similarities and differences between the life experiences of the subjects in LA opened the door to question whether I would find stories or statements about place – or

lived experiences -- that have similar outcomes in Miami. Throughout the testimonies in this chapter, the theme of preparedness kept emerging, which prompted me to wonder whether this factor had anything to do with the return of so many Ecuadorians to Ecuador after living in the U.S. for years (Lopez and Rohal 2015)? I also wondered if living in a Cuban dominated society such as Miami would be much the same for Ecuadorian immigrants as living in LA that has a majority Latin American population from Mexico. As I reviewed the questionnaire before flying to Miami, I decided not to revise the questionnaire because comparative studies about lifestyle were beyond the scope of this investigation in which all the subjects in LA without provocation raised the issue of preparedness.

The subject testimonies from LA form a very strong point of departure for this investigation focused on Ecuadorian U.S. migration to the U.S. The next phase of research in Miami builds on the testimonies and observances acquired in LA to examine the construction of identity at the intersections of race, class, and gender of Ecuadorian immigrants as an expression of their acts of transnational giving in another very different cultural space, Florida's Magic City.

Chapter Six

Miami Sprawl and Multi-Latin-American Dreams

What a child does not know and does not want to know of race and color and class, he learns soon enough as he grows to see each man flipped inexorably into some predestined groove like a penny or a sovereign in a banker's rack.

Beryl Markham (1902-1986)

Miami is a vast metropolitan microcosm of humanity in which Latin American diversity is the norm and not the exception. However, the reality for culturally different South Americans is that the opportunities or magic⁷ of the Miami of their dreams was frequently lost in the reality they faced each day because they were different. The Beryl Markham citation that introduces this chapter speaks to her experiences as a different — but, no less talented --- female writer accused of plagiarism for reasons that grew out of class, and gender bias. Also, Markham’s quote speaks to the objective of trying to fit the dominant racial, class, and gender pattern or the process of acculturation, “the translation and mutual influencing that can occur when there is a new and rather sudden meeting between different world-views” (Rapport and Overing 2000). The brief history of Miami that follows reveals that like Cuban, Haitian, and other Latin American migrants, Ecuadorian immigrants have survived despite being metaphorically treated as children by various classes of Miami’s politically and economic elite.

This section begins by focusing on the history of Miami from the 1960’s through 2014 to examine two factors; 1) the impact of changes in the racial and ethnic composition of Miami’s ruling class, 2) and, the way these culturally different elite groups framed and

⁷ Miami is known as “Magic City”.

shaped the general feelings, attitudes, beliefs, and opinions of Latin American migrants. This analysis builds on Grenier and Stepick's (1992) argument that the mission of Miami's various oligarchies has always been the same --- to reduce the agency of various national groups -- especially those that have recently arrived (2-3). The history of the Magic City sheds light on the testimonies that follow about the processes of assimilation and acculturation, the construction of Ecuadorian immigrant identity, and the practice of transnational giving at the junction of changing worldviews about the ideals of *Buen Vivir* and the American Dream in the social climate of Miami.

Miami Powerbrokers and the American Dream

According to Historian Chanelle N. Rose (2015), various groups of white business developers and political tyrants exercised complete control over Miami since the city was incorporated in 1896 until the era of the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960's. During this time, Miami was a typical southern city in which white powerbrokers used racial stratification as a method to prevent people of African descent from playing almost any role in the construction of the city's social climate (1-2). But, Sociologists Aranda, et. al. (2016) claim that with the arrival of fleeing Cubans in the 1960's, a nativist strategy based on differences in languages (English versus Spanish, Cuban Spanish versus Central American Spanish, and Mexican versus Cuban Spanish⁸) and Latin American cultural norms and values conflated the black/white strategy in a way that continued the

⁸ Differences between the way Spanish is spoken, i.e. speech patterns which employ particular inflections, and/or use poor grammar and colloquialisms that sound different than the dominant Cuban way of speaking Spanish. Speaking Spanish in a non-Cuban way is associated with non-citizenship and denotes membership in a lower class (Castro 1992).

racialization of Miami in favor of phenotypical and cultural whiteness. The result was an ethnic-class based change in guard and the distribution of power that continues today (150-155).

Regarding this shift in hegemonic control, Arnada, et. al. also claims elite Cubans and multi-ethnic entrepreneurs since the 1980's gradually assumed control of the wealth and politics of Miami in response to increased immigration to the city by Central and South Americans and the exit of both whites and blacks. The result of these changes is that having or not having citizenship, acquisition or failure to achieve the American Dream, class, and race are the intersecting axes along which modern Miami's autocrats currently stratify the city (150-159). In the remainder of this chapter, Ecuadorian migrants speak to how acquiring the American Dream may or may not be related to the process of acculturation in which their customs and values are retained and assimilation or cultural absorption of a minority group's traditional practices, norms and values into the city's majority, complex, divided, and rapidly changing cultural landscape.

A Family Project of Service

I first made contact via telephone with Laura Gonzales after finding her name on the Internet as part of a 2007 report that listed Ecuadorian community organizations in the U.S. At the close of our first conversation, I promised her I'd be in Miami as quickly as possible. But, six months passed and as I approached the building, I was afraid Laura wouldn't remember our conversation. To my surprise, she and her Son Ricky greeted me like a long-lost friend. The following analysis is of the source of Laura's kindness and willingness to share her life experiences as part of this research.

The first time I met with Laura, the UBER driver bypassed the pantry that is one of three office suites in a building that sets back about 50 feet from the curb on a dangerous one-way street. As you approach from the front, the entrance to the pantry is a garage door with vertical plastic shutters. The charitable organization *Vecinos en Acción* (Neighbors in Action) is located in East Little Havana close to Marlins Park and not too far from downtown Miami. Three members of the Gonzales family contributed interviews to this research; Laura an Ecuadorian immigrant, her husband Fernando who migrated to Miami from Cuba in the 1960's, and their son Ronald, a second-generation Ecuadorian-Cuban who now resides in New York City. Laura, Fernando, and their youngest son Ricky spend countless hours at *Vecinos en Acción*, and Ronald and his new wife also volunteer their time to the organization whenever they visit Miami.

The following analysis of Laura's testimony focuses more on her experiences in Ecuador and the reconstruction of her identity since migrating to Miami. Fernando's interview that follows Laura's tends to go more into the running of *Vecinos en Acción* and the complexities of practicing giving or caring for the well-being of others in a city that prioritizes assimilation that favors the norms and values of the current preponderant cultural influence. Ronald's testimony is examined because in the 1990's through the new millennium he provides first-hand knowledge about the ways racialization practices -- and in particular nativism --- frame and shape the lives of phenotypically and culturally different groups of immigrant Latin Americans and their U.S. born children.

Laura Gonzales – Matriarch and Community Care Giver

Laura Gonzales was born in 1953 in Guayaquil and when she was barely 17 years old she left alone to migrate to Miami. Her plans over the years haven't undergone much change since leaving her homeland; Laura's dream is to continue a legacy of service to others and family. According to Laura, her mother was in charge of the upbringing of the children and the household maintenance and her father who was in the military concerned himself with supervising everything outside the home. But, because Laura accompanied her mother on outreach missions to serve the poor throughout Ecuador, she feels her childhood was not typical. Laura describes herself as different. She speaks warmly of the cultural diversity she saw while accompanying her mother on field trips to help the poor and she expressed her discomfort that these same dissimilarities between people are too often used as reasons to divide and mistreat people for unjust reasons.

Laura's Mom, like her mother before her, practiced giving as a way to assure the well-being of their neighbors. According to Laura, she was shown by example that there isn't any justifiable reason to make distinctions in people based on skin color or the ways they celebrate their cultures. Her mother helped everyone, no matter what race, ethnicity, class, or gender. At the same time, Laura's mother emphasized education and protected the solidarity of the family unit by forbidding Laura and her siblings to play with other kids who were not members of the immediate family.

Because of her strict upbringing and isolation within the family, Laura refers to her brothers and sisters as life-long friends. In fact, the bonds that they share are the reasons she feels at home, "en casa" when she returns at least twice a year to Ecuador.

When asked if the many Ecuadorian cousins and her brothers and sisters believe she has been changed by her experiences in the U.S., Laura said, “I feel “en casa” because we sit around reminiscing about the old times. They treat me well, even though they notice my accent, my accent because my husband is Cuban and I’ve lived in Miami with so many Cubans that my accent has changed. I feel like a citizen in the middle” (Laura Gonzales 2016). Laura’s marriage in 1973 may have resulted in a change to the way she speaks Spanish, but, her identity as white (*blanco*) in both Ecuador and the U.S., her legal status as a dual citizen (Ecuadorian and U.S.), and her continued dedication to the altruistic principles of *Buen Vivir* through *Vecinos en Acción* (Figure D1) support her contention that she is a citizen, or member, of a space between her homeland and settlement country.

Laura is proud of three interrelated relationships in her life; what she refers to as her Latina identity, a successful and happy 40-year marriage, and U.S. born sons Ricki and Ronald. The following testimony by Laura about issues of discrimination and her lived experiences in Miami as an Ecuadorian immigrant reveal that by living a life devoted to service, Laura – like her mother – created a familial environment for her family that stood in opposition to the concepts of entitlement and limitless consumption associated with the American Dream.



Figure D1: *Vecinos en Acción* – (left to right) A customer, Laura, and Ricki.

Vecinos en Acción – compliments Laura’s personal objectives. The community outreach food pantry is an extension of Laura’s Ecuadorian family traditions of service that has also benefited from her personal and multi-ethnic experiences in Miami. Laura addressed the interrelationships that exist between her family, the community of Miami, and *Vecinos en Acción*.

I adore the United States. It is part of my life. I came here so young; my two kids were born here. My brother is here, but my older sister is in Ecuador. But, here in Miami we hardly see each other...not sharing much, just Christmas and New Year Day. (Pointing to a man with a cane sitting near boxes). There he is, my brother – he’s only with me now because he’s been sick so he comes to visit to keep himself busy. I spent my adulthood in the United States. Here in Miami, I never experienced discrimination ...everyone treated me in good spirit. It’s because I have relationships with positive people here (Miami), people who give me love

and support me. They are my wall against discrimination...they've made my life easier, happier. My husband too, he is understanding in good and bad times.

Laura Gonzales, 2016 (Miami)

Above, Laura does not deny there is racial, sexual, or class bias in Miami, instead, she reveals that she responded to the lack of familial ties in the city by reaching out and establishing relationships that protected and continues to shield her from discrimination.

Regarding the opportunities and good fortune some Ecuadorian immigrants I interviewed for this research have found in the U.S., Laura indicated that many have failed and some even live here in poverty while countless others have had to return home. Laura noted that over the years few Ecuadorian migrants seek help at the facility. She explained that a return to Ecuador happens for reasons that in her opinion Ecuadorians do not want to be seen as in need of help, "I see this even in Ecuador, when we go there to deliver aid. They are reluctant to step forward and ask" (Laura Gonzales 2016). A second reason discussed by Laura was that she feels some exhaust all their resources before they develop a network of emotional and economic support strong enough to visualize and construct a personal American Dream. *Vecinos en Acción* has served a constant stream of immigrant populations which includes the currently dominant wave of migrants from Central America.

For the above reasons, between her commitments to *Vecinos en Acción* and her growing family, Laura has found little time over the years to attend social events at one of Miami's Ecuadorian clubs or focus on the social climate of the city. The next analysis of Fernando's (Laura's Cuban husband) interview examines the events and actors that

influenced the reconstruction of *Vecinos en Acción* several times to be able to effectively serve the community in response to the racialization of Latin American immigrants in Miami.

Fernando Gonzales – Patriarch and Entrepreneur

Fernando Gonzales' – who was born and migrated from Cuba -- interview raises the question as to whether or not *Buen Vivir* is an ideal shared by all Latin Americans. For example, as a child Fernando watched his Dad care for the poor who were victimized by the Cuban wealthy class. Fernando's family was not middle-classed or very poor, he described his childhood home as comfortable because they had enough, or all the food and dress they needed to be happy. According to Fernando, "Poor people used to come into Papa's store begging for bread, anything ... he helped as much as he could without putting his business in jeopardy. There was no help in Cuba, people couldn't help one another...rich didn't care about the poor" (Fernando Gonzales 2016). As a student, Fernando joined a protest movement in opposition to Castro's Revolution and the forced enrollment of all citizens in the Communist Party. His participation in the student protest resulted in his imprisonment and in 1959 at age 19 he fled to the Venezuelan embassy where he requested and ultimately received asylum in the U.S.

When Fernando arrived in the U.S. from Cuba in the early part of the 1960's, he observed that Cubans did not have any of their own organizations in the community to help new migrants socially or economically survive the stresses of discrimination. Even in Fernando's case as a fairly-light complexioned recent arrival, he found himself the victim of class, race, and cultural bias. For example, his inability to speak English left

him with few options for employment outside the service class and there were occasions in which he was severely ostracized when he spoke Spanish in public. Fernando has bitter memories of how the merger of racialization and the practice of nativism in Miami impacted the family before and after his marriage to Laura in 1973.

In the 60's through the 80's there was discrimination because sometimes they called my son "Indio" ...I had to stop them sometimes...I almost fought a man who called my wife "Indio" ...I remember when speaking Spanish on the bus meant you had to sit in the back with the black people – speaking Spanish in public automatically meant you were lower class. They discriminate against me not because I was black but because I spoke Spanish, "I was brown but with green eyes, I looked American, if I don't talk, they don't say anything, but if I start talking... well, I just didn't talk in public.

Gonzales, 2016 (Miami).

Fernando above speaks of acts of prejudice perpetrated against himself and his family over three decades (1960-1990). After moving to Miami, Fernando first received Temporary Residency Status and in three years acquired U.S. citizenship. But, his naturalized status for many years and his hard work did not mitigate the dominant perceptions of lower class in Miami society based on his use of language and the color of the skin of his wife and children. Per Fernando, race was not the issue that separated people in Cuba as much as class. But, in the U.S. he described racism as a severe problem that in his opinion is changing –in some ways --- for the better:

I ran away from Cuba because Castro mistreated people and I face the same thing here in the US where black people suffer without any reason – about this, I was very sad. Right now, there still could be some kind of race problem, but things are better than when Ronald (early 1990's) was growing up...you go to Miami beach and you can see any white girl with a black boy, or a black man with a white woman, no problem- it's a lot different now.

Fernando Gonzales, 2016 (Miami).

Fernando's testimony brings to the forefront the fact that racialization is a dynamic process in Miami that he feels is improving; but, despite this positive change, he is not implying that racial bias against darker or non-English speaking Latin American immigrants is no longer an issue.

Since the doors of *Vecinos en Acción* opened, Laura and Fernando established a policy to solicit and receive funding only from private sources for two reasons; 1) too many prejudice government elites make grant funding decisions that reflect popular and discriminatory ideas about skin complexion and Spanish or English proficiency, and, 2) the expensive and excessive accountability process that federal and state organizations demand ultimately extract resources in the form of valuable volunteer labor from the coffers of *Vecinos en Acción* and defeat the purpose of the organization to serve the homeless, and help immigrants who may be undocumented or unable to work and sustain their families.

Vecinos en Acción has maintained a flexible format, which means that the types of service the foundation provided for the community has changed over the years to meet the policy demands of the city and the needs of nationally different populations of migrants⁹. For this reason, the club at one time hosted a citywide sports league, assisted girls with high risk pregnancies, and at other times provided educational guidance. But, over the past 25 years, Fernando sometimes found himself at odds with the wishes of high ranking officials who publically showered Laura with honors while at the same time

⁹ South American migration (except in the case of Colombia) to the U.S. has substantially declined over the years and the majority of the clients of the *Vecinos en Acción* are currently Central American immigrants (Pew Research 2015 & Fernando Gonzales 2016). .

they created policies that advanced prejudices that closed the doors to opportunities for ‘lower class’ migrants to advance or even economically survive in Miami. This type of hegemonic control by the government also impacts the transnational giving of *Vecinos en Acción*.

According to Fernando, the corruption of government officials and the military in Ecuador grossly complicates the logistics *Vecinos en Acción* has to use to deliver resources to the impoverished women and children in Ecuadorian villages. Fernando and Laura travel alone and without protection to personally accompany their goods to make sure they actually reach the villagers in need in remote regions of Ecuador. Along the way the national and provincial governments demand they pay fees to purchase valueless permits that in the end provide no security for what Fernando described as a very dangerous journey.

Also, the experience of giving back to Laura’s homeland too often proves to be a frustrating experience. Once they reach their destination, the villagers frequently view them with suspicion and too often they even refuse to accept the aid. After discussing this reluctance further, Fernando laughed and said he believes that like the Ecuadorians migrants in Miami who are seldom clients of *Vecinos en Acción*, the villagers were frequently verbally opposed to even holding a conversation to discuss the benefits of accepting assistance. I asked Fernando – and later his wife Laura – if the villagers were under any type of duress and could their refusal of aid be a response to a threat of social or physical harm. Fernando and Laura indicated that although their project was politically discouraged by regional, local, and national authorities, they saw no evidence

of coercion by these outside forces on the villagers to force them to deny aid. On a few occasions, reluctant villagers talked with Laura and Fernando about this denial phenomenon. The informants claimed there was a sense of personal shame and failure attached to accepting help – no matter how badly it is needed. Laura and Fernando agreed that the ambivalent behavior of the villagers in Ecuador – and the reluctance of Ecuadorians in Miami to seek help from social agencies like *Vecinos en Acción* are related. Also, I concluded after this talk with the couple the analysis of the attitude of many Ecuadorians about accepting altruistic acts adds clarity to one of the arguments of this research; customary mannerisms that originate in Ecuador and continue to be practiced by Ecuadorian immigrants are socially constructed and directly related to their formation of identity in the U.S.

At the end of the interview, Fernando observed that Latin American immigrants have always judged each other by their level of education. The level of educational achievement of migrant Latin Americans is now a social determinant in Miami that is in practice a subjective interpretation of language proficiency that can be used to divide people into classes. Castro (1992) argues, the greatest danger to the lower class non-English speakers is that a focus on educational determinants opens the door to creating assumptions about citizenship. As Spanish only speakers the uneducated are assumed to be unworthy since proficiency in English is required to claim U.S. citizenship (110).

Fernando who strongly disagrees that there are just 600,000¹⁰ Ecuadorian immigrants in the U.S., also feels there has been a shift in immigration to the U.S. by Ecuadorians who have acquired good educations.

I know there are far more Ecuadorians in this country than 600,000, especially in the Northern states. Many more. The people over there (Ecuador) who have good educations don't come over here now, they find some way of living. For example, to make even \$300 over there is hard, but if you make a \$1,000 a month over there ... it's like really \$1,000 over there, you can find a place to live maybe not in a good place, a small apartment.

Fernando Gonzales, 2016 Miami.

Fernando speaks from experience about the ways financial changes in Miami and the U.S. have formed reasons for immigrants to accelerate or halt migration. For example, he opted to retire when his vegetable stand in downtown Miami became a victim of gentrification as Miami shifted from being a service oriented and tourism based economy to a upper middle-class banking industrial center. Also, Fernando feels he has earned his citizenship because he is living his dream deeply rooted in *Buen Vivir* to be of service to the needy who have been victimized as a part of the U.S. racialization process.

For Fernando, the American Dream is tied to the ownership of his own home, two dogs, and the well-being of his family. In the next section, Fernando's son Ronald expands on the observations of his father about the racialization of Miami. Father and son were not interviewed together and Ronald's analysis examines his experiences since

¹⁰ According to a 2015 Pew Research report, the number of Ecuadorian Immigrants in the U.S. was 687,000 based on the 2013 U.S. Census. Fernando Gonzales' argument that there are many more Ecuadorian immigrants who work off the official books and live in deplorable situations is based on his experience with undocumented migrants who would not under any circumstances agree to being interviewed or counted as part of a federal census.

the late 1980's as an individual of dual Latin-American ancestry in a racialized and culturally diverse city.

Ronald Gonzalez: Belonging

I met Ronald Gonzalez for the first time on the same day I interviewed Laura, his mother, at *Vecinos en Acción* in Miami. Ronald's first session was later that same day; but, over the next six months we chatted again via telephone and during dinner at a Thai restaurant in New York City's Little China. Born in 1979, Ronald attended public school for many years outside his racially and ethnically mixed neighborhood in East Little Havana. Riverside Park is in the center of this community that was referred to during Ronald's childhood in Miami as "Vietnam" because the area was a neutral territory controlled by both Cuban and Central American gangs. Ronald's dark complexion and his ethnic identity as a person of Latin American heritage born in the U.S. shaped his experiences as a student in public schools.

I hung out with the *mulatos*, *creoles*, mostly from the Caribbean, and some Cubans, the mixed kids¹¹ and the other group was Central American. Kids off the boat looked different¹² – some Cubans came in the 1980's – their outlook was more mature, more experienced in life because they had been through some bad things.... Some were delinquent.... a lot of bad apples. Many folks older in their 30's had been released from jail in Cuba. Central Americans were fleeing war, but gangs from Central America

¹¹ "Mixed kids" refers both to children who were racially mixed and the children whose parents were Latin American but from different South or Central American nations..

