Making Space

Community Organization, Agrarian Change, and the Politics of Scale in the Ecuadorian Amazon

by
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At the western edge of the Ecuadorian Amazon, 20 kilometers north of the town of Tena, is the *centro matriz*, or administrative center, of Mondayacu, a Quichua community of about 1,200 people. Here stand a few dozen houses, most made of rough-hewn boards and tin roofs, though many have been constructed at least in part with split bamboo siding and have roofs of thatch. A handful of stores sell basic foodstuffs, soda, liquor, notebooks, pens and pencils. Women wash their laundry, their children, and themselves in roadside pools fed by water diverted from a distant stream, and children play soccer and basketball next to the community meeting house. Though most homes within 100 meters of the highway are wired for electricity, there are no telephones here, no running water, no sewerage. On a hill overlooking the center are Mondayacu's elementary and bilingual intercultural secondary schools. The concentration of houses and other buildings along the highway represents the first line of defense against the incursions of colonists from the highlands or coast and the first stage in the long process of obtaining legal title to the community's land claims. Away from the road, clearings in the forest for

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cattle pasture and cash crops are further evidence of land occupation, serving to solidify the community's presence.

Mondayacu's community association, the Asociación de Trabajadores Indígenas Agropecuarios de Mondayacu (Association of Indigenous Agricultural Workers of Mondayacu—ATIAM), was established in the mid-1970s in order to gain legal title to the community's land claims, threatened by the influx of colonists into the Amazon region, or Oriente. These processes of community formation and land titling have involved a spatial restructuring of settlement and have been facilitated by the forging of institutional relationships that link Mondayacu's residents to a variety of extralocal organizations: regional and national indigenous federations, state agencies, national and international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). These relationships have allowed residents of Mondayacu to "jump scales," that is, to gain political and financial support for their claims from actors with broader institutional reach and at the same time to link their concerns to struggles at the regional and national scales.

Ecuador's indigenous organizations have gained international prominence in recent years and have received considerable attention from academics both within and outside of Ecuador (see, e.g., Bebbington et al., 1992; Brysk, 2000; Collins, 2000; Moreno and Figueroa, 1992; Perreault, 2000–2001; Sawyer, 1997a–b; Selverston-Scher, 2001; Whitten, Whitten, and Chango, 1997). While these analyses are clearly valuable in clarifying the role of indigenous organizations in national and international political economic relations, less attention has been paid to local-scale actors and processes. Because the lived realities of community residents are fundamentally different from those of national-level indigenous political leaders, a focus on community-scale processes is crucial to gaining a fuller understanding of indigenous politics in Ecuador. In this article, I focus on the role of community-based organizations and the multiscalar networks of which they are a part in mediating processes of regional development. I begin this discussion with a consideration of space, scale, and network formation and the role that these have played in shaping and reshaping Mondayacu. I then outline the history of the community, highlighting changes in patterns of social and spatial organization and in agricultural strategies and development projects.

INDIGENOUS ORGANIZATIONS AND THE PRODUCTION OF SCALE

In simplified form, indigenous organizations in Ecuador are structured in a nested hierarchy in which community-based groups are affiliated with

provincial-level federations that in turn are part of regional confederations (one each for the Amazon lowlands and the Andean highlands). These regional confederations are affiliated with the Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador (the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador—CONAIE), a national confederation that in recent years has emerged as an important actor in national politics (see Bebbington et al., 1992; Collins, 2000; CONAIE, 1989). Although this basic outline is generally true, in reality the relationships between indigenous organizations in Ecuador are complex, multiform, and frequently contentious. While a full explication of these relationships is beyond the scope of this article, I wish to call attention here to the ways in which indigenous groups have organized themselves according to spatial scales and emphasize that, through this structure, they are engaged in a form of spatialized politics. This is not to argue that spatial aspects of political struggle are more important than, for example, class, gender, or ethnic identity. Rather, in focusing on space and spatial practice I hope to foreground elements of political struggle that are all too often ignored or taken for granted, the elucidation of which may shed light on opportunities for alternative forms of political and economic organization.

The concept of geographical space has enjoyed something of a celebrity status in the social sciences in recent years, with researchers from a variety of disciplines and theoretical perspectives writing of "political spaces," "terrains of struggle," or the "mapping of difference." Much of the appeal of spatial metaphor, however, is based on a notion of space as unproblematic; conceived of as fixed and inert, space is frequently represented as merely the ontologically given background to human actions (see, e.g., Appadurai, 1991, and Rahier, 1998). A more useful view is one of space as actively (re)constructed through the interplay of material practice. As Neil Smith (1992: 66) asserts, space cannot be viewed as separate from the realm of material processes but rather is socially produced through and within social relations. As Smith and others point out, not only space but spatial *scale* is likewise produced through the give-and-take of material practice. Scale—in the most basic sense, the socio-spatial "level of analysis"—is an articulating, organizing element of spatial processes. For instance, scalar distinctions between the "regional" and the "national" or the "local" and the "global," far from being organic qualities of the spatial organization of societies, are contingent upon the interaction of social actors and structural forces (Marston, 2000). Moreover, spatial scales do not emerge passively or in a political vacuum. Rather, they are produced through the exercise of power, as the outcome of negotiation, struggle, and compromise (Silvern, 1999; Smith, 1992; 1996; Swyngedouw, 1997; see also Agnew, 1993; 1997; Cox, 1997a–b; Herod, 1995; 1997; Howitt, 1993; Staeheli, 1994).

