

*Governing Indigenous Territories* examines a paradox of modern indigenous lives. In recent decades, native peoples from Alaska to Cameroon have sought and gained legal title to significant areas of land, not as individuals or families but as large, collective organizations. On the one hand, obtaining these titles represents an enormous accomplishment: for centuries, indigenous peoples have been losing their access to land and natural resources, often with little or no compensation. On the other hand, obtaining collective title to land — or what is increasingly thought of as creating an indigenous territory — brings many changes for the people who live there. In particular, once a territory is legally established, other governments and organizations expect it to act as a singular and unified political entity, making decisions on behalf of its population and managing those who live within its borders. Without such a territorial government, it is difficult (if not impossible) for the population to continue to defend its interests in relation to the outside world. The territorial government must mediate between a host of outsiders and a not always united population, work to create consensus, and enact policies that will affect all residents. Thus, collective indigenous land titling, whose apparent purpose is to allow native peoples the freedom to escape from the everyday workings of bureaucracy and the state, paradoxically

cally initiates new governmental structures within the territory and new dynamics of rule and discipline.

Many scholars and activists alike have regarded gaining territorial titles as virtually synonymous with achieving sovereignty, which they define as obtaining authority and control over territory from the states in which they are situated. This book demonstrates that sovereignty is more process than product. In particular, I show that sovereignty is necessarily an internally oriented process of subject making, one that requires new understandings of personhood and social obligation. Such changes take place not only between individuals, but also between them and a new entity known as the territorial government (a body that has a life of its own, even though the leadership may change every two years). These new relationships include differing sets of expectations, obligations, and forms of discipline. In many cases, territorial residents (especially in Latin America) have until recently lived on the margins of state control, and so these new, intimate forms of governance significantly alter people's lives.<sup>1</sup>

I use the term “sovereignty” rather than the term “autonomy,” even though the latter is employed by indigenous activists in Latin America and most Latin Americanist scholars. I made this choice both to acknowledge my debt to scholars working in English-speaking settler states (particularly Australia, Canada, and the United States) and because the term “sovereignty” captures processes of rule better than “autonomy,” which can imply isolation or independence from relationships of power. Although indigenous leaders have indeed pursued greater autonomy vis-à-vis the Ecuadorian government, they have not sought isolation. Instead, they have worked toward sovereignty in part by forming alliances with other governments, state agencies, and NGOs willing to fund development projects. For example, indigenous organizations desire greater control over the curricula taught in bilingual and intercultural schools, but they expect that the Ministry of Education will provide a level of funding for those schools comparable to that provided for other public schools in Ecuador, thus avoiding “autonomy without resources” (Stahler-Sholk 2005, 37). They also regularly seek funds from their provincial and municipal governments for infrastructure projects within their territories. Thus what they consider to be a struggle for autonomy is better understood as an effort to increase local control over the ways that education and other forms of development are practiced within indigenous territories, rather than as an effort to reject state-funded devel-

opment. The same argument can be made about the agreements forged with various international entities attempting to shape indigenous landscapes and peoples through development projects. As Rudi Colloredo-Mansfeld has argued for Ecuador's highland Kichwa, "autonomy materializes more in strategic connections than in the zonal separation" (2009, 142–43; see also Cattelino 2008, 17; Warren 1998, 18). Indeed, in today's world, no governmental entity exists without extralocal ties and commitments.

There are two sets of insights concerning sovereignty on which I have built my analysis. The first set concerns the complex ways in which indigenous intellectuals and leaders are working toward defining and fostering difference, even as they increasingly engage in relationships that are shaped by global capital and transnational connections (Cattelino 2008; Escobar 2008; Rappaport 2005b; Tengan 2008). Jessica Cattelino, for example, believes that sovereignty is created through "collective assertions, everyday enactments, and lived experiences of political distinctiveness," although she emphasizes the relations of interdependence that exist between the Florida Seminoles and other sovereigns (2008, 17). Rukullakta's most active leaders have been motivated in part by a deep belief in, and a commitment to, what they see as the cultural distinctiveness of their people, even as they seek to improve their constituents' lives in ways that some may classify as modern or capitalist.

The second set of insights concerns ways in which indigenous sovereignty continues to be structured by colonial legacies and postcolonial inequities (see, for example, M. Becker 2011; Kauanui 2008; Povinelli 2006; and Simpson 2000). For example, Audra Simpson highlights the "forced cultural transformation of native culture through the bounding of people and bounding of space" (2000, 118). Although it can be easy for scholars to get caught up in the liberatory expectations of indigenous sovereignty movements as they spend months and even years speaking with activists, it is important to highlight that these movements have been and continue to be shaped by a history of colonialism and exclusion.

The expectations and obligations of sovereignty emerge out of these co-existing, mutually constitutive realities of indigenous lives. Indigenous sovereignty is not solely a social movement motivated in part by a search for alternative futures, nor is it simply the product of long-standing inequalities. Rather, it is the processes of negotiation and mediated practice that occur as these two realities confront one another. In Rukullakta, for example,

leaders attempt to convince residents that they should feel obligated to the territorial government (and thus be willing to donate their labor and give up control over what they think of as their family's property), because the leaders believe that this is the best way to make the territorial government stronger. Stronger territorial governments are better able to withstand forces that threaten them and to negotiate favorable agreements with those who can contribute resources for development. Unfortunately, these obligations often come into conflict with residents' obligations to their families, which include connections to the particular areas of land their families had claimed prior to the formation of the collective organization. The enactment of indigenous sovereignty thus has involved a long history of negotiation and mediated practice, a history that continues into the present.