¹² Many of the children who had recently arrived as immigrants were a part of multiple waves of Haitian migrants. Dunn and Stepick (1992) claim the Civil Rights Movement's success made Miami an attractive destination after the late 1960's for migrants of Afro heritage. As an example, there was a massive wave in 1979 of Haitians to Miami that coincided with the Mariel boatlift from Cuba (47-50). Another wave of Haitians arrived by boat in 1986 (in 1980's people of African descent were 20% of Miami's black population) fleeing Duvalier's dictatorship and again in 1991 after a coup that overthrew Jean Bertrand Aristide.

setup headquarters in Miami and kids joined. Kids who had witnessed horrible stuff in Central American wars.

Ronald Gonzales, 2016 Miami.

The stress and conflicts in “Vietnam” grew out of the cultural and racial diversity of the area and the lack of adult positive leadership and examples. Ronald was the exception in his neighborhood where single mothers were left alone to raise children who watched and eventually joined their fathers selling or taking drugs in Riverside Park. Even the public-school system failed to provide a consistent and uplifting atmosphere for the children of “Vietnam”.

East Little Havana’s elementary school was under-construction for many years and this resulted in Ronald’s generation being sent by bus to public schools throughout the city. Ronald was selected to attend Douglas Elementary in Overtown, a then and still decaying mostly black section of Miami that had once been a flourishing tourist enclave. During this era (1980 – 1990’s) in Miami, Rumbaut and Portes claim the assimilation of children --- a necessary component to support their upward mobility -- depended upon which school they attended; middle-class migrants’ children sent them to private schools and lower class and often first generation immigrant children attended public schools staffed by less qualified teachers (98).

According to Ronald, he is grateful that his parents ignored the warnings widely circulated in the community to avoid what was referred to as the “lower-class” Overtown schools. At Douglas and later in middle school, Ronald was a member of the majority because of the dark color of his skin. White students on the other hand in Overtown frequently found themselves the victims of discrimination. “There was the last day of the

school year, beat up a cracker day -- when we had a white beat down day -- if your skin was too light you would be beat up. It was that simple” (Ronald Gonzales 2016).

Racism was turned on its head in Overtown. But, when Ronald was reunited with the kids from his neighborhood in Booker T. Washington Middle School in Little Havana, he says that it became clear that two factors would shape the future of his multi-racial and multi-cultural generation, 1) ideas about race, class, and gender that are part of the racialization process of Miami, 2) the absence in the majority of the families in “Vietnam” of male positive role models, and 3) a related increase in the responsibilities of often first generation migrant women left alone to assimilate children in an unfamiliar environment where males were deeply involved in often illicit gang activities.

There were problems that got worst in middle school – all of a sudden the issue of race was in your face. People started forming cliques. Black kids the majority, Cubans, everybody else...the teachers were constantly talking about race. They (other students) even beat up my little brother Ricky and constantly picked on him so bad that after he was in our school for only about two months, my Mom and Dad had to take him out [in a later conversation Ronald claimed the bullying of Ricky was because his brother is very quiet and lighter in complexion]. Some (of the kids) did adjust. Some did eventually get a great job, others that joined gangs didn't...no father in home or strong leadership to prevent them from joining a gang...a good role model made the difference. Assimilation was the goal, some failed and many, too many, joined gangs. Once they got a record with the law in Miami, that was it...no way to escape or improve.

Ronald Gonzales, 2016 (Miami).

Jütersonke, et. al. (2009) claims that the violence practiced by Latin American gangs – or *maras* (transnational gangs) that function in both Central America and the U.S. --- have their origins in hegemonic masculinity, *machismo*. The twisted codes of *maras*, legitimate the commission of aberrant acts that adversely affect the lives of their

own families, such as the sale of drugs in their own communities, and the creation of a gun-centric culture in which violence is the norm (378-379). Ronald who describes himself as Hispanic and racially mixed expressed with a sigh “I’m very fortunate because my parents were both strong role models. They spoke Spanish with Ricky and I and we learned the cultures of both Cuba and Ecuador” (Ronald Gonzales 2016).

During the interview, Ronald was ambivalent about self-identifying in all of the racial and ethnic categories. As he continued to explain his position, he discussed the meanings of these classifications in terms of his lived experiences in two intersecting worldviews; 1) the norms, and values of his Cuban and Ecuadorian parents which included the strong influence of ideals such as *Buen Vivir*, 2) and, Miami’s racialized interpretation of the American Dream that always relegated particular Latin Americans to the bottom of the social ladder. The lens Ronald used to see beyond Overtown and “Vietnam” also enabled him to come to the conclusion that “American is synonymous with success and the American Dream is a class based achievement made possible because in the U.S. money rules” (Ronald Gonzales 2016).

Ronald proudly declared that he benefited from watching his parents in 1992 begin *Vecinos en Acción* as an outgrowth of the community’s response to Miami and Dade County’s abandonment of support for all parks and social programs in “Vietnam”. Also, he expressed his opinion that the city and county’s repeated failure to fund or even promote the work of community leaders and positive role models such as his father in Overtown and “Vietnam” relates directly to the fact that many of the victimized children in these neighborhoods were never able to even develop dreams of succeeding in the U.S.

Because Ronald did have excellent leadership and examples in his home, he was able to construct a dream for the future that resulted in obtaining a degree in International Relations at Florida International University. He and his wife now live in New York City where he's employed as the Assistant for Trade Division in the Canadian Consulate of New York.

The next section examines the testimony of three administrative members of the Ecuadorian community club *Liga Ecuatoriana de Florida (Liga)*. This analysis of the life experiences of these club leaders examines what they believe is the meaning and function of *Liga* as this has been reconstructed over the years to support and shape the altruistic practices of the organization. The subjects have all served as presidents of *Liga* and they were asked to speak about how membership in the club has influenced their lives, hopes and aspirations to attain success and a balanced life in the U.S. As part of this discourse, the participants discuss the impact of Miami's process of racialization, or what Ronald refers to as "the personification of those old *Casta* pictures"¹³, in one way or another, based on light skin, light colored eyes where there is no access for those on the bottom to get started, no access in the bottom to rise" (Ronald Gonzales 2016).

¹³ During the 17th and 18th century in Latin America *Casta* pictures varied geographically. But, in all cases each family portrait consisted of a series of hierarchically arranged mini-captions representing the social ranking of ancestors based on phenotypical characteristics. In each *Casta* picture, white (or whiter) ancestors were strategically placed at the top of the portrait reflecting their desirable rank in society and the ancestors in each succeeding mini-caption reflected a darkening in the family tree, or the influence of racial mixing and an associated decrease in the social value of the darker members of the family.

Club Liga Ecuatoriana de Florida (The Ecuadorian League of Florida)

Club Liga Ecuatoriana de Florida (*Liga*) is in Kendall, about 24 miles to the West of downtown Miami in a warehouse district. The Ecuadorian clubs in Miami do not come together to host an annual parade or festival. Also, the appointment of a queen each year and the charitable transnational activities that this event fosters are both activities solely sponsored and exclusively managed by *Liga* members. The club requires organizations and individuals in both Ecuador and Miami to petition by application to receive funding except in the case of a dire emergency such as a need for support created by a natural disaster. This chapter explores the possible reasons Ecuadorian immigrant participation in clubs is undergoing a change in Miami and how this transformation is affecting the practice of the custom of individual and collective giving.

I felt apprehensive approaching the site because the building is recessed from the street and once you turn off the approaching road, the parking area in front of the entrance is not well lit. The club consists of an oblong large room with a very high ceiling and on the right after entering the facility, there is a bar with a huge TV and kitchen, and after the kitchen a spiral staircase that goes to a set of rooms on the second floor. On the wall opposite the entrance of the club, there is a sound system, another TV, and a stage (Figure D2).

That first evening Jose was delayed; but I used the time to arrange future interviews with the entertainer booked for the next evening, Sonia Villar. After enjoying some snacks that you can't buy anywhere except in Ecuador, everyone in the building – including me at the insistence of Sonia –took turns singing along with the

karaoke. I observed that there were just as many male as female members present to do the prep work and the medium age appeared to be late 30's or early 40's. The karaoke music each member picked to sing was mostly U.S. genres such as soft rock or international hits spanning several generations.

When Jose arrived after 11:30PM, he was exhausted and we both decided it was too late that evening to do an interview. Jose and his wife were kind enough to give me a ride back to Little Havana. He spoke of the Liga's mantra – to be of service to others in Ecuador and Miami --- and one issue he believed to be the club's most pressing concern; *Liga* needs to find a way to recruit and keep the interest of younger members.



Figure D2: La Liga Ecuatoriana – 1st floor main room

The next evening was a warm and humid Saturday and one of the first members I met while sitting at the bar was Susanna. Susanna served me a drink and after we chatted

for a few minutes about this research, she volunteered to do an interview. Susanna, born in Quito in 1953, maintains a hectic schedule that requires her to balance responsibilities at work, in her home, and at the club. In addition to these commitments, she travels at least once each year to coordinate *Liga's* charitable outreach program in San Rafael, Ecuador.

Susanna prepared and served plate after plate of the *chiva* from a huge steaming pot and cheese filled empanadas while her husband the bartender shared as many jokes as drinks with the guests during the evening (Figure D2). I sat at the bar and watched several of the younger women I met the previous evening arrange chairs, help people find seating, and even dance to encourage the crowd to join in. There were covered tables along the walls, a cleared space in the middle for dancing, and a disco ball and lighting system that responded to the beats of the music. Sonia did two long sets that crossed many musical genres and later that night I conducted her interview upstairs. The volume of the music increased and the dancing and call and response for the guests intensified as a younger singer took the mic and merged Latin rhythms with rap.

At the entrance, there is a newspaper dispenser displaying a circular published by Ecuadorians. The food from Ecuador was provided by Mi Lindo Ecuador and at the beginning of the event, Jose announced the names of prominent Ecuadorian business men and women in the audience. The club proudly supports entrepreneurship and the social and political accomplishments of Ecuadorians in the Miami community. At one point, Jose was the publisher of the club's newsletter, *Premisius* which they distributed to keep

members informed about upcoming events. *Premisius* has gradually been replaced by a strong Internet presence on social media.

I was approached many times during the evening by guests who wanted to know more about the research. When I asked some of them where they were from in Ecuador I discovered that many of them identified themselves as husbands, wives, family members or friends who were themselves first or second generation Latin American immigrants from other countries. The food and some of the drinks were definitely Ecuadorian, but the event for the most part was a transnational celebration of fusion music uniting the American Northern and Southern hemispheres.

During that evening, I did a SMS text via cellphone to make arrangements to meet with Jacqueline Sanchez, the only subject of this leg of the research in Miami that identified as an Ecuadorian of Montubios-Afro heritage. Also, I met one of the evening's guest performers Dannie Daniel who would be the first interview I would do a few months later at the New York field site near Astoria.



Figure D3: (Left to Right) Behind the bar, Susanna's husband, 'la Colombiana' Jose's wife, Susanna, and a guest at the event.

I made a second trip to *Liga* a few months later to attend another event after the natural volcanic disaster in Ecuador. At least some of the proceeds raised would go towards funding future events and a continuing relief effort by *Liga* to send supplies to Ecuador. The theme of the night was music of the 1980's. This time, there wasn't a live entertainer. Instead, as the mirror ball glittered and pulsed, a DJ started the evening by playing a medley of up-tempo 80's hits from the U.S. The audience responded by singing along and some danced doing Latinized versions – incorporating salsa and meringue movements --- of popular 1980's dances such as the MC Hammer and the Cabbage Patch. As the crowd size increased the DJ gradually reduced the number of U.S. hits and ended the evening by only playing pop hits from Latin America.

I sat at a table with a group of young women who appeared to be in their mid 20's. Only one out of the six claimed Ecuadorian heritage and the rest were Cuban and Central American. As they chatted the dominant language they spoke was English. As I listened and chatted with them, I noticed that the majority of the attendees were guests whose South American accents were not Ecuadorian. Susanna and her husband remained on duty the entire evening in the kitchen area that became the focus of attention at one point when the TV on the far wall broadcasted a football game (soccer) featuring Ecuador's national team. With every goal, the crowd erupted into cheers "E- cuador!!!!" The multi-national mixture of guests that I saw at almost every table that night and the changes this might bring about to *Liga* were issues I raised as part of a discussion I had later with Jose Eguez, *Liga* President.

I was scheduled to meet with Jose at Mi Lindo Ecuador on a rainy evening in Doral. Unfortunately, the restaurant was closed and instead of Ecuadorian food we drove around the small shopping center until we found an open Mexican restaurant. Like many of the members of *Liga*, Jose drives a very attractive late model luxury car and I began to wonder as he pulled into the driveway if the display of success in the parking lot that I noticed outside of *Liga* might discourage less fortunate Ecuadorian immigrants from attending events. For this reason, Jose and I discussed the economics and politics of the organization before the session turned to his lived experiences in the U.S.

Jose began this part of the conversation by emphatically stating that as far as the U.S. and Ecuadorian governments are concerned, *Liga* is a federally registered non-profit foundation [501 (c)(3)], and a non-political organization, "We're community activists,

Liga doesn't have anything to do with this current government(s), it's just the policy of the institution. We represent (Ecuadorians), getting a stain is so easy, scrapping off the stain not so easy" (Jose Eguez 2016). By referring to the possible effects of forming political alliances outside the organization as staining, Jose made it perfectly clear that the purpose for the past 35 years of *Liga* has been to be non-politically active, or of service in this case to both the local Miami community and to those with special needs in Ecuador.

I next discussed the issue of affordability as a factor of both membership and event attendance while keeping in mind the following personal costs: roundtrip via UBER to *Liga* from my apartment in Little Havana cost \$40, admission each night to an event \$20, and a plate of food without a drink was between \$5 and \$7. My question to Jose was; "what is the cost to belong to *Liga* and do you feel many people who may want to come just can't afford it"?

We have now about 80 subscribers/members who get a discount to events at the door, at a cost of \$75 for a family and for individuals \$60 a year. Right now, you have to be Ecuadorian to join, but with Ecuadorians marrying other people, this will I hope change. I believe taking UBER to get here is reasonable, the cost of drinks between \$1-15, maybe they'd spend \$100 an event, this is average for Miami"

Jose Eguez, 2016 Miami

Jose's reply speaks to the differences in perceptions about affordability that are tied to the reality of class membership in Miami. The ambitions expressed by Jose are grounded in the reality that the numbers of Ecuadorians migrating to Miami has sharply decreased while the relationships between existing migrants from Ecuador with other ethnic and Latin American national groups is greatly increasing. Also, Jose's reply

ignores the reality of poverty that confronts many Latin Americans living in Miami. Later in this section, an analysis of Jose's assimilation experiences in the U.S. explores his current attitudes about issues of race, class, and gender. One objective of Jose's interview was to determine his opinion about how racialization plays or doesn't play a part in creating legal and economic roadblocks that discourage and prevent some Ecuadorian migrants from attending events at *Liga*.

I wondered how a deeper immersion of *Liga* into the multi-Latin-American tapestry of Miami would impact Jose's dream for the club to increase the number of younger Ecuadorian immigrants? This is an important question that should be explored in future research because of two factors; 1) There has been a drastic decrease in Ecuadorian migration to the U.S., and 2) according to the evidence uncovered by this research, there is an accompanying increase at the same time in the number of intermarriages between U.S. Ecuadorian immigrants already settled in Miami and other ethnicities. This multi-cultural and multi-racial change – which Ronald Gonzales referred to earlier as the racial-cultural reality of Miami --- would test the Ecuadorian and U.S. beliefs about race, class, and gender of *Liga's* founding members like Susana who identifies herself as “a mixture, *Ecuatoriana* (Ecuadorian female), I think races of people is something someone created” (Susana Villenas 2016 Miami).

Susanna Villenas: Gender Bias in Practice

The day of Susanna's interview she picked me up at my Airbnb apartment in Little Havana and as we drove around Miami in the direction of a Mi Lindo Ecuadorian restaurant, we spent a great deal of time talking about her obsession, the preparation of

traditional Ecuadorian food from the sierra region. Traffic that day was brutal, but Susana was determined to taste test the food at this new Ecuadorian restaurant to make sure the chefs were producing dishes that were truly representative of Ecuadorian cuisine. During the drive, Susana shared secrets to making Ecuador's traditional Easter soup *fanesca*. She emphasized the need to add particular spices at just the right time and she shared her recipe for the dish she served the evening we first met at *Liga, chiva* (braised goat) and rice with *empanadas* (Figure D4).



Figure D4: *Fanesca* (Easter Soup) with empanada (top right) and *chiva* (goat) with yellow rice.

When we finally arrived at Mi Lindo Ecuador in Doral in a strip mall about 15 miles to the West of downtown Miami the restaurant was closed¹⁴. The next half hour we were back in traffic and on our way to Barzola Restaurant, an Ecuadorian national chain with multiple locations in Miami and New York. The following brief summary of Susana's extensive three-hour interview will focus only on her views about good and bad outcomes of the practice of hegemonic masculinity. Many of the comments made by Susana about Miami's social climate relate to an initial comment by her in which she said, "I was not prepared to move to the U.S." (Susanna Villenas 2016). The analysis will focus on her ideas about preparedness as it relates to the role of females in society and the shaping of young minds so that they will be able to both envision the American Dream and withstand the pressures of Miami's process of racialization.

Susana's childhood in the highlands of Ecuador was split into two parts; she lived for the first 11 years in a secure and comfortable environment in the care of her grandmother and later she returned to her parent's impoverished home where she was the only female child out of 11 total children. Susana's mother was pregnant every year and the family worked on farmland and lived in small shacks in which Susana "learned how to be a good woman, a good daughter, a good mother, a good friend, a good cook, everything one does while living in the countryside. These were things you did to prepare for marriage" (Susana Villenas 2016). As she attended a gender-mixed school, in her heart Susana dreamed of studying languages and nursing. Susana's father's

¹⁴ I actually tried on four different occasions with and without interviewees to visit this restaurant and never found it open. The promotional food and drinks from Ecuador at the events were sponsored by this restaurant.

emphatically refused to invest money in her education, while at the same time he directed all his attentions and whatever funds he could scrap together to finance the education of her brothers. Her father's attempts to control Susana's life finds its justification in the rules of hegemonic masculinity or *machismo* – a social system in which the control of females defines and is a crucial process that justifies the practice for male dominance.

Susana spoke about the lessons she took away from this experience with her father and the reason she is ambivalent about the idea that women should only stay in the home and devote themselves to the upbringing of the children.

A woman should first always learn to defend herself, speak up. *Machismo*, yes it was like that before, but now it's changing in Ecuador. But, thank God I immigrated, because really ... nothing much is different there in Ecuador. One sees *machismo*, they want the woman to stay in the house... not leave, but wait on the man to arrive home, for the kids to come home from school. But, you see lots of professionals in Ecuador because women have sacrificed their educational goals and stayed home with the children ... encouraging and nurturing them to prepare for the future... to be good, great professionals, to keep them (children) from abandoning their studies.

Susana Villenas, 2016, Miami.

Susana above points to a weakness that she sees in American society, the lack of support for youth that allows them to fall victim to discrimination based on their race, gender, and class. When she spoke of this problem that she feels permeates all ethnic groups in Miami, she points to what she believes is a positive outcome of *machismo* that demands women stay in the home to raise children.

Although Susana has worked outside her home for the past 35 years since migrating to the U.S., the debate about whether or not women should be home-bound

primary caregivers continues to be an area of concern that impacts her desire to preserve Ecuadorian culture. She spoke with pride about her membership in an Ecuadorian club in Chicago before moving to Miami and the cultural immersion of her children and grandchildren in Ecuadorian customs by sending them to live for extended periods in Ecuador. In fact, the project to develop *Liga* as an offshoot of the Chicago club came about because in 1981 Susana, her husband, and a group of other migrants from Chicago felt there was a need for an Ecuadorian cultural presence in Miami. Initially, the group felt that Ecuadorians at that time were not recognized as a social or political coalition in Miami. For this reason, Ecuadorians immigrants were only Latin Americans from an individual standpoint and not part of the hierarchical structure of Miami which favored Cubans and more unified and larger Latin American groups.

The second area in which the founding group felt there was a need to improve was based on their belief that Miami was a new space in which there was an opportunity for them to construct a shared cultural awareness that would serve as a reason for future generations of Ecuadorian immigrants to unite. The objective was to overshadow any of the old misconceptions about differences in people they brought with them from Ecuador, “we ignored racism – that racist idea about differences between people from the coast and the sierra, our presidents would rotate, some from the coast, some from the sierra, we were all Ecuadorians... no difference” (Susana Villenas 2016). Here, Susana’s conflation of race and class brings to the surface the racialization process of *mestizaje* in Ecuador and demonstrates that in the new space – her adopted homeland --- there was a

need to present a more compelling reason for her fellow countrymen/women to oppose the alienating forces that for centuries separated them in Ecuador.