Political and economic power is exerted nationally and globally in ways that simultaneously produce "the local" as immobile and relatively disempowered. Following Harvey (1973; 1990), Smith (1992; see also Brenner, 1998) asserts that, whereas the powerful express their freedom in space, subaltern oppositional groups are imprisoned by it. Castells (1996) makes a similar point in arguing that global elites derive much of their power from their social articulation in what he terms the *space of flows*. Simultaneously, he argues, the masses, restricted to the *space of places*, are segmented, disorganized, and localized. Constructions of space and the politics of scale are central to these relations of power. This involves a process of "deterritorialization" wherein national and global elites are able to reduce (though never entirely eliminate) their spatial fixity, that is, their reliance on particular locations to carry out their economic, political, or social activities (Smith, 1996). In other words, through their greater spatial mobility elites are able to engage more easily than subaltern groups in a politics of scale. Examples include the greater personal mobility and freedom of international travel enjoyed by elites; the hypermobility of capital (relative to labor), the ability of the powerful to manipulate legal jurisdiction or political boundaries in order to circumscribe localized actors; and the linking of global networks of surveillance and control to the benefit of the ruling classes. Similar capabilities to transcend spatio-economic and political scales do not exist—at least to comparable degrees—for subaltern groups, which are largely confined to localized, often disarticulated patterns of action and resistance.

It should be acknowledged, however, that spatial scale, which provides the mechanism for oppression and control, may also be employed in ways that empower social movements and challenge existing spatio-political hierarchies. It is in this sense that Castells's (1996) static dichotomy of the powerful global and the powerless local proves far too simple, for it fails to recognize the ways in which local actors can bridge scales of action. By forging relationships that link actors at different spatial scales—and therefore with differential access to networks of institutional, financial, and political support—oppositional movements can, to varying degrees, overcome the constraints of scale to broaden their spatial reach (Escobar, 2001). This process, a political strategy that Smith (1996) refers to as "jumping scales," allows localized subaltern groups to increase their capacity to make political claims against other actors (see also Swyngedouw, 1997).

Of crucial importance to the capacity of actors to jump scales is their ability to control space and place. Here we are reminded of Harvey's (1990: 234) "simple rule": those who command space can control the politics of place and scale. Through the control and consolidation of space and the production of place that this process brings about, subaltern groups may find a basis for

linking their concerns to actors with broader spatial reach. Once multiscalar networks have been established, these may serve to consolidate the spatial control of a subaltern group. Thus, the relationship between place and scale is mutually constitutive and central to the ways in which social movements resist domination and advance their claims. Crucially, however, these notions cannot be understood apart from a theory of the production of space. Through the consolidation of space and the linking of these spaces through multiscalar networks of influence and operation, subaltern groups can construct what Brenner (1998: 478–479) refers to as "emancipatory countergeographies."

It is precisely by consolidating space and jumping scales that indigenous organizations in Latin America have been able to gain political influence and legitimate their claims vis-à-vis the state to the degree that they have in recent years. In the context of southern Mexico, for instance, Fox (1996) notes that the ability of peasant groups to "scale up" beyond the local is central to the construction of social capital and the resultant "thickening" of civil society.[1] Others working in Latin America have likewise examined the construction of social capital—the bonds of trust and reciprocity that inhere in civic engagement and collective action—and its utility for enhancing livelihoods and facilitating economic development (see, e.g., Bebbington, 1998; 1999; Perreault, Bebbington, and Carroll, 1998; Tendler and Freedheim, 1994). Such analyses highlight the importance of transnational networks and the ways in which these networks can positively influence not only the ability of such groups to make political claims but their capacity to improve market functioning and state accountability. As Jonas (1994) points out, however, empowerment is derived not merely from "stretching" spatially to higher scales but through the simultaneous mobilization of actors at multiple scales of social action. In Ecuador, for instance, indigenous groups have formed dense, multiscalar networks that not only link community-based organizations to regional and national federations but connect these organizations with national and international NGOs, lending institutions, and the state (Selverston-Scher, 2001). As Alison Brysk (2000) illustrates, indigenous groups throughout the hemisphere have strategically linked themselves to diverse and complex transnational networks involving nongovernmental organizations as well as state agencies. These networks, involving international environmental, development, and human rights organizations, have opened up new spaces—both literally and figuratively—for indigenous political mobilization and cultural revalorization. Empowerment, then, is gained from the mobilization of these various actors and, crucially, their articulation at a variety of spatial scales.

Jumping scales has been a particularly important strategy for indigenous organizations as they have negotiated the institutional networks and

transformative processes of regional development. Here I am thinking of development in both senses of the term used by Bebbington (n.d.): on the one hand as a generalized process of capitalist transformation and on the other as individual, directed intervention. While both generalized processes of transformation and directed interventions are central to the understanding of development as a cultural, economic, and political project (Escobar, 1995), they are too often conflated in the literature, and their contingent relationship is frequently left unacknowledged. Of importance to this study is the fact that directed interventions by actors such as NGOs or state agencies may contribute to broader processes of capitalist transformation but do not necessarily do so. Such interventions may in fact empower indigenous individuals and organizations to resist capitalist penetration or state integration and negotiate spaces for autonomy. In particular, programs aimed at education, land titling, and the improvement of agricultural production may facilitate the consolidation of indigenous communities and provide a basis for political mobilization. Such has been the case—to varying degrees, to be sure—among communities in the Ecuadorian Amazon. The aim of this article is to clarify the spatial aspects of community organization and the role of multiscalar networks in allowing indigenous community residents to negotiate processes of economic and political change.

A fuller understanding of the spatialized nature of indigenous politics in Ecuador and the ways in which different geographical scales of struggle have been constituted historically is perhaps best achieved through an examination of specific organizational histories (see Korovkin, 2001). By looking closely at the ways in which residents of Mondayacu have consolidated their presence in the landscape—legally, economically, socially—we may better comprehend the manner in which indigenous organizations have produced spatial scales and how those scales, once produced, may facilitate the advancement of indigenous political claims. As Cervone (1999) notes, the scale of indigenous politics in Ecuador has been shaped to a considerable degree by state policies of rural modernization, as well as by the practices of international development agencies. Both the 1937 Ley de Comunas and the agrarian reform legislation of the 1960s and early 1970s required communities to receive *personería jurídica* (legal incorporation) in order to receive title to lands, water resources, agricultural credit, infrastructure, or any other benefits made available by the state. This had the effect of forming legally recognized, spatially delimited indigenous communities, thus reifying the (socially and politically produced) "local." Since the late 1970s international aid agencies and NGOs have focused their attention on these base-level communities or, to an even greater extent, on regional secondary-level organizations or indigenous federations (Bebbington et al., 1992; Perreault, 2000). In

this way, indigenous organizations are shaped and limited by the scalar politics of the state but at the same time can use the institutional relations produced through those practices to jump scales and gain political legitimacy and representation.