### Governance and Regimes of Rule

Over the past three decades, there have been two major trends that have increased the number of legalized indigenous territories, as well as the number of roles filled by territorial governments. The first trend is the increasing international attention to the rights of indigenous peoples, best shown in the 1989 promulgation of the International Labour Organization's Convention on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples, which is the major binding international convention concerning indigenous peoples. Specifically, the convention "puts pressure on governments to recognize indigenous peoples' traditional lands and to grant indigenous peoples some form of administrative autonomy" (Offen 2003, 44). The convention inspired what Karl Offen calls a "territorial turn" in Latin America, a wave of titling of collective lands to rural indigenous and rural black communities in several countries, particularly Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, and a number of countries in Central America (Escobar 2008, 319). It has also contributed to surging senses of ethnic pride among indigenous intellectuals. Some have become involved in advancing new political ideologies among their people by appropriating and politicizing pedagogy in bilingual schools, appointing activists rather than educational professionals as teachers (Rappaport 2005b, 124; see also Gustafson 2009, chapter 2). Similarly, in southern Mexico, intellectuals involved with the Zapatista movement are engaged in "the effort to continually transform society" through the construction of new social subjectivities and the promotion of radical democracy (Stahler-Sholk 2010, 269).

The second trend is that since the 1980s national governments world-

wide have been increasingly pressured by international lending institutions to reduce the size of their state bureaucracies in order to reduce government spending. Especially in the poorest areas of the developing world, NGOs have taken over many of the public services that were previously considered the responsibility of states, and these organizations typically coordinate their activities with local governments and institutions rather than national ones. Territorial governments are among the local governments that serve as intermediaries for NGOs, helping to coordinate delivery of services and manage territorial residents' engagement in development projects.

In yet another example of territorial governments taking over the tasks normally associated with state and municipal governments, some community councils have resorted to punishing those believed to have committed crimes against community members, rather than relying on the police to do so (Colloredo-Mansfeld 2002; 2009; D. Gow and Rappaport 2002). Whether portrayed as practitioners of community justice or savage vigilantes, those who publicly pursue justice outside the state-sponsored system are asserting their desire to play a greater role in determining what can and cannot occur within their communities.

By looking at these diverse practices of community policing, development project mediation, educational activism, and pursuit of new ideologies through a single lens rather than treating them in piecemeal fashion, it is possible to see that many of the organizations typically understood as indigenous *rights* organizations, working to increase levels of autonomy in relation to the state, are simultaneously indigenous *governing* organizations, working to shape the members of their communities. In the case studied in this book (and I suspect in the others cited above as well) indigenous leaders are attempting to construct particular kinds of people through these various projects, people who will not only participate in long marches on the capital or make other short-term sacrifices to change national policy, but who will also relate to leaders and to one another in new ways.

In this book, I am indebted to Michel Foucault's writings on governmentality (1991) for my understanding of indigenous leaders' efforts to shape and empower their constituents, and to many scholars who have been inspired by him. Foucauldian scholars interpret government as the "art' of acting on the actions of individuals, taken either singly or collectively, so as to shape, guide, correct and modify the ways in which they conduct themselves" (Burchell 1996, 19) — or, more succinctly, as "the conduct of con-

duct” (Dean 1996, 47). Most scholars using the lens of governmentality in the development literature mainly examine the practices of states, NGOs, or transnational institutions such as the World Bank (see, for example, Escobar 1995; Li 2007; West 2006).

Foucault, however, clearly envisioned government as a process that exists at multiple levels, even within the family. It is a moral exercise, since those who govern presume to know what constitutes virtuous and responsible conduct for individuals and collectives, and moral shaping occurs within many types of relationships (Dean 1999, 11). Thus, I seek to demonstrate the ways subalterns in general and indigenous peoples in particular (usually seen as only the objects of governmental action) can also be the agents of governmentality, rationalizing and disciplining their fellow group members while enlisting them in projects of their own rule.

Most scholars who apply the governmentality analytic to ethnographic and ethno-historical material portray new forms of discipline as inherently manipulative and self-serving (Starn 1999, 96–97). This may explain why they have been reluctant to examine governmentality and the associated formation of new subjectivities within indigenous social movements and territories.<sup>2</sup> Yet attempts to govern others and oneself are often made with good intentions. Barbara Cruikshank, for example, studies various social programs in the United States, such as the War on Poverty, that have ostensibly been designed to empower participants. She argues that “the will to empower others and oneself is neither a bad nor a good thing. It is political; the will to empower contains the twin possibilities of domination and freedom. . . . My goal, however, is not to indict the will to empower but to show that even the most democratic modes of government entail power relationships that are both voluntary and coercive” (1999, 2–3).

Like Cruikshank, I do not wish “to indict the will to empower.” Indigenous leaders’ actions have been critical in assuring their members’ continued access to land and development funding. Rather, I am interested in the ways in which those in governing roles have worked to transform individual subjects (in this case, people who thought of themselves primarily as part of a kinship-based group, occupying family-owned land) into active citizens (in this case, of indigenous territories with collective titles and bureaucratic governments).

I am also interested in the ways members have shaped their leaders. As

subsequent chapters will demonstrate, they have done this through demanding services that leaders might not otherwise perform, outspokenly criticizing leaders' activities, forging ties with external entities to increase their bargaining power in internal disputes, and actively ignoring the obligations leaders try to impose on them. By drawing attention to the multiple ways in which residents "conduct the conduct" of their leaders, and even to some extent the conduct of the various development organizations that seek to implement projects in Rukullakta's territory, I seek to describe something that goes beyond resistance to domination. Territorial governors are dependent on citizens to participate in various development endeavors (for example, to be present at meetings in which an international development organization wishes to elicit "public participation" to meet the requirements of its project, or to participate in a rally protesting the exploitation of resources such as petroleum). Citizens are able to communicate their disapproval of leaders or particular projects by not attending such events, thus forcing their leaders to seek different funding partners and pursue different plans. Thus citizens, by remaining in distant corners of the territory rather than gathering in Rukullakta's assembly hall, practice what I call government through distance, shaping the ways in which their leaders can shape them.<sup>3</sup> Most governmentality studies have been conducted in highly industrialized states and have examined governance at the national level. Thus, they have focused on the ways in which "centres of calculation" (Latour 1987, chapter 6) pursue their desires to influence distant persons, places, and processes. Understanding processes in Rukullakta provides insight into governmentality in the many other governing bodies that do not exercise the coercive power of highly industrialized states or wield the financial resources of multilateral development organizations.