Another factor associated with the way Susana constructed her identity in Miami's has to do with how language differences can be used to establish class membership. Susana is very conscious of the agency that can be gained in Miami society by speaking Spanish without an accent, "I speak clearly, not like those of the coast in Ecuador or even the Cubans who speak much differently" (Susana Villenas 2016). She also stated that she believes that language continues to be one determinant that serves as a reason some Ecuadorians continue to believe the people from the coast are inferior, less educated, than the people of the highlands.

Susana manages to find an equilibrium between the mixed messages she continues to receive from her homeland about the role of women and the demands she faces each day outside her home as a highly-trained security specialist for an air cargo company. Even though Susana owns a home in Ecuador, she feels that the persistent and worsening unrest in the nation makes it impossible to even consider a return by any of her family members to live in her homeland. On the other hand, Susana takes comfort in the belief that she has acquired the objects or outward signs of being a citizen of the U.S.; she can purchase the things she wants because of her prestigious job, she owns her home in Miami, and her children are educated and well on their way to living their own personal American Dreams.

Regarding the possibility for her family to leave the U.S. and permanently return to live in Ecuador, she spoke warmly of Correa's public policies that established an even

exchange rate for remittances and thereby directly benefit the philanthropic projects *Liga* operates in Ecuador. However, she points to an un-evening affect produced by this type of deregulation. In her opinion, equal exchange prompted some U.S. Ecuadorian immigrants to believe that they could invest or purchase property in Ecuador, return to live there and benefit from the liquidation of all their assets in the U.S. because of Ecuador's cheaper cost of living. According to Susana, many Ecuadorians tried this scheme and lost everything because they failed to think about the opportunities they were leaving behind in the U.S. By coming to terms with --- but, not totally rejecting -- the misogynistic idea that a woman's place is only in the home, Susana feels she has also accomplished her Ecuadorian goals of living a good life, *Buen Vivir* in the U.S. Susana's constructed an identity or what she described as a balanced worldview in which she can focus on the well-being of her family and *Liga*. Her association with *Liga* also provides for her the opportunity to contribute to the betterment of other people.

Susana's testimony shed light on the conflicts associated with the practice of male bias. Also, her comments raised questions which may directly relate to the differences in the cultures of Miami and Los Angeles. For example, is male bias repressed more in the traditionally conservative Southern U.S. versus how it may play out in a liberal environment such as Los Angeles. Although answering this question has the potential to foreground subterranean issues that shaped Susana's identity and the way she practices acts of altruism, an analysis of how U.S. regional influences impact *machismo* would require an extensive investment of time and human resources that go beyond the scope and feasibility of this research. For this reason, the following section of this analysis of

the lived experiences of current *Liga* club president, Jose Eguez will be used to elucidate and make it possible to discuss from a different perspective – the male viewpoint -- many of the intersecting issues of race, class, and gender addressed by Susana. The objective is to examine the lived experiences of Jose as he constructed an identity which was framed and constantly shaped by the influences of *Buen Vivir*, the American Dream, and the pressures of racialization in Miami.

Jose Eguez: The clothes of the Father

Jose who has only one sibling, a sister, was born in 1972 in Guayaquil and he and his wife – a Colombian immigrant – are currently applying for U.S. citizenship. He plans to also obtain dual-citizenship for himself and his children who were both born in the U.S. Jose self-identifies in both Ecuador and the U.S. as white or *blanco* while adding that there may be unknown indigenous blood in his family tree. When I asked him to elaborate about his claim to whiteness, Jose’s reply revealed what he thinks about the practice of racializing culture in both the U.S. and Ecuador.

In Ecuador, I’d say I’m white, it’s just because that’s the way I’ve been identifying myself all my life. It makes more sense. When they just say Hispanic in the U.S. they don’t differentiate even though some places they put Hispanic and under that they’ll have different classifications – I haven’t paid much attention because race to me is not a big thing. I know though that culture is a big deal. Mom and Dad did not dwell on things like race, even though in a place like Ecuador where you are immersed in different cultures and racial distinction is so vivid, it gets in your veins...there I too made ugly racial jokes that I today would consider profiling.

Jose Eguez, 2016 (Miami)

Jose’s opinions about racial difference were strong in Ecuador; but, after living in the U.S. since 2000, these viewpoints have undergone a drastic change. Jose infrequently

saw people of African heritage and even in his Ecuadorian Catholic school in which most the students were more affluent, his middle-class status created a problem for him that his light-skinned appearance could not overcome.

Jose admired his father who had graduated from college with the help of his mother. For this reason, Jose emulated and continues to copy the dress habits of his Dad. His father always wore casual office attire: a well-pressed shirt, slacks, and dress shoes. This manner of dressing made Jose stand out amongst his classmates who were concerned about modern trends and dressed in jeans, light weight tees, and tennis shoes. For this reason, Jose believes that for him in Ecuador class was more of an issue. In the household, the Eguez family had all the bells and whistles that marked them as members of the middle-class; they employed more than one maid, and Jose had a *nana*, or babysitter. Below, Jose reveals much about the plasticity of racialization in Ecuador as he discussed the process of hiring household workers and the ways this system has changed over the years as the indigenous gained more agency.

Yes, we had a maid more than one, the maid was *mestiza* (white-indigenous female). Normally my Mom --- she was concerned to get someone who would not steal ...they would not have hired a black maid...she'd ask her network of friends for recommendations. I had a nanna – who started working for us at age 12, who lived with us and she went to school with my Mom to night school, she mostly did not eat at our table...not forbidden but she rather eat in the kitchen – current maid (who is also *mestiza*) in Mom's house always eats at the table.

Jose Eguez 2016 (Miami)

Discrimination above is reinforced by verbal exchanges that reinforce negative stigma, or preconceived notions about the moral character and differences in the capabilities of people that is directly linked to their phenotypical characteristics. Jose

added that although he could not recall being discriminated against since coming to the U.S., he believes “gender discrimination here (U.S.) is tied closely to media control and the shaping of what constitutes what is a good man or woman and how they should behave” (Jose Eguez 2016). Jose’s role models were his parents and their behavior determined the way he would construct his identity as a husband, and father in the U.S.

My Dad would yell at my Mom, but he never laid a hand on my Mom...he was very respectful of my Mom...short arguments about handling money... when they got married they had a long term goal...not just to get married. He said, I want to have a family, kids, raise those kids to be leaders in society, I want success for my kids, so I’m going to marry you – so, they were friends.... that’s the same thing I did with my wife.

Jose Eguez 2016 (Miami)

According to Jose, his parents were partners and his mother who was very devoted to her job as a public teacher. Jose claims he was inspired by her dedication to her students that she worked with after hours when they dropped by and shared dinner with Jose and his family.

For 42 years, and until recently Jose’s mother continued to teach even though she suffered from a severe pituitary gland disorder and a brain tumor that required treatment in the U.S. His mother’s independence is one reason Jose cites that his father has a deep respect for his mother. Jose’s told a humorous story about his Dad’s ultra-vigilant attitude when it came to overseeing the socialization outside the home of Jose’s sister who is now a very independent and successful architect in Ecuador. But, after telling the story, his tone changed as he confirmed in a solemn voice that his father’s rejection of *machismo* in favor of honoring his mother explains the relationship he has with his wife. Jose’s wife

Paula is a Colombian (Figure D5) immigrant and the couple works together to raise their children while she works part-time outside the home.



Figure D5: Jose Eguez and his wife “La Colombiana” singing karaoke together.

When Jose spoke of his mother’s generosity in the community he said this was the first time he gave much thought to why he feels committed that *Liga* must continue to be an organization that supports those in need in both Ecuador and the U.S. As we began to discuss the attributes of *Buen Vivir*, Jose provided more detail about his mother’s generosity that helped to shape the way he practices giving.

Let me tell you about my family..... we have special customs, like there’s a soup we make November 3rd to celebrate the dead, my Mom always ...even when money wasn’t a lot, she never made just enough, she always made more... she’d say, “someone might come”. She always wanted to have someone not from the family at the table, she always shared...she

was a teacher for the government at night, teaching to grownups like my Dad – he went to school late in life, when I was 12 he got his degree in Civil Engineering. She would invite one of her best students to eat with us, give him a special dish she'd made just for him or her...and I'm sure she learned it from somewhere. Also, while in high school, I did a lot of community work, I was part of a special group, a youth movement and we would go to very poor places and teach the kids.....teach them about Catholic religion and on weekends we went to homes to be with the elderly to help them out.

Jose Eguez 2016 (Miami)

I can attest to the fact that Jose walks in his mother's shoes because I've watched him work with club members and guests like myself in a way that left us all feeling very much at home.

The tuition at the high school Jose attended was very expensive because the majority of the students were the sons of governors and senators. Therefore, Jose's parents deliberately set about to inspire their son to live a balanced good life in which he would be able to identify himself as a professional equipped and interested in being of service to others. After graduation from college, Jose's preparation to migrate to the U.S. included his acquisition of a college degree in Computer Science specializing in Telecommunications and a solid background in concepts associated with *Buen Vivir*. But, after several setbacks and recoveries Jose is now living a life that he refers to as successful because he has intimate knowledge of the cost of claiming success based on the ideals of the American Dream.

Jose dreams of a career in technology began at age 11 when he worked beside his Uncle who is now owns a brokerage firm in London. After being refused a tourist visa he obtained a letter and permission to stay with relatives in Miami in 1996, a move that gave him the opportunity to attend a coop program between his institute in Ecuador and

Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Massachusetts. According to Jose, other Latin Americans and his family helped him as he traveled the U.S. studying to be a network engineer and acquire as much knowledge as possible about his profession so that he could return to Ecuador and graduate. He got a good job once he returned to Ecuador after graduation in 1998 with an Internet Service Provider. In 2000, with every intention to gain experience in his profession and return to Ecuador – he accepted a low paying job in Miami to qualify for a Visa which he finally acquired with the sponsorship of this employer in 2001.

When I came to this country I quickly acquired the American Dream, I'd say it took me about 4 years, to learn and buy into the American Dream ... this dream that the end justifies the means, and that I had to do whatever it took to become rich. I met my wife in 2002, married had a kid, so I started a business on the side...my salary was still very low ... I wasn't going to get anywhere, so I figured I'd get a second job, that's what you do here, right, you have a job and get a second job...all to make more money – so, I started my own business, within 3 years I was making 300K – to 400k in revenue, 120k profit... ..sure, I partied with some of the money... traveled, leisure...changed cars, then I started thinking like my Dad that I should do something for my kids...so, I started buying real-estate...two then three properties, then all of a sudden in 2007 and 2008, the market crashed...and I lost all the money I put into housing... I lost all but one apartment which I stopped paying for and it took a year to force me out. Yes, the sheriff arrived and moved me out. I had no legal residency (U.S.) and I couldn't travel outside the U.S. – it was a mess; I was very depressed.

Jose Eguez 2016 (Miami)

Jose's American Dream experiences provided him the leverage to be able to consume and live a very prestigious lifestyle. Even the memories of his father's industriousness was channeled by Jose as an approach to gain money – no price was too high to pay to gain the success and bells and whistles of the American Dream. The sense

of entitlement Jose felt that justified his overconsumption made him more susceptible to countless economic forces and circumstances at play in an economy built upon the ideal of the American Dream. Jose described this time in his life as the crisis that resulted in him falling into a deep depression that required an intervention from his mother, the help of a life coach, and a return to the values of *Buen Vivir*. In a recent conversation with Jose, he talked about why he decided to become a life coach and his renewed commitment to find ways for *Liga* to contribute to communities and individuals in need in Miami and Ecuador. “God gave me a life now because I have become a coach to help others. The training with the life coach woke up memories of what my Mom used to do...I started seeing myself differently, understanding I can ignite change...not wait for the next guy to do it” (Jose Eguez 2016).

We had stayed in the alcove talking for two hours after the Mexican Restaurant closed. As we walked to our cars, Jose turned to me and asked if I would mind answering a question about race, specifically about Afro-Americans. After I agreed, he said, “I don’t understand ... it seems like Afro-Americans live with resentment, cultural resentment, they were mistreated...I’m not denying that. But, you can see this in their attitude, it’s like “don’t mess with me, their demeanor, their body language... I see it in the way they treat people” (Jose Eguez 2016). I tried to answer Jose’s question and in the end the best response I could provide was that the behavior he’s seeing is being done by many people who have lost hope. But, I made note for future reference that Jose’s observations --- like Charlie de Cali in LA --- did provide possible insights into the complexities of Latin American and Afro-American inter-relationships.

Jose and Susana both strongly recommended I interview Cecilia Barraque, a former *Liga* president. They felt Cecilia's vast experience with local authorities and Ecuadorian diplomats had the potential to reveal in greater depth the struggles of *Liga* to do community service as an apolitical non-profit organization. The analysis that follows of Cecilia's lived experiences also continues the thematic focus of this dissertation on Ecuadorian immigrant identity construction in the U.S. and the exercise by them of acts of transnational giving.

Cecilia Barraque: Reconstructing Prestige

I drove to meet with Cecilia at her hairdresser's shop in Doral about 24 miles from downtown Miami. The shop was crowded and after I introduced myself to her, she returned the favor by taking me around the shop to meet several of the hairdressers. Cecilia has a striking demeanor and even in that casual setting she took control of the room. As a child, she learned the value of preparedness at the side of her mother when they migrated to New York City. Her claims to success include the accomplishments of her two daughters who both graduated from college and her recognition that she is very fortunate to be able to care for her 83-year-old mother. Like Laura Gonzales, Cecilia is married to a Cuban; but, the similarities appear to end at this point since the two women view the act of giving from two very different perspectives based on their lived experiences in the U.S. and Ecuador.

In Ecuador, Cecilia's father was a very successful banana exporter and when she was born her mother focused strictly on managing the household. After Cecilia's mother returned from a trip abroad to New York to care for her pregnant sister, the once upper-

middle class family's economic status plummeted along with falling banana export prices. While in New York, Cecilia's mother had been offered a job. Cecilia's mother assumed the leadership role for the family and decided that it would be best for the entire family to migrate at different times to New York City (NYC). Cecilia's mother accepted the job that was in an office in the same building as her sister's apartment. Cecilia's father struggled to save his business in Ecuador in vain and within a year the family was reunited and living in NYC.

Cecilia's parents sent her to the best Catholic schools in NYC and with her parents' consent she rapidly learned to navigate the city without the company of her brothers. She lived in NYC for 10 years and because of her experiences there and later in Miami, Cecilia took exception at the Pew Research estimate that there are only 600,000 plus Ecuadorians in the U.S. "There are more than that in New York alone...some people are so afraid; they live in fear if they don't have their papers. By 18, I was already a resident. Then, my brother who now lives in England, immigrated to the U.S. through Mexico (an illegal immigration). Our family tried desperately to get him a Visa without luck. My Aunt's husband's brother suggested he go through Mexico. I am a dual citizen" (Cecilia Barraque 2016).

For Cecilia, belonging is very important. For example, as she struggled to racially and ethnically self-identify according to the categories available on the U.S. and Ecuadorian censuses, it became clear that her transnational identity is of greater importance to her than her racial and ethnic heritage. Rather than focus on the categories and what they might or might not mean in relationship to her identity, Cecilia's viewpoint

is that all these labels that denote a group of people in one nation have a meaning for her that speaks only to their citizenship, or in her case, her belonging as a citizen of two nations.

Cecilia claimed indigenous and Afro blood during the part of the session when we discussed race and ethnicity in Ecuador. She is emphatic that there is no white or European blood in her family. After several minutes of deep thought, she identified as *mestiza* based on phenotypical characteristics she's seen in her grandmother. As she examined the categories on the Ecuadorian census survey she at first thought the available categories which posited whiteness at the top of the list and darker colors by shade at different levels at the bottom, were based on economic status and not ethnicity. This conflation of race and class which speaks to the racialization process in the Ecuador also influences her opinion about labels such as Hispanic and Latino/a used to describe Latin Americans in the U.S. Regarding her identity in the U.S., she expressed concern that the term Hispanic is a racialized expression that provides justification for prejudice people to group all Latin Americans together without any regard for the diversity of their cultures.

For Cecilia, dividing people into different classes has caused the most damage to members of the lowest class in both Ecuador and the U.S. Prior to the statement below, Cecilia and I discussed *Buen Vivir* and she said that although her father had gone above and beyond the call of duty to support his employees and one of his sisters, she had never seen either of her parents devote time to serving the community.

After moving here at age 24 (1984 to Miami), I went back to Ecuador for the first time and to have servants bothered me...they seemed like

slaves...people can't get up and get their own glass of water. But, I think they're learning now...yes, after Correa (2007-present) – I think he's done good things...now, the poor have benefits. Here, the American Dream is obviously to have your house, your family, your pet, live in a very comfortable way, not be rich ... just to have your family and a place you call a home – that's the American Dream, we had something similar over there (Ecuador).

Cecilia Barraque 2016 (Miami).

Above, Cecilia provides a definition of the American Dream that draws heavily from the life goals of *Buen Vivir*. Perhaps the reason that she conflated the two terms was due to the order in which I asked the questions. The intention of the question ordering (asking about *Buen Vivir* before the American Dream) was to stimulate her to talk about the possible sources that may have inspired her to seek ways to express her concern for the betterment of others. According to Cecilia, the experiences of her youth at home and in school were not the reason that she became interested in becoming a member of *Liga*.

As early as 1975 while living in NYC, Cecilia served as either a candidate, an elected queen or event organizer for Ecuadorian club competitions. She enjoyed the spotlight but didn't become very active as a member of the organizations in NYC; but, after moving to Miami she gained citywide notoriety as Miami's Latin American Queen of Queens. As her popularity increased, so did her interest in the business side of producing and managing the pageants. According to Cecilia, she became devoted to improving the process of electing the queens and attracting more support in Miami where she noticed other national groups were disjointed and not formally organized in the same

way as *Liga*. As a result of Cecilia's hard work, each year there are now two citywide events.

We now have up to 25 participants, 2 per country Nicaraguans win the most...but, when the populations in Miami change, so does the nationality of the winners. For example, the Brazilians won a lot...then, at one time there were a lot of wealthy people here from Latin America and the girls looked German, when all the wealthy people left then other groups started to win...they are the descendants of first generation Latin American migrants.

Cecilia Barraque 2016 (Miami).

After winning pageants and accomplishing many of the goals she set for herself as a project director, Cecilia accepted the invitation in the early 1990's to become a *Liga* board member. For her, this opportunity became another organizational challenge that resulted in *Liga* obtaining a 501 (c) (3) federal non-profit classification in 1999 under her leadership as president.

Because of her high visibility throughout Miami, with the U.S. Ecuadorian consulates, international corporate firms, and the Ecuadorian Ministry, there were occasions when she had to prove she would not succumb to or relinquish control to the hegemonic powers exercised by males inside or outside *Liga*. According to Cecilia, it was clear to her that male bias was the reason some men demanded that she act more "feminine or submissive – I told them this is not Ecuador, no I wouldn't put up with them (males) who didn't even respect me after I married [which meant to Cecilia they were disrespecting my husband]" (Cecilia Barraque 2016). As she discussed these incidents involving hegemonic masculinity, she concluded her comments by stating the reasons she continued to serve on the board even though at times there was opposition based at least in part because she is a woman.

Liga became first, my job then my family, my family should have been first, then job, then family.... I have two daughters... *Liga* was like my special child I had to take care of, my headache. I had to make sure *Liga's* name was at the top, that all the directors helped me to help the people in Ecuador.

Cecilia Barraque 2016 (Miami)

Cecilia made the above statement after she spoke of the joy she feels each time she travels with the Queen to Ecuador to distribute *Liga's* gifts to the poor. As Cecilia and I walked out the salon, I noticed the make and model of her late model luxurious car and this brought to mind her comments about esteem or the prestige that she attaches to citizenship and her work with the Miami pageant circuit and *Liga*. While driving back to Little Havana, I began to consider how much the subjective appeal of the American Dream had influenced the way Cecilia constructed her identity as an Ecuadorian immigrant in Miami. Based on her testimony, there was a strong possibility that to achieve a sense that she is living a good life Cecilia came to terms with the visceral desire to focus only on self-advancement associated with the American Dream. By taking control of these forces in a space whose mantra reflects many of the ideals of *Buen Vivir* – *Liga*, -- she redirected the energy to acquire personal esteem and began to pour that intense desire to achieve into creating projects to preserve Latin American culture in Miami and altruistic missions in Ecuador.

The final section of this chapter examines the lived experiences of two subjects that share one thing in common; for different reasons, they both infrequently attend *Liga* events and they believe they can't justify paying for a membership. For example, in one case, the interviewee testified that she can't think of a reason she should participate as a

member in *Liga* activities in the future. This section explores the subjects' attitudes about self-improvement, and contributing to the well-being of others who may be racially, gender, or ethnically different as part of a continuing process of identity construction in a social climate dominated by the ideal of the American Dream.

Jacqueline Sanchez: Class and Self-Determination

I met with Jacqueline Sanchez on two occasions near her home in Southland Mall at a Starbucks's about 25 miles from Downtown Miami. She recanted the life experiences below in which she was a victim of male bias with tears in her eyes; but, frequently she tended to overlap the stories about the pain she suffered because of *machismo* in a way that it was difficult to determine who exactly was the source of her anguish. The reason became clear during the second interview when she reached the conclusion that hegemonic masculinity had framed and shaped most of her life.