Over the past 30 years, and in particular since the late 1980s, indigenous organizations in Ecuador have asserted their claims vis-à-vis the state through both popular mobilization and electoral politics. The 1990 uprising, in which indigenous people blocked roads and filled city squares throughout the highlands to press their claims to land and political rights, brought indigenous organizations to national attention. Led by CONAIE (formed just four years earlier), the uprising was an attempt not only to break the patterns of paternalism, discrimination, and exploitation that mark ethnic relations in Ecuador but also to restructure the state's political institutions so as to deepen Ecuadorian democracy (Moreno Yánez and Figueroa, 1992). Following on its relative successes, in 1992 indigenous people from the central Oriente staged a week-long march from Puyo, in Pastaza Province, to the capital, Quito, in the highlands. Led by the Organización de Pueblos Indígenas de Pastaza (the Organization of Indigenous Peoples of Pastaza—OPIP [a regional indigenous federation in Pastaza Province]), marchers succeeded in bringing their demands for territorial rights before President Rodrigo Borja (Sawyer, 1997b; Whitten, Whitten, and Chango, 1997). Central to both the 1990 uprising and the 1992 march was the use of spatial tactics to press indigenous claims: the filling of urban (mestizo) public spaces with rural, indigenous protesters materially as well as metaphorically linked the provincial with the metropolitan. These transgressive actions were intended to disrupt exclusionary power relations dependent on spatial marginalization and the exercise of domination through the production and enforcement of scale hierarchies.

More recently, with the emergence in the mid-1990s of the Movimiento de Unidad Plurinacional Pachakutik (the Pachakutik Movement of Plurinational Unity, hereafter referred to as Pachakutik), a political movement that participates in electoral politics and broadly represents the interests of indigenous peoples (and to a lesser extent Afro-Ecuadorians, labor, and other progressive social movements of the left), indigenous organizations in Ecuador have gained another avenue by which to make claims against the state. Pachakutik's influence and visibility, together with the continued activism of CONAIE, have helped bring indigenous groups to the forefront of opposition politics in Ecuador. This was dramatically apparent in the January 2000 coup against the discredited president Jamil Mahuad (Collins, 2000) and again in January and February 2001 in protests against Mahuad's successor, Gustavo Noboa. The political legitimacy gained by indigenous

organizations such as CONAIE and OPIP, as well as Pachakutik, has come through a long history of organizing at multiple scales, a process that has involved the participation of national and international NGOs, the Church, and the state. Through the political representation provided by national-level organizations, together with the development and advocacy work of regional indigenous federations (see below), local indigenous communities like Mondayacu have scaled up their access to institutional, political, financial, and natural resources. Such linkages in turn serve to (re)produce scalar relations between indigenous organizations and between these organizations and external actors.

It is important to consider, however, that indigenous peoples in Ecuador do not exist solely within relations of ethnic politics. Similarly, spatial scales are produced not only through political struggle but through relations of production and patterns of social reproduction and consumption that inform notions of identity (Marston, 2000). Residents of Mondayacu are engaged in agricultural practices that bind them to national and international markets, and it is here that they have been less successful at scaling up their concerns and maintaining control over the relations of production and exchange. As a result, indigenous producers in Mondayacu remain disempowered relative to the middlemen to whom they sell their products. Whereas indigenous groups have been relatively effective in linking scales to press political concerns, they have been considerably less so in using the same techniques to overcome market inequities and economic marginalization. In what follows I discuss the organizational history of Mondayacu and detail the production practices and institutional relations that have at once allowed community residents to assert their presence and legitimacy as political actors and perpetuated their subordination to national and international markets.

ORGANIZATIONAL NETWORKS AND COMMUNITY CONSOLIDATION

In the decades prior to the implementation of agrarian reform policies in the Oriente in the 1960s and 1970s, inhabitants of the Mondayacu area lived in dispersed settlements rather than in a center. Extended families occupied house clusters that were widely separated one from another in a landscape mosaic of primary and secondary forest, managed fallows, and clearings. Women cultivated household gardens and men engaged in occasional wage labor, hunted, fished, and tended small plots of coffee and cacao. During this period, there was no political hierarchy analogous to the contemporary community association ATIAM, though families were subject to the *varayuj*

system imposed by missionaries and the local state as a means to control the indigenous population and extract their labor. Some individuals were also subject to the onerous arrangements of debt peonage associated with hacienda labor that persisted in the region into the mid-twentieth century (see Hudelson, 1981; Irvine, 1987; Macdonald, 1999; Muratorio, 1991; Oberem, 1980). As exploitative as they clearly were, these relations of production did not significantly alter lowland Quichua social, political, or spatial organization. Such changes began in the 1960s and accelerated in the 1970s with the demographic and administrative changes brought about by agrarian reform, oil extraction, and the associated colonization of the Oriente.

Ecuador's agrarian reform laws of 1964 and 1973 followed two paths: (1) divestiture of large landholdings and redistribution of land to smallholders and the landless and (2) colonization of lands considered uninhabited. To facilitate colonization, in 1964 the government passed the Ley de Tierras Baldías, which declared uncultivated lands to be uninhabited and therefore available for colonization (Pichón, 1992; Zevallos, 1985). Indigenous land claims in the Amazon, the resource use practices for which were based on small-scale horticultural production, hunting, and fishing, were thus declared fallow lands, making them highly vulnerable to incursions by settlers as well as commercial interests. Large-scale colonization stemming from this policy placed intense pressure on the resource bases of indigenous groups. As a result, many communities and organizations sought to secure title to their land claims by clearing forest for cattle pasture (Macdonald, 1981; Rudel, 1993; Salazar, 1981). This policy coincided in time and space with petroleum development in the Oriente, which, with its vast network of associated roads and infrastructure, made possible the large-scale settlement of formerly remote portions of Ecuador's Amazon.