One of the key strategies that indigenous leaders have used to promote their ideas of territorial citizenship is the construction of a number of different arenas for intervention. Leaders create and administer "governable spaces" (N. Rose 1999, 31–34). These "spaces" refer not only to physical sites (such as collectively run cattle pastures or schools) but also to realms for intervention (such as collective agriculture or bilingual and intercultural education). Although the spaces have varied over time, depending largely on available opportunities and the types of allies who have provided funding, there has been a relatively consistent emphasis by many Amazonian Kichwa

leaders on promoting collectivist (as opposed to individualistic) economic, political, and social activity within these arenas.

Despite all the challenges they face, the people of Rukullakta have managed to maintain their collective title to the land, and their leaders in particular have maintained high expectations for the enactment of sovereignty. It is true that both techniques and the changing vision associated with leaders' governing have emerged through engagements with many social movements and groups (including the state, communists, missionaries, feminists, and environmentalists), but they have not been entirely determined by those groups. Although much of the funding for development projects has come from the state or international groups, the goals indigenous leaders pursued were not identical to those of the funders, and this shaped the meanings associated with involvement in the programs and the strategies that leaders employed to persuade their constituents to participate in particular ways. In other words, indigenous leaders have worked to produce a different type of person than other governing agents have, and it is important to understand these differences if we want to comprehend changes in indigenous lives, values, and ways of seeing the world.

Those filling leadership roles in Rukullakta have shared an interest in conserving the collective title, but they have differed in many of their other priorities and general perspectives on what will improve the welfare of residents. Territorial governance is dynamic, due to both the changing makeup of the government and shifting levels of legitimacy. Leaders are further differentiated by the fact that they have had access to very different levels of resources for encouraging compliance with their visions, and thus varying ability to "structure the field of other possible actions" (Foucault 1982, 791). Early leaders often overshot the boundaries of their legitimacy, working to shape members' behavior in dramatic ways, inspired in part by courses they had taken on cooperative formation. Subsequent leaders' efforts have been forged through relatively horizontal coordination with their constituents, within a larger context of marginality relative to the Ecuadorian state, the market, and international development trends. All of these factors have led to a very dynamic system of governance that has maintained some characteristics of a social movement, even as Ecuadorian indigenous organizations have become more institutionalized and have acquired more influence over state politics.<sup>4</sup>

## Territorial Citizens

The word “citizen” typically refers to someone with a particular set of rights and responsibilities vis-à-vis a nation-state, and a special type of membership in that nation-state. This membership may be based on where one was born, one’s ancestry, or other criteria, but once obtained, it is not easily revoked by the state. Recently, some Native North American scholars have begun to use the term to refer to the members of Native American tribes (see, for example, Lyons 2010; Teuton 2008) and to explore how thinking about tribal members as tribal citizens rather than just members shifts one’s understanding of the relationship between those individuals and their tribal government.

The term is also useful for thinking about the residents of indigenous territories in other parts of the world. The initial 207 heads of households who signed up to be part of Rukullakta joined an organization, contributing the lands they claimed and a substantial amount of unpaid labor toward the creation of the cooperative. Subsequent generations have, in general, not made equivalent sacrifices, yet they assume that being born into the collective territory entitles them to certain rights — to use land within the collective title, select their leaders, and benefit from any development project or service being offered to other territorial residents. Leaders emphasize very different aspects of living in the territory, continually reminding residents that they have certain obligations and responsibilities, much as the leaders of nation-states do when speaking about the obligations of citizenship. However, as is the case with revoking national citizenship, actually expelling from Rukullakta’s territory members who do not fulfill their obligations has been extremely difficult in practice.

In other words, what leaders are working toward is not simply sustaining a social movement in Rukullakta that is associated with defending the territory from external threats. Rather, they are attempting to construct territorial citizens, people who feel a sense of obligation toward the territorial government and are willing to act on that sense of obligation. Leaders believe that indigenous organizations that include such active, territorial citizens can more effectively confront threats to the integrity of their land holdings, negotiate relationships with outsiders, and manage land use within their territories. As part of their efforts, leaders employ “technologies of citizenship”

(Cruikshank 1993, 1999) — discourses, development projects, and other tactics that are aimed at making individuals politically active and capable of self-government. These technologies are often very well intentioned, yet they also constitute and regulate citizens (in this case, those of indigenous, collectively held territories). Negotiating the specific responsibilities and duties associated with territorial citizenship is one of the key sites of enacting sovereignty.

Governors of indigenous territories work to shape their members into territorial citizens, willing to accept new obligations toward the continuity of their territory and its government. Many firmly believe that they are empowering their members as part of this process. Simultaneously, members have worked to shape their leaders, as have a myriad of national and foreign entities. In the latter case, development organizations (including government agencies) have worked to shape leaders into promoters of modern agriculture, cooperativism, conservation, women's rights, and other causes that do not always — at least, at first — neatly connect with members' lives and ways of thinking about the world. Over time and through these diverse engagements, what leaders have asked of their citizens has changed somewhat, as have their strategies for promoting change, although often not as much as many outsiders would like. To understand changes in indigenous subjectivities and practices in the region, it is necessary to examine these multiple processes and engagements.

A concrete example from my fieldwork may clarify what I am describing here. One of the primary duties of Rukullakta's president (now known as the *kuraka*) is to sit in an office, Monday through Friday, nine to five, typically without pay (although periodically an NGO working in Rukullakta is able to budget a small stipend for a community liaison and will select the president to fill this role). During this time, the president attends many meetings with government and development project representatives and, between meetings, listens to the concerns and complaints of Rukullakta's citizens. On more than one occasion after a particularly long day of listening to such complaints, José Shiguango (president from 2000 to 2002) would look at me with an exasperated expression on his face and say: "They come here to talk about their rights, how they are not receiving what is due to them as members. I tell them that it is not only about rights, but also about responsibilities." He would then sometimes follow this statement with a specific, substantiating point, such as: "If they do not pay their annual quotas, how

can I afford to make the necessary trips to seek more funding for agricultural credit?”