Jacqueline began the first interview by stating she was born in Guayas province in 1963 and traveled with her mother to New York for the first time in 1991 to help care for sister that had just delivered a baby. While in NYC, Jacqueline began to stand in opposition to the dominance of her father. Against his wishes for her to return to Ecuador, she completed classes in English and cosmetology, and began working in NYC without papers with the goal to earn enough to pay for her citizenship. Also, her father was very displeased when she met, and became pregnant by a 62-year-old white Yugoslavian-American citizen.

Yes, my father practiced *machismo*. I came to the U.S. to get away from *machismo*. My mother stayed home to raise children --- me, I had my daughter for myself, not for some man. My father was habitually unfaithful and had mistresses all his life and ignored and mistreated my

mother... it broke her heart, I watched her cry because I was always by her side.

Jacqueline Sanchez 2016 (Miami).

In NYC Jacqueline was outside the control of her father; but, she stated that the Yugoslavian-American was verbally abusive and demanded that she confine all her activities to the home and avoid contact with her family in the city. In both Ecuador and the U.S., the complex relationships intersecting race and class that she formed with males who practiced hegemonic masculinity framed and shaped the construction of Jacqueline's identity.

Desperate to escape the control of the Yugoslavian-American, Jacqueline asked for her father's help to return to Ecuador where she gave birth to her daughter. Shortly after Jacqueline arrived in Ecuador, her father's business failed; but, this setback did not reduce his attempts to control her. On one occasion, Jacqueline asked his opinion about love and the role of women. Per Jacqueline, his response was bitter as he defined love as only an attraction that has nothing to do with giving women money. He added that he only gives women money to get what he wants. Without pausing, he shouted that love is not real and that he does not respect any woman, especially his wife (Jacqueline's mother) and his mistress. He repeatedly referred to both woman as stupid and because they seldom complained he believed they both accepted his dubious behavior. He became livid when Jacqueline asked him how would he feel if her mother had cheated on him. He responded quickly by accusing Jacqueline of being a *machisma* (masculine female). At that point, Jacqueline borrowed money and returned to NYC leaving her child in the care of a relative.

Jacqueline's father was an English-speaking negro. But, based on her mom's Spanish surname, Jacqueline claims white and *montubios* heritage on her mother's side. "We are mixed *blanco* (white) and negro, you can tell by our surname which is different than Afro-Ecuadorians from Esmeraldas...they have different roots...I have European roots, I'm not Afro-Ecuadorian, I'm *mulata*" (Jacqueline Sanchez 2016). In the U.S., Jacqueline self-identifies as Latina; but she became confused by the racial categories on the survey. After verbalizing possible reasons each label did not fit her, she said that she believes she is not 100% Afro, white, or negro. She laughed at this response and pushed the survey sheet aside while politely denying she belonged to any of the racial categories because she is *mulata*.

Being *mulata* and not Afro-American or Afro-Latina is very important to Jacqueline even though her mother ostracized her because of her darker skin and curly hair. In the U.S., she's seldom mistaken for an Afro-American and she views her *mulata* identity to be an asset – something she said men found very attractive. Only in Miami was she ever discriminated against because of her racial-ethnic identity. She recalled that on that occasion a Cuban landlord told her in no uncertain terms that he did not rent to her kind --- even though Jacqueline said that she could tell he was also *mulato*. Jacqueline's claim of whiteness being a part of her mixed racial heritage is used by her to mitigate her Afro ancestry --- a status that in Miami's hegemonic social structure would be an indication that she is a member of the darker lower class.

As the conversation began to turn to the impact of ideals such as the American Dream and *Buen Vivir* in Jacqueline's construction of identity, Jacqueline made it

perfectly clear that to claim the American Dream one must be a member of the middle-class.

At first, the American Dream meant to have what I wanted, spend, spend, spend...I had a credit card when I lived in Ohio, that was a disaster...too much debt. I worked anywhere they'd let me without papers...sold Avon, made and sold jewelry. I never thought of myself as a *obero* – a day laborer, construction worker, cooks, seamstress – whatever kind of work they do.

Jacqueline Sanchez 2016 (Miami).

As previously argued, Jacqueline's constructed identity as a middle-class *mulata* elevates her above Miami's lower class. After the hostile conversation with her father, she was determined to return to the U.S. by way of Miami to avoid having any contact with the Yugoslavian-American. Shortly after arriving in Miami in 1996, she met and married a Mexican-American. In this way, she began a journey to acquire U.S. citizenship, or another factor that would set her apart from Miami's non-citizen lower class.

In 2004, Jacqueline's marriage to a Mexican auto mechanic with U.S. citizenship enabled her to accomplish a life altering and long-time goal. Her immigration status as the Mexican-American's wife meant that she held a Green Card. With this Green Card status and the support of her husband they legally obtained counsel and brought her eleven-year-old daughter to the U.S. Jacqueline and her husband now have a pre-teen son, they own a home, and the money she earns by designing, making, and selling jewelry and his salary are used to sustain the family. Jacqueline's inability to find employment limits in many ways her ability to take advantage of the opportunities of the American Dream.

For Jacqueline, the American Dream also represents opportunity while at the same time she feels that devoting your life to this ideal has nothing to do with exercising generosity and the incentive to care for what you already have been able to acquire.

Oh no, the American Dream has nothing to do with generosity. It's is hard, the American Dream –I am proud to have dual-citizenship and I've retrained myself now for new work, but Americans are closing the doors. I taught my children to speak Spanish...to care for their culture. I want them to understand how Ecuadorians see the world. In my country the custom is to take care of the things that are given to you. Mom, she set aside something out of what she had – her Mom and her grandmother believed if you give it should be without expecting anything back... it's a circle ... Even my Papa had a good heart too, even though he was influenced by *machismo* ...he tried to help kids, adults too.

Jacqueline Sanchez 2016 (Miami).

Jacqueline is reproducing a lifestyle and contributing to the well-being of her family on an individual level. In this way, her lived experiences reveal that despite the power of male hegemony in the U.S. and Ecuador and her inability to seize the promised opportunities of the American Dream that she expected by migrating to the U.S she has not forgotten the central concepts of *Buen Vivir*.

Limited resources sometimes prevent Jacqueline and her husband from participating in *Liga* events and she's given little thought to joining the organization. The distance factor and expenses involved are often outside the family's budget. Above all, Jacqueline relishes the fact that she --- and not a dominate male --- made the choice to stay at home and care for her family. For this reason, she is able to speak of what she referred to as her less than perfect marriage as a space in which she has been able to give meaning herself to her personal identity as wife, mother, and grandmother. Jacqueline said, "I prefer to be involved with those I love rather than mix with other people I am not

familiar with. I don't have a reason to make my world bigger, include more people" (Jacqueline Sanchez 2016). When Jacqueline migrated, her primary objective was to find meaningful or professional work in order to be a home owner and build a family. Her testimony proves she feels she has accomplished both her Ecuadorian and U.S. American Dream-based dreams. So, although she is proud of the work the club is doing, her support of others will be for those she loves and there is little likelihood that she will increase her participation in the organization.

In the next section, the interviewee does not have financial obligations which limit her attendance or keep her from joining *Liga* and attending events. However, her testimony reveals that the needs of the community and changes in family dynamics and personal objectives can also result in a decrease in interest on the part of potential *Liga* participants.

Rosie Flores: Caretaker of Humankind and the Planet

I met Rosie at her home near the Miami Zoo in a small cul-de-sac approximately 25 miles from downtown Miami. She was one of the guests who came to chat with me at the bar when I attended the first event at *Liga*. She became very excited about this research and immediately volunteered to be interviewed. As a result, I visited with Rosie on two occasions in her home. The first session we only concentrated on the interview and the second time I returned as a guest to sit and chat with Rosie, her Mother, and daughter about many issues including her daughters plans to begin studies soon as a Freshman at a university. Because Rosie feels a great deal of who she has become in the U.S. is based on the ways she has emulated or rejected the behavior of her parents, this

section about her places an equal emphasis on the acculturation of her Mom and Dad in the U.S.

Rosie's ranch style one-story home is surrounded by an assortment of vegetation that Rosie later told me she planted to attract a species of rare butterfly. As we settled into a dining room table near the outside pool to begin the interview, I was introduced to an exchange student Rosie is hosting from Germany and her son and daughter. Rosie warmly laughed and explained that her home is buzzing with activity because she surrounds her family with a diversity of new friends and associates to introduce them to new ideas and experiences.

Rosie was born in Pichincha Province, near Quito in the small town of Barrio Obrerero. The family never had money problems and for the most part neither parent was concerned or involved in any way with the community. Like other middle-classed families in Quito, Rosie's Dad employed the rules of Quito's racialized society to closely supervise the hiring of household workers and nannies in accordance with the prevailing dictums of society.

We had maids in Ecuador. Dad refused to hire a Black maid. At that time there weren't many Blacks in the sierra and he just felt they weren't as good as a white person. Even though other rich families hired blacks – most were indigenous, my father said “no Blacks”. He hired only “Otobalos” (indigenous).

Rosie Flores 2016 (Miami).

Once in Long Beach, Rosie's father used the labor of his sons to keep the cars and yard in order. Within the family, her father was described by Rosie as a proud Ecuadorian former member of the Army who exercised complete control to make sure all

bills were up to date and always made sure there was food on the table. In Ecuador, Rosie's Mom was not allowed to have anything to do with household financial matters. Rosie's Mom began to assume a more dominate role in the family when she took the initiative to decide the family should go to the US to seek out a better life and greater opportunities. Once the family arrived in the U.S., Rosie's father had to begin to relinquish his total control of the family.

At first, Rosie's father stayed in Ecuador while Rosie's mother and the kids independently established a home in Long Beach near Los Angeles (LA). Rosie did witness many occasions in which her Mom was verbally abused by her father. But, there were very few occasions in which her mother was physically assaulted and Rosie remembers her Dad as a hard worker who was always present in the home and never interested in other women or abandoning his family. Rosie's father was the oldest sibling in his family and above all else, he demanded respect. The family's house in Ecuador was always well furnished with expensive woods and new devices that her father believed made his neighbors believe the family was a member of the well-to-do class in the community.

Even after arriving in the U.S., her father held true to his Ecuadorian culture and according to Rosie, "He never became completely acculturated to US ways and, unlike his brothers, Dad never adapted to U.S. culture. But, he made one exception, he believed in education and believed his wife and children should all be educated" (Rosie Flores 2016). Rosie watched her proud father immediately seek the American Dream which included buying the bells and whistles that reflected once again his membership in a

higher class than that of a laborer. Ironically, even though he was a highly trained graphic artist and teacher in Ecuador, he had to rise in the ranks to become a self-taught machinist – a trade he learned by watching as he swept floors at MacDonal Douglas Aircraft.

Rosie's Mom had also undergone training to be a legal secretary in Ecuador, but, in their homeland the father's rules grounded in *machismo* were not questioned. Her mother relinquished to the taunts of her father and stayed in the home and did not begin to work even part time until after all the children were attending school. When her mother did go to work after migrating to the U.S., her weak English language skills prevented her from being an office employee. At first, she self-studied and learned enough English to work at Memorial Hospital with nutritionists. At one point, both parents took English classes in a local high school and alternated days of attendance to care for kids. When the earnings of Rosie's mother became an important source of revenue that contributed to the well-being of the family this undermined a core belief of *machismo* that males work outside the home and the only acceptable role for females is to care for the household and the children.

Rosie identifies in Ecuador as *mestiza* based on a mixed Spanish-Jewish-indigenous heritage. Her racial-ethnic identity is a matter of pride because she is a dual-citizen of Ecuador and the U.S., or in her words "I identify myself as North American, because I was raised here and I know the ins and outs. I'm also fully Ecuadorian, I know the culture well, I'm bilingual. In the U.S., I'm white because the predominately the only relative that was not white or Spanish was my grandmother" Rosie Flores (2016). Rosie's

claim of whiteness is tempered by her experiences in LA, a city in which being Latina is often conflated with ideas that racialize all Latin Americans.

Although her father firmly situated blacks at the bottom of Ecuador's racial-ethnic social ladder, these narrow ideas about the social stratification of people based on preconceived notions of white superiority from Ecuador did not sit well with Rosie. As she entered her last two years in a private Catholic high school in LA, she found herself at odds with her father's narrow perceptions about the differences in people that reflected the influence of racialization concepts in Ecuador and the U.S.

I stood up to my father when he disagreed about my wanting to become a bi-lingual teacher. He said, "Why are you going to go to work teaching those Mexicans. You teach only English! Why you want to be associated with Mexicans"? He hated being called a Mexican. He thought of them as unsophisticated, uneducated, he was out of touch with Cesar Chavez.

Rosie Flores 2016 (Miami).

The racist comments above by her father intensified Rosie's lifelong interest in teaching language. But, as she boarded a flight with the excuse to her father that she wanted to finish her education in Ecuador so that she could be immersed in an environment in which Spanish was correctly spoken, she was determined to resist his dominance over her life based on her gender. Because Rosie attended private schools in LA and she did not see her parents express any interest in being of service to others outside their home, her life experiences so far did not equip her to understand that the racist misconceptions held by her father stood in stark contrast to the dominate ideal of a good life in Ecuador or *Buen Vivir*.

While in Ecuador for two years, Rosie followed in the footsteps of her Aunt and Uncle who worked with the indigenous. Rosie watched the middle-class flaunt their cars and defame their indigenous maids as they shunned people they labeled lower-class because of their darker skin or their last names which did not appear to sound Spanish or in some way denoted the bearer might have Afro or indigenous ancestry. Rosie lived in the Amazon amongst the indigenous who her father had cautioned her to avoid. During this time, “I learned about the Ecuador that was of no importance to my father...I learned their culture...to care for the land and I learned about poverty” (Rosie Flores 2016). This time spent in Ecuador marks Rosie’s introduction to the principles of *Buen Vivir* or the living of a simplistic and good life based on fairness, compassion, and the dedication to self-improvement to be of service to others.

Rosie returned to the U.S. and after completing her degree she began a career as a bilingual teacher. In this way, she satisfied her father’s dream for her to become a professional like him to acquire the American Dream. According to Rosie, the goals to claim the success tied to the American Dream are complex and interrelated.

The American Dream means you buy your own home, make sure you have a steady job and income, make sure you’re not wasting time or making the best of your time...you succeed if you put your mind to it. Always have a positive side, and for me a strong spiritual part...this is the most important to me...I committed my life to my Lord.

Rosie Flores 2016 (Miami).

One important irony that is present in the above statement by Rosie is that she has incorporated property ownership into the definition of the American Dream. According to Rosie, when the family arrived in LA, they stayed with her Aunt in a rented property

and for this reason her father --- who never purchased a home in the U.S. --- normalized renting in the U.S. as a sign that he had achieved the American Dream. Rosie, unlike her father has embraced the idea that home ownership is the ultimate indication that she has achieved the American Dream. Also, Rosie's strong Christian belief system is incorporated into the meaning of this ideal. This acceptance by Rosie of the role of faith in a higher power stands in sharp contrast to her parent's ceremonial and insincere role in the church when she was a child. Per Rosie, her parents only went to church as a way to demonstrate to the community that they were members of the middle-class congregation. There is a symbiotic relationship between Rosie's religious beliefs and her interpretation of the American Dream. Both exercise an influence as she shapes her identity as wife, mother, and the guardian in her home of her aging mother.

Rosie married a Floridian Ecuadorian immigrant in 1980 and moved to Miami. She describes her husband as a kind man who is very respectful of women – a trait she feels makes him the exception to the rule because in Ecuador his childhood was grossly impacted by witnessing unjust acts committed against his mother that were provoked by the practice of *machismo*.

Over the years, Rosie has changed her affiliation to *Liga* to meet the needs of her growing family. In fact, Rosie joined *Liga* about two years ago because she was looking for an organization in which her daughter could experience being Ecuadorian and learn about the customs of her homeland. Based on her testimony, there is another possible reason for involving her daughter in the club. Many of *Liga's* members are well-educated and being exposed to phonetically correct Spanish spoken by *Liga* members

could be very important to Rosie. For example, by speaking clearer and more precise Spanish, this could lower the probability that her daughter be misconstrued to be a member of Miami's non-citizen lower class. This possible explanation implies that Rosie desires to protect her daughter from becoming (as her father would describe) an analogous Mexican – or, the conflation of race and class that is representative of a non-citizen in Miami.

The participation of Rosie and her daughter at *Liga* ended abruptly when the daughter after attending only a few times complained that the majority of the members were older and there seldom were young people her age at the organization's events. According to Rosie, she had no idea what projects the club sponsored because "I stopped going and I didn't really notice what they were trying to do" (Rosie Flores 2016). Rosie is now retired and earlier in 2016 she started her own non-profit for special needs children that is sponsored by Cuban telenovela actor and star, William Levy. The organization is what she describes as a "life-long dream. I now have my family, work, and church responsibilities. The missionary experience in Ecuador – with the indigenous -- turned my world" (Rosie Flores 2016).

Rosie's religious experiences are intertwined with the life lessons she received by associating closely in Ecuador on a day to day basis with the indigenous. Considering her busy schedule which includes tending to her exotic garden, family, responsibilities at church and work, Rosie feels she might attend *Liga* events in the future; but, it is highly unlikely that she'll consider rejoining *Liga*. Rosie has chosen to embrace the *Buen Vivir* principle of giving as part of her individual identity in two interconnected ways; 1) she is

adding value to the environment by employing gardening techniques she learned in the Amazon, and 2) she diligently works on many levels to increase the value and well-being of others.

This section of the chapter confirms that Jacqueline and Rosie do have different reasons for not joining *Liga* in the future and limiting their participation in the club's events. Also, the testimonies in this final section of the chapter give credence to the concerns of the *Liga* board members that the organization needs to recruit younger members and give some thought to the fees charged for membership and event attendance. But, the testimonies of the participants in this chapter who practice giving on individual and/or as part of philanthropic organizations provide proof that the customs of *Buen Vivir* are resilient enough to survive the gross racialization practices particular to the social climate of Miami.

The next chapter continues to explore the meaning and function of the principles of *Buen Vivir* and the quest for the American Dream as cultural framers and shapers of U.S. Ecuadorian immigrant lived experiences. By analyzing how the feelings, attitudes and beliefs or social climate of New York City impacts Ecuadorian migrant identity construction, this research will serve as a way to compare their exercise of giving in the U.S. in three very different cultural spaces.

Chapter Seven

New York City Spatial Mobility and Cultural Diversity

Community is that place where the person you least want to live with always lives. And when that person moves away, someone else arises to take his or her place.

Parker J. Palmer

The keyword to describe New York City, New York is community. The vast city is comprised of five boroughs – Manhattan, the Bronx, Staten Island, Queens, and Brooklyn (Figure E1) -- and in each the population of U.S. and non-U.S. citizens is ethnically diverse. Above, activist and educator Parker J. Palmer argues that the plasticity of neighborhoods and the inherent tensions between residents is a norm. This chapter examines the impact of changes since the late 1960's in the ethnic, racial, and class hegemonic structure of the communities such as Elmhurst-Corona in Queens and how shifts in the social climate of the city of New York influenced the lived experiences of migrants from Ecuador.



Figure E1: New York City's Five Boroughs

This chapter builds on Roger Sanjek's celebrated ethnographic study (1998) examining the consequences of conflicts and collaborations between various immigrant populations in New York and how these intersected and impacted social, economic, and political circumstances inside and outside the Elmhurst-Corona community. In addition to Sanjek, this research expands on Pribilsky's (2012) ethnographic study that examines what he refers to as *Iony*, or the aspiration to acquire things that in part shapes undocumented Ecuadorian male consumption in New York City (325). Because the existing scholarship specifically about Ecuadorian immigrants in New York City (NYC)

is a scant and nascent body of work, the theoretical framework of this chapter also embraces the findings of scholars across disciplines about this population. For example, Sociologist Sonia Song-Ha Lee's (2014) exploration of the hierarchy of specific Latin American nationalistic groups in the politics of NYC and Cordero-Guzmán's (2005) analysis of the role of community organizations in the city will be briefly discussed to enhance the historical discourse in this chapter about the social and political environment of NYC launched earlier by Sanjek.

The first section of this chapter is a historical examination of late 20th and early 21st century prevailing feelings, beliefs, and opinions about the shifting social and political agency of Latin Americans in NYC. The other two sections examine informant testimonies from two standpoints; 1) four Ecuadorian immigrants discuss the social dynamics involved in their decision to settle in NYC, and 2) the final section explores the lived experiences of three subjects who concurrently live as residents of multiple transnational cities including NYC.

The approach of this chapter is to provide the third part of this dissertation's comparative study about the differences in the social climates of NYC, LA, and Miami and the impact of these spaces on the cultural practice of giving within the context of U.S. Ecuadorian immigration. Also, the subject testimonies in the chapter open the door to critically draw conclusions about the arguments and findings brought to light and analyzed in this dissertation's conclusory chapter.