In 1964, as the first agrarian reform was being drawn up, a Texaco/Gulf consortium received concessions to nearly 1.5 million hectares of eastern Ecuador's lowland tropical forest. Three years later the group struck oil at Lago Agrio, in the northeastern Oriente, and commercial extraction began with the construction of a 313-mile-long trans-Andean pipeline to the coastal city of Esmeraldas in 1972 (Martz, 1987; Sawyer, 1997a). Oil revenues were used to subsidize urban consumption, particularly gasoline, wheat imports, and electricity (de Janvry, Sadoulet, and Fargeix, 1991). While the benefits of oil production accrued to the growing urban population of the highlands and coast, its negative effects remained in the rural Amazon. Deforestation, contamination of rivers, and the intense pressure on lands and resources brought by colonization all contributed to a disruption of indigenous lifeways in the region and proved to be powerful issues around which indigenous

organizations would mobilize (see Kimmerling, 1993; 1996; O'Connor, 1994; Varea, 1995).

Organizing activities in the Mondayacu area began in the early 1970s with the establishment of a community store and the gradual movement of families to the area of the present-day center.[2] Residents of the area perceived the army's Montúfar Battalion, which was constructing the Tena-Baeza highway, as a threat to their land claims (which were bisected by the new road). After failed attempts to join the nearby community of Sardinas, which was already legally recognized, people in Mondayacu suspected that families from that community intended to occupy land claimed by Mondayacu residents. Consequently, they decided to seek the assistance of the Federación de Organizaciones Indígenas de Napo (the Federation of Indigenous Organizations of Napo—FOIN) in legalizing their land claims.

At this time FOIN was working with the Instituto Ecuatoriano de Reforma Agraria y Colonización (the Ecuadorian Institute for Agrarian Reform and Colonization—IERAC) to legalize indigenous land claims in the area. An IERAC representative was present at the first community assembly, in October 1975, and "explained the motive for the meeting and the importance of living within a legally constituted organization and the defense of the common interests of the associates."[3] In May 1983, ATIAM gained legal title to 8,899 hectares—much more land per person than any other community in the area. This title was granted "globally," meaning that it is held by ATIAM, each of whose 70 members is entitled to usufruct of an individual 100-hectare lot.[4] Additionally, the community has more than 1,200 hectares in reserve for future generations. Fifty-four percent of the community's population consists of families that are not members of ATIAM and therefore have no rights to ATIAM land or to participation in ATIAM meetings or decision making. These families do, however, benefit from the educational opportunities and (limited) infrastructure improvements that have resulted from ATIAM's activities. Whereas many of these families own private plots of land—some quite sizable—in the area, others have almost no land of their own. Although differentiation in landholding certainly existed prior to the agrarian reform, it has been greatly accentuated in recent decades, as land usufruct is no longer based upon family groupings and inheritance rights, but rather is contingent upon strictly limited membership in the legally sanctioned community organization (Wray et al., 1996).

Organizing activities in Mondayacu, together with the legalization of land claims, helped consolidate the community spatially and fix its presence in the physical and institutional landscapes. This in turn strengthened ATIAM's position as a member of FOIN and therefore as a political and social actor in the Alto Napo, providing community residents with a channel (however

imperfect) through which to voice their concerns. Moreover, community formation and the legal recognition of the community's land claims allowed ATIAM to establish formal organizational relationships with, for example, the provincial bilingual intercultural education agency and state and international rural development programs. As will be discussed below, these relationships further contributed to ATIAM's spatial and organizational consolidation.

BILINGUAL EDUCATION

Since the Josephine missionaries first established schools in the area in the early twentieth century, the scholastic calendar has been a major determinant of the timing of family movements and, consequently, the seasonality and spatiality of resource use practices. During the school year, families tend to concentrate in the center so that their children may attend classes. During vacation periods, most families move to their farms, which may be more than 20 kilometers away (Unupi et al., 1993). In the mid-1980s, Mondayacu leaders worked with FOIN and the provincial bilingual-education agency to establish educational programs that continue to play important roles in the life of the community. In 1986 a kindergarten was established in Mondayacu, and plans were made for a bilingual (Quichua/Spanish) high school—the first of its kind in the immediate area. The high school was inaugurated in 1987, and within three years the basic curriculum had been expanded. Today the high school, Programa Educativa Mondayacu Causaimanta Yachana[5] (Mondayacu Educational Program Causaimanta Yachana—PEMCY), promotes the study of community development and organization, Quichua language and culture, traditional agriculture, and medicinal plants. In this way, the bilingual intercultural high school, which emerged as a direct result of the organizational activities of ATIAM and FOIN, working with the provincial bilingual-education program, seeks to promote knowledge of traditional practices as well as social and political organization among the community's young people. The emphasis on cultural revalorization through bilingual education coincided with the consolidation of regional and national indigenous organizations and the increasing politicization of indigenous discourse in Ecuador. It is also part of a broader process of increasing indigenous participation in and control over certain state functions and programs at the local, provincial, and national scales. Changing ideological emphases in bilingual intercultural education are reflective of these processes. It is important to note that this program (and others like it throughout the Alto Napo) emerged at a time when subsistence-based resource-use practices had been literally

losing ground to such market-oriented practices as cattle raising and, more recently, cultivation of the fruit naranjilla.