The view of citizenship espoused by Rukullakta’s members—defined almost entirely in terms of the possession of rights—has much in common with that which is implicit in much political theory from the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. In the late 1980s and 1990s, political theorists began to argue that these notions of rights needed to be supplemented with the active exercise of citizenship responsibilities and virtues (Kymlicka and Norman 1994, 354–55), much as Shiguango argued with Rukullakta’s members. However, scholarship in anthropology and on Latin American social movements has continued to focus almost exclusively on the rights aspect of citizenship. Many authors have emphasized how ethnic and racial minorities feel excluded from full citizenship in the nation-states where they live (see, for example, Pallares 2002; Postero 2007; Rosaldo 1994; Yashar 1998). When indigenous people increasingly staged powerful protests in their nations’ capitals in the 1990s and 2000s, Nancy Postero and Leon Zamosc pointed to the “crucial issue of what kinds of rights indigenous people should be granted as citizens of democratic nation-states. . . . The promise of democratization is that the political, social, and economic marginalization that characterized indigenous relations with the state (and the elite classes that controlled it) would be replaced by a full and robust citizenship” (2004, 5). Other scholars have suggested the possibility of what has been called differentiated citizenship, in which indigenous people, by virtue of their special status in Western societies, would enjoy rights above and beyond those of non-indigenous citizens (Blackburn 2009; Young 1995). In short, the overwhelming emphasis has been not on what the state expects of citizens in terms of responsibilities, but on what citizens expect from their governments. It is perhaps not surprising, given this emphasis, that little has been written on what sorts of obligations indigenous territorial citizens in Latin America might have to their territorial governments.

Aihwa Ong’s prolific writings on citizenship (1996, 1999, 2003, 2006), in contrast, highlight the fact that citizenship is not merely related to rights but is also a process of subject making. Like Ong, I am particularly interested in the “everyday processes whereby people . . . are made into subjects” (1996, 737), and, again like her, I view citizenship as dialectically determined by governors and governed. However, Ong views citizenship “in the context of the ways in which a set of common . . . values concerning family, health,

social welfare, gender relations, and work and entrepreneurialism are elaborated in everyday lives” (2003, xvii). Citizenship for her, then, becomes a form of enculturation conducted not only by state agencies but also by civic groups, churches, refugee camps, health workers, and others.<sup>5</sup>

The implication of her analysis is that these diverse entities are all working toward an equivalent or largely overlapping form of enculturation, striving to imbue in citizens roughly the same values and behaviors as the state promotes. Specifically, she argues that “neoliberalism, with its celebration of freedom, progress, and individualism, has become a pervasive ideology that influences many domains of social life . . . setting the normative standards of good citizenship in practice” (1996, 739). She does not refute agency in these processes, but she addresses only that practiced by individuals, who “modify practices and agendas while nimbly deflecting control and interjecting critique” (2003, xvii). Ong is not alone in the way she understands governmentality. As Donald Moore has argued, “despite their considerable insights, [many] analyses of colonial and postcolonial governmentality have tended to emphasize an underlying ‘grammar of modern power,’ a coherent ‘regime of intelligibility,’ or a unified ‘political rationality’” (2005, 8). Thus, scholars have tended to imagine governmentality as singular, rather than multiple, and as following a coherent and unified position.

Yet in my understanding of territorial citizenship, governmentality happens through multiple, overlapping centers that, although they share commonalities, articulate divergent projects of subject making (see also Moore 2005). In this book, I focus on a relatively local governing entity—the indigenous territorial government—that strives to construct citizens who feel responsibility toward the territory and who therefore practice certain duties as responsible, contributing citizens of that territory. Sometimes these projects overlap with the state’s or development organizations’ efforts to construct particular kinds of citizens, but sometimes becoming a better territorial citizen does not have any recognizable connection to becoming a better national citizen, and in fact it may involve challenging or ignoring some of the claims and aspirations of the state. By implication, it may be the case that other intermediary groups, including the churches and civic organizations described by Ong and the development NGOs described by Maria Elena García (2005) and Nancy Postero (2007), are working to create somewhat different types of citizens than what the state is working to produce,

even though all three authors suggest that the NGOs are “doing the state’s ‘work’” (Postero 2007, 166).

Many indigenous leaders’ ideas of appropriate duties and responsibilities are shaped by alliances with and the financial assistance provided by the Ecuadorian government, international development organizations, larger Ecuadorian indigenous federations, and transnational indigenous networks, and thus there is no denying that important aspects of their political projects can be similar. However, I argue that there are also important differences in the constitution of territorial citizens, in which indigenous leaders place the continuity of their territorial government above the priorities promoted by their various allies and funders. Thus, much like the states and the associated technologies of citizenship that are the focus of Ong’s analysis, Rukullakta’s government can be seen as constituting “a positive generative force that has responded eagerly and even creatively to the challenges of global capital” (1999, 21).

Unlike scholarship on Latin American indigenous organizations, Native North American intellectuals are not only increasingly using the term “citizen” to describe members of indigenous nations, but they are also starting to explicitly link citizenship to obligations. Part of this is a response to the growing recognition that US-imposed restrictions on minimal blood quantum, or percentage of Native American ancestry, is slowly but surely reducing the number of people who can claim Native American status according to US law. When a tribal member marries someone from outside the tribe, subsequent generations have lower and lower amounts of “native blood” and eventually cannot qualify to live on Indian reservations or obtain other government services that were promised to tribal members when their ancestors initially signed treaties with the US government. When tribal leaders echo the state’s emphasis on blood quantum and exclude those individuals who do not meet the minimum requirement from tribal decision making, they are criticized by some native intellectuals for having internalized racist standards set by the colonizer (see, in particular, Kauanui 2008). Scott Richard Lyons (2010), condemning the rigid boundaries of blood quantum, proposes a type of naturalization process, in which those people who marry into a Native American tribe, or whose blood quantum falls below certain requirements, can fulfill certain other requirements (such as learning the native language) and thereby gain citizenship in that tribe. He

thus sees citizenship as a way in which leaders can shape their citizens and “produce sovereign indigenous nations.” He writes: “What are the proper criteria for indigenous citizenship? *Require what you want to produce.* If your heritage language is dying, then make fluency a requirement for citizenship. If your territory suffers from brain drain, make residency a requirement for citizenship. If you need capital, make commitment to the [indigenous] nation’s laws a requirement for citizenship and level a progressive income tax” (2010, 186, italics in original). Here, the notion that Native American intellectuals and governing bodies should be actively shaping their people into a particular type of citizen is explicit.