The Socio-Political Structure of Elmhurst-Corona

According to Sanjek (1998), prior to the late 1960's, a white majority population controlled the social and political climate of the two Queens' neighborhoods of Elmhurst and Corona. But, after the first influx of Latin American immigrants dominated a flow of various ethnic groups into the community, white exodus rapidly increased to the point that the NYC media and exploitative politicians began to refer to --- in sometimes disparaging terms -- Elmhurst, Corona, and Jackson Heights as predominately Latin American enclaves. Ecuadorian migrants who were a part of several Latin American waves of immigrants to these three communities and Corona (Figure E2) between the late 1960's and early 1990's - found storefronts closed and a shortage of jobs in the four neighborhoods except for a few in seedy sweetshops that were a part of NYC's declining apparel industry. By the 1990's, Latin American immigrants had become a part of the white-collar workforce that supplied the labor to sustain Mayor Edward Koch's "World City"¹⁵ concept. The idea of World City envisioned NYC as a global center of banking, business, and the fine arts. In practice, both Mayors Koch (1978-1989) and Dinkins' (1990-1993) administrations redirected federal funds specifically ear-marked to rejuvenate impoverished communities towards the construction of the infrastructure of Manhattan (64-142).

¹⁵ The concept of "World City" was later embraced by Mayor Roy Dinkins but referred to during his administration as "A Gorgeous Mosaic" – a term which implied economic prosperity for NYC in an atmosphere of social multi-cultural equality. Both political conceptualizations of NYC had similar outcomes from the prospective of impoverished neighborhoods in the five boroughs.

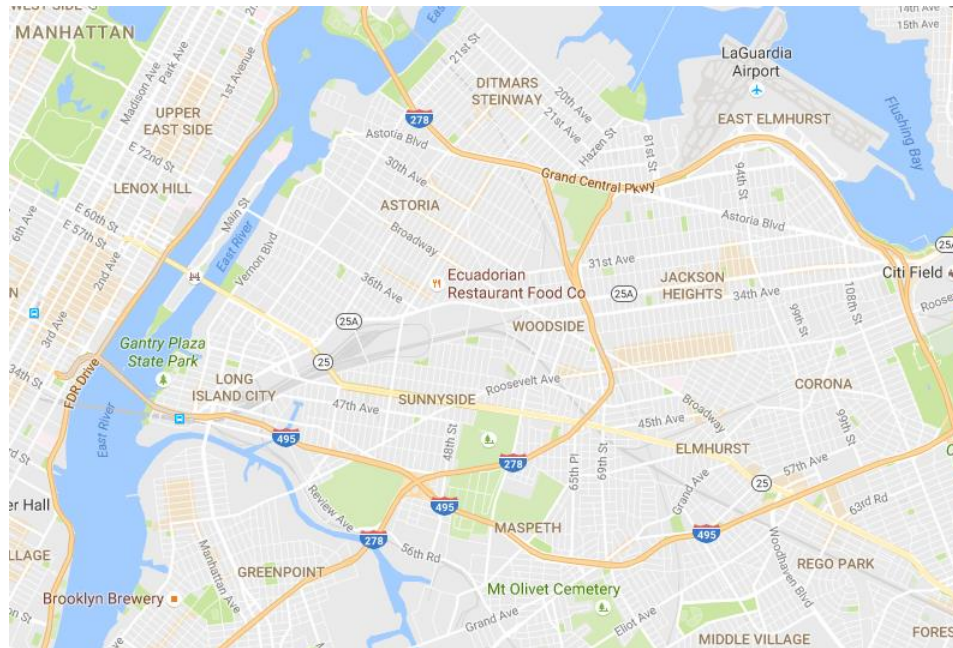


Figure E2: Queens Borough – Elmhurst, Corona, Jackson Heights, and Woodside Communities

In the neighborhoods, Latin American immigrants negotiated the complex processes of assimilation and acculturation in communities in which ethnic origins, race and class strongly divided the residents. The prevailing notion in NYC was that new immigrants purposefully stole less desirable and menial factory and service industry jobs from citizens. This notion created a class binary in which the born and naturalized citizen was pitted against the “illegal alien” who was accused of stealing the jobs of existing citizens. Miles (2004) analysis sheds light on this issue from the U.S. Ecuadorian immigrant perspective; she argues that Ecuadorian migrants understand both the process of racialization -- based on class and ethnic differences -- and the stratification of social and economic opportunities in the U.S. from their lived experiences in Ecuador (186). But, having the knowledge to comprehend the reason why one is a victim of prejudice and discrimination does not lessen or distort the realities that caused the victimization.

Many NYC communities in the late 1990's became domains in which the residents suffered greatly because of the unequal distribution of social and economic opportunities and a rising level of ethnic chaos between neighbors. For example, reduced government subsidies for schools in NYC deprecated the quality of free-public education forcing Latin American residents concerned about the quality of the preparation of their children for the future in Elmhurst-Corona to invest limited household funds in the parochial private school system. Also, by the late 1990's, the numbers of crimes involving violence against people of color escalated in the boroughs and included the 1994 choke-hold death of Puerto Rican Anthony Baez (1994) by a white police officer and the hate-crime killing of Ecuadorian immigrant Manuel Aucaquizphi. In the case of Aucaquizphi, the prevailing viewpoint of the racist perpetrators was that Aucaquizphi was a "Mexican" they accused of trying to invade their space, a community park.

The animosity against people who were perceived to have African heritage based on their phenotypical characteristics was especially acute throughout NYC. This translated to mean that racist notions of inferiority and superiority were used to deny equal opportunities of housing and employment to the ethnically diverse and stratified residents of Elmhurst-Corona (Sanjek 1998). Even within the arena of political advocacy, particular national Latin American groups based on their strength in numbers exercised more political agency than other national groups, i.e., the Puerto Ricans who often embraced and advocated for smaller Latin American groups (Lee 2014 and Cordero-Guzmán 2005). Ecuadorians by 2008 were the fourth largest Latin American population in NYC (Caro-López 2011); but, like other South and Central Americans,

many were not counted in official surveys because of their status as a non-citizen.

According to a report by Caro-Lopéz -- published by CLACLS (CUNY's Center for Latin American, Caribbean & Latino Studies), Queens borough still in 2010 had the highest concentration of immigrants from Ecuador because in neighborhoods like Elmhurst-Corona there are many well-established businesses catering to the specific needs of Latin American migrant populations (Vertovec 2004). For example, the Ecuadorian owned Delgado Travel Agency in Jackson Heights specializes in money exchanges between the U.S. and Ecuador.¹⁶ According to Caro-Lopéz (2011), Elmhurst-Corona has many restaurants and social clubs that offer a variety of Latin American cuisines and cultural entertainment – sometimes under one roof.

The Ecuadorian Consulate maintains a satellite office in Woodside. Most U.S. Ecuadorians in the community are first generation and the 2008 median household income of Ecuadorians was over \$55,000¹⁷ (11). But, since 2005, Wyly, et.al. claim aggressive gentrification is forcing all ethnic groups out of Elmhurst-Corona (2612-2614). After 2008, a greater number of Ecuadorian migrants arrived in NYC were well

¹⁶ Pribilsky's (2012) ethnography describes the Latin American businesses of Elmhurst, Corona, and Jackson Heights. His argues that these businesses create a conducive ambiance to encourage spending and the logistics to support an exchange of goods from which the two male undocumented Ecuadorian subjects of his study derive a feeling of success by balancing a desire to have things, *Iony*, and effectively manage personal finances so that they are able to send remittances back to Ecuador (325).

¹⁷ Household income figures for Ecuadorians places them in second place in relationship to other Latin American populations and disaggregation of the figures reveals that Ecuadorian female migrants in NYC born in Ecuador are twice as likely to not work in comparison to their male counterparts.

educated; but, there has also been a significant rise over the past ten years in the number of Ecuadorian immigrants entering the U.S. and settling in this area that do not have high school diplomas (2-15).

During the investigatory phase in the field, I spoke to Ecuadorian consulate representatives in both L.A. and Miami about the economics and educational shifts involved in the current migration of Ecuadorians to the U.S. According to Leonor Torres, who acts as liaison between Ecuadorian Civic Committee Nueva York (ECCNY) and the consulate's NYC offices, the consulates in NYC, are responding -- according to U.S. and Ecuadorian laws -- to the changes in immigration statistics by developing some basic educational programs; but, little is being done to support the migrant's economic and social adjustment to living in NYC. The absence of these types of services is acutely felt by many Ecuadorian migrants who have already exhausted their personal and family resources to arrive in the U.S. Launching a petition in Ecuador to request settlement in the U.S. requires a heavy investment of cash. Also, the U.S. immigration process is strict to purposefully eliminate unsponsored (without familial or business documented support) transnational migrations. Illegal migration costs can be even higher and more dangerous. Migrants frequently become involved in a network of human traffickers who charge exorbitant fees and enact punishments ---including death--- to either the borrower and family members for slow or lack of fee payment (Bertoli 2010 and Jokisch & Kyle 2008).

In NYC, the Ecuadorian Consulate relationship with the community clubs that provide settlement economic and social services has not always been supportive --- which

may be due to the apolitical role the clubs play in the public sector¹⁸. Part of this section explores how one local Ecuadorian club, Ecuadorian Civic Committee Nueva York (ECCNY) in Corona, has modified their support services to the Ecuadorian immigrant community based on the assumption that many migrants from their country are now not financially and educationally prepared to resettle in the U.S. The next two sections examine the testimonies of seven participants who speak to the past and current status of Ecuadorians living in Elmhurst-Corona and how educational level, employment opportunities, and racialization issues may or may not impact U.S. Ecuadorian immigrant identity construction and transnational giving.

Oswaldo Guzmán: Past and Present Preparedness

Originally, my plan in NYC was the same as the one I used in LA and Miami; the strategy was to meet and arrange interviews with the leaders of one of the Ecuadorian organizations by using the list of national Ecuadorian organizations to; 1) find the name of officials, and 2) I then searched individual Facebook pages and attempted to contact these club officers individually by leaving text messages for them on this social medium. The club with the highest Internet visibility was the Ecuadorian International Center (EIC) in Jackson Heights.

The website of EIC features a list of special services offered to the community by the agency including English, citizenship preparation, and GED classes. Attempts to reach EIC over a two-week period by phone and at their offices failed and as a result I

¹⁸ As registered non-profit foundations, political involvement is heavily scrutinized by federal authorities: <https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/charitable-organizations/the-restriction-of-political-campaign-intervention-by-section-501-c-3-tax-exempt-organizations>).

turned my attention to ECCNY. After a long conversation with Leonor Torres and her son on Facebook and by phone, I obtained the list of and contact information for two ECCNY's current board officers and this led me to call and make an appointment to interview Oswaldo Guzmán and his wife Marta.

I met with Oswaldo Guzmán in his office which was on the second floor at the end of a narrow hallway in the suite of rooms of the Ecuadorian Civic Committee Nueva York (ECCNY) foundation in Corona (Figure E3). The small room was full of donations being staged for shipment for earthquake victims in Ecuador and the walls were decorated with photos and memorabilia featuring Oswaldo in the company of Ecuadorian and U.S. dignitaries. Oswaldo's interview was the only session I conducted during the field research phase in which another interviewee was present. During the meeting, his wife Marta remained in the office and the interaction of the two revealed that they share a common concern and sense of pride in the accomplishments of their family and the role ECCNY has played in the Latin American community of NYC.

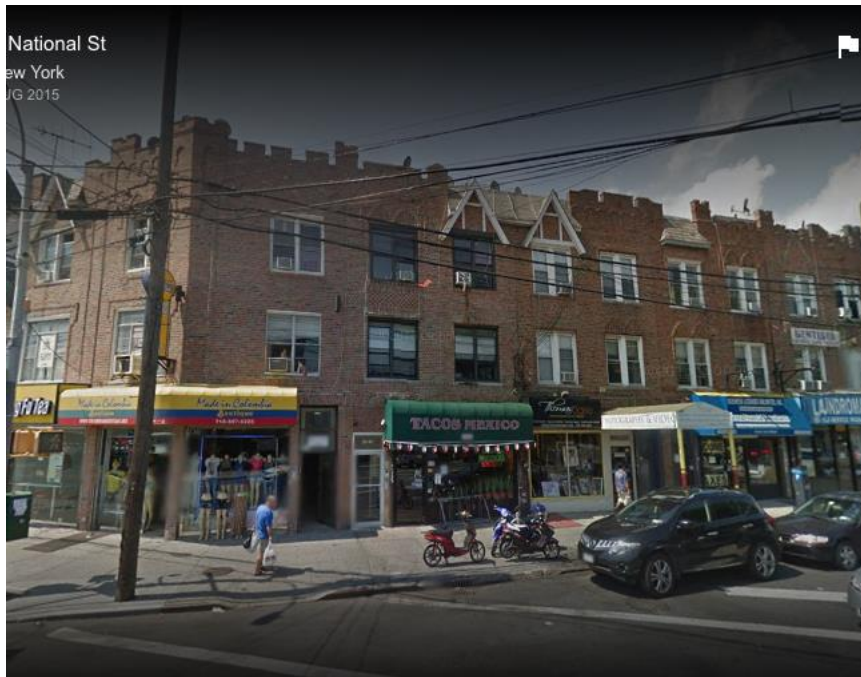


Figure E3: Ecuadorian Civic Committee Nueva York (ECCNY)
[@ GoogleStreetView-2017]

Oswaldo Guzmán: Leadership and Service

The first few questions I asked Oswaldo were about race and the process of racial and ethnic classification on national census surveys. Oswaldo began by basing his claim of *mestizo* identity in Ecuador on a combined indigenous and *blanco* (white) heritage and in the U.S. he selected *Español* (Spanish or from Spain) as an ethnicity and white as a race. Regarding Oswaldo's self-identification as white in the U.S., he came to this conclusion by using a process of elimination which he summarized and explained by saying that in the U.S., *blanco* means a person who is not of Indian or Afro ancestry.

Regarding people in the U.S. and Ecuador of African heritage, Oswaldo's lived experiences in his homeland did not bring him into contact with many Afro-Ecuadorians and perhaps this is the reason that he continues to define them in terms of the place in

Ecuador in which he believes they reside, “There are various zones in our country like Esmeraldas, and, in Chota where there are Afro-Ecuadorians” (Oswaldo Guzmán 2016). Oswaldo immigrated to the U.S. in 1969 prior to the beginning of massive migrations of Ecuadorian people of African ancestry away from Esmeraldas and Imbabura (Chota) provinces and into various national urban centers. Perhaps this explains why his perception of the current geographical location of Afro-Ecuadorians in Ecuador does not reflect the reality that they are now a population that is widely scattered and highly visible in urban areas such as in the Pichincha province of his birth¹⁹.

I began to explore how much Oswaldo’s memories of his socially stratified homeland impacted the way he established relationships and constructed an identity in the U.S. by asking him questions about his childhood. Oswaldo was one of three children and the only male in a family in which his father and mother emphasized the importance of mutual respect for others. Both parents were involved in running businesses outside the home which Oswaldo remembers as a comfortable residence located in a community where his friends were also of the same middle-class. Oswaldo described his father as a man he greatly respected that taught him by example that woman should be treated as equals.

¹⁹ According to Sánchez (2013), 75% of Afro-Ecuadorians now live in urban areas and although 44% of Afro-Ecuadorians live in Esmeraldas and in the province of Oswaldo Guzman’s birth Pichincha, at least 4.5% of Ecuador’s Afro population now resides in the city of Quito (154).

Regarding the ways Oswaldo's educational background intersected with his receiving life lessons from his parents and the community about his responsibility to contribute to the well-being of others, he agreed serving humanity is a big part of his dream of who he is.

In grade school they prepared us to become teachers. We were always thinking of ways to help poor children, me and my friends ...when in 4th grade you had to give a class to children in a community without much in the way of resources. My friends and I created a system of giving those most needy food, try to buy them things that would help them lift themselves up...then, when I was in university I tried to do the same thing. We'd go to places in which people resided that were having mental problems – we brought them clothing, things they needed.

Oswaldo Guzmán, 2016 (NYC).

The greatest concern of his parents was that Oswaldo and his siblings focus on education to prepare themselves to become professionals. Oswaldo's father passed away before he was able to see his son travel to Quito to acquire a college degree.

In 1969, Oswaldo arrived in NYC with a degree in Psychology and the dream of becoming a college professor. He began to immediately establish a network of friends which included an Argentinian and other Ecuadorians that helped him as he searched for work and improved his English. Oswaldo described this friendship network as one in which he experienced belonging and support, "All were dedicated to learning and self-improvement...plus, we formed a sports club and I was appointed in 1972 as president. Today, I still serve as secretary and the club has members from all over NYC" (Oswaldo Guzmán 2016). The network's support enabled Oswaldo's efforts to acculturate as he professionally advanced from a menial job in the garment industry to a job before his

recent retirement as a dealer of blue list stocks on Wall Street. According to Oswaldo, this lucrative career enabled him to acquire the American Dream.

Oswaldo's definition of the American Dream is derived from principles that define living good as an experience that he believes is possible in the U.S.

Part of the American Dream is to obtain property – unlike renting—to own you can use the property for your own purposes -- in order to make one's ability to achieve, to improve oneself. We always strived to obtain property to be able to improve ourselves...to live more securely, and I've attained that. Also, our children live independently, to attain the American Dream you have to advance yourself.

Oswaldo Guzman 2016, (NYC).

After his arrival in the U.S. Oswaldo did not marry until 1975. This first marriage ended in divorce in 1986 and he didn't remarry again until he met Marta in Manhattan in 1990. His comments about property ownership reveal that the acquisition opens the door to be able to use the investment – not as a display of achievement – but, as a tool to enable the family to improve. Both daughters referred to above hold advanced degrees and one is a dentist and the other works in a high position in security for the government. Although Oswaldo believes much of his success is due to luck, his testimony about the American Dream left little doubt that the friendship network and organization of Ecuadorian clubs in NYC played an essential role in helping him to develop a cultural sense of belonging and the level of acculturation that led to his success in the U.S.

The first ten years in NYC, Oswaldo dreamt of moving back to Ecuador. Although the property Oswaldo owns includes a home in his homeland, he listened to the advice of his friendship network that cautioned him that by moving back to the Ecuador he would stifle his chances to advance his education and lose all the benefits he gained by

living in the U.S. The following comment by Oswald includes a list of what he considers to be benefits of living in the U.S.

I have received many accolades including being honored by NYC's mayor and Ecuador's President. Here at ECCNY, I continue to enjoy being involved in civic events like the annual Ecuadorian Parade in August and festivals...all to record and bring to the forefront the customs of Ecuador in the State of New York. In Ecuador, all my friends are changed – although we casually talked, we all now have more established and organized lives in order to enjoy the best things and try to have a tranquil life.

Oswaldo Guzman 2016, (NYC).

Oswaldo is giving back to the community and by embracing the principles of *Buen Vivir* -- living good enables him to see himself as a respected man. The next section is an analysis of the testimony of Oswald's wife Marta (Figure 4). The possibility exists that Marta's construction of identity may or may not have been framed and shaped in the same way as her husband's due to various factors, including the conflicts inherent to the processes of social stratification and racialization in Ecuador and the U.S. For this reason, in the next section this analysis includes Marta's comments from a feminine perspective – or, from a different frame of reference --- about Ecuadorian identity construction in the U.S. and the custom of giving.



Figure E4: (left to right) Marta Guzman, Pageant Contestant, and Oswaldo Guzman

Marta Guzmán:

I also met Marta in the offices of ECCNY and we chatted about grandchildren and TV shows for almost an hour before I interviewed her husband. Marta Guzman was born in the high sierra province of Ambato and soon after her birth, the family moved to Quito where she finished high school in the city's provincial system supervised by nuns. As employers of two household workers, the family did claim the status of belonging to the middle class. Regarding these employees in the family's home, Marta's mother always hired the indigenous who she believed to be meticulously clean and well-trained to do domestic work. Marta's father – a prison director- supported her mother's decision to not

work outside the home and he was described by Marta as the most loving of the two parents. According to Marta, *machismo* was not a practice she personally witnessed in her home because her father always respected her mother. According to Marta, “my Mom was the boss of our family’s *hacienda* (household), the corrector of the children. My brother gives credit to my mother’s strong guidance as a reason he became a doctor” (Marta Guzmán 2016).

Marta describes herself as a poor student in school who devoted more time to her equestrian hobbies and friends than improving herself through education. She never attended parties and her mother did not permit her to go out of the home alone to the movies without her brothers. Her mother’s strict rules included the family’s attendance every day at church and this resulted in narrowing Marta’s network of associates to a few friends at school and her immediate extended family of cousins. But, Marta did have a professional dream, “I loved mathematics, I dreamt of being an architect, but I couldn’t because I got married” (Marta Guzmán 2016). At age 19, she married for the first time and devoted herself to the education of her children. The marriage rapidly dissolved and after her husband abandoned her and her two sons, Marta and her children moved back into her parent’s home and she took a job working for a family from Spain. For 16 years Marta focused on work, and her mother assumed total responsibility for the upbringing of her two grandsons.