Though a full discussion of bilingual education in the Alto Napo is beyond the scope of this article, it is important to note the symbolic transition it has undergone. When bilingual education programs began in Napo Province in the 1970s, they functioned primarily to provide basic education for indigenous children with limited Spanish comprehension and to facilitate access to educational and institutional resources. As contact with Spanish-speaking Ecuadorian society (through travel, education, radio, and market relations) has increased over time, fewer children of school age have been raised as monolingual Quichua-speakers. At the same time, an increasing number of Quichua children are being raised in primarily or, in rare cases, exclusively Spanish-speaking homes.[6] Bilingual education is now valued primarily as a way for students to maintain Quichua language skills and learn about shamanism, medicinal plants, subsistence agriculture, and, significantly, community development. Gradually, then, the primary function and symbolic significance of bilingual intercultural education has shifted from the provision of educational access to the valorization of Quichua culture and language.[7] It is perhaps reflective of the ways in which the "traditional" and the "modern" are mutually constitutive that shamanism and Quichua language are now formal courses of study in the high school. This is also symbolic of the ways in which forms of modernity are marshaled to reproduce and represent notions of "traditional" identity in the Alto Napo. Bilingual education and Quichua radio programs have played an important role in the formation of a regional Quichua identity—one of the central projects of federations such as FOIN, OPIP, and the regional confederation of which they are both a part, the Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas de la Amazonía Ecuatoriana (the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of the Ecuadorian Amazon—CONFENIAE).

In contrast to the resistance met by bilingual educational programs in the Peruvian highlands, where they are commonly viewed by parents as an obstacle to the socioeconomic advancement of their children (see García in this issue), PEMCY enjoys broad support in Mondayacu. Bilingual intercultural education is widely valued by parents and children alike as a means by which Quichua students may learn about their culture and their community, which to many in Mondayacu appear to be under far greater threat than the likelihood of integration with national society. In Mondayacu students have a choice of schools to attend, and many choose to pursue studies at both PEMCY and the Spanish-language high school in the nearby town of Cotundo.

PEMCY has strengthened the spatial and organizational consolidation of Mondayacu through the presence of the schoolhouse (built with the assistance of FOIN), the structuring of daily practices in the center, and the notoriety received by the community as the site of a bilingual intercultural high school. The school also serves, however, to connect Mondayacu institutionally with the broader region, through its association with the provincial bilingual-education agency and other communities with similar programs. Through these associational ties, ATIAM is part of a broader process of identity construction at a regional (as opposed to community) scale, and this in turn serves as a political basis for collective action. This, then, becomes a political space—in the literal as well as the figurative sense—occupied by FOIN and other indigenous federations. Without the consolidation of indigenous spaces devoted to social organizing and activities such as bilingual intercultural education, the formation of a regional Quichua identity—and the scaling up of political concerns that this facilitates—would scarcely be possible. These processes of spatial consolidation have been brought about not only through political and social mobilization but, crucially, through practices of economic production as well. Perhaps the most evident of these are cattle raising and naranjilla production.

CATTLE PRODUCTION AND INDIGENOUS SPACE IN MONDAYACU

The legal requirements for gaining title to land, established by agrarian reform legislation and enforced by IERAC, stipulated that 50 percent of land claims had to be cleared and put to "productive use." The easiest (and for many the most prestigious) way to do this was to clear forest and plant *gramalote* (*Paspalum fasciculatum*), the tall, tough grass used throughout the region for cattle pasture. This was facilitated by the availability of low-interest agricultural credit in the 1970s and 1980s. Cattle production is not new to the Alto Napo. Muratorio (1991: 81) notes that Jesuit missionaries introduced cattle to indigenous communities in the 1870s as a way of encouraging a settled existence and, no doubt, as a form of agricultural production that would be useful to missionary and state authorities. Cattle raising among indigenous communities in the region remained of minor economic or ecological importance for nearly a century, however. In the mid-1970s, following requirements set forth by the 1973 agrarian reform, Quichua communities in Napo sought to establish their land rights by clearing and planting their holdings. At the same time, and as part of agrarian reform measures, the military government embarked on an agricultural modernization program. Low-

interest loans made available to smallholders by the Central Bank made cattle raising a more attractive option than production of other market crops such as coffee and cacao (Macdonald, 1981). Central to the economic and political objectives of the military government at the time was the modernization of agriculture, and therefore the state facilitated various forms of agricultural development: low-interest credit, technical assistance, provision of infrastructure, and legalization of agricultural lands. Such programs were expected to rationalize agricultural production and supply low-cost food to growing urban centers.

During the 1980s, ATIAM received considerable development assistance, the majority of it aimed at cattle production, from both national and international sources. In 1983 ATIAM leaders approached a representative of the Inter-American Foundation (IAF) who was visiting the area and expressed interest in an agricultural development project for the community. As a result of that conversation, in November of that year the IAF initiated a project in the community intended to improve market production for Mondayacu farmers.[8] Under this program, which lasted for several years, the IAF provided training in market-oriented agricultural techniques (e.g., for the production of naranjilla, coffee, and cattle). Additionally, the program supported commercialization efforts through the enlargement of a community store from which agricultural goods would be sold; the provision of refrigeration equipment for the safe storage of meat, milk, eggs, and produce; and the creation of a weekly open-air market so that producers would have the opportunity to sell their goods directly to consumers.[9] These initiatives were intended to circumvent the role of the middlemen who purchase cattle and produce directly from farmers. Because farmers in Mondayacu typically have had no adequate way to transport their crops to market, they often have had little choice but to accept the low prices offered by intermediaries (see below).

In August 1984, the Central Bank's integrated rural development program, the Fondo para el Desarrollo del Rural Marginal (Fund for the Development of Marginal Rural Areas—FODERUMA), in conjunction with the Department of Rural Development within the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, began a large-scale development project with ATIAM. This project, part of the state's efforts at modernizing the country's agricultural sector and integrating its rural population more fully into the national economy, was aimed at increasing market production. Under this project FODERUMA provided loans, training, and grants for the community beginning in 1985. Half of the project funds went to low-interest credit for cattle production (mostly loans for the purchase of livestock but also loans for clearing forest and planting pasture and for veterinary medicines and mineral blocks). The rest of the funds were divided among infrastructure projects, loans for short-cycle crops

(coffee, naranjilla, manioc, plantain, and maize), training, technical assistance, and travel.[10]