Issues of blood quantum have not entered into the same sorts of state-sponsored political exclusions in Latin America. Until recently, most Latin American governments pursued ideologies of *mestizaje*, under which all national citizens were supposed to think of themselves as racially mixed, yet in practice indigenous people and dark-skinned mestizos experienced high levels of discrimination. Additionally, indigenous people in Latin America received title to their territories much more recently than most Native Americans in North America got titles to their reservation lands, so what to do about children of mixed marriages has not yet become a serious problem in Latin America. Although it is important to keep these historical differences in mind, Lyons’s list of issues facing Native North American tribes (language loss, brain drain, and lack of capital) has much in common with the concerns of indigenous intellectuals in Latin America. It will be interesting to gauge the similarities and differences between notions of the ideal territorial citizen held in each region in the decades to come.

Importantly, Lyons also emphasizes that sometimes citizens rightly reject the obligations expected of them: “Civil disobedience is when the citizen tries to improve the nation by ridding it of some evil, and should be distinguished from resigning one’s citizenship, or for that matter being a do-nothing sort of citizen” (2010, 173). Lyons’s discussion of citizenship has much to offer scholars studying indigenous territories in Latin America, although his implication that indigenous sovereignty can be fully realized (when everyone speaks the language, there is sufficient capital, or everyone remains on the reservation) ignores the role that multiple, powerful actors play in constraining that realization. As Cattelino (2008) has argued, even billions of dollars in gambling revenue, a revitalized sense of cultural pride, and significant advances in wresting control of tribal administration from

the US government have not created a situation in which Florida Seminoles no longer need to worry about threats to their territory or to their hard-won political gains; Seminole leaders still face powerful critics who think they earn too much money and exercise too much power. They must also continue to address many conflicts within the tribe as they govern it.

### **Territory as Both Place and Property**

Building on important work that established the importance of place (Basso 1996; Feld and Basso 1996) and landscape (Schama 1995) to various cultures, scholars writing about territory in Latin America have highlighted how the collective titling of territories allows indigenous people to continue to live in landscapes that transmit historical memories, cultural knowledge, and moral lessons (see, for example, Escobar 2008; García-Hierro and Surrallés 2005; Rappaport 2005a; Santos-Granero 2005). According to this literature, indigenous people can have a strong “sense of place” (Feld and Basso 1996), forged through generations of dwelling in particular sites. Part of this sense of place can be understood as a type of intuition (Ingold 2000) or knowledge (Nadasdy 2004) that grows through long-term practice of skills that are specific to a particular environment. For example, over a lifetime of hunting in the same area, one can gain a keen sense of where animals are, which way they are moving, and how they will respond to a hunter’s actions. Although some basic aspects of this knowledge can be taught, these scholars emphasize, much of it must be acquired through situated practice and experience.

Most scholars studying indigenous knowledge and perception have focused on hunting skills and knowledge of plants, both of which are vital to the acquisition of food and other necessary resources. However, environment-specific knowledge extends also to less-recognized skills such as moving through the landscape. This was never clearer to me than when I tried to navigate the deep mud that forms on rainforest paths that the residents of Rukullakta use to move cattle and mules between their homes and market centers. Each time I inadvertently left a rubber boot behind, plunging my already muddy foot two feet down into the mud in front of me, my guide would admonish me with the words “don’t put your weight on your foot as you are walking.” No matter how I tried, I could not figure out how to walk without putting any weight on my feet. Sometimes, my guide would try to make me feel better by telling me where other non-indigenous people had fallen along the way, which only made me realize that my own mishaps

were being added to his sense of place and bank of stories to tell the next poor traveler. Sometimes, I would try to regain some of my pride by suggesting that he visit me during a Michigan winter, when I would try to teach him how to walk on the ice without falling. “Then,” I would say, “you will know how I feel right now.”

Residents of Rukullakta have a strong sense of place, and it is extremely important for them to live in the same place as their ancestors. This is revealed in the very name “Rukullakta,” which means “old settlement.” As Arturo Escobar, like many other scholars, has argued, “place continues to be an important source of culture and identity; despite the pervasive delocalization of social life, there is an embodiment and emplacement to human life that cannot be denied” (2008, 7). Strong attachment to place becomes clear in the many stories Rukullakta’s residents tell about particular spots in the territory and the place names they select to commemorate events important to its defense. For example, Yawar Urku (Blood Mountain) refers to a mountain where a successful battle took place during the colonial period, when Spanish blood is said to have stained the mountain red. A strong commitment to place is also revealed in their long-standing desire to create a future for their children on this land. This motivates their interest in building a territorial economy that will allow their children to remain close to home when they reach adulthood, rather than having to move away to find a job.

For some scholars, a focus on place and local knowledge has served as a way of breaking with the “overdeterminations of a distinct ‘global’” (Raffles 1999, 350), and I agree that ethnography can provide a lens into how each place is “a set of relations, an ongoing politics, a density, in which places are discursively and imaginatively materialized and enacted through the practices of variously positioned people and political economies” (Raffles 1999, 324). Yet many people have unfortunately used the concepts of place and traditional ecological knowledge to go to the opposite extreme of what Raffles suggests, describing what is made to seem like local autonomy by ignoring or downplaying the ways that transnational articulations and interactions shape places over time (Biersack 2006, 16). A related weakness of the recent focus on place and traditional ecological knowledge is the tendency to portray indigenous cultures as internally homogeneous or, alternatively, as losing their culture due to interactions with markets or outsiders.