Marta admitted that her mother’s strict interpretation of the norms and values of Quito’s racially and culturally diverse social climate continues to greatly influence who she and her sons have become today. In Ecuador, Marta identifies as *blanca* (white)

based on her father's Italian heritage and in the U.S. she claims an ethnic identity of *España* (female with Spanish heritage) and a racial identity of *blanca*. Marta geographically posits Afro-Ecuadorians in Chota and the coastal region; unlike her husband Marta does not believe Ecuadorians of Afro heritage live only in one littoral province. She is aware of the progress made by the Ecuadorian indigenous and refers to their positions as workers in banks and hotels as an indication that their social rank has greatly improved over the past few decades.

Regarding how she views racial and language differences in people in the U.S., Marta's first strong response was "We are all equal" (Marta Guzmán 2016). In 1976, Marta immigrated to join her brother who was beginning to plan to open a practice in the U.S. She felt a sense of belonging in the company of her sibling and she feels her two sons enjoyed attending Catholic schools in New Jersey with their cousins. Below, she reveals that despite her personal belief about human equality she is very aware that her white phenotypical characteristics and her ability to acquire a fluency in English played a part in the way she is perceived by others in the U.S.

I have a white appearance, I look white. So, my appearance made no difference. Other people thought I was an American female. I had luck, between my brother and a group of his Puerto Rican friends I got work at a Puerto Rican Medical Center. I didn't know English; but, I helped with the patients and after a bit I learned more and more English when I went to work for my brother. I lived in Glenwood, New Jersey near my brother where there were no Ecuadorians...all Americans. Some people didn't even believe I was from Latin America. But, we Ecuadorians are double-citizens...I love Ecuador and I like it here in the U.S.

Marta Guzmán 2016, (NYC).

Above, Marta's testimony sheds light on how she constructed a personal identity that took into consideration the practice of using stereotypes to divide Latin Americans into groups based on race and language proficiency. Marta also speaks above of the role a sense of belonging played in enabling her to develop a plan that included learning English as a way to achieve acculturation. For Marta, her goal was to adopt particular cultural traits and social patterns of "Americans" in a way that would enable her to also promote the practice of Ecuadorian customs; first, as part of her brother's extended family and now as a member of ECCNY. Marta stated that what she has accomplished in the U.S. has made it possible for her to claim a dual identity and a sense of belonging that she feels would enable her to live permanently in either the U.S. or Ecuador.

In closing, I asked Marta to expand on her comments about success to talk about the status of Ecuadorian migrants in the U.S. During Oswaldo's interview, she agreed that the Pew Research estimates based on the 2010 U.S. Census did not reflect the reality faced by the majority of immigrants from Ecuador. Her comments shed light on the economics and politics particular to Ecuador that has shaped the return wave of so many immigrants to their homeland.

They don't have work here – this is the most common reason. And, they don't have papers. Many live here for 4 – 5 years without papers, some for over 20 years without papers. Some lost money because they invested in Ecuador when the economics or politics were bad. They had sent money back to the country to invest in their return...they lost everything.

Marta Guzmán, 2016 (NYC).

The return process for Ecuadorian immigrant's is described by Marta above as something that depends upon factors that are often outside the control of the immigrants. Building

on Oswaldo's testimony that most are employed in low-paying jobs in construction, restaurants, and the few remaining factories in the metropolitan area – jobs that do not require paperwork, I next asked Marta to discuss why she is devoted to supporting not only Ecuadorian, but all Latin immigrants through her work at ECCNY. Marta described childhood experiences in which her parents demonstrated to her by example that she should always participate in some way to improve the well-being of others. Also, she spoke with pride of the example of her current husband Oswaldo's generosity and kindness that supports her efforts to look beyond immigration status to be able to help all Latin American immigrants at ECCNY to begin to construct a meaningful and balanced life in the U.S.

At this point in the interview, I noticed that Marta had never used the word 'success' to describe her own experiences; but she did mention this objective as a goal her family members had achieved and as an accomplishment that was out of the reach of most Ecuadorian immigrants. As we closed the conversation, Marta reconsidered how she had defined the American Dream and began to express her opinion about this ideal in very personal terms, "In Ecuador, I had no dream I could realize, here I have my dream -- that my children are fine and I'm happy in my garden and here at ECCNY where I feel I'm being of service to others" (Marta Guzmán 2016). The objective of the following analysis of Leonor Torres' testimony is to explore again through a particular feminine lens how success, marital status, racialized concepts, and professionalism may or may not impact Ecuadorian immigrant identity construction and the cultural practice of giving.

Leonor Torres: Expanding Public Service

Leonor Torres entered the room about 15 minutes after I completed Marta's interview. Marta and Oswaldo had warned me that Leonor might be running late since she had to travel by train from the Ecuadorian Embassy in Manhattan. But, she arrived a little ahead of schedule and we moved together to a large conference room where a teacher was busy preparing to begin a class in English. This brightly lit extended space was oblong shaped and spacious enough to be partitioned off to accommodate two classes of 10 – 15 students each. Leonor sipped coffee and quickly introduced me to the teacher of the next class who had to immediately turn his attention to greet the early arrival of three young male students. I began Leonor's interview by asking her to discuss her childhood in Ecuador in order to raise questions about her experiences as a professional fashion designer and current ECCNY director in charge of educational and social events.

Leonor self-identifies in Ecuador as *mestiza* and felt that there is no category on the 2010 U.S. Census that reflects or considers her ethnic or racial indigenous heritage. She was born in Azuay Province near Cuenca and her most vivid memories are of the struggles of her mother and the hegemonic masculine practices of her father. She described her mother as a supportive and devoted woman who remained faithful to Leonor's father despite the fact that he demanded she accept his need to seek adventures and be in the company of other women because, in Leonor's words, "the woman has to obey, the woman has to serve, the woman has to do everything no matter what he does...she had to treat him like a king---he never said this, but it was clear in the way he

treated my mother...a man is the Man of the house!” (Leonor Torres 2016). Leonor remembers living in poverty as a child because her father never contributed to the household expenses. In fact, she only recalls seeing him twice before her eighth birthday and every time he visited the family he impregnated her mother.

The impact of the abuse of Leonor’s father on the family and Leonor personally was both economic and psychological. Even the few times he lived under the same roof with his family, there was always a lack of food and the necessities to support the education of his children. Leonor established a lifelong relationship with her Mother’s sister who moved in with the family to help care and provide for Leonor and her three siblings. As a result of the confusion that surrounded her as a child and the mutual support she received from her female role models, Leonor became acutely aware of the need to have solidarity between family members and the damage that can be done to children who have to witness the suffering of their mother.

Leonor’s mother admired the organizational skills and work ethic of the nuns. She also told her daughter that she did not want her to become of member of the lower-class – a group she described as people who lacked opportunity. When Leonor’s mother was a child these sisters of the church customarily helped the impoverished mothers of the neighborhood who lacked the economic support of live-in or absent husbands. After an exposure to the lifestyles of the nuns as a child, Leonor’s Mom realized that Leonor needed to develop some of the professional skills of these female role models and members of the religious community. Leonor’s mother also believed that by becoming a professional her daughter would be independent and protected from hegemonic

masculinity. For this reason, Leonor was sent every day after school with lunch in hand and a meager allowance to apprentice in the home of a seamstress. This decision by her mother launched Leonor down a life-long path to change her lot in life in a way she described as being completely different than that of her mother.

I remember wanting to be able to live comfortably – without stress... to have possession of things that I own and things that do not belong to others – debt free, but for the future if I want to improve myself I need to study and learn to look for another type of life – not like my Mommie who had to cook and wash, doing all that type of work, I don't want to live like that.

Leonor Torres, 2016 (NYC).

The stewardship with the seamstress resulted in Leonor acquired the critical life skills required to manage money and the realization that a rise from the lower-class would be extremely difficult even if she established a solid and positive relationship with a marital partner. She saw the seamstress and her taxi-driver husband repeatedly fail in their attempts to overcome obstacles that they confronted because they couldn't construct a solid economic foundation for their family. As Leonor approached the end of her apprenticeship with the seamstress, she searched for a way to fulfill two dreams; 1) to work in a profession that she had grown to love, and 2) to be able after high school to support her mother. After high school graduation, Leonor got her first job and for seven years she earned enough money to accomplish both of her dreams.

In the 1970's, Leonor's brother immigrated to the U.S. and his success in his new country of settlement inspired Leonor to begin to think about migration. She felt professionally prepared as an experienced seamstress to follow her brother; but, by this time a move to the U.S. was not possible because she was now married and expecting her

first child. For this reason, in 1980 her husband migrated first and Leonor --- who left her now two children with her mother -- joined him in NYC where she found work as part of the undocumented labor force in the garment district. Leonor recalls this time in her life as profoundly sad because she witnessed countless raids by U.S. immigration authorities that resulted in the deportation of many of her fellow-workers. The threat of deportation for her was very real because she too lacked papers. For this reason, she took a job in New Jersey in 1983 where she became a member of the local union. After three years, the union sponsored her application for a Green Card and in 1993 Leonor became a citizen.

Leonor retains her citizenship in Ecuador and when she completes applications in her homeland that ask for her nationality, she describes herself as “Ecu-USA citizen”. As an official dual-citizen, her path to self-improvement included finishing literally all the courses in her field that were offered by the Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT) to become a renowned fashion designer. Because of her interest in developing supplemental courses and the training of upcoming designers she also completed classes at Manhattan Community College and is now co-grant supervisor of her own program funded by the FIT in conjunction with the Garment Industry Development Corporation.

Her son and daughter entered the country at ages 10 and 13, and her son is a DJ and music promoter and her married daughter is the mother of several children. Leonor reared her children to respect Ecuadorian customs and to speak the language of their homeland.

We raised them in our ways, not the American way... we even opposed the counselors at school --an unmarried guy-- when my daughter was

11.... he said we were too strict... a home visit was done by a social workerwhen he questioned me , I told him the streets were too dangerous...we don't let them walk alone here.... We go with them, not with someone we don't know.

Leonor Torres, 2016 (NYC).

In her defense, Leonor offered the social worker a visual example. During the home visit, Leonor asked the Child Protective Service Worker to join her at the front window of her apartment where she pointed to several corners that were haunted by drug pushers and bullies that her daughter would have to walk by on her way home from school. The exposure to danger on the streets became part of the price Leonor's family paid to be able to change their living and working conditions in NYC.

The possibility of staying in the U.S. was not part of the couple's original plans. They began their journey as immigrants with the goal to make enough money to finance a better life after returning in four to six years by working in the U.S. Instead, Leonor had to come to terms with the reality of being a member of the non-citizen class. Although Leonor has effectively changed class membership because she is now a naturalized citizen, she still finds it necessary to stand in opposition to "the American way".

Leonor takes issue with what she referred to as the American ways' lack of concern for the majority of her fellow workers in the garment industry who are mostly transnational immigrants. Her students lack experience; but, they hope that by attending FIT they will achieve what Leonor feels is an impossible goal: to be able to succeed in a diversified and mostly off-shore managed industry that relies on U.S. workers for only their skill as cheap fabric cutters and not creative designers. Leonor believes that the ideas driving the restructuring of the garment industry guarantee only the economic

growth and success of the company at the expense of the worker. As we began to discuss the American Dream, Leonor cited this unbalanced relationship between labor and ownership is one bad outcome she's personally experienced as she tried to achieve the American Dream.

According to Leonor, "the American Dream changed my life, all my family is here and although I have a little home in Ecuador – something I can say is mine there, I now want to stay here in the U.S. with my family because I am not sure I could be happy in Ecuador" (Leonor Torres 2016). Leonor's home is an apartment in Manhattan that is now being threatened by gentrification; but, she stated that as a woman of her age – a woman over thirty -- she knew because of a mass firing witnessed in Ecuador by her niece that in her homeland her age would be a liability to prevent her from attaining her current dream of a good and content life.

Leonor also spoke of countless examples of professional Ecuadorian migrants of both genders who failed in the U.S. because they became obsessed with consumerism and feelings of disappointment after years of chasing the American Dream, "They say 'I have everything in Ecuador, I'm a professional there in my country' ...but, they don't know any longer why they want to stay here (U.S.) ...they just want more, and more things" (Leonor Torres 2016). At first glance, Leonor's statement appears to confirm Pribilsky's (2012) claim that male undocumented Ecuadorian subjects of his study derive a feeling of success by balancing a desire to have things, *Iony* (325). Leonor's testimony at the very least expands Pribilsky's assertion because she is referring to the experiences of professional class male and females who are both documented and undocumented at the

intersection of cultural ideas about the good life (Miles 2004) or *Buen Vivir* and the ideal of the American Dream.

The final comments by Leonor (Figure E5) are taken from a phone conversation in which we talked about her involvement in ECCNY as a board member and event coordinator. Leonor worked for the factory in New Jersey that sponsored her Green Card for 13 years. During the bulk of her term of employment, she was also a board member of the local union. Part of her responsibilities as a member of the board was to schedule cultural events that would support the plan of the board to encourage cooperation amongst the factory's ethnically diverse workforce. A student recommended that she invite a speaker from ECCNY to present for a cultural event. The ECCNY representative suggested during his visit that Leonor allow her then 16-year-old daughter to compete in the foundation's Queen of the Carnival Pageant. Leonor agreed and this began a relationship of over 20 years with ECCNY and her appointment as a board member who supervises the educational programs and the annual pageant in which her daughter originally was a contestant.



Figure E5: Leonor Torres, Event Director 2016.

The pageant responsibilities at ECCNY also brought her into contact with event sponsors and other powerful political actors throughout the five NYC boroughs and in Ecuador. When we chatted, Leonor had just returned from Washington, D.C. where she participated as an activist in a U.S. wide attempt by Ecuadorian representatives to acquire temporary protective status (TPS) for Ecuadorians. Several years ago, Leonor was appointed as a board member of a NYC-wide Hispanic Committee and she actively serves others by promoting the cultural and civil rights of Ecuadorians and all Latin Americans in the U.S.

The upcoming section about ECCNY includes in greater detail a description of both the objectives of this philanthropic organization and also a brief discussion of some of Oswaldo's, Marta's and Leonor's experiences as a way to further clarify their reasons for being active in the foundation.

Ecuadorian Civic Committee Nueva York: Beauty and Education

Scholarship about the network of Ecuadorian clubs scattered throughout NYC describe these groups as organizations in which the membership reflects the home country's stratification of classes – rich versus poor or, in NYC, the undocumented from the elitist-documented (Pribilsky 2007), and other literature that suggest that collective groups such as the sports clubs formed by Ecuadorians might serve the purpose of uniting Ecuadorians who share a geographical point of origin, or village, in their homeland (Jokisch and Pribilsky 2002). The following analysis of the testimonies of the three previous subjects in this chapter confirm that by promoting Ecuadorian cultural beliefs, the clubs in NYC serve at the very least two vital purposes. Based on the Internet presence on Facebook and the information on their webpages, the first advertised objective of these organizations is to safeguard and nurture Ecuadorian norms and values. This mandate includes preserving what Miles (2004) argues in her ethnography about Ecuadorian migrants in NYC is a cultural opposition to undisciplined consumerism (29). The clubs' second objective is to combat the loneliness (Miles 2004:29) that accompanies migration by providing a nurturing and familiar environment in which to celebrate being Ecuadorian – or a shared point of national origin.

When asked to comment on the 2010 U.S. Census estimates published by the Pew Research Group that claimed that the population of Ecuadorian migrants in the U.S. is less than 700,000, Oswaldo strongly disagreed and stated that this figure in no way reflects the reality that there are probably at least one million immigrants currently living in the greater NYC area. He provided the following comment based on his observations

and experience about the types of work and living conditions of Ecuadorians migrants in NYC who he believes are for the most part undocumented workers who protect their ability to remain in the U.S. by avoiding contact with all U.S. and Ecuadorian authorities and organizations. When asked to describe the socio-economic conditions returnees confront, Oswaldo described the living conditions of most Ecuadorians in NYC.

Very few succeed here, less than 30%. The lack of opportunities to obtain work in the U.S. force them to return to Ecuador – heavily in debt in most cases. Here, most work construction where they have little opportunity to improve themselves...these are not professionals. They live in apartments, some work in factories and restaurants...doing whatever they have to do to care for their families – including their families back in Ecuador.

Oswaldo Guzmán, 2016 (NYC).

At this point, Oswaldo showed me a magazine in which there were many pictures of very well educated and successful Ecuadorian immigrants. He indicated that professionalism, or the achievement of a level of education that will support taking on the challenge to acquire the American Dream is still being accomplished by a growing number of immigrants from Ecuador.

I also asked Oswaldo about the current participation of Ecuadorian immigrants as members or clients in ECCNY. Although he described the majority as economically and educationally disadvantaged his answer opened the door to ask questions about the current goals of the organization.

We don't see them (Ecuadorian immigrants) here much. They are scattered all over New York and many are undocumented and afraid... we don't ask about your status here (immigration) and we are holding English

classes for migrants and welcome Latin Americans from any country. Ecuadorian immigrants that enter and are known by the consulate do hear about us... but many others focus on caring for their families.

Oswaldo Guzmán, 2016 (NYC).

Marta's testimony focused on the work she helps the board members accomplish like the annual parade in August to commemorate Ecuador's independence from Spain. According to Marta, the organization's 501(c)(3) federal status as a non-profit organization allows it to solicit contributions and distribute those funds to support the operation of ECCNY and their projects in the U.S. and Ecuador.

We go to Ecuador, where we have a small school --- they use the money to do repairs --painting and necessary things -- for special children in Quito that we send money to and a special program that also delivers eye glasses (Figure E6), an institute there that has a site that only charges \$3.00 to check vision throughout Ecuador. In 2015 I was there when I was scared to death by the aftershocks of an earthquake. But, we continued our work with the programs there and the funds were given to support the projects.

Marta Guzmán, 2016 (NYC).



Figure E6: The ECCNY vision program in Quito, Ecuador

The distribution of funding in Ecuador is accompanied by an outreach program in the U.S. that currently supports an English language program for immigrants from many Latin American nations.

As special events and education coordinator for ECCNY, Leonor supervises the operation of the English language courses and the annual pageant to elect the foundation's queen. The queen begins her reign as part of the annual festival and parade in August and later in the year she travels with ECCNY representatives to Ecuador to deliver the organization's annual contributions to the agencies they fund in the homeland. The participation in the pageant is decreasing due to the pressures on the young Ecuadorians to work to pay for school and other expenses.

Leonor began working exclusively with the youth in NYC over 10 years ago. She claims that many U.S. native born Ecuadorian young people are losing their Ecuadorian

cultural heritage and that this is happening because of their involvement in the process of assimilation. One indication that these young people are abandoning Ecuadorian customs is that Leonor has observed them exhibit feelings of greed and entitlement that she believes are associated with their desire to attain the American Dream. Leonor expressed her concern about the future survival of ECCNY which relies on the organization's ability to attract younger members, "we are working to keep our culture, all that we have.... civic means we are always commemorating our history.... the young people don't want to get anything done.... they don't have the goal of the committee in their minds.... our history" (Leonor Torres 2016).

The next section examines the survival issue for the clubs by analyzing the testimonies in tandem of three individuals who sustain professional careers as artists both within and outside the network of U.S. Ecuadorian clubs. This approach also asks questions about the roles of race, class, and gender as these relate to identity construction and their attitudes about individual giving and philanthropic support of Ecuadorians and Latin Americans in the U.S.

The Future: Transnational Professionals

This final section of Chapter 6 turns the attention of the dissertation to a narrative about the possible future of Ecuadorians in the U.S. and how the socio-economic and cultural changes in Ecuador and the U.S. and the aspirations and dreams of immigrants from that country may or may not impact the survival of Ecuadorian clubs. I met the world renown singer Sonnia Villar at *Liga Ecuatoriana* (Liga) in Miami during an event in which she began the evening by fusing popular international music from a variety of

popular artists. Sonnia's mother and father were both the direct descendants of Spaniards. According to Sonnia, this is the reason she self-identifies as *blanco* (white) in Ecuador and racial white and ethnically Spanish in the U.S. Her global career as a singer spans over 50 years and began in her hometown of Guayaquil in Ecuador where at five years old she performed the role of Red Riding Hood as a part of her mother's musical company. Her father was an actor and Ecuador's first TV director and the family had servants and the amenities in their home that set them apart from the lower class. Both parents were born and raised in Ecuador and although they were very concerned about their individual careers they guided Sonnia's life in a way that emphasized the importance of self-improvement.

Sonia migrated first in 1965 to Costa Rica, then she moved to Panama and finally in 1967 she arrived and settled for 30 years in NYC. In NYC, Sonnia married in 1983, she divorced after the birth of her son who is now 30 and she has dual U.S. and Ecuadorian citizenship. Also in 1983, she traveled to Ecuador with the intention to stay only a couple months; but, she remained in her homeland for 10 years. In late 2001, Sonnia returned to the U.S. and she currently lives in both NYC and Miami. As a musician, Sonnia defines her relationships with people of different racial and ethnic heritages in terms of the musical genres she remembers they brought into her life and how these unique rhythms framed and shaped who she has become today.