Following the project model used throughout the country, each ATIAM member was encouraged by project technical staff to purchase one bull, three cows, and two or three calves. Sixty-eight of ATIAM's 70 members took advantage of the readily available credit to buy either 5 or 6 head of cattle each, for a total of 382 purchased under the program.[11] The push toward cattle production was aided by the initiation in 1985 of the rural development program of the Banco Nacional de Fomento (the National Development Bank—BNF), funded by the Inter-American Development Bank. In contrast to the MAG-FODERUMA program, under which money was lent to ATIAM, which in turn lent it to individual farmers (at a higher rate of interest), under the BNF program farmers borrowed money directly from the bank. Irrespective of these administrative differences, the outcomes of the two projects were similar: a dramatic increase in the community's total cattle herd, with concomitant increases in deforestation and indebtedness. Under the BNF project, credit was provided to purchase 486 head of cattle, along with fencing and the labor and seed to convert over 300 hectares of forest to pasture.[12] Thus, a total of 868 head of cattle were purchased with readily available low-interest loans through FODERUMA and BNF in which virtually all ATIAM members participated. According to a project report,[13] in 1984 the total cattle herd in Mondayacu was 434, a figure that was tripled by 1987. Mondayacu's experience was typical of economic and environmental processes occurring throughout the region: between 1983 and 1985, the amount of land devoted to pasture in Napo Province as a whole increased by 62 percent (Macdonald, 1992: 224). Similarly, Unupi et al. (1993: 106) report that between 1976 and 1990 the area of land devoted to pasture in the Sumaco region (which includes Mondayacu) increased 379.2 percent, while the area of primary forest decreased 30.9 percent.

Regardless of their environmental impacts, development projects pursued by Mondayacu farmers secured ATIAM's land claims and inscribed their presence in the landscape. This process was facilitated by national and international programs of rural development and agricultural modernization made possible by ATIAM's organizational relationships with FOIN and its links to IERAC, FODERUMA, BNF, and IAF. At the same time, however, these processes of social and spatial transformation served to convert Mondayacu's forests into pasture and its farmers into (nearly) full-time cattle producers dependent on market forces over which they had no control. The BNF and FODERUMA rural development programs ended in the early 1990s, in part as a result of defaulting by loan recipients (not only in Mondayacu but throughout the country) and in part because of broader state

policies of economic liberalization. For many Mondayacu residents, cattle production was an attractive option only so long as credit was cheap and easily available. In the absence of such subsidies, cattle production—a difficult and costly activity under the best of circumstances—is not economically viable for most residents. With the decline in agricultural credit, farmers in the Alto Napo sought alternative market crops to fill the void left by the waning cattle economy. For many, increased production of naranjilla appeared to be the best option.

As with the establishment of Mondayacu's bilingual intercultural high school, the rural development programs of the 1980s served both to consolidate the community spatially and to forge linkages between ATIAM and actors with national and international reach. The dramatic increase in forest clearance was a direct response by Mondayacu farmers to state land reform policies, together with state-led rural development programs that facilitated heavy investment in cattle production. In addition to allowing capital accumulation by some of Mondayacu's farmers, the presence of pastures and cattle clearly mark the community's presence in the landscape, creating a bounded indigenous space. This consolidated space in turn serves as a basis for organizing practices and has been central to ATIAM's ability to form relationships with state agencies and international development organizations. Mondayacu's spatial consolidation is also crucial for scaling up political concerns through the community's relationship with FOIN and other (higher-scale) indigenous organizations.

MARKET PRODUCTION AND THE CHALLENGE OF "THE LOCAL"

Currently, the most important cash crop grown in Mondayacu (and other upland communities of the Alto Napo) is naranjilla (*Solanum quitoense*). A member of the huge and diverse Solanaceae family (to which tomatoes, potatoes, and capsicum chiles also belong), naranjillas (which resemble orange tomatoes) are used to make juice throughout Ecuador and Colombia. Several varieties of naranjilla are native to the eastern Andean foothills, and some of them have been commercially cultivated in Ecuador at least since the 1940s (INIAP, 1982). Commercial cultivation of naranjilla entered the Ecuadorian Amazon with colonists from the highlands or the coast,[14] within a historical and ideological context in which the Amazon Basin was viewed as an agricultural frontier the productive transformation of which was to contribute to the development of the nation.

Naranjilla did not become the predominant commercial crop in Mondayacu until the 1990s, after the deflation of the cattle boom in the Alto Napo and the construction in 1987 of a new road linking the Tena-Baeza highway to the town of Loreto to the east. Moreover, naranjilla production in the province of Morona Santiago in the southern Oriente collapsed in the late 1980s because of massive pest infestation. This no doubt increased demand for naranjilla from the Alto Napo precisely at the time when areas ideally suited to its production were made accessible by the construction of a road east to the town of Loreto (Bates, 2000; Rudel, 2000).

Because naranjilla is highly susceptible to pest and weed infestation, producers in Mondayacu (as elsewhere in Ecuador) apply pesticides and, if they can afford it, hire contract laborers to weed their plots. Farmers may also rent horses or mules to transport the crop from their farms to the nearest road, where, as with cattle, it can be sold to a marketing intermediary. Each of these inputs represents a significant expense for small farmers, making naranjilla production a capital-intensive enterprise and providing the incentive for producing ever-larger crops in order to recoup overhead costs. High input costs are exacerbated by the fact that farmers are frequently indebted to intermediaries, who divide trading regions among themselves so as to retain virtual purchasing monopsonies. Intermediaries commonly sell fertilizers and pesticides (on credit and at inflated prices) directly to farmers or lend money to cash-poor farmers so that they may purchase chemical inputs, seedlings, tools, or other items necessary for the production of naranjilla. High-interest loans are often to be repaid in the form of naranjilla from a future crop. More often than not, however, farmers find themselves further in debt, as they must borrow more money to buy more pesticides to produce the same amount of naranjilla. In this way, naranjilla farmers in Mondayacu are increasingly bound to capitalist relations of production and exchange and caught in the typical dependence on chemical as well as capital inputs so common among modern monoculture cropping systems.