In this book, I take a different approach by examining Rukullakta’s residents’ deeply felt, yet shifting, attachments to their territory through the lens

of property. Addressing questions about who can do what and where within an indigenous territory is a key way of understanding the politics involved in enacting sovereignty. Research in political ecology spanning from foundational books (for example, Blaikie and Brookfield 1987; Neumann 2002; Peet and Watts 1996; Peluso 1994) through recent analyses (for example, Peluso and Lund 2011; White et al. 2012) have long revealed the mechanisms states, corporations, and international aid organizations use to gain control of property and resources previously used by indigenous and peasant groups. I aim to show how the normally distinct literatures on political ecology and place can inform one another through an analysis of property that is not limited to issues of ownership. Tracing the various ideas about property held by Rukullakta's residents provides incredible insight into their understandings of themselves as persons, as well as their relationships to one another, their leaders, and the land where they live. Residents have debated various questions associated with property regimes for their entire history of living together, in part because forming the collective territory involved dramatic changes from previous understandings of property, and in part because of the multiple, subsequent instances of outsiders (including development banks and conservationists) attempting to change property regimes in Rukullakta to fit their own agendas. Tracing debates about and the changing practices associated with property thus illuminates the enormous expectations that accompanied territorial titling, the deep attachments to place that confounded those expectations, the transnational relationships that have continued to shape those expectations and attachments over time, and the implications all of these have had on notions of territorial citizenship.

Some of the most interesting work in anthropology on property, and the deep connections between notions of property and both citizenship and personhood, has been produced by anthropologists working in the countries of the former Soviet bloc (see, for example, Alexander 2004; Dunn 2004; Humphrey and Verdery 2004; Verdery 2004). Residents of these countries went through dramatic changes and upheavals in their understandings of property and who they were as persons when their national economies transitioned from state-owned enterprises under socialism to privatized enterprises in the 1990s. Rukullakta's transition was quite different: indigenous leaders expected members to shift from understandings of property and personhood centered on extended kinship groups to a system in which land and people were governed by a territorial government. As in the former Soviet

bloc countries, there were substantial challenges associated with these transitions. In both places, the challenges were heightened by the fact that participants simultaneously began a period of stronger engagement with capitalist markets and with Western-trained experts who had very different expectations about property and social obligations. (In the former Soviet bloc, a number of people from Western Europe and the United States became involved in the privatization process in the 1990s; in Rukullakta, residents became more involved in market-oriented cattle ranching schemes through development projects sponsored by the Ecuadorian government and multilateral banks in the 1970s.) These outside entities brought new practices and new understandings of how residents should relate to one another, the products they produced, and their employers. For Rukullakta's residents, a second wave of intensive engagement occurred in the 1990s and early 2000s, as environmentalists brought their own expectations and assumptions about social relations, contracts, and property into their negotiations with indigenous governments. Some of those expectations — that indigenous governments spoke for and controlled the land use practices of territorial residents, and that existing property regimes were conducive to initiating projects that required large areas of land — were surprisingly similar to those of the government officials who promoted cooperative cattle ranching in the 1970s. Yet, as will be shown in chapter 4, the sheer length of time that environmentalists have actively worked to shape indigenous understandings of the environment has produced more pronounced effects on indigenous subjectivities and relationships to nature than what occurred as a result of the relatively brief period that government agencies spent promoting cattle ranching in the 1970s.

### **Making Citizens, Making Leaders, Making Territories**

As Rukullakta's leaders attempt to shape citizens and residents attempt to shape their leaders, both contribute to a more institutionalized territorial government, although it must remain dynamic to survive recurring external threats to the territory's integrity. A story from Rukullakta's recent history makes this clear. In 2011 the kuraka of the Kichwa People of Rukullakta signed a contract with Ivanhoe Petroleum to build an exploratory well within Rukullakta's territory after various residents had expressed an interest in having the company build a road to the well, a road that would also improve some residents' access to markets for their crops. The kuraka accepted

a modest payment of US \$1,000 from the company to act as its community liaison. When it became clear that a very vocal majority of residents was firmly opposed to the contract, he claimed that he did not sign it. Some say he even traveled to Quito to have a new national identification card issued with a different signature, so that he could claim that his signature on the contract had been forged. At a rapidly called assembly meeting subsequent to his actions, members rubbed hot peppers in his eyes (a punishment typically given to children) and deposed him.

A second-level leader, roughly equivalent to a minister of economic affairs, was asked to become the new kuraka. During an interview, he told me: “The people called on me to fill this role and I accepted. I had to quit my job to fill this unpaid position because they are looking to me to lead this organization. [Ministerial positions are much more part-time than the position of kuraka, and most ministers also have paying jobs outside the territorial government.] Our grandfathers and fathers left these lands, this organization in a good position. How can I disrespect them by failing in this duty?” (René Shiguango interview, June 15, 2011).

The new kuraka’s sense of obligation is apparent, and he is not the only one to feel this way. After four decades, there are aspects of living in an indigenous territory that are now generally accepted, even though they were new as recently as the 1970s. There are many other aspects of people’s behavior, however, that leaders have attempted to change unsuccessfully; members have resisted, either through vocal outcry or silent evasion. Territorial citizenship is a moving target, one that leaders pursue, members assess, and multiple outsiders attempt to grasp and shape to suit their own political agendas. Although observers of indigenous organizations typically emphasize the importance of tradition, Rukullakta’s forty-year history illustrates that change may be as important as continuity in sustaining senses of shared ownership and identity. This book traces these processes over a span of four decades, as well as the changing subjectivities and understandings of personhood, property regimes, and nature that have accompanied them.