My family was not typical. When I performed Red Riding Hood my Mom wrote the character as different ... intelligent, active, involved in adventures. My father taught Castilian Spanish – so, I've always loved repeating different accents. Like the people of Esmeraldas – we went there many, many times – their marimba is pure. In the 1960's, I learned Afro-American music – Billy Holiday and the music of Latin America

when I was in my country. And, I am very familiar with the *pasillos*, but I didn't learn Ecuadorian music until I moved to NYC. I learned the recording business in NYC – as a soloist and a writer in the clubs I learned people love to mix rhythms. I also studied music at Hunter College in NYC. Now, I am independent and I sing anything I love – the music I love.

Sonia Villenas, 2016 (Miami).

Ironically, the 30-year experience of living in NYC included Sonia's construction in this space of a cultural bridge between the U.S. and Ecuador based on her embrace of what was described by other subjects of this study as the national music of Ecuador, *pasillo*. Her career provides for her an avenue to celebrate, practice, and nurture in the U.S. the Ecuadorian heritage which she fuses with other Latin American and global rhythms at Ecuadorian clubs in NYC and Miami.

I became aware that there were urban and regional programs for talented young Afro-Ecuadorian artists as a part of the research to better understand the issues confronting people of African heritage in Ecuador. I met on several occasions to interview one of the most influential mentors of these young people, Sonia Viveros, in Quito. When I visited Sonia at the now closed Afro-Ecuadorian museum in Quito, she was the acting curator and director of youth programs that included guiding the development of musicians preparing to undertake careers Sonia encouraged them to forefront what it means to be Afro-Ecuadorian for national and global audiences.

I met at a restaurant in Astoria with Jose Juan, an aspiring Afro-Ecuadorian drummer with ancestral ties to both Quito and the El Chota Valley of Ecuador who had been a part of a program at Sonia's museum. Jose was born in 1985 and in Ecuador he identifies as Afro-Ecuadorian and in the U.S. he claims the ethnic identity *Hispano*.

After much thought regarding the category of race on the 2010 U.S. Census survey, Jose expressed frustration and finally declared that he is unable to accept the idea of race, “we don’t have a race, instead of race all these groups (on the 2010 U.S. Census) --- the indigenous, whites, Africans, all have Spanish (the language) in common --- we all are Hispanos, not races” (Jose Juan 2016). Jose’s annoyance regarding the implications of racial stratification in the U.S. can be explained as an outgrowth of his experiences with racialization in Ecuador. When he was attending Sonia’s museum, the objective of the institute’s programs was to expose their students to their Afro-Ecuadorian leaders who at that time in Ecuador’s history were confronting and redefining the social structure and climate of Ecuador.

Part of Jose’s interview paid tribute to Sonia “being at the museum was an opportunity and learning experience. There, they were trying to liberate us from oppression, working trying to make our rights as Afro-Ecuadorians and as human beings in our community and nation” (Jose Juan 2016). Jose’s mom is a well-established but still struggling singer who specializes in *bomba* music, the regional sound of the province of Imbabura. His grandfather is credited with being the founder of this genre in Ecuador. Despite the dominance of music in his life as a child, Jose dreamed of being an athlete²⁰. His ambitions were practical for two reasons, 1) he felt obligated to help his mother support his family and part of soccer’s appeal was that if he were good enough he could

²⁰ Jean Rahier’s (2008) article sheds light on the meaning of playing soccer to young Ecuadorians and the attraction of international sports as a way to mediate the inequality of racist practices in a multicultural state and take advantage of one of the few avenues open to Afro-Ecuadorian youth to earn a living for their families that is not blocked by the structural racist practices of national and private institutions (148).

earn a very good salary, and 2) he wanted to avoid the painful racist resistance to Afro-Ecuadorian professionalism that had stifled the career of his mother.

Jose's dream changed when he was offered an opportunity to attend the National Conservatory of Music in Quito. Jose (Figure E7) completed his studies and he is now living his new dream; "Like my mother, I want to advance myself, live for and spread the music of my people" (Jose Juan 2016). This dream included his first trip as a percussionist to the U.S. as part of a big band playing symphonic music. When he returned from the tour of several U.S. cities, he traveled in Ecuador to Salinas and Guayaquil to increase his knowledge of all popular and traditional Latin American genres before migrating at age 21 to NYC.



Figure E7: Jose Juan playing the *bomba* as part of his band Chota Madre.

Unlike Sonia, Jose did not find the Ecuadorian community or sense of belonging in NYC's boroughs. He arrived at a time that gentrification was causing Ecuadorians and other Latin Americans to become widely dispersed outside their traditional Queens neighborhoods. According to Jose, after traveling the country and searching the city, "There's no Afro-Ecuadorian community here in the U.S. and NYC. Many Ecuadorians seem to arrive here and they undertake on their own to learn the system of the city. You don't find them at social events. They stay home" (Jose Juan 2016).

Jose's few friends of African heritage are for the most part racially mixed or mestizos from several Latin American nations. Regarding race in the U.S. as a problem for people of African heritage, he said,

You just have to work and fight for whatever job you want here in the U.S.; the ways are open. Not like in Ecuador where racism is super-noticeable – more insulting and violent because the people are crueler, harder. In society here (U.S.) many people don't know ways/methods to do it (advance themselves) for themselves. I've noticed that many Afro-American people, maybe they feel put to the side because they've fallen into a system full of drugs. It's a shame.... it's like they don't have pride in who they are. It's true, Afro-Ecuadorians have suffered a lot....in all the world Afro people have suffered.... but I feel Afro-Americas – many haven't achieved a lot, they lived immersed in pain -- hoping the government is going to change their lives.

Jose Juan, 2016 (NYC).

Jose qualified his opinions about Afro-Americans and the cohesiveness of formerly Ecuadorian communities in NYC. He told me stories of unsuccessful attempts he had made to establish relationships at work and in his life as a musician that led him to seek friendships almost exclusively with other Latin Americans. For example, Jose was asked to do an interview to promote his band, *Chota Madre*, on Radio Delgado, a well-established station owned by an Ecuadorian consortium in Guayaquil and headquartered in Jackson Heights. While at the studio, he talked to a man who claimed to be Afro-Ecuadorian from the Valley of Chota who said that he actually knew Jose's father and the music of his mother. But, every attempt Jose made to reach out to this man of African heritage over the years failed leaving Jose – without any family in the U.S. to construct a sense of belonging in NYC.

Jose has a Green Card sponsored by his current employer and he feels that in order to accomplish his dream he must also achieve another goal; U.S. citizenship. He expressed this dream to become a naturalized U.S. citizen in terms of how it relates to the American Dream and fulfilling the objectives of living a good life, or *Buen Vivir*.

The American Dream for me would be to bring out here in the U.S. the dreams of my mother, my family, my siblings, my cousins, friends, neighbors -- working to give a future to the music not only in Ecuador but in the world. My American Dream is to begin the pathway of my music in this huge city (NYC), and even LA in the near future.

Jose Juan, 2016 (NYC).

Jose's final comment built on his memories about attending school in Ecuador where the authorities gave him firearms and told him these would be his tools to build a better life. Because of his mother's guidance that Jose believes reflects the ideals of *Buen Vivir*, he said, "My Mom taught me that if I am proud of myself, I will arrive wherever I want to arrive. I should not worry about food – food will come; I should be professionally tenacious" (Jose Juan 2016).

Sonia and Jose are creative artists who share their cultural heritage as a way to contribute to the well-being of others. Both, continue to practice self-improvement and despite the difference in their ages they are both independently functioning artists who are part of a widely-dispersed network of professional Ecuadorian musicians. Sonia and Jose have never met and Leonor and ECCNY board members were also not aware that Jose, a rare *bomba* player and representative of Esmeraldan and El Chotean music in the U.S. was actually living in NYC. As a part of this research, I compiled a list of 30 professional migrants from Ecuador who are professional artists. They tend to live in large metropolitan areas and in most cases when I asked 10 subjects in NYC, Miami and LA if they personally knew their fellow countrymen on this list, the answer was no. These artists include well-established and often award winning vocalists like Joe Arroyo and Ricardo Arjona and pianist Hugo Realpe. But, the artists on the list do have one

thing in common; they all rely heavily on the professional services of a small group of Ecuadorian immigrant event managers to coordinate their bookings in the Ecuadorian club network.

Danny Daniel: Entertaining and Giving

Danny Daniel is one of the managers in the group of Ecuadorian migrants who specializes in booking Ecuadorian artists and talent from other Latin American countries in Miami and New York. Danny travels constantly in his classic Mercedes and it's not uncommon for him to perform sets along with the featured singer he represents at sessions. I met Danny in Miami at *Liga Ecuatoriana* (Liga) where he was accompanying a client, Ralphy Peña, a recently arrived artist from Ecuador. After the show, Danny agreed to do an interview for this research in a few months in New York. My first day in NYC to do field work, I called him and arranged a lunch appointment at the Ecuadorian Restaurant Food Company (Figure E8) near my apartment in Astoria.



Figure E8: Ecuadorian Restaurant Food Company

I had called the restaurant before arriving in NYC and tried without much luck to arrange an interview with one of the employees. The small eatery is situated on a busy corner in what looks like a well-to-do and recently gentrified neighborhood not too far from my apartment in Astoria. The waitress confirmed that the business is owned by an Ecuadorian; but, the owner was not receptive to being interviewed, and the staff did not attempt to hide their discomfort and suspicion about my intentions. The facility is very compact and the customers repeatedly had to squeeze by each other and rearrange chairs at one of the small number of tables in the dining area. Outside, delivery men parked their small motorcycles and inched their way to the back of the room to pick up orders at the register counter beside another room that served as a tiny oblong kitchen area.

As I began sipping a glass of *jugo de mora* (blackberry juice), Danny arrived and we ordered lunch while he launched a conversation about the politics and economics of Ecuador. He concluded a discussion about current affairs and human rights violations in his homeland by voicing his support of the TPS petition for Ecuadorians, “special protection is needed by immigrants here who must struggle as people in between nations Against a nation that is rejecting their right to claim their due rights of citizenship!” (Danny Daniel 2016).

I began to ask Danny interview questions after his endorsement of TPS when he suddenly expressed concern about what he felt was unusual behavior on the part of one of the delivery men. Even though I hadn’t notice any odd behavior in the room, Danny shifted in his chair and as he kept an eye on the man picking up orders at the counter and he explained, “you see, I was a body guard for 10 years, when I was 22 to age 32, for a rich old man who retired to Greece to live on his yacht and I know when somebody isn’t acting right” (Danny Daniel 2016). After a few minutes the delivery man exited the building and Danny seemed more at ease as he began to talk about the global experiences in his life that have resulted in his being a cautious and in many ways what he self-identified as, “a very traditional husband and parent” (Danny Daniel 2016).

Danny does not claim Ecuadorian citizenship and he self-identifies in Ecuador as *Montubio*. He felt Afro-American might be the best way to describe himself as a citizen of the U.S. Danny struggled with both questions regarding race and ethnicity on the 2010 U.S. Census and concluded, “I don’t consider myself Hispanic – that’s not a race, and I’m not white or African. Choosing ‘other’ makes me feel like a second rate citizen”

(Danny Daniel 2016). Although Danny referred to his childhood in Ecuador as happy and claimed to be extremely proud of his African heritage, he remembers being shunned as a *Montubio* due to the severe social stratification in the provinces of Monta and Manabí. The memories of suffering unjust discrimination is just one reason Danny feels returning to his homeland to live is an impossible dream.

This happened to me. Your kids grow up but, this is when you realize the place you want to go back to has changed. You realize everyone there will see you with a different mindset, with dollar signs, It's a big letdown. Then, there's culture shock. No hot water, weak water pressure, things you take for granted in U.S. After the first month there, the idea pails. When I'm in Ecuador, I don't belong, I don't have papers and no legal rights there I couldn't even open a bank account -- because I am a U.S. citizen.

Danny Daniel, 2016 (NYC).

Although life in Ecuador is believed to be a less desirable option for Danny, he also recalls being racialized due to his family's undocumented class membership in the U.S. Danny's parents arrived in 1970 and the family settled in Ozone Park – now, by Danny's description a Jewish community that has undergone massive gentrification. The household was characterized by Danny as traditionally Ecuadorian. According to Danny, his mother never worked outside the home and his father, as the provider, worked at a racetrack in Queens as a maintenance man where he was part of the undocumented labor force or class.

After saving money for eight years, the family migrated back to Monta where Danny's father first found a job in a bakery that enabled him to save and buy a taxi to support his family. By 1986, and after the taxi was destroyed in an accident, Danny's father decided to return to the U.S. because he couldn't find work due to the instability of

the Ecuadorian economy. The marital separation caused the family to slide into poverty and his mother took the initiative to return to NYC a year later to begin a career sewing in the garment industry. For the next 14 years, Danny mastered English and he began to make money singing to help his mother achieve the goal of bringing other family members to the U.S.

Although he enjoys reading and studying, Danny dropped out before graduating high school in order to be able to earn money to help his family. He also wanted to enjoy a more relaxed lifestyle and the technological advances --- color TVs and cell phones -- and other amenities that were not available to him in Ecuador. Danny describes the American Dream as, “what you make of it... to be doing what I want to do...being happy. For me, it’s freelancing and doing my music... I could do without half the things I have. People have been sold the idea they need, to consume, buy things...this is the American Dream...I’ve been in it, the more things you have – the unhappier you are taking all your time to care for these things” (Danny Daniel 2016). Danny believes this desire for simplicity in order to achieve contentment is an Ecuadorian trait because he has heard his fellow countrymen and women in various parts of the U.S. express this sentiment in different ways.

From the beginning of our conversation, Danny advised me that he would be treating our interview as a professional session – one in which he preferred avoiding too much discussion about his family. He did however reveal that he is the father of two generations of children and that him and his wife have a new baby and two kids in college. Danny is proud that he raised his children in the Ecuadorian tradition; his

Ecuadorian wife is rooted in the home where he says she loves to cook, Spanish only is spoken in the household, and everyone is expected to rise early and eat breakfast together each morning. Per Danny, he spends countless hours on the road to sustain his own professional enterprise because, “many Ecuadorian immigrants here want to have their own business, even a taxi cab, Ecuadorians consider ownership, not being tied to a corporation as having success” Danny Daniel (2016).

Danny does shows at all types of Latin American clubs, but he does not hold a membership in any of these foundations and he only attends club sponsored events for professional reasons. As our conversation came to an end, I wanted to know how Danny individually practices altruism outside the network of these social groups. Danny returned again to a political theme as he gave a possible meaning to the concept of *Buen Vivir* and described the ways he believes he adheres to the principles of this Andean ideal.

I do this managing of artists and perform myself because it makes me happy to give back to the community. The good life is to leave the politics to the side. A life in which there are no financial worries and this is not your sole focus. A simple life.

Danny Daniel, 2016 (NYC).

Above, Danny conflates ownership which is a key goal for the American Dream with the harmonious and more simplistic ideal of *Buen Vivir*. He uses the long stretches of time on the road away from his family to attain success. This means that his practice of the concepts of *Buen Vivir* may be reinforced during the many days and evenings he spends in the company of first generation Ecuadorian immigrants who share with him their customs and beliefs. However, when I asked Danny when he believed he began to

realize the importance of a simpler life he claimed to remember these feelings emerged in Ecuador when as a seven-year-old he felt at peace as he sat calmly beside his grandma watching her make straw hats, accompanied his mother to the market on lazy afternoons, and while riding his bike and enjoying meals at the beach with his family. Danny's current success exists because he feels he has attained the American Dream under his own terms and without falling victim to practicing or constructing an identity based solely on his ability to define himself based on his power to consume.

The next and concluding chapter turns the attention of this dissertation to the future by first presenting the findings of this study exploring the practice of altruism by Ecuadorian immigrants in the U.S. The approach of this final section is to create an intersectional discourse – or a narrative at the junction of race, class, and gender-- about the dynamic factors that shaped the lived experiences – or, space formation -- of the subjects in three particular social climates; NYC, LA, and Miami. The chapter will also draw conclusions about the impact on the Ecuadorian migrant experience of the conflation of the American Dream and *Buen Vivir*. This objective is to summarize how the processes of racialization may or may not have framed and shaped the individual and group giving in the three different geographical places. Finally, the last chapter will intensify a core argument of this dissertation; there continues to be a need for future social scientists to ask questions about the relevancy and accuracy of public surveys such as the census and the impact of being undocumented in a binary society that favors citizenship.

Conclusion

“It is the force of ambivalence [a form of knowledge and identification that vacillates between what is always ‘in place’, already known, and something that must be anxiously repeated] that gives the colonial stereotype its currency” Bhabha (1994)

Discussion

This dissertation explored the creation of Ecuadorian migrant identity beyond the characterizations and stereotypes about their race, class, gender, and cultural practices that permeate existing scholarship and the hegemonic generalizations that conflate this diverse population into the broad ethnic categories Latino/a and Hispanic. For example, Pribilsky’s (2007) focus in his study is the transnational experiences of male-only members of Ecuador’s rural to urban migratory labor class. Mills’ (2004) intersectional ethnographic study asks many of the same questions about identity that are addressed in this dissertation; but, the subjects are from only one Ecuadorian region and the conclusions drawn about the impact of place on their cultural practices is not confirmed across different social climates in the U.S. The central argument of this study is that we are a sum-total of “our past and present” experiences and that to understand the ambivalence of the process of self-identification on public surveys requires giving meaning to and documenting the intersectionality of – or, the multifarious junction of class, race, and gender -- that defines how anthropological subjects see themselves at any one or different periods of time (Bhabha 1994).

This ethnographic study focused on the phenomena of individual and group philanthropic participation as a cultural practice that is uniquely framed and shaped by the process of self-identification at the intersection of the Andean concept of *Buen Vivir*

and the varied outcomes of striving to achieve the American Dream. Each analysis of subject testimonies in this dissertation is an intersectional discourse that demonstrates the implausibility of creating a uniform narrative about causality (Kearney 1986) regarding the practice of altruistic acts across diverse geographical spaces and between individuals (Appadurai 1996) who share similar lived experiences. Beyond proving cause, this study accomplishes two related goals. First, this investigation gives meaning and documents the varied ways individuals and groups culturally practice philanthropic acts.

Secondly, the findings of this study support the second goal of this investigation to delegitimize the practice of conflating Latin American populations in the U.S. into the racialized categories of Latino/a and Hispanic. Prior scholarship provides evidence that racial and ethnic categories of the kind that appear on public surveys contribute to the production and reproduction of negative stereotypes, invisibilization and marginalization of vulnerable populations. For example, a syncretization of Cox (2000:201) and Fanon (1952:167) supports the argument that the social classification negro is a derogatory marker that implies African descendants are incapable of assimilation and that the cultural practices of this population is of no value to society²¹. This research focusing on U.S. Ecuadorian immigrants adds to the voices of other Latin American scholars who call attention to the stress, confusion, isolation, and social devaluation produced by public

²¹ See also Adams and Sanders (2003) regarding the current levels of structural and institutional racism that result from the generalization process of population self-identification where popular conceptualizations of African heritage such as Afro-American and Black replaced negro but in practice intensified the gross social disadvantages of populations of African heritage (319).

surveys that reinforce discriminatory practices by subsuming diverse Latin American cultural groups into ethnic and racial categories such as Latino/a and Hispanic.

In Chapter Four, Ecuadorian migrants discuss the impact of stress factors and social relationships that they believe influenced their construction of self in LA and the Environs. The interviewees validate Johnson's (2013) and Gilmore's (2007) claims that it was difficult for Latin Americans to build and maintain familial and community belonging between the widely dispersed multi-national neighborhoods of Latin Americans in LA. Also, the testimonies confirm that it was extremely important for most of the LA interviewees to establish intra-ethnic relationships both in the workplace and in their resident neighborhoods. The subjects' spoke of the impact of working and living very close to other ethnic groups and the personal outcomes of cross-ethnic relationships that stood in opposition to the loneliness or absence of a sense of belonging. In each interview, there was also a discussion of class and the importance of acquiring English fluency to assimilate or culturally be cleansed of the alleged impurities or stereotypes associated with being an Ecuadorian Latin American. Informant testimony that is part of this research sheds light on what is still today a process of cultural erasure in LA, a city in which the predominant demographical statistics used to define the social climate are influenced by the notion that language proficiency denotes citizenship and the related idea that all Latin Americans are members of only two racial-nationalistic groups; either the "Mexican – non-citizen – non-English speaker" or, the "non-Mexican – citizen – English speaker" classes.

Unfortunately, the stereotypes from Ecuador that influence the structural-institutional, political-economic and social climates of the Andean nation based on race, gender and geographical ancestry continue to inform relationships inside and between Ecuadorian club members in LA, Miami, and NYC. For example, a myriad of deeply seated notions about the racial and cultural differences among coastal and High Sierra Ecuadorians and the *blanquemento* claim that whiteness has a higher value in society intersect to cause interpersonal and intrapersonal conflicts and intensify solidarity between Ecuadorian immigrants. Also, in all three sites the universal consensus of the informants was that discrimination in the U.S. and Ecuador is a racist practice. But, during a few of the interviews the subjects were ambivalent²² about seeing phenotypical differences such as indigenous or Afro-characteristics on the of bodies of members of their immediate families. The lives of several informants were changed by racially and ethnically different individuals in the U.S. in significant ways – socially and economically.