Moreover, naranjilla rarely produces a profit for most farmers, a grim fact of which most people in Mondayacu are well aware. The stagnating prices received by farmers for their crops are more than offset by the ever-rising prices of pesticides and fertilizers, which have always been linked to the U.S. dollar. In the context of Ecuador's ongoing economic crisis, this means that naranjilla farmers are squeezed by rising costs and stagnating incomes.[15] While prices paid for chemical inputs and basic foodstuffs have consistently risen during the past decade, the prices received for naranjilla and coffee have declined in real terms over the same period. During the period 1988–1997, for instance, the price of the commonly used pesticide Nuvacron rose 113.4

percent in real terms (constant 1988 dollars), while the prices of two other commonly used pesticides, Karate and Monitor, rose 62.5 percent and 59.2 percent respectively. During the period 1990–1997, the prices of basic foodstuffs commonly purchased by Mondayacu families also rose in real terms. The cost of canned tuna rose 29.8 percent, while that of noodles increased by 34.0 percent, sugar by 74.3 percent, and rice by 84.2 percent. At the same time, prices received by farmers for their most important cash crops fell. Between 1986 and 1996, the price received by producers for naranjilla dropped by 53.3 percent and that received for coffee by 54.8 percent in real terms.[16] Farmers in Mondayacu—and throughout the Alto Napo—are caught in a price squeeze of rising costs for basic consumer goods and stagnating prices received for the product of their labor.

What is clear from this example is that, although ATIAM was relatively successful in scaling up its claims to land, education, and political representation through its relationships with NGOs, state agencies, and higher-scale indigenous organizations, it has been unable to jump scales in the context of recent agricultural transformation and changing relations of production. Because of their limited spatial mobility (owing to the lack of a means to transport their crop to markets in Quito or Colombia) and their lack of reliable information regarding current prices for naranjilla, the subordinate position of farmers vis-à-vis the intermediaries to whom they sell their crop and from whom they borrow money and purchase pesticides is reinforced. In the early 1990s ATIAM attempted, with the assistance of FOIN, to form a multicommunity marketing cooperative for naranjilla producers. For a variety of reasons, however (not the least of which was the inability to purchase a truck for transporting the crop), this attempt failed to produce lasting results.

ATIAM *was* successful at jumping scales to gain access to resources and stimulate local agricultural production in the 1980s but only within a populist socioeconomic and political context in which national and international development agencies invested heavily in rural development (Yashar, 1999). In the current climate of economic crisis and neoliberal restructuring, jumping scales has had limited effect on the community's economic conditions in spite of recent political gains by CONAIE and Pachakutik. It would appear, then, that the capacity of multiscale networks to foster local development is largely contingent upon the role that the state is willing to play in such a process (Fox, 1996). In making this argument, my intent is not to discount the emancipatory potential for indigenous peoples of a politics of scale. Indeed, its effectiveness has been demonstrated through the structure and achievements—political, social, and economic—of indigenous organizations throughout Ecuador. I do, however, wish to point to the limits of this potential in the absence of a political and economic climate that allows for effective

organizing. Without adequate transportation, credit, information about markets, or media for communication—all means through which scales may be bridged and the friction of distance overcome—organizing politically and economically will be extremely difficult. Clearly, this raises questions regarding state commitments to investment in the agricultural sector. However, it also points to the role of national and regional indigenous organizations in rural development and their potential for bridging economic as well as political scales. The long-term political success of Ecuador's indigenous movement is dependent upon the ability and willingness of regional- and national-level organizations to address the livelihood needs of residents in communities like Mondayacu. If they fail to do so, the gulf between these organizations and local communities will surely continue to widen, perhaps irreparably.

CONCLUSION

The capacity of localized actors and social movements to advance their claims against the state or to resist the domination of extralocal actors depends to a large degree on their ability to jump scales: to forge networks with groups or individuals with broader institutional and, therefore, spatial reach. This notion is central to an understanding of subaltern groups' possibilities of gaining political voice and legitimacy. As powerful a concept as this is, however, it can only be understood in the context of a theory of the production of space. Spatial scale is (re)produced through social practice—relations of production and social reproduction—and, often, through political struggle, negotiation, and the exercise of power. Crucially, it is the control and consolidation of space(s) and place(s) that makes possible both the production and the linkage of hierarchical scales. As Harvey (1990) asserts, command of space is essential for controlling the politics of scale. In this sense, the spatial and organizational consolidation of Mondayacu was necessary for the forging of multiscalar networks. These networks, in turn, facilitated the consolidation of the spatial basis for engaging in a politics of scale. Mondayacu and communities like it throughout Ecuador form a vital political and spatial base for an indigenous movement that has made dramatic gains in recent years (Yashar, 1999).

In making this argument I do not mean to imply that indigenous politics can be reduced to a working out of the relations of space and scale. Clearly other social factors, including class, ethnicity, gender, relations of production, and the contingencies of social history, are of central importance. Indeed, I have addressed some of these elsewhere (see, e.g., Perreault, 2000;

2001). Far too often, however, space and spatial practices are overlooked as organizing principles in the cultural politics of social movements. Moreover, the notion of jumping scales cannot properly be understood apart from a theory of the production of space and place. The transnational networks discussed by social movement theorists and critics of development (e.g., Escobar, 1998; 2001; Watts and McCarthy, 1997) are made possible by spatial consolidation and the simultaneous practice of actors at multiple scales (Harvey, 1990; Jonas, 1994). Spatial practice and the politics of scale have been central to the gains made by Ecuadorian indigenous organizations during the past 30 years.

Whatever their political achievements (and these have been many), indigenous organizations in Ecuador have been less successful in recent years at increasing economic security or improving livelihood options at the scale of the community. In spite of their broader political reach, residents of Mondayacu are circumscribed locally by relations of production in which they are subordinate to marketing intermediaries. Mondayacu residents find their economic alternatives limited by restricted spatial mobility, a dearth of technical assistance, and now the paucity of credit for peasant farmers. Nearly a decade of economic crisis, neoliberal restructuring, and state withdrawal from peasant agriculture have left few resources and perhaps even fewer options available for smallholders. This fact points to a broader problem with the indigenous movement(s) in Ecuador: the increased political influence of national-level indigenous organizations has in many regards shifted the focus of attention from community development to national politics (see Perreault, 2001). If attention is not paid to the integration of concerns at multiple scales, the jumping of political scales by social movements may have the unintended consequence of remarginalizing local communities, thus limiting their ability to overcome economic (or other) forms of oppression and inequity. This disjuncture between national politics and local realities is a social and cultural issue, to be sure, but it is also, fundamentally, a geographical one. The linking of the national and the local and the recognition of the importance of the politics of scale are crucial for the establishment and sustainability of viable indigenous organizations in Ecuador and throughout Latin America.