### Outline of the Following Chapters

At the beginning of chapter 1, I provide a brief history of the region’s interaction with missions and the colonial and federal government in the centuries preceding the formation of the Rukullakta Cooperative. Subsequently, the chapter turns to the early cooperative leaders’ vision for in-

indigenous empowerment during the turbulent 1960s, and the national and transnational encounters that shaped this vision. Many groups, including government agencies, encouraged indigenous people to form collective organizations so they could retain access to their land. This required electing leaders and designating some of the organization's land for communal use. Both requirements were sharp departures from earlier Kichwa understandings of social organization, personhood, and property. Yet a relatively small but vocal group of Kichwa saw the possibilities of forming collective organizations as empowering, rather than as simply an imposition by the state. Self-appointed local leaders guided numerous families through a vision of empowerment that deviated from the state's project but corresponded to it sufficiently to qualify their organization for special treatment.

In chapter 2, I examine the challenge that confronted leaders once the organization had been officially recognized: creating a community of members in a newly recognized territory that was amenable to indigenous governance. Sustaining collectivist energies and creating a long-term, economically collaborating entity with over two thousand residents were considerable goals, given members' strong preference for living autonomously. Leaders fought to maintain members' interest in their vision of empowerment by seeking development funding from a wide variety of sources. After just a few years, however, it became clear that the state-like vision of a large, economically collaborating group involved changes in social relations that were too dramatic for most residents. I conclude the chapter by arguing that despite the downfall of large-scale collectivism, important traces of this period and the early leaders' vision for empowerment continue in smaller-scale projects practiced by a large portion of the membership.

Although the first two chapters follow the history of Rukullakta in a chronological format, the final three chapters are organized thematically to allow me to draw attention to some of the key issues and processes that have characterized Rukullakta's enactment of sovereignty since the mid-1980s. In chapter 3, I analyze the complicated and contradictory ideas surrounding property that have plagued Rukullakta's government for decades. If early leaders had been successful in pursuing their vision for empowerment, the formation of the cooperative would have involved dramatic changes in the ways in which participants thought about property. Previous chapters emphasize the differences in priorities set by early movement leaders and those

held by much of the membership, but this chapter reveals that it is wrong to assume that debates within the cooperative amount to disagreements between modernists and traditionalists. I identify three ideal types of property, each of which includes some aspects of older ways of understanding property and other aspects that are relatively new. Each of the three types is also tied to particular understandings of personhood, Kichwa identity, and citizen-leader relationships. Finally, each is connected to a distinct landscape, and I trace how these various landscapes have become more and less common at different points in the cooperative's history. My analysis of aerial photographs and satellite images from various points in Rukullakta's history reveals that rather than simply attempting to shorten distances to markets, members make their land use decisions based on deep-seated opinions about the value and meaning of territorial citizenship.

In chapter 4, I examine the rise of conservation-driven investments in the Upper Napo region since the mid-1980s. I trace how indigenous leaders in the cooperative and throughout the Ecuadorian Amazon have slowly shifted toward environmentalists' visions of conservation, even as they staunchly resisted what they saw as attempts to challenge their organizational autonomy. Not all indigenous organizations agree on the value of particular environmentalist projects or certain tenets of environmentalist thought. Differing opinions among leaders about particular programs emerge from the leaders' varying cultural values, understandings of property, and histories of engagement with outsiders, and these opinions contribute to distinct forms of environmental subject formation and different understandings of territorial citizenship.

I then turn to a key question in chapter 5. How is it possible that Rukullakta has remained strong despite the many challenges described in previous chapters? Through a close reading of Rukullakta's archives, it is possible to see how the territory's citizens have played an important role in shaping their leaders and legitimating their rule, in particular through appeals to the leaders for assistance in resolving local conflicts. I refer to such acts as everyday forms of indigenous territory formation, building on Gilbert Joseph and Daniel Nugent's concept of "everyday forms of state formation" (1994b). I then examine three additional forms, or "technologies of citizenship" (Cruikshank 1993, 1999) pursued over the last decade, and reveal how all of them have been mutually constituted through the actions and imaginaries

ies of leaders and citizens. This was particularly clear in the period between 2006 and 2009, when leaders worked to reinvent the cooperative to fit its new legal designation, the Kichwa People of Rukullakta. I conclude that re-invention is a key process in sustaining indigenous territorial organizations.

### Living History as Fieldwork

Documenting and interpreting recent history is a process fraught with complications, as many, though not all, of the people involved in this history are still living. To make matters more complicated, the longer I spend engaged in understanding Rukullakta's history, the more I become a part of it. The following story highlights some of these dynamics.

I began my research in 1999–2000, as directed by the Rukullakta leadership of the time, by interviewing as many of the founding members of the organization as I could find. In the process of doing so, I discovered that there were a number of facts and interpretations on which people disagreed. For example, I was unable to determine who had been the first president of the cooperative, even though this was an issue of extreme importance to my informants. Many founding members of the organization identified Juan Shiguango as having filled that role. However, Carlos Alvarado — and a relatively small number of other people — told me that he himself had been the first president.

Several weeks later, I was granted access to the organization's meeting minutes (the *Actas*). In these archives, it stated clearly that Carlos Alvarado was the first president of the organization, and Juan Shiguango was the first vice president. Given my book-centric training, my tendency was to believe the written archive over the verbal accounts, but I also knew that Alvarado had written many of the minutes in the *Actas* in the early years. Thus, I thought, it was *conceivable* that Alvarado had lied in the meeting minutes, switching the roles that he and Shiguango filled. Another, less conspiratorial, possibility was that nearly all the people I was interviewing had joined the organization after Alvarado's presidency, since Shiguango was listed as the second president. A final — and perhaps the most likely — possibility was that Alvarado had been a self-selected president during the early organizational meetings of what they call the "Pre-Cooperative" in 1970–73, but by the time the state granted official recognition to the organization in 1974 and members had to select their president, Shiguango was the one they chose.