Regarding gender, most males and females who took part in this research agreed that survival in the U.S. required often drastic reinterpretations of gender roles or even the abandonment of pre-conceived notions and stereotypes associated with the practice of hegemonic masculinity. However, many of the female informants that identified themselves as professional in LA, Miami, and New York described their success in terms

²²Deana Jovanović (2016) argues that anthological studies of people that live between two places of experience (3) are enhanced by analyzing ambivalent statements “contradictory attitudes, incompatible values, and emotional internal clashes...part of the greater task of understanding people’s different dispositions toward their futures and their everyday lives” (2).

of their role in the family. Some of the informants strongly supported the Ecuadorian custom of staying home to raise professional children -- especially those that were conflicted because they had sacrificed large amounts of time outside the home pursuing their careers. Since females in the social clubs tend to perform duties for the organization at all levels, in these spaces at least the influence of misogynistic ideas associated with *machismo* are giving way to the pragmatic demands of the members for socio-cultural-economic solidarity in the U.S.

Ecuadorian social club members in all three field site spaces almost unanimously defined their success as a conflation of ideas related to *Buen Vivir* and the American Dream. The leaders I spoke to for the most part recognized that decreasing membership is a problem for most of these organizations that focus on sponsoring events at their facilities and supporting and participating in city-wide Ecuadorian celebrations. For example, LA's Ecuadorian social clubs encourage entrepreneurial ventures that stimulate the growth of an increasing number of Ecuadorian owned businesses; but, the majority have not developed programs to support the non-documented to help this struggling class of both long-term and new arrivals to acculturate and begin to be able to seek opportunities in the U.S. For example, membership in the clubs requires applicants to prove they were born in Ecuador. This prerequisite creates a new class of others, or non-Ecuadorians who may be the partners or multi-national children of unions with Ecuadorians from becoming members of the social club community.

The informant lived experiences in their homeland did frame and shape their dream to migrate. Some planned to become permanent U.S. residents, but the majority

immigrated with the hopes of earning enough money to fund a good life in Ecuador after working abroad for only a few years. Once in the U.S., the demands to acclimate into the multi-ethnic social climate of LA, decreasing employment opportunities, and increased investment of personal resources in familial responsibilities in two geographical spaces, all took a toll and most of the subjects interviewed reconstructed their ambitions and personal identities. All the interviewees in LA who were professionally trained before leaving Ecuador agreed that a lack of preparedness, a drastic decrease in the availability of good paying jobs, and the investment of funds in schemes to return to or invest in Ecuador are the primary reasons many Ecuadorians have found it necessary to return to the homeland.

One fact quickly emerged first in LA regarding the fluidity of class in the population of study that would also be confirmed to be an issue in NYC and Miami. The testimonies in this dissertation confirm preexisting theories that traditionally in Ecuador a subject's access to educational and vocational training many times depended upon factors such as their class status and/or ethnic ancestral origin. But, the practice of racialization and the distribution of access to opportunities varies between homeland and the U.S. where Ecuadorian migrants are racially reconstructed and conflated into the U.S. Census ethnic categories of Latino/a or Hispanic. The general attitudes, beliefs, and opinions – or, social climate of the 1970's – 1990's in LA favored the speaking of English and the assimilation of Latin American cultures.

As the testimonies in this dissertation confirm, during the late 1970's – 1990's economic advancement in LA required migrants to become fluent in English. Even in the

new millennium, speaking Spanish in some public spaces or having a Spanish accent is viewed as being low-class. The testimonies also revealed that in LA the Anglo fear of the lower class referenced earlier by Gilmore's (2007) has been adopted by some Ecuadorian immigrants that struggle to distance themselves from membership in the lower class by erasing their Spanish accents and embracing what they believe to be more acceptable identities.

Chapter 5 continued to examine the role of language as a determinate factor to shape hegemonic class structure in another social climate. The subjects' reflections in Miami about their lives also brought to the surface a shared fear of being seen by others as members of the lower class. In Miami, being a non-low-class member depended on several factors, i.e. geographical location of birth or parental birth, phenotypical appearance favoring whiteness that simultaneously stigmatized blackness, Spanish language enunciation, and level of education.

The dominant language in Miami since the early arrival of thousands of Cubans in the mid 20th century and at all levels of society has been and continues to be Spanish. For this reason, Ecuadorian immigrants suffered discrimination in the Magic City because they spoke Spanish differently and appeared in many cases to be more Indigenous – or *indio* - than white. The rules for upward class mobility in the Magic City were very different than the guidelines they were familiar with in Ecuador. Another factor that also shaped their identity as newcomers in Miami was the arrival of numerous waves of Latin Americans who changed the general feelings and attitudes of the city. Various hegemonic population schemes that stratified and marginalized some ethnic populations

have been put into place by controlling *politicos* in Miami. A coalition of white business men in the late 19th century were the first brokers of power who drew the lines between Miami residents that grossly disadvantaged people of Afro-ancestry. After the massive wave of Cubans in the 1960's and today, white powerbrokers relinquished control of the population stratification process in Miami and rich Cuban immigrants took the reins and exacerbated the distrust between ethnic groups. The frequent domestic conflicts in Miami are characterizing by the controlling class as acts of unprovoked and illogical violence between populations of *Indio* and/or Afro and White-Cuban-citizens. But, at this intersection Latin American migrants created or reconstituted diametrically opposed organizations; neighborhood gangs that practiced *machismo* to unite its members, and local clubs that were created to protect and nurture the customs of the homeland. In the case of *Vecinos en Acción* and *Liga*, Ecuadorian migrants founded organizations tasked to rethink and begin to abandon traditional ideas from Ecuador about race, gender, and ethnicity.

Liga Ecuatoriana and Club Ancon share many of the issues that are impacting the future of these social clubs, such as the need to attract younger members to join the foundations. But, there is talk between board members in Miami about focusing on amending their membership eligibility rules to accommodate the growing number of inter-racial and inter-ethnic marriages and offspring while continuing to meet the needs of both Ecuadorian entrepreneurs and the struggling poor and undocumented living in the city. *Liga's* 501(c) (3) status has just been renewed and there is a meeting of the minds

between the more conservative founders that argue for the creation of family-oriented programs and the new ideas of younger members who press for multi-ethnic inclusion.

Liga Members I spoke to were very unaware of the lived experiences of economically challenged and mostly undocumented fellow Ecuadorian countrymen and women who cannot afford and feel insecure about the motives of Ecuadorian social clubs and being seen in public places. Also, executive board members continue to insist that membership dues and the cost to attend the foundation's events is affordable. This affordability issue and the documented reluctance some Ecuadorians express and/or display about reaching out to accept help are economic and cultural obstacles Ecuadorian social organizations in LA and Miami must come to terms with to attract new members.

The life experiences in the Miami section of this dissertation are survival stories of individuals who overcame discrimination because they were fortunate enough to be able to construct identities as a part of a very strong family. They spoke of their acts of giving as something that was made possible because they fused aspects of the American Dream with core principles of *Buen Vivir* even though Miami has never had an exclusive Ecuadorian immigrant community – or central location in which they could establish a sense of belonging. Unlike LA, Latin Americans in Miami are severely divided along South American geographical and racialized lines and the only refuges for Ecuadorian immigrants have been the independently functioning Ecuadorian social clubs outside Little Havana --- which is ironically the neighborhood that is most open to provide housing to newly arrived Latin American immigrants.

Also unlike Miami, Ecuadorian enclaves in LA that were once small communities of five to 10 families continue to be the sites in which elder members still reside close to clubs like Ancon. Chapter 6's focus on NYC is an analysis of a place in the U.S. where there once were three thriving Ecuadorian immigrant neighborhoods in one of the city's five boroughs. The subjects interviewed also spoke of the importance of solidarity or belonging that some had created in their familial life, while others developed a sense of cultural affiliation in NYC as employees, members of unions in workshops, factories and as team members in Latin American multi-national and multi-ethnic sporting teams.

In the 1970's and through 1990, NYC Ecuadorian immigrants were able to find and take advantage of educational opportunities as part of the population that was understood by NYC's controlling political-economic oligarchy to be a multi-ethnic – or a normalized and much needed part of NYC's labor force of Latin Americans. In the factories and workshops, they reconstructed their identities to be able to advance beyond the non-citizen low class as part of a community or neighborhood that supported their efforts to raise their children in compliance with traditional Ecuadorian norms and values. But, after the jobs slowly began to be offshored and the city-wide gentrification caused them to abandon their neighborhoods in the 1990's, the pressure to acclimate or professionally and personally conform or in some cases reconstitute their Ecuadorian traditional norms and values increased as did the level of ethnic racialization or “Mexicanization”²³ of all Latin Americans.

²³ This study takes advantage of the liberty to create or coin the phrase “Mexicanization” and employs it as a descriptive term that conflates all Latin American nationalities and

As a scattered population forced by urban development to live side-by-side with all ethnic groups, Ecuadorian immigrants in NYC struggled to come to terms with the hegemonic stratification of Afro-Americans as the “other” and their own Ecuadorian identities that many of them believed were directly tied to Afro ancestry. This research argues that racial tolerance often develops out of a need to be practical and despite the persistence of hegemonic practices. For example, Leonor felt extremely lucky to have found work in well-paying unionized shop. The union’s support of human rights for all races and ethnicities challenged the Ecuadorian notion that Afro and indigenous ancestry denote social inferiority. The informant’s testimonies in Miami and Los Angeles is an analysis of how uplift services to all Latin American immigrants in the U.S. can develop in spaces that challenge notions of racial and ethnic superiority. As an example, ECCNY’s membership is highly influenced by the rules of population stratification in Ecuador; but, the geographical scattering of Ecuadorian immigrants in New York City increases the need for the organization to ignore the stereotypes and ancestral origins of peoples of indigenous and African origins.

The three subjects at the end of Chapter 6 reflect the changing influence of the dynamic social climate of NYC over time. The first artist was influenced by the community she found in NYC to share and reflect through musical expression the syncretization experienced by Ecuadorians in the U.S. The younger drummer was conditioned in Ecuador to embrace his African heritage as a part of his plan to create a global celebration and fusion of Afro-Ecuadorian music with other South American

cultures into one group. racialized group based on the creation of the controversial belief in the U.S. public domain that all non-documented immigrants are Mexican.

rhythms to add value to the expression of Latin American culture in the U.S. The final testimony in this dissertation of the manager of performing artists proves that some Latin Americans have constructed a cottage industry by creating social organizations that stand in opposition to the wide disbursement of their ethnic groups into small pockets throughout the U.S. and the punitive political solutions popularized by states such as California, a state in which the 1994 Three Strike Law and a justice system favoring the rich work together to disproportionality institutionalize minorities and populate a massive prison industry. As the testimonies in this dissertation argue, the economics of accelerated globalization that increases the geographical distance between Ecuadorian immigrants continues to serve as a catalyst driving them to reconstitute the practice of giving, reconstruct individual identity, and reinforce Ecuadorian norms, values and customs.

Future Research and Contributions

This dissertation engaged, benefited from and contributes to the field of cultural anthropology's exploration of the performance and interpretation of everyday activities in immigration spaces by examining the conflation of *Buen Vivir* and the American Dream to shed light on the construction of identity and the practice of altruism by U.S. Ecuadorian migrants in New York City, Los Angeles, and Miami. Conclusions reached in this investigation strengthen, amplify, and demonstrate that there continues to be a need to explore the meaning and utilization of racialized descriptors to classify Latin American immigrant populations in the U.S. In addition, the evidence that emerged based on observation and subject testimonies shows that instruments of public policy such as

census questionnaires embolden the anthropological argument that race, class, and gender is an intersectional phenomenon.

The findings of this investigation brought to light the need for additional anthropological research to explore relationships between Afro-Americans and Latin Americans as these associations relate to deeper structural understandings of the problems around issues of employment, housing, and educational advancement in particular geographical places in the U.S. Even though this study's findings include a discussion of the processes of transnational assimilation and acculturation in the settlement place, the narrative in this dissertation about these issues opens the door to continue to ask questions about preparedness of immigrants as a factor that frames and shapes both the transfer of values and customs and cultural absorption in the new place.

This project shares many of the objectives of anthropological research that explores racialization across a board spectrum of global cultures, and about the ways cultural expressions of historically marginalized immigrant populations change during the process of immigration. This project also hypothesizes that Ecuador's immigrant population in three different U.S. social climates may be aware of both the benefits and realities associated with the oppression imposed by public policies; but, on the other hand, because of the inherent power and professed neutrality that characterizes policies (Wedel 2005), they may not be cognizant of the political ties and ramifications involved in identifying and changing these rules and regulations. Based on this hypothesis, these findings will contribute to the bodies of anthropological theory being designed to ask questions about the impact of global, national, and private industry public policies in

which the ideologies of race and racism exercise hegemonic power over the lived experience and the practice of culture in very particular ways. Finally, the methodology of this project contributes to the debate in anthropology about the ethical and intrinsic value of collaborative research. Beginning with the socio-politically engaged work of Boas, Benedict, and Mead, this project adds to and embraces the idea of a practiced anthropology (Clifford and Marcus 1986 & Besteman and Gusterson 2005) that is dedicated to developing collaborations with other anthropologists (Mukhopandhyay and Moses 1997) and informants who are actively engaged in building a keener awareness in their communities of what constitutes a “system of exclusion” (Low 2011).

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Appendix A – Partial Field Study Questionnaire (English)

Field Study Questionnaire

Linda Jean Hall

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Proposed Research Term in Field (New York, NY, Miami, FL, and Los Angeles, CA):

January 2016 – July 2016

Project Title: *Americanized Afro-Ecuadorianism* as Artistic Expression: Synthesizing the ancestral with U.S. Immigration Policies.

I. Phase I.

- a. In which Ecuadorian province were you born?
- b. When did you first leave your province of birth?
- c. Have you lived anywhere else besides your birth province before moving to the United States?
- d. If you answered yes to (c), where inside or outside Ecuador have you lived before moving to the United States?
- e. How long have you lived in New York (Miami, and Los Angeles)?
- f. How did you find out about the research project for which I'm asking you to interview?
- g. To which census group did you belong in Ecuador? (Answers will be the series of ethnic group identities used in the government's census)
- h. Please, take your time and tell me about growing up in your Ecuadorian home province. I encourage you to speak about meetings or events you might have been a part of, or tell me about your role(s) in public observances or celebrations of weddings, childbirths or death.
- i. Describe the kinds of food that you think describe your community? What were some of the dishes served for special occasions?
- j. Tell me what you remember about the music of your community and the dancing. Were you or members of your family artists or did you dance, sing, or play an instrument as part of a musical group?
- k. What were some of the stories told by the music you heard in your community?
- l. **Question 6: Do any of your family members still live in (Ecuadorian home province) and do you still think of (home province in Ecuador) as home?**

II. Phase Two

- m. Question 1: To which census group do you belong in the U.S.? (Answers will be the series of ethnic group identities used in the government's census)
- n. Question 2: Please, take your time and tell me some of your experiences since coming to the U.S. I encourage you to speak about meetings or events you might share with other Afro-Ecuadorians, or tell me about your role(s) in public observances or celebrations of weddings, childbirths or death.

Appendix B – Partial Field Study Questionnaire (Spanish)

Cuestionario del Campo

Linda Jean Hall

El Departamento de Antropología

Universidad de California Riverside

Las Fechas de Trabajo en **New York, NY, Miami, FL, and Los Ángeles, CA**: El enero 2016 – El junio 2016

Título del Proyecto: *Afroecuatoriamieto* Estadounidense como expresión artística: la síntesis ancestral con las políticas de inmigración en Los Estados Unidos

I. Fase I.

- a. ¿En cuál provincia de Ecuador nació?
- b. ¿Cuándo salió de esa provincia?
- c. ¿Vivió en otro(s) lugar(es) antes de moverse a Los Estados Unidos?
- d. Si contestó sí, ¿en dónde vivió?
- e. ¿Cuánto tiempo tiene viviendo en NY?
- f. ¿Cómo se enteró de este proyecto?
- g. En Ecuador, ¿cómo se identifica: mestizo, montubio, blanco, afroecuatoriano, indígena, u otro?
- h. No hay prisa, por favor cuénteme sobre su infancia en su provincia natal. Por favor incluya los detalles sobre los eventos culturales – en los que tuvo papel o no, en bodas, fiestas de nacimientos, incluso los arreglos fúnebres.
- i. Descríbame la comida de su comunidad natal. ¿La servían para fiestas o celebraciones?
- j. Descríbame la música de su comunidad natal. ¿Había artista en su familia – cantantes, bailarines, o artistas que tocaban instrumentos en un grupo musical?
- k. Descríbame sobre las leyendas y los mitos de su comunidad natal?
- l. El día de hoy, hay miembros de su familia en su provincia natal? ¿Se siente como en casa allá?

II. Fase Dos

- m. Pregunta 1: Aquí en Los Estados Unidos, se considera latino? También, el censo de EE.UU. nos pide identificarse según nuestras raíces. ¿Cuál es su raíz aquí – blanco, Afro, negro, africano, indígena, u otro? ¿Se considera Afroamericano?
- n. Pregunta 2: No hay prisa, por favor cuénteme sobre su vida/ experiencias en **Nueva York (Miami, Los Ángeles)**. Por favor incluya los detalles sobre los eventos culturales – en los que tuvo papel o no, en bodas, fiestas de nacimientos, o aun los arreglos fúnebres.
- o. Pregunta 3: Descríbame la comida de **Nueva York (Miami, Los Ángeles)**. ¿Todavía come la comida de su país aquí? la sirvieron para fiestas o celebraciones?

Appendix C – U.S. 2010 Census, Race & Ethnicity Questions

Espos(a) Suegro(a)
 Hijo(a) biológico(a) Yerno o nuera
 Hijo(a) adoptivo(a) Otro pariente
 Hijastro(a) Inquilino(a) o pupilo(a)
 Hermano(a) Compañero(a) de casa o de cuarto
 Padre o madre Pareja no casada
 Nieto(a) Otro no pariente

3. ¿Cuál es el sexo de esta persona? Marque UNA casilla.
 Masculino Femenino

4. ¿Cuál es la edad de esta persona y cuál es su fecha de nacimiento?
Escriba 0 para los bebés que tengan menos de 1 año de edad.
Escriba los números en las casillas.
 Edad el 1 de abril de 2010 Mes Día Año de nacimiento

→NOTA: Por favor, conteste la Pregunta 5 sobre origen hispano Y la Pregunta 6 sobre raza. Para este censo, origen hispano no es una raza.

5. ¿Es esta persona de origen hispano, latino o español?
 No, no es de origen hispano, latino o español
 Sí, mexicano, mexicano americano, chicano
 Sí, puertorriqueño
 Sí, cubano
 Sí, otro origen hispano, latino o español — *Escriba el origen, por ejemplo, argentino, colombiano, dominicano, nicaraguense, salvadoreño, español, etc.*

6. ¿Cuál es la raza de esta persona? Marque una o más casillas.
 Blanca
 Negra o africana americana
 India americana o nativa de Alaska — *Escriba el nombre de la tribu en la que está inscrita o la tribu principal.*

India asiática Japonesa Nativa de Hawaii
 China Coreana Guameña o Chamorro
 Filipina Vietnamita Samoana
 Otra asiática — *Escriba la raza, por ejemplo, hmong, laosiana, tailandesa, paquistaní, camboyana, etc.* Otra de las islas del Pacífico — *Escriba la raza, por ejemplo, hiana, tongana, etc.*

Alguna otra raza — *Escriba la raza.*

7. ¿Vive o se queda a veces esta persona en algún otro lugar?
 No Sí — *Marque todas las que apliquen*

Husband or wife Parent-in-law
 Biological son or daughter Son-in-law or daughter-in-law
 Adopted son or daughter Other relative
 Stepson or stepdaughter Roomer or boarder
 Brother or sister Housemate or roommate
 Father or mother Unmarried partner
 Grandchild Other nonrelative

3. What is this person's sex? Mark ONE box.
 Male Female

4. What is this person's age and what is this person's date of birth?
Please report babies as age 0 when the child is less than 1 year old.
Print numbers in boxes.
 Age on April 1, 2010 Month Day Year of birth

→NOTE: Please answer BOTH Question 5 about Hispanic origin and Question 6 about race. For this census, Hispanic origins are not races.

5. Is this person of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?
 No, not of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin
 Yes, Mexican, Mexican Am., Chicano
 Yes, Puerto Rican
 Yes, Cuban
 Yes, another Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin — *Print origin, for example, Argentinean, Colombian, Dominican, Nicaraguan, Salvadorian, Spaniard, and so on.*

6. What is this person's race? Mark one or more boxes.
 White
 Black, African Am., or Negro
 American Indian or Alaska Native — *Print name of enrolled or principal tribe.*

Asian Indian Japanese Native Hawaiian
 Chinese Korean Guamanian or Chamorro
 Filipino Vietnamese Samoan
 Other Asian — *Print race, for example, Hmong, Laotian, Thai, Pakistani, Cambodian, and so on.* Other Pacific Islander — *Print race, for example, Fijian, Tongan, and so on.*

Some other race — *Print race.*

7. Does this person sometimes live or stay somewhere else?
 No Yes — *Mark all that apply*