NOTES

1. Fox (1996: 1089) defines societal "thickness" as the density of representative organizations and likens it to the accumulation of social capital (see Putnam, 1993).

2. This center now stretches for nearly a kilometer along both sides of the highway. Many families have two houses—one in the center and one where their farm is located, which may be at several kilometers' distance and accessible only by footpath.

3. This statement is from the minutes of the first assembly of ATIAM, at which the organization was formally established. See document in ATIAM files entitled "Acta Constitucional," dated October 7, 1975. The quote in Spanish is "explicó el motivo de la reunión y la importancia de vivir bajo una organización jurídicamente constituida y la defensa de los intereses comunes de los asociados."

4. The figure is double the size normally granted by IERAC. No one I spoke to, either in Mondayacu or with the Instituto Nacional de Desarrollo Agropecuario (the National Institute of Agricultural Development—INDA), the successor to the now defunct IERAC, could fully explain why ATIAM was granted so much land. The best explanation I heard was offered by an official with INDA's Tena office, who suggested that the community simply claimed land that no other community or individual desired and was therefore granted title.

5. *Causaimanta Yachana* is Quichua for "place of living education." When the high school was opened in 1987, it was named Programa Alternativa de Educación Bilingüe Intercultural (Alternative Program of Bilingual Intercultural Education). The school's name was changed in 1990.

6. The increased use of Spanish and the decreased use of Quichua is of course more pronounced in communities (such as Mondayacu) that are close to major towns such as Tena and Archidona than in more remote communities.

7. My thanks to Patrick C. Wilson for this insight.

8. In implementing this project, the IAF worked directly with ATIAM. In later years the IAF—along with most of the other development organizations active in the region—channeled its projects through FOIN. By the late 1990s many NGOs were again working directly with communities or with small secondary-level organizations created expressly to participate in certain projects rather than channeling project funds through the federation. This shift can be attributed largely to the frustration experienced by many NGOs with FOIN's chronic administrative problems and growing politicization (see Wilson in this issue).

9. See IAF contract (*convenio*) number EC-127 in ATIAM files. See also ATIAM document entitled "Informe del progreso del proyecto," dated November 12, 1983–February 12, 1984, and subsequent documents entitled "Carta informe programático" for the periods February 13, 1984–August 12, 1984; August 13, 1984–December 12, 1985; and December 13, 1985–December 31, 1986.

10. See document in ATIAM files entitled "Banco Central del Ecuador Gerencia de Estudios y Proyectos Especiales—Fondo de Desarrollo Rural Marginal—Resolución del Comité del Fondo—FOD-R-84." See also MAG-FODERUMA (1984) "Proyecto de Desarrollo Comunitario 'Mondayacu.' MAG—División de Desarrollo Campesino, Departamento de Desarrollo Rural."

11. See ATIAM document entitled "Registro de crédito bovino," dated March 6, 1986.

12. See undated document in ATIAM files entitled "Explotación ganadera con crédito del Banco Nacional de Fomento sucursal Tena en la tierra comunal de la Asociación Mondayacu."

13. "Proyecto de desarrollo comunitario 'Mondayacu,' MAG—División de Desarrollo Campesino, Departamento de Desarrollo Rural" in FOIN archives.

14. Naranjilla had previously been cultivated commercially in the thickly forested mid-elevation hills in the vicinity of Baños, west of Puyo, and Baeza, north of Tena (Hans Knoblauch, personal communication, 1999).

15. At the time of writing, Ecuador is experiencing mild stabilization following its worst economic crisis in a century. Inflation for 1999 was 60.5 percent, the highest in Latin America, and the sucre lost 65 percent of its value against the dollar. In 2000 the sucre was dropped altogether and the U.S. dollar adopted as the national currency. The external debt, $13.7 billion, is roughly equal to gross domestic product. The economy contracted by 7.3 percent in 1999 (*Economist*, 2000). The costs of goods such as chemical fertilizers and pesticides, whose prices have always been linked to the dollar, have become exorbitant for smallholder farmers. The adoption of the U.S. dollar as the national currency in 2000 has only exacerbated these cost problems for small farmers.

16. These data are national averages. Generally, food prices in the Amazon tend to be higher than those paid on the coast or in the Andes because of the added cost of transportation. Price data for chemical inputs are taken from agricultural census data, "Precios de insumos," Ministerio de Agricultura y Ganadería, Subsecretría de Política e Inversión Sectoral: Proyecto para la Reorientación de Información Agropecuario, Dirección de Información Agropecuaria, Sistema Nacional de Información y Noticias. Prices for consumer foodstuffs are taken from "Precios al consumidor," Ministerio de Agricultura y Ganadería, Subsecretaría de Política e Inversión Sectoral, Proyecto para la Reorientación del Sector Agropecuario, Directiva de Información Agropecuaria, Sistema Nacional de Información y Noticias. Naranjilla and coffee price data are based on "Variable PFJ precio finca-productor," Ministerio de Agricultura y Ganadería, Dirección de Información Agropecuaria, Base de Datos Mensual de Información Agropecuaria. Data are standardized to constant U.S. dollars using exchange rates found in Banco Central del Ecuador (1988) and Economist Intelligence Unit data, 1986–1997. The U.S. inflation rate was calculated using Consumer Price Index data from the Bureau of the Census (1984) and data from the Office of Productivity and Technology, Bureau of Labor Statistics, http://stats.bls.gov/blshome.htm.

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