Prior to coming to this tenuous conclusion, however, I asked several people directly about the discrepancy. Older interviewees inevitably reacted with a disgusted snort or a dismissive and annoyed smirk about the possibility of Alvarado filling the role. Sometimes they would add, “Carlos Alvarado was just a young man at that time” (the implication being that at that time, it was only older men who were respected enough to become leaders). However, when I mentioned what the archives stated to the current cadre of leaders, all men in their late twenties or thirties, they embraced the new information. They complimented me for my keen investigative skills, since they had always been told that Shiguango was the first president. I appreciated their compliments, but I also felt uneasy. In the history I produced for them, I listed Alvarado as the first president, in part because he had been such a valuable informant to me, making me reluctant to imply that he was lying. I also did my best to respect the legacy of Juan Shiguango by including substantial coverage of the important organizational work he did prior to his untimely death. It was at moments such as these that I was forced to realize that the role of historian is not that of a detached, objective compiler of documents and oral accounts, but that of a shaper of collective memories and history itself.

In another twist, when I returned in 2001 to continue the research, Alvarado was no longer living in Rukullakta, having chosen to separate from his wife and move to the Galapagos. His wife and children approached the leadership, asking for financial assistance. The leaders decided to help the family in recognition of the key role Alvarado had played in obtaining the large land title that Rukullakta’s residents enjoyed, especially during his time as the first president. I then realized that my seemingly harmless historical work as a student was having material as well as symbolic ramifications.

In subsequent years, I had my dissertation translated into Spanish and published by an Ecuadorian press (Erazo 2008). Each time I visit, I bring dozens of copies and receive almost as many requests for them. So far, no one has confronted me about my interpretations, even though I am sure they would not hesitate to do so if they felt the need (although admittedly, it is mostly younger people who take the time to read the book). More important, as Rukullakta becomes more and more a part of me, it has been my constant aim to produce a history that neither romanticizes nor unfairly

condemns the activities of the organization and the larger indigenous movement to which it belongs.

The methods I have used have changed substantially over the last decade, both because my recent work and family obligations make extended trips difficult, and because of dramatic changes in Rukullakta. In 1999–2000, my primary task was to find and interview the founding members of the organization, most of whom were no longer actively involved in governance. Finding them often involved four-hour hikes through deep mud along cattle trails in the rainforest, only to find that the person I sought was away on a hunting trip, or running errands in Ecuador’s capital. Even when I tried to take advantage of founding members’ scheduled trips to the nearby mission town (which I learned about from their grown children who lived closer to me), the frequent Amazonian downpours often meant that the interviewee decided to stay at home and stay dry rather than make the scheduled visit. Fortunately, I was usually accompanied by a guide, and I lived just steps away from Rukullakta’s central government offices. I was therefore able to engage in more relaxed conversations and participant observation between interviews. I was also able to spend evenings and rainy days attempting to decipher the handwriting in Rukullakta’s *Actas* and reading other archives.

One of the recurring themes in my interviews was issues of property, and in 2000 I located two sets of aerial photographs of Rukullakta taken in 1973 and 1982, housed at Ecuador’s Military Geographical Institute. Between my 2000 and 2001 fieldwork trips, I took courses in aerial photograph and satellite image interpretation as a way of visualizing the various processes and debates to which leaders and members had devoted so much energy — and to which the *Actas* gave so many pages. Interpreting aerial photographs and satellite images is an uncommon method of understanding debates over property. However, the images gave me insights into where new homes, agricultural fields, and pastures were established at different times, often against the will of leaders, allowing me to assess the relative strength of leaders to determine how the territory was being used at different points in time. I spent months trying to fit hand-drawn community maps of family-claimed property boundaries to the land cover maps I created with the aerial photographs and several satellite images from other points in time, in order to understand the connections between struggles over property regimes and changing land use. This process included two months of hiking through Rukullakta’s territory with a global positioning system (GPS) and interviewing farmers on the

past thirty years of land use, so that I could better assess the data provided by aerial photographs and satellite images.

A few years later, things began to change quite dramatically in Rukullakta. More and more people had periodic access to broadband Internet and owned cell phones — even people who still lived hours from the nearest road and had yet to obtain electricity in their homes.<sup>6</sup> I began to receive press releases, photos of important events, and professional-quality brochures as attachments to e-mails from leaders who have come to expect my periodic returns to Rukullakta as the organization's semi-official historian.

In 2008 a project organized by the Center for Environmental Studies in Latin America (subsequently called the Center for Conservation in Indigenous Lands in Western Amazonia) at the University of Texas at Austin invested the funds and hours necessary to map the community-held property boundaries I had struggled so long to understand based on hand-drawn community property maps. Today the government offices of Rukullakta are adorned with dozens of Geographic Information System maps that were created using the center's data, and leaders draft management plans that establish guidelines for land use decades into the future. Although in some ways it was disheartening to be outdone in terms of the production of geographical information, the availability of all these data has enabled me to understand some processes and relationships that I had not been able to see previously.

When I first began work in Rukullakta, I felt that my role was to observe and not interfere with what I perceived as a more fragile culture than my own. As time passed, it became increasingly clear to me that my assumptions could not have been further from the truth. Rukullakta's leaders actively seek allies, and I am only one of hundreds of foreigners who have played a role there. While I write books and articles, others offer money, utopian development projects, geographical analysis of land cover within Rukullakta's borders, technical assistance in projects Rukullakta's leaders have designed, and even documentary coverage of the leaders' efforts to control some of the effects of globalization in their territory.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, Rukullakta's leaders have put my writings to their own uses. For example, the forty-page history and photos that I produced in 2000 traveled to Spain with a few leaders as they successfully attempted to obtain funding from a Basque foundation. Thus, I increasingly feel that it is my responsibility to contribute, at least in modest ways, to leaders' efforts to strengthen their organization rather than

pretend I can sit on the sidelines. As my good friend Medardo Shiguango, head (as of 2012) of the Project on Geotourism for the Kichwa People of Rukullakta (the Pueblo Kichwa de Rukullakta, or PKR), likes to say to me, “*Doctora*, you are one of PKR’s representatives in the United States. Your books will let people know about the work we are doing here.